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Policemoms: Perceptions of Motherhood and Policy in Ohio Police Organizations

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Walden University
2016

Abstract

Policemoms: Perceptions of Motherhood and Policy in Ohio Police Organizations

by

Lacy Kristine Ellis

MSCJ, Tiffin University, 2007

BCJ, Tiffin University, 2006

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Public Policy and Administration

Walden University

August 2016

Abstract

Police organizations have a problem retaining female police officers, especially those who are mothers. Women leave the policing profession at higher rates during childbearing and child-rearing years than during any other time in their career. Using feminist theory as a foundation, the purpose of this phenomenological study was to gain a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of policewomen who are mothers and identify factors that contribute to poor retention rates during childbearing and child-rearing years. Data were collected through 11 interviews with policewomen, who were also mothers, in Ohio. These data were analyzed using Saldana's 2-cycle coding procedure followed by thematic analysis. The findings included a set of patterns that provided insight into the reasons why female police officers are more difficult to retain. These patterns included: (a) challenges related to a double standard associated with women being primary caregivers, (b) psycho-social changes after children including hypervigilance on the job, (c) fear of reassignment or termination, and (d) the perception that departmental policy fails to address the unique needs of female officers. Together, the findings suggest that police departments today have yet to fully understand the challenges that policewomen who are mothers face on a daily basis. The implications for social change include reformed policies and practices that could contribute to the advancement and professionalization of the policing profession as a whole by changing the traditionally masculine organizational culture and promoting a more gender-neutral environment, thus allowing communities to benefit from having a more diverse police force.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to all law enforcement officers. Your dedication and sacrifice do not go unnoticed. Thank you for all that you do. Stay safe!

Acknowledgments

There are so many people that have encouraged and supported me throughout this journey but no one more than my loving and supportive husband, Chuck. I would not have had the courage to pursue my Ph.D. if it were not for you and most likely would not have had the ability to complete it without your support. You have always been there for me, and these past few years have been anything but easy for our family, but we made it through. Thank you for always being my rock. I love you and appreciate you more than you know.

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To my colleagues and close friends, you are amazing. You were able to provide what was needed most when it was needed most. Whether it was empathy, tough love, support, comic relief, a shoulder to lean on, and sometimes even a much-needed distraction, you were always there! I'll never find better colleagues and friends.

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I cannot say enough about the 11 brave women who participated in this study. They volunteered their time and were open and honest about their experiences, some of which were very personal. I have made a few new friends through this journey and I hope that you all find our finished product to be a success. I cannot thank each of you enough. And for what it's worth, in my opinion, you are all doing an amazing job being a "policemom." Stay safe!

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Background

Police organizations have been built around a paramilitary organizational

structure, and generally deploy in units, seek training and weaponry from military

personnel, and adopt a ranking structure similar to that of the armed forces (Hill & Beger,

2009). This paramilitary structure is one reason why the nature of police work is closely

aligned with socially accepted ideas of masculinity, such as crime fighting, physical

strength, bravery, and aggression, among others (Kim & Merlo, 2010). Starting in the

late 1800s, women began to make their way into the profession, although their role was

not the same as men (Archbold & Schulz, 2012; Roth, 2011). Women were generally

recognized as having more nurturing and compassionate skill sets compared to most men,

which meant that women were an asset in dealing with certain issues, especially those

involving troubled youth or female inmates (Kingshott, 2012; Rabe-Hemp, 2009). The

fact that women's roles focused on dealing with society's ills, versus crime fighting, kept

them from reaching the ranks of patrol and put them into positions that were viewed as

less important, such as jail matrons or social workers.

During the past century, women have increasingly gained more respect and

responsibility within the profession by proving that they are equally as capable as men of

performing policing duties (Archbold & Schulz, 2012; Bochantin & Cowan, 2008;

Schulze, 2011). As they began to integrate themselves into all aspects of police work, the

number of women increased from only a few in the late 1800s to almost 15% of the

federal police force in 2008 (Langton, 2010). During this period of growth, women

demonstrated that not only can they perform traditional policing duties equal to those of men, but because women generally have more refined communication skills and abilities, they also are great assets when it comes to some of the more modern approaches to policing, such as community policing.

The steady growth of women into the policing profession has been viewed by some as progress; however, considering the amount of time this small increase in representation has taken and the much higher percentage of women in other professions, 15% is still relatively low (Yu, 2014). The greatest period of growth for women was between 1960 and 1990, which was when various legislative acts such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Pregnancy Discrimination Act of 1978, and the Family Medical Leave Act of 1993 were implemented. These acts protected women from being discriminated against and supported them as they pursued careers outside of the home. However, since the passage of these laws, the increase in the number of women entering the police profession has slowly started to stagnate or even reverse in some cases. Researchers such as Cordner and Cordner (2011); Kurtz (2012); Lee (2005); Lonsway (2007); Rabe-Hemp (2011a); Schuck (2014); and Shelly, Morabito, and Tobin-Gurley (2011) noticed this stagnation and began to question why this decrease has occurred, suggesting that failing legislation, increased barriers for women, additional obstacles for women, and the policing culture may be to blame.

Childbearing and child-rearing are two barriers that may significantly contribute to women's poor retention in the police profession—barriers that do not exist or are not as equally challenging for men. Researchers have noted that retention of female police

officers is the lowest during childbearing and child-rearing years (Charlesworth & Robertson, 2012; Kingshott, 2012). Upon further examination of this phenomenon, pregnancy has been specifically mentioned by female officers as posing a significant challenge to their ability to maintain "business as usual" or in some cases their ability to continue their career at all (Bochantin & Cowan, 2010b). A lack of support from police departments, gender-biased policies, and the police culture have all been cited as contributing to this retention issue (Bochantin & Cowan, 2008; Corsianos, 2011; Lonsway, 2007). If women are fortunate enough to make it through their pregnancy without negative setbacks in their careers as police officers, the struggle is far from over due to the additional challenges that also come with rearing young children. Cowan and Bochantin (2009); Gultekin, Leichtman, and Garrison (2010); and Schulze (2011) all have recognized the nature of police work as being very demanding and often requiring officers to work nontraditional shifts and long hours. This schedule is unwieldy and not very accommodating to police officers who have to arrange child care and attend family/school functions. These challenges are exacerbated for police officers who have rotating shifts, work nights, or are mandated to work overtime, when child care is not often readily available or available at such short notice. These unique work demands can pose challenges for male officers as well; however, research has shown that women bear the heaviest burden when it comes to child care and managing the household (Hall, Dollard, Tuckey, Winefield, & Thompson, 2010; Kurtz, 2012, Natarajan, 2014; Roebuck, Smith, & Haddaoui, 2013). This leaves female officers with greater responsibilities at home compared to their male counterparts, who generally will have a spouse who

assumes these responsibilities. The demands of police work, in addition to the responsibilities of having a family, are difficult to balance, especially because these demands are often competing for the same resources and time (Hall et al., 2010). Current legislation, departmental policies, and the police culture have been insufficient in supporting these women through a natural phase of their lives while still supporting their right to remain employed as police officers (Bochantin & Cowan, 2008; Corsianos, 2011; Lonsway, 2007).

Police work has been recognized as a challenging career to maintain for most women, versus men, due to many of the additional responsibilities that women generally bear at home. In addition, most women are faced with maneuvering less than supportive organizational cultures and gender biased policies that add to these challenges. This dissertation is a qualitative phenomenological study that focuses on female police officers' perceptions of motherhood and policy and how these two factors may impact their ability to have a successful career in the policing profession.

Problem Statement

Police organizations, in general, have a problem retaining female police officers, especially those who are mothers. Women have been leaving the policing profession at higher rates during childbearing and child-rearing years, generally from the ages of 21 to 35, than during any other time in their career (Charlesworth & Robertson, 2012; Kingshott, 2012). Despite legislation such as Affirmative Action, Equal Opportunity Employment, the Family Medical Leave Act, and the Pregnancy Discrimination Act, feminist theorists would agree that barriers still exist due to the variety of ways that

departments have interpreted and implemented this legislation within this unique organizational culture. Though there has been a slow increase in the representation of women over the past few decades, multiple studies have shown that the steady increase of women entering law enforcement has begun to stagnate or even reverse (Archbold & Schulz, 2012; Lonsway, 2007; Prenzler, Fleming, & King, 2010).

This problem has negatively impacted female police officers and affected their abilities to pursue successful careers in policing. There is a social problem of gender equity that needs to be addressed and a gap in the literature regarding the reasons why pregnancy and motherhood have been significant barriers to the continuation of employment of women in the policing profession. A possible cause of this problem is that current legislation is not sufficient. This allows gender-biased policies and struggles to be accepted and the masculine culture to persist, with pregnancy and motherhood being a significant contributing factor. This phenomenological, qualitative study investigated the reasons why female police officers have felt forced to leave the policing profession during motherhood years. Examining the struggles, perceived or real, that they have faced during pregnancy and motherhood could potentially offer remedies to the situation by improving efforts and revising departmental policies designed to retain women in the policing profession.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this phenomenological qualitative study was to gain a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of policewomen who were mothers to determine what contributes to poor retention rates during childbearing and child-rearing years.

Specifically, perceptions of pregnancy, motherhood, organizational culture, and departmental policies, including pregnancy policies, the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), the Pregnancy Discrimination Act (PDA), and even statewide mandates, such as firearm requalification requirements were examined through a feminist lens.

Research has shown that women face additional barriers compared to those of men in the policing profession, stemming mostly from the masculine police culture, the questioning of their competence and abilities, sexual harassment, and double standards (Bochantin & Cowan, 2008; Shelley, Morabito, & Tobin-Gurley, 2011); however, an investigation as to why retention is worse during childbearing and child-rearing ages had yet to be determined. The data collection process included in-depth interviews with policewomen who are mothers in northern Ohio in an effort to fully understand the challenges and struggles that might be contributing to this phenomenon.

Research Questions

This research was guided by the following central question: How do women in policing perceive departmental policy and culture as they relate to motherhood?

The following sub-question was developed to support the primary question: From a feminist perspective, what challenges/obstacles stand in the way of gender equality or gender-neutral practices in policing?

Theoretical Framework

Feminist theory, heavily influenced by Simone de Beauvoir and her notion of a philosophy of lived experience, was used as the theoretical framework for this study to examine and analyze gender inequality (Beauvoir, 1953/1989; Marshall, 2006). Simone

de Beauvoir is one of the most well-known modern feminist theorists and the author of the seminal book, *The Second Sex*. The feminist perspective assumes that being female is, and will be, significant in most interactions that women will have throughout their lives, especially related to women's roles in relationships, societal processes, responsibilities, and expectations (Patton, 2002). Feminist theorists and philosophers, such as Hendricks (1992) and Nagel (1974), have offered guidance about the ways in which policies, regulations, and laws should govern women. Instead of treating women "like men," as they have been in masculine organizations, women should be treated as individuals by their own definition. According to Bem (1994), a postmodern feminist,

> The problem for women is not simply that they are different from men, whether biologically or in some other way. The problem is that they are different from men in a social world that disguises what are really just male standards or norms as gender-neutral principles. (pp. B1-B2)

The feminist approach allowed the researcher to let go of these socially accepted standards and norms and question all patterns, behaviors, interpersonal dynamics, resources, and positions of power by exploring them organically and from a vantage point that may not otherwise be seen (Stivers, 2002).

Beauvoir (1953/1989) acknowledges that women are raised and groomed from infancy to believe that they are made for childbearing. This study specifically acknowledged that motherhood is an experience about which only women can provide a true "inside perspective;" the participants of this study explained and reported on their experiences, emotions, and thoughts on how they were impacted in the policing

profession (Patton, 2002). Research has indicated that motherhood increases and intensifies the struggles that female officers face, especially regarding matters of policy and expectations in the policing profession (Cowan & Bochantin, 2009). Beauvoir (1953/1989) and Stivers (2002) acknowledge that though progress has been made by way of legislation, women are still shouldering the majority of household duties, including the care of children. Because of this unequal burden, women can hardly reconcile the best interest of her children and a demanding occupation. Society has made no effort to provide the care, education, and protection of children outside of the home, leaving this responsibility up to the woman, based on societies expectations. These contradictory expectations of society will cause women to lose in one way or another (Beauvoir, 1953/1989).

This study explored what it was like to be a mother and a police officer and sought to understand this phenomenon as closely as possible based on the lived experiences of women police officers. The experience of occupying these two roles—police officer and mother—could be uniquely captured by better understanding the perspective of members of the specific population (Van Leeuwen, 2012). Examining the interview responses and research literature through a feminist theoretical perspective helped identify biases and obstacles that have led to poor retention of female police officers during their childbearing and child-rearing years. This perspective made it possible to identify aspects of overt/covert discrimination, issues of inequality, and instances of sexism/bias that had yet to be examined or addressed. Following Wu's (2013) advice for feminist scholars not only to gain new knowledge but also, and perhaps

more importantly, to apply this new knowledge to encourage change, I plan to use this study as a driving force for promoting change and seeking a more gender neutral environment in police organizations. Considering Beauvoir's (1953/1989) argument that gainful employment is what has traversed most of the distance between equality of men and women to date, focusing on issues of inequality in employment will continue to narrow the gap between the sexes and liberate women of some of these gender stereotypes that still harm them and perpetuate this unequal burden.

Nature of the Study

The nature of this study was qualitative, and utilized a phenomenological methodology to examine the shared experience of being a mother and a police officer from the perspective of those who have lived this experience on a daily basis. This study contributed to feminist theory by using these lived experiences to drive the interests of women with a focus of changing or improving their situation and seeking equality within the policing profession. The main focus of phenomenology is to understand how humans view or perceive (whether these perceptions are accurate or not) their lived experiences (Willis, 2007). A qualitative approach facilitates an in-depth examination of issues; it further encourages openness in participant responses and allows the researcher to collect varying perspectives and experiences, which is what this study elicited from police officers who were mothers (Patton, 2002). Moustakas (1994) states that "everyday understandings, judgments, and knowings about an experience should be set aside to allow the phenomenon to be revisited freshly, naively, and in a wide open sense" (p. 33). In this study, what it generally means to be a woman, a mother, and a police officer will

be set aside, allowing me to focus on the participants' experiences as they have lived them.

Individual, face-to-face interviews were conducted with female police officers who had children to gain first-person reports of their lived reality. Convenience snowball sampling was used initially by first contacting a number of police administrators at various police departments by phone or email that I had personal and professional relationships with in Ohio, such as Wooster Police Department, Wayne County Sheriff's Office, Akron Police Department, Newburgh Heights Police Department, Smithville Police Department, Mansfield Police Department, Kent Police Department, Canton Police Department, Massillon Police Department, Medina County Sheriff's Office, Stark County Sheriff's Office, New Albany Police Department, and Tiffin Police Department. I initially asked these police administrators if they could provide a list of officers in their department who met the inclusion criteria for this study. The individuals who met the inclusion criterion were contacted and asked to participate in the study. If they agreed, the interviews were conducted in a neutral and private setting of their choice, such as a public library or church. Semi-structured, open-ended interview questions were used to elicit subjective and objective experiences and perceptions from the participants that specifically focused on motherhood, their career, and organizational policy. The interviews were audio recorded to assure accuracy of responses for transcribing. I also took written notes and analytic memos during the interviews. Participants were provided with a one to two page summary of key findings from their interview. They were asked to review this summary to ensure contextual accuracy and authenticity of what was

conveyed during the interviews as part of the member checking process. NVivo software was used to help organize and analyze responses. The analysis process was conducted in two coding cycles. The first cycle included coding the raw data by relevant descriptive and holistic information. Eventually, the second cycle of coding included reviewing the first cycle codes and organizing them into patterns to gain insights and glean meaning from this experience. Stivers (2002) commonly approached studies through a feminist lens to be able to identify and reveal gender-biased practices. Approaching this study through a feminist lens revealed that departmental policies, state regulations, and personal expectations are, in fact, gendered instead of gender neutral. These potentially gendered policies may be compounding the challenges for police officers who are mothers.

Definitions

For the purposes of this study, the following definitions apply:

Certification: A certificate is awarded after successful completion of The Ohio Basic Peace Officer Training Academy (Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine, n.d.). .

Commissioned Officer: Any police officer who has successfully completed the state training that is required by the Ohio Peace Officer Training Commission, which is the Ohio Basic Peace Officer Training Academy (Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine, n.d.).

Culture: Values, beliefs, and assumptions held by organizational members that are developed through socialization and belonging to various groups in a workplace (Denison, 1996).

Gender: The cultural, social, or attitudinal qualities that are typically associated with a particular sex. For example, aggression is associated more commonly as masculine and compassion is more commonly associated with femininity (Greenberg, 2006).

Maternal Body: A woman's body before, during, or after pregnancy and/or the birth of a child that includes characteristics commonly associated with pregnancy and new maternity, such as fatigue, and the potential of the maternal body to change shape and produce fluids (Gatrell, 2013).

Maternal Leakage: The natural physiological processes that occurs before, during, or after pregnancy and/or the birth of a child, including vomiting, tears (caused by unpredictable hormones), bleeding, amniotic fluids/breaking waters, and production of breast milk (Gatrell, 2013).

Motherhood: Socially constructed values that are associated with having children or being a mother (Guerrina, 2001). This may include biological children, adopted children, and at times stepchildren.

Retention: The ability of an organization to keep good employees long term to maintain a competitive advantage and recoup their investment (Cardy & Lengnick-Hall, 2011).

Tokenism: The practice of an organization to adhere to minimal standards mandated by policy or law, or a poor attempt to demonstrate an effort toward compliance and/or equal opportunities--for example, hiring only one female officer in a police

department, attempting to appear fair, when in reality they are only maintaining the status quo (Danaher & Branscombe, 2010).

Work/Life Balance: The attempt or need for equilibrium across multiple spheres of life, which may include work and family, and which requires balancing between the demands of work and family responsibilities (Roebuck et al., 2013; Tajlili, 2014).

Assumptions

Assumptions are preconceived ideas that can potentially influence the results of a study and should be directly addressed. Wertz, Nosek, McNiesh, and Marlow (2011) suggest that two basic assumptions of phenomenology as a research method are: humans are social and are self-interpreting beings. Moustakas (1994) understood that reporting on lived experiences could be subjective and that perceptions did not always accurately describe what was present in consciousness. In this study, I assumed that all participants had their own interpretations and perceptions of their experiences as policewomen. I also assumed that all participants were open, honest, and to the best of their ability provided accurate information when responding to the interview questions about their lived experiences as police officers and mothers. I also assumed that common patterns would emerge through thick, rich descriptions with this particular number of participants to provide adequate understanding of the lived experiences of these women. If common patterns did not emerge, further sampling would have been warranted. Finally, it was assumed that I would be able to set aside preconceived ideas that I may have had about being a policewoman and a mother. Phenomenological interpretation requires a relationship between the interpreter and the interpreted; however, it was important that

the phenomenon of interest was examined from the participant's perspective and not the researchers (Merriam, 1997; Wertz et al., 2011).

Scope and Delimitations

This qualitative, phenomenological study was limited to interviewing commissioned police officers who were mothers and who were employed with various police departments in northern Ohio. I sought to interview 10 to 15 participants with the hope of collecting detailed, thick, rich descriptions of their lived experiences related to being a mother and a police officer. The geographic scope of the study was delimited to northern Ohio for convenience (travel, expenses) and the researcher's familiarity and ease of access to Ohio police departments due to professional and personal connections. The number of police departments contacted depended on the number of participants who were found at each department. Once I reached 10 - 15 participants, I stopped making contact with new departments. The transferability of this study to police departments in other states would be determined by the similarity between the two contexts being compared. The specific state's laws and policies, the specific departments' internal policies, culture, size, location, and demographic, and the individual officer's personal experiences all impacted the transferability of these findings.

Limitations

One limitation of this study was that influences other than motherhood and policy might be impacting some of these women's abilities to maintain successful policing careers. However, it would have been very costly and time consuming to be able to

control for all of the other variables such as age, race, education, marital status, etc. Therefore, this was considered a potential weakness of my study.

Another limitation was the comfort level of participants in terms of their willingness to be forthright in expressing honest and open feelings and information. Participants might feel that being open and honest about these topics would only further marginalize them within their departments. Recognizing this, I took steps to ensure confidentiality and privacy through the use of pseudonyms for all interviewee responses and the use of private interview locations. It was my hope that being able to empathize and truly understand their experiences first hand as a member of the target population would help me build a strong rapport with these participants and add to their comfort level.

Lastly, and potentially the most influential limitation, was my own personal bias. I am a commissioned police officer who is also a mother. Having experience as a police officer and observing and reflecting on my experiences in this role potentially allowed me to build a stronger rapport with these participants and understand and empathize with their experiences, which could have been considered a strength of this study; however, this experience and my own personal interest in this topic could have potentially influenced the results of my study if not carefully monitored. To address this limitation, member checking was used to ensure the authenticity and accuracy of all final reporting. Other methods of addressing limitations included, saturation (or rich data) that was detailed and clear enough to provide a full understanding of the phenomenon was collected which would not be as likely to produce a mistaken conclusion or entertain any

potential bias, along with using external auditors, such as my dissertation committee who was used to review the project and provide an objective assessment. Finally, through my research I became more aware of this potential bias and acknowledged the manner in which it could have negatively impacted my study. I used caution and monitored my own work as well.

Significance

This study will hopefully contribute to more equitable and just policies and practices in the law enforcement profession. Bochantin and Cowan (2010b); Kingshott (2012); and Shelley et al. (2011), among others, have suggested that the biggest failure in retaining female police officers revolves around the issues of pregnancy and motherhood. Specific organizational policies, such as the Family Medical Leave Act or the Americans with Disabilities Act, do not fully cover the needs of pregnant officers or new mothers. In addition, the lack of organizational policies such as having no light-duty policies, significantly limit a woman's opportunity to continue to work while pregnant. The findings of this study are consistent with the research noted above, which provides evidence and justification for changes to current policies to reflect balance and equity between both male and female officers. Policy reform could potentially contribute to the advancement and professionalization of the policing profession as a whole by changing the traditionally masculine organizational culture and promoting gender-neutral practices and policies. These progressive policies and practices could serve as much needed support for women and contribute to their fight for equal rights and against gender discrimination, especially during childbearing and child-rearing ages.

If these policies could remove obstacles, potentially more women could be recruited and retained in the policing profession. Implications for social change include strengthening and modernizing the policing profession by recruiting and retaining more female police officers, who have been found to benefit the profession due to their increased and refined communication, problem-solving, and de-escalation skills. In addition, female police officers contribute to community policing efforts and have natural abilities to be transformational leaders (Cowan & Bochantin, 2009; Silvestri, Tong, & Brown, 2013). On an even larger scale, gender-neutral policies and practices could be expanded in professions nationwide to promote true equality.

Summary

Women have made great strides in being accepted, increasing their representation, and proving to be valuable assets in the law enforcement profession over the past hundred years. Despite this progress, it is concerning that the representation of women in the profession is now starting to stagnate or even decline. Charlesworth and Robertson (2012) and Kingshott (2012) have found that women in their childbearing and child-rearing years have the lowest retention of all. There is a gap in the literature concerning this phenomenon and has rarely been examined.

This study sought to understand how female officers perceived their dual role as mother and police officer and what challenges came with this dual role. Fully understanding this experience might assist police departments in better supporting women in being retained and continuing to pursue a successful law enforcement

career. This study could potentially increase awareness and have implications for social change in professions outside of policing as well.

Chapter 2 provides a comprehensive overview of the problem from the onset of women entering the policing profession to the present day. First, the history of women in law enforcement is examined including how women's roles have transitioned over time and how women have been recognized as being assets in the profession. Second, the impact of legislation over the past four decades is discussed and how it has supported the growth of women in the profession, in addition to where legislation may be falling short. Finally, challenges that still face women in the profession, including pregnancy, rearing young children, and the police culture are examined in detail.

Chapter 3 discusses the methodology for this study, which includes the rationale for selecting a qualitative study and the role of the researcher. The methodological approach, including participant selection and setting, instrumentation, data collection and data analysis are outlined in detail. Finally, issues of trustworthiness and how they were minimized and ethical considerations are examined.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The literature review was systematically conducted to provide a comprehensive overview of how motherhood is perceived in law enforcement, from its inception when the policing profession was born to the present day. The search process also involved seeking information that evaluated and recommended solutions for overcoming barriers and challenges that may arise due to being a mother and a police officer. Archbold and Schulz (2012), Bochantin and Cowan (2008), and Kingshott (2012) all identified the problem of women leaving the policing profession in high numbers during childbearing and child-rearing years. The purpose of this study was to gain greater insight into why this phenomenon was occurring and what could be done to address this problem. In order to fully comprehend the situation, an understanding of the history of policing, how and why women have been found to be assets in the field, and the legislation and policies that have been implemented to this point to correct these inequities is necessary. The summary of the literature is divided into five sections. The first three sections review the history of policing, women as assets in policing, and current legislation and policy. The fourth section specifically addresses the problem statement by discussing challenges and obstacles that remain for women in policing, including pregnancy, child-rearing, and the masculine police culture. Lastly, the fifth section discusses progressive policies, recommendations, and social change implications that could potentially reform the policing profession or society as a whole.

Literature Search Strategy

The literature review was conducted using the Walden University library, the Tiffin University library and the CLEVNET Library Cooperation, which is a consortium of 43 library systems across 12 counties in northeast Ohio, and Google's search engine. The databases searched included Academic Search Complete, Thoreau, Google Scholar, ProQuest Criminal Justice, SocINDEX with Full Text, Political Science Complete, ProQuest Central, SAGE Premier, PsycARTICLES, PsycINFO, Criminal Justice Periodicals, and Dissertations and Theses. Specific journals that provided a number of relevant articles included *The Journal of Women, Politics, and Policy; The International Journal of Police Science and Management; Police Practice & Research; Policing and Society; Criminal Justice Studies; Police Quarterly; Feminist Criminology; Women and Criminal Justice; Advancing Women in Leadership;* and *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies and Management.* The keywords that were used included: *law enforcement, police, officer/s, female/s, women, mother/s, motherhood, pregnant, pregnancy, gender, discrimination, equity, inequality, work/family balance, work/family conflict, Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Equal Opportunity Employment (EOE), Pregnancy Discrimination Act (PDA), Title VII, feminist theory,* and *feminist framework.* Iterations of these keywords were used separately, in their singular and plural forms, and in combinations, which led to more than 1,000 articles. In addition to the articles that were found through these specific searches, I also reviewed the references of each relevant article to identify additional articles of interest that did not surface in the search process. Lastly, research by a number

of specific authors was found repeatedly. I personally contacted three of these authors: Dr. Corina Schulze with the University of South Alabama, Dr. Jaime Bochantin with the University of North Carolina, Charlotte, and Dr. Renee Cowan with the University of Texas at San Antonio. Two of the three authors responded sending additional research they had conducted on this topic.

