

PINK AND BLUE: OUTCOMES ASSOCIATED WITH THE INTEGRATION OF OPEN GAY AND LESBIAN PERSONNEL IN THE SAN DIEGO POLICE DEPARTMENT

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We examine whether the integration of open gay and lesbian officers has undermined the organizational effectiveness of the San Diego Police Department (SDPD). Based on an analysis of prior research and a 3-day site visit, our finding is that a quiet process of normalization has reduced much of the emotional charge that heterosexual officers originally anticipated. Although integration has proceeded largely uneventfully, subtle forms of discrimination do persist, and gay officers who do not already enjoy respect may face challenges. Despite these uneven effects, integration has enhanced cohesion as well as the SDPD's standing with the communities it serves.

Beginning in the mid-1980s, a number of American municipal police departments began to seek increased representation of homosexual personnel within their ranks. Responding to complaints about discriminatory practices, lawsuits, new laws, and a growing interest in new forms of community policing that emphasized closer ties between officers and the districts they served, major urban police departments, such as New York, Los Angeles, and Seattle, began implementing recruitment and support programs that

The authors are very grateful to Professor Otwin Marenin for valuable feedback on an earlier version of the article, to three anonymous reviewers who provided very helpful suggestions, and to Harold Toro, doctoral candidate in the Department of Sociology at the University of California, Berkeley, for helpful assistance in the collection of data.

POLICE QUARTERLY Vol. 5 No. 1, March 2002 63–95

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targeted gay men and lesbians (see, e.g., Gates, Carroll, & Smith, 1986; Harris, 1991; Purdum, 1987).

As was the case for many women and minorities during previous integration transitions, the early experiences of major police departments attempting to integrate known homosexuals proved to be challenging (Brown, 2000). Reactions among the rank and file, officers' organizations, and prominent community members often were negative. Internal support for such policies was uneven, and long-standing work cultures were slow to change (Barlow & Barlow, 2000; Leinen, 1993). Research of police culture through the early 1990s depicts a work environment that sought to reinforce traditional notions of masculinity and describes casual remarks ridiculing or stereotyping homosexuals as being commonplace in formal and informal settings. For many police officers, discussions of sexual interest in women and other reinforcements of heterosexual orientation were central to the shared work culture (Buhrke, 1996). Gay male officers who chose to come out or who were known to be gay frequently reported harassment, and isolated cases of threatened physical abuse and failure to support gay cops in backup situations were identified and corroborated in a number of instances. Highly charged public debates took place in Los Angeles, New York, and Dallas over whether the integration of gay officers would undermine the local police department (Hernandez, 1989; Suro, 1992).

Although two studies examining the experiences of gays and lesbians in American law enforcement were published in the early 1990s (Leinen, 1993; RAND, 1993), they were written when new policies integrating self-identified homosexuals had been established only recently. Since the publication of the Leinen (1993) and RAND (1993) studies, a small number of researchers have continued to track outcomes associated with gay officers in police departments (Burke, 1994a; Koegel, 1996; Stewart, 1995). However, prior to this date, an in-depth case study of a major urban department has yet to be undertaken. For example, Stewart's (1995) case studies focus only on cadet training programs rather than overall departmental performance, and some of his cases are based on surveys of as few as three individuals. Consequently, long-term outcomes remain unknown. This study seeks to provide an in-depth, longer term assessment by examining the experiences and outcomes of a major urban police department after a decade of integration of open gay and lesbian officers.¹

As study directors, we have chosen to focus on the San Diego Police Department (SDPD) because in many respects it represents a typical American metropolitan force. Although every urban police department is

characterized by a unique set of historical, political, and sociocultural circumstances, the city of San Diego is politically moderate, neither excessively liberal nor conservative, and the department draws from a regional population that is closely tied to major U.S. military institutions, holding relatively mainstream political and social values and in demographic flux. Its public constituency during the 1990s, although changing rapidly, was still predominately White, socially and politically conservative to moderate, and working and middle class.² Among major U.S. cities, its crime rates were roughly average, and its police department was perceived to be competent but imperfect (McKinnie, 1996). And, like other departments at the time, in the early 1990s, the SDPD found itself making a new commitment to supporting equal opportunity and the integration of self-disclosed gay and lesbian personnel in its ranks. The case also offers the researcher a solid 10-year window to examine outcomes after a formal decision to support integration and equal opportunity. It is true that the SDPD is much larger than most other American police departments.³ However, to the extent that the SDPD shares some important similarities with other American metropolitan forces, the conclusions of our study may be relevant or partially relevant for other police departments.

Our key finding is that the increasing participation of self-disclosed homosexuals in the SDPD has not led to any overall negative consequences for performance, effectiveness, recruiting, morale, or other measures of well-being. Even though incidents of harassment and discrimination continue and new internal tensions have arisen concerning the integration of homosexuals, self-disclosed gay personnel, their peers and commanders, and outside observers all agree that disruptive incidents continue to decline in frequency and are usually handled effectively through both informal and formal channels. We suggest that although the findings of this case study may not be applicable to every police department, our data indicate that the integration of open gay and lesbian personnel in law enforcement need not undermine organizational effectiveness.

METHODOLOGY

A social scientific study of outcomes associated with open participation of homosexuals in a major police department faces a number of challenging tasks. As previous researchers of the topic have noted, police departments are traditionally characterized by a variety of informal norms that emphasize loyalty, discretion, and secrecy (Buhrke, 1996; RAND, 1993; Stewart,

1995; C. Stewart, personal communication, May 2001). For police departments with formal, public commitments to supporting equal opportunity for homosexuals, such as the SDPD, senior representatives making public statements may understandably wish to project images that are as consistent as possible with their departments' formal policies. Furthermore, lower-ranking personnel in the command structure may feel uncomfortable making observations that could reflect poorly on their superiors or their departments more generally. Last, homosexual personnel themselves who are willing to be interviewed for a study are much more likely to be widely self-identified. Selection bias may emerge when efforts to speak with gay and lesbian personnel and their peers lead to a snowball sample that underrepresents homosexual personnel who, for a variety of reasons, feel uneasy or unwilling to speak about their experiences.⁴

Taking into account the unique methodological challenges facing an investigation of this nature, the present study adopted a number of complementary techniques designed to maximize the breadth of data collected, anticipate and correct for any potential sampling or response bias whenever possible, and use multiple sources of evidence to substantiate and verify initial findings. The first stage of the study sought to identify, retrieve, and analyze all prior academic, policy, and press documents relating to homosexuals in the SDPD or other major urban police departments ($n = 328$). Although we do not include all 328 published sources in our bibliography, we did look carefully at all of them. Documents included (a) scholarly books, book chapters, and journal articles; (b) doctoral dissertations and master's theses; (c) government documents; (d) internal departmental memos; (e) mainstream magazine and newspaper articles; and (f) newspaper articles from the gay press.

Based on a preliminary analysis of these secondary sources, the study directors sought input from a diverse group of informed observers to design a broad, comprehensive interview survey strategy. The second stage of the project consisted of an intensive, 3-day site visit to the San Diego area that included participant observation of formal and informal activities within the SDPD where self-identified homosexual and heterosexual personnel work together; semistructured interviews with senior and rank-and-file departmental personnel, both heterosexual and homosexual, on- and off-site; additional interviews with representatives of major governmental, citizen, and police officer interest groups; and the collection of additional relevant documents available from departmental, public, and private interest group sources. Follow-up interviews and document collection continued

for an additional 4 weeks following the site visit. The response rate among individuals and organizations contacted for this study was 90% ($n = 30$).

