THE PERSISTENT GLASS CEILING IN LAW ENFORCEMENT: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY
EXAMINING THE EXPERIENCES OF FEMALE POLICE LEADERS

by

Haley Slade

This dissertation is submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education

Ferris State University

June 2023

The Persistent Glass Ceiling in Law Enforcement: A Phenomenological Study Examining the Experiences of Female Police Leaders

by

Haley Slade

Has been approved

June 2023

APPROVED:

Jimmie Baber, EdD
Committee Chair

Dalton Connally, PhD
Committee Member

Sandra J Balkema, PhD
Committee Member

 Dissertation Committee

ACCEPTED:

Sandra J Balkema, PhD, Dissertation Director
Community College Leadership Program

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of female police leaders. Data was collected using semi-structured interviews conducted via Zoom. Common themes and key threads were then identified through analysis of the data. The study was created and analyzed under the theoretical framework of feminism and tokenism.

Key contributors to the participants' career success to top leadership positions in law enforcement included informal mentor relationships, external support systems, education and training, work ethic, and perseverance. Several obstacles and barriers were identified as contributing to the underrepresentation of women in law enforcement. These barriers and obstacles included harassment, balancing work and family responsibilities, and the hypermasculine organizational culture of policing. The challenges and obstacles identified by the study participants were consistent with the literature pertaining to the glass ceiling and more specifically to challenges faced by females in law enforcement. The organizational culture described by the participants was also consistent with the literature pertaining to the organizational culture of policing. Coping mechanisms and strategies identified by the study participants included internal and external support systems and activities to relieve stress including exercising and healthy eating habits.

The participants emphasized the importance of increasing the number of females in law enforcement and recommended more female representation in higher education criminal

justice programs and police academies and the need for transformational change in the

organizational culture of policing.

KEY WORDS: Females in policing, female leaders in law enforcement, glass ceiling in law enforcement

DEDICATION

To my late mother, a lifelong educator and believer in the power of education. You taught me to always try my best, be my best, and aspire to great things. Thank you for teaching me to never take "no" for an answer and for teaching me that a woman can do anything a man can do and, as you would say, probably better. It is because of powerful and strong women like you who fought for women's rights that I can earn this doctorate today and that the women in this study were able to rise to the top of their profession. Thank you for tapping on that glass ceiling so that so many of us are able to break through, and thank you for making me believe I can do and be anything. I am because you were. Keep shining your light down on me.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank you to so many people who guided and supported me along this journey. I have been blessed to have so many people by my side and in my corner throughout this process.

Thank you to my committee, Dr. Baber, Dr. Connally, and Dr. Balkema. Your guidance, suggestions, and encouragement helped me see this through to the finish line. I greatly appreciate your time and expertise. Dr. Baber, thank you for agreeing to be my dissertation chair and for being a great example of someone successfully moving from a career in law enforcement to excelling in a career in academics. Dr. Balkema, thank you for all your guidance and "tips" during this dissertation process. Your ability to break this massive project down into small pieces is priceless. Also, thank you for your amazing editing and English language skills! Dr. Connally, I am forever grateful for your mentorship as I transitioned into the academic world. Your guidance and kindness made the transition so much easier and filled with laughs. But most of all, thank you for being a friend.

To my classmates in Cohort 11, we did it! Thank you for making this journey bearable and for filling it with companionship, humor, and lots of laughs along the way. I can't imagine a better group of people to spend the past three years with. The future is so bright for all of you, and I can't wait to see how you change the world!

And lastly, thank you to my family for all your support and unconditional love. Dad, thank you for always supporting me on my many, many educational and career journeys! Jason, thank you for always being my voice of reason and for paving the way in academics. Mom

would be so happy that we both made our way back to academics! To my dogs, thank you for laying tirelessly behind my desk in the basement while I endlessly typed and worked. I promise to have more time to throw the ball now. And to my partner, Janice, thank you for your endless support and love in all my endeavors and also thank you for knowing exactly when I need an adventure. Looking forward to a lifetime more of adventures with you. And lastly to my mom, thank you for showing me the value and power of education. I did it, Mom!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

Page

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

INTRODUCTION

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, women have become an increasingly more prevalent part of the workforce since about the 1960s (*Women in the Labor Force*, 2021). However, there is one industry that is still lagging far behind the rest of the labor force in terms of gender equality. In 2019, women made up 57.4% of the total labor force, while women made up only about 12.5% of all police officers (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2017; *Women in the Labor Force*, 2021). As indicated by these statistics, policing continues to be dominated by males. The problem becomes worse when we look at females in leadership roles in police departments with females comprising only 10% of first-line supervisors in police agencies and 8% of intermediate supervisors (Hyland & Davis, 2019). Furthermore, the problem becomes even worse when we look at the very top leadership positions in police departments with females comprising only 3% of top leadership positions in police agencies (Hyland & Davis, 2019). To exacerbate the problem, there is very little research that has been done on female executives in policing and much of the research that has been done is quite dated. This study focuses on eight female police executives and their experience rising to the top in a male dominated field.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

A woman's path to leadership in any field is fraught with barriers and obstacles. The glass ceiling is a metaphor that was created in the 1980s to demonstrate the many barriers preventing women from reaching leadership positions (Johns, 2013, p. 1). Over forty years have passed since the "glass ceiling" term was first used, and yet women still find themselves fighting to break through this metaphor. The problem is not unique to law enforcement; in fact, we find it in the corporate sector as well, as women struggle to earn top leadership positions such as chief executive officers or chief financial officers. In 1991, the federal government created the Glass Ceiling Commission to study the inequalities women faced in the workforce (Johns, 2013, p. 1). The commission identified three broad categories of barriers that women faced: societal, governmental, and internal business structural barriers (Federal Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995; Johns, 2013). Societal barriers include prejudice, stereotyping, and bias related to gender, race, or ethnicity that exist in society and result in blocked opportunities (Federal Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995; Johns, 2013). Governmental barriers include little or poor collection of employment data and a lack of monitoring and enforcement of affirmative action programs (Federal Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995; Johns, 2013). Lastly, internal business structural barriers include the organizational climate of the agency resulting in alienation or isolation of females, poor outreach and recruiting practices specific to females and minorities, and a lack of adequate training and mentoring programs (Federal Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995; Johns, 2013). Many of these same barriers can be found in law enforcement as well.

Despite women earning higher educational credentials and aspiring to leadership roles, women still find themselves failing to reach the top of their respective fields. Women make up

2

50.8% of the population in the United States and earn 59% of the country's master's degrees (Warner et al., 2018, para. 1). However, women still lag in key leadership roles in several industries. Women make up only 5% of all chief executive officers and 12.5% of all chief financial officers in Fortune 500 companies (Warner et al., 2018, para. 2). Women also make up only 22.7% of partners in law firms and 32% of full professors in universities in the United States (Warner et al., 2018, para. 2). Focusing specifically on law enforcement, women make up only 12.5% of all sworn police officers in the United States (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2017). Further magnifying the problem, females make up a mere 3% of all female police chiefs in the United States (Hyland & Davis, 2019, p. 7). This number increased from 1% in 2003, however, has remained relatively stagnate since 2013 (Schulz, 2003, p. 342). The United States Department of Justice reported that in 2016, 89.6% of all police chiefs were white and 97% were male (Hyland & Davis, 2019, p. 7).

In a world where glass ceilings are supposedly shattering everywhere, females are largely absent in our top leadership positions in policing. Why does this matter? In a time, where policing and the role of law enforcement in our communities is increasingly controversial, the research shows that women can help reform police departments. Female police officers are more trusted by their communities, exhibit better interpersonal communication skills, tend to be better at deescalating volatile situations and are less likely to use force (Roman, 2020, para. 2). Who better to lead our police departments than the women who are more trusted by their communities and more apt to recommend and initiate reform in policing?

HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE PROBLEM

Although we may think of the police in the United States as being in existence for a long period of time, organized public police forces are a relatively new concept. The first publicly funded and organized police force in the United States can be traced back to the city of Boston in 1838 (Waxman, 2017, para. 5). In the cities in the northern half of the United States, the creation of the police force can be mostly attributed to urbanization and the desire to protect private trade interests such as the shipping industry (Waxman, 2017, para. 5). However, police forces in the southern half of the United States were created in order to protect the system of slavery (Waxman, 2017, para. 6). These slave patrol forces can be traced back to the early 1700s (Waxman, 2017, para. 6).

Surprisingly, women in policing can be traced back to even some of these earliest instances of law enforcement in the United States. In at least informal roles, women can be found in the sheriff departments that made up the western portion of the United States starting around the 1870s (Archbold & Schulz, 2012, p. 695). These women often assisted their sheriff husbands in an unofficial capacity, although some were even given arrest powers (Archbold & Schulz, 2012, p. 695). However, women's formal presence in policing would take until almost 1900 to emerge in the United States, although these earliest police women found themselves not in traditional police roles, but rather in caretaker roles charged with taking care of women and children in police custody (Archbold & Schulz, 2012, p. 695). They often held the title of *matron*, which meant they lacked any arrest powers. Even those women fortunate enough to shed the title of matron and gain arrest powers found themselves in social service roles instead of crime fighting roles (Archbold & Schulz, 2012, p. 695).

4

One of the first documented police women in an official capacity was Lola Baldwin (*Lola G. Baldwin*, 2008). She was sworn in in 1908 in Portland, Oregon, thereby becoming America's first policewoman (*Lola G. Baldwin*, 2008). Although she was officially a sworn police officer, she was not given a uniform. Instead, her assignment was to patrol — in plain clothes — areas such as pool rooms, dance halls, and other entertainment areas where alcohol consumption and promiscuous behavior might be occurring (Archbold & Schulz, 2012, p. 695). Baldwin later became superintendent of the Women's Protective Division, where she would become an advocate for the protection of single working women (*Lola G. Baldwin*, 2008). Other cities watched Baldwin's role in the Women's Protective Division and created similar bureaus in their cities. Although Baldwin would never take on the role of a traditional police officer, many of her crime prevention strategies and social welfare practices would stand the test of time and be used as a model for years to come.

World War II began a marked changed in the history of women in policing. These women were no longer satisfied with being matrons, caretakers, or social workers within the police department. Many of these women had served in the military and came home wanting to do the same job as their male counterparts in policing (Archbold & Schulz, 2012; Smith, 2019). These mold-breaking women would find a way into policework. These women were given real police assignments, such as investigating abortion clinics; however, they were still mostly serving in undercover roles where the male detective thought a woman could be useful or less obvious (Smith, 2019). Nevertheless, women used their success in these female investigative roles to inch their way into traditional police work. Women started to find themselves in patrol roles and they were even issued uniforms and firearms (Archbold & Schulz,

2012, p. 696). It wasn't until 1968 that the first women police officers were assigned to patrol units in their own patrol cars (Snow, 2010, p. 1). Liz Coffal and Betty Blankenship of the Indianapolis Police Department started their 1964 Black-and-White Ford Custom with nervousness and excitement as they embarked onto the streets of Indianapolis in their own patrol car for the first time (Snow, 2010, pp. 1-8). However, it would take until the 1970s until female officers were routinely on patrol in the nation's largest cities and police departments.

As women started to take on larger roles in police departments, they began to seek promotions within their departments, which historically had been completely barred for women. In 1961, two female officers, Felicia Shpritzer and Gertrude Schimmel, from New York City Police Department, filed a lawsuit seeking to have the opportunity to take the Sergeant promotional exam (Archbold & Schulz, 2012, p. 696). Finally, in 1967, after additional litigation and two sets of make-up exams, they became the first two female lieutenants (Archbold & Schulz, 2012, p. 696). However, this breakthrough of the ranks for women that started in the late 1960s would not result in widespread promotions for women in law enforcement.

The first documented female police chief occurred in 1920 in the small community of Buckner, Illinois (Schulz, 2004, p. 43). Lydia Overturf, or Lizzie as she was called, was appointed by the mayor, John Mallory, to lead the police department, much to the dismay of the citizens of the town (Schulz, 2004, p. 43). The reaction of the town's folks to the appointment of Overturf was described as "…the gamblers laughed, the drunks snorted, and his [Mallory's] wife thought he'd lost his mind" (Schulz, 2004, p. 43). However, Overturf would prove her worth by adopting a tough zero tolerance policy of arresting gamblers and drunks (Schulz, 2004, p. 44).

Overturf found herself constantly defending her position and often this meant swinging her billy club to assure doubters she really was the police chief (Schulz, 2004, p. 45).

Despite this very early appointment of a female police chief, it would take until 1985 for a female to head a police department of a major city in the United States (Roman, 2018, para. 2). In 1985, Penny Harrington was sworn in as the chief of police for city of Portland, Oregon (Roman, 2018, para. 2). Harrington became the first female chief of Portland after rising through the ranks as the first female detective, sergeant, lieutenant, and captain (Roman, 2018, para. 3). Harrington's road to the top was never easy but rather filled with challenges and obstacles including discrimination lawsuits, sexual harassment, and constant bullying from what she called the "boys-only club" (Roman, 2018, para. 3). Harrington filed over forty sex discrimination lawsuits against the Portland Police Department during her tenure (Snow, 2010, p. 78). Despite Harrington's attempt to reform the department and elevate the role of females in policing, she was forced to resign during her first year as police chief amidst controversy surrounding the reform of their Force Policy and a lack of respect from the all-male command staff. When asked recently about the current state of females in law enforcement, Harrington responded that she was really hoping the "me too" movement would reach law enforcement too (Roman, 2018, para. 59). Harrington further explained, "I was hoping women in law enforcement would speak out too. That tells you how bad it is for women in there. They still don't dare speak up" (Roman, 2018, para. 59).