Literature Review

The History of Women in Law Enforcement

Women began to appear in the policing profession before the 1900s (Archbold & Schulz, 2012; Roth, 2011) and their role has evolved significantly during the past century. Originally, when women were introduced into the field, their role was defined very differently from that of men. Specifically, based on the premise that women embody inherently different characteristics that have been traditionally considered feminine, such as communication, empathy, and compassion, they were to use these qualities to address society's ills (Kingshott, 2012; Rabe-Hemp, 2009). This included being responsible for juveniles, for women's issues, and eventually becoming matrons in jails, performing duties of care responsibilities for those in custody. During this era, women did not have arrest capabilities and wore different uniforms or street clothes (Archbold & Schulz, 2012; Yu, 2014). Their responsibilities were loosely defined as police work but more accurately fell into the category of social service work.

Although there has been, and still is, much debate over the identity of the first official policewoman, it is known that the roles and responsibilities of women in policing remained largely outside of the traditional policing tasks. Only after World War II did

women refuse to accept these secondary policing roles and began to demand changes and insisted on full integration and equality (Archbold & Schulz, 2012; Lee, 2005). By the 1960s, new laws surrounding equal employment, in combination with women challenging social inequalities, provided more opportunities for them to become part of the mainstream police culture. Specifically, the introduction of Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act provided new opportunities for women. It was expanded to include public agencies and prohibited police departments from discriminating against women in hiring, recruiting, promoting, and maintaining working conditions (Archbold & Schulz, 2012; Kingshott, 2012). This act was only the beginning of legislation and reform that would assist women in making a career out of law enforcement.

Women's representation in the field of police work has increased significantly since the 1960s, at times nearly tripling during a single (Cordner & Cordner, 2011). However, women have remained a small segment of the overall police population compared to their representation in the national workforce, which is close to 50% (Yu, 2014). According to Langton (2010), sworn officers who were women increased only slightly during the 1990s and 2000s across all levels of law enforcement. By 2007 and 2008, studies suggested that there were a combined 100,000 female sworn officers between federal, state, and local agencies. Federal and state agencies have routinely reported higher numbers of female representation, fluctuating around 15%, compared to local agencies, which have tended to be much lower, even in the lower single digits. Langton's (2010) survey conducted of federal reporting agencies during a 10-year period indicated that the percent of officers who are "women increased slightly from 14% in

1998 to 15.2% in 2008," indicating that the growth rate has not been substantial but rather holding steady at best (p. 2). A more recent study by Cordner and Cordner (2011) suggested that the hiring of women by police agencies has hit a plateau. Tracking a trend in large police agencies, these researchers found that women represented 14.4% of sworn positions in 1999, 13% in 2000, and 12.7% in 2001. This stagnation, or gradual decline, in population has been corroborated by other researchers, such as Lee (2005); Lonsway (2007); Schuck (2014); and Shelly, Morabito, and Tobin-Gurley (2011) who have reported similar findings. This downward trend may suggest that equal opportunity and affirmative action reform of the 1960s through the 1990s, that once sparked an increase in the female officer population for more than four decades, is no longer effective.

Women as Assets

Women have been the silent minority in the policing profession; however, their benefit to the profession has not gone unnoticed by researchers. Although negative attitudes and perceptions about the abilities of women still exist within the traditional police culture, they have been unfounded. Studies such as those of Archbold and Schulz (2012), Bochantin and Cowan (2008), and Schulze (2011) have revealed no significant differences in their abilities to conduct police work and have confirmed that women are equally as competent as their male counterparts. Even more noteworthy is recent research that has suggested women may be better at some specific police tasks (Bochantin & Cowan, 2008; Grant, 2000; Horne, 2006; Shelley et al., 2011). For example, women have been found to be exceedingly valuable in regard to: (a) having fewer lawsuits filed against them (Archbold & Schulz, 2012), (b) possessing stronger

communication and de-escalation skills, (c) being more compassionate by nature, (d) being charged with fewer crimes (both on duty and off), (e) having a stronger ethical fiber, and (f) contributing in meaningful ways to community policing efforts (Denham, 2008; Irving, 2009; Silvestri et al., 2013).

Communication, de-escalation, and compassion. Police activities are broad and can range from crime fighting and physical arrests to building positive relationships with the community. Many police functions involve activities that are considered "feminine," yet these types of activities have remained largely unrecognized or undervalued by police organizations due to the masculine police culture (Corsianos, 2011). There is considerable evidence indicating that women are good problem solvers, have better communication skills, and are able to de-escalate potentially dangerous and violent situations. For example, women have been found to use verbal communication along with a wider variety of skills to calm tense situations. They also tend to be less aggressive and confrontational in their interactions than their male counterparts (Archbold & Schulz, 2012; Bochantin & Cowan, 2008; Rabe-Hemp, 2011b; Shelley et al., 2011; Silvestri et al., 2013).

In a study by Seklecki and Paynich (2007), women reported that they were far more capable in their ability to apply reason and interpersonal skills to hostile situations. These abilities have provided the necessary tools for female officers to stay within the appropriate levels of force, which has resulted in fewer excessive-force complaints and fewer incidents of deadly force among female officers (Bochantin & Cowan, 2008; Denham, 2008). Overall, female officers have demonstrated specific traits that are

associated with "good policing" as defined by the public and the communities they serve (Corsianos, 2011).

When women first entered the policing profession, their role was limited to duties that were traditionally considered "feminine," such as social work or working with juveniles. It was recognized that the ability to be compassionate and to have mothering characteristics was an asset when dealing with specific populations and the public. Women have been found to demonstrate greater empathy for victims of violence, specifically women and children who have been victims of domestic violence and sexual abuse or assault (Corsianos, 2011; Silvestri et al., 2013). These skills may have been developed and refined throughout women's lives by conforming to social gender roles or having experience with their own children at home. Cowan and Bochantin (2009) surveyed female police officers and reported that many of these officers considered their "mothering skills" to be their best and most valued asset while on the job. Specifically, these authors reported that "attributes such as empathy, listening, staying calm, being able to relate to children, and relating to mothers were all skills these women and their departments valued about them" (Cowan & Bochantin, 2009, p. 27). However, if these attributes were used outside of managing these specific populations at work, the departments did not value them but instead viewed them as counterproductive (Cowan & Bochantin, 2009).

Community policing efforts. The emphasis on community policing by departments and the demand for community policing by citizens and communities during the past few decades may reshape the role of police officers over time. "Soft" policing

activities, such as working collaboratively with citizens to solve problems, expressing empathy for victims, and being an effective communicator, were once considered to be peripheral activities. However, over time, these activities have become more accepted and may even be viewed as necessary to accomplish police work within police organizations in the wake of community policing reforms (McCarthy, 2012; Morash, & Haarr, 2012; Natarajan, 2014; Novak, Brown, & Frank, 2011). Male officers have generally viewed these community policing functions as secondary and less important than their traditional crime-fighting responsibilities; however, women have been drawn to some of these activities due to their different skill sets (Corsianos, 2011; McCarthy, 2012). As mentioned earlier, female officers' less aggressive and less confrontational policing style, their ability to act as role models, and their ability to communicate effectively with the public can foster the cooperation and trust needed to implement an effective community policing model (Denham, 2008; Irving, 2009; Silvestri et al., 2013). Shelley et al. (2011) found that the public generally perceives female officers positively because they are viewed as more approachable, especially considering that male officers have repeatedly reported that they prefer traditional crime fighting activities to soft policing activities.

Increased community policing efforts over time could transition the traditional model of policing from "crime fighting" to placing a greater emphasis on collaboration and partnerships with citizens, which would align closely with many of the traits that women are believed to bring to the profession (Archbold & Schulz, 2012; Novak et al., 2011; Rabe-Hemp, 2009). This transition could increase recruitment and retention of

women in police organizations and more closely align with their skill sets. More

openings and opportunities in these areas could provide avenues for women, potentially

legitimizing the female gender into the profession as being more socially acceptable

(McCarthy, 2012; Morash & Haarr, 2012; Rabe-Hemp, 2009). It would naturally create a

greater demand for women in the profession and over time may help strike a better

balance with regard to the representation of women and provide more opportunities for

them.

Lawsuits, crime, and ethics. One gauge of public perception and approval for

police departments comes from the publicity and reputation that can be built or damaged

by police officers' actions. As discussed earlier, women have a different approach to

many of their responsibilities and duties as officers. The differences between male and

female approaches in working with the public may explain why male officers have been

more frequently named in complaints filed by citizens than female officers. According to

the National Center for Women & Policing (2002), employing female police officers also

had a financial benefit because they generally cost departments less in terms of excessive

force lawsuits and civil liability payouts (as cited in Cowan & Bochantin,

2009). Considering recent events, such as the cases of Michael Brown in Ferguson,

Missouri; Walter Scott in North Charleston, South Carolina; Tamir Rice in Cleveland,

Ohio; Alton Sterling in Baton Rouge, Louisiana; and Philando Castile in St. Paul

Minnesota; police use of force and decision making has been questioned more than ever

before. Whether these incidents were appropriately handled by the officers or not,

damage has been done to the reputation of the policing profession, and ethical practices have been questioned.

Officers who have some type of formalized education have been found to be beneficial to departments and communities. Aamodt (2004) reported many benefits to hiring officers with higher levels of education. Some of these benefits included performing better in the academy, receiving higher job performance evaluations, having fewer disciplinary problems and use of force incidents, and finally, better overall attendance at work. Specifically, when it comes to use of force and lawsuits, officers' levels of education have been examined in relationship to their performance. The most recent research in this area has indicated that college-educated officers were more than 40% less likely to use force than their less educated counterparts (McElvain & Kposowa, 2008; Rydberg & Terrill, 2010). Female officers, in general, have tended to be more highly educated than male officers of equal rank. For example, Lonsway (2007) conducted a study of the Indianapolis Police Department and found that "49.3% of women compared to 30.2% of men had a bachelor's degree prior to being hired. Over four times as many women as men had earned a master's degree prior to their employment" (p. 20). These findings are consistent with many other similar studies (e.g., Lee, 2005; Lonsway, 2007). Despite the known benefits and a history of advocating for educating the American police force, only approximately 1% of departments in the United States require a four-year degree, 2% require a two-year degree, and 6% require some college to be hired (Paoline & Terrill, 2007; Rydberg & Terrill, 2010). These low percentages may be a result of the counter arguments to the educational debate, which

declares that in-service training is equally effective, if not more effective, than education

in addition to the resistance or hostility against educated officers by non-educated senior

officers (Paoline & Terrill, 2007). The expansion of community policing efforts has

increased the responsibilities of patrol officers, which requires them to be better decision

makers, more tolerant, and better communicators in order to be effective on the job. This

makes higher levels of education more attractive because these officers will already have

these refined skills (Rydberg & Terrill, 2010). Without being required, women have been

bringing these credentials into the profession at a much higher rate than males. Higher

rates of education coupled with women's natural communication skills and abilities make

female officers less of a liability to departments.

Studies have shown that female officers adopt a higher ethical code of conduct

over their male counterparts (Silvestri et al., 2013). The public, both on duty and off

duty, are constantly watching police officers and their actions impact the department and

profession overall. Lonsway (2007) found that 70.2% of the men surveyed had been

investigated by internal affairs compared to 47.8% of the female officers. Stinson, Todak,

and Dodge (2013) conducted a study comparing male and female officers' involvement

in criminal activity. Though women and men both participated in criminal activity, the

types of crime and circumstances were very different. Their findings revealed that the

type of criminal activity that policemen were likely to be arrested for was more serious

than that of their female counterparts. Policemen were arrested more for sex-related or

violence related crime, whereas policewomen were more likely to engage in profit-

motivated crime. Policewomen were also less likely to receive criminal complaints from

citizens compared to their male counterparts. Though any criminal activity by police officers is negative, Stinson et al. (2013) and Archbold and Schulz (2012) offer an explanation for female police crime in that it may be motivated by financial securities, lack of promotional opportunities, and barriers that are still affecting women over men and this criminal activity is a result of these women attempting to advance and get ahead, which may be fruitful until the criminal activity is discovered.

Legislation and Its Impact

Various legislative acts, such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Pregnancy Discrimination Act of 1978, and the Family Medical Leave Act of 1993 have been credited for the growth of women's representation in the policing profession. Prior to any civil rights legislation, there were fewer than a dozen women assigned to patrol; however, between the decades of 1960 and 2008, this number has been estimated to have grown to more than 100,000 (Langton, 2010; Rabe-Hemp, 2009). The first notable legislative act was the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibited employment discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin (Wolkinson & Wolkinson, 2010). This was the first of many that began providing protections to women against discrimination. However, women quickly discovered that protections based on sex did not include protections for all natural/biological life processes that they may encounter, including pregnancy.

In 1972, amendments were made to the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Women not only were protected against discrimination, but they were now permitted to perform the same duties as their male counterparts (Lee, 2005). The uncertainty over pregnancy was

also addressed when the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) issued guidelines requiring employers to treat pregnancy as any other illness or disability (Wolkinson & Wolkinson, 2010). However, the Supreme Court ruled in General Electric v. Gilbert that Title VII did not prohibit discrimination on the basis of pregnancy, which left women who wanted to have a family at a disadvantage and made them targets of discrimination once again. It was not until 1978 that Title VII was amended by the passage of the Pregnancy Discrimination Act (PDA), which provided more protections to women, including protection from being discriminated against for pregnancy. The PDA guaranteed eligible employees two rights: "1). the right to not be treated adversely because of pregnancy; and 2). the right to be treated the same as other employees with respect to all aspects of employment, including benefits such as leave and insurance" (Grossman & Thomas, 2009, p. 24). The purpose of this amendment was to guarantee that women had equal rights when it came to participation in the workforce and the fundamental right to pursue a family life, if they wished (Wolkinson & Wolkinson, 2010). This amendment became known as the Gilbert Amendment.

Although women could not be discriminated against any longer based on pregnancy, there were still uncertainties that existed about how to handle pregnant women on the job when job tasks became too difficult or dangerous to perform, especially during the later stages of pregnancy. The 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) provided protection against discrimination of individuals with disabilities. The act also required that reasonable accommodations be provided for disabled individuals that allowed them to continue to perform their job duties, if needed. However, this was

little help to pregnant women on the job because although the ADA itself provided three different definitions of "disability," federal regulations further defined disability under the ADA, and pregnancy was specifically cited as an example of a condition that would not be considered a "disability" but rather a disorder (Rabe-Hemp, 2011a; Wolkinson & Wolkinson, 2010). Therefore, pregnant women were still required to work overtime and engage in job duties that were oftentimes too difficult or dangerous, which left them no other option but to take unpaid leave for the remainder of their pregnancy.

In 1993, the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) was enacted, which was intended to balance the demands of the workplace with the needs of families by entitling employees to take reasonable leave for medical reasons. This act was gender neutral and provided benefits to employees regardless of their gender. The most significant impact of the FMLA was benefits granted to women for pregnancy-related medical issues and the birth of a child. The provisions of the FMLA entitled an eligible employee to a total of 12 unpaid weeks of leave during any 12-month period. Employees also could substitute their unpaid leave for paid leave if they chose to use accrued leave (Wolkinson & Wolkinson, 2010). The Family Medical Leave Act provided enough flexibility and leave time so that women had more options regarding work decisions during the later stages of pregnancy and also the option of staying home for a period of time after the birth of a child.

The increase in the number of women in the national workforce since the 1960s suggested that this legislation, in addition to the social movement that questioned traditional values of work and family, have provided opportunities and removed some barriers for women (Archbold & Schulz, 2012; Schulze, 2011). However, the low

representation of women in masculine professions, such as policing, in addition to the recent decline in these numbers during the past decade, have caused researchers such as Archbold and Schulz (2012), Bochantin and Cowan (2010b), Kurtz (2012), and Rabe-Hemp (2011a) to question whether women still could be facing discrimination and criticism to some degree despite the effectiveness of these laws in the past. According to Bochantin and Cowan (2010a), the EEOC reported that from 1992 to 2006, pregnancy discrimination complaints jumped 39% while the nation's birthrate dropped 9% during the same time frame. These figures suggest that current legislation may already have reached its full potential in today's society and that in order to progress toward full equality and participation in the workforce, more needs to be done.

Challenges Facing Policewomen

The policing profession has been recognized as one of the most stressful professions in American society. This constant stress has contributed to a number of problems for law enforcement professionals, including high divorce rates, heart disease, drug and alcohol abuse, and even higher suicide rates compared to that of other professions (Hall et al, 2010; Kurtz, 2012). In addition to the given challenges and stressors associated with the policing profession, female officers may face additional barriers that compound an already stressful career. According to Kurtz (2012), the most noteworthy difference between stress levels of male officers and female officers is primarily related to family situations and responsibilities. The more complex a woman's family obligations, including prenatal care, marital status, and number of children, the more stress she will likely experience. Hall et al. (2010) found that police officers

attempted to balance competing domains of their work lives and their home lives. They also noted that by attempting to achieve this balance, they quickly deplete their emotional and physical resources, often leaving them exhausted, burnt out, and in many cases unable to maintain success across both domains. Women, specifically, tend to experience even greater conflict due to the fact that their share of responsibilities in the family/home domain is generally much larger than their male counterparts (Hall et al., 2010; Kurtz, 2012, Natarajan, 2014; Roebuck et al., 2013).

Pregnancy. "Being pregnant, in some professions, can signal the end of the woman's career" (Bochantin & Cowan, 2010a, p. 320) or as Beauvoir (1953/1989) stated, "for some women childbirth is martyrdom" (p. 506). There are many challenges associated with pregnancy and the ability to maintain "business as usual," especially in male-dominated professions. Environmental conditions, certain physical movements, and specific job conditions, such as shift work, irregular hours, and psychological stress, can be hazardous to both mother and the fetus (Grossman & Thomas, 2009). One participant in a study by Bochantin and Cowan (2010b) said it best:

> There are a lot of choices that go hand in hand with being a female cop. One really important decision to make is whether or not to have children. It is my opinion that the cons usually outweigh the pros of having a kid in this line of work. (p. 247)

This officer highlighted the fact that women even struggle with the decision of whether to become a mother. This struggle has been widely apparent based on the number of female officers who have chosen to have children from 2007 to 2010, which has dropped 9%

(Bochantin & Cowan, 2010a). Haussengger (2005) explained that women who choose motherhood understand that they will be forced to balance motherhood and work on their own with very little or no support. This balancing act is an expectation placed on women, "because as many will remind us, "It is your choice" [to have children]" (pp. 5-6). However, women who decide not to have children may not have the opportunity to change their mind later due to decreasing fertility rates as they age.

   Uniforms and equipment. Many of the challenges that exist surrounding pregnancy are related to a lack of support and understanding as well as organizational barriers that are in place. For example, Bochantin and Cowan (2008) and Lonsway (2007) interviewed policewomen who expressed a dislike for their uniforms. In general, police uniforms are made to fit men's bodies, often making them awkward and uncomfortable for female frames. In addition, heavy-duty belts and bulletproof vests can be painful and uncomfortable (Corsianos, 2011). These discomforts are even more exacerbated for the ever-expanding bodies of pregnant women. After almost a century of women participating in the policing profession, most departments still do not have maternity uniforms or equipment that can support a woman through the stages of pregnancy and allow her to continue to stay on the job (Bochantin & Cowan, 2010b; Corsianos, 2011; Cowan & Bochantin, 2009). This lack of action has been perceived by women as a lack of support by their departments and some have even reported that they believe pregnancy or being the parent of toddlers or young children is used as an excuse or an attempt to hinder them or push them out of the profession (Bochantin & Cowan, 2010b; Cowan & Bochantin, 2009; Kurtz, 2012).

Internal and external policies and mandates. In addition to the lack of support

surrounding uniforms and equipment, departmental policies, such as firearm

requalification, are difficult to uphold while pregnant. Despite variations in state

regulations and the policies of each specific department, all police officers are required to

pass a firearm requalification at a shooting range to keep their certification active. For

example, in Ohio, the Ohio Administrative Code §109: 2-13-2 (2014) mandates that all

certified police officers must successfully complete a firearms requalification every

calendar year in order to be authorized to carry a firearm. This is a minimum standard set

forth by the state; however, firearms requalification instructors are encouraged to make

these requirements more rigorous, resulting in some departments requalifying police

officers as frequently as every three months. Many female officers have refused to

participate in firearms requalification due to the potential harm that it could cause to their

unborn fetus resulting from extremely loud noises and exposure to lead (Corsianos, 2011;

Kingshott, 2012). Thus, these women's firearms certification will expire, which only

compounds their challenge to remain on duty or return to duty after their child is born.

Due to the unique nature of police work, long hours and overtime are common

requirements of the job. The ADA does not recognize pregnancy as a disability, and

courts have supported the ADA's stance by not requiring employers to accommodate

pregnant women's requests to avoid working overtime (Wolkinson & Wolkinson, 2010).

Consequently, pregnant officers who have not been able to work long hours, work extra

hours, fit into their uniform, or maintain their firearms certification have been forced to

take unpaid leave. In many instances, women have used up their FMLA leave, which has

resulted in a loss of income, less time with the baby after birth, less time for recovery, and in some cases a negative impact on worker morale (Wolkinson & Wolkinson, 2010).

Light-duty policies have been recommended to bridge the gap for pregnant officers between (a) meeting the obligations of regular duty and (b) being forced to take unpaid leave. In Lonsway's (2007) study, women rated a light-duty assignment due to pregnancy as the most coveted policy that could be offered by their department. According to Grossman and Thomas (2009), light-duty policies can provide temporary work assignments for pregnant officers to accommodate their limitations during pregnancy; however, light-duty policies are still rarely found in police departments. Schulze (2010) conducted a study reviewing the leave policies of 203 police departments and found that "6.9% had their own policy in place that provided some type of light duty assignment and 5.9% designated unpaid, or paid leave in excess of FMLA as well as some type of light duty assignment," which left the remaining departments with policies that defaulted to federal mandates (p. 181). Schulze (2010), Schulze (2011), and Wolkinson and Wolkinson (2010) found that women view federal mandates that support women, such as the FMLA, as the bare minimum, recommending that improvements such as longer leave periods or paid leave be required. Unfortunately, Rabe-Hemp (2011a) discovered that even in departments that do have light-duty policies, many have applied them arbitrarily and unsystematically. This lack of consistency leaves women with few options. Some are forced to stop working, sacrificing wages and other benefits until they return to work; others who absolutely need their wages to survive have ignored medical advice and continued to perform all job duties as long as they are

physically able (Grossman & Thomas, 2009). In addition, a few female officers have

mentioned that these policies have cast them in a negative light. Light duty often has been

viewed as "weak police work" (Bochantin & Cowan, 2010b, p. 255). Bochantin and

Cowan (2010b) and Dick (2010) suggest that officers assigned to light duty are perceived

as lacking commitment and credibility. This perception goes against the tough,

masculine reputation that many policewomen have worked very hard to build in order to

gain acceptance into the policing culture. Gultekin et al. (2010) conducted a study of the

Turkish National Police and found that female constables in Turkey had similar

experiences to that of American policewomen. These authors further reported that

female constables indicated that they were being penalized because they were pregnant,

yet their male counterparts had taken similar leaves of absence while being deployed for

the military and still received promotions and other benefits while away. This differing

treatment reflected a double standard and a clear example of inequality that women felt

needed to be addressed.

　　　Loss of income. An absence of light-duty policies and/or being forced to take

FMLA leave can cause financial and emotional hardships for many families, resulting in

women choosing to hide their pregnancies for as long as possible. Gatrell (2013)

interviewed policewomen who worked through severe morning sickness, hid the pain of

medical procedures, and even placed themselves in physically dangerous altercations to

avoid disclosing that they were pregnant out of fear that they would be further

marginalized. Some departmental policies in police organizations have granted the

department ultimate authority to determine when pregnant officers may be transferred to

light duty or granted a leave, taking all rights and decision-making authority away from women officers (Bochantin & Cowan, 2010a). Decisions such as these have led to an unprecedented increase in pregnancy discrimination lawsuits during the past several years: "A recent EEOC report shows a 40% increase in charges related to pregnancy from 1997 to 2007, on top of a 10% increase between 1992 and 1996" (Rabe-Hemp, 2011a, p. 138). These statistics support the notion that supervisors are often unfamiliar with affirmative action legislation, that they do not know what to do with female officers who become pregnant, and how and when to apply policies according to the law (Bochantin & Cowan, 2010b; Cowan & Bochantin, 2009). Having departments make these decisions for women has not proven to be effective. In essence, many policewomen feel as if they are being punished for becoming pregnant by being sent home without wages due to (a) the absence of an appropriate policy or (b) a lack of clear understanding and implementation of policy by their departments. This unfair treatment has led to additional stress for these women and, in many cases, dangerous situations for officers who have decided to hide their pregnancy.

Rearing young children. Aside from the challenges associated with pregnancy, rearing young children also has been regularly mentioned by policewomen as posing significant barriers to retention and successful employment in the policing field. These barriers, although different from pregnancy-related issues, are equally as harmful to their careers and family life.

Responsibilities at home. Gender roles during the past few decades have weakened when it comes to household responsibilities and increased involvement from

men at home. However, studies have indicated that women, whether working or not, still

engage in the majority of household labor (Kurtz, 2012, Natarajan, 2014; Roebuck et al.,

2013). Hochschild's seminal *Second Shift* (1989) documented the struggles of women

attempting to find a balance between work and family and supported findings that women

generally shoulder the majority of household responsibilities, despite this slow shift of

gender roles (as cited in Schulze, 2011). This statement alludes to the fact that female

officers might be experiencing this "double burden" or "second shift" due to their

responsibilities at home, which may include household cooking and cleaning, managing

finances, arranging child care, organizing family schedules including sporting events,

school functions, and spousal responsibilities (Agocs, Langan & Sanders, 2015; Kurtz,

2012).