During the data collection process, the study authors adopted a number of strategies to maximize breadth of evidence and minimize bias. These techniques included (a) providing multiple opportunities for police personnel to remain anonymous or go “off the record” to encourage full disclosure; (b) securing private, one-on-one interviews with all participants, thereby avoiding social pressures common in focus groups; (c) impressing on all participants with a possible vested interest in the study’s outcome the importance and value of an accurate and comprehensive response; (d) encouraging participants to use informal networks to have colleagues with differing views or experiences contact the study authors on conditions of anonymity if preferred; and (e) soliciting interviews with informed observers who do not work for the SDPD including former personnel, community representatives, and public civil rights groups to corroborate findings and advise on potential sources of bias.⁵

The last stage of the study focused on an analysis of the preliminary observations to identify and confirm the robustness and consistency of findings. Where findings appeared inconsistent or potentially affected by bias or underreporting, the study authors sought to identify additional sources for follow-up interviews and conferred with key informants and outside observers. These efforts allowed the study authors to assess the likely validity and reliability of a variety of conclusions.⁶ Our aim throughout the research has been to produce a case study that goes into more depth than any other analysis available in the literature. That having been said, because this is an $N = 1$ study, our findings are only suggestive and more research is needed to examine the integration of gays and lesbians in other police departments.

CASE HISTORY: THE INCLUSION OF SELF-IDENTIFIED GAY AND LESBIAN PERSONNEL IN THE SAN DIEGO POLICE DEPARTMENT

Up through the late 1980s, the SDPD was typical of other police departments in having neither a formal policy regarding homosexual personnel nor a public presence of self-disclosed gay and lesbian officers. Like other major urban police departments, during the 1960s and 1970s, the SDPD had continued to selectively discriminate, both explicitly and informally, against the hiring and promotion of self-identified homosexuals (Stetz &

Thornton, 1998a, 1998b). Through at least 1980, the questionnaire given to potential recruits asked them to identify whether they were attracted to the same gender, and recruits were sometimes queried during oral interviews about their sexual preferences (M. Dallezotte, personal communication, May 30, 2001, and January 11, 2002). Within the department, antigay attitudes, especially toward gay men, were widely shared, and homosexuals were frequently the subject of jokes, derogatory remarks, and differential treatment.⁷ The only male officer to have disclosed his homosexuality during this time did so after he decided to resign from the department (R. Edgil, personal communication, May 30-31, 2001).

Although the SDPD maintained a largely unfavorable atmosphere for homosexuals prior to the 1990s, like other police departments, it was not consistently so. Although screening and training of new recruits included questions regarding sexual behavior, a number of currently serving gay personnel recalled administrators' ignoring or sidestepping evidence of homosexuality. Furthermore, interviews and other evidence collected for this study suggest that several women officers, and perhaps a few men, were known by at least a handful of colleagues to be homosexual. But even in these cases they remained extremely discrete in their disclosure.

During the late 1980s and early 1990s, a number of factors, both internal and external, led the SDPD to shift its formal and informal policies regarding homosexual personnel. First, as part of a growing commitment to increasing diversity within the ranks and improving relationships with community groups, during the late 1980s the chief of police and his successor strongly supported a variety of measures to promote equal protection and greater inclusion of underrepresented groups (B. Burgreen, personal communication, June 12, 2001; J. Sanders, personal communication, May 30, 2001). Even though early departmental efforts to support diversity did not explicitly include homosexuals, as early as 1988 the chief of police had made public comments that supported the right of homosexuals to serve in the force.⁸ Departmental shifts reflected a commitment to increasing diversity of public institutions and responded to a variety of legislative and policy shifts within the city of San Diego and the state of California that codified equal protection statutes. One such city measure that passed in 1990, commonly known as the Human Dignity Ordinance, outlawed arbitrary discrimination against sexual minorities.⁹

In responding proactively to these legislative measures, the department sought to redress complaints lodged by various underrepresented community groups including Latin American immigrants and homosexuals

regarding poor service, harassment, and purported physical abuse by police officers (G. N. Biagi, personal communication, 2001; D. Rubin, personal communication, June 5, 2001). Organized representatives of the gay community of Hillcrest, near downtown, exerted significant pressure on the department to improve its patrol efforts after the murder of a young man in the neighborhood and several gay beatings (G. N. Biagi, personal communication, 2001).

At the same time that the department was responding to various citizen and governmental pressures to provide equal opportunity for officers and improve community relations, a variety of other trends contributed to a growing local and national awareness of issues relating to gay officers. The late 1980s had seen a number of gay and lesbian officers publicly “coming out” in other urban departments, often under highly charged political circumstances. One of the earliest gay police organizations, in New York City, encountered both legal and personal resistance by the police department as it attempted to organize. Under much controversy, a number of cities considered initiating recruitment efforts targeted at gay populations (Leinen, 1993). Perhaps most significantly, in 1989, a former Los Angeles police officer filed a lawsuit against the department for having allegedly encouraged and allowed flagrant and sustained threats to his personal safety, while actively discriminating against him on the job (Hernandez, 1989). Along with several other incidents, this lawsuit brought heightened attention to the concerns of gays in uniform.

In October of 1990, the gay Los Angeles officer who filed the lawsuit, accompanied by two others, held a small press conference in San Diego to symbolically “come out” as gay cops. Their conversations and interactions with a number of prominent San Diego gay community members helped catalyze the beginning of a process of self-disclosure and organization among several gay and lesbian personnel in the SDPD in the coming months. Three weeks after the Los Angeles officer’s visit, 10-year veteran SDPD officer John Graham officially “came out” at a press conference. Shortly thereafter, a second seasoned officer, Rick Edgil, also publicly acknowledged his homosexuality. Then-police chief Bob Burgreen made public statements in support of the rights of officers to serve openly as homosexuals, and the department appeared to take the news in stride. In July of 1991, Officer Graham served as the “man of the year” in the city’s gay pride parade at which the department also sponsored an informational recruiting booth. By that time, gay and lesbian personnel had organized an officers association, SOLO (Society of Law Officers), and began

coordinating their own support network with other groups around the country (Taylor, 1991).

Although the SDPD publicly supported the rights of several gay and lesbian officers to serve without fear of arbitrary discrimination or harassment in the early 1990s, the growing evidence of the police chief's and several senior administrators' progay commitment contributed to a backlash among more conservative members of the department and the wider political community. The biggest public uproar ensued when a greater San Diego area police cadet training program sponsored by the Boy Scouts dismissed one of its most respected teachers, an officer from the El Cajon Police Department named Chuck Merino, because he was homosexual. Shortly after Officer Merino's dismissal, Police Chief Bob Burgreen publicly condemned the Boy Scout's actions and suggested that the department would withdraw its participation from the Scouts' Explorer Program. Almost immediately, a heated public debate followed in which a number of police officers and community members expressed frustration over Burgreen's decision. Several conservative politicians, the Police Officers Association (POA; the union for the SDPD's uniformed officers), and many community members expressed anger over what they saw as a cow-towing to fashionable politically correct causes and the emergence of a new form of reverse discrimination against White males.

Even though public criticism of Chief Burgreen continued for several months following the Boy Scout incident, the department continued to institutionalize a variety of mechanisms to support equal opportunity throughout the remainder of his tenure, as well as that of his successor. A liaison to the gay and lesbian community was created, as was one for Latin Americans and African Americans. All recruits were required to participate in a training module that sought to clarify rules regarding appropriate conduct, and the growing cadre of out gay and lesbian personnel began serving as bridges and interpreters for police work in predominately gay districts. Implemented to support equal opportunity for gay cops in the 1990s, these strategies constituted a clear and unambiguous policy commitment on the part of the SDPD, but they were not codified in an explicit, written statement that endorsed the participation of open homosexuals *per se*.