Despite the progress women in law enforcement have made during the past fifty years, the numbers of total women in law enforcement and the number of women in leadership positions seems to be stagnate (see Figure 1).

7

Figure 1: Women in Police Departments, 1987-2013
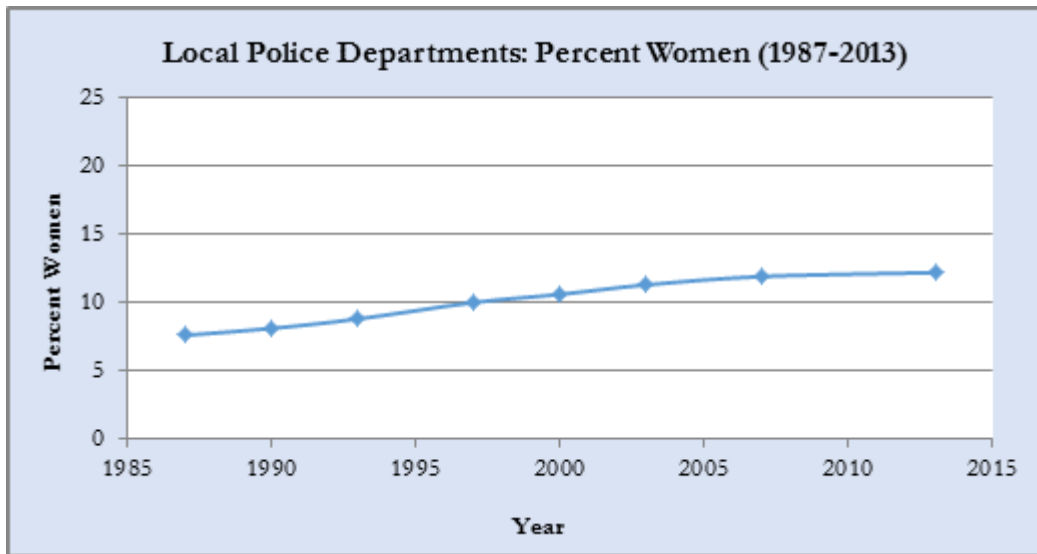
Source: Advancing Diversity in Law Enforcement, 2016

According to the Council on Criminal Justice Task Force, the number of female officers more than doubled from 1987 to 2016, increasing by 112%, while their share grew from 7.6% to 12.3% of local officers during that same period. However, most of the growth in representation of female officers occurred in the 1990s, after which their share of the total number of sworn officers has remained relatively stagnant (*Assessing the Evidence - Policing by the Numbers*, 2020, para. 6).

In the aftermath of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the number of females in law enforcement tripled from the 1970s through the 1990s (Miller & Segal, 2019, p. 1). However, that trend of substantial growth did not continue into the early 2000s. After experiencing substantial growth following the civil rights movement in the 1960s and the feminist movement in the 1970s and '80s, the number of women employed in law enforcement in the United States has essentially leveled off or reached a plateau. Not surprisingly, we see this same trend in the number of females leading police departments or in executive roles in police departments.

While women have made significant progress in law enforcement agencies, they still remain disproportionately concentrated in the lowest level positions of law enforcement (Lee, 2005).

HISTORY OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND POLICING

There have been initiatives to provide police officers with more education and training since the early 1900s (Roberg & Bonn, 2004; Marciniak & Elattrache, 2020; Gardiner, 2021). In the 1920s, Chief August Vollmer, who was a strong advocate at the time for police professionalism, began to advocate for higher education for police officers (Roberg & Bonn, 2004). This led to the creation of the first policing program in the United States at the University of California, Berkeley (Gardiner, 2017). After the creation of this program, other policing related programs at colleges soon followed, including the first Criminology program at the University of Chicago and the first two-year policing degree program at San Jose State University in 1930 (Gardiner, 2017). These early advocates of higher education in policing believed that higher education would create a more professional and well respected police agency (Roberg & Bonn, 2004; Gardiner, 2017). Despite this early progress in college policing courses and programs, not much progress was made as far as requiring police officers to have some higher education until the 1960s (Roberg & Bonn, 2004). The steep increase in crime rates in the 1960s and rioting in major cities led to increased attention on the professionalism and effectiveness of the police (Roberg & Bonn, 2004). A committee formed by the federal government in the late 1960s, The President's Crime Commission on Law Enforcement, proclaimed that the goal of all police agencies should be to require all police officers to have college degrees (Marciniak & Elattrache, 2020). In the 1970s, the government again created a task force related to studying police agencies and education and again recommended that

police agencies start requiring two-year degree for police officers immediately and eventually require four-year degrees (Roberg & Bonn, 2004). Despite these recommendations over the past 50 years, only about 1% of police agencies today require a four-year degree, and a high school diploma continues to be the most common minimal entry requirement for a police officer (Reaves, 2015).

PURPOSE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This qualitative phenomenological research study takes an in-depth look at the lived experiences of female police leaders. These leaders, who are severely outnumbered by their male counterparts, can give us an inside look to how they got to where they are today, the obstacles and barriers that stood in their way, and how they overcame these obstacles and barriers. This research seeks to understand the role that education, training, and leadership development plays in the participants' career path. This research seeks to give meaning and provide understanding to the pathway that these women took and how they made it to the top of their profession.

This study aimed to provide greater understanding to the limited body of research that exists regarding female police leaders. Much of the prior research was conducted several years ago and qualitative and quantitative data on this topic seems to be very limited. This study describes the individual and unique experiences of eight different female police leaders and their educational, training, and leadership journeys. However, this study also reveals common threads and themes surrounding the experiences of these female leaders. The goal of this study was to create a better understanding of what it takes for a female police leader to reach the top, thereby giving us better strategies to get more females in top leadership positions in law

enforcement. Females aspiring to be police chiefs one day and police departments struggling to recruit and promote female officers may benefit from reading about the experiences of the women in this study. Criminal Justice programs at community colleges and universities may also benefit from this study as they try to attract female and minority students and create a curriculum that helps to develop future law enforcement leaders.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

As we grapple with the complexities of police reform in this country and what that looks like, we know that more diversity is needed in our police departments. Women make up approximately half of the population in the United States, yet make up somewhere between 12-13% of total law enforcement officers in the United States (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2017). Additionally, women make up a mere 1-3%, depending on the study, of police chiefs in the United States (Schulz, 2003; Ziegler, 2021). Little research or literature exists regarding the lived experiences of these women in police leadership roles. This study was guided by these overarching research questions:

1. What are the lived experiences of female leaders in law enforcement on their pathway to becoming the leader of their department?

   - What helped them break through the glass ceiling and advance their career?

   - How did their educational journey and any leadership training help them advance their career?

2. What significant obstacles and barriers did these women overcome in their journey to become chief or deputy chief?

   - Were any of these barriers related to their gender?

   - From their perspective, did male officers face the same barriers to career advancement?

3. What reasons do current female law enforcement leaders identify for the ongoing underrepresentation of women in leadership roles?

- How can we improve college criminal justice programs to help recruit more females into the field and create more female police leaders?

4. What are the strategies women leaders in law enforcement identify as helping them cope and excel in male dominated police departments?

OVERVIEW OF METHODOLOGY

This study was based on a qualitative phenomenological research design. Qualitative research is best used when researchers want to understand more about how people interpret their experiences and what meaning they attribute to these experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 6). Qualitative research has its roots in the philosophical perspective of constructivism, which believes there is no single, observable reality but rather there are multiple realities that are socially constructed (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 6). Qualitative research was chosen for this study as the goal of this study is to gain a better understanding of the experiences of female leaders in law enforcement and to be able to portray their experiences in a rich, thick format. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) explain that a phenomenological approach is "well suited to studying affective, emotional, and often intense human experiences" (p. 28). The career of a police officer fits this description of an emotional and intense human experience. Also, the researcher will be the primary instrument of data collection and analysis in this study, which is a key characteristic of qualitative research.

Sample Selection

This study utilized purposeful sampling. Purposeful sampling allows the researcher to gain the most insight from a carefully selected sample. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) further explain, "Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of

central importance to the purpose of the inquiry, thus the term purposeful sampling" (p. 96).

Using purposeful sampling in this study allows specific cases, in this study female police chiefs,

to be selected that will give information rich cases: According to Patton (2002), "The logic and

power of purposeful sampling derive from the emphasis on in depth understanding. This leads

to selecting information rich cases for study in depth" (p. 46). The criteria used in the

purposeful sampling for this study included first being a female sworn police officer in the

United States. Next, the female police officer needed to have reached one of the top leadership

roles in their respective departments. This generally meant the female held the title of "Police

Chief," "Police Director," or "Deputy Police Chief." A total of eight female police leaders were

included in this study.

Data Collection

In qualitative research studies, the researcher is the primary data collector. The primary

method of data collection used in this study was interviewing. Person-to-person interviews

were conducted. These types of interviews can be described as a conversation with a purpose

(Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The purpose of the interview is for the researcher (the interviewer)

to gain a better understanding of what is going on in the interviewee's mind and therefore gain

a better understanding of how the interviewee experienced the phenomenon in the study. In

this study, personal interviews were used to gain a better understanding of how these female

police chiefs understand and experience their role as a female leader in policing. A semi-

structured interview format was followed for the eight interviews. This allowed the researcher

to respond to the situation in the interview and elicit new thoughts and ideas as the interview

progressed.

Delimitations refer to the boundaries of the research study. The purposeful sampling that was used in this study was certainly a delimitation. The participants were limited to eight females in law enforcement who had achieved the highest leadership positions in their respective departments. As these in-depth interviews were very personal experiences unique to these individuals, the results may not be able to be generalized across all females in law enforcement positions. The interviews were also limited in time and scope as there was not an infinite amount of time to interview participants.

RESEARCH BIAS

It is important that researchers acknowledge their own biases and assumptions that underlie and affect the study. As Merriam and Tisdell explain "…qualitative research is concerned with understanding how a particular researcher's values and expectations influenced the conduct and conclusions of the study" (2016, p. 249). For this researcher, the initial choice to choose this topic to study was a result of this researcher's own bias. This researcher is a female who spent eight years as a sworn law enforcement officer. For many reasons, including a lack of opportunity, this researcher did not rise to a leadership role in law enforcement. However, this researcher knew several other female officers who were both successful and unsuccessful in obtaining leadership roles in law enforcement, although very few were able to rise to the top level of police chief. Not surprisingly, the experiences, trials, and tribulations of females in law enforcement intrigued this researcher and left this researcher wanting to know more about this topic. This researcher understands that their own experiences

and challenges of being a female in a male-dominated field contributed to the interviews and shaping of the data in this analysis.

INTERSECTIONALITY

It is important to note that women in law enforcement are not a homogenous group and that their experiences are, in fact, individual to them. It is also important to note that this researcher recognizes the importance of intersectionality. Intersectionality is the theory that social constructs such as gender, race, ethnicity, and sexuality are all interwoven and connected to our experiences of discrimination, marginalization, and privilege (Smooth, 2013). According to the United States Department of Justice, in 2016, Black female officers made up 2.7% and Hispanic female officers made up 2.1% of all police officers in the United States (Hyland & Davis, 2019, p. 7). The Department of Justice also reported that 89.6% of all police chiefs in the United States were white and 97% were male (Hyland & Davis, 2019, p. 7). Thus, these minority women police officers have a unique perspective and experience different than their White female colleagues. These women find themselves as a double minority in a white male-dominated field. This researcher sought to tell some of their experiences in this purposeful sample selection of interviewees.

GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS

The following terms are used throughout this study. These definitions are provided to show how the researcher defined these terms in the study.

> *Glass Ceiling*: a metaphor used to describe the invisible barriers that prevent women and minorities from advancing to management and executive positions (Johns, 2013).

Glass Cliff: a metaphor used to describe the situation of placing a woman or minority in a leadership position at a time that the agency or department is in crisis causing the woman or minority to be more likely to fail (Federal Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995).

Police Leaders – the following terms are used to describe leaders in police agencies:

First-Line Supervisor: lowest level supervisors and generally direct supervisors to patrol officers, usually called Sergeants.

Mid-level Managers: supervisors ranked above first-line supervisors, usually called Lieutenants and Captains.