According to Schulze (2011), wives of male police officers accept more familial

responsibilities than husbands of policewomen. This difference adds to the burden that

policewomen face, setting them apart from their male counterparts at work. In a study

conducted by Natarajan (2014), both men and women agreed that women still maintain

responsibility for the majority of household duties in addition to the responsibility of

managing their careers. Both male and female participants in the study mentioned that

household responsibilities can be a constant distraction for women while on the job,

whereas male officers may not be as distracted because their wives take care of the

household duties and family matters while they are away. Even more noteworthy is the

distribution of labor in households in which two police officers are married. Though the

woman in the marriage is equally employed, even down to the rank, department, shift,

etc., to that of her husband, she still bears the majority of household labor, despite all other variables being equal (Agocs et al., 2015). Kurtz (2012) studied the influences of gender and family on police stress. He found that the more familial tasks that female officers were responsible for, including caring for children, being married, or caring for parents, the higher the levels of stress they experienced. This phenomenon did not hold true for male officers. Wolfinger, Mason, and Goulden (2008) echoed Kurtz's findings and stated that marriage and family formation were impediments to the advancement of careers for women but not for the careers of men. This double duty for women has lead to emotional exhaustion and burnout on both fronts--home and work.

Child care. According to Cowan and Bochantin (2009); Gultekin et al. (2010); and Schulze (2011) police work is unique in that it requires shiftwork and working non-traditional hours, such as 12-hour shifts. This expectation can exacerbate child care issues for women, especially those who are assigned to the night shift or non-traditional shifts that do not coincide with the hours of operation for child care facilities or with school schedules. In addition to the regularly scheduled workday, officers also have responsibilities during their off-duty time, such as testifying in court, completing update training, and working unexpected overtime, which are responsibilities that are not easily predictable and do not allow for adequate child care planning (Agocs et al., 2015). Depending on the assignment, some officers, such as detectives or narcotics agents, may be on call 24 hours a day, which poses significant challenges to family planning.

The constant challenge to ensure care for their children despite their unyielding schedule has left many women choosing to opt out of taking promotions or progressing in their careers because they view the personal cost as being too high (Roebuck et al., 2013). Much research has been conducted regarding women and the "brass ceiling" effect. This effect has been described as women in law enforcement not having as many promotional or leadership opportunities as their male counterparts. However, researchers have found that in many cases, women intentionally turned down promotional opportunities in order to be able to stay on a more regular shift due to child care conflicts that arise when taking on new positions. In some cases, these women have decided to leave the profession altogether for a more family-friendly career (Bochantin & Cowan, 2010a; Cowan & Bochantin, 2009; Roebuck et al., 2013). According to Hewlett and Luce (2005), an opt-out revolution has been the result of organizations maintaining inflexible policies and structures that do not support women in balancing family and career. This conscientious decision is often a self-preservation strategy and/or a family preservation strategy that is used until children are old enough to attend school or able to care for themselves. Unfortunately, having a child is enough to paralyze a woman's life as it once was. She can only continue working if she abandons the child to others for care and strikes a delicate balance between professional interests and her family. This balance comes with a heavy price of concessions, sacrifices, acrobatics, which require a constant state of tension and one that many women do not want to endure (Beauvoir, 1953/1989). Others, such as Bringsrud, Fekjær, and Halrynjo (2012), have found that although women have similar career aspirations and motivations as their male counterparts early in their

careers, their lower promotional rates can be explained by experiences that they have after joining the force, including discrimination, social isolation, "tokenism," and work/family conflict.

    Breastfeeding. Returning to work after childbirth not only means balancing work-life responsibilities and home-life responsibilities, but at times it means balancing the two simultaneously. If a mother chooses to breastfeed her child, this task will interfere with her work schedule to some degree. Sources vary on their recommendations; however, according to Eidelman, Schanler, Johnston, Landers, Noble, Szucs, and Viehmann (2012) and O'Reilly (2010), most medical advice encourages women to exclusively breastfeed their children from birth to six months and encourages continued breastfeeding through two years of age to provide maximum benefit to children. The Center for Disease Control (2015) strongly supports breastfeeding, even stating that as far as preventative health measures are concerned, it is one of the most highly effective health benefits that a mother could provide to her child. Social expectations and medical recommendations such as these add pressure to mothers to continue to breastfeed their children and to do what is in their best interest; however, breastfeeding is a time-consuming and tiresome endeavor that does not fit into what is acceptable by professional norms (Gatrell, 2013; Women's health.gov, 2015). Women cannot simply refuse to take calls for service or leave the scene of an investigation to pump breast milk every few hours. In addition, breastfeeding or pumping breast milk at work is cause for concern for many women because the maternal body is often still unwelcome or makes others uncomfortable in professional settings, especially workplaces that are traditionally masculine (Gatrell,

2013). Smith (2013) suggested that breastfeeding or pumping breast milk while at work could even affect relationships with peers or superiors who negatively view this overtly feminine activity, essentially costing women social status or social capital. In addition to breastfeeding, "maternal leakage," including uncontrollable emotions/tears from hormone changes, has been viewed as inappropriate within the workplace as well, forcing many women to attempt to keep these natural experiences of motherhood a secret while at work in order to conform to the professional norm (Gatrell, 2013, p. 624). This rigid environment has left women with little choice when it comes to the option of breastfeeding a child once they return to work. Medical experts and activists have attempted to educate organizations to understand that breastfeeding is not a lifestyle choice but a basic health issue (Eidelman et al., 2012). The cost associated with the decision to not breastfeed can be shame, guilt, or embarrassment for not being able to meet societal or personal standards of being a "good mother" in addition to physical problems, losing income, and missing a bonding experience with a child that mothers should not have to sacrifice (Smith, 2013).

Competing devotions. In many studies, women have discussed the social pressures they face associated with being a "perfect mother." They question whether or not they can truly "have it all" (i.e., motherhood and a career), especially when choosing one domain means they may not perform up to their expectations in the other domain and the guilt that accompanies this situation. For example, O'Reilly (2010) quoted one mother who said, "I was crying because I could not win. Because as a worker, I was turning away from my work at exactly the most important moment; yet, at the same time,

as a mother, I had already stayed too long [before deciding to leave the workforce]" (p. 123). Tajlili (2014) describes the dichotomy of "taking time off to stay at home with her children as being viewed as a liability because she deemphasizes her job. Conversely, if she immerses herself in her professional pursuits, she is judged as a bad mother" (p. 254). In O'Reilly's (2010) study, other mothers were ambivalent towards the idea of total motherhood and the unwritten code of mothers to "do all" and "be all" for their children. Some struggled with the fact that they were purposefully going to work and participating in high-risk, dangerous, and irresponsible behaviors that they were fully aware could potentially rob their children of their mother (Agocs et al., 2015; Cowan & Bochantin, 2009). Many qualitative studies examining female officers with children found that these women faced a constant tension to choose between their families and their careers. There was no balancing or integrating these two spheres of their lives like many other women could do in other professions because of the nature of their job. One participant in a study by Bochantin and Cowan (2010b) stated, "You have to pretty much deny the fact that you are a mother in order to do this job well" (p. 22). Another participant was quoted stating, "Choosing between your arm (family) and leg (career) is not really a choice" (O'Reilly, 2010, p. 247). O'Reilly (2010) discussed how the feminist movement brought women the opportunity to make more choices; however, O'Reilly further noted that in reality, the choice has essentially been removed from today's working mothers and instead has become something that has become expected by society.

Police culture and masculine tradition. The police culture has been a largely

researched phenomenon due to the unique nature of this culture compared to other

professions. Police recruits begin to be socialized into the police culture as early as the

police academy. New recruits are eager to be accepted and easily adopt the "norms of the

collective, including work methods, jargon, habits, and values," which are constantly

confirmed and reinforced throughout their training (Karp & Stenmark, 2011, p.

11). Richards (2010) more informally defined the police culture as "how we really do

things around here" (p. 231). Within this unique culture, there are codes that have been

established, accepted, and ingrained into officers by way of tradition. Generally, police

codes are conservative and rigid, which is why it can be very difficult to enact change in

police organizations (Karp & Stenmark, 2011). The fact that the police cultures strength

comes from decades of collectively held beliefs that stand in solidarity against

manipulation and change, introducing a new policy, concept, or initiative that goes

against this code, culture, or tradition, will be extremely difficult to achieve due to

resistance (Denison, 1996).

Culture. Denison (1996) defined "culture" as "the deep structures of

organizations, which are rooted in the values, beliefs, and assumptions held by

organizational members. Meaning is established through socialization to a variety of

identity groups that converge in the workplace" (p. 624). Denison also referred to

"organizational climate," which is temporal and subjective, "often subject to

manipulation by people with power and influence" (p. 644)--in this case those with power

and influence in most law enforcement jurisdictions today are white males, because they

are generally the dominant population. In order to be accepted into the culture, there are a number of formal and informal rituals, routines, and symbols to which officers need to conform to in order to gain insider status or approval from colleagues; this insider status shows commitment and loyalty to the profession and fellow colleagues (Dick, 2010; Richards, 2010). As an outsider, gaining membership can be challenging, especially as a woman entering into a masculine culture, because the culture may view women as a threat to the culture itself. However, women officers understand that membership is necessary to ensure success or even survival in the profession. According to Karp and Stenmark (2011), officers who will not adapt to the established cultures and codes are often informally sanctioned. In a study conducted by Shelley et al. (2011) one officer described the police culture as "a club that can get away with virtually anything because no one, male or female, can afford punishments that follow ratting on a fellow cop. And this is a club where you can get killed if people don't like you" (p. 356). Acceptance into the culture can be reflected in non-essential activities, such as having friends on the police force to socialize with. However, acceptance also can mean knowing that officers will receive reliable backup in a dangerous situation. Women often feel as if they need to prove themselves or outperform their male counterparts in order to be accepted or treated as equals in this culture (Rabe-Hemp, 2011b; Stinson et al., 2013). Because women officers have had to invest additional time, effort, and energy in order to be accepted into the police culture versus their male counterparts, they often ignore issues of inequity, harassment, and discrimination to persist to avoid being isolated from the culture, or they are deeply incentivized to overlook these issues. Losing their membership and

acceptance into the culture is much more devastating to them than putting up with a few injustices along the way.

   Masculine tradition and its effects. The law enforcement profession has a long tradition of being built around the life patterns of men. Because of this strong tradition, women in these organizations often experience their work environment differently from men, often as outsiders. One difference commonly mentioned by women is sexual harassment or even overt harassment and hostility. Hassell and Brandl (2009) found that women are more likely than men to have negative experiences on the job that can cause additional stress, such as being the topic of rumors, being exposed to profanity and sex jokes, experiencing negative attitudes and exclusion by male officers, and experiencing stigmatization due to appearance or "tokenism". Though this type of behavior may be fairly common, women often refuse to report it out of fear of repercussions or to avoid drawing attention to the situation. Maher's (2010) study provided support to this notion of fear when he found that a majority of female officers in his sample had reported being sexually harassed, but only 12% of the 75% that had been harassed had officially reported it. The two officers (12%) that reported the misconduct felt that it was not worth it because it came with a heavy price due to the minimal disciplinary action that was taken, if any at all, in addition to the informal treatment they received by fellow officers. Harrison (2012) reported similar findings in that female officers in her study refused to report difficulties at work due to embarrassment, potential consequences or lack of resolve, and lastly that they felt they were committing professional suicide. These instances have been modeled as being acceptable throughout police organizations, which

only strengthens the police culture and masculine ideology, further oppressing women, and providing a safe haven for such conduct to continue.

Aside from sexual harassment and misconduct, female officers have expressed frustration with the organizational culture because they feel as if they are being held to double standards. The organizational culture glorifies violence, strength, and masculine characteristics of the job, yet undermines social or traditionally feminine aspects of the job, such as communication, compassion, and empathy (Shelley et al., 2011). On one hand, women felt that their mothering skills, such as compassion, emotion, and the ability to relate to children, were valued when they were being used in domestic situations while on duty. However, if they were to mention or use these skills toward their own children or display these characteristics outside of this role, it was merely tolerated or used to discriminate against them (Bochantin & Cowan, 2010a). In addition to these soft skills, this double standard can also be observed through the continued use of formal policies and procedures such as physical fitness testing for entrance exams. An emphasis is placed on physical fitness and strength in police organizations, when in reality, strength and fitness has very little to do with the day to day responsibilities of the job. Cordner and Cordner (2011), Corsianos (2010), and Lonsway (2007) all discuss the disparate impact that physical fitness testing has had on women because it emphasizes upper body strength that does not reflect the day-to-day job of most officers. Yet, these women feel as if their only value is physical strength and standards that have been established by men, even if they can contribute vastly in other ways. In fact, a double standard exists even when comparing the competence of women versus men. Archbold and Schulz

(2012), Bochantin and Cowan (2008), and Schulze (2011) have all found that women are equally if not more competent to perform police tasks as men; however, Stivers (2002) concludes that women in today's society must perform better than men to be considered equally competent. Because of these double standards, women often feel devalued and viewed as second class employees.

It is clear that most police agencies are not well equipped or are not even prepared to address these issues of inequality at this time, even though many of them are in direct violation of law or human rights. Instead, the individual employee, in this case the female officer, not the organization, becomes responsible for all issues that do not fit squarely within existing policy (Bochantin & Cowan, 2010b). This additional responsibility can mean attempting to balance work/home life with little to no support, turn down promotions because they are not a realistic option, ignore sexual or overt harassment while on the job, or even quit the force in order to take care of her family. According to Corsianos (2010), few police departments have truly taken the necessary steps to promote equity and foster a supportive work environment, even though it may be promoting and claiming such behavior; all the while, informally leaving women to be discriminated against.

Recommendations and Best Practices

Though women have made great progress integrating themselves into the field of policing on their own through the use of humor, resistance, taking advantage of legislation available, and other coping mechanisms, the burden should not lie solely on this already marginalized population (Kingshott, 2012). Instead, there are a number of

best practices and alternatives that have been recommended by researchers, in both the

public and private sector, that could serve as a model for reform. According to Yu (2014)

and Roebuck et al. (2013), research found that police agencies fall behind the private

sector when it comes to family friendly policies. For example, maternity/paternity leave,

flextime, part-time, and job sharing opportunities, rotating schedules, light-duty

assignments, and in-house day care options or overnight day care options are generally

non-existent, or not equivalent to those offered in the private sector. In addition, a lack of

breast feeding (nursing) policies have been cited by women as potentially jeopardizing to

one's career. Cordner and Cordner (2011) believed it was important to note, that women

are not looking to be treated differently, instead, these family friendly policies would

benefit both males and females in their pursuit of successfully managing career and

family.

One specific best practice that is currently being used in the private sector is on-

site child care provided by employers as part of an employee benefit package. In 2010,

nearly one third of the 100 best companies to work for offered company sponsored child

care. Surveys of employees that received this benefit concluded that this service was one

of the best an employee could offer (Hsu, 2014; Yost, 2012). Employers often resist the

idea of on-site child care with the sole argument that it is not financially feasible or that

the benefits do not outweigh the costs. However, Yost (2012) conducted a study of one

specific child care program offered by a Fortune 500 company and found that the return

on investment was 125% annually, thus countering the common financial argument for

on-site child care programs. Offering on-site child care was found to substantially

improve job performance metrics for employees including better attendance/less

tardiness, improved job satisfaction and engagement, and fewer incident/accident reports

(Yost, 2012). Improvements in these metrics, especially in emergency service positions

such as policing, can literally mean saving lives, in addition to dollars saved.

A second alternative that could be modeled after in the public sector is federally

funded public child care. Sweden and Norway have both passed child care

legislation. Sweden has developed national commissions and passed many

acts/provisions specifically focused on the need for public child care, which has led to

having one of the highest percentages of uniformed women officers. Some mentionable

proposals that have been adopted are the Preschool Activities Law of 1973, which

established family day care as a supplement to preschool activities, and going a step

further the National Preschool Act of 1975, which made it mandatory for local

governments to provide preschool to all children whose parents worked, studied, or had

other obligations (Sorensen, 2011). According to Gultekin et al. (2010); Hsu (2014);

Kurtz (2012); Roebuck et al. (2013); and Sorenson (2011) child care policies can have a

significant impact on women regarding their employment opportunities, retention, social

equality, and their ability to reconcile tensions between work and family life. Larger

social change implications and goals can be realized through public child care

policies. Hsu (2014) stated that there is a great need for reform in the current U.S. child

care infrastructure due to the fact that it is based on outdated norms of the makeup of the

American family. This makeup consists of two parent households in which one or more

of the parents are able to manage the children full-time. These assumptions are outdated

and tend to be the exception in today's society (Hsu, 2014). Public child care reform

could secure a higher standard of living for the working class, allowing for dual earner

incomes, and provide equality between the sexes at home allowing for more families to

be able to make choices regarding how to best operate their own family unit (Sorenson,

2011).

Mentorship programs have been cited by several researchers as being beneficial

or highly recommended for women in organizations where they tend to be marginalized.

Gregory-Mina (2012) found that mentors contribute to greater career success for

individuals who are afforded them. Women in law enforcement have limited options

when it comes to mentoring opportunities, which creates an additional barrier that men do

not face. Support from within the work environment has been found to impact an

employee's well-being. Policewomen, being part of a marginalized group, may not have

much needed support from peers or supervisors. They may even resist seeking out

support within their police department due to the police subculture (Thompson, Kirk, &

Brown, 2005). Haarr and Morash (2013) have found that women use a mixture of

strategies to cope and adapt to the policing culture, some of them not contributing in

positive ways to their career. Having a formalized mentor who has been successful in the

law enforcement profession can provide guidance and much needed support to these

women in hopes of keeping them on a successful track.

A few states and individual police departments are taking initiative and leading

the way to remove barriers and improve conditions for women. Specifically, California

and New Jersey have implemented a program to provide paid leave for the care of new

children; New York City has also gone above and beyond federal legislation to offer

employees up to one year of unpaid leave, eight weeks of paid leave, and even provides

an optional maternity uniform for pregnant female officers (Jang & Appelbaum, 2010;

Schulze, 2010). A number of researchers have recommended revising qualifications and

entrance testing for applicants based on an individual's ability to perform job related tasks

versus physical fitness tests, civil service point systems, and age and height requirements

that can have an adverse impact against female applicants (Corsianos, 2011; Prenzler et

al., 2010).

Few would argue against the fact that women have different experiences to that of

men in the policing profession, taking into consideration tokenism, discrimination,

socialization/culture, promotional and mentorship opportunities, and structural barriers

that still exist. Despite popular rhetoric associated with police departments' integration

and acceptance of female officers, a number of researchers have found that women are

still being marginalized and much of this rhetoric is simply a facade (Hughes, 2011; Lee,

2005; Novak et al., 2011). Though legislation to date has been helpful, a stronger

commitment to affirmative action goals, effective implementation and monitoring is

needed. "The observable stagnation indicates the need for a much more explicit

commitment to implementing affirmative action policies and experimenting with

different equity strategies to bring women's representation in the police closer to that of

the general population" (Prenzler et al., 2010, p. 594). Dedeoglu (2012) and Lee (2005)

noted that without proper implementation and close oversight discrimination is still being

allowed to persist because gender neutral/progressive policies are not being strongly or effectively enforced.

Social Change

Existing literature on barriers facing women in law enforcement have been conducted in a plethora of different law enforcement agencies across United States and worldwide; thus, alluding to the fact that significant obstacles and barriers still remain for women in the police culture today. Though great progress has been made in the past few decades, policing is still far from being a profession of equal opportunity. It is my hope that this study will contribute to the progressive movement of women fighting for equal rights and opportunities, specifically in the law enforcement profession. The findings of this study were consistent with current research and showed that women perceived that motherhood/pregnancy and current policies significantly limited their opportunities in the policing profession, this study has provided evidence and justification for policy reform and recommendations that can better support women and serve social justice initiatives.

Summary

The literature highlights a number of specific circumstances in which women may have additional barriers and obstacles to overcome compared to men in order to be successful. These obstacles may pose significant challenges to women when it comes to being retained as police officers, specifically during childbearing and child-rearing ages. Though legislation has proven to be effective in some circumstances, the literature suggests that current legislation may not be sufficient enough to combat the poor representation of women in the profession. Chapter 3 discusses the methodology for this

study, which includes the rationale for selecting a qualitative study and the role of the

researcher. The methodological approach, including participant selection and setting,

instrumentation, data collection and data analysis are outlined in detail.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore how female police officers perceived motherhood and departmental policies. These policies included maternity leave, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), the Pregnancy Discrimination Act (PDA), and other state mandates that were enforced within police departments. Though women in law enforcement—specifically how they use force, their ability to meet physical fitness requirements, and their ability to do their job compared to men—have been popular topics among researchers during the past few decades, limited research has been conducted on the lived experiences of police officers who are mothers. This study addressed this gap in the literature.

In this chapter, I first present my rationale for using a qualitative design and phenomenological approach. Secondly, I explain my role as a researcher. Third, I discuss the setting of the study and participant selection, data collection procedures, and data analysis procedures. Finally, I examine issues of trustworthiness and ethical procedures.

Research Design and Rationale

The central purpose of this study was to better understand the lived experience of women who are mothers and police officers. In order to gain this understanding, I used a qualitative research design. Denzin and Lincoln (2011) defined qualitative research as "studying things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret,

phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (p. 3). Conducting and audio recording interviews with 10-15 female police officers who were mothers allowed me to immerse myself into these women's world by listening deeply and attentively to what they were saying. Gathering these in-depth, thick descriptions allowed me to gain a holistic understanding of the feelings, struggles, successes, pressures, and perceptions that female officers experience but that were not generally explored.

Within this qualitative design, the methodology that best fits the research questions and central purpose of this study was a phenomenological approach. A phenomenological study examines a group of people that have similar lived experiences and seeks to describe the common meaning that they bring to these experiences (Creswell, 2013). In this case, the shared experience was motherhood and working in the policing profession. Merriam (2009) suggested that phenomenology is "well suited to studying affective, emotional, and often intense human experiences" (p. 26), which includes motherhood. Moustakas (1994) stated that "everyday understandings, judgments, and knowings about an experience should be set aside to allow the phenomenon to be revisited freshly, naively, and in a wide open sense" (p. 33). In this study, what it generally meant to be a woman, a mother, and a police officer was set aside, allowing these participants to define what it meant to be a mother and a police officer and provided insight and understanding from their own experiences.

Research Questions

This research was guided by the following central question:

How do women in policing perceive departmental policy and culture as they relate to motherhood?

The following sub-question supported the primary question: From a feminist perspective, what challenges/obstacles stand in the way of gender equality or gender-neutral practices in policing?

Role of the Researcher

My role as a researcher was to be a data collection instrument and participant observer. Qualitative researchers are often used as data collection instruments when conducting interviews (Rudestam & Newton, 2007). It was my responsibility to gather and accurately record all responses from the participants. To ensure that responses were thoroughly and accurately recorded, audio recordings were used. Prior to the interviews, all participants signed a consent form notifying them that their interviews would be recorded. These audio recordings were transcribed and used for analysis. The analysis and findings were shared with the participants for a review of authenticity and accuracy prior to publishing.

As a participant observer, I interacted with the participants mostly by introducing the study, initiating the interview process, conducting the interviews, member checking, and disseminating the findings. The interview process was approached as an interactive process between the researcher and participants in which the participants described their experiences from their own viewpoints; the researcher was able to respond, redirect, and empathize with participants, which had been deemed appropriate when using a feminist methodology (Patton, 2002). There were no personal or professional relationships among

the participants and myself. As an observer, I also captured the participant's responses

and nonverbal behaviors by taking notes during the interview process.

Methodology

Participant Selection and Setting

I identified my sample through the use of convenience snowball and criterion

sampling. Convenience snowball sampling was used initially by first contacting a number

of police administrators who I had personal and professional relationships with at various

police departments in Ohio, including: Wooster Police Department, Wayne County

Sheriff's Office, Akron Police Department, Newburgh Heights Police Department,

Smithville Police Department, Mansfield Police Department, Kent Police Department,

Canton Police Department, Massillon Police Department, Medina County Sheriff's

Office, Stark County Sheriff's Office, New Albany Police Department, and Tiffin Police

Department. I contacted these police administrators by phone or email. If 10 - 15

participants had not been available within these few departments, I would have widened

the scope of my search to other known departments. If necessary, I would have

conducted cold calls to departments to participate, which had been successful for me in

the past. I initially asked these police administrators to sign cooperation letters to

participate in the study (Appendix A). If they agreed to participate, I then asked for a list

of officers in their department who met the inclusion criteria for this study. This

convenience snowball sampling method allowed me to identify cases of interest from

people who were known to them. I continued this process by using networks and

connections of people to gain access to other participants who met the criterion, hence

snowballing or gradually expanding the pool of participants by word of mouth or personal connections. Once I received the initial list, I continued to ask the participants if they knew of any other officers who met this criterion and would potentially be interested in participating.

Patton (2002) recommends using criterion sampling to find participants who met some predetermined criteria of importance in order to gain access to relevant information. In this case, the central purpose of the study was to examine and understand the lived experiences of female police officers who were mothers. It was essential to identify and locate participants who had experienced the phenomenon that I was investigating; therefore, criterion sampling was used. The criteria of importance were that participants were actively commissioned female police officers who were mothers. Identifying an officer's commission status and sex was easily gathered by the chief administrator through personnel files; however, identifying whether or not an officer had children came through personal knowledge of the chief administrative officer. If the chief administrator did not know, I asked him/her to include the officer on the list with a notation and I reached out to that officer to verify this criterion. If individuals did not meet these criteria, they were not asked to participate in the study. However, all officers who did meet the criteria were contacted and told the purpose of the study, that all responses were strictly confidential, and were asked for their participation (Appendix D). Officers who agreed to participate signed a participant consent form (Appendix B). I continued this process until I found 10-15 officers who were willing to be interviewed. These officers were employed in a variety of different police departments

in northern Ohio located in either rural or urban areas.   I traveled to each of these locations to conduct the interviews face-to-face.

Although 10-15 participants may seem relatively small, in phenomenological research the main purpose is to understand the complexities of a lived experience. Patton (2002) pointed out that in quantitative research, what is considered a bias (small, selected sample size) is actually considered a strength of qualitative research. According to Patton (2002), sample size in qualitative research will vary depending on a number of variables involved, such as what the researcher wants to know, the purpose of the study, the time and resources available, and what will produce useful and credible results. In other words, the depth of these interviews were the focus, not the breadth. As long as data saturation occurs, a sample size of 10-15 participants is appropriate in phenomenological qualitative research (Mason, 2010). My intention was not to generalize the findings but rather to fully understand the perspective of these participants. Similar studies that would be comparable, were conducted by Cowan and Bochantin (2009), who interviewed 15 female officers from four different police departments, two suburban police departments, and two urban police departments. However, Cowan and Bochantin (2009) cited their sample size as a relatively small sample and considered it a starting point for future research. The present study filled an existing gap in the literature and could be viewed as a starting point for literature on this topic. Therefore, 10-15 participants were considered an appropriate sample size for this type of study. Future research in this area may lend well to larger sample sizes that would add credibility to this initial study.