During this time of informal implementation of equal opportunity and education policies, gay and lesbian personnel continued to self-disclose on a case-by-case basis. But changes in the work environment did not proceed as quickly or evenly as official policy. Generally, the handful of individuals who had chosen to self-disclose reported encountering only minor

difficulties with peers and supervisors in the early 1990s. But results of a prior study that included an examination of the SDPD (RAND, 1993) suggest that in the SDPD, as in other departments, a number of more closeted gay and lesbian officers remained concerned about the impact self-disclosure would have on their careers. Especially in more conservative divisions of the department, frequent derogatory comments regarding homosexuals and other minority groups continued to characterize the day-to-day work environment. According to some gay men, “macho” cop culture in the department presented significant risks to homosexual personnel in the early and mid-1990s (M. Dallezotte, personal communication, May 30, 2001, and January 11, 2002). For instance, several heterosexual officers maintaining public security at the annual gay pride parade turned their backs on the chief of police, gay officers, and their supporters as they marched by on at least two occasions. Lesbian officers who came out formally or informally in greater numbers throughout the decade described less overt hostility and discrimination in their work environments but also characterized them as less than ideal.

In the past several years, the number of self-identified gay men and women working in the department has grown from about 5 individuals in 1992 to between 35 and 50 as of this study date.¹⁰ They range in rank from officer 1 to (at least) lieutenant and work across all divisions of the department, including patrol, detective work, vice, SWAT, community relations, and training. The chief of police meets regularly with the Citizens’ Gay and Lesbian Advisory Board, and a liaison to the gay and lesbian community reports directly to him. The SDPD’s mission statement includes a strong commitment to diversity, and it recruits aggressively in gay and lesbian venues such as the gay pride parade.¹¹ Indeed, each year, gay officers and their straight colleagues, including the chief, march in the pride parade (G. N. Biagi, personal communication, 2001). What impact has a decade-long policy of integration as well as increasing participation of self-disclosed homosexuals had on the effectiveness and performance of the SDPD?

OUTCOMES ASSOCIATED WITH INCREASING PARTICIPATION: DISCRIMINATION, WORK ENVIRONMENTS, AND ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE

Observers concerned with evaluating the impacts of personnel policy changes on the well-being and effectiveness of police departments or other paramilitary organizations can focus on a variety of measures to assess

outcomes. Debates over the effects of including open homosexuals in military or paramilitary organizations usually focus on three types of potential consequences: changes in the frequency of acute personnel problems arising as a direct consequence of the policy change (i.e., harassment or misconduct); secondary effects on morale, cohesion, or other interpersonal characteristics of the work environment that influence job performance and effectiveness individually and collectively; and the cumulative impact of these acute and secondary effects on objective measures of organizational performance and effectiveness (see, e.g., RAND, 1993). In the present study, we attempted to collect and assess all available evidence to evaluate all three classes of outcomes.

FORMAL HARASSMENT, DISCRIMINATION, AND MISCONDUCT

The SDPD's equal employment opportunity (EEO) office documents complaints and conducts investigations regarding all internal incidents of discrimination and harassment alleged to occur in the department. Personnel who wish to file a complaint may do so informally or formally. Complaints filed with the department EEO office include those that may also be on file with federal, state, and county offices and cover all forms of harassment or discrimination including age, race, gender, national origin, pregnancy, sexual orientation, and religion (C. Trujillo, personal communication, January 11, 2002). The total number of formal and informal complaints and inquiries on record at the EEO office between 1995 and 2000 ranged between a low of 79 in 2000 and a high of 99 in 1995.¹² For reasons of confidentiality, the director of the EEO unit was not permitted to provide the authors of this study with precise numbers of complaints relating to sexual orientation during every year of this period. However, at the time of the interview, the director (who has since retired) was able to examine files available for 1999 and ascertain that only 1 of the 87 complaints, formal and informal, lodged that year related, at least in part, to issues concerning sexual orientation (C. Lienback, personal communication, May 31, 2001). According to her recollection, the extremely small percentage of complaints relating to sexual orientation in 1999 was typical of other years during her tenure in office. Most complaints received by the EEO office relate to sex or racial and ethnic discrimination. Relative to other categories, she characterized complaints relating to sexual orientation as "not significant at all" (C. Lienback, personal communication, May 31, 2001).

The Equal Employment Investigations Office of the city of San Diego also receives and documents complaints of public employees. Since 1996, the office has received 56 EEO complaints filed against the SDPD. According to the director of the office, none of these complaints related to sexual orientation (M. Watson, personal communication, June 26, 2001). Furthermore, in the 5 years prior to 1996 that she was on the job, the director could not identify a single case of alleged EEO violations relating to sexual orientation lodged against the SDPD. Alleged violations most commonly related to age, marital status, race, or gender.

As noted above, the SDPD EEO unit declined to release to the authors of this study the exact figures for sexual orientation complaints for any year except 1999. However, other senior departmental observers we interviewed confirmed that internal complaints regarding harassment, discrimination, or misconduct that relate to the sexual orientation of sworn personnel are extremely uncommon. To the degree that the command structure has been made aware of discrimination and harassment problems within the ranks, the vast majority of such complaints have focused on gender or racial issues, not sexual orientation. Every departmental observer with whom we spoke emphasized that complaints relating to sexual orientation are very unusual and far less frequent than allegations of gender discrimination or harassment.

Although it is probable that the actual numbers of EEO complaints relating to sexual orientation are extremely small, they are likely to seriously underestimate the actual occurrence of harassment or discrimination that may stem from sexual orientation issues. Most important, closeted personnel who fear being identified as gay are unlikely to come forward to complain about problems, especially because they are often not certain of the allegiances of peers and supervisors who may arbitrate the dispute. Second, the SDPD work culture, like that of most police departments, strongly emphasizes the informal and discrete resolution of personnel problems at the unit level whenever possible. Last, because the sanctions imposed from formal EEO violations are perceived to be so high, including the time involved in the investigation itself, all parties may feel keen to avoid the procedures (M. McCulloch, personal communication, June 18, 2001). As an internal affairs sergeant familiar with EEO issues for gays and lesbians observed,

If they are not out and have not discussed it with their supervisors, they don't want to bring it forth. So they more or less have to be subjected to whatever the person's doing to them because they don't want to draw attention. . . . And you bring this all out and discuss it with people, strangers. People such as EEO, the office. They are people that

you have never had contact with. And everyone in there who conducts investigations are city police sergeants. So you are talking with your peers, or a supervisor. So it's kind of a difficult situation. It's not like you are talking to somebody, who is what I would say "completely impartial." Because again you have that culture, what you say, that underlying maybe possible code of silence. (C. Kendrick, personal communication, May 30, 2001)

To better ascertain the extent of serious misconduct problems, we asked all interview participants to reflect on any knowledge they might have regarding alleged complaints of discrimination or harassment involving gay officers that may have occurred in the department. Respondents included additional senior departmental officials whose positions in the SDPD make them privy to internal complaints about harassment or misconduct including the director of internal affairs, who is responsible for personnel problems; the assistant to the chief of police; an internal affairs officer familiar with gay and lesbian issues; and the special assistant to the chief for gay and lesbian issues. We also spoke with the chief psychologist at a private social services agency that contracts out primary psychological care for SDPD personnel. Because current personnel at the department may feel formal or informal pressure to minimize disclosure of potential problems, we also secured interviews with five outside experts who have extensive familiarity with the department, including the former police chief of San Diego from 1994-1999, the director of the Human Rights Commission for the city of San Diego, a senior member of the city's Gay and Lesbian Task Force, and other external contacts. Finally, we also asked all of our gay and lesbian respondents to speak openly about any knowledge of violations that may have occurred in the past.

In extended interviews with gay and lesbian personnel and other senior observers in the department, mention was made of at least three separate cases in which serious alleged EEO misconduct occurred. The first case, which occurred several years ago, concerned a sergeant and lieutenant who were overheard dismissing the promotional possibilities of a gay cop, using offensive and inappropriate language (personal communication). The second case involved the circulation of falsified love letters seeking to embarrass an openly gay recruit. The third case referred to a gay officer who believed he had been denied promotions because of his sexual orientation. In the first two cases, the gay officers involved believed that the administration, through formal and informal channels of EEO, worked quickly and effectively to address the violations and discipline the responsible parties.