Chief Executives: highest ranked supervisors in a police agency, usually called Police Chiefs, Deputy Chiefs, or Police Directors.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

This first chapter provided an introduction to the importance of female leaders in law enforcement. It also provided a brief history of females in law enforcement followed by the research questions that this study addressed. The chapter then covered an overview of the research methodology and some of the limitations of this study. Chapter Two takes an in-depth look at the literature surrounding this topic. Chapter Three provides a much more in-depth explanation of the research methodology and framework. Chapter Four explores the data that was collected from the interviews and an analysis of that data. Chapter Five provides a summary of the research results, implications for future research on this subject, and finally this researcher's personal reflections on this topic.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the phenomenon of female leaders in law enforcement and their journey to get to the top of their profession. The journey of these individuals includes their background, their level of training and education, their actual and perceived barriers that they faced, the challenges of being promoted in a male dominated profession, and the strategies implored by these individuals to overcome and succeed. This literature review focused on the glass ceiling and barriers women face to achieving leadership positions, the barriers that women in law enforcement specifically encounter, the traits of females in leadership roles, the effect of the organizational culture of policing, the traits of women as police officers, and the intersection of race and gender. As the research specific to women in law enforcement leadership roles is still very limited, this literature review examined not only women leaders in law enforcement but women leaders in other organizations as many parallels can be drawn between women leaders in law enforcement and women leaders in the corporate sector.

THE GLASS CEILING

The glass ceiling has been used as a metaphor to define the difficulties of women transitioning into leadership roles in all facets of the workforce. Rosalind M. Chow, an associate professor of organizational behavior and theory at the Tepper School of Business at Carnegie

Mellon University, explained "The glass ceiling isn't so much a thing. It's a phenomenon that

people have noticed where women seem to have an easier time entering into organizations at

lower levels, but as they advance to higher levels, their numbers dwindle" (Lockert, 2022, para.

3). Lockert (2022) further explains women earn advanced educational credentials at a higher

rate than men yet hold far fewer executive positions than men (para. 5).

Wirth (2001) and Martinez-Fierro and Sancho (2021) explain that the term "glass

ceiling" was first used in the United States in the 1970s. Wirth (2001) further describes the term

as invisible and artificial barriers "created by attitudinal and organizational prejudices which

block women from senior executive positions" (p. 1). Martinez-Fierro and Sancho (2021) explain

that the phrase "glass ceiling" refers to the invisible barriers preventing women and other

minorities from career progression.

Numerous studies conducted in the past fifty years since the term "glass ceiling" was

first used have found women to be underrepresented in leadership roles. The United States

government found the glass ceiling to be such an issue that they created a fact finding

committee to study the issue in 1995 (Federal Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995). First the

committee found that in fact a glass ceiling does exist and that it substantially excludes women

and minorities from top management positions (Federal Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995). The

committee also identified several barriers that lead to this class ceiling effect including societal

barriers, internal structural barriers (within the organization), and governmental barriers

(Federal Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995). Wirth (2001) and Saleem et al. (2017) identified in

their studies of the glass ceiling contributing causes of both societal and organizational

stereotypes and discrimination. Warner et al.'s (2018) research focused on women in academia

and business roles, finding that women were greatly underrepresented in roles of chief

executive officers, chief financial officers, partners in law firms, and full professors. Glass &

Cook (2016) researched the number of women in key C-level positions, with similar results.

Lockert (2022) compared the number of women in C-level positions as well as the number of

women in chief executive officer roles in Fortune 500 companies and found a small increase in

females in C-level positions during the past few years, however, the same increase was not

found in females in Chief Executive Officer roles. When we look at the percentage of women

serving top leadership positions in law enforcement, we find the numbers are even lower. The

National Association of Women Law Enforcement Executives reports that women make up only

approximately 12% of all law enforcement officers in the United States and only 3% of law

enforcement executives (Tucker, 2021).

THE GLASS CLIFF

There is recent research surrounding the idea of the glass ceiling that identifies a new

phenomenon challenging female leaders in the workplace. This phenomenon has been named

"the glass cliff" (Ryan & Haslam, 2007; Glass & Cook, 2016;). The glass cliff refers to the idea

that when employers do promote women to leadership roles, they tend to do so at very

precarious and challenging times (Ryan & Haslam, 2007). In other words, employers tend to

promote women to leadership positions at times when they are destined to fail (Ryan &

Haslam, 2007). To put it metaphorically, women that break through that glass ceiling tend to

find themselves on a glass cliff waiting to fail and fall.

Empirical studies have confirmed this notion of the glass cliff. Haslam & Ryan (2008)

found that in all three of their studies involving hypothetical situations posed to graduate

19

students, high school students, and community college students, study participants were more

likely to put women in leadership positions when the organization was facing some type of

crisis or in a precarious position. One study even showed that men were more likely to be

placed in leadership roles when there was no risk of failure at all (Haslam & Ryan, 2008).

Similarly, a longitudinal study conducted between 1996 and 2010 that focused on CEO positions

of Fortune 500 companies found that women were more likely than white men to be promoted

in poorly performing firms or firms in crisis (Cook & Glass, 2014). Another study conducted by

Cook and Glass in 2016 found that 42% of women in their study set were appointed as CEO of a

firm when that firm was struggling compared to 22% of men (Glass & Cook, 2016).

There are several specific examples in the literature of females that have experienced

this glass cliff phenomenon. Mary Barra was appointed the Chief Executive Officer of General

Motors Corporation (GM) in 2014 (Glass & Cook, 2016). Immediately upon her appointment,

GM faced a major recall that led to Barra having to testify at congressional hearings. It was later

determined that members of the GM board of directors who appointed Barra were aware of

the pending recalls prior to her appointment (Glass & Cook, 2016). Pheba Novakovic was

appointed CEO of General Dynamics in January 2013 in the middle of the company posting a

two billion dollar loss in the prior quarter (Glass & Cook, 2016). Anne Mulcahy was appointed

CEO of Xerox in 2001 at a time when Xerox was near bankruptcy and experiencing a major

accounting scandal (Glass & Cook, 2016).

Similarly, there are also several examples in the literature of the glass cliff phenomenon

found in the hiring of female police leaders. Penny Harrington, the first female police chief of a

major city in the United States, was appointed as the head of the Portland Police Department in

1985 (Roman, 2018). Harrington inherited a department that was overburdened, understaffed, and faced a strained relationship between administrators and the officers' union (Roman, 2018). In 2018, Carmen Best was appointed as the first Black female police chief of the city of Seattle (Miletich & Beekman, 2018). Best took the reins in Seattle at a time when the police department still found themselves under a 2012 federal consent decree that addressed excessive force and biased policing (Miletich & Beekman, 2018). Best also found herself taking over a department that was in the middle of a difficult contract negotiation with the patrol officers' union, who had worked without a contract since 2014 (Miletich & Beekman, 2018). Jenee Harteau was promoted to Minneapolis Police Chief in 2012 (B. Williams, 2017). Harteau assumed control of a department that was rife with claims of disparate treatment of minority residents. Harteau was forced to resign in 2017 following several controversial use of force incidents and sentiments of mistrust from the minority community (B. Williams, 2017). Most recently, Keechant Sewell was appointed as the first female police commissioner of New York City Police Department in 2022 (Fitzsimmons et al., 2021). Sewell took over NYPD at a time of high crime rates, increased distrust of the police, calls for the defunding of the police department, and demands for major police reform (Fitzsimmons et al., 2021).

The glass cliff phenomenon may help provide an explanation as to why many female leaders leave their leadership positions (Haslam & Ryan, 2008). Stroh et al.'s (1996) longitudinal study conducted in 1989 involving twenty Fortune 300 companies found that, by 1991, 26% of the female managers had left their leadership roles compared to 14% of male managers. Stroh et al. (1996) also found that women were not leaving their leadership roles because of family responsibilities, but rather because of job dissatisfaction and other career related concerns.

Todak (2017) found that 28% of police agencies reported that it was more difficult to retain female officers than males. The Network of Executive Women published a report in 2018 finding that 24.4% of women in first-level and mid-level management positions were leaving their roles as opposed to 13.3% of men (Network of Executive Women, 2018, p. 5). The report also further found that women in top executive positions were leaving their jobs at a rate four times higher than men (Network of Executive Women, 2018, p. 5). The Network of Executive Women report concluded that if the current trends of women leaving the workforce continue, the female leadership population will experience a 50% decline in the next decade (Network of Executive Women, 2018, p. 2). Elting (2019) further found that not only are women leaving their positions at a higher rate than men, but that often, they are then replaced by men (para. 2).

GLASS CEILING BARRIERS

Females trying to break through the glass ceiling experience several types of barriers preventing them from obtaining leadership positions. These barriers include societal barriers such as discrimination, harassment, and stereotypes; organizational barriers such as biased recruitment practices and lack of mentoring and training; and they can also include personal barriers such as family obligations. This literature review looks both at research studies focused on barriers generally for women in the workforce and also specifically at barriers for women in the law enforcement field. It is important to note and alluded to by the literature that all women experience the glass ceiling differently and the glass ceiling metaphor is not meant to be a universal generalizable metaphor that can be applied to every woman in the same

manner; however, the literature attempts to find thematic commonalities experienced by women.

Oakley (2000) identified several barriers to women reaching leadership positions including what she refers to as "behavioral double-binds," communication and leadership styles, old boy networks, tokenism and differing male and female attitudes toward power (p. 324). Oakley (2000) describes the "behavioral double-bind" as a situation in which no matter what the woman does, she cannot win, as she is stuck in the conundrum of the urge to be more assertive to fit in the male leadership role while also trying to avoid being too assertive or too aggressive (324). The women leaders in Oakley's (2000) study expressed the perception that being too feminine was associated with incompetence and adopting masculine traits was equated with competence (Oakley, 2000). Regarding communication styles, Oakley (2000) explains that women are socialized to avoid self-promoting language, while males are socialized to use that language that enhances their status, a trait that is beneficial in the corporate culture (p. 325). Lastly, Oakley (2000) concluded that cultural and societal stereotypes are still widespread that perceive leadership roles as being more suited for a male.

Wirth's (2001) study of women in management positions found similar obstacles as those reported by the Federal Glass Ceiling Commission. Wirth (2001) emphasized that family obligation and dominance of male values in corporate culture were the main obstacles to career advancement. Interestingly Wirth (2001) also found that women who were in even higher-ranking leadership positions tended to experience more discrimination than those in lower leadership positions.

Elacqua et al. (2009) conducted a study of 685 managers (both men and women) at a large midwestern insurance company. The study identified several barriers preventing women from breaking through the glass ceiling into leadership positions. These barriers included interpersonal issues and organizational situational issues. The interpersonal issues included women's lack of access to mentors and informal networks within the organization (Elacqua et al., 2009, p. 286). Elacqua et al. (2009) also highlighted the existence of an "old boys" network within organizations as creating additional obstacles for women (p. 286).

Babic and Hansez (2021), who conducted a similar study to Elacqua et al. (2009), also identified similar barriers preventing women from breaking through the glass ceiling. Their study was conducted on 320 women in managerial positions at a global healthcare company (Babic & Hansez, 2021). Similar to Elacqua et al. (2009), Babic and Hansez (2021) found that women lacked access to mentor figures, which in turn, made them feel isolated from important formal and informal communication channels within the organization. Babic and Hansez (2021) also found that women often found themselves assigned to positions with lower visibility which made it harder to connect with managers and therefore lowered their chances of promotion (p. 10).

BARRIERS FACING WOMEN IN LAW ENFORCEMENT

Research indicates that women in the law enforcement field experience all these same barriers as women in the corporate sector. However, research also indicates that women in the law enforcement field may feel the effect of these barriers magnified and experience additional barriers as law enforcement continues to be a field dominated by white men. In 2019, the National Institute of Justice hosted a symposium bringing together over one hundred female

law enforcement officers from around the country. The participants identified several barriers

women in law enforcement face including adverse and hostile work environments, harassment,

sexism, double standards, a lack of support and opportunity, and trying to fit into the "boys

club" (National Institute of Justice, 2019, p. 4).

Various studies have documented the prevalence of harassment and sexual harassment

that females in law enforcement grapple with. Haarr (1997) found that 100% of the female

officers interviewed had experienced at least one instance of sexual harassment in their career.

Martin and Jurik (2007) found that two thirds of women in police organizations experienced

discrimination by colleagues, supervisors, and citizens (p. 71). Somvadee and Morash (2008)

conducted a study of 117 female law enforcement officers and found that 90.6% of

respondents had experienced some type of sexual harassing behavior in the workplace (p. 489).

However, only 58.2% of the women considered themselves a victim of harassment (Somvadee

& Morash, 2008, p. 489). In fact, Lonsway et al. (2013) indicates that the culmination of studies

on this topic suggest that 50-75% of American women in law enforcement will experience some

type of sexually harassing behavior in their workplace (p. 179). Lonsway et al. (2013) conducted

a study consisting of over 500 female law enforcement officers from across the United States.

The results of their study indicated that 93.8% of respondents had experienced some type of

sexual harassment in their workplace; however, 85.5% of the respondents indicated that they

never filed a complaint regarding the harassment (Lonsway et al., 2013, p. 190). Almost a

quarter of those respondents that did not file a complaint indicated they were concerned about

the implications on their career and feared retaliation (Lonsway et al., 2013, p. 190).