I also considered feasibility when determining the sample size for this study. Very limited research has been conducted on the influence that being a police officer has on motherhood. Agocs et al. (2015); Bochantin and Cowan (2008); Bochantin and Cowan (2010b); Cordner and Cordner (2011); Hall et al. (2010); Irving (2009); and Kurtz (2012) have conducted a substantial amount of research on the barriers facing women in general, women in law enforcement, and the glass ceiling experienced by women in the workplace, but the unique variable of motherhood has not been studied sufficiently and represents a gap in the literature.

Although there are more women in law enforcement today than ever before, and although many officers have children (if male officers are also included), a relatively specific and small group of individuals are both mothers and police officers. Because this population in general is relatively small, the total sample of 10-15 participants was appropriate. This sample size was also feasible considering time constraints and resources. As the primary researcher, I conducted all of the interviews by traveling to each location. Each interview required approximately 60 minutes and travel time to and from the location. I planned to conduct one to two interviews a day depending on the location of the participants and proximity to each other. This allowed me to conduct all of the interviews in a few weeks.

The setting for the interviews varied depending on the location of each participant's home police department. Each participant was asked to meet in a neutral and/or private setting of her choice, such as a public library or church. This setting was intended to (a) reduce any anxieties that participants had about being forthright, and (b)

avoid any potential marginalization of participants by fellow officers because they chose to participate. This distanced setting was also intended to minimize any work-related distractions.

Instrumentation and Data Collection

In qualitative studies, the researchers are often used as the data collection instrument. I was the data collection instrument for this study by collecting data from the interviews using an interview protocol (Appendix C), an observational protocol (Appendix E), and audio recording devices. Four specific data-collection methods were appropriate for my study: interviews, observations, analytical memos, and documents.

Interviews. Most data were collected through interviews, which consisted of semi-structured, open-ended questions focused on participants' experiences being a mother and a police officer. Patton (2002) recommends using an interview guide or protocol to ensure consistency between interviews. I used an interview protocol (Appendix C) for each interview to ensure that each participant had the opportunity to respond to the same questions. All interviews were audio recorded with the participants' consent and transcribed verbatim for data analysis. This allowed me to return the audio recordings to the participants so that they could reexamine the statements that they made.

Observations. It was possible to conduct this study using only the interview method; however, including observations added depth to the study because it allowed me to observe nonverbal behavior and body language that were not available when conducting interviews alone. Participants' body language and nonverbal behaviors that were displayed throughout the interviews were observed, documented, and analyzed

using an observational protocol (Appendix E). Direct observations of the participant's

behavior during the interview helped me collect a holistic response, including the context

in which responses were given, beyond spoken words only, which provided a more clear

understanding of the meaning and emotions that the participant associated with the

responses. These observations provided insight into how the women felt about disclosing

this information (i.e., hesitant, angry, ashamed, sad, etc.). This information was also

beneficial to understanding how the police culture affected female officers' decisions to

have children and how the current environment was making these women feel at present

time.

Analytic memos. Analytic memos were taken throughout the interviews. Miles,

Huberman & Saldaña (2014) recommend using analytic memos as a way to keep track of

thoughts and reflections, monitor progress, and pause to assess the information that was

being learned throughout the interview process. Using analytic memos made the data

analysis process more manageable because it allowed for a head start with the

organizational process and acted as a guide for the analysis.

Documentation. Finally, documentation was collected from these participants

and/or their respective police departments. Documentation such as maternity leave

policies, paternity leave policies, Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) Manuals, and any

other documentation that was found to further investigate the potential problem and

support or contradict the participant's statements that were elicited during the interviews.

Data Analysis

Qualitative content analysis was used to analyze the data. Zhang & Wildemuth (n.d.) describe qualitative content analysis as condensing large amounts of raw data, in this case interview transcripts, documents, audio files, and memos, into more manageable content such as relevant patterns and categories based on the researcher's inference and interpretation of the content. The interview transcripts contained thick, rich descriptions of perceptions and experiences of the participants, which provided me with as much information as possible to be able to draw meaning and significance from the phenomenon being studied.

NVivo was used to organize and analyze the collected data, audio recordings, analytic memos, and collected documentation. Moustakas (1994) recommends a Van Kaam data analysis method for most phenomenological studies; however, I used a two cycle coding process for analyzing the data as recommended by Saldaña (2012), which was also appropriate for this particular study. The first cycle of coding involved descriptive and holistic codes that were applied to all of the data collected. Descriptive codes allowed me to take an inventory of the content collected, while holistic codes provided a big picture overview of the information as a whole. Organizing the data in this manner allowed me to pull more relevant data to the forefront and narrow the focus. Once all of the data had been coded in this fashion, the second cycle of coding began. "The primary goal during second cycle coding is to develop a sense of categorical, thematic, conceptual, and/or theoretical organization from your array of first cycle codes" (Saldaña, 2012, p. 207). Similarly coded data was organized into categories,

or patterns and themes. Pattern and theme recognition is a way to pull commonalities from seemingly random information (Patton, 2002). This information, these women's experiences, were brought together into a total experience and expounded upon. This process is known as creative synthesis (Patton, 2002).

Issues of Trustworthiness

Qualitative research views validity in terms of credibility and trustworthiness. It was of great importance that each step in this study was carefully planned, documented, and checked for accuracy and credibility. Maxwell (2013) recommends using rich, thick descriptions; triangulation; member checking; and acknowledging potential biases as methods to add to the trustworthiness of qualitative studies.

Rich, thick descriptions were elicited from these intensive interviews with the participants. Data that was detailed and clear enough to provide a full understanding of the phenomenon was not as likely to produce a mistaken conclusion or entertain any potential bias. Though I took field/observational notes, this did not detract from the accuracy of the spoken word of the interviews because of the use of audio recordings that were transcribed verbatim and used for data analysis.

Triangulation is often used to add to the validity to a qualitative study. Themes and patterns that were discovered through the interviews needed to be triangulated, or checked against various other research and outside resources, to be validated. Triangulation of data improves the reliability and validity of qualitative studies by corroborating the results with outside sources, such as internal departmental policies and similarities in participant responses (Patton, 2002). The more quality

resources that assisted in investigating whether policies and documentation aligned or contradicted the information that was received from participants, the more trustworthy the study became.

In addition to triangulation, member checking was used to ensure accuracy of participant responses. All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. Participants were given a one to two page summary of the key findings from their individual interview. They were asked to review their summary to ensure contextual accuracy and true authenticity of what was conveyed during the interviews. This validation step took place electronically through email.

Finally, because I am a police officer and a mother, I have a passion and vested interest in this topic. Because of this personal/professional connection to the study, I needed to address this as a potential bias. Although my personal and professional experiences have suggested that motherhood does bring additional barriers to women attempting to be successful in the policing profession, this did not necessarily make it true for all female police officers. My goal was to seek honest, meaningful, and credible findings and not allow any personal bias to enter into my research. I sought neutrality through all phases of this study by leaning heavily on external auditors, such as my dissertation committee, to ensure true objectivity throughout the process. In addition, acknowledging my own potential bias was of great importance. Maxwell (2013) and Patton (2002) state that acknowledging personal bias can allow researchers to monitor their own work throughout the data collection process and the data analysis process. Although personal bias is usually considered a limitation, there were benefits in this

specific case to being part of this demographic and having experience both as a police

officer and as a mother. First, being a police officer makes me a member of an exclusive

culture that is often difficult to gain access to. I used my background in law enforcement

to gain access to police departments and participants to which I otherwise might not have

had access. In addition, my role as a mother and a police officer helped gain credibility

and build a supportive rapport with the female officers that I interviewed. It was my

hope that my status would help them feel comfortable in participating and that they

would view me as a non-judgmental peer. I was also able to draw on my personal

experiences to be able to empathize with these women by showing a genuine

understanding, interest, and caring, while still remaining neutral.

Ethical Procedures

Walden University's Institutional Review Board reviewed and granted approval

for this study. The approval number is 01-04-16-0349272. In addition, I successfully

completed the National Institute of Health's training course on "Protecting Human

Research Participants" to further ensure ethical treatment of all participants in this study.

All participating departments and individual participants were required to sign consent

forms prior to participating in the interview process. The purpose of the study, the

interview process, and the procedures of the study were detailed in the informed consent

form presented to potential participants. In addition, the potential participants received a

list of interview questions to review prior to deciding whether to participate. My contact

information was provided, and participants were encouraged to ask any questions they

felt necessary. It was clear that any participant was able to stop participating in the study

at any time during the process.

Conducting interviews with this demographic of the police force involved ethical

implications. With women being at a disadvantage in the strong male culture that

surrounds police agencies, asking for time to speak with these female officers could have

been looked down upon. From the women's perspective, though they may have wanted

to participate, they also understood that participating in this study might be viewed by

their male counterparts as being weak for even agreeing to discuss how motherhood

might impact them and their abilities. Female officers try very hard to be accepted in this

male dominated workplace and will generally avoid anything that could be viewed as a

weakness or perceived as a setback to their career or hard earned reputation (Cowan &

Bochantin, 2009). Because of these reasons, it was important to provide confidentiality

and privacy while conducting interviews in order to eliminate some of the possible

conflicting feelings some participants might experience. In order to provide this

protection, all participants were assigned pseudo names. It was important to keep the

purpose of this study hidden from everyone except those who directly participated in the

study. It was important that the participants of this study did not feel additional pressure

or stress as a result of their participation.

As mentioned in the sampling methods section, police administrators were

contacted in order to gather a list of officers who met the inclusion criteria for this

study. Because of this, female officers might have felt anxiety about being forthright or

divulging their honest and open feelings and information, especially if they wanted to

comment against current policies and feared retribution. A full briefing prior to each interview was conducted to ensure that each participant was aware that their chief, or top administrator, voluntarily recommended their department for the study, that this study was not an examination of any specific policy, and that their comments would not be used to judge or assess their specific department; rather, they were informed that the purpose of the study was to create a better understanding of what it means to be a mother working in the law enforcement profession. In addition, the administrator was not given information on the identity of officers that chose to participate. They were only providing a list of officers that would qualify to participate. If the participant choses to be known or speak about her participation that was her decision; however, this information was protected by the researcher throughout the study.

Due to promises of confidentiality, in addition to the value of the collected data, various measures were taken to protect the data throughout the study. All audio recordings and interview transcripts were uploaded to my computer that is password protected as a master working copy. This copy was used for analysis and was considered my working draft. In addition, a copy was housed on a flash drive as a backup in case one of the other copies were damaged, lost, or destroyed. Finally, a hardcopy of all master documents was kept in a locked safe in my home. These measures helped maintain the confidentiality that was guaranteed to all participants, as well as, provided the necessary back up options for recovery should a version of the data be damaged or destroyed.

Retention of this research and all data that had been collected followed the guidelines of the Office for Human Research Protections. According to these protections, research records should be retained for a minimum of three years after the completion of the research if IRB activities were required, such as informed consent (45 Code of Federal Regulations 46.115, n.d.; Office for Human Research Protections, n.d.). The informed consent forms in addition to all research records (transcripts, audio files, etc.) will be kept for a minimum of seven years in a fire safe within my residence. After seven years the data will be reviewed for relevancy and a decision will be made as to whether or not it should be retained for an extended period of time.

Summary

The qualitative, phenomenological approach that was used provided the most appropriate method to achieve the central purpose of this study. The participants were purposefully selected based on criterion sampling to ensure that they had an intimate knowledge of the topic at hand and could adequately address the interview questions. Semi-structured, open-ended interviews allowed for focused questioning, yet enough flexibility for participants to answer comfortably and freely with any thoughts they might have on the topic in question. The data analysis process included using NVivo software to assist with organization and analysis of the raw data, transcripts, documents, and notes/memos that were collected throughout the interviews using a two cycle coding process.   Multiple precautions were taken at all phases of the study to limit any problematic issues related to trustworthiness. Ethical considerations were

recognized, and procedures were put into place to avoid any unnecessary risk to the

participants.

Chapter 4: Findings

Introduction

The purpose of this phenomenological qualitative study was to gain a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of policewomen who are mothers to determine what contributes to poor retention rates of women during childbearing and child-rearing years. Eleven participants from law enforcement organizations in northern Ohio were interviewed in January of 2016. These participants were commissioned police officers who were already parents or who were pregnant during the time they were interviewed for this study. The interviews consisted of semi-structured, open-ended questions on topics related to pregnancy, motherhood, policy, and organizational culture.

In Chapter 4, I describe the various interview settings and explain participant demographics and characteristics that are relevant to this study. I also provide detailed explanations of the data collection analysis procedures that were used, including coding strategies and the use of data analysis software. I further discuss issues of trustworthiness and, finally, I present the findings, which are organized according to patterns and sub patterns that emerged as a result of the data analysis process.

Demographic Information

The study participants were 11 policewomen. The participants were already parents or were pregnant during the time they were interviewed for this study, and were employed by police organizations in northern Ohio. Ten of the 11 participants were assigned to patrol divisions responsible for general road patrol and answering calls for service while pregnant and/or rearing young children. One participant was promoted

from patrol to an administrative position at the time of pregnancy. Of the 11 participants, two worked at small police organizations that employed fewer than 25 officers. Six of the participants worked at medium-size organizations that employed between 26 and 50 officers. Three of the participants worked at larger organizations that employed more than 50 officers.

Together, the 11 participants were the mothers of 15 biological children. The number of children and whether they had their children before or while being employed in law enforcement are listed in Table 1. One participant was pregnant with her first child. Seven participants each had one child. Two participants each had two children, and one officer had three children. Two participants had stepchildren in addition to their biological children.

Table 1

Participant Designation, Number of Children, and Timing of Birth

Participant	Number of Biological Children	Number of Stepchildren	Timing of Birth
Participant A	1	0	During Employment
Participant B	1	0	During Employment
Participant C	1	0	During Employment
Participant D	2	0	During Employment
Participant E	1	0	During Employment
Participant F	1	0	Prior to Employment
Participant G	2	1	During Employment
Participant H	1	0	Prior to Employment
Participant I	1	0	During Employment
Participant J	3	2	Prior to Employment
Participant K	1	0	During Employment

Of the 11 participants, eight had their children while employed in the policing profession. The other three participants had their children prior to the start of their policing career; however, these officers were included as participants because they were

parenting young children when they entered the profession. While some of the questions pertaining to pregnancy did not apply to these three participants, their experiences with motherhood, policy, and culture were valuable to the study because they were raising young children while in the police force.

It should be noted that although these demographic data reflected participants' current employment situations, their experiences were drawn from their entire policing careers, which may have encompassed more than one organization. Five of the participants had been employed for their entire careers at one police organization; however, six of the participants had been employed in other police organizations prior to their current organization. Six participants reported that the experiences they shared during their interviews might not have occurred while they were working with their current employer.

Data Collection

Cooperation Agreements and Initial Contacts

The data collection process began using a convenience snowball sampling procedure. I initially contacted 20 police organizations in northern Ohio that I had a personal or professional relationship with and explained the purpose of the study. I made this initial contact via email or phone call depending on what contact information was provided on each department's webpage. Each initial contact was directed to the police chief, the sheriff, or the supervisor of the patrol division in each of the 20 police organizations. My goal was to locate enough police departments that would agree to cooperate and participate in the study in order to yield a target sample of 10-15

officers. If the supervisor at the police organization agreed to participate, I asked him or

her to provide me with a list of officers within that organization who met the inclusion

criterion and to give me their contact information. All but one department provided a

work email address. The remaining department provided the potential participant's shift

and a phone number. If the supervisor provided this information, this allowed me to then

make direct contact with individual officers at that organization, discuss my study, and

ask if they would be willing to participate in an interview. A few departments were

reluctant to agree and first wanted to discuss the idea with other supervisors and/or a

trusted female officer within the department. Of the 20 police organizations I initially

contacted, 14 consented to participate in the study. Of those 14, only 13 employed

officers who met the inclusion criteria of being a commissioned officer and a

mother. The 13 remaining departments all signed a Letter of Cooperation from a

Research Partner (see Appendix A), which were submitted to the institutional review

board (IRB) at Walden University and granted approval number 01-04-16-0349272.

An initial contact email was sent to all officers who met the inclusion criterion

from each cooperating organization. The initial contact email (see Appendix D)

explained the purpose of the study, described my background as a researcher and police

officer, explained reasons for conducting this study, and asked for their

participation. The initial contact email also contained a copy of the dissertation research

proposal and a participant consent form (Appendix B) for review. Of the 19 initial

contact emails and phone calls, 11 participants responded and agreed to participate in the

study. These 11 participants were from nine different departments.

Initially, a twelfth participant granted consent; however, her organization withdrew consent without providing a reason before I was able to schedule individual interviews with her or any additional participants from that organization. One officer from this department contacted me to apologize and stated that she did not know why consent was withdrawn and that she and a number of other women had been looking forward to participating. One reason for withdrawing consent may have been that this department had experienced prior legal issues regarding women, pregnancy, and policy. Participating in this study may have drawn unwanted attention to these issues or cast a negative light on the department, especially at a time when many departments have struggled to maintain a professional and positive reputation.

Setting

The 11 consenting participants and I exchanged emails during a period of a few days to determine a date, time, and location for the interviews. The date, time, and location for each interview varied according to the needs and preferences of each participant. I provided each participant with several potential dates, times, and examples of locations that would be optimal for an interview, such as a public library or a church. Each participant was asked to select an interview location that would provide convenience, comfort, and privacy.

All interviews were conducted between January 6, 2016, and January 23, 2016. The interview locations included local bookstores, public libraries, local coffee shops, private conference rooms within police departments, and local athletic facilities. Concerns about privacy and confidentiality were addressed with the participants who

selected their home police departments and public spaces as interview locations. Two

participants expressed no reservations about meeting at these locations, or if they were

concerned about privacy, they made accommodations within the location to ensure that

other employees were unaware of their participation. Regarding the participants who

chose to be interviewed at their respective departments, the departments were either small

enough so that no other officers were present, or they were large enough that the

interviews could be conducted in a remote section of the building away from routine,

day-to-day operations.

Data Collection Procedures

The procedure for conducting each interview was generally the same. Each

participant and I met at the predetermined location on the date and at the time we had

agreed upon. After we spent a few minutes introducing ourselves to each other, I

reviewed the purpose of the study and the requirements for participation. I explained the

participant consent form (Appendix B) in detail. I further explained that consent was

voluntary and could be withdrawn at any time. I answered any questions about

participation that were asked, and each participant signed and dated the consent form.

I used an interview protocol (see Appendix C) to guide the interview process and

ensure consistency among the interviews. Participants responded to the interview

questions by sharing their lived experiences as policewomen and mothers. I encouraged

participants to respond by providing as much or as little detail as they required to ensure

that they clearly answered each question. I also asked follow-up and clarifying questions

during the interviews. I used an observational protocol (see Appendix E) during the

interviews to record direct observations of each participant's behavior, such as when participants became emotional when speaking about their children. This observational protocol also was used to record notes and document statements that were made prior to or at the conclusion of the interview. I eventually incorporated these notes and statements into analytic memos. I recorded each interview using a Sony IC Recorder. The digital recordings were used to transcribe each interview verbatim during the data analysis phase.

At the conclusion of each interview, I collected all documents and locked the digital recordings on the recording device. I thanked each participant and reminded them that I would be asking them to review a key findings summary from each individual participant's interview, respectively, in the upcoming weeks. The key findings summary summarized the main points and pertinent statements from the interviews that would likely be used in the findings/results section of the study. The purpose of asking each participant to review a key findings summary from her individual interview was to ensure that I had recorded and analyzed the information from the interviews completely and accurately.

Unusual Circumstances

During four of the 11 interviews, children and/or spouses were present. This development was unexpected but overall not a significant challenge. If the children were young, under 10 years old, they remained with their mother during the entire interview. If the children were older, over 10 years old, they entertained themselves by exploring the library, browsing the bookstore, or participating in an extracurricular

activity while I conducted the interview. Most of the participants explained the need for their family members to be present during the interview because of foiled child care arrangements or an extreme hardship that otherwise would have made it impossible for them to make it to the interview. In one instance, an interview was conducted during a child's athletic practice so that the mother could continue to meet her responsibilities with her family and still participate in the interview. This will be discussed further in the results and findings sections.

Data Analysis

Qualitative content analysis was used to analyze the data. This process involves condensing large amounts of raw data—in this case interview transcripts, documents, audio files, and memos—into more manageable content (such as relevant patterns) based on the researcher's inferences and interpretations of the interview contents (Zhang & Wildemuth, n.d.). The first step in the data analysis process was transcribing each interview in its entirety. Immersing myself in the transcription process allowed me to become intimately familiar with each participant's interview responses. Qualitative content analysis allowed me to conduct a precursory analysis process as themes and patterns began to emerge as I transcribed the interviews.

Once I had transcribed each interview from the audio file to a Microsoft Word document, these documents were then uploaded for analysis into NVivo, a qualitative data analysis software application. To analyze the transcripts, I used a two-cycle coding process commonly used by Saldaña (2012). The first cycle of coding involved reviewing each interview line by line using a descriptive coding process. Descriptive coding

summarizes in a word or short phrase the basic topic of a passage (Saldaña, 2012). For

example, Participant C stated, "We don't have a policy pertaining to pregnancy. I'm

considering looking into it since now I'm the second one and both me and the other

officer plan on having more children." In this case, this excerpt was coded as

"policy." Every passage was coded, and each code was typed directly onto each

interview transcript in NVivo. These codes allowed me to quickly visualize the content

by topics, which were then analyzed even further during the second cycle of coding.

The primary goal for the second cycle of coding was to develop themes or

patterns from the first cycle of coded information. "Pattern coding is a way of grouping

summaries, or topical areas, into a smaller number of sets, themes, or constructs"

(Saldaña, 2012, p.152). Similar codes from the first cycle of coding were assembled

together and reviewed in order to make a pattern/theme code that would tie them all

together. For example, first-cycle descriptive codes, such as "family support," "friends,"

and "supportive school," were grouped together to form the single pattern code of

"support systems." For each second-cycle code, a node was created in NVivo to collect

all of the coded data together. Codes from the first cycle of coding that were identified as

outliers, were not assigned second-cycle codes.

The second-cycle codes that emerged through the data analysis process are listed

in Row 1 of Table 2, titled "Pattern Codes." When reviewing all of the data within each

pattern, sub patterns emerged in some cases. The sub patterns are listed in Table 2 under

their respective pattern code. Identifying sub patterns was important because a large

amount of information was coded under several dominant pattern codes. Grouping the

information into similar sub patterns allowed for more efficient organization and further

delineation of responses from the participants.

Table 2

Patterns and Sub patterns Identified Through Analysis of Participant Interviews

Pattern Codes	Challenges	Changes After Children	Fears	Policy	Support Systems	Secondary Careers
Sub patterns	Culture	Distracted or Hyper-vigilant	Death/Injury	Fear	Family/Spouse	
	Double Duty	Limits	Children	Confusion	Friends/External	
	Nature of the Job			Lack of Policy Informal Workarounds	Mentoring	

Evidence of Trustworthiness

In order to ensure the trustworthiness of the data collected for this study, I

implemented several strategies throughout the data collection and data analysis process:

(a) using rich, thick descriptions; (b) employing triangulation; (c) conducting member

checking; (d) identifying and acknowledging potential researcher biases; (e) maintaining

confidentiality; (f) collecting proper documentation and keeping records.

First, rich, thick descriptions were elicited from these intensive interviews with

the participants. Maxwell (2013) concluded that data that are detailed and clear enough to

provide a full understanding of the phenomenon would not be as likely to produce a

mistaken conclusion or entertain any potential bias. Good description takes the reader

into the setting being described to the point that the reader can feel the emotions, see the

sights, and hear the sounds as if they were there (Patton, 2002). I advised participants

that I was not looking for responses/answers of any specific length; rather, I encouraged

them to answer by providing as little or as much detail as they needed to completely and

accurately answer each question. If the participant did not describe a scenario to the

point of clarity, I replied with follow-up questions. In order to facilitate honest and

meaningful dialogue, all participants were ensured confidentiality of participation and

individual responses.

Secondly, triangulation was also used to add to the trustworthiness of the

study. Triangulation of data improves the reliability and validity of qualitative studies by

corroborating the results with outside sources, such as internal departmental policies and

similarities in participant responses (Patton, 2002). The more quality resources that can

assist in investigating whether policies and documentation align with or contradict the

information that is received from participants, the more trustworthy the study will

become. Patton (2002) commonly used the method of triangulating sources. One

method of triangulation that was used in this study was triangulation of sources. Each

participant was considered a source with a different perspective. I compared each of the

sources against each other to corroborate common patterns that emerged during the data

analysis process. I also used triangulation of sources to compare participant responses to

statements or policies that were provided by their respective departments. For example,

if a participant was confused about a policy or if a participant made a statement that was

an outlier compared to statements made by other participants, it was verified by

requesting copies of the department's current policy.

Third, member checking was used to ensure accuracy of participant responses. I audio recorded and transcribed the interviews verbatim. After I transcribed the interviews and conducted the data analysis, I provided the participants with a one to two page summary of the key findings from their individual interview and asked them to review their summary to ensure contextual accuracy and true authenticity of what was conveyed during the interviews. Additionally, when reviewing the key findings summary, participants were allowed to include any information they had neglected to report during the interview process or to delete any information they had reported in the interview but later wanted to redact. This validation step took place via email prior to any data being used in the findings sections of the study.