In the third case, as in other instances of alleged discrimination in promotion, there was insufficient proof of misconduct to make a finding.

According to gay officers and other respondents, serious instances of EEO violations such as those mentioned above are clearly the exceptions rather than the rule. All personnel and observers we interviewed remarked that serious unreported violations of departmental antiharassment and discrimination policies relating to gay or lesbian personnel are extremely rare, especially in the past several years. As the current president of the POA noted,

There are occasions when . . . and there certainly aren't very many, when someone may have done something inappropriate and they are dealt and they are disciplined and everyone sees it. They mean what they say [that] it's not going to be tolerated. I think that's part of it. For people who can't get past their prejudice they know that they've gotta put it away at their job. (B. Farrar, personal communication, May 29, 2001)

Problems in the work environment are usually much more subtle and rarely rise to the level of a formal violation. A reduction in behaviors that clearly violate policies may be due to a variety of factors, but most respondents believe that a clear, unambiguous mandate from senior leadership has significantly altered perceptions among the rank and file of what is considered appropriate conduct. Because the leadership and command structure has maintained a strong, consistent position regarding EEO policies and backed them up in practice, personnel who previously may have engaged in policy-violating behaviors are aware of the dangers of continuing to do so.

Whatever the reasons may be for the low incidence of serious violations of policy, over time most gay personnel who have self-disclosed have experienced very few serious acts of discrimination or harassment. Consistent with the comments of the EEO representatives, problems in the workplace rising to the level of a violation appear to be much more common for women officers than homosexuals as a class.¹³ As former police chief Sanders commented,

I know of detective units where there was a lesbian detective—these are tough units—and we've had zero problems. I know of the same units where we have had a straight woman and we have had tremendous problems. In terms of men—that is the problem with gay and lesbians—you do not know who is—you may know who is out but we've had problems from gender differences. The men in the unit did not treat them as neutrally as you wanted. We took complaints very seriously in all of these issues. (J. Sanders, personal communication, May 30, 2001)

The former police chief's views are consistent with the perspectives of the men and women interviewed for this study. For instance, reflecting on her own case as a lesbian and women officer, Sergeant Kendrick responded,

I don't think there's truly been any examples of anyone discriminating against me, more as a female, not as my [sexual] preference. They have been very, very supportive. I pretty much have gotten everything I asked for in department as for assignment. (personal communication, May 30, 2001)

Although serious violations of EEO policy regarding homosexual officers appear very uncommon, less specific and directed incidents of antigay behavior among colleagues and commanders still occur on occasion. Most currently serving gay and lesbian personnel have found themselves in at least a handful of situations that have made them uncomfortable or led them to consider making an EEO complaint. One gay officer, for example, reported an incident in which a sergeant who was actively spreading rumors that the officer might be gay began "riding him really hard" for no reason and writing him up regularly. After confronting the sergeant and informing him that the officer might contact the EEO office, the harassment stopped. In another context, Sergeant Dallezotte recounted another experience at headquarters:

But still I would ride the elevator, and, for instance this happened a couple of months ago: Some guy shook my hand, he grabbed a hold of it . . . held my hand for a good 5 seconds or so, and the elevator closed and a couple of people said, "You know, what it means if they hold your hand for more than 3 seconds." This is where I have to step up. I said, "I do not appreciate that kind of talk. It's time that you keep your own thoughts to yourself." (personal communication, May 30, 2001, and January 11, 2002)

Especially in less formal environments, gay and lesbian personnel often observe behaviors or comments that do not fully accord with current departmental policies. Nevertheless, usually such comments are made "off the record" in semiprivate settings and are not directed at particular individuals. As Sergeant Dallezotte observed, "People tend to keep it quiet and if they do talk like that, then it is usually one-on-one and it is away from everybody else" (personal communication, May 30, 2001, and January 11, 2002). Senior heterosexual commanders, community observers, and the current and former directors of the POA all have made similar observations.

CHANGES IN THE WORKING ENVIRONMENT

How has self-disclosure by gay police officers in San Diego affected the functioning and well-being of their broader work environments? For this study, we asked 6 gay and 3 lesbian officers who have served in active patrol environments; 5 heterosexual officers, their commanders, and representatives; and other contacts who have worked with homosexuals in field units about any issues, changes, or consequences that may have arisen as a result of self-disclosure in work environments. One of the study authors also accompanied an out gay officer for several hours as he interacted with colleagues at his division. Coupled with other indirect evidence provided by outside observers with contacts in the department, responses from departmental personnel converge on a number of themes.

Although the circumstances surrounding an individual's decision to self-disclose are always unique, the 9 out gay and lesbian officers with whom we spoke have described a similar range of initial reactions and consequences. With some recent exceptions, and consistent with the findings of Leinen (1993) and Burke (1994a, 1994b), gay and lesbian cops usually came out slowly and cautiously over time, choosing to self-disclose to particular colleagues when circumstances seemed appropriate. Prior to coming out for the first time, virtually all had concerns that a number of close colleagues would reject them or refuse to work with them or that they even would be fired. Yet in the vast majority of cases, work partners and colleagues responded in a supportive and affirming manner. Most said they were sometimes surprised at the level of support accorded to them on a one-to-one level, even among traditional and conservative peers. Perhaps the single most common observation made by out personnel was that close colleagues tended to focus on their qualities as a police officer, or "good cop," in their reactions. The experience of Officer Rick Edgil was typical. In recollecting the response of a very conservative and traditional colleague to other peers who were ridiculing his self-disclosure in 1990, Officer Edgil recalled,

They would say, "Can you believe it, John is queer," etc. And Larry turned to them and said, "I don't care what he is, he is a damn good cop and he has always been there when I called for cover." (personal communication, May 30-31, 2001)

In focusing on aspects of performance, integrity, and respect as a "good cop," heterosexual peers and commanders usually adapted quickly to knowledge of a colleague's homosexuality. The observations of gay officers were consistent with the perspectives of heterosexual colleagues and com-

manders we interviewed. For them, respect for a colleague's performance record as a hardworking, capable, and trustworthy fellow officer was far more important and influential than an admission of a particular sexual identity.¹⁴ Former police chief Jerry Sanders believed this factor was especially true for men coming out in the 1990s: "I think that the male officers had more trouble with gay men, but I really think that revolved around performance. Once performance was established then I think we saw a much different atmosphere" (personal communication, May 30, 2001). For both gay cops and their colleagues, in the work environment sexual identity takes a back seat to reputation and respect in the department. As a long-standing lesbian officer in the department observed,

In my unit here, I believe most of the people knew, many people I did not know and never ever worked around. So you know my method of operation is to come in really low key, just do my job, keep my reputation stellar. Let them get to know who I am, let them get to know me as a person, as a professional in their office, as an employee of the city. And I'm not just a representative of the department. I'm a representative of the city. And then get them to like me that way. If they don't like me then whatever, maybe they don't like me because of my work ethic. Then once I feel safe, I start to put my foot in the water, talking about what I do in the weekend, my personal life, and once in a while, I have brought my significant other in to pick me up . . . get to meet everyone in the office and they get to know her. (C. Kendrick, personal communication, May 30, 2001)

The process of selective disclosure and having a positive reputation to fall back on has allowed many gay and lesbian officers to guard against potentially hostile reactions and disruptive effects in their work environments. Historically, in work environments where equal opportunity protections were not defined or enforced and where widespread condemnation of open gay people was the norm, such a protective approach was crucial. But in recent years, in at least some units of the SDPD, traditional proscriptions against self-disclosure have begun to shift; arguably, a process of normalization of open participation by gay and lesbian officers is now under way.