The literature shows that female officers express reluctance to reporting these incidents of harassment. Lonsway and Alipio (2007) explain that fears of retaliation and concerns that nothing will be done dominate the reasons for not reporting. Lonsway and Alipio (2007) conducted a study on female law enforcement officers who had filed harassment lawsuits against their employer. Their study found that less than 40% of the lawsuits resulted in any real changes being implemented in the police department, and many of the women in the study experienced retaliation (Lonsway & Alipio, 2007, p. 63). Lonsway et al. (2013) indicated that almost half of the female respondents who had made a formal complaint experienced some sort of retaliation (p. 188). It is evident from the literature that harassment, particularly sexual harassment is very prevalent in the law enforcement field, and it is also evident that female law enforcement officers are reluctant to file complaints regarding such harassment.

FEMALES AS LEADERS

Leadership is important to any organization. However, leadership is even more important in policing, where paramilitary organizations are responsible for the safety of a community and decisions made by leaders can literally result in saving lives or can result in the death of citizens. Wilson (1968) and Muir (1977) documented the importance of leadership in police organizations in the 1960s and '70s. Tyler (2011) noted the importance of leaders in policing to steer organizational change and establish legitimacy within a police department and community. As a result of the minimal number of females in law enforcement leadership positions, the research specific to female law enforcement leaders is limited. However, there are some studies detailing leadership traits of females in all occupational fields and a few studies specific to law enforcement.

Eagly and Johnson (1990) described women leaders as both more democratic and participatory than male leaders. Bass (1999) built upon and expanded Burns' concept of transformational leadership created in the late 1970s. Bass (1999) describes transformational leadership as leading with charisma, inspiration, and consideration of others and the organization. Bass (1999) explains that several studies show that women tend to be more transformational as leaders and this is evidenced by effectiveness and satisfaction among their subordinates (both male and female) (p. 17). Similar to Bass (1999), Eagly et al. (2003) also found women to be more transformational as leaders. Hoyt (2010) also found women to be more transformational as leaders and noted that women tended to be more supportive and more engaged in mentoring which have both been linked to more effective leadership.

FEMALE POLICE LEADERS

Leadership is important to any organization; however, arguably leadership is even more paramount in a police organization. Early research on police organizations emphasized the para-military model that included leadership that was impersonal, highly directive, and largely authoritarian in style (Jermier & Berkes, 1979; Thomas & Cangemi, 2021). Despite the early findings of Jermier and Berkes (1979) that this authoritarian leadership style was highly ineffective and resulted in low job satisfaction and little organization commitment by subordinates, many police organizations continued to pursue an authoritarian style within their ranks. Sarver and Miller (2014) explain the recent trend in police organizations and specifically police chiefs to transition away from a more authoritarian style of leadership to a more transformational style of leadership which has been found to be more effective. The United

27

States Department of Justice discussed the need to transition away from the traditional

paramilitary approach to a more community oriented approach in their Law Enforcement Best

Practices handbook (US Department of Justice, 2019).

The few studies specifically conducted on women leaders in law enforcement seem to

show mixed and sometimes contradictory results on the leadership styles portrayed by females

in law enforcement. Engel (2001) and Maskaly and Jennings (2016) both conducted similar

studies on the leadership styles of first-level supervisors in police departments (mostly

sergeants). Engel (2001) found that the female sergeants implemented a more traditional

leadership style relying heavily on following rigid rules and procedures of the department while

Maskaly and Jennings (2016) concluded that female sergeants in their study exhibited much

more innovative leadership traits rather than traditional as compared to the male sergeants in

their study. Maskaly and Jennings (2016) acknowledge that their study took place fifteen years

after Engel's study and perhaps organizational changes and the increase in female police

leaders could have influenced their differing results. Sarver and Miller (2014) conducted a study

in regards to leadership style with police chiefs in Texas. Their study revealed that the female

police chiefs were more likely to be transformational and innovative, while the male police

chiefs were more likely to be transactional and traditional (Sarver & Miller, 2014). More

recently, Beaton et al. (2022) conducted a study similar to Engel (2001) and Maskaly and

Jennings (2016). Beaton et al. (2022) found their results more closely matched that of Maskaly

and Jennings (2016) finding that 82% of the female police leaders in their study reported being

innovative or supportive leaders. Beaton et al (2022) explained that the female innovative

leaders in their study tended to adapt to the needs of their subordinates with an intentional

emphasis on mentoring officers to help them be more effective to the organization and the community.

Silvestri (2007) came to a different conclusion than the previously mentioned studies in her research. She explained that although we see transformational leadership traits among female police leaders and female police leaders understand the importance and effectiveness of transformational leadership, the traditional nature of the police organization itself fails to allow female police leaders to fully develop into transformational leaders (Silvestri, 2007). For example, the female police leaders in Silvestri's study indicated that when they exercised transformational leadership traits, such as using participatory and consultative approaches to problem solving, they found themselves being criticized for being too weak and taking too long to make decisions (Silverstri, 2007). Silvestri (2007) concluded from her research that the police organizations continued to value and subsequently reward a more transactional approach to leadership that was steeped in competitiveness and individualism.

Although the literature on female police leadership traits and styles is inconsistent, what remains consistent is the need for more studies and research in this area. As we see the numbers of females in leadership roles in policing increase, more research needs to be done to determine how they adapt their leadership styles to police organizations or how they use their leadership skills to effectuate organizational change in policing.

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

The nature of police work is unique, and the demands of the job are different from most other occupations. The unique characteristics of policing have led police organizations to develop a particular distinctive culture. The organizational culture of policing has caused unique

29

challenges and barriers to women in policing. It is important to recognize the complexities of police culture and to understand the culture of a police organization may vary historically and geographically; however, the literature indicates there are common threads defining the culture of policing.

Grieve at al. (2007) describes organizational culture as "the deeper level of assumptions and beliefs that are shared by members of an organization, that operates and projects unconsciously an organization's view of itself and environment" (p. 116). Kingshott (2009) defines organizational or workplace culture as "the sum of the beliefs and values held in common by those within the organization, serving to formally and informally communicate what is expected" (p. 64). The organizational culture of policing has deep historical roots that continue to pervade police organizations today.

Scholars who have studied the organizational culture of policing seem to agree that police organizations are highly gendered institutions (Haarr, 1997; Franklin, 2005; Silvestri, 2007; Kingshott, 2009). Acker (1992) defines a gendered institution as one in which gender is engrained in the processes, practices, images, ideologies and distribution of power within that organization. Acker (1992) further explains that these gendered institutions have been created and dominated by men and they have been defined by the very absence of women.

Franklin (2005) sums up the organizational culture of policing in one word, hypermasculinity. Franklin (2005) further explains that this this culture of hypermasculinity creates an environment that is not only hostile to women but promotes sexism and misogyny that is often directed against female police officers. Kingshott (2009) describes police organizational culture as elitist, misogynist, racist, and authoritarian. Batton and Wright (2019)

argue that this culture of masculinity has not just pervaded police organizations but the entire criminal justice system in the United States. They further explain this culture of masculinity as a system of patriarchy where men dominate women and masculine traits are valued over feminine traits.

Several research studies (Lonsway, 2003; Crank, 2004; Dejong, 2004; Batton & Wright, 2019; Belknap, 2021) have emphasized that policing has always been considered "man's work" emphasizing physical force, aggressiveness, and dominance. Research (Lee, 2005; Rabe-Hemp, 2009; Archbold & Schulz, 2012) also emphasizes that, although women were formally hired in police departments as early as 1900, they were confined to only traditional "female" roles such as caretakers, taking care of juveniles or females, and providing basic clerical support. Lee (2005) explains that it wasn't until the passage of affirmative action statutes by the federal government in the 1970s that women were able to assume more traditional police roles in law enforcement agencies. Martin and Jurik (2007) explain that despite this change in the nature and status of women in policing, men continue to believe that women cannot handle the job of policing physically or emotionally. Martin and Jurik (2007) further explore men's opposition to women in policing. Several studies (Fielding & Fielding, 1992; Waddington, 1999; Franklin, 2005; Martin & Jurik, 2007) have concluded that the mere presence of women in policing presents itself as a threat to the male police officer who values the masculinity of policework, a man's work, especially when the woman does the job of policing as good as the man.

As Miller (1998) describes it, women were seen as "too soft" to do the job of police work (p. 162). Miller (1998) explains that females are viewed as lacking the masculine traits of aggressiveness, bravery, and brutality which many view as necessary to fight crime. Garcia's

(2003) research revealed that the woman is seen as too emotional, too compassionate, too

physically fragile and gentle to do policework and that the lack of physical strength of women

has always been viewed as one of the main sources of opposition to women in policing.

OCCUPATIONAL BARRIERS

LAW ENFORCEMENT STANDARDS

Historically, police agencies have felt the need to screen out certain candidates that

they deemed unfit for the job. During the early part of the 1900s, physical standards were

developed in an effort to professionalize policing (Richardson, 1974). Gaines et al. (1993)'s

research found that these physical standards included not only agility testing but also height

and weight standards which continued up until the passage of Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights

Act and that prior to passing the Civil Rights Act, the government found that the height and

weight requirements used by law enforcement agencies were discriminatory against female

candidates. By 1990, the authors noted, 80% of police agencies had replaced their height and

weight requirements with physical agility and fitness tests (Gaines et al., 1993).

Scholars (Austin & Hummer, 1998; Parsons & Jesilow, 2001; Cordner & Cordner, 2011;

Nevers, 2019; Diaz & Nuño, 2021) agree that the physical fitness tests used by law enforcement

agencies have a disparate impact on female recruits. Schuck (2014), using data from over 4,000

police agencies, found that departments using physical fitness standards to screen out potential

applicants had less gender diversity than those that did not use these standards. Gannon (2017)

noted that a federal judge in Colorado ruled that a physical fitness test implemented by the

Colorado Springs Police Department had a disparate impact on female officers and, therefore,

was in violation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The Court found the test implemented

by the Colorado Springs Police Department resulted in a 50% failure rate for females and only a 6% failure rate for males. Marroni (2021) reported that a United States District Court ordered the Pennsylvania State Police to pay a $2.2 million dollar settlement as a result of the disparate impact of their physical fitness tests on female recruits. The Court found that from 2003 until 2012, 94-98% of males passed the physical fitness test, while only 71-72% of females passed (Marroni, 2021).

Williams and Higgins (2022) conducted a study utilizing the results of the physical fitness tests used by the Kentucky State Police from 2014-19. They found the Kentucky State Police physical fitness test also had a disparate impact on female recruits. According to their research, there is no currently federally mandated fitness standard for law enforcement resulting in vastly different physical fitness requirements from state to state and agency to agency. Scholars in the 1980s and '90s (Potts, 1983; Birzer & Craig, 1996) were already questioning the validity of these physical fitness tests and questioning the correlation between these tests and the job of a police officer. Garcia (2003) explained that there is a common misconception that the majority of policework is spent fighting crime whereas the actuality is that the majority of policework is spent doing much more mundane tasks such as writing reports and conducting social welfare type calls. Other scholars (Gaines et al., 1993; Cordner & Cordner, 2011) point out that, if physical fitness was so important to the job of policing, then ongoing fitness standards would be implemented at police agencies, which is currently not the case for the majority of law enforcement agencies. Schuck (2014) studied the effectiveness of physical fitness tests in policing and found little empirical evidence to show a correlation between physical fitness tests

and everyday police officer tasks and further found these tests were not predictive of how well an officer dealt with hostile or non-compliant citizens.

Additional barriers exist in the very nature of police work itself. According to a study conducted by Wertsch (1997), 69% of female officers interviewed expressed family obligations as the main deterrent to promoting and 72% of these female officers expressed that they did not feel that men had to make this same decision, sacrificing their career for their family (p. 48). Research by Cooper & Ingram (2004) noted that family responsibilities that often fall on the shoulders of the female clash with the duties of a police career. Cordner and Cordner's (2011) research also found that police officers are required to work night shifts, rotating shifts, and holidays, all of which make raising a family more difficult. Once an officer reaches the point of having seniority and therefore a shift preference, they may hesitate to apply for a promotion as a promotion often results in a bump back to low seniority and a change back to night shift or working weekends. Schulze (2010) and Batton and Wright (2019) explain that shift work affects women differently as they are more likely than males to have child rearing and family responsibilities. To exacerbate the problem, Batton and Wright noted that childcare is often difficult or impossible to find when working afternoon or midnight shifts. According to studies conducted by Muller et al. (2020) and Anton Rubio et al. (2021), many women felt they must choose between family and their profession causing them to abandon their profession completely or choose not to pursue promotional opportunities.

A study by Silvestri (2006) stressed that the role of the female as a child bearer and mother seems to be incompatible with policework in most agencies. Schulze (2010) explained

34

the stigma associated with being a female pregnant officer included policies at many agencies requiring a pregnant officer to refrain from wearing her uniform. Schulze's (2010) study, which looked at policies at over 200 law enforcement agencies, found that only 12.8% had specific policies covering administrative procedures if an officer were to become pregnant. Schulze (2010) also found little consistency regarding "light duty" assignments and availability to pregnant officers with many agencies requiring pregnant officers to exhaust all their paid leave time before being able to take unpaid leave under the Family Medical Leave Act. Rabe-Hemp and Humiston (2015) explain that despite the fact that nearly 60% of female officers will become pregnant at some point during their career, the research on how agencies handle pregnant officers during and after their pregnancies is sparse. Rabe-Hemp and Humiston (2015) also reported that 82% of law enforcement agencies in their study had only "discretionary" policies regarding pregnant women being given light duty assignments rather than any formal policies, which resulted in unequal treatment of pregnant officers.