Fourth, acknowledging potential bias was an important step in the data collection process and the data analysis process because I am a police officer and a mother myself. Although I am passionate about and have a vested interest in this topic, my main goal was to seek honest, meaningful, and credible findings and not allow any personal bias to enter into my research. In order to minimize detrimental biases, I relied on my dissertation committee to be external auditors to ensure objectivity throughout the process. Although personal bias is usually considered a limitation in research studies, I found that being a member of this demographic and having experience both as a police officer and as a mother were beneficial. My background in law enforcement was critical in gaining access to many of these police departments and participants, which I otherwise may not have had access to. A number of the participants mentioned to me prior to the interviews that they had conducted their own research into my background and stated that

knowing I was a police officer was one of the deciding factors in agreeing to participate in the study. Patton (2002) recognized having a personal interest and connection to the participants as a potential benefit in some cases. My status as a police officer helped them feel comfortable participating because they viewed me as a non-judgmental peer. I was able to draw on my personal experiences to empathize with the participants by demonstrating genuine understanding, interest, and caring.

Finally, maintaining confidentiality and collecting and tracking all appropriate documentation was vital to ensuring trustworthiness for this study. Each participant was assigned a pseudonym, a letter of the alphabet that was used when referring to any data that they provided. A detailed log, or tracking document was created and maintained throughout the data collection and data analysis processes of this study. I used this document to track the date, time, and location of all important documentation throughout the study. It was a record that detailed all contacts and documents including when documents were sent, received, and what documents were left to be collected. This record could be used to trace any step of the data collection process. Every contact I made with a department and/or participant was documented, including any sending or receiving of documents. For example, in this document, I listed every participating police organization, the administrative contact person, the contact information for all of the policewomen who met the inclusion criterion, the date and time the initial contact emails were sent to each of these policewomen, and other logistical information related to the data collection process. All documents relevant to this study were tracked by including the date when they were sent and the date when they were returned with signatures.

These tracked documents included the (a) letters of cooperation from research partners (see Appendix A) and (b) participant consent forms (see Appendix B), both electronic versions and hardcopies. All contact between individual participants, such as initial contact emails (see Appendix D), was also documented. Interview protocols (see Appendix C) and observational protocols (Appendix E) were completed and collected during the interviews. All electronic documents, including audio recordings, interview transcripts, initial contact emails, letters of cooperation from research partners, and key findings summaries, were uploaded to my computer, which is password protected; in addition, these documents have been housed on a flash drive and Google Drive as a backup in case one of the copies is damaged, lost, or destroyed. The hardcopy documents, such as the participant consent forms (see Appendix B), interview protocols (see Appendix C), and observational protocols see (Appendix E) have been placed in a locked safe in my home. These measures help maintain the confidentiality that was guaranteed to all participants as well as provide the necessary backup options for recovery should a version of the data be damaged or destroyed.

Findings

The purpose of this study was to gain a deeper understanding of what it means to be a policewoman and a mother. Limited research has focused on this population; however, during the past decade, researchers have noticed that the slow and steady increase of women entering into the profession has started to stagnate (Archbold & Schulz, 2012; Lonsway, 2007; Prenzler et al., 2010). Of primary interest to researchers

are the reasons why women have left the profession during their childbearing and child-rearing years more than at any other time.

Throughout the data analysis process, six patterns were identified. Many of these patterns reveal insight into the reasons why female police officers are more difficult to retain, especially during their childbearing and child-rearing years. Overarching patterns that were identified included the following: (a) challenges, (b) changes after children, (c) fears, (d) policy, (e) support systems, and (f) secondary careers. Within these broad patterns, more specific sub patterns emerged, which are listed in Table 2 and are discussed in detail.

Table 2

Patterns and Sub patterns Identified Through Analysis of Participant Interviews

Pattern Codes	Challenges	Changes After Children	Fears	Policy	Support Systems	Secondary Careers
Sub patterns	Culture	Distracted or Hyper-vigilant	Death/Injury	Fear	Family/Spouse	
	Double Duty	Limits	Children	Confusion	Friends/External	
	Nature of the Job			Lack of Policy Informal Workarounds	Mentoring	

Aside from the spoken words, many participants expressed similar emotions and demonstrated similar body language during the interviews. The attitudes of all 11 participants generally fell into two categories: They were either open and excited about participating in this study or hesitant and reserved. Five participants were open and excited from the start, which I interpreted from their outgoing nature and verbal

expressions of their interest in the study; in fact, some participants contacted me prior to their scheduled interview to express how excited they were that someone was conducting research on this topic. The other six, although they were willing participants, seemed more reserved. Their response to the initial email invitation to participate included very few words--for example, "I consent." When I met with these six participants in person, I quickly recognized that I would need to build rapport before they would fully open up. Many participants mentioned that they had conducted their own background research on me to determine whether they could trust me. Understanding that the police culture is very unique and often misunderstood by those outside of the culture, I expected this from many of the participants and encouraged it in my initial contact email. All of these more hesitant participants eventually let down their guard and were very open and honest during their interviews.

Patterns Emerging from Research Question 1

Following is the first research question this study sought to answer: "How do women in policing perceive departmental policy and culture as they relate to motherhood?" Two patterns emerged from the interviews that provided insights into this question: (a) changes after children and (b) policy (see Table 3).

Table 3

Patterns Emerging from Research Question 1

Pattern Codes	Changes After Children	Policy
Sub patterns	Distracted or Hyper-vigilant	Fear
	Limits	Confusion

Changes after children. Having a child is a life-changing event. All participants

reported that their lives changed to some extent after the birth of their children. When

asked how pregnancy or motherhood impacted their work responsibilities or work status,

the responses of most participants fell into two categories; they were either (a) more

distracted than before they had children or (b) hyper-vigilant because of their children. In

addition to adopting a different perspective after having children, a majority of

participants described how limitations became a part of their lives, more so than before.

Distracted or hyper-vigilant. Having children and maintaining the role of primary

caregiver to children is a demanding job. Two participants explained that their children

were a source of distraction at times while they [participants] were at work. The

distraction was usually not intentional, but participants reported that they were not as

focused as they felt they should have been. Participant D explained how her actions and

behavior remained consistent before and after becoming a mother, but her internal

dialogue has changed as a result of having children.

> Suddenly your life blows up. I mean, there're so many things going on. I put it
>
> this way: When it was just me, I ran headlong into everything, and it was fine. I
>
> could change on a dime. Now it's like, *Okay, where's this one [child] and*
>
> *where's this one [child]? Who do I have to call?* You know, for me, if I'm not
>
> gonna be there to pick one [child] up, I have to call the school. It's really
>
> different... there used to be... there was no fear; you know, initially I was wild and
>
> crazy and nothing was gonna stop me. I'm kicking in this door. And now, I'm still
>
> kicking in the door, but I'm like, *Are you being safe? Are you doing what you're*

supposed to? And then you remember, *Oh, so and so needs lunch money, so I need to call him and tell him to drop it off.* My world is so not my own anymore, but I wouldn't change it.

Participant G shared similar experiences in that she, too, had her children's care on her mind while at work:

I think we are more likely to be distracted. For example, if there's a snow day and my kids are going to be home alone, I'm more likely to return to my car from a call to check my phone right away instead of just going about my normal business. I'm more likely to stop at home and check on things. I hate to say I'm distracted to the point that it's going to be a problem; I'm just more conscious that there are other things that I'm doing and checking on besides just focusing on work.

In addition to being distracted, a majority of participants recalled experiencing a heightened sense of vigilance after becoming mothers. All of the participants who reported experiencing these feelings stated that they had always been vigilant; however, since having children, they reported that they experienced a much stronger sense of self-preservation for the purposes of coming home to their children. Participant B stated, "Now, I'm watching my back because I have to come home to her [daughter]. She's my goal, so my goals changed." Participant E shared, "I guess you're a lot more vigilant. I realize that it's not just me anymore; my son depends on me. I'm gonna make the best decisions I can make to ensure that happens [I come home]." This change in perspective became apparent to Participant A after returning to work for the first time after having

her child. She distinctly recalled conducting her first traffic stop and observing a large

man in the car she had pulled over. She thought to herself, *I have a baby at home now*.

She was shocked at the change in her thinking that had occurred. Prior to having children,

she loved conducting traffic stops, but now she held reservations. She never completed

the traffic stop that day.

> ***Limits.*** Limitations have become a regular part of participants' lives as a result of

becoming mothers. Before becoming mothers, they felt that they could do anything they

wanted to; however, since having children, they placed many more boundaries and/or

limitations on themselves in order to feel that they are doing right by their

children. Participant B recalled working a lot of overtime hours and special details prior

to being pregnant because she was able to supplement her income. "When I became a

mom, it was like, *Wow, I have to stop."* Participant H reported that it is difficult to

balance the demands of work and her family:

> It's tough because I feel what I do [my career] is so important. It's hard to say no
>
> when they [supervisors] ask me to come in to do things, but at the same time my
>
> family is also just as important. I feel pulled back and forth a lot. It gets hard [to
>
> maintain a balance].

Participant H recognized that many of the male officers in her department picked up extra

shifts and stayed late for events much more than she did. This discrepancy was not

because she did not want to work overtime or because she was not as dedicated as male

officers, but rather it was because she had other responsibilities at home. Participant I

shared similar feelings, stating, " I'm less likely to spend as much time working on

certain projects, working weekends, or working late because I want to get home to her [my daughter]."

In addition to turning down special details and extra shifts, a majority of participants recalled limiting their own promotional opportunities that could further their career because of their children. For example, Participant B described not wanting to take on a supervisory role simply because she believed that her supervisors would expect more from her than she was able to give at that time. Therefore, she limited herself to remaining a patrolwoman because this position would allow her to focus more on her responsibilities at home. At least seven of the 11 participants recalled turning down or not pursuing a promotion or career-furthering opportunity in order to keep their children as their highest priority. Participant F explained that she remains on night shift in order to be able to attend all of her son's school activities during the day. Participant D explained how keeping her current rank allows her to be home with her children in the evenings:

> My career opportunities are limited by being a mother. I'm a patrolman; I will retire as a patrolman. I have no desire to do the other things. I've been asked, and at one point and time I was ordered to take a Sergeant's test, but I don't want to. I'm really in a great spot right now on days [working on the day shift]. Nobody can kick me out of my spot. It works best for my children, and I get to tuck them in at night. I can make sure my son washes his feet because he still apparently doesn't like the shower. I don't want to change that because I like that time. I

know that advancement and changing certain things will put me on the bottom

rung again.

Participant F is on a crisis negotiation team, which requires officers to be available to be

called to a scene at any time of the day or night. She mentioned that she never would

have been able to be a member of this team when her son was younger because she

would not have been able to be on call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Participant H

shared a similar experience regarding a crime scene unit she was interested in joining.

Unfortunately, she declined the opportunity because her son was too young to care for

himself at that time:

> I can't take jobs where I'm on call. Well, I mean I could now that he's older [and
>
> can take care of himself]. When I worked for another department, they wanted me
>
> to do the crime scene unit, which would have been really cool! But you're on call
>
> every other week, and I couldn't leave my son in the middle of the night. So I had
>
> to turn that down. There's been a few things that I've turned down… shifts that
>
> I've turned down.

Participant I reported that her chief had been encouraging her to attend the FBI

academy. The FBI academy is a coveted training opportunity for law enforcement

officers. She recognized this as a valuable opportunity; however, she reported that she

has delayed making a decision because attending the academy would require living away

from home for three months:

> Chief's really pushing me to go to the FBI academy. I want to go, but it's three
>
> months away [from home] and a seven-hour drive. They [male officers] don't

always understand. They're like, "It's okay; I did it. You can Skype her every

night." Yeah, well I'm a mom, not a dad. Dad's can do that. So I've been kind of

pushing him off until my mom retires so that I know I actually have some kind of

backup while I'm gone.

All of the participants who mentioned having limitations specifically noted that

they placed these limitations on themselves in order to make their children a top priority

in their lives. However, participants reported two specific instances in which they felt

that police organizations were limiting them and could be more supportive to women by

reviewing current standards or policies. One of these instances included the rigid

physical requirements for becoming a member of the SWAT Team. Participant G

recognized that SWAT officers should be in excellent physical condition; however, she

also felt that some of the requirements were nearly impossible for women to meet

because of their physical makeup: "Unfortunately, Mother Nature built women a little

differently than men, and that's something I can't change."

The second instance was mentioned by Participant E regarding the Ohio State

Highway Patrol's academy standards. The Highway Patrol has struggled to recruit

women, but Participant E was not surprised at this struggle because of the rigid

requirements enforced by the academy.

If you want to be a trooper, for instance, which I would love to do, it's just not

feasible right now. You are to go to their academy, and its six months, and you're

there [in Columbus] every day on campus. You come home once a week. You

know that's just not feasible. I just wish there was a way that something like that

could be changed somehow. There are definitely difficulties.

Policy. During the interviews the topic of policy seemed be a source of concern

for all participants to some degree or another. Findings on policy are reported throughout

many sections of Chapter 4; however, findings related to policy and Research Question 1

are discussed here. The two common sub patterns that emerged were (a) fears, and (b)

confusion.

Fears. The participants described different types of fears during pregnancy,

motherhood, and working as an officer. One of the first instances in which fear was

recognizable was when participants were deciding when (and whether) they should

disclose their pregnancy to their superior officers. Because a majority of the departments

lacked an official pregnancy policy outside of the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), a

majority of participants reported that they felt reservations and hesitation when disclosing

their pregnancy, mostly out of a fear of the unknown. The opinions of participants were

divided evenly about the most appropriate time to disclose their pregnancy. Three

participants reported that they chose to disclose their pregnancy as soon as possible. The

common reason for disclosing as soon as possible was a concern about the safety of their

child. Participant C recalled, "It was pretty early. I was nine weeks, so right after, I went

to the doctor. I let my chief and direct sergeant know just in case I wasn't comfortable

handling any of the calls that came in." Participant D shared similar feelings in that she

told her supervisors as soon as she knew she was pregnant "out of fear of something

happening." She said, "You know, it's not just me now." Participant E recalled the decision to disclose as being a scary one because she did not know what to do:

> I guess I wanted them to know the situation. It was scary; I didn't know what I was supposed to do. Did they want me to be on the road still? I don't know. I think having another human life inside of you, someone should know. There's not only one of us now.

Although three participants chose to disclose immediately, four participants waited as long as possible to disclose their pregnancy. Their reasons for waiting differed, but all the fears were related to concerns about what would happen to them. Participant A explained that she would have waited longer if she could have, but her ever-changing body made that impossible: "I had just gotten to my three-month mark, and the reason was I couldn't snap my belt anymore. I would have waited longer if I could have." Participant B began to get sick early in her pregnancy, forcing her to disclose her pregnancy earlier than she would have preferred: "I'd say a month, and that's when I got sick and they noticed something was wrong. I wasn't going to disclose right away because I knew that they would be, like, 'You can't work any more.'" This fear of being removed from road patrol was a common theme for those participants who waited to disclose their pregnancy. Participant A knew what would happen to her once she disclosed, so in order to avoid it, she delayed the process as much as possible:

> Really, the most difficult thing was I knew as soon as I told work that I was pregnant that I would have to get taken off the road and would go to light duty. So for selfish reasons, I was thinking, *Oh, I don't want to have to work at a desk.*

That's why I'm an officer; I don't like working the typical 8-to-5 job. So I waited

about as long as I could until my duty belt truly just wouldn't snap anymore.

Participant K was caught off guard when she was immediately removed from road

patrol. She stated, "When I told them, they immediately took me off the street, which I

did not expect. I was a little disappointed, but I understood why they did it." Participant I

knew that being pregnant meant being removed from road patrol and assigned light duty.

However, she was in a unique situation in that she was getting promoted to a supervisory

position. At that time, supervisory positions were not contracted to perform light-duty

work; however, patrol positions were. Therefore, she was unsure about the consequences

of disclosing her pregnancy. She waited until her promotion was official and disclosed

her pregnancy the very next day.

Participant D and Participant G revealed the dangerous situations that they had

found themselves in, whether by choice or otherwise. Although Participant D revealed

her pregnancy immediately, her department at the time did not have any policies in place

that could be consulted for guidance. She was given the choice to continue road patrol or

use her sick time and go home. Unfortunately, she had not accrued enough sick time to

last through her pregnancy, so she chose to remain on road patrol. The absence of policy

and her subsequent decision to remain on road patrol placed her and her fellow officers

who were trying to help in dangerous situations:

I continued to work because I was still a relatively new officer. I didn't know

what to do. I mean, I continued to come in and go to work. I only told a few guys

that I was close to [about my pregnancy], but then again, I told them, "I'm gonna

be fine…. Don't get crazy" because they would start running to my calls from

across town. They're gonna get hurt. I was pretty new, so I didn't make any

money. I had to live, so I just came into work until I got too big to be on the road.

I was in three fights, up until my fourth month, while I was pregnant. And my

uniform didn't fit anymore because I had the bump, and it was terrible. I said,

"Listen, this isn't probably the best thing to do and have all this weight on her [the

baby] and dealing with all of these things." So they said, "You need to go home."

Participant D was not the only participant who put herself in danger. Participant G

struggled through severe illness and voluntarily put herself and unborn child in danger

because she was not ready to disclose her pregnancy:

Being pregnant with her [daughter] was not fun. I was on night shift, which was 6

p.m. to 6 a.m. I had quite the little routine down. I would collect Cool Whip

bowls, the larger big tubs. I would take a few of them to work every day with a

few Ziploc baggies with wet wash cloths in them. Whenever I got sick, or

whenever I felt like I was going to puke, I would pull over, take the lid off of my

Cool Whip bowl, puke in it, open up the wet wash cloth, and clean myself up…

[then] put that back [the washcloth] because I had to wash that one, and then get

rid of the Cool Whip bowl. That was probably two or three times a night.

In addition to hiding her sickness, she also said, "I got shot with a Taser while I was

pregnant. It was at the point where I wasn't telling them yet." When asked if it was Taser

training and whether she voluntarily was Tased, she stated, "Yes, I had to keep up the

facade. Otherwise, how do you say no." Participant G kept up the facade until her body became too big as a result of her pregnancy, forcing her to buy new pants and a belt.

Although Participant J had her children prior to entering the policing profession, she shared observations that she had gathered during her long career about the reasons pregnancy is a source of fear for most female officers:

Knowing that I wanted to get into law enforcement, having children actually was going to be detrimental. I do know several women who have gotten pregnant and then were removed from the road, kind of annexed somewhere else. Clothing was a thing too; what are they gonna wear--you know, the gun belt? They were given options on the shirt, but they were kind of ousted. Then when they went back onto the road after having children, they had their issues too. They were afraid to get pregnant while working. I talked to several of them [female officers], and I was very glad that I didn't get hired by any department until after I had my children.

Confusion. All of the participants in this study recalled having a sense of confusion at one time or another regarding the policies that their departments did or did not have. This confusion was the catalyst for much of the fear that participants experienced. The participants did not know what, if any, policies were available to them to support them through their pregnancy. Participants used phrases such as "Not that I'm aware of," "I don't know," and "I'm not sure" when they were asked direct questions about existing policies. Participant A shared that she definitely would research her options if she were to become pregnant. The best way she could describe the way she felt at times was "flailing around, trying to figure stuff out." This feeling of "flailing around"

was a consistent theme. About half of the participants were the only woman in their department or the first woman in their respective departments to become pregnant during the last few decades. Participant E shared that she did not know of anyone on the department who had been pregnant before her. She remembered thinking, *"What do I do now?"*

A couple of the participants reported that policies, such as a pregnancy policy or a light-duty policy, were handled very informally. Instead of consulting a written policy, these types of situations were handled on a case-by-case basis in an informal manner. Participant D shared that her department had struggled in the past with pregnant officers and fair treatment; knowing this, she was unsure about whether the department had formal policies in place that provided guidelines for pregnant officers. Participant C, who was pregnant at the time of the interview, reported that she felt her situation was being handled in a positive manner. Nevertheless, her statements reflected reservations in that she emphasized the importance of having a pregnancy policy in writing, which would help her feel more "protected" and to "feel safer."

Four participants conducted their own research into their respective department's policies to be fully informed before participating in the interview for this study. Participant D reported that her department had implemented a "transitional duty" policy that was applied to pregnant women because their department did not have a light-duty policy. Participant G reported that her department did not have a light-duty or transitional-duty policy. When asked what would happen to an officer who became pregnant, she stated, "I honestly don't know. I'm really not sure how they would handle

that. I actually looked through our policy on that just to make sure." Participant F reported that she had been shocked when she discovered that her department had no formal, written policy regarding officers who became pregnant. She inquired further and asked several of the male officers who recently became fathers whether they knew of such a policy. Their responses varied, which added to the confusion of Participant F.

Five participants reported that in researching their department's policies, they found that there was a formal lactation policy. Participant K stated, "I know that they have a lactation policy now, which is kind of a shock." The other participants seemed equally as surprised that their department had a lactation policy. Some participants, such as Participant G, found humor in the fact that their departments had a lactation policy but not a pregnancy policy. She stated, "It's funny... we have a policy on breaks that you can take for lactation for breastfeeding, but we don't have a policy on pregnancy." This suggests that participants perceived that implementing a lactation policy without a pregnancy policy was illogical.

Patterns Emerging from Research Question 2

Following is the second research question this study sought to answer: "From a feminist perspective, what challenges/obstacles stand in the way of gender equality or gender-neutral practices in policing?" Two patterns emerged from the interviews that provided insights into this question: (a) challenges and (b) policy (see Table 4).

Table 4

Patterns Emerging from Research Question 2

Pattern Codes	Challenges	Policy

Sub patterns	Culture	Lack of Policy
	Double Duty	Informal Workarounds
	Nature of the Job	

Challenges. Every participant mentioned challenges they encountered that stood in the way of gender equality or gender neutral-practices.   Five common sub patterns emerged that described the types of challenges participants experienced: (a) culture, (b) double duty/double standard, and (c) nature of the job.

Culture. The police culture has been examined by researchers for decades because of its strength and ability to stand against manipulation and change (Denison, 1996; Karp & Stenmark, 2011; Richards, 2010; Shelley et al.,2011). The law enforcement profession traditionally has developed around the life patterns of men. Because men have comprised the dominant population in law enforcement, they have held the greatest power and influence over the evolution of police culture. Because of this tradition, women within police organizations often have experienced their work environment differently than men have. More specifically, women often have perceived themselves as outsiders with little influence in the police culture. A majority of participants reported that they did not truly feel accepted into the police culture at the beginning of their careers and even sometimes currently. Dick (2010) and Richards (2010) maintained that in order to be accepted into the culture, there were a number of formal and informal rituals, routines, and symbols to which officers needed to conform to in order to gain insider status or approval from colleagues. A majority of the participants agreed with the idea of having to "prove themselves" or "earn their colleagues' respect";

however, they felt that this pressure (or requirement) to participate in these informal

rituals did not apply to new male recruits who were automatically given respect from

their first day on the job. Participant A recalled specific training scenarios during which

her male colleagues tested her physically. She stated that, "you definitely have to assert

yourself, kind of prove that you're able to do these things--where when guys come in, for

the most part, they're not being second guessed." Participant H shared a similar

experience. She recalled being pushed aside during physical encounters or fights with the

public and reported that it was not until she forced herself into the situation and resolved

the physical issue that she felt she earned the respect of her peers:

> I was told, and I've learned, that you have to work a little harder to prove that you
>
> can do it yourself. You know, I've had fights break out to where you go to handle
>
> it, and I got shoved aside [for the males to handle it]. It wasn't until they saw me
>
> do it that they were like, 'okay, she can do it.' But if I were a guy, they wouldn't
>
> have done that. So that's frustrating.

Participant I and J referred to the "good ol' boys" when describing how they felt about

having to prove themselves: "Whether we like it or not, we still have to deal with the

'good ol' boy' system. [Women are] always gonna have to prove themselves 10 times

more than anybody else. I don't know if that will ever change" (Participant

I). Participant J described a similar experience and was doubtful that the "good ol' boys'

club" would ever cease to exist:

> Yes, you do have to prove yourself as a female--no matter now or when I went
>
> through the FTO program. I don't think I was truly accepted until after I got into

my first fight, so they knew I would be able to handle myself. I totally get it. But

then when you get someone coming in just out of the academy and they're a male,

they don't have to prove themselves like you did. You know, it's the police

culture again, and you just accept it.

Participant J reported that women having to prove themselves was one of the greatest

challenges to women in the police profession: "Proving yourself. I really do think that's

one [of the greatest challenges] because you still have the stigma, and I think it's always

going to be there. You still have the 'good ol' boys' club."

Participant K did not like the idea of having to prove herself. She knew that she

was qualified for the job because she was hired and did not feel pressure to prove

herself. However, she did report that she had to "earn their respect, because there are a

lot of male chauvinists in the police department."

The deeply ingrained masculine culture not only forced many participants to feel

compelled to prove themselves or go above and beyond their male counterparts in terms

of their performance, but it also forced many of them to handle illegal, unprofessional,

and uncomfortable situations while at work. When discussing these scenarios, the

majority of participants agreed that these behaviors were not intended to be malicious in

nature, but instead were stemming from stereotypical assumptions held by men in the

department or ignorance on their behalf because they had never worked with

policewomen in their department.

Participants A, D, F, H, and K reported that assumptions were made about them

by their male colleagues because they were women. Participant A and H both recalled

that the men in their department seemed to walk on eggshells around them and would not

engage in usual conversation:

> I always laugh because when I would walk on station, everyone [the men] would
>
> get really quiet. I don't think the guys knew how to take me when I got
>
> hired. They worry, 'oh is she gonna be offended by this joke? Or should I not
>
> cuss in front of her?' The first time I cussed in front of a room full of guys they all
>
> about fell out of their chairs. It made them a little more conformable. Once they
>
> knew how to take me, they became more comfortable. (Participant H)

It was not until Participant A used profanity as well that the awkwardness ceased.

Participant A recalled that a few policies in her department were revised because the

department had never fired a female officer before. After making friends with a few male

officers, they confided in Participant A that prior to her being hired, administration had

considered requiring the entire department to take a sensitivity class. This suggests that

unwarranted fear and a lack of understanding about how to work with women on the

department is real. The responsibility seems to have fallen on the women to educate or

show by example that they are not all that different from the men.

Aside from not having experience with women in the department, other men

made assumptions and held stereotypes about the women in their department that were

consistent with common gender stereotypes. Participant D recalled a situation in which

she was asked to "mother" another officer:

> I've had administration come to me and be like, 'well you're gonna get this guy
>
> because he's having problems. A female supervisor said to me, 'We're giving him

to you because he needs to be mothered," and we get it from all angles; it's like

they expect you to mother people and come in and have the cool head, and you

don't cuss, and you're the one that calms people. I don't calm people. I'm here to

do my work and leave.