Although self-disclosure remains a sensitive and delicate process for many gay and lesbian officers, in a number of ways the work issues surrounding such decisions have become much more routine. In several respects, the presence of self-disclosed gay and lesbian officers has become normalized. Perhaps most obviously, for larger proportions of the force over time, the discovery of a colleague's homosexuality is much less shocking or disruptive. Officer Edgil, for instance, recounted a recent experience:

It is kind of funny. Last year there was a week period where I took over a squad and ran it and we were doing something at the end of the shift where all the officers meet you and you sign your reports and approve everything and you double check it and something came up in conversation and I just kind of looked at one of these guys. "I do not want to make anybody feel uncomfortable here but you guys are all aware that I am gay, right?" And a couple of guys just stood there and looked at me like, "No, I did not know you were gay," and they had been at the division for like 6 to 8 months and I'm like, "I just kind of assumed that all you guys knew this." And the one kid looked at me and goes, "Well I don't really care, my brother's gay." And it . . . just became a non-issue. . . . It is not the big deal that it was. (personal communication, May 30-31, 2001).

For most personnel working in the SDPD, the controversy and concern over working with openly gay people has subsided as day-to-day interactions with gay colleagues become more commonplace. In many divisions, for straight and gay people alike, sexual orientation issues are relatively unimportant vis-à-vis the daily challenges of being a cop. Although isolated comments and misconduct may occur, the professional working environment and strong support for equal treatment from headquarters tend to diffuse their frequency and significance. As the current president of the POA remarked,

I think it is a common enough occurrence that there is no special uniqueness if someone shows up at your command. I am not saying that there is zero conversation about it. I suppose that one person might say to another . . . you know . . . there probably is still some joke or something that might be said from one to another but I don't think. . . . It's certainly nothing that is widespread. (B. Farrar, personal communication, May 29, 2001)

This "taken-for-grantedness" regarding work with gay and lesbian cops has also spread, albeit less evenly, to the rank and file. In at least some divisions, patrol officers have become accustomed to working alongside gay and lesbian colleagues. Some gay and lesbian personnel have even begun to attend departmental functions with their partners routinely.

Virtually all respondents believe that the increasing taken-for-grantedness of gay cops reflects in part the more tolerant values of new recruits coming into the department. Younger cohorts of recruits have brought with them more diverse views and greater comfort levels with gay issues than in years past, and EEO policies and training programs are allowing for more candid give-and-take as recruits wrestle with uncertainties over how to work with gay people (K. Marshall, personal communication, June 5, 2001). In the past several years, problems of understanding or discomfort relating to gay

colleagues have not disappeared, but they have become much easier to identify and resolve as younger cohorts enter the force. As former POA president Sergeant Collins observed,

It just seems to me that the department is at a point where there still are those people that are intolerant for whatever reason and it can be religion, or it can be just old school. But I would say that the majority of the younger officers that we are hiring are much more liberal than they ever were before, and all the training and the expense that the city and the department have gone through to sensitize people to all of those issues is paying off. (personal communication, May 30, 2001)

The director of internal affairs agreed:

I've taught professional ethics at the police academy for the recruits last 9 years. And I taught in the academy for 25 years. I saw a tremendous change in attitudes. When I came on in the department, people with an alternative lifestyle did not come out of the closet. Very secretive. Even best friends were not confided [in] . . . now it's second nature, it's accepted. (G. Gollehon, personal communication, May 30, 2001)

Within the SDPD, the process of normalization also appears to be improving the coping strategies and problem-solving techniques available to personnel when conflicts do still arise between gay and straight colleagues. For many out gay cops, normalization means that they can more openly engage conflicts or misapprehensions as they arise on a day-to-day basis. For "Pat," who self-disclosed during training to correct fellow recruits' misconceptions that there were no gay peers in their midst, humor, "ribbing," and other informal methods to address misconceptions among his peers played an important role in defusing potential difficulties in the SWAT unit where he works. Other gay cops we interviewed have been able to take advantage of a more tolerant and open environment to challenge stereotypes and defuse potential tensions.

The growing acceptance and support for gay personnel in the SDPD has removed some of the destructive sting from individual instances of inappropriate language or conduct and allowed gay personnel to depersonalize minor infractions. Most gay personnel have observed or overheard mildly offensive or inappropriate comments in the work environment on an occasional basis, but in the current climate these incidents often are seen as reflective of ignorance rather than personal attacks, situations that go into the "box of dumb remarks" for one respondent.

For gay cops and their colleagues, being able to normalize working in an environment with both straight and gay personnel may help contribute to a

higher level of comfort, solidarity, and trust within their working units. All observers we spoke with for this study situated the evolution of equal opportunity policies toward gays within a broader departmental effort to instill a new philosophy of honesty, tolerance, and good conduct among the rank and file. As departmental culture has evolved and gays have come out and spoken more openly about their lives, misunderstandings and levels of distrust between them and some of their colleagues have eased. As Commander McCulloch remarked,

The people that were gay or lesbian—it wasn't as open as it is now. But people knew. But I think it strained it just a little bit. But they still were professional enough to get the job done. I think that with the cultural shift . . . it is more accepted, it is a less stressful work environment. It is less likely to interfere. It was something that I had to watch when I directly supervised to make sure that everyone was being treated equally and the job was getting done . . . now, because it is more out in the open and is more accepted, it is less of a concern I would imagine, and I'm just speculating, I would imagine as a direct supervisor. And there [are] more people, too. It used to be fewer in number but it is now more in fact. (personal communication, June 18, 2001)

Although interpersonal misunderstandings, problems, and conflicts between personnel will always exist, potential problems between gay and straight officers are much easier to identify and handle when sexual orientation issues are brought out in the open and made “matter of fact” (C. Ball, personal communication, June 15, 2001).

Commanders and senior officers interviewed for this study have also identified secondary benefits to the work environment that may emerge from allowing gay recruits to self-disclose under uniform rules of appropriate conduct. Having gay officers come out allows them to more fully integrate themselves into the work culture and tends to reduce internal divisions:

When I go to line-ups, which I do frequently, where the officers go and the sergeants do the briefings. That's what gives me my perception that back 10, 15 years ago was one of concern or watching all the time, now it is more, it is less guarded because I do see improved communication between the two groups and I do see more acceptance and better . . . “We are all a part of the same team” atmosphere. (M. McCulloch, personal communication, June 18, 2001)

For gay officers, too, coming out often allows them to develop more honest and collegial relationships with peers with whom awkwardness or uncertainty previously prevailed:

Because, yeah, there was this awkwardness before: "Well gosh, should I ask Rick and do I acknowledge that he is gay by saying, do you want to bring someone special?" And I actually did [get] invitations like that. And I actually took that as a compliment, you know. But there is this awkwardness about that. They don't know what to say. I think there is a lot more trust when you are not being secretive. (R. Edgil, personal communication, May 30-31, 2001)

As the participation of gay cops in the day-to-day work life of their peers has become more commonplace, open or flagrant hostility to self-disclosure has all but disappeared. Nonetheless, elements of mistrust, discomfort, and resentment arising from the presence of out gay officers persist, both in familiar forms as well as in new ones. First, as noted earlier, colleagues uncomfortable with their gay peers did not usually engage in behaviors that violate EEO policies, but they still manifested a variety of more subtle behaviors that presented challenges to gay cops. Colleagues or commanders uncomfortable with the discovery of a gay officer in their ranks sometimes reflected their unease by becoming curt, withdrawn, and aloof, in essence, giving their gay colleagues "the cold shoulder." Pat, who came out during his training sequence, offered a prototypical example by describing a field training officer's (FTO's) behavior while riding in a car together for several days of 10-hour shifts:

This particular officer said absolutely zero ever to me that was ever not work-related, and was always very critical of my work. . . . There were never any comments, never anything unprofessional . . . never anything I could pinpoint. Other trainees I knew from my class had not had the same experience with him. . . . That was the only situation I had [relating to discrimination] with any of my six FTOs. (Pat, personal communication, June 5, 2001)