WOMEN IN POLICING

The literature shows that there are significant differences between the way in which men and women police (Garcia, 2003; Schuck & Rabe-Hemp, 2005; Bolger, 2015; Bergman et al., 2016; Klemko, 2020). Several studies (Garner et al., 2002; Lonsway, 2003; Johnson, 2011; Bergman et al., 2016) have indicated that female police officers are less likely to use force against a suspect than their male counterparts. Garner et al. (2002) also found that when force was used by female officers, it was less likely to be excessive. Lonsway et al. (2002) further found that female officers accounted for fewer citizen complaints, fewer excessive force allegations, and fewer civil liability payouts compared to male officers. This study, which

examined seven large police departments across the United States, found that although female officers made up about 12.7% of the total police force, they accounted for only 5% of the total citizen complaints and 2% of the sustained allegations of excessive force (Lonsway et al., 2002, p. 3). Schuck and Rabe-Hemp (2005) confirmed the results of the Lonsway et al.'s study finding that female officers and female-female partner patrol units were less likely to use force than their male counterparts in police-citizen encounters. Schuck and Rabe-Hemp (2005) further concluded that increasing the number of female officers in police agencies would result in fewer excessive force complaints and thereby increase police legitimacy in a community. A study conducted by the Pew Research Center found male officers were more than twice as likely as female officers to have fired their weapon while on duty (Morin & Mercer, 2017). A study conducted in 2021 in the city of Chicago found that female officers executed 7% fewer arrests than male officers while using force 28% less often and the largest discrepancy in use of force between male and female officers was found in the use of force against Black civilians (Ba et al., 2021).

Literature (Lonsway et al., 2002; Dejong, 2004; Franklin, 2005; Roman, 2020), then, seems to indicate that female officers exhibit a different style of policing than male officers, one that relies more on communication and verbal skills and less on physical force. Garcia (2003) found women demonstrated a more service oriented style of policing that was more conducive to the community policing strategies that many agencies are trying to implement. Lonsway (2003) and Franklin (2005) found female officers to be better communicators and therefore more likely to be able to diffuse a volatile situation without the use of violence. Rabe-

Hemp (2009) found female officers were better at serving the needs of victims, particularly female and child victims.

There is a noticeable gap in the literature of female law enforcement officers regarding minority female law enforcement officers. There are very few studies that focus specifically on the experiences of officers who identify as both a female and member of a minority group. Collins (2009) describes this phenomenon of the experiences of non-white women as multi-racial feminism further explaining this as adverse experiences that exist in the context of a power hierarchy in which race and gender represent intertwining systems of oppression.

There is a tendency in the literature to treat female officers as a homogenous group (Felkenes & Schroedel, 1992; Yu, 2021). Additionally, the literature (Yu, 2021) that does examine minority women in law enforcement also treats that as a homogenous group without recognizing, for example, that the experience of a Black female officer may be quite different from the experiences of a Hispanic female officer or a female officer of Asian descent. This is evident in the Bureau of Justice Statistics that records the demographics of law enforcement officers in the United States. The Bureau of Justice Statistics accounts for percentages of male and female officers and also racial disparities of officers; however, there are no statistics to separate female officers who also identify as a racial minority (*2017 Crime in the United States - Full-Time Law Enforcement Employees*, 2017).

The literature that does exist in this area indicates that minority female officers experience a combination of both race and sex discrimination. Felkenes and Schroedel (1992) conducted one of the earliest studies in this area examining the experiences of minority women

officers in the Los Angeles Police Department. This study found that Black and Latina women in

the department experienced a higher degree of discrimination than white women or minority

men (Felkenes & Schroedel, 1992). Felkenes and Schroedel (1992) detailed the experiences of

these minority women describing harassment and double standards during training. It is

noteworthy that Felkenes and Schroedel (1992) also found supervisors to be aware of the

harassment and complacent in these incidents, often describing the incidents as pranks and

jokes. Dodge and Pogrebin (2001) found that both white female officers and Black male officers

tended to distance themselves from Black female officers in an effort to assimilate more to the

dominant white male culture that is so prevalent in police organizations. Haarr and Morash

(2004) also found that minority women officers faced a greater degree of discrimination

stemming from both racist and sexist attitudes that exist in the organizational culture of

policing. Hassell and Brandl (2009) found officers who had the greatest representation in the

organization (white, male) had the most favorable workplace experiences while those who had

the least representation (minority, female) had the least favorable workplace experiences.

Hassell and Brandl (2009) further found that Black female officers experienced a greater

number of workplace problems compared to all other race and sex combinations. In a more

recent study, Yu (2021) found that Black female officers experienced a lower level of inclusivity

and higher perception of the existence of a glass ceiling to promotions. Yu (2021) also found

that Latina female officers experienced higher levels of sexual discrimination than white female

officers.

Several research studies (Roberg & Bonn, 2004; Rydberg & Terrill, 2010; Gardiner, 2021) show a relationship between the level of education of a police officer and their relative performance and quality as an officer. Roberg and Bonn (2004) and Rydberg and Terrill (2010) found college educated officers were better at report writing, received fewer citizen complaints and were more innovative and less resistant to change. Rydberg and Terrill (2010) also found officers that had some level of college education were less likely to use force against a suspect. In spite of these previous studies, Gardiner (2021) found in her comprehensive study of nearly 5,000 police agencies in the United States, that very few agencies (less than 2%) required a bachelor's level degree for police officers. Even for the top leadership positions, fewer than a third of agencies required a bachelor's degree and fewer than 5% required a master's degree (Gardiner, 2021). Gardiner (2021) also studied the differences in education levels of male police leaders and female police leaders and found that female police leaders on average had significantly higher levels of education than their male counterparts. The level of education required for an entry-level police officer was significantly positively correlated to the level of education of the top police leader at the agency (Gardiner, 2021).

CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter provided an overview of the literature regarding the experiences of females in leadership positions in law enforcement. As the literature specific to this topic is still limited at this time, this researcher provided an overview of literature regarding the glass ceiling, the glass cliff, barriers to promotional opportunities, and leadership traits of females both generally and specific to law enforcement. The organizational culture of policing and

occupational barriers such as physical fitness standards and the balance of work and family life were also examined. Additionally, the literature surrounding how female officers differ from their male counterparts was explored. Lastly, the literature surrounding the intersectionality of race and gender in law enforcement and the effect of education on law enforcement was explored. This research study is intended to help fill the gap in literature surrounding specific experiences of females in leadership roles in law enforcement. The following chapter will describe the methodology of this study.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

This chapter begins with a restatement of the purpose of this study and the research

questions that guided this study. The components of this chapter include the rationale for the

chosen method of data collection, details of the research plan, ethical concerns, delimitations

of the study, data collection procedures, and method of analysis. This phenomenological study

explored the experiences of eight female police leaders. The in-depth interviews provided us

insight into their lived experiences, their journeys to the top of their professions, the obstacles

and barriers that they overcame, and strategies they used to obtain leadership positions in a

male dominated atmosphere. The analysis of the data provided us with themes and

commonalities experienced by all the subjects in this study.

OVERVIEW OF THE PURPOSE OF STUDY AND GOALS

The purpose of the study was to provide a greater understanding of the lived

experiences of female leaders in law enforcement. This researcher sought to understand the

journeys of these female police leaders through their own narratives. These narratives were

then analyzed, and commonalities were brought to light. This analysis was completed by using

transcripts from semi-structured interviews that were conducted with each of the subjects. The

end goal of this study was to provide further research and information to the limited body of

research that exists on female police leaders. Hopefully, this research can be used by the law

enforcement community to support females in law enforcement who aspire to be leaders in

their field and higher education Criminal Justice programs to recruit more female students and

improve their programs.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study was guided by these overarching research questions:

1. What are the lived experiences of female leaders in law enforcement on their pathway to becoming the leader of their department?

   - What helped them break through the glass ceiling and advance their career?

   - How did their educational journey and any leadership training help them advance their career?

2. What significant obstacles and barriers did these women overcome in their journey to become chief or deputy chief?

   - Were any of these barriers related to their gender?

   - From their perspective, did male officers face the same barriers to career advancement?

3. What reasons do current female law enforcement leaders identify for the ongoing underrepresentation of women in leadership roles?

   - How can we improve college criminal justice programs to help recruit more females into the field and create more female police leaders?

4. What are the strategies women leaders in law enforcement identify as helping them cope and excel in male dominated police departments?

The objective of these research questions was to provide an in depth understanding of

the experiences of female police leaders. More specifically, these questions sought to provide

insight into the meaning that each subject gave to their individual experiences and how their

experiences shaped their careers. From these insights, commonalities and themes were

developed from the narratives of the study participants.

Quantitative research is best used when numerical data is collected and analyzed using various statistical tools and techniques. Historically, quantitative research has been the dominant and most accepted form of research in the scientific community and beyond. However, in recent decades, the social science community has recognized and accepted qualitative research as an acceptable and valuable form of research (Jovanović, 2011). Qualitative research is best used when the researcher wants to understand the meaning of one's experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In this study, the research questions intend to attach meaning to the lived experiences of female police leaders. Qualitative research has its roots in the philosophical perspective of constructivism, which believes there is no single, observable reality but rather there are multiple realities that are socially constructed (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 6). Qualitative research was chosen for this study as the goal of this study is to gain a better understanding of the experiences of female leaders in law enforcement and to be able to portray their experiences in a rich, thick format.

The specific form of qualitative research used in this study is phenomenology. In a phenomenological study, the researcher's primary interest is the lived experiences of the subjects (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 26). Merriam and Tisdell (2016) explain that a phenomenological study is best used when an emotional, often intense human experience is being studied (2016). In this study, the experiences of female leaders in law enforcement are studied. The role of law enforcement in our society and the career of a law enforcement officer is an intense and emotional experience. Patton (2002) explains that a phenomenologist is

interested in how a subject experiences a phenomenon and interprets it to make sense of the

world (p. 106). Patton (2002) further explains the phenomenological approach as

> …the assumption that there is an essence or essences to shared experience. These essences are the core meanings mutually understood through a phenomenon commonly experienced. The experiences of different people are bracketed, analyzed, and compared to identify the essences of the phenomenon, for example, the essence of loneliness, the essence of being a mother, or the essence of being a participant in a particular program. The assumption of essence, like the ethnographer's assumption that culture exists and is important, becomes the defining characteristic of a purely phenomenological study. (p. 106)

In this study, the shared experiences of these subjects are their role as female leaders in

the male dominated field of law enforcement. The individual experiences of these subjects

were then analyzed and compared.

RESEARCHER AS PRIMARY INSTRUMENT

Another key characteristic of qualitative research is the researcher is the primary

instrument of data collection and analysis (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 16). As previously

mentioned, the goal of qualitative research is to attach meaning and understanding to a

particular phenomenon, using a human as the primary instrument makes this possible. A

human is also able to be adaptive and responsive during the collection of data, which is often

necessary in qualitative research (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 16). However, using a human as

the primary instrument also brings the researcher's own biases and subjectivity into the

research. Consequently, it is important when conducting qualitative research to recognize and

bring to light the researcher's biases and subjectivities. Some scholars even argue the

researcher's biases and subjectivities or the lens that the researcher sees the data through is

actually an important part of the interpretation of the data in a qualitative study. Peshkin

(1988) explains, "subjectivity can be seen as virtuous, for it is the basis of the researchers'

making a distinctive contribution, one that results from the unique configuration of their

personal qualities joined to the data they have collected" (p. 18). The researcher in this study,

who was the primary instrument of data collection and analysis, is a female that was a sworn

law enforcement officer for eight years. While the researcher aspired to be a police chief, she

left law enforcement and entered academics prior to achieving her goal.

STUDY PARTICIPANTS

Sampling

This study utilized purposeful sampling. Purposeful sampling allowed the researcher to

acquire significant insight from a specifically selected sample:

> Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry, thus the term purposeful sampling. (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 96)

Using purposeful sampling in this study allowed specific subjects, in this study female

police leaders, to be selected that gave information rich cases: "The logic and power of

purposeful sampling derive from the emphasis on in depth understanding. This leads to

selecting information rich cases for study in depth" (Patton, 2002, p. 46).

The criteria used in the purposeful sampling for this study included these:

- Participants must be a female sworn police officer in the United States.

- The female police officers needed to have reached one of the top leadership roles in their respective departments. This generally meant the female held the title of "Police Chief," "Police Director," or "Deputy Police Chief."

This study also relied on using the specific technique of snowball sampling as a method

of identifying candidates for the purposeful sample. Snowball sampling involves identifying a

couple of key subjects that fit your purposeful sampling criteria and then asking these subjects to identify other subjects that may also fit this criteria (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 98). Patton (2002) explains, "By asking a number of people who else to talk with, the snowball gets bigger and bigger as you accumulate new information-rich cases" (p. 237). In this study this researcher was able to use her connections from the law enforcement community to identify a few female police chiefs and then these subjects were asked to recommend other female police leaders for the study.