   Double duty/double standard. A majority of the participants reported that they

maintained responsibility for a greater share of the household and child care

responsibilities at home, even though nine of the 11 of the participants were married or

living with a domestic partner. These participants described their household and child

care responsibilities as "double duty." They reported that every day, they would go to

work and then return home to begin their "second shift," whereas their husbands or

partners, though helpful at times, did not have the same responsibilities. Participant F

explained that she felt pressure, not only because of the expectations that she placed on

herself, but she also felt pressure from society:

   It's double duty now. Society says moms are supposed to do this and moms take

   sick kids to the doctors and moms go to parent-teacher conferences, so we put

   those stresses on ourselves because of society. Then we have work stress too, just

   like everyone else. So I think you kinda just get a dual role or a double duty.

Participant G recalled the struggle of balancing both roles: "You want to do a good job at

work, yet you wanna come home and your house to be clean and to do all the mom stuff

as well. So for me, the balancing of that is very challenging." Participant I shared similar

feelings: "It's overwhelming at times. As much as we try to split work, men are men, and

it's hard... it's very hard to keep up on all the things I used to keep up on." Several

participants briefly described a typical day to demonstrate the chaos involved in maintaining both roles. Participant J recalled the struggles she faced when her children were younger--struggles that were very similar to those reported by many of the other participants:

> I had a one year old. It was me getting up making sure they were at daycare at 6 a.m., you know, to start my shift at 7:00. Then when I went back on the road, I had to make sure that they were at daycare before 6 a.m. when I worked first shift. I was getting them up, getting them ready… because my husband at the time of course, couldn't do that. When I worked third shift, that was a little bit easier because I could be home [and] get them to school, and then he [husband] had left for work, so that was like my perfect shift. It was hard balancing, but I just had to do a calendar. You kind of have to balance it out. It was hard at times, but I wanted my career. It was important to me to have both. I wanted my kids, and I wanted my career.

In their responses about balancing the dual roles of mother and police officer, almost all of the participants reported that the majority of their male counterparts (i.e., male police officers) had wives. The fact that their male counterparts had "wives" seemed to elicit a sense of jealousy or resentment towards their male counterparts because participants perceived these wives to handle the majority of the responsibilities at home, leaving their fellow male officers with much more free time than participants had. Having a wife at home also contributed to a lack of understanding among male officers about the workload that their female counterparts maintained both at home and on the job.

Participant A stated, "I was in the motor unit, so it was all male officers and they all had stay-at-home wives." Participant D described the differences between her life and the lives of most of her male colleagues:

> Sometimes our guys, you know, their wives are teachers or they stay home; they think he walks on water, and that's great for him. However, I do the exact same job you [males] do. I'm the breadwinner. I come here [to work]. I get in this cruiser and drive around. I get in fights. I do what I'm supposed to do. But then, I go home and I take an active role in my children. It's a little different because they [male officers] think you have all this free time. I don't have free time. As soon as I take off my junk here, I got the mom hat on, [and] I'm trying to do that thing.

Participant B shared similar experiences and feelings regarding how males perceive women officers in her department:

> I think the male perception is that the women should stay at home and take care of their children and the males should come to work. But with the female officers, I feel that they think that their other half [the female officer's spouse] is responsible, you know. They don't look at both sides of what we have to go through. All of our administration are men, and they can just brush it off to their wives.

Participant F and Participant H both described a time when they attempted to educate one or more of their male counterparts about the differences between their lifestyles and responsibilities compared to the lifestyles and responsibilities of male officers. They

attempted this communication in response to comments that males made to them, obviously not fully aware of the differences in their lifestyles:

There would be days I would go to work exhausted and [a male colleague would say], "Why are you so tired? It's just now work time?" Well no, I've been up since 5:30 this morning with a four year old or five year old or a sick kid. I would explain it to him like this: "Everything your stay-at-home wife does before you go to work or while you're sleeping or while you're doing whatever, I do all those things, and then I come to work. So, I don't get a break, like you get a break. (Participant F)

Participant H explained to a male colleague why she did not have as much time as he did to dedicate to work:

I tried to explain to them sometimes that they have more time to give, more time that they can devote to work. Sometimes I have to explain to them [that] "I can't do that; I don't have a wife at home to take care of the kids like you do."

In addition to feeling as though they work double duty, at least four participants described situations in which they felt they were being held to a double standard. Although the goal and perception of every department is that all officers are treated equally, several participants questioned whether that was, in fact, true. Participant J reported that her experiences have shown that women are better than males at de-escalating situations while on the job and that they generally have more empathy. Although these personal characteristics are beneficial to departments and to police work, they have been used against female officers at times, along with the fact that they are

mothers. For example, Participant A shared an experience she had during a workplace interview:

> They [interviewers] were like, "Can you imagine going on a call where you have to do a death notification of a child?" or something like that. "As a mother, how do you see you doing that?" Oh my God, I can't believe that that question just came up. And I wanted to say, "Have you ever asked the men that?" I didn't [because] I didn't want to burn any bridges.

Two participants, Participant D and Participant K, experienced illegal and sexist comments after disclosing their pregnancy to their superiors. Participant D recalled being sent to the safety director to disclose her pregnancy:

> He looked at me and said, "You're telling me this why?" And I was like, "Well, I don't think it's safe for me to be out there on the road." And he said, "Well, here's what you need to do; you need to make a decision. Do you want to be a police officer, or do you want to be a mother?" I about went over a table.

She did not want to cause trouble; however, she pointed out to the safety director the double standard that was in place. She stated, "We have men here that have five and six kids. They get to procreate and I've given that up? And he was like, "I don't know what to tell you because they don't have to be off." I was like, *"Wow!"* Participant K had a similar experience; however, she heard indirectly about comments that were made:

> The union told the chief [that I was pregnant] so they could find a position for me, and the comment made by the chief, who is no longer the chief by the way, was, "Well, did she ask for permission to be pregnant?" I guess everyone that was

there from the union were just floored. When they told me, I was like, "He said

what!? I didn't know I needed your permission to have a life outside of this police

department." I just couldn't believe someone who is in that position would say

something so stupid and heartless.

The double standard between male officers and female officers was clearly

demonstrated to Participant D through an observation regarding the activities of the

Police Wives Chapter. The Police Wives is a chapter of women, generally wives of

policemen, who engage in service activities for the department. Participant D overheard a

conversation between an officer couple (male officer/female officer) during which the

husband asked the wife if she made things for the Police Wives Chapter:

We have our chapter of police wives; they're lovely ladies, but in that aspect of

the police wives, we also have policemen who are married to policewomen here.

One of my dear friends, her husband looked at her and said, "Did you help them

make things for police wives?" And she goes, "No, did you?"

Nature of the job. Police work is a unique profession compared to most

professions. Policing operations occur 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year,

and during this entire time, officers are at the mercy of the public. When the public calls

for help, no matter the circumstances, the police respond. Providing this type of service

has taken its toll on many participants. Although many of the sentiments that were

expressed by female officers during their interviews would likely be very similar among

their male counterparts, the fact that these women were the primary caretakers of their

children made this unique nature of their job more challenging and possibly more

heartbreaking as well. Participant D explained how police work has interfered with her life:

> Police work interferes with every aspect of being a mom, that mom [the perfect mom]. You're held over… you have this go on… you just can't leave or you get called in [to work]. It's usually when you have something planned. You don't go to the doctor's appointments that you'd like to go to; you have to cancel and reschedule. Sometimes the programs, the birthday party, the dinner, most holiday dinners if I'm working it's [dinner] gonna get a little dry. I call, and I'm like, "I'll be there." And they wait for me. You know, it's that kind of stuff. The police department interrupts everything. It really does. I'm lucky I had my kids while in police work so they are used to it. Our [police officers] challenges are unique, but I think ultimately, there are some jobs where they never close. So they know my plight. Maybe they're not standing there with a dead body like I am, but they're serving people or they're driving truck or something, so they know the heartbreak.

Participant J shared similar experiences and wondered whether the nature of the job required officers to put more effort into helping strangers than into helping their own family:

> I think with LE [law enforcement], we devote ourselves to others more than our family. I think that's a common problem or issue with a lot of families that have a parent that's in LE. You're putting in a lot of time, a lot of time away… you have to.

Participant A recalled the holidays being the most difficult for her, especially now that social media has become so popular; she stated that seeing other families being able to spend time together has made it more difficult for her:

At Christmas [and] the holidays, when 99% of the population is off with family, and especially now with social media, it kills me. Everybody's putting their pictures up and saying, "Oh, I'm off all week" or "I'm off two weeks," I'm like, *That must be so nice! I'm so happy for you (sarcasm)*. In 20 years, I might get that [holidays] off.

Participant F explained that although many professions have stressors, police work presents a different type of job stress. Participant F reported that she is often unable to leave this stress at work:

I think we [police officers] have different job stress. I know everyone has job stress; some of it I think you can leave at work. You can say, "I'll take care of that tomorrow when I get back in." We have some stress that you can't leave at work. Even if you've left the paperwork and taken off your uniform, it's still on your mind. That affects how you go home and deal with your family also.

Participant G provided specific examples of how her work stress may be different from the stress that other mothers have experienced:

Most mothers do not have to worry about being assaulted in their jobs. Most of them do not have to worry about catching some random disease, like Hep C or anything like that, from some dirt bag [suspect] that they've just arrested. Most of them don't have to worry about being recognized outside of their field. If you're a

nurse or something and you see somebody at Wal-Mart, it's usually not the end of

the world. If you've arrested that person, it's a little uncomfortable… just the

simple fact that your day off sometimes is never your day off. Granted, with most

jobs you have the chance of getting called in, but most of the time you can say no.

In our job, if you get called in, sorry about your luck, but you're going.

In addition to the stress, the unique hours of the job can pose a challenge when trying to

find child care. Participant A recalled trying to find night-time child care for her child

when she was scheduled to work the night shift: "Trying to find night care is almost

impossible from an establishment; the cheapest one that we found was $1,100 a week.

That was even with a government discount for military and police."

Policy. Every participant reported that policy, or lack of policy, was a source of

frustration, and they attributed the lack of gender equality and gender-neutral practices to

policy failures. Two common sub patterns emerged that described the types of policies

that did or did not exist: (a) lack of policy and (b) informal workarounds.

Lack of policy. Of all the patterns that emerged, a lack of policy was the most

commonly mentioned or described by these participants. All 11 participants commented

to some degree about the lack of a policy. Most participants simply experienced

discomfort, fear, and or a sense of feeling lost because no policies were in place.

However, three participants in particular experienced extreme hardships due to this

absence of policy. During the interviews, this lack of policy was described by participants

with mixed feelings. Participant D explained that within her department, "there were no

procedures. It was just fly by the seat of your pants and say whatever you want."

Participant F stated, "There is nothing; it's horrible." Participant G said, "No, nothing was established at all." Participant J shared the logic behind her department's lack of a light-duty policy, stating, "We have no light duty anymore. We used to. So you either have to be fit for duty, or you're not." Participant G shared that not only did the absence of policy affect her, but it also became the subject of gossip within her department:

> The chief that we had when I was pregnant wasn't that big on policies. I mean, there was a lot of people that used light duty back then. Now on our department, it [light duty] doesn't exist; you cannot use light duty unless you are on a workman's compensation claim. The thing that was funny is, I told two or three key people that I was pregnant, and it was just a matter of days before everybody in the world knew what was going on. Everybody was wondering what would happen and how they were going to take care of everything [my pregnancy/my work].

One participant's department had a light-duty policy that was generally used for pregnancy; however, because she was a supervisor, light duty was not in her contract, only the duties of a patrol officer. She reported that her pregnancy, and the fact that she was an administrator, caught the department off guard, and they were in unchartered waters:

> Well, for me, it was different because we've had pregnant females before, but they were patrol [officers]. We've never had a pregnant supervisor before. When I told them, they immediately took me off the road and put me on light duty, but it [light duty] wasn't in our contract, so they put me back on patrol. They just made

stipulations that I had to stay inside and do other things without going out. I still

worked different shifts; I was on midnights then--midnights and afternoons,

whereas the patrolmen... when they are pregnant, they automatically go to day

shift, light duty, out of uniform. (Participant I)

A few participants recognized that the lack of policy was an issue; however, those

who worked within somewhat flexible and accommodating departments were hesitant to

complain about it too much, fearing that a formal policy may make their situation worse

or more difficult. Participant C was the second officer in her department to become

pregnant. She was happy that the first officer carved a procedural path and that her

department was very flexible and accepting when working with her. This was comforting

to Participant C. Participant K understood the need to have a policy; however, she was

also hesitant about voicing her observations, fearing that "the grass may not always be

greener," she stated, "Well, to have one [a policy] would be nice, I guess, but then again,

maybe not depending on what the policy may end up being. Maybe we're better off just

sticking with what we got, which is nothing."

Beyond minor setbacks or feeling uncomfortable about a lack of policy, three

women experienced significant hardships because pregnancy policies or light-duty

policies were not in place. Participant B explained how her pregnancy was addressed:

It was crazy! The first month I became very sick, and the doctors told me I would

have to go on light duty at work. I told them [supervisors], I said, "I need light

duty." They [supervisors] said, "We don't offer light duty here." I said, "This is a

village, I'm not employed by the police department; I'm employed by the

village. We have desk jobs." They wouldn't do it [allow me to have a desk job/light duty]. So my health went down really quick. I was off the whole entire nine months. It was real difficult. There were no policies in effect; they [supervisors] wouldn't accommodate, so the doctor just said, "You're off." I had just bought a house; I was pregnant; it was overwhelming.

Participant D described a similar resistance and lack of accommodations by her department. She recalled being forced on leave, sitting at home, and calculating which utilities she could discontinue in order to continue to meet her financial obligations:

I didn't know what to do. I had to live, so I came in to work until I got too big to be on the road. I was in three fights up until my fourth month while I was pregnant, and my uniform didn't fit anymore because I had the bump, and it was terrible. I said [to the safety director], "Listen, this isn't probably the best thing to have all this weight on her [baby] and dealing with all of these things." So they [administration] said, "You need to go home." I only had some sick time that I had amassed, but it was not gonna be enough. I went home, and I was at home for 30 days, using up sick time. I was at home trying to figure out what utilities I could cut off so that I could still afford to live and have my baby, then go back to work. After that 30 days, they [administration] called me and said, "You need to come in; we're going to give you transitional duty."

Both Participant B and Participant D contacted attorneys to remedy their situations, but they were both told that they were not being discriminated against and that nothing could be done. Eventually, Participant D's department, due to strong recommendations from

powerful community members, decided to change their stance. Participant E experienced a similar situation as Participant B and Participant D but knew that taking unpaid leave was not an option for her. With no other options, she voluntarily resigned her position at the department:

> During that process, I was told that it was a possibility that I could take leave, but the leave would be without pay. That was not something that was feasible. I had to have an income. So basically, I took it upon myself, and I had resigned my position.

> Participant J was aware of the struggles that many women experienced when trying to have children in the policing profession. After all, some of her relatives were officers. She had her children prior to entering the policing profession, and she had done so intentionally:

> I had heard that it would be better to get a job if you had already had your children and they would be more apt to hire you. I remember I volunteered this [information at an interview], stating something to this effect, like, "Yeah, I'm done having children now, and this is what I want to do with my career." I'm almost positive that I said something to that effect.

Participant J recalled that it was very important for her to bring up the fact that she was done having children. She felt that disclosing this information would increase the probability that she would be hired, knowing that policing is not the most family friendly of organizations.

Informal workarounds. While discussing the absence of policy, a large majority of participants mentioned that they believed there definitely should be a formal written policy for pregnancy, stating that "since there is no policy, it can definitely be improved or at least documented just so we feel safe about everything" (Participant C) and "I definitely think that something needs to be put into place" (Participant F). In addition to reporting that a policy should be in place, eight of the 11 participants shared informal workarounds from which they have benefitted to alleviate some of the burden that was caused by pregnancy and motherhood. Participants reported that they were appreciative of these informal workarounds and felt these workarounds were one way that their departments were trying to accommodate them. Participant C felt supported based on the manner in which her department responded to her pregnancy. Although no formal policy existed, she appreciated the fact that her department allowed her and her doctor to make all the decisions regarding her pregnancy:

> They were very flexible and accepting. They left it up to me and my doctor as far
> as when I wanted to be taken off of the road and placed on administrative duty.
> But when I was on the road, they were very cooperative and understanding if I
> didn't want to go on a bar fight, or something like that.

This idea of having some control over the situation was a common theme among participants, even into motherhood. Four of the participants mentioned having to bring their child to court with them when they were required to appear for a case. Finding a sitter at the last minute or on their day off was not an easy task. Many of their departments did not object if the children had to stay in a roll-call room at the department

or with some of the other officers while their mother appeared in court. Participant A

stated, "I pretty much told them [the administration], 'If you want me to come, I've gotta

bring her [daughter].' She could kinda sit back there with the other guys I worked

with. It was like, *Who brings their kid into court? I do!*" Participant K also reported

taking her child to court with her, and Participant B stated that she has never had to bring

her child to a court appearance, but if the situation arose, she would. In addition to taking

her child to court, Participant I has experienced the need to take her child with her to

work during a regular shift since she began working in administration. She reported that

she is very appreciative of her chief, who allowed her to care for her child when needed

but also maintain her work responsibilities:

> Yeah, our chief is very helpful. I used to roll her [my daughter] in in her stroller
>
> and spend the day working. She comes to meetings when she has to. I try not to
>
> because it's hard. I won't wear my uniform when I take her usually because I
>
> don't want to have to react, because what am I gonna do with her? So if she goes
>
> to meetings and stuff with me I usually go in plain clothes and they give me the
>
> ability to do that. She's been to all kinds of meetings. They are really good about
>
> it.

Because a majority of the participants were not in administrative positions within their

department, bringing their child to work with them was not feasible. However, there were

times that supervisors allowed participants the flexibility to handle family matters while

on duty. For example, Participant G shared a situation in which her daughter participated

in a special athletic event on a day that she was working:

My daughter had a show one day that I couldn't get off [work] for. The sergeant I

was working for at that time was like, "Just go up [to the show] on duty, and keep

your radio on. It's fine, no big deal. I was at the show for over an hour. We didn't

have any calls; it was a Sunday afternoon, and it wasn't a big deal. But depending

on who the supervisor was, that could have had a completely different outcome.

Participant H shared a similar experience that occurred when she needed to pick up her

son from an athletic practice while she was on duty. Her supervisor allowed her to take

the cruiser to pick him up. They said, "Take the cruiser, go pick him up, and run him

home." When her supervisors worked with her in such fashion, she found it to be helpful

in maintaining a balance between home responsibilities and work.

Additional Findings

In addition to findings that were directly aligned to the research questions, other

patterns emerged from the interviews. Three patterns, a) secondary careers, b) support

systems, and c) fears were discussed by a majority, if not all, of the participants during

the interviews and are outlined in Table 5.

Table 5

Additional Patterns Identified Through Analysis of Participant Interviews

Pattern Codes	Fears	Support Systems	Secondary Careers
Sub patterns	Death/Injury	Family/Spouse	
	Children	Friends/External	
		Mentoring	

Secondary Careers. One observation that was not directly related to policing,

motherhood, or gender equality, but was still noteworthy, is that a majority of participants

became involved in policing as a secondary career. Seven of the participants either had

previous careers, such as hairdressers, office workers, teachers, and loss prevention agents, or they had been pursuing another career path by earning degrees in business management, law, mathematics, and social work. Of the remaining four participants, Participant D and Participant K specifically mentioned that this career path was more of a default career because they did not know what else to do.

Participant D reported, "I was not smart in school. I didn't get bad grades, but about the only thing I really did well was fight, if that makes any sense. I didn't know what else to do and that's one thing I knew I could do." Participant K reported having a similar experience: "Maybe it's just the tomboy in me. Looking for adventure, misguided." The remaining two participants reported that they had a true interest in policing from the start and intentionally chose this profession.

Support Systems. All participants recognized that managing their dual roles as mothers and policewomen would be almost impossible, if not entirely impossible, without having some type of support system. The unique nature of policing, with shift changes, court appearances, and the possibility of being called into work 24/7, presents challenges that make a reliable support system absolutely critical. Every participant referred to her support system and how critical it was to her ability to maintain her career to some degree. Each participant's support system was different but typically included close family members, friends, babysitters, schools, mentors, and even social media groups.

Family/spouse. Participant A discontinued her employment at a department where she had been working for a number of years because the department would not

provide flexibility that would allow her to care for her child. She and her husband

attempted to make it work for a while but realized that it was not possible. This rigid

approach by her department was a primary reason she attributed to the decision to move

her family back home to be closer to relatives who could help with the child care

responsibilities: "The main reason, the only reason that we moved back here was for

family" (Participant A). She stated that she made an agreement with her grandparents

that if they moved back home, the grandparents would agree to help with babysitting

since they were retired. Participant B mentioned that even though her family lives close

to an hour away, they still help out by picking up and dropping off her daughter when

necessary. Participant E also reported that she relies heavily on family; she stated, "I'm

pretty lucky in the fact that I have my parents to fall back on in helping with my son and

caring for him when I'm not able to." Participant K reported that she had a very

supportive family and that she understands how critical her family members are in

helping her maintain her career:

> I'm kind of lucky because I have family that is supportive. If I get held over, we
>
> know we can call grandma and grandpa and they can come over. Without them,
>
> we would be in trouble. Without a strong family to help you out, I wouldn't
>
> recommend having kids.

Most participants were actively involved in relationships with their husbands,

boyfriends, or the father of their children to help with child care from time to time.

Participant J explained, "You have to have that partner, that husband, who if a child is

sick at school and you're working road, they could leave and go pick up the child. It's not

always the mom that has to do that." The reality for most participants was that their significant others also worked full-time jobs, leaving little time for them to care for the children. The primary responsibility of child care arrangements fell on the mothers.

Friends and external support. A few participants did not have close families that were a part of their support system. Instead, they found others that helped them maintain the balance, including close friends, colleagues' wives, school administrators, and even social networks. Participant A and Participant I relied on a colleague's relative or wife who operated a daycare for children of police officers. This option was comforting to them because they did not have to explain why they would be late picking up their children or why they were asking for care at the last minute. These child care providers offer services at any hour of the day or night, understanding that officers do not work regular shifts. These two participants felt they could trust these individuals because of their connection to work.

Participant F reported that she used multiple strategies throughout her career to care for her child. At times, she recalled, relying on family was critical:

> I used to work midnights and work weekends so that I could be home with him [her son] during the week. So, Friday after school I would pack him up and he would go to my mom's, which was about an hour away, for the weekend. My dad or my grandma would bring him home on Sunday night.

At times when she did not have the option of relying on family, Participant F relied on close friends who were able to fill the void:

I had to count on the friends that I had met, and I mean I had one great friend. I took him [her son] there in the morning; she took him to school for me, she picked him up from school for me, [and] she made our dinner; she was an awesome friend. I would wash her dishes before I left. You just have to really count on those people to help you out. There would be times where I would be called into work, and I knew that she was the one person that I could call and say, "Hey, even if you're not home, I know your husband's home and your kids are home; I'm dropping him here." She was just that open door for me. You just have to really have those connections, those friendships.

Participant F further stated that if she did not have this close friend to rely on, she did not know if she could make it work.

While some participants relied on family members and close friends, this option was not available for other participants; however, they reported that they were able to find alternative solutions. Participant D elaborated on how she essentially had to train individuals at her children's school to help them understand the nature of her job and that her children may experience an erratic schedule at times:

If I'm not gonna be there to pick one up, I have to call the school, and for my daughter it was different because I had to break the school in; they weren't used to that. You know, sometimes I'm running late, and I can't get out of here on time to get over there to get them, but I'm walking in and I have a gun on and a uniform or riot gear, or I'm calling and I'm on the phone with the secretary, like,

"Hello, send them to SAC; their dad will pick them up." She's like, "Is

everything ok?" [I explain], "I'm on a dead body [call]."

Initially, Participant D explained that these last-minute changes and types of phone calls

were somewhat shocking to staff members at the school; however, now the staff members

are used to it, and it has become the norm for her family.

Participant G and Participant H relied on family and friends from time to time but

not on a regular basis. Instead, they relied on hired help, such as babysitters or

nannies. They both reported that not only did they struggle to find this help but that they

also felt discomfort when using these care options at times. Participant G reported the

struggles she encountered in finding innovative child care solutions:

When they were younger [her children], I had a regular babysitter, and I had a

backup babysitter all the time. The good thing is, both of those people knew each

other, so they could communicate as well in case I wasn't able to answer the

phone or I was very unclear about what was going on. Child care was a pain in the

butt because we work [odd hours]; most child care providers... they want someone

that's Monday through Friday. Well, our job, you know, 6 a.m. to 6 p.m.--that's

when I have to be there, so I would have to drop her off at 5 in order to get there,

get in uniform, and get ready to go, and I wouldn't be able to pick her up until at

least 6:30 p.m.; nobody wants to be saddled with somebody else's kids for that

long. So that was always a pain because you could never go to a daycare facility;

you always had to find somebody that did it in their own home--somebody that

understood what you do. The worst thing is when you work night shift because

you're kid is going to bed somewhere else every single night… well, not every

night but, it makes you feel like shit as a mom because your kid can't even sleep

in his own room. When I was on night shift, I had an Amish lady come into the

house, and that was just kind of weird. I mean, it worked out great because she

just slept when the kids slept, then got up with them and everything, but it was

really awkward for me letting somebody else in my house. We're just very

private--law enforcement--in general… to have somebody in my house, it just

bugged me.

Although Participant H's son has become more self-sufficient over the past few

years and can now stay on his own for short periods of time, she recalled the struggle to

find child care:

Oh my gosh, [I] struggled for babysitters all the time. My family and I have

friends that helped. I had to resort to using that Care.com, where they do

background checks on the babysitters, and I actually had a girl who was a pre-

med student at Walsh. She was really good, but she was expensive; she was $8.00

an hour, but she was really good with him, so I always made it work.

Mentoring. Participant H reported that in addition to family and friends, she

found a social networking group, Sisters of the Shield, which helped address her child

care needs. The women that are part of this group are all policewomen who have

struggled with the same issues:

If you're dealing with something or struggling with [something], you'll get tons

of help. They'll say, "Oh, I've dealt with this, and this is how I handled it, and

maybe you could try this." Having that extra support system has really helped.