In the particular case noted by Pat, the cool reception he received from the FTO thawed over time; in later encounters, their relationship normalized. In this instance and in a number of others, initial unease among some colleagues lifted once a gay or lesbian officer became better known. But not all personnel were amenable to changing their views. Although the leadership of the SDPD has consistently embraced gay and lesbian officers as fully valued members of the force, not all personnel shared a moral acceptance of homosexuality. Despite education, familiarization, and exposure over the past several years, a number of personnel in the department still find the prospect of working with gays and lesbians uncomfortable or undesirable. Pat observed,

There are a lot of officers with whom I know there's a wall . . . kind of a buffer zone. They don't want to get closer than a certain amount and are not comfortable with me. And in some cases I know that if it weren't for the policy they'd be rude to me. But they know the policy . . . so they live with me. Not that many officers are like that. The bulk of cops see so much deviant illegal behavior in the field, then if all it is is the matter of who you're sleeping with, they don't care. (personal communication, June 5, 2001)

Captain McCulloch concurred,

I am sure there's still people within the organization that have core beliefs that are antigay or lesbian but I think culturally they know that they are in the minority and there is that pressure and also that they are going to be held accountable if they were to verbalize that at the workplace so they would not dare. (personal communication, June 18, 2001)

Gay personnel and their less comfortable straight colleagues have developed a variety of informal mechanisms to minimize awkwardness and discomfort. Perhaps the most simple method is avoidance whenever possible: Colleagues uncomfortable with one another work together as necessary, but otherwise they stay out of each other's way. This strategy is perhaps most apparent when colleagues of gay cops are highly religious. As Sergeant Kendrick described,

The only issues that I see here with me are people who are highly religious. They have a real issue with homosexuals in the department. And you kind of tend to stay away from them. There are some in my office, some around the same floor. You can feel it. They don't say anything. Because they know if they say something, it could affect them professionally. (personal communication, May 30, 2001)

Although there is evidence of such avoidance strategies occurring in the hallways of large divisions, it does not appear that efforts to avoid colleagues have led to widespread changes in work assignments. Present and former command staff members agree consistently that disruptions to working relationships resulting from the presence of a gay or lesbian cop are very infrequent. Having worked with and supervised a number of units with open lesbians and gay men, Lieutenant Christopher Ball stated,

At no time did anyone come to me and say that I cannot be effective working with this person because they are gay. At no time did anyone come to me and say that so and so doesn't have the nerve to come and tell you but I know that he/she is very uncomfortable working with this person because they are gay. At no time was I involved in ca-

sual conversation with a group of people that said, "you know that person is [expletive deleted] gay, I can't tolerate them or I can't work with them or I can't interact with them." (personal communication, June 15, 2001)

At the same time, however, Lieutenant Ball and others have noted that most departmental personnel enjoy relative discretion in decisions to change their post or job status; interpersonal conflicts may be uncommon because personnel with problems transfer elsewhere.

The challenge of negotiating working relationships between colleagues with different belief systems may be related to a second major indication of a still uneven and incomplete transition: decision making over promotions in the department. Interviews with rank and file as well as senior management reveal two seemingly contrary views. On one hand, several gay and straight observers offered evidence that some gay officers have experienced subtle forms of discrimination in their efforts to get promoted. On the other hand, representatives of the heterosexual rank and file and one gay cop suggested that many officers are resentful and suspicious of apparent efforts to increase minority representation in promotion decisions.

During interviews conducted for this study, several straight and gay respondents viewed the promotion of openly homosexual officers to higher ranks within the administration as possibly problematic, particularly for men. This situation was seen as especially true up through the early 1990s. Half of our gay respondents reported having been made aware of at least one occasion in which a homosexual officer may have been passed over for a promotion because of his sexuality. In one instance discussed above, when a sergeant and lieutenant were overheard dismissing the promotional prospects of a gay male officer, an EEO investigation promptly ensued and resulted in disciplinary action for both. In a second incident, internal affairs sergeant Kendrick recalled, "One male we have in the department had difficulties. He's very bitter that he hasn't been promoted, he hasn't moved on up and he hasn't had choice assignment because he came out too early" (personal communication, May 30, 2001).

During the course of this study, several other observers intimated that they were aware of additional cases of alleged job discrimination against gay men. Two higher level observers, one female and one male, surmised that senior management who were older, predominately male, and more conservative than younger recruits might have a difficult time working closely with openly gay males. Consistent with the more general pattern observed in this study, most respondents believed that lesbians face fewer informal barriers than gay men. As former POA president Sergeant Collins

remarked, "This is still a male profession and it is a macho-male profession. In most people's mind the gay men do not fit that mold." He went on to add that he suspects that in "any organization, possibly even this one, that gay men may have less of an opportunity to advance than gay women. I think that is pretty factual." Other heterosexual observers believe that informal barriers to promotions for gay men, for instance, in consideration for specialized units, were quite strong but have softened considerably in the past several years (M. McCulloch, personal communication, June 18, 2001).

Although several gay personnel and a representative of internal affairs observed that gay cops might sometimes face informal obstacles to rising through the ranks, several heterosexual officers and supervisors believed that some of the White rank and file resent possible preferential treatment to homosexuals as yet another "special class" in the department. Three respondents who have represented the rank and file in different capacities noted that a number of White male officers feel frustrated at what they see as an overcompensation on the part of the department to accommodate minorities and homosexuals. For instance, some straight officers resented the chief of police for marching in the gay pride and Martin Luther King Day parades but not in the St. Patrick's Day celebration (G. Collins, personal communication, May 30, 2001). Furthermore, at least some of the rank and file have been frustrated by the chief's efforts to recruit a number of straight peers to march in the SDPD contingent of San Diego's gay pride parade. A similar protest has been made against the department's apparent effort to promote larger numbers of minorities, women, and lesbians to high-profile positions, presumably at the expense of perhaps better qualified White males. According to one observer, these comments are typical of a widespread backlash against what some see as special privileges accorded to underrepresented groups in public employment (B. Wilson, personal communication, May 29, 2001). Most of this backlash, however, appears to be directed at non-Whites and women. As current POA director Bill Farrar observed, "You hear a lot of that in terms of job assignment or job promotions, but I do not recall anybody ever complaining that so-and-so got promoted or got a job because of their sexual preference" (personal communication, May 29, 2001).

Interestingly, in addressing issues of treatment and promotion in the SDPD, the gay and lesbian personnel we spoke with were unanimous in their strong commitment to a merit-based system for promotion. Three mentioned that fear of being perceived as wanting special treatment had led them to be less candid about their identity. In fact, one gay male officer

lodged the same complaints about problems with overzealous promotion of diversity as many straight respondents, but believed preferential treatment applied only to non-Whites, women, and lesbians.

ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE: EFFECTIVENESS, RESPONSIVENESS, COMMUNITY RELATIONS, RECRUITMENT, AND REPUTATION

What consequences, if any, has the increasing presence of self-identified gay and lesbian officers had for the various measures of performance and effectiveness of the department as a public law enforcement agency? Early arguments over gay and lesbian participation in police departments focused on whether gay and straight colleagues could work closely and effectively together under dangerous circumstances to protect public safety and whether gay officers would be deliberately abandoned or denied backup during hazardous operations. Nobody familiar with the history of the SDPD could identify any such complaints or incidents. All respondents contacted for this study unambiguously asserted that when close support was required and the safety of citizens or cops was at stake, personal differences were left aside. As a gay member of the SWAT team stated, "Basically, it's personal issues . . . aside when there's a cover, because you're covering the badge, you're not just covering the person" (Pat, personal communication, June 5, 2001).