Participant Selection

The possible study participants that fit the selection criteria that were already known to the researcher were first contacted by email to explain the study and gauge whether the participant was interested in participating in the study. Once it was determined that the participant was interested, the informed consent waiver was emailed to the participant. After receiving consent from the participant, a mutually agreed upon date and time was set up to conduct the virtual (using Zoom) interview. At the end of the interview, the participant was asked if they had any other recommendations for study participants that fit the criteria. Three initial study participants were known by the researcher and, by utilizing snowball sampling, through these three initial participants, an additional seven study participants were identified. The researcher then sent an email to these seven potential study participants and received a positive response affirming their willingness to participate from five of these participants. This resulted in a total study sample of eight participants.

As previously mentioned, in qualitative studies, the researcher is the primary instrument of data collection. In this phenomenological study, the researcher was attempting to get at the essence or meaning behind the lived experiences of the subjects in this study. In order to do this, the best method of data collection is the phenomenological interview (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 27). Patton (2002) explains that the purpose of interviewing is to allow the interviewer insight into the subject's perspective (p. 341). Patton (2002) further explains,

> We interview people to find out from them those things we cannot directly observe. The issue is not whether observational data are more desirable, valid, or meaningful than self-report data. The fact is that we cannot observe everything. We cannot observe feelings, thoughts, and intentions. We cannot observe behaviors that took place at some previous point in time. We cannot observe situations that preclude the presence of an observer. We cannot observe how people have organized the world and the meanings they attach to what goes on in the world. We have to ask people questions about those things (p. 341).

In this study, the researcher used a semi-structured interview format to gain insight into how the subjects in this study attached meaning to their lived experiences as female leaders in law enforcement. The interviews followed the same basic format for all eight study participants. First, the researcher conducted introductions and made sure the participant understood the informed consent and still wished to proceed with the interview. The researcher then asked basic background questions pertaining to how long the participant had been at their current positions and other positions they had held. The researcher then asked the following questions that pertain to the research questions (see Table 1).

Table 1: Research Questions Mapped to Interview Prompts

RESEARCH QUESTION	INTERVIEW PROMPT
What are the lived experiences of female leaders in law enforcement on their pathway to becoming the leader of their department?	
	What do you think female police officers and female police leaders can bring to the police organization and culture?
	What has been your biggest accomplishment in your career?
What helped them break through the glass ceiling and advance their career?	
	What educational and training credentials do you hold? How have these helped you in your career journey?
	Have you had any formal or informal mentors along your journey?
	Have you used any coping mechanisms or strategies to advance in your career?
How did their educational journey and any leadership training help them advance their career?	
	Have you had any formal or informal leadership training? Has this helped you?
	Describe your leadership style.
	Has your education helped you advance your career? How?
What significant obstacles and barriers did these women overcome in their journey to become chief or deputy chief?	
	Have you faced any obstacles or barriers in your career path? Have you witnessed any other females face obstacles or barriers?
	What has been your biggest challenge that you have faced in your career?
Were any of these barriers related to their gender?	
	Did you feel these obstacles or barriers were related to your gender?
	Have you ever faced any discrimination or harassment based on your gender and/or race? If so, did you report it?
From their perspective, did male officers face the same barriers to career advancement?	
	Did you feel that male officers in your agency faced the same obstacles or barriers?
What reasons do current female law enforcement leaders identify for the ongoing underrepresentation of women in leadership roles?	
	Why do you think we have not seen vast improvements in the number of policewomen overall and in the number of female police leaders?
	What can we do to improve the number of female police officers and police leaders?

RESEARCH QUESTION	INTERVIEW PROMPT
	Why do you think more female officers don't try for promotions?
How can we improve college criminal justice programs to help recruit more females into the field and create more female police leaders?	
	What is the role of education in recruiting more females into policing and helping to create more female police leaders?
	How can we improve college criminal justice programs to help promote the recruitment of more females into the field?
What are the strategies women leaders in law enforcement identify as helping them cope and excel in male dominated police departments?	
	What strategies and coping mechanisms have you used in your career? How did these help you?
	What advice would you give to aspiring female police leaders?

The interviews were conducted via Zoom, a virtual meeting platform, to allow for consistency and convenience for the study participants. The interviews lasted between 45 and 90 minutes long. The interviews were recorded, and a transcript of the interviews was created and downloaded by the researcher.

DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis is the process of making meaning of the data. In this study, the data is the words, narratives, and stories, as told by the subjects in this study. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) explain that data analysis involves consolidating, reducing, and interpreting the words of the study participants (p. 202). Merriam and Tisdell (2016) further explain, "data analysis is a complex procedure that involves moving back and forth between concrete bits of data and abstract concepts, between inductive and deductive reasoning, between description and interpretation. These meanings or understandings or insights constitute the findings of a study" (p. 202). Through the process of analyzing the data, this researcher sought to find answers to

the research questions in this study. These answers were organized into themes, categories, and findings. Fossey et al. (2002) further explains the process of data analysis,

> The analytical procedure typically involves two levels of analysis: first, to review, identify and code recurrent themes within data for each participant; and second, using similar steps, to identify common themes and areas of divergence across participants. Finally, it usually entails bringing identified themes back together into meaningful relation with each other; developing, as it were, a narrative or structural synthesis of the core elements of the experiences described. (p. 728)

This researcher used coding to organize and more easily identify the data. This researcher then developed categories and themes from the coded data. The researcher did this by reading through the interviews several times and identifying several common threads. Each thread or theme was then given a specific color coding. The research then analyzed each interview and highlighted relevant sections with the corresponding color coding to theme. These themes and categories were then fully analyzed to develop emergent and divergent findings between the narratives of the study participants and to answer the research questions. The themes were also analyzed and correlated to the literature from Chapter Two.

VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

Qualitative research is similar to other forms of research in that it wants to produce results and knowledge that are valid and reliable and do so in an ethical manner. Validity and reliability are important to any research study. These concepts ensure that the audience has confidence in the process of the study and the results of the study: "Validity and reliability are concerns that can be approached through careful attention to a study's conceptualization and the way in which the data are collected, analyzed, and interpreted, and the way in which the findings are presented" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 238). This study ensured reliability and

validity by using triangulation, member checks, researcher's reflexivity, an audit trail, and rich thick descriptions.

Triangulation involves using several different check points to ensure internal validity. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) explain, "triangulation using multiple sources of data means comparing and cross-checking data collected through observations at different times or in different places, or interview data collected from people with different perspectives or from follow-up interviews with the same people" (p. 245). To check the reliability of this study using triangulation, the researcher compared the data collected during interviews to observations that were made during the interviews, to any documents that were collected, and to information that was collected during the literature review. The researcher then made sure that these results were consistent.

This researcher also utilized member checks to ensure internal validity. Member checks require the researcher to elicit feedback from the participants during the process of emergent findings and data analysis (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 246). This ensures that your interpretation of the data "rings true" with the participant's experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 246). After the initial data analysis, the researcher offered to show the subjects who were interviewed a copy of the interview transcript to ensure the interpretations of their words and experiences were true and accurate.

The study also utilized the researcher's position or reflexivity to check the reliability of the study. Researcher's reflexivity is that idea that the researcher's own bias affects the data in some way (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 249). As someone who has experience in the law enforcement field, this researcher wants the reader to understand the perspective and

experience of the researcher and how that may or may not have shaped the analysis of the data.

Lastly, an audit trail was utilized to show the reader exactly how the study was designed, how the data was collected and analyzed, and finally how the results were derived: "Just as an auditor authenticates the accounts of a business, independent readers can authenticate the findings of a study by following the trail of the researcher (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 252). As qualitative research cannot quite ensure reliability or transferability in the same way a quantitative study can, the best we can do is show the reader in detail how we arrived at our results. This researcher used the detailed account of the methodology of the study from this chapter and also the detailed accounts of the data and data analysis found in Chapters Four and Five to describe this audit trail.

BRACKETING AND RESEARCHER BIAS

As previously stated, the goal in phenomenological qualitative studies is to explore how the study participants attached meaning to their experiences. As qualitative data analysis involves interpretation of the subjects' narratives, it is important that the researcher recognizes their own bias, viewpoints, and assumptions that may skew the data. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) explain that historically this process was called epoche, "a Greek word meaning to refrain from judgement…in the Epoche, the everyday understandings, judgements, and knowings are set aside, and the phenomena are revisited" (p. 27). As Merriam and Tisdell (2016) further explain, the modern form of epoche is known as bracketing. The idea behind bracketing is that the researcher is able to recognize and identify their own bias and assumptions and then "brackets" them or sets them aside in order to analyze the data in the

most non-bias way possible. In this study, the researcher understands that she brings with her certain perspectives and biases from being a female police officer. The researcher attempted to set aside or bracket these biases the best she could before analyzing the data in this study.

EXTERNAL VALIDITY

External validity involves how well a study can be applied to other situations (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 253). Although qualitative studies cannot quite be replicated or tested the same way quantitative research can, we can ensure that our qualitative study is more transferable. Transferability is achieved by providing sufficient descriptions so the reader can understand the experiences of the subjects in the study and apply these to other situations. This phenomenological study used rich thick descriptions to describe the experiences of the subjects interviewed thereby increasing the transferability of the study. Merriam and Tisdell explain: "when rich, thick description is used as a strategy to enable transferability, it refers to a description of the setting and participants of the study, as well as a detailed description of the findings with adequate evidence presented in the form of quotes from participant interviews, field notes, and documents" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 257). The experiences of the female police officers in this study are described in rich, thick details and often even in their own words to provide the reader with an understanding of the participants' experiences.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ensuring reliability and validity in qualitative studies begins first and foremost with conducting the research in an ethical manner. As Patton (2015) explains, since the researcher is the primary instrument of data collection and analysis, the credibility of the researcher is vital to ensure ethics and credibility of a qualitative study: "ultimately for better or worse, the

53

trustworthiness of the data is tied directly to the trustworthiness of those who collect and analyze to data and their demonstrated competence" (p. 706). Therefore, in a qualitative study, the ethical integrity of the researcher must be trusted and through the researcher's description of the research methodology, it should affirm that the study was carried out in an ethical manner and with integrity. Important to the ethical considerations and integrity of a qualitative study is the informed consent of the participants and the assurance that no humans were harmed or left in a worse off position as a result of the study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Patton, 2002). This study complied with these ethical considerations and all requirements of the Ferris State University Institutional Review Board.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework of a study is the lens by which the researcher is viewing the world and thereby how this study fits into that perspective. Collins and Stockton (2018) describe the theoretical framework as, "the use of a theory (or theories) in a study that simultaneously conveys the deepest values of the researcher(s) and provides a clearly articulated signpost or lens for how the study will process new knowledge" (para. 5). Grant and Osanloo (2014) describe the theoretical framework as the blueprint for the study that provides the plan and foundation for all other aspects of the study. This study relies on the theoretical framework of feminist theory and tokenism.

FEMINIST THEORY

First, this researcher relies on feminist theory as part of its framework. Feminist theory examines gender inequalities and examines the world from the female perspective, a historically marginalized group. An examination of the history of feminist theory reveals three

distinct periods. First, from about 1830 until the 1920s, the feminist movement was focused on

women's suffrage and expanding women's rights in public (Freeman, 2019). The second period

extending from the 1960s to the 1980s included women's rights in the workplace, equal

opportunities in education, abortion, and sexual harassment (Freeman, 2019). Finally, the third

period starting in the 1990s until present day, combines feminism with intersectionality and the

realization that belonging to multiple marginalized groups results in different forms of

discrimination (Freeman, 2019). During this stage of feminism, there is a realization that a white

woman although marginalized may have a much different experience than a Black woman or a

Hispanic woman who may experience multiple layers of oppression.

Chafetz (2004) in her attempt to provide a simplistic definition for feminist theory stated

that it includes these four basic tenets:

1. Whatever else it may also be, gender is a system of inequality between males and females as sex categories by which things feminine are socially and culturally devalued and men enjoy greater access to scarce and valued social resources.

2. Gender inequality is produced socioculturally and is not immutable.

3. Gender inequality is evaluated negatively as unjust, unfair, etc.

4. Therefore, feminists should strive to eliminate gender inequality. (p. 965-966)

Leavy and Harris (2019) describe feminism as a human rights position that seeks to

expose and remedy gender inequalities. However, Leavy and Harris (2019) also recognize that

the modern form of feminism recognizes that:

We are not bodies that are only gendered, but rather, we simultaneously occupy race, ethnicity, social class, sexuality, and other positionalities. Feminist research recognizes the inescapable need to approach the study of gender in a way that recognizes the simultaneous nature of our complex selves, and the ways in which multiple aspects of privilege or oppression are being exercised at once. (p. 4)

This modern form of feminist theory recognizes and incorporates intersectionality as a part of the theory. This is important to this study as the researcher recognizes the subjects of this study are not only women, but also belong to certain racial and ethnic groups and social classes. Leavy and Harris (2019) remind us that where there is gender discrimination there is often also racism, classism, heterosexism, etc. as oppression rarely lives alone (p. 6).

Feminist theory is generally recognized as a critical research approach, meaning it does not just attempt to recognize and identify inequalities, but rather attempts to change the status quo (Leavy & Harris, 2019). In other words, feminist theory first states and describes the problem, then attempts to solve the problem. The researcher in this study, by engaging in this work, has attempted to describe the issue to the reader and portray detailed experiences of individuals affected by the issue and by doing so hopefully engages and encourages others to work to find viable solutions to this problem. Feminist theory not only looks at the world through the lens of females and other marginalized groups but by doing so also attempts to act as an engine for social change.