Participant D reported an informal mentoring system that takes place within her

department when it comes to dealing with administration. The female officers who have

seniority mentor and support the rookie officers as they encounter issues associated with

pregnancy and motherhood. According to Participant D, rookie officers are encouraged

to disclose to one of the veteran female officers that they are pregnant prior to disclosing

their pregnancy to administration:

I let them know [that] if you have a question, you come to one of us women, and

we will lead you through it. Generally, if somebody gets pregnant around here,

they run it by me. Of course, they are making the announcement, but they will run

it by me. I will tell them, "If you have an issue or a problem, come see me and

we'll handle it. If you're having problems with something, you tell us and we'll

be the ones that yell and scream and carry on..." because, you know, when they're

newer, they can't say anything [because] they think everybody's gonna hate

them. So we'll deal with it [instead].

To summarize participants' views about support systems, every participant, in

some way, described her idea of a support system and how critical that support system

has been in helping her achieve success. These support systems materialized in many

forms, but regardless of the form, participants recognized and acknowledged their

importance. Participant I clearly summarized the importance of support systems with her

answer to the question, "What advice would you offer a mother wanting to get into police work?" She stated, "Just make sure she has a strong family support system or friends who are going to be able to help her out."

Fears. Every participant described having fears that could be traced back to being a member of the policing profession. These fears fell into two sub patterns: (a) fears about death or injury and (b) fears about their children, mostly relating to their quality of life. A large majority of the participants recalled experiencing both types of fear, while a few experienced only one type or the other.

Death or injury. Nine of the 11 participants described having experienced some degree of fear about being killed or injured while on the job. All of the participants acknowledged the danger inherent in police work and that every day they put themselves at risk. When asked about their fears, Participant H stated, "I fear of losing my life and leaving my son without a mom. That's a fear every day. I fear getting hurt." Participant G's response was slightly different in that she did not worry on a daily basis:

> It's [death] crossed my mind simply because it would be stupid for it not to. It's
>
> not something that I'm worried about as an everyday thing. Mainly what worries
>
> me, obviously death would worry me, but I would be very worried about
>
> becoming disabled to the point where I wouldn't be able to enjoy my kids.

Participant C shared similar sentiments about her fears, stating, "Obviously the fear of death or if I were injured, how I would be able to take care of my child," and Participant F stated she was afraid "that something will happen to me, and my son won't have a mom."

A majority of participants were clearly preoccupied to some degree with death or injury on a regular basis. Participant I stated, "I mean, you always have the thought of not coming home," and a few participants recalled giving their children hugs and kisses and telling them they love them before walking out the door to go to work, thinking "I hope this isn't the last time I come home" (Participant K).

Participant B recalled that her fears had changed since becoming a mother. She stated, "I think it [biggest fear] would be leaving [my daughter]--me dying in the line of duty, but I think that's every mom's fear that's in law enforcement because it wasn't my fear when I started… not until I became a mom." The awareness of this new fear became apparent to Participant A after returning to work for the first time following the birth of her daughter. She distinctly recalled conducting her first traffic stop, an activity she used to enjoy, but this time, it was different:

> I got ready to call it out, [call the traffic stop into dispatch] and I hesitated for the first time ever. It was a single guy in the car, but I could see his head was huge, and I had this thought, "I have a baby at home now." I ended up not even doing the stop. It was for a minor thing, like a turn signal light or something, but I didn't even do the stop. I went home, and I'm, like, *What the heck am I doing?* It wasn't until the very second that I called it in on the radio that I was like, *Wow, okay, I'm a mom now.*

Participant A recalled returning home that evening and being very upset with herself. These feelings about motherhood took her by surprise. Eventually, she overcame her new fear by intentionally forcing herself to conduct regular traffic stops.

Of all the participants, Participant J had the most unique perspective regarding the dangerous realities of her career. Rather than exuding fear or anxiety, she spoke about her faith and fears in a calm and casual manner:

Fears on the road... I guess I have my faith, so every day before I start my shift, whether it's school [as a DARE officer] or on the road, I just ask God to be with me on my shift and bring me home safely. And if it doesn't happen, it is what it is. It could be any career that you do. You could be working at Subway [sandwich shop] reception and someone comes and shoots you. So, it really doesn't matter in today's society as far as safety goes.

Children. All 11 participants reported fears that they had experienced regarding their children. For a majority of the participants, this fear was even stronger than their fear of death or injury. Interestingly, I had not asked a specific interview question about this topic, yet every participant volunteered information about fears related to their children on several occasions throughout the interviews. When they talked about their children, the majority of participants displayed a noticeable increase in emotion compared to when they talked about other topics during the interview. Four of the 11 participants became visibly emotional (e.g., fighting back tears), while discussing this topic.

These specific fears related to their children were mentioned by every participant, but were communicated in different ways. Participant D characterized this fear overall as "the heartbreak" she felt she was causing her children. She described how her job, as a result of her death or injury, could cause her children pain, but she also explained that the

nature of her job also causes her children emotional pain, or "heartbreak," because it affects their quality of life:

> I'm afraid that somehow, someway, I'll be gone, and that will cause my children pain. Hopefully, it's [potential death] not because of something I missed, because I try to be vigilant and see and do everything I can to come home. They [my children] are used to seeing injuries; they don't like it, but luckily they're little soldiers and have lived this, so they've adjusted well to that. I'm so afraid of me being the reason that they have pain. They get scared sometimes. They're at an age where they understand things on the news, and sometimes they get this little panic and say things like, "Mom, I need you to watch for people."

Other participants also reported that they witnessed this fear that their own children carry regarding the safety of their mother. Participant B recalled comments her daughter has made, such as, "Bye mom, love you!" as she is getting ready to leave for work. Participant B knows that her daughter is worried that her mother will not come home because her daughter is old enough to watch the news and see "that the world is turning against officers." Participant B reported that it is difficult for her to know that her daughter has this fear weighing on her mind. Participant F reported that her son has made similar comments as she leaves for work, such as, "Be careful mom; I'll see you in the morning" or "Be safe mom." Participant B reported that she makes a point to say, "I'll see you in the morning" every day to alleviate some of his fears because she knows what is on his mind. Participant H reported that her son shows his fears by asking questions, such as, "Are you okay, Mom?" or "What happened at work?" Sometimes

after he has seen or heard a story on the news, he will ask, "Has that ever happened to you?" Because she is aware of her son's fears, Participant H reported that she is careful about what she tells her son regarding her work activities; she knows that too much information can easily scare him. Participant E reported that she has taken a similar approach in that she is very conscientious about what she says around her son. On one hand, she wants him to be aware, but on the other hand, she does not want to overwhelm him with fears that are beyond his control.

In addition to the fears that participants reported causing in their children, participants also reported feeling that they are "the worst mom ever" (Participant K); "the bad mom" (Participant D); "the tired mom"(Participant K); "the grumpy mom" (Participant F); or simply "not like Joe's mom" (Participant D), who, according to Participant D, seemed to be the "perfect mom." All of the participants reported that they (a) felt some form of guilt for not being more available for their children to some degree or (b) that their children made them feel guilty because of their parenting style. Not being more available or missing out on family functions impacted a large majority of the participants. Although almost all participants give their families a lot of credit for being understanding, they recognized that having a mother who is a police officer still takes a toll on their family members. Participant D explained how her career has impacted her life:

> Police work interferes with every aspect of being a mom. You're held over, you just can't leave, or you get called in. It's usually when you have something planned. You don't go to the doctor's appointments that you'd like to go to; you

have to cancel and reschedule. Sometimes the programs, the birthday party, the

dinner, most holiday dinners... if I'm working, it's gonna get a little dry, and I call

and I'm like, "I'll be there." And they wait for me. You know, it's that kind of

stuff. The police department interrupts everything; it really does. I'm lucky I had

my kids while in police work, so they are used to it.

Participant G and Participant I recalled missing many of the same family events and

gatherings:

Let's see, I have missed more Christmases and birthdays than I care to admit. I

have missed choir concerts for my son. They [children] don't get to do a lot of

fun stuff. If it's not planned and it's not on my day off, it doesn't happen.

(Participant G)

My daughter had to miss a birthday party [because I had to handle a last-minute

situation]. That happens... like holidays, I'm working on the Fourth of July. You

know, I try to get around some of those things, but that doesn't always work. So

she has to miss out on a lot. (Participant I)

Many of the participants understood that they will never be the "room mom" at their

children's school because of their job (Participant E) or that they will have to miss events

and send others in their place (Participant J). At the same time, they also admitted that

while these options are helpful, they can never replace the presence of their mother at

school functions. As Participant D stated, "Even if they [her children] don't complain

about it, you're not there. You're supposed to be, but you're not there." These women

feel they are letting their children down to a degree, and this weighs on them. Participant

H shared her concern about how her son may be supportive of her career today; however, she wonders if he will resent her later:

> I worry about when he gets older... looking back and being angry at me for not being there more--you know, angry for me not having a more normal job. And I've talked to him about that, and I've said, "You know, if it bothers you, I'll find something else. He's always been very supportive. He says, "No, Mom. This is what you were supposed to do; you know you're a good cop... this is what you should be doing." Thankfully, he's so good; he's been very supportive, but I do worry about that. I worry that he misses out on things because of that and he may resent me later for that.

Participant F described a time when her son struggled being away from her because of her job. She had forgotten about the situation because it had been so long ago; however, her son reminded her about it when she mentioned participating in this interview:

> I was actually talking to my son about coming here today, and he's super intellectual, so he likes to discuss. I think it impacts kids a lot to have a mom who is a police officer... more than a mom who is a teacher or a librarian or something. He told me, and I forgot he had done this, but I used to work midnights and work weekends so that I could be home with him during the week. So, Friday after school, I would pack him up and he would go to my mom's, which was about an hour away, for the weekend, and she or my dad, or my grandma would bring him home on Sunday night. He said, "Remember how sometimes I used to call you crying because I just wanted to be home?" That was when he was four or five. I

was, like, "Yeah, that was horrible." And he said, "Yeah, I mean, we got through it." But I think that that affects kids too in a way that I never considered. I know he was with his grandparents and he had friends there, and it still was like, "I just want to be home."

Five of the participants reported feeling that their parenting styles were a direct result of the events that they have seen and experienced in the policing profession. Participant G shared her concerns about being too strict on her children and the result it could have:

It's kinda like that phrase, "The preacher's daughter is always the worst." I'm worried that I'm going to be so stinking strict on these kids that once they reach 18, they are going to do something absolutely nuts and that it's just gonna piss me off.

Participant I stated, "You see other cops' kids getting in all types of trouble, so I may shelter her [daughter] more and pay more attention to things. She might not have as much fun as other kids." Participant J reported having similar concerns and recognized that officers are usually harder on their children then they probably should be:

I think it's that we have to be especially aware as LE [law enforcement] sometimes because we are harder on our kids than I think we should be; we want that perfect child, and there isn't a perfect child.

Participant K also reported that her experiences in the field likely influence her parenting style, even though she tries to be realistic about the situation:

You see these kids that you deal with all the time, and you just pray to God that

your child does not end up like that... like on drugs or their behavior is just

atrocious. Sometimes I might come home and she [my daughter] misbehaves,

and I have to take a step back and be like "Okay, this is not the same child that I

was dealing with at work…" just praying that your kid doesn't end up like the

kids on the street.

Participant F was not sure whether her parenting style has been influenced more by

policing or by her parents, who also were very strict:

Well, according to my child, I am very grumpy and I don't let him do things that

his friends are allowed to do. He doesn't go to someone's house whose parents I

haven't met, and he's still in bed by 9:30 at night because nothing good happens

when it's dark out. Those are the things he will tell you. I think I'm more strict

than some of his friends' parents, but that's how I grew up too. I don't know if it's

policing that made me that way or just how I grew up also.

These participants clearly understood that their career influences their children's

lives. The desire to shelter their children stemmed not only from what they have seen on

the job but also from a fear that they have about how others will treat their children

because their mom is a cop. Many participants reported that they worry about how their

children are treated at school because of their career:

Really, my only fear is when she gets into school how kids are going to treat her

because her mom is an officer. I just worry if kids will be like, "uh, your mom's a

cop" and give her crap for that. (Participant A)

Participant B reported harboring similar fears, noting that her daughter thinks her career is "cool" now but knows this will change once she enters junior high school:

> Right now it's cool that her mom's a cop and there's a cruiser in the driveway, but I know when she gets into junior high, things will be different. You know, "Don't tell her anything because her mom's a cop, and she's gonna rat you out."

Although Participant I's child is not yet school age, she reported that she already has similar concerns about her daughter. To minimize the effect her career may have, Participant I reported that she already decided not to change her name when she gets married, keeping her daughter's last name different from her own. Her daughter has the last name of her fiancé (the child's father). "I won't change my name because I have to go on TV sometimes doing press releases, and I feel like maybe if I don't change my name, they won't recognize or connect me [with my daughter] as much" (Participant I).

Participant J's children are now adults. When they were younger, school aged, they were bullied to a degree because their mom was an officer. Participant J did not know how this had affected her children at the time that it occurred; however, now that they are older, they have shared these experiences with her:

> We talk a little bit more [now that they are older]. My son said that if kids would start to say something to him, he would just get ready to fight them. I'm glad that he didn't; I didn't know that. He'd tell me, "Yeah, I went off on one guy; he was a wrestler, so I went off on one guy, and they knew-- *Don't push him because he'll go off on you*. So they kinda left him alone. My daughter, she had to get a different group of friends, which was better for her anyway, but she had gotten

the, "Oh, you know your mom's a police officer" [taunted by other children] and

kinda taunted her a little bit, and it bothered her too a little.

A few participants reported that they have adopted proactive strategies with the

intent of helping their children avoid these types of situations. One strategy has been to

send their children to school districts outside of the jurisdiction in which they work or to

send their children to a private school. As a result of these steps, participants believe that

their children will have fewer confrontations, such as facing peers that their mom had to

arrest the night before.

I don't send my son to public school here because I don't want him to have to

deal with, "Your mom is such a bitch!" I don't think men are viewed that way;

your dad's the tough cop... that's cool. But if your mom does something, she's the

horrible bitch, unfortunately. So he goes to school 20 minutes away. (Participant

F)

Participant I chose to send her daughter to a school in another district as a precautionary

measure to try to avoid conflict for her should an emergency situation arise in the city:

Even preschool, you know, we have one of the best in the city, and I won't send

her there because it's in the city [that she worked in], and my fear is if something

happens and I'm working, what do I do? I'm gonna want to go get my kid, but

what about all the other kids? If people see me go in and get my kid and run out,

then what?

In addition to concerns regarding their parenting style and strategies they have

used to protect their children from external threats, participants also noticed that the stress

and demands of their job impact the type of person they are while at home. Participant D explained how it is very difficult for her to engage with her family at times due to exhaustion from work:

By the end of the day when I pick up my adorable 14 year old, who wants to tell me everybody else's business, I'm done. I don't want to hear that anymore. I've heard everybody else's business today. "I need you to just shhh…" so I'm kind of afraid of what do I do when I'm done here [when she retires]. Will I talk to people, or will I be the mean old lady that says, "Get out of my yard," you know?

Participant F acknowledged that she has a difficult time mentally leaving work at work sometimes. She stated, "We have some stress that you can't leave at work; even if you've left the paperwork and taken off your uniform, it's still on your mind. That affects how you go home and deal with your family. I'm grumpy mom." Participant K shared a story about her daughter's school project, which highlighted her daughter's perception of her while she was at home:

Well, it [the job] definitively takes away from your family time. Sometimes you feel like you're the worst mom ever. You never see your kids, or you don't get to do the things that you want, or your kid comes home with a school project and it talks about "What my moms like," and she [daughter] says, "All she [mother] does is sleep because she works midnights." So, they [children] don't understand.

These experiences were clearly painful for participants. Participant C, who was pregnant with her first child when the interview was conducted, reported that she already was concerned about how her job will impact her as a mother. She stated, "It's a high-stress,

full-time job. I'm a little worried about how it is going to affect me at home with young children."

Summary

The purpose of this phenomenological qualitative study was to gain a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of policewomen who are mothers to identify factors that contribute to poor retention rates during childbearing and child-rearing years. I followed an interview protocol and interviewed 11 participants using semi-structured interview questions. A two-cycle coding process was used to analyze the data and identify emerging patterns. Patterns were organized and presented based on their correspondence to each research question. The first research question, **"**How do women in policing perceive departmental policy and culture as they relate to motherhood?" was supported by two patterns: (a) changes after children and (b) policy, with additional, narrower sub patterns. Research question two, "From a feminist perspective, what challenges/obstacles stand in the way of gender equality or gender-neutral practices in policing?" also was supported by two patterns: (a) challenges and (b) policy, with additional, narrower sub patterns as well. Finally, in addition to findings that were directly aligned to the research questions, other patterns emerged from the interviews: (a) secondary careers, (b) support systems, and (c) fears. Chapter 5 explores these patterns further and provides interpretations of the findings, limitations of the study, recommendations, and implications for positive social change.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this phenomenological qualitative study was (a) to gain a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of policewomen who are mothers and (b) to identify factors that contribute to poor retention rates during childbearing and child-rearing years. Specifically, I investigated perceptions of pregnancy, motherhood, organizational culture, and departmental policies. I used a phenomenological methodology to examine the shared experience of being a mother and a police officer. The main focus of phenomenology is to understand how humans perceive their lived experiences (Willis, 2007). I sought to answer the following central question: How do women in policing perceive departmental policy and culture as they relate to motherhood? The following sub-question was developed to support the primary question: From a feminist perspective, what challenges/obstacles stand in the way of gender equality or gender-neutral practices in policing?

Key findings included the following: (a) the experience of a double workload as a result of working as a policewoman and managing a household, (b) fear and guilt regarding their children, (c) challenges due to an absence of departmental policies regarding pregnancy, (d) a masculine culture and traditions within police departments, and (e) a validation of a number of previous studies.

Interpretation of the Findings

The qualitative phenomenological design allowed participants to share a multitude of experiences. This research design also allowed me to gather new and unique

insights from participants and to validate a number of similar studies that existed in the

research literature. Specifically, challenges stemming from an absence of policies

addressing women's issues and maintaining a double workload were prominent

throughout the findings and confirmed prior research studies. However, the fears and

guilt that participants reported related to their children was unexpected.

Double Duty

Women have been slowly challenging the stereotypical role of the stay-at-home

mom and wife and have been making progress in the professional workforce. Today,

women comprise approximately 50% of the national workforce in the United States (Yu,

2014). Although women may have positions equal to those of men, their roles at home,

e.g., being a wife or a mother, have not changed, which has resulted in an increase in

their overall responsibilities and day-to-day workload. Hochschild's seminal work,

Second Shift (1989), documented the struggles of women attempting to find a balance

between work and family. This publication supported findings that women generally

shoulder the majority of household responsibilities, despite the slow shift of gender roles

(as cited in Schulze, 2011). The idea that women continue to maintain responsibility for

the majority of household responsibilities was supported by a majority of participants in

this study, who reported that they maintained a greater share of responsibility for the

household and child care duties at home. These duties included cooking and cleaning;

managing finances; arranging child care; maintaining spousal responsibilities; and

organizing family schedules, including sporting events, school functions (Agocs et al.,

2015; Kurtz, 2012). Even though nine of the 11 participants were married or living with a

domestic partner, they continued to experience this unequal distribution of work. Participants described their household and child care responsibilities as "double duty." They reported that they would go to work every day and then return home to begin their "second shift," whereas their husbands or partners, though helpful at times, did not experience this same burden.

Hall et al. (2010) found that police officers attempted to balance competing domains of their work lives and their home lives. These researchers noted that by attempting to achieve this balance, they quickly deplete their emotional and physical resources, often leaving them exhausted, burned out, and in many cases, unable to maintain success across both domains. This research was focused on all police officers, including men; however, this study maintains that women have even greater challenges when it comes to balancing work and home life adding to the stress that they feel. Many participants described the strategies they use to manage their stress and reported that they try to keep their work life and home life separate. However, especially for policewomen, this separation is nearly impossible, especially when they must remain on call in both domains on a full-time basis. As a result, it should be no surprise that women have left the policing profession in large numbers after having children. Managing a household is a lot of responsibility, but trying to do so while also maintaining a career in a not-so-family-friendly profession is even more difficult. Even if it were possible to maintain a balance, many policewomen have decided that it is not worth the stress and the sacrifice.

The policewomen who have been strong enough to remain in the field have recognized that managing their dual roles as mothers and policewomen would be almost

impossible, if not entirely impossible, without a support system. The unique nature of policing (e.g., shift changes, court appearances, the possibility of being called into work at any time of the day or night) presents challenges that make a reliable support system absolutely critical. Participants reported that most of their support has been found externally, that is, outside the work setting; however, research has indicated that support from within the work environment can positively influence the well being of employees. If the policing profession truly wants to progress, an examination of the workload/expectations placed on policewomen, both at home and at work, needs to be explored in order to support and promote gender equality. Establishing child care policies is one example of how police departments could support women and help them balance this double workload. According to Gultekin et al. (2010); Hsu (2014); Kurtz (2012); Roebuck et al. (2013); and Sorenson (2011), child care policies can exert a meaningful influence on women by creating employment opportunities, improving retention, and establishing social equality, thus helping women reconcile tensions between work life and family life. Until this imbalance is at least acknowledged, women will never have the same opportunities as men. Officially, they may be able to apply for the same positions, but when it comes to actual equality, women have continued to be disadvantaged in the workplace. Ultimately, they have too many competing devotions that spread their talents, energies, and finances too thin to allow them to perform at their best or to accept advancement opportunities.

Fears and Guilt

The mental and emotional toll experienced by working mothers is one that has recently begun to emerge in the research literature. Simone de Beauvoir (1953/1989) noted that having a child creates enough pressure and stress to paralyze a woman's life. Beauvoir has suggested that women can only continue working if they abandon their children to others for care and strike a delicate balance between professional interests and family life. According to Beauvoir, this balance comes with a heavy price of concessions, sacrifices, and acrobatics, all of which require a constant state of tension that many women prefer not to endure. In this present study, the participants echoed Beauvoir's sentiments in that they felt completely torn between two (often competing) devotions.

As women, participants reported that they feel pressure from a natural maternal instinct to have children and be mothers. This is generally something that most women today want for their life. Motherhood is also encouraged by society (Beauvoir, 1953/1989). However, second wave feminists have also influenced society and suggest that women should rather strive for equal rights and equal opportunities in the workplace because child-rearing and other care activities are undervalued and unpaid (Beauvoir, 1953/1989). In response, many women have chosen to pursue a professional career, with all of its associated demands. As a result, society has asked women to pursue two very different roles that are fundamentally incompatible under existing social, political, organizational, and economic structures. Social expectations require women to manage these two roles without providing a fully sanctioned support mechanism to effectively do so. One participant in a study conducted by Bochantin and Cowan (2010b) captured the

unfortunate outcome that most likely occurs as a result of the tension created by these dual roles:

> There are a lot of choices that go hand in hand with being a female cop. One really important decision to make is whether or not to have children. It is my opinion that the cons usually outweigh the pros of having a kid in this line of work. (p. 247)

Haussengger (2005) explained that women who choose motherhood understand that they will be forced to balance motherhood and work on their own with very little or no support. This balancing act is an expectation placed on women "because as many will remind us, 'It is your choice' [to have children]" (pp. 5-6). Haussengger rightly has pointed out that women are aware of this expectation and do make the choice to balance work requirements with motherhood. This point was clearly illustrated by one of the participants in this study, who explained that she felt this pressure not only because of the expectations that she placed on herself but also the pressure she felt from society. In fact, most participants acknowledged their failure to maintain this balance to some degree in that they failed to meet their own expectations and or the expectations they believed that society has placed on them. However, there is one problem with Haussengger's notion that having children is a deliberate choice: Women are not the only ones involved in the decision to have children. Men/fathers are equally responsible for the choice to have children, yet they have not experienced the same social pressures as women that lead to feelings of failure and guilt.

Social pressures associated with being a "perfect mother" can be found throughout society: on television, within peer groups, on social media, at school functions, at work, and even from children themselves. Many women question whether they can truly "have it all" (i.e., motherhood and a career), especially when choosing one domain means they may not perform up to their expectations in the other domain and that they may experience feelings of guilt, frustration, and failure. For example, O'Reilly (2012) reported that one mother said, "I was crying because I could not win. Because as a worker, I was turning away from my work at exactly the most important moment; yet, at the same time, as a mother, I had already stayed too long [and missed something important at home]" (p. 123). This mother is not alone. All 11 participants in this study reported that they experienced fears regarding their children—fears that were overwhelmingly related to feelings of guilt and failure. One mother labeled these feelings as "the heartbreak" because she felt responsible for potentially causing emotional stress for her children. However, it was obvious from her body language and facial expressions she also was experiencing this stress herself. She described the source of her stress as twofold. First, she noted how her chosen profession—ie., police work—could cause her children pain as a result of her death or injury, but secondly, she also explained that the nature of her job also causes her children emotional pain, or heartbreak, because it affects their quality of life. One participant stated that "the worst thing is when you work night shift because your kid is going to bed somewhere else every single night... well, not every night, but it makes you feel like shit as a mom because your kid can't even sleep in his own room" (Participant G). The emotions in this mother's story can be felt from two

perspectives: first, her son's perspective (e.g., having to sleep in a house other than his own, such as the home of grandparents, a friend's house, a babysitter's house, etc.), and secondly from the mother's perspective of "feeling like shit," not meeting society's expectations, and not meeting her own expectations of what it means to be a "good mom."

From my perspective as a researcher, policewoman, and mother, the interviews with participants at times seemed more like confessional sessions in which participants felt the need to explain how they could not meet the standards that they feel are required of them, whether these standards arose from their own expectations or those promoted by social pressures. The sentiment that they were not "perfect mothers" appeared in many forms throughout the interviews, such as "I've missed this school event," "I've missed this athletic game," "I should be more like Jimmy's mom," "my child calls me 'grumpy mom' or 'sleepy mom,'" "I missed Christmas and many other holidays," "I take work stress home and it affects my kids, and I feel like I'm there more for strangers than my own family," just to name a few. Not only did participants report feeling guilt about mothering, but they also reported that they fear their children will be treated differently or harmed because of the fact that their mother is a police officer. They feared that their choice of a profession could add to the emotional pain their children experience. The "heartbreak" was palpable in each interview.