Emphasizing that even colleagues who were less keen on working with a gay cop gave assistance, Lt. Schaufelberger noted,

If I get on the air and I need help everybody goes. If I get on the air and I am asking for help with a report or I get on the air and I am asking for somebody to come in and impound a car, maybe it is an issue. But the bottom line is if I get on and key my mike, people are going to be driving with their heads in the glove box and their hearts in their throats just coming to keep me alive and that is the truth of what it is that we do. So the bottom line, live or die they are going to be there. (M. Schaufelberger, personal communication, May 31, 2001)

An exception to this finding is that during the first several years of the AIDS crisis, when many officers were concerned with possible risks of exposure from colleagues who might have carried the virus, some observers noted a potential problem with backup support. But according to our respondents, a strong education campaign within the department quickly diffused fears (G. Collins, personal communication, May 30, 2001).

We asked all commanders, field officers, and senior personnel that we interviewed how the growing ranks of self-disclosed gays and lesbians have influenced the performance and effectiveness of the department more broadly in reducing crime and ensuring the safety and security of the city's citizens. None could identify any negative consequences, even when probed for hypothetical examples. When asked to compare the performance measures of analogous units, such as arrest and apprehension rates between units, in which one included self-identified gay or lesbian personnel and the other did not, commanders and former supervisors stated that there were no significant differences. For instance, Lieutenant Ball said that there were "no differences" between the performance levels of drug units with and without the participation of self-disclosed gay personnel.

Although all respondents believed that out gay cops did not contribute to noticeable differences in unit performance indicators, several argued that the increasing participation of gay cops on the beat has been linked with improvements in the quality of neighborhood policing around the city. As noted above, SDPD support and integration of larger numbers of self-disclosed gay and lesbian officers during the 1990s coincided with a broader effort to strengthen community policing. The community initiatives and commitment to diversity were in part a response to increasing crime and growing dissatisfaction with SDPD conduct and performance in several minority communities. As part of this effort, the department implemented a number of new programs such as new "storefront" satellite offices in neighborhoods to strengthen informal interactions between neighborhood citizens and officers assigned to their districts. At the same time, the department sought to draw on the cultural and social resources of its increasingly diverse workforce to better respond to the concerns of particular communities such as Latinos and gays. In the predominately gay Hillcrest neighborhood and in other minority communities, these efforts appeared to pay off: By the late 1990s, citizen satisfaction was up, incidents of alleged harassment and abuses were down, and violent crime had decreased substantially (G. N. Biagi, personal communication, 2001). According to many officers we interviewed, the support and integration of out gay cops has played a significant role in these larger improvements in community policing. As Pat observed, "You gain way more respect from the community that you're policing if you have members of the diverse community working as cops" (personal communication, June 5, 2001).

Although there is no way to ascertain whether the increasing participation of self-disclosed homosexuals as part of a broader community policing

and diversity effort is responsible for improvements in the effectiveness of the SDPD, indirect evidence supports the general argument that at the very least, the department's reputation and performance did not suffer as a result of increasing gay participation. For example, a 1994-1995 survey of minority attitudes toward the SDPD found largely favorable ratings among a range of minority constituencies as well as other improvements over the early 1990s (McKinnie, 1996). A more recent U.S. Department of Justice (1999) report on crime and community perceptions of safety in 12 major U.S. cities suggests that a number of measures improved during this time. From 1990 to 1997, homicide rates in San Diego dropped by 53.3%, superceded by only New York City in the extent of the reduction. The proportion of residents who were satisfied with the SDPD in 1998 stood at 93%, superceded in the survey only by Madison, Wisconsin, at 97%. That same year, more than half (57%) of San Diego residents polled said that the police department was practicing at least some community policing ($n = 1,131$) (United States Department of Justice, 1999).¹⁵

A last class of performance measures relevant to police departments focuses on how well they are respected and embraced by the wider communities they serve and depend on for their salaries and pool of potential recruits. Consistent with the findings reported throughout this study, all available evidence suggests that the SDPD has not suffered negative publicity or lower recruitment or retention rates as a result of its strong support of gay cops. In the years since the first public debate over departmental relationships with the Boy Scout Explorer Program in the early 1990s, the progay policies of the department have not attracted much local media coverage. The former editor of *The Gay and Lesbian Times*, George Biagi, who now works as council representative for city councilwoman Tony Atkins, has monitored publicity surrounding gay cops in the department throughout the past decade:

I have never in the 5 years that I have worked here had somebody call up and say, "I cannot believe this city is recruiting gay people for the police force." I've never had a single complaint, haven't read a single article in the newspaper. Even when I was the editor of *The Gay and Lesbian Times*, never heard anything negative about diversifying the police department. (personal communication, 2001)

Similarly, a Nexis/Lexis search of *The San Diego Union Tribune* and other major news sources collected for this study revealed that the only substantive articles discussing gay officers in the SDPD were upbeat stories

about the department's progress as a proactive organization supporting diversity, both internally and externally (e.g., Galgano, 1999).

Finally, available data and perspectives from internal and external observers suggest that the growing presence of out gay officers has not had any impact on aggregate recruitment and retention. As the total force size has grown slowly from just less than 2,000 to just more than 2,000 in the past 10 years, nobody we interviewed believed that recruitment or retention rates had suffered in any way as a result of the policy change. As former police chief Jerry Sanders (personal communication, 2001) stated, "No, we've never had a shortage of applicants. . . . And that was just never an issue. . . . In fact I had never heard that issue before." Similarly, neither he nor current commanders and supervisory personnel are aware of any instances in which an officer resigned from the police force as a result of having to work with gay officers.

SYNTHESIS AND CONCLUSION

This study began by asking a deceptively straightforward question: How have increasing numbers of self-disclosed gay and lesbian officers influenced the functioning, well-being, and performance of the SDPD in the past decade? We considered potential effects on harassment and discrimination rates, disruptions to the work environment, influences on morale and cohesiveness, and recruitment, retention, and reputation. All available evidence suggests that, in the cases of all these classes of indicators, the increasing participation of out gay and lesbian personnel has not led to any harmful consequences. Instead, a quiet but remarkable process of normalization has developed that has reduced much of the emotional and moral charge that the prospect of serving with gay colleagues generated originally. For many out cops in the SDPD and their colleagues, being gay or lesbian is starting to become a "nonissue."

But like answers to all deceptively straightforward questions, the findings of this study have led us to some more complex conclusions as well. Although the integration of self-disclosed gay cops into the SDPD has proceeded largely uneventfully, old dilemmas have remained and new problems have emerged. A strong EEO policy has reduced the frequency of blatant violations of basic rights, but some personnel continue to exercise more subtle forms of discrimination, and potential difficulties with promotion remain. Gay men working among the rank and file and those personnel who

do not already enjoy high levels of respect may face the greatest challenges. Consequently, many gay male officers still choose to remain closeted, as do some lesbians, perhaps to the detriment of their own mental health and the long-term well-being of their units. Furthermore, strong support for the rights of homosexuals sometimes stands in direct tension with the moral or religious views of other personnel. At the same time, among the ranks of the "old guard" are many who feel disenfranchised and resentful of what they see as the granting of special privileges to underrepresented groups.

Yet even while fully acknowledging these potentially uneven effects, the findings of this study suggest that broader shifts toward a more honest and diverse workforce resulting in part from the change in policy have enabled the SDPD to evolve into a higher performing department than it might otherwise have been. Despite the interpersonal difficulties that remain, the normalization of gay cops has been associated with higher levels of trust, cohesion, and effectiveness in working with diverse communities than were present in the early 1990s. Many observers believe that the department's broader commitment to support gay cops has helped the SDPD retain and strengthen its good standing with its own officers as well as the communities it serves.