TOKENISM

Tokenism can be traced back to the 1970s to the work of Rosabeth Kanter (King et al., 2010). Kanter conducted a study on women in leadership positions in a Fortune 500 company. Based on her study, Kanter concluded,

> The life of women in the corporation was influenced by the proportions in which they found themselves. Those women who were few in number among their male peers and often had "only woman" status became tokens: symbols of how-women-can-do, stand-ins for all women…Sometimes they faced the loneliness of the outsider, of the stranger who intrudes upon an alien culture and may become self-estranged in the process of assimilation. (Kanter, 2010, p. 207)

Kanter (2010) further found that by women being present in these male-dominated

organizations they faced increased visibility and therefore scrutiny, increased pressure, and

social isolation from the dominant group. Additionally, Kanter (2010) found that women were

constrained by their social roles defined by gender stereotypes and found themselves

conforming to these roles rather than challenging the majority group.

Tokenism is evident in law enforcement. The literature review discussed the prevalence

of the glass cliff when women are promoted into leadership positions (Glass & Cook, 2016;

Ryan & Haslam, 2007). This glass cliff phenomenon could also be described using tokenism

theory as the police leaders mentioned in the literature review (Penny Harrington, Carmen

Best, Jenee Harteau) all experienced increased visibility, scrutiny, pressure, and social isolation

and described by Kanter (2010) (Williams, 2017; Miletich & Beekman, 2018; Roman, 2018).

Several other studies have found women in law enforcement experiencing tokenism (Martin,

1989; Belknap & Shelley, 1993; Archbold & Schulz, 2008; Stroshine & Brandl, 2011). Archbold

and Schulz (2008) found female officers felt they had to work harder than their male

counterparts, experienced disrespect and lack of full acceptance, and reported being treated

like tokens. Stroshine and Brandl (2011) emphasize the effects that race may also have on

tokenism. Their study found that black female officers experienced tokenism at a much higher

rate and at a higher intensity than their white female counterparts (Stroshine & Brandl, 2011).

Feminist theory and tokenism were appropriate theories to use as the theoretical

framework for this study because this study explores the experiences of females in law

enforcement, a white-male-dominated field. Feminist theory and tokenism help to frame and

explain the experiences and feelings of the participants in this study. These theories helped

guide this researcher in creating the methodology for the study, the literature review, framing the interview questions, and finally analyzing the data. These theories provided a framework or lens to better understand this study.

DELIMITATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

Delimitations refer to the boundaries of the research study. Delimitations concern the scope of the study and affect the generalizability of the study (Miles, 2017). Delimitations are restrictions or constraints that are self-imposed by the researcher (Miles, 2017). The purposeful sampling that was used in this study was certainly a delimitation. The eight participants for this study were identified as females in law enforcement who had achieved the highest leadership positions in their respective departments. As these in-depth interviews were very personal experiences unique to these individuals, the results may not be able to be generalized across all females in law enforcement positions. The sample was also limited to eight subjects, which makes the study less generalizable to a large population.

Limitations are constraints imposed by the research methodology chosen by the researcher (Miles, 2017). Generally, these limitations are outside the control of the researcher. In this study, the data collection was limited to personal interviews with the subjects. These personal interviews are limited in scope and constrained by time as all the data must be collected during that interview.

A strictly qualitative research design was chosen and, as such, only open-ended questions were used during the interview; this structure means that quantifiable data was not gathered. The researcher is also assuming that all the subjects were being truthful during the interview process.

The researcher also chose to conduct the interviews virtually via Zoom. Virtual interviews do not allow the researcher to observe the participants in the same way as a face-to-face setting. Body movements and other non-verbal cues are not easily observed in a virtual setting.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter detailed the research methodology used in this study. The rationale and purpose of the study were explained as describing and providing insight into the lived experiences of female police leaders. The chosen methodology of phenomenological qualitative research was explained and the rationale for choosing this type of research for this study was examined. The process of sample selection, data collection, and data analysis was explained. Also, this researcher provided an explanation as to why this study is both valid and reliable. This researcher then provided and explained the theoretical framework that was used in this study. Lastly, the delimitations and limitations of this study were provided. The following chapter provides a detailed account of the data collected in this study.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand the lived experiences of female police leaders and their journey to the top of their profession. The body of research specific to females in leadership and supervisory roles in law enforcement agencies is quite limited and the studies that do exist explain the need for more research in this area (Schulz, 2003; Silvestri, 2007; Todak et al., 2021; Beaton et al., 2022). This study sought to understand the pathway that led these females to their current roles and top executives at their agencies. Through their narratives, the study sought to get a better understanding of the barriers and obstacles that stood in their way and the strategies and coping mechanisms they used to break through the glass ceiling.

This chapter used the data collected through the interviews of the eight study participants to answer the following questions:

1. What are the lived experiences of female leaders in law enforcement on their pathway to becoming the leader of their department?

   - What helped them break through the glass ceiling and advance their career?

   - How did their educational journey and any leadership training help them advance their career?

2. What significant obstacles and barriers did these women overcome in their journey to become chief or deputy chief?

   - Were any of these barriers related to their gender?

- From their perspective, did male officers face the same barriers to career advancement?

3. What reasons do current female law enforcement leaders identify for the ongoing underrepresentation of women in leadership roles?

- How can we improve college criminal justice programs to help recruit more females into the field and create more female police leaders?

4. What are the strategies women leaders in law enforcement identify as helping them cope and excel in male dominated police departments?

This researcher used semi-structured interviews conducted virtually through Zoom with all eight participants. The researcher used the interview questions found in Appendix A to guide the interviews. The participants were emailed a copy of the interview questions a couple of days prior to the interview to prepare. The interview questions were left brief and open-ended to allow the participants to tell their stories. Additional probing questions were used as needed to guide the interview.

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY PARTICIPANTS

Each study participant has reached one of the top executive leadership positions (generally this meant Chief of Police, Director of Police, or Deputy Chief) at their agency. However, the participants varied in terms of age, years of experience in the field, education level, and additional leadership training. Two of the participants are now retired from their roles as chief executives. Interestingly, all eight of the participants were the first female top executives at their respective agencies. However, only three of the eight participants were the top executive at the agency that they started at as a rookie patrol officer. The other five participants went to different agencies to take on the role of top executive. The following table summarizes the demographics of the study participants.

Table 2. Study Participant Demographics

PARTICIPANT	AGE GROUP	HIGHEST EDUCATION LEVEL	OTHER LEADERSHIP TRAINING/EDUCATION	# OF YEARS AS TOP EXECUTIVE
A	60-69	Bachelor's	Staff & Command (S&C) School/ FBI National Academy (NA)	13
B	70-79	Bachelor's	FBI NA	14
C	40-49	Master's	S&C School	2
D	40-49	Master's	S&C School	3
E	40-49	Bachelor's	S&C School	Less than 1 year
F	60-69	Associate	FBI NA	8
G	50-59	Master's	S&C School	2
H	50-59	Master's (in progress)	S&C School	2

POLICE EXECUTIVE PROFILES

POLICE EXECUTIVE A

Police Executive A has been the top executive at her agency for thirteen years. She came from another agency where she started her police career and spent twenty-five years. During her tenure at her prior department, she made it to the rank of Captain before she was asked to apply for a Chief of Police position at another department. She has earned her bachelor's degree and has attended a staff and command school. She explained the staff and command school was a ten-week course designed to teach leadership skills for law enforcement. She also attended the FBI National Academy, which she explained was a ten-week course held at the FBI academy headquarters specifically for leaders in law enforcement. She felt that both her college education and her additional leadership training really helped her develop into the leader that she is today.

Police Executive A explained that her desire to become a police officer started with a personal tragic experience. She explained that her brother had committed suicide and the officer that handled the death notification, "didn't do it right." Executive A explained that the officer told her mother over the phone that her son was dead. Executive A said that she knew right then that she wanted to go into law enforcement because as she said, "I could do it better." Executive A said this same reasoning applied to her desire to become a leader in law enforcement. She knew that she could do it better than what she had seen and experienced from other police leaders: "If you're going to be part of the change, you need to be part of the change, and you can't just sit around on third shift and bitch about it." Executive A explained that this sentiment led to her taking her first promotional exam after being on the job for about five years. She passed the exam but was not promoted. Executive A said it took several years and several lawsuits filed by minority male officers and female officers regarding the promotional process before she was promoted. Executive A explained, "When all those lawsuits were said and done, they [the plaintiffs] all won. How did the city screw it up so bad that all categories won their lawsuits against the city for discrimination?" Executive A said following the lawsuits, the promotional process was changed and outsourced to a third-party agency which leveled the playing field and allowed her to get her first promotion into a leadership role as a sergeant.

Executive A spoke about her first experiences as a police leader. She explained that it wasn't always easy to lead a group of almost all male patrol officers. She said, "I think there's always that group of people who has no intentions of ever working with a female, let alone having a female supervisor." She explained that in her head, she tried to give the officers the

benefit of the doubt: "I always thought you know it's not their fault. They didn't plan on working with me." Executive A explained that she wasn't offended by this and tried to not be offended by much during her career. She said she experienced and heard all the blond jokes, women jokes, and sex jokes, but tried to just laugh at them and not be offended. She explained that she just tried to fit in with the guys, which she thought helped her in her leadership roles. She said, "I don't know that I necessarily was just one of the guys, but I was just one of the employees, one of the officers."

Executive A recognized the role that mentors played in her leadership journey and she felt that other female law enforcement leaders paved the way for her. She explained, "I had some really good role models that were successful. They stood their ground. They banged their head on the glass ceiling way more than I did. I credit them." She credits these female police leaders in her department who came before her with making changes within the department that she was able to benefit from. Executive A explained that she probably would not have applied for some of the promotions that she did without the guidance of her mentors. The mentors and role models encouraged her to apply for promotions and gave her confidence in her abilities. When explaining the importance of these mentors and role models, Executive A said, "You need somebody to tell you that you're good enough."

Executive A described her leadership style as "complicated." She further explained that it depended on the situation. She said that she tries to be more "hands off" and not a micro manager. She explained that she wants to trust her officers and know that they are out there doing their job. She said she definitely has a dominant personality and wants her officers to

know that; however, she also wants them to know she is part of their team and not against them.

Executive A explained that to be a female who has risen through the ranks to the position she is now, she has had to work harder and do things better than her male counterparts. She said "We [female police leaders] have to try harder, study harder…always be well read and well spoken." Executive A explained that she is proud of what she has accomplished thus far in her law enforcement career. She said that advice she would give to an aspiring female police leader would be to take advantage of every educational and training opportunity and "make them tell you no."

POLICE EXECUTIVE B

Executive B spent 14 years as the Chief of Police. She was not only the first female Police Chief at her agency, but also the first female minority police chief. Prior to becoming Chief, she spent over 20 years at the agency where she was first hired as a patrol officer and rose to the level of Captain at that agency. She finished her bachelor's degree while working full time as a homicide detective. She also attended the FBI's national leadership academy. She initially did not have dreams of becoming a police officer. She explained, "I became a police officer because I needed a job." She was laid off from her job as a special education teacher and saw an advertisement in the local newspaper that the local police department was looking to hire more officers. After completing the police academy and working patrol for a couple of months, Executive B said she realized that police work was not just a job for her, but rather "a calling." Executive B explained that after only a few years of working as a patrol officer, she was assigned to the detective bureau. After working her way up to homicide detective, she soon

found herself being promoted into leadership roles within the department. She was promoted to Sergeant, then Lieutenant, and finally Captain before retiring from that agency. Once retired, she found an opportunity at a much smaller agency where she just intended to work as a patrol officer. However, soon after joining that department, the administration saw her capabilities and potential. Executive B explained that not long after joining this new agency, the Chief job became available, and she was encouraged to apply. Executive B was named the Police Chief at this agency and stayed there for 14 years.

Executive B explained the important role that mentors played in her career. She said, "every step of the way, there was somebody who believed in me." Executive B further explained that there were several times where she didn't think she was ready for that promotion or special assignment, but there was always that one person who pushed her and told her that she was ready. She said, "A lot of the things I did was based on people seeing something in me that I didn't see in my myself, and becoming Chief was one of those things." Executive B expressed appreciation and gratitude for these people that helped her along her journey.

Executive B explained that her journey was not always easy. She said she hit obstacles and roadblocks along the way. There were several instances where she was told "No" or felt that she didn't belong because she was a woman. Executive B explained that every time she was told "No" or that she couldn't do something made her even more determined to prove everyone wrong. Executive B expressed that it was lonely at times: "You have to be okay with standing alone. Because sometimes you have to do it alone." Executive B credits her success to

her education, training, and willingness to work hard to always get the job done to the best of her ability.