Some participants reported struggling with the fact that they were purposefully going to work and participating in high-risk, dangerous, irresponsible behaviors that they were fully aware could potentially rob their children of their mother, whether literally by

death or indirectly by a lack of quality time and bonding (Agocs et al., 2015; Cowan & Bochantin, 2009). Before becoming mothers, participating in high-risk, dangerous, irresponsible behaviors was fun and exciting; however, after becoming mothers, these behaviors, though still fun, became laced with a lingering worry. One mother stated, "My actions are the same, but my thoughts are different" (Participant D). Although she was engaging in the same dangerous behavior as she did before becoming a mother, her internal dialogue was much different in that it focused more on her children and remembering to be as vigilant as possible to ensure that she made it home safely.

In addition to experiencing a new thought process, many participants felt forced to place additional boundaries and/or limitations on themselves in order to feel that they were being responsible mothers. The constant challenge to ensure that children are properly cared for despite unyielding schedules has caused many women with demanding careers to opt out of accepting promotions or progressing in their careers because they have viewed the personal cost as being too high (Roebuck et al., 2013). At least seven of the 11 participants recalled turning down a promotion, choosing not to pursue a promotion, or declining a career-advancing opportunity in order to keep their children their highest priority and to fulfill their expectations as mothers.

In conclusion, the policing profession is stressful, and the results of this stress have been demonstrated by the high divorce, alcoholism, and suicide rates of officers. Adding the guilt and fear that policewomen experience regarding their well being of their children and their abilities to be a "good mother" is enough to paralyze these women, as Beauvoir explained. This paralysis was demonstrated by the overwhelming emotions and

all-consuming thoughts that these women shared about their children and their drive to "have it all." In addition to the double workload that participants reported experiencing, the mental and emotional anguish also has made an impact on them at a deeper level. These uncomfortable and disturbing feelings interfere with their quality of life, self-esteem, workplace morale, and family dynamics. Support, by way of policy and mentorship would benefit policewomen personally and professionally, and it likely would improve the lives of their families as well.

Policy

The low representation of women in traditionally masculine professions, such as policing, in addition to the recent decline in the number of women in these professions during the past decade, has caused researchers such as Archbold and Schulz (2012), Bochantin and Cowan (2010b), Kurtz (2012), and Rabe-Hemp (2011a) to question whether women still could be facing discrimination to some degree despite laws such as the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA). Of all the patterns that emerged in this study, a lack of policy was most commonly mentioned or described by participants. All 11 participants commented to some extent on the absence of a policy in their departments addressing issues related to pregnancy and motherhood. They explained that they experienced discomfort, fear, and/or a feeling of loss because no policies were in place to address these issues.

In previous studies, this absence of policy has been perceived by policewomen as a lack of support by their departments, and some have even reported that being pregnant or being the parent of toddlers or young children is used as an excuse or an attempt to

hinder them or push them out of the profession (Bochantin & Cowan, 2010b; Cowan & Bochantin, 2009; Kurtz, 2012). Although the participants in this study never directly mentioned feeling that an absence of policy was a way to push them out, many of them were taken aback when discussing the absence of policy and wondered why this issue has not been addressed. They understood that women have been in the police profession for decades, and the fact that an attempt to accommodate or support policewomen through this natural life process has not been made was an obvious slight towards them. The fact that progress has not been made for more than half a century illustrates the lack of importance that this issue held in most police departments. Participants holding this perception would explain why some were fearful of disclosing their pregnancy to their superiors. Once they were not able to work long hours, work extra hours, fit into their uniform, or maintain their firearms certification, they did not know what their professional future held.

Schulze (2010) conducted a study reviewing the leave policies of 203 police departments and found that only "6.9% had their own policy in place that provided some type of light duty assignment and 5.9% designated unpaid, or paid leave in excess of FMLA as well as some type of light duty assignment," which left the remaining departments with policies that defaulted to federal mandates (p. 181). These results align directly with my findings and reflect the type of policy, or lack of policy, that existed in the participating departments. Because a majority of the departments lacked an official pregnancy policy outside of the FMLA, participants reported that they felt reluctant and hesitant when disclosing their pregnancy, mostly out of a fear of the unknown. Their

reasons for waiting to report their pregnancy differed, but all the related fears they

reported were the result of concerns about what would happen to them. The absence of

policy and their subsequent decision to remain on road patrol placed many of these

women and their unborn fetuses in dangerous situations and created increased liability for

the department.

Without a light-duty policy as protection, participants reported that they either

stopped working, sacrificing wages and other benefits until they returned to work, or

ignored medical advice and continued to perform all job duties as long as they were

physically able in order to keep their wages (Grossman & Thomas, 2009). Gatrell (2013)

reported that policewomen worked through severe morning sickness, hid the pain of

medical procedures, and even placed themselves in physically dangerous altercations to

avoid disclosing that they were pregnant out of fear that they would be further

marginalized. My study revealed similar situations in which policewomen would go to

extremes to hide their pregnancy or avoid being removed from road patrol. Some

participants reported that they had engaged in physical fights, vomited between calls for

service, and were willing to be Tased as a part of their training--all because of a lack of

policy and a fear about what would happen to them as a result of their pregnancy.

The findings of this study, along with prior research, seem to indicate that most

police agencies are ill prepared to adequately handle the needs of pregnant police

officers. The masculine traditions and culture within most police departments hinder their

ability to operate with a feminist perspective and truly understand women's needs.

Instead, individual employees, in this case female officers, not the organization, assume

responsibility for all issues related to motherhood and pregnancy that do not fit squarely within existing policy (Bochantin & Cowan, 2010b). Eight of the 11 participants in my study described informal workarounds they created to alleviate some of the burden that was caused by pregnancy and motherhood. These workarounds were important in helping participants maintain their career. However, without policy support, policewomen will continue to struggle to balance their work life and their home life with little to no support, turn down promotions, or even quit the police force in order to take care of their family.

One important question that arises from this study, and other similar studies, is why society expects so much more from one gender than it does from the other. A double workload, the mental and emotional baggage resulting from expectations placed on mothers, and the fact that women do the work of mothering while attempting to maintain a full-time job through workarounds seems excessive, especially when society and their own departments are claiming that they are equals. Police departments today cannot expect women to improve these issues on their own. Working women already are extremely busy, and many are hesitant to speak up because they do not have the support to do so. If departments took initiative and reached out to female officers for guidance about how to create a more gender equitable workplace, they might be surprised at the interest and help they might receive.

Limitations

As with every study, this study encountered limitations. The greatest limitation was that influences other than motherhood and policy might influencing the ability of participants to maintain successful policing careers, such as marital status, race,

education, etc. In addition, geographic location could also be a limitation in that all of

the participants were employed by police departments located in northern Ohio. The

police culture may be different in northern Ohio compared to other departments across

the nation, thus influencing the experience of participants. Generalizability would be

increased if the sample population had included participants from police departments

nationwide; however, considering time and resource limitations, it was impossible to

control for all of these variables. In addition, without police contacts nationwide, limiting

the scope to northern Ohio was sufficient for the purpose of this study; however, it should

be noted as a limitation.

Recommendations for Future Research

Based on the findings, two recommendations for future research have emerged

from this study. First, expanding the study to include police departments outside of

northern Ohio, and potentially sampling departments across the entire nation would help

to strengthen the validity of the study and increase generalizability of the findings.

Secondly, considering the suggestion of two participants and male officers that

have taken an interest in this study, including peers, and chiefs of participating

departments, I would recommend that a similar study be conducted with male officers

who are fathers. The purpose of this future study would be to identify the ways in which

the challenges that male officers (who also are fathers) face are similar to or different

from the challenges that female officers (who also are mothers) face. This type of

comparative study would help determine whether the challenges experienced by female

officers are the result of parenthood, which male officers also experience, or whether

these challenges were a product of stereotypes and assigned gender roles incongruent with the masculine police culture.

Implications and Recommendations for Practice

Without social and organizational reform, the findings of this study have suggested that history, tradition, and the existing police culture will continue to marginalize women despite evidence supporting the value of women in police work. According to Kingshott (2012), "Women have proved that they are not only competent in all aspects of police work, but they bring a caring and empathetic dynamic to the organization that benefits the organization and the communities they serve" (p. 382). Considering the many challenges and obstacles that women in the policing profession have faced it should not be surprising that women have not been retained. The representation of women in the policing profession has remained stagnant, and the largest number of women are leaving the profession during childbearing and child-rearing years as evidenced by the representation of women in the (Archbold & Schulz, 2012; Lonsway, 2007; Prenzler et al., 2010). This stagnation and exodus of women can be easily attributed to the lack of support that pregnant women and mothers in the policing profession have continued to experience. When female officers reflect on their situation, despite their desire to have a family and also maintain a career, giving up a career that they love for their family has been an easy choice because it is not realistic to maintain them both, given the current organizational climate within most police departments.

New legislation and departmental policy reform could benefit female police officers and better support them in managing the family-life/work-life balance that has

been identified by women as one of the primary challenges that prohibits them from

remaining in the policing profession (Cowan & Bochantin, 2009; Prenzler et al., 2010;

Lonsway, 2007; Yu, 2014). Bringing awareness to this phenomenon and providing more

options for women can be the first step in correcting and balancing this problematic issue.

Social change cannot occur without first increasing the awareness of those who are not

affected. Implementing policies and practices could potentially contribute to the

advancement and professionalization of the policing profession as a whole by changing

the traditionally masculine organizational culture and promoting a more gender-neutral

environment, allowing communities to benefit from having a more diverse police force.

Higher retention rates can also alleviate a large financial burden on departments that can

be associated with high turnover rates (Shelley et al., 2011). As more women are able to

enter the field, and "move into leadership positions, organizations themselves will begin

to change and will become less hierarchical, more participatory," and as a result, the

police culture may eventually change to reflect a more supportive environment (Cordner

& Cordner, 2011; Stivers, 2002, p. 77).

Organizations that lack policies to support women as they encounter normal life

experiences, such as pregnancy and maternity leave, should consider drafting policies

with the help of female officers. Progressive policy changes could include 24-hour on-

site child care for emergency service workers as a part of the benefit package (similar to

the policies of Fortune 500 companies) or they should be offered as a government

initiative similar to policies and benefits provided in Sweden (Sorensen, 2011; Yost,

2012). In addition, mentorship programs or support groups for policewomen could be

implemented to better assist them through some of the challenges of pregnancy and

motherhood. Pregnancy policies could be developed or revised to support female officers

(Grossman & Thomas, 2009; Kingshott, 2012). Flexible working hours, flexible shifts,

and other family-friendly policies could be explored. These changes would benefit not

only women but also men as well. Making progressive policy revisions and implementing

them could benefit female police officers by providing support that helps them manage

the family-life/work-life balance that has been identified by women as the primary

challenge that prohibits them from remaining in the policing profession (Cowan &

Bochantin, 2009; Prenzler et al., 2010). These policy revisions could potentially

contribute to the advancement and professionalization of the policing profession as a

whole by changing the traditionally masculine organizational culture and promoting

gender-neutral practices and policies.

  Progressive policies and practices could also provide much-needed support for

female officers and contribute to their fight for equal rights and against gender

discrimination, especially during their childbearing and child-rearing ages. If these

policies reduced or eliminated obstacles, an increased number of females could be

recruited and retained in the policing profession. If the policing profession truly wants to

progress, an examination of the workload/expectations placed on policewomen, both at

home and at work, needs to be conducted in order to support and promote gender

equality. Establishing child care policies is one way police departments could support

women and help them balance this double workload. According to Gultekin et al. (2010);

Hsu (2014); Kurtz (2012); Roebuck et al. (2013); and Sorenson (2011), child care

policies can exert a meaningful influence on women by creating employment opportunities, improving retention, and establishing social equality, thus helping women reconcile tensions between work life and family life. Until this imbalance is at least acknowledged, women will never have the same opportunities as men. Officially, they may be able to apply for the same positions. However, when it comes to actual equality, women have continued to be disadvantaged in the workplace. Ultimately, they have too many competing devotions that spread their talents, energies, and finances too thin to allow them to perform at their best or to accept advancement opportunities. Implications for social change include strengthening and modernizing the policing profession by recruiting and retaining more female police officers, who have been found to benefit the profession (Cowan & Bochantin, 2009; Silvestri et al., 2013). On an even larger scale, these progressive gender-neutral policies and practices could be expanded in professions nationwide to promote true equality, not just illusions of equality, in the American workforce. Gender equity is a desirable goal from a social change perspective.

Conclusion

There is little known about the life of policewomen, especially those who are mothers. Policewomen have a very difficult job, not only while on duty, but also in their efforts to maintain some semblance of a normal life at home. Unfortunately, these two domains of their lives are not very compatible, often competing for their time, energy, and resources on a daily basis. Through the interviews, conducted for this study, policewomen have provided meaningful insights into what it means to be a policewoman and a mother in today's world.

The participants in this study indicated that their workload as police officers is demanding and rigid, whereas their work as a mother is emotion-filled and never ending. Managing both is nearly impossible. Once their shift ends at the police department, policewomen go home to begin their second shift being a mother. With a lot of planning and support from others, most participants have been able to attain some level of success. However, even though they have been able to logistically maintain both their career and their family, they were not able to escape the guilt and fear that comes with being a mother and a police officer. The fear of dying or being injured and not being able to care for their family, the fear of how their children will be treated because they are officers, and the guilt that they feel for not being the "perfect mother" because of their career choice, haunts them nearly every day.

Unfortunately, police departments have yet to fully understand the challenges that policewomen who are mothers face on a daily basis. This has been illustrated by the absence of policy that has been implemented regarding women's health issues pertaining to pregnancy and maternity leave and a lack of support that many policewomen receive during childbearing and child-rearing ages. Police administrators need to create effective policy to support and retain women in their department and also to recruit new officers in the future. Research has clearly indicated that women benefit the profession in a multitude of ways. Recruiting and retaining more women could help move the field toward a more professional era of policing, which is being demanded by the community today. My hope is that this study will contribute to feminist theory by using the lived experiences of these participants to drive the interests of women with a focus on changing

or improving their situation and seeking equality within the policing profession, thus

improving the profession altogether.

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Appendix A: Letter of Cooperation from a Research Partner

Wayne County Sheriff's Office
Administrator Title
Address of Organization

Date

Dear Lacy Ellis,

Based on my review of your research proposal, I give permission for you to conduct the study entitled *Policemoms: Perceptions of Motherhood and Policy in Ohio Police Organizations* within Wayne County Sheriff's Office. As part of this study, I authorize you to interview officers who have agreed to participate in your study, contact these officers as needed for authentication purposes and to conduct follow up questions, and disseminate results and/or the finished study back to the participants. Individuals' participation will be voluntary and at their own discretion.

We understand that our organization's responsibilities include: providing a list of names and contact information for officers that meet the inclusion criterion: 1.) must be actively commissioned, 2.) must be employed in Ohio, and 3.) must have children/be a mother (biological/adopted). We understand that the identity of officers who agree to participate in the study will not be revealed or made public to our organization unless the officer chooses to disclose her participation. We reserve the right to withdraw from the study at any time if our circumstances change.

I confirm that I am authorized to approve research in this setting and that this plan complies with the organization's policies.

I understand that the data collected will remain entirely confidential and may not be provided to anyone outside of the student's supervising faculty/staff without permission from the Walden University IRB.

Sincerely,
Authorization Official
Contact Information

Walden University policy on electronic signatures: An electronic signature is just as valid as a written signature as long as both parties have agreed to conduct the transaction electronically. Electronic signatures are regulated by the Uniform Electronic Transactions Act. Electronic signatures are only valid when the signer is either (a) the sender of the email, or (b) copied on the email containing the signed document. Legally an "electronic signature" can be the person's typed name, their email address, or any other identifying marker. Walden

University staff verify any electronic signatures that do not originate from a password-protected source (i.e., an email address officially on file with Walden).

Appendix B: Participant Consent Form

You are invited to participate in a research study that involves the perceived experiences of police officers who are mothers and how they balance this dual role. You were selected for this research study because you meet the inclusion criteria of being a mother and an actively commissioned police officer in Ohio. Your knowledge and experience in both of these areas could contribute beneficial information to this particular topic. This form is part of a process called "informed consent." It is designed to inform you of the purpose and procedures that are involved in this study before agreeing to participate. Please read this form to its entirety and feel free to ask any questions you have prior to consent of participation in this study.

This is an independent research study and is not endorsed or sponsored by any specific police department or organization. The statements and questions addressed by the researcher do not represent any individual or employee associated with your department. The researcher is the only member representing these questions and only in her role as a Doctoral Candidate.

Lacy Ellis is the researcher conducting this study and is a Doctoral Candidate at Walden University studying Public Policy and Administration. Lacy has been an actively commissioned police officer since 2006 and takes great pride in conducting research in the criminal justice field, specifically law enforcement. In addition to her role as an officer, she is an Assistant Professor at Tiffin University, and a mother to three children. It is her hope that this research makes a positive impact for female officers across the U.S. and potentially women in the workforce in general.

Purpose of this Study:
The purpose of this study is to explore how female police officers perceive motherhood and departmental policies, including pregnancy policies, the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), the Pregnancy Discrimination Act (PDA), and even statewide mandates, such as firearm requalification requirements. Research has shown that women face additional barriers compared to those of men in the policing profession, stemming mostly from the masculine police culture, the questioning of their competence and abilities, sexual harassment, and double standards; however, how women perceive the dual role of motherhood and policing has rarely been examined.

Procedures:
If you consent to this study, you will be asked to:
- Meet researcher for a face-to-face interview in a neutral setting of your choice (i.e. public library, church).
- Participate in an interview (approximately 60 minutes) where you will be able to discuss any aspects of your dual role as mother and police officer as they relate to your experiences, as well as answer questions unique to this study.

Sample questions:
- o Has your perception of your career/job changed since having children? How so?
- o Can you tell me how the unique demands of police work interfere with your family life? Or vice versa?
- o How do you feel the current leave policy (maternity/paternity) could be improved?
- o What kind of advice would you offer a mother considering an occupation in policing?

- Review a 1-2 page summary of key findings from your interview will be sent to you via email for review. The purpose of this review is to ensure that a true and authentic representation of what was conveyed during the interviews is being presented. This should take approximately 20 minutes.

Voluntary Nature of this Study:
Your participation in this research study is strictly voluntary. This means that I will respect your decision to decline to an interview or have your information removed from this research. If you decide to participate, you can still decline for any reason and at any time during the study. There will be no consequences for not participating in this study.

Risks and Benefits of Participation in this Study:
It is understood that speaking about certain issues of motherhood in a masculine organization can be viewed as taboo in some cases. If you feel that participation in this study could marginalize you or be used against you in anyway you are encouraged not to participate. It is a possibility some questions may be uncomfortable to answer. Please feel free to decline questions that appear to be too uncomfortable or that you feel may impact you or your department in a negative manner.

The benefits of participation will not be felt at an individual or participant level. Rather, the benefits will hopefully be felt and measured by social change and reform geared toward true gender equality in police departments that can be made from the findings and recommendations of this study.

Compensation:
There is no compensation for your participation, aside from the possibility of a free beverage during the interview and receiving the final product. However, the researcher greatly appreciates the time and effort that you have invested into this study.

Confidentiality:
Any information that you provide for this study will be kept confidential, including your choice to participate, even from your chief/administrative Officer. With your permission, your statements will be quoted and/or paraphrased in this research study, under an

assigned pseudo name to protect your identity. Your information will not be used outside of this research study.

Contact Information and Questions:
If you have any questions or concerns you may ask them now. If questions or concerns arise at a later time, please do not hesitate to contact the researcher, Lacy Ellis via cell phone at 330-464-7977 or via email at lacy.ellis@waldenu.edu. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call Dr. Leilani Endicott. She is the Walden University representative who can discuss this with you. Her phone number is 612-312-1210. Walden University's approval number for this study is **01-04-16-0349272** and it expires on **January 3, 2017.**

You will receive a copy of this form for your records.

Statement of Consent:
I have read the above information and I understand its entirety. I do believe I know enough about this topic that I can provide professional and personal expertise to contribute to this research study. By signing, I will agree to the terms mentioned above.

If consenting by email, please reply to this email with the words "I consent," which will indicate your agreement to the terms mentioned above.

Name of the Participant (PRINT) _____

Signature of the Participant _____

Date of Consent _____

Name of the Researcher (PRINT) _____

Signature of the Researcher _____

Date of Consent _____

Appendix C: Interview Protocol

Name of Interviewer: _____

Name of Participant: _____

Assigned Pseudo name: _____

Date/Time: _____

Location of Interview: _____

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research. As you know, this research project is about women in law enforcement, specifically the perception of motherhood and policy in police organizations and how the dual role of mother and police officer are maintained. I will be asking questions about your role as a police officer and your role as a mother. In addition, I will be asking questions about departmental policy as it relates to these two roles. It is my hope that this study will provide insight into a phenomenon that has rarely been examined from an insider's perspective. This information could potentially be used to provide recommendations for reform seeking true gender equality in both police departments and other professions.

This interview will be audio taped for transcription purposes. You will have the opportunity to review a summary of the key findings from your interview for authentication purposes prior to analysis. Your participation will be kept strictly confidential.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

　　　(Sign informed consent form)

Interview Questions

Opening Questions:

1. Can you please tell me your position/rank within the police department?
2. How many years have you been on the force?
3. How many women (including yourself) are on your department?
4. Can you elaborate on why you chose to become a police officer?
5. May I ask how many children you have (ages)? Are they biological/adopted?
6. May I ask your marital status? Both current and any previous marriages?

Pregnancy:

1. Were you pregnant/did you deliver while you were employed in law enforcement or did you have your children prior to being an officer?
2. Please think back to when you decided to have children. Was this a difficult decision for you? Did your career aspirations cross your mind when making this decision? Why/how so? How did you feel about this?
3. Were you the first officer to become pregnant in your department? If so, did you have any concerns about being the first? Why?
4. When you became pregnant, how far along in your pregnancy were you before you disclosed your pregnancy to your superior/department? What was your reasoning for disclosing at this particular time?
5. Can you explain what your situation was like from the point you notified administration you were pregnant through when you returned to work after birth (leave)? Reactions that you received, policies that you used, leave, processes, your thoughts/feelings, what changed?
6. In your experience, how does pregnancy/motherhood change an officer's work responsibilities and status?
7. Did your department have a maternity uniform? If not, how did you handle this as you reached later stages of pregnancy?
8. Were you required to re-qualify with your firearm while pregnant? How did you feel about that?

Motherhood:

1. Can you tell me how the unique demands of police work interfere with your family life? Or vice versa?
2. What fears do you have about being a police officer and a mother? Fear of death/injury? Fear of being a "bad mother"?
3. Has your perception of your career/job changed since having children? How so?
4. If you compare yourself and your career with mothers who are working in other professions, do you feel that your challenges are unique to your career? How so?
5. Have you created your own strategies to help manage the two roles? If so, can you provide examples (i.e. child care arrangements)?
6. Pretend I am your child, and I say to you, "Mommy, I want to be a police officer like you when I grow up." How does this make you feel and what are your thoughts about his/her comment? How would you respond to your child? Would you encourage or discourage your child to follow this as a career path?

Policy:

1. When you had your children were procedures already established for handling pregnancy within your department? If not, how was this handled?
2. Does your department have a pregnancy policy or maternity leave policy, outside of FMLA?
3. How do you feel the current leave policy (maternity/paternity) could be improved?
4. Please explain your experience when you took leave? What was the determining factor to take leave? Was it forced/voluntary? Paid/Unpaid? Light duty/no duty?
5. Do you feel that your department overall is supportive of parents?
6. What is your perception of treatment and expectations of officers who are mothers versus officers who are fathers in your department?
7. Have you ever felt that your career opportunities were limited due to being a woman/mother? Please explain.

Culture:

1. When I say "Police Culture" what does this mean to you?
2. Do your co-workers expect you to act a certain way because you are a woman? A mother? Can you give me examples or situations that illustrate this?

Closing Questions:

1. In your opinion, what do you perceive as the most difficult problem facing women entering this profession today?
2. Was there ever a time that you considered leaving the profession? Please explain.
3. Lets pretend you are a graduating senior in high school and have the ability to start over and choose any career path, would you still become a police officer? Why/why not?
4. What kind of advice would you offer a mother considering an occupation in policing?
5. Is there anything else that you would like to share with me or that you believe would be beneficial to this study?

Appendix D: Initial Contact Email

Dear Patrolman _____,

Hello, my name is Lacy Ellis and I received your contact information from Chief _____ who has allowed me to conduct research within your department. I am a Professor at Tiffin University and a Patrolman for Shreve Police Department. I am currently completing my Ph.D. through Walden University and my dissertation is titled: *Policemoms: Perceptions of Policy and Motherhood in Ohio Police Organizations*.

I want to invite you to participate my study, which involves the perceived experiences of police officers who are mothers and how they balance this dual role. You were selected for this research study because you meet the inclusion criteria of being a mother and an actively commissioned police officer in Ohio. Your knowledge and experience in both of these areas could contribute beneficial information to this particular topic.

The purpose of this study is to explore how female police officers perceive motherhood and departmental policies, including pregnancy policies, the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), the Pregnancy Discrimination Act (PDA), and even statewide mandates, such as firearm requalification requirements. Research has shown that women face additional barriers compared to those of men in the policing profession, stemming mostly from the masculine police culture, the questioning of their competence and abilities, having heavier workloads at home, sexual harassment, and double standards; however, how women perceive the dual role of motherhood and policing has rarely been examined. It is my goal to use this research to better understand the challenges that may be affecting women in being retained in policing, and bring awareness to issues of gender equality that may be contributing.

Chief_____ has agreed to allow you to participate; however, your participation is strictly voluntary and your Chief will not know if you decided to participate. Please review the consent form I have attached to this email. It explains my study in detail, what your participation would entail, benefits, confidentiality, etc. Should you agree, I would arrange a time and place convenient for you (local library, church, etc.) to meet and conduct our interview. You can sign the consent form at that time.

Should you have any questions at all please feel free to reach out to me. In addition, I welcome you to look into my background as well to make an informed decision to participate.

I look forward to hearing from you!
Sincerely,
Lacy Ellis

Appendix E: Observational Protocol

Name of Interviewer: _____

Name of Participant: _____

Assigned Pseudo name: _____

Date/Time: _____

Location of Interview: _____

	Descriptive Notes (observations)	**Reflective Notes** (questions to self, my interpretations of non verbal behavior)
Physical Setting		
Participant		
Opening Questions (Enter question # for any observations)		
Questions on Pregnancy		
Questions on Motherhood		
Questions on Policy		
Questions on Culture		

Closing Questions		