APPENDIX

Personal Interviews

CURRENT AND FORMER POLICE DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS

- Brunton, Jolee, Ph.D. Chief psychologist, Focus Psychological Services (on contract to San Diego Police Department; June 5, 2001)
- Burgreen, Bob. Former chief of police, San Diego Police Department (June 12, 2001)
- Gollehon, Gary. Lieutenant, internal affairs/police, San Diego Police Department (May 30, 2001)
- Harrison, Barbara. Executive assistant to the chief of police, San Diego Police Department (May 29, 2001)
- Kendrick, Carolyn. Sergeant, internal affairs, San Diego Police Department (May 30, 2001)
- Lienback, Carol. Director (retired), equal employment opportunity unit, San Diego Police Department (May 31, 2001)
- Marshall, Karen. Regional policing initiative instructor and social worker (June 5, 2001)
- Sanders, Jerry. Former police chief of the city of San Diego; president/CEO, United Way of San Diego County (May 30, 2001)

Trujillo, Carol. Director, equal employment opportunity unit, San Diego Police Department (January 11, 2002)

CURRENT FIELD OFFICERS, COMMANDERS, AND REPRESENTATIVES

Ball, Christopher. Lieutenant and co-commander for vice, San Diego Police Department (June 15, 2001)

Collins, Garry. Sergeant; former president of the San Diego Police Officers Association, 1996-2000 (May 30, 2001)

Farrar, Bill. President, San Diego Police Officers Association (May 29, 2001)

"Linda." Officer, Level II, San Diego Police Department (May 30, 2001)

McCulloch, Mike. Captain, central division, San Diego Police Department (June 18, 2001)

SELF-IDENTIFIED GAY AND LESBIAN PERSONNEL

Dallezotte, Mark. Sergeant, domestic violence unit, San Diego Police Department (May 30, 2001 and January 11, 2002)

Edgil, Rick. Officer, western division, San Diego Police Department (May 30-31, 2001)

Graham, John. Officer, community relations. San Diego Police Department (June 3, 2001)

Kendrick, Carolyn. Sergeant, internal affairs unit, San Diego Police Department (May 30, 2001)

"Pat." Officer, SWAT, San Diego Police Department, (June 5, 2001)

"Phil." Officer, western division, San Diego Police Department (June 4, 2001)

Schaufelberger, Margy. Lieutenant, program director, Regional Community Policing Institute of San Diego (May 31, 2001)

Stone, Natalie. Sergeant, special assistant to the chief of police, San Diego Police Department (May 31, 2001)

Waclawek, Gerry. Police officer, central division, San Diego Police Department (May 29, 2001)

PUBLIC AND COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES

Biagi, George N. Council representative for councilmember Toni Atkins, District 3, city of San Diego (2001)

Fulkerson, Scott. Executive director, Citizens' Review Board on Police Practices, city of San Diego (2001)

Grobesson, Mitch. Former police officer, Los Angeles, CA (multiple dates, May and June 2001)

Rubin, David. Deputy district attorney, assistant chief of north county branch, San Diego (June 5, 2001)

Stewart, Chuck. Consultant to numerous California law enforcement agencies (multiple dates, May 2001)

Watson, Margaret. EEO commissioner for the city of San Diego (June 26, 2001)

Wilson, Bridgette. Task force (May 29, 2001)

NOTES

1. During the 1990s, several academic researchers published results of investigations of issues related to gay and lesbian officers in police departments, but such investigations focused on attitudinal or pedagogical topics and not on case studies of long-term departmental performance outcomes (e.g., Barlow & Barlow, 2000; Burke, 1994b; Doyle, 1995; Hiatt & Hargrave, 1994; Praat & Tuffin, 1996). For an earlier example, see Bayley (1974).

2. During the last two political terms, for example, the city council of San Diego has been evenly split between Democrats and Republicans. At the same time, a number of strong conservative voting blocks continue to dominate several suburbs, and San Diego has been widely seen as relatively "straight-laced" and conservative (G. N. Biagi, personal communication, 2001).

3. The metropolitan population of about 1.25 million that the force of approximately 2,100 sworn personnel serves is ranked the seventh largest in the United States. Recent population and force figures were provided by the San Diego Police Department (SDPD) and confirmed through city sources (also available through <http://www.sandiego.gov>).

4. For a discussion of how to minimize bias given these methodological obstacles, see King, Keohane, and Verba (1994).

5. One outside observer, a former Los Angeles police officer who had settled a lawsuit with the Los Angeles Police Department over charges of discrimination and harassment during the 1980s, was very concerned about the possibility of the SDPD "whitewashing" the study by directing investigators to particular interview participants (M. Grobeson, personal communication, May and June 2001). As a result of his concerns, the study authors made all possible attempts to solicit contact from as wide a range of external sources as possible through multiple channels.

6. Interview sources are listed in the appendix.

7. All of respondents in this study who worked at the SDPD during the 1970s and early 1980s as well as community observers described a work culture of widespread mistrust and ridicule of homosexuality. One respondent, for instance, recalled the high proportion of jay-walking citations issued to pedestrians in the gay area of Hillcrest in the early 1980s—what she termed the "great gay crime." (B. Wilson, personal communication, May 29, 2001). Antigay sentiments were part of a broader culture that had difficulties with women and other underrepresented groups as well (C. Kendrick, personal communication, May 30, 2001; B. Harrison, personal communication, May 29, 2001).

8. A local university alumni newsletter covering homosexual rights issues in 1990 quoted Police Chief Bob Burgreen as saying in 1988,

I personally know that there are Gay and Lesbian people in the San Diego Police Department now, and they are doing an effective job in being police officers. . . . I think it's how a person handles their sexual preference, how a person handles their sexuality, that's important, rather than what that is. (Center for Social Services, 1991)

9. The addition of the ordinance to the San Diego Municipal Code on April 16th, 1990, (52.9601) reads,

Discrimination based on sexual orientation deprives the City of the fullest utilization of its resources and capacity for development and advancement. Such discrimination poses a substantial threat to the health, safety, and welfare of the community. Existing state and federal restraints on arbitrary discrimination are inadequate to meet the particular problems of this City. It is hereby declared as the public policy of The City of San Diego that it is necessary to protect and safeguard the right and opportunity of all persons to be free from discrimination based on sexual orientation. Notwithstanding the intent of this ordinance to protect all citizens from arbitrary discrimination, nothing in this ordinance shall be construed as endorsing, encouraging, or approving a particular life style, nor is it the intent of this ordinance to give special privileges or rights to any person based on sexual orientation.

10. The figure of 35 "out" personnel is a conservative estimate provided by knowledgeable internal sources in the department and corroborated in interviews conducted for this study. The actual number is likely to be higher. A knowledgeable internal source estimates that about 6 of the self-identified gay officers are men and that the rest are women.

11. The Diversity Commitment Team's mission statement declares, "The San Diego Police Department's Diversity Commitment is dedicated to uniting and strengthening our organization by supporting an environment where differences are valued" (internal affairs document obtained by study authors). The department's general vision and mission statement identifies eight principal values: human life, crime fighting, loyalty, fairness, ethics, valuing people, open communication, and diversity. In defining "valuing people," "open communication," and "diversity," the statement reads,

We will treat each other with dignity and respect, protecting the rights and well-being of individuals. . . . We will listen to one another's opinions and concerns. . . . We appreciate one another's differences and recognize that our unique skills, knowledge, abilities and backgrounds bring strength and caring to our organization. (document provided by internal affairs personnel to study authors)

12. Total SDPD EEO complaint statistics (formal and informal) for 1995-2000 were as follows: 1995: 99 complaints; 1996: 83 complaints; 1997: 90 complaints; 1998: 90 complaints; 1999: 87 complaints; 2000: 79 complaints. The data were provided to the study authors by Sergeant Natalie Stone of the SDPD.

13. Of course, some women are members of both groups.

14. This phenomenon characterizes many other workplace situations in which gays and lesbians work side by side with heterosexuals. See, for example, Belkin and Levitt (2001).

15. The range in the survey was 42% (Knoxville, TN) to 67% (Chicago, IL). See United States Department of Justice (1999, p. v).

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