POLICE EXECUTIVE C

Executive C spent the first few years of her career at two different agencies before finding an agency that she called home for 17 years. After feeling that she had accomplished all she could at the agency and with no real room for growth at the small agency, she started looking for leadership opportunities elsewhere. She found one and was named the Chief of Police at a small-town police agency. She was the first female Chief at this agency. Executive C stayed at this agency as Police Chief for two years; however, she felt like she was not getting the support and resources that she needed to be successful there. She then found an opportunity as a Deputy Chief at an institution of higher education where she has felt more supported and has access to more resources. Executive C has a master's degree and has attended a staff and command school. She was also just recently nominated to attend the FBI's national leadership academy, and she hopes to attend this soon. Executive C explained that she became a police officer because she always had a strong desire to help people. She also felt that, as an athlete and a bit of a thrill seeker, that a job where she didn't have to sit behind a desk all day suited her well.

Executive C said she started to want to pursue promotional opportunities when she was starting to feel bored with her current role and felt that she had done all that she could in that role. She also said that she had worked for and witnessed both good and bad leaders and felt like she could do it better. She explained, "I'm kind of a firm believer that if you're observing it and want change, then in order to make it happen, you have to do something. You have to be

willing to go into that arena and do it yourself." Executive C explained her belief that change starts at the top and if you want to see change you have to be willing to step into those leadership roles. She found herself wanting to be that change.

Executive C credits some informal mentors for helping her along her leadership journey. Early on in her career she had a female Deputy Chief who she viewed as a role model figure. Executive C explained, "I always looked up to her leadership style and how she was able to put things together and create awesome programs. She really built that police department up." Executive C said she also worked under a Police Chief for many years who taught her valuable lessons about empathy, hard work, and building up the people you lead. Lastly, in her current role as a Deputy Chief, she explained that she has been fortunate to work under a Chief who has a lot of knowledge and expertise that he passes on to her.

Executive C said that her biggest challenge is still the public's perception of what a police officer, and especially a police leader, should look like. She explained, "I don't fit the mold of what somebody thinks the Chief should look like." She commented that she often gets called "sir" in e-mails. Executive C explained that female leaders in police work always must work harder than their male counterparts because females are judged under a different lens. She said, "I don't think we'll ever change that…not in my lifetime." Despite the challenges she has faced along her career journey, Executive C is proud of how far she has come. She feels that her biggest accomplishment was earning her master's degree while working full time as a police officer and raising her kids.

Police Executive D had worked at several different police agencies before getting the Chief of Police position at her current agency. She rose to the rank of Deputy Chief at one of her prior agencies and the rank of Lieutenant at another agency. In her current role, she is the first female Police Chief at this agency. Executive D has earned her master's degree and has attended a staff and command training school. Executive D said she knew from a young age that she wanted to be a police officer. She had a strong desire to help people and liked the non-routine nature of the job. She said she also enjoys the critical thinking aspect that comes along with the job.

Executive D said she started down the leadership path when she realized that she wanted to make some changes within her department and within policing in general. She explained:

> I really believe that one person can make a difference, and I feel like I bring a different approach than a lot of my counterparts. I think that approach is needed, especially in the law enforcement that we are in today. So, I thought I could make a difference and I wanted to see what I could do.

Executive D went on to say that her desire to pursue a larger leadership role was greatly strengthened when her family experienced a tragedy at home that required the assistance of the local police department. Executive D said the coldness and lack of empathy that the officers on scene expressed to her and her family was unfathomable. She said to this day her son remembers how awful the officers treated her family. Executive D explained that the response of the officers was even more surprising considering that the officers knew she was part of the law enforcement community. After that incident, Executive D knew that to be able to make real sustained changes in policing, she needed to hold a leadership role.

Executive D explained that she has never had a formal mentor; however, there have been several colleagues who have helped along her career and leadership journey. She said that at one of the first agencies where she worked, her supervisor had really beat her down and made her feel that she was not good enough. Executive D said she was finally able to transfer to a different agency where she worked for a supervisor who believed in her: "He said he knew from the get-go that I was destined to do bigger things, and I absolutely credit him for kind of helping put me back together and recognizing that I can actually do this job." Executive D said even after leaving that agency to take her current Chief's role, she still talks to her mentor figure on a regular basis and gets advice from him.

Executive D expressed that her path to her current leadership position has been filled with challenges and she still faces challenges today even from her top leadership position. She said, "I'm pretty lonely here [at the top]." She explained that she can still walk into a room at work or a professional conference and be the only female in the room. She said that this still sometimes leads to feelings and thoughts of feeling like she doesn't belong here. She said that she still finds it frustrating that after 26 years in law enforcement she still finds herself having to prove herself or justify herself to other people. Executive D explains that she still deals with people who don't think a female should be running a police department. She said that to deal with all these types of comments and bias perspectives throughout her career, she has developed a coat of armor to block out this background noise.

Despite the challenges, Executive D is proud of what she has accomplished in her career. She said that, although she is proud of becoming the first female Police Chief at her agency, she is most proud of completing her master's degree. When speaking about her graduation day for

her master's degree, she said, "That is still one of my most favorite days. It's something that I never thought I would do." She also expressed her proudness and sense of accomplishment that she felt at her swearing in ceremony for Police Chief:

> I underestimated how much that affected a lot of people: Women brought their young daughters to my swearing in who had no affiliation to law enforcement because they felt like this was kind of history in the making. Now I try to do a better job of remembering that and honoring that.

Executive D is proud of the changes she has been able to make thus far at her department as Police Chief and hopes to be able to continue to make positive changes.

POLICE EXECUTIVE E

Executive E started as a patrol officer at her agency 22 years ago. She was promoted to the Chief of Police position in 2022 and became the first female Police Chief at her agency. She earned her bachelor's degree in biology and originally pursued a career in nursing with plans to eventually attend medical school. However, Executive E explained that kids and life got in the way of pursuing further education. While working at the hospital, Executive E took on a role in the morgue helping with autopsies. In this position, she had frequent contact with police detectives and became interested in their work. Executive E explained that one particular detective told her that his department was hiring and invited her to come do a ride along with one of their patrol officers. Executive E said she went and did the ride along one night and immediately fell in love with the job of policing. She said, "after the first ride along, when I came home, I told my husband this is where I want to be."

Executive E did not initially intend on pursuing leadership roles within the department. After about eight years on the job, she applied for a Lieutenant's position, and she did not get

71

the position. Executive E explains that not getting this role was probably the best thing for her because it allowed her to develop as a leader and get more experience and training. Executive E waited five or six more years before applying again for the Lieutenant's position and this time she got the job. She then worked her way up to Deputy Chief and eventually into the Chief's role. Executive E said she did not have any female mentors in her department as when she hired in there was only one female officer in a leadership position. However, she said that the previous Police Chief at her department served as an informal mentor to her as she progressed through leadership roles in the department. She explained that he was the type of person she always felt she could go to and discuss situations. He also pushed her into uncomfortable situations when he knew she needed to be pushed or encouraged. Executive E further explained his importance, "I don't think I would have ever applied for the Deputy Chief's position if he hadn't pushed me into that role and encouraged me, and it wasn't until I was in that role that I recognized I had the skill set to apply for the Police Chief's role."

Executive E explains that she has faced many challenges and obstacles along her policing and leadership journey. However, she indicated that the biggest challenge she has faced has been herself. She explained, "being in a completely male-dominated environment and in my case, you know, being a leader and a supervisor of almost all males, there is sometimes self-doubt that creeps in." Executive E said she had to work on building up her confidence and recognizing that she was put in these leadership roles for a reason. She attributes her biggest accomplishment to overcoming this self-doubt and having the courage to take on this role as the first female police chief at her agency.

Executive F worked for her agency for 32 years before retiring at the highest rank in her

agency. She rose through the ranks during her 32 years and served at every rank from patrol

officer all the way up to Director (the highest ranking in her agency), serving as the first female

Director of her agency. Executive F explained that her desire to enter a career in law

enforcement runs in her blood as she followed in her father's footsteps who also worked for

the same agency where she later became the Director. Executive F explained, "Law

enforcement is not something you wake up in the morning and decide you want to try to be a

cop today. It is something that is in your heart, and you are dedicated to." Executive F said her

father never wanted her to follow in his footsteps as he thought the job was much too

dangerous for his daughter. However, Executive F said she applied anyways despite her father's

hesitations, and her father would later become her biggest supporter in her career journey.

Executive F said she never really thought she would promote much farther than the rank

of sergeant. In fact, it took the urging and encouragement of another female police leader in

her agency to convince her to take the sergeant's test. Executive F explained that she was

fortunate as a patrol officer to have supervisors who acted as mentor figures for her. Executive

F said she learned some valuable leadership lessons from her mentors including treating

everyone fairly and giving people second chances. She said she would later adopt some of these

leadership principles when she found herself in leadership roles. She described her leadership

style as "firm, but fair" and explained that making sure her team always knew she cared about

them as one of her most important leadership traits. Executive F further explained the

importance of caring, "9 times out of 10 people will walk on hot coals for you if they think you care about them."

Executive F said she didn't feel that she faced as many obstacles and barriers as some other women in the law enforcement field. However, she always knew that, as a female in a male-dominated field, she needed to work harder than anyone else to earn respect. Executive F said when she first became a sergeant and found herself in leadership meetings, she realized that she was the only female at the leadership table. She started telling her colleagues at these meetings "to remember to save a seat for the sister at the table." Executive F said that, as she rose in the leadership ranks, she used this mantra to try to mentor other aspiring female police leaders and would often invite them to accompany her at the leadership meetings. She then changed her mantra to "save at least two seats at the table for the sisters."

POLICE EXECUTIVE G

Executive G has spent over 20 years with her current agency where she was sworn in as the first female police chief last year. While working as a patrol officer, she went back to school and finished her bachelor's and master's degrees and has completed over 2,000 hours of advanced police training. She didn't become interested in policing until after high school when nothing else seemed to interest her. After a friend of the family introduced her to policing, she decided to give it a try. She started the police academy and instantly knew that the structured environment and physical nature of the job really appealed to her.

Executive G said she probably would not have thought about promoting up through the ranks if it hadn't been for the encouragement from her mentors. She explained that her mentors saw potential in her when she didn't yet see it in herself. The first time she was eligible

to take the sergeant's exam she chose not to as she didn't think she was ready. However, she acknowledged that most male officers take it as soon as they are eligible. She said females tend to be more critical of themselves and tend to wait longer before trying for a promotion. Executive G said she eventually did take the sergeant's test and was promoted to sergeant and later to lieutenant. Executive G admitted that there were struggles and obstacles that she faced as she took on more leadership roles. As a lieutenant she did not feel supported by her supervisors at that time. She explained, "I was basically told to just be happy where you're at and don't make any waves." She said that it would take several retirements of these older supervisors before she felt that the culture in her agency started to change, and she became more accepted as a female leader.

Executive G described her biggest accomplishment as being in the position that she is currently in as the first female police chief of her agency. However, she also described this as her biggest challenge as well. She further expounded on this challenge explaining that it took her awhile to prove to herself that she deserves to be in this position. Executive G said as police chief, she hopes to bring a culture of inclusiveness, collaboration, and belonging to everyone in the department, which she explained was not something she always felt during her leadership journey.

POLICE EXECUTIVE H

Executive H worked for 25 years at her first police agency and retired as a captain before joining her current agency where she is the Assistant Chief of Police. Executive H explained that her desire to become a police officer resulted from trauma that she experienced as a child and into her teenage years. She said she wanted "to be that voice for the voiceless" and that led her

75

to a career in policing. Executive H has earned her bachelor's degree and is currently working on her master's degree.

Executive H said she never intended on going for promotions and moving up the ranks as she said she was content with being a patrol officer and being out in the community. However, after working patrol for a few years, some of her fellow officers who she considered mentor figures, encouraged her to start going for promotions. Once she was promoted to sergeant, she said she really wanted to stay in this role for a while and really learn the job before moving on to the next rank. She said really tried to learn and master leadership skills at every rank she held.

Executive H credited several mentor figures for her career success. One of these mentors was a former Chief. She explained, "I learned a lot from him, and he allowed me to sit in spaces that normally sergeants and lieutenants would not sit in." Executive H also explained that her mother was a police officer, and she learned about the importance of serving the community from her. When speaking of her mother, Executive H said, "I saw early on her passion for the community, and I saw the way she treated people in a way that they respected her."

Executive H described one of her biggest challenges as just being a female in the law enforcement profession. She said even when she got her current leadership role, she was not immediately accepted. Executive H said when she and the Chief (who is also a female) were first promoted to their current ranks, people assumed in meetings that the males in the meeting were higher ranking than both of them. When speaking about these meetings, she said, "they would automatically talk to our male counterparts." Executive H also described

being a female and a minority in this profession as additionally challenging. She said she had to learn to stop internalizing every bad thing that another officer did. When describing this, she explained, "I was feeling that and felt like I was carrying that weight." Executive H described her biggest accomplishment as sitting in her current seat as the second in command of a major city police department.

THEMES AND INSIGHTS

Each of the interviews with these eight female police executives provided valuable insight into their personal and professional career journeys. Although each interview was unique, there were several common themes that were found to be interwoven throughout the interviews. These themes included the role of mentors, barriers and obstacles faced by the interviewees, unique qualities of female leaders in law enforcement, and the value of education and training of the study subjects.

First, all the participants described mentor figures who were important to their career and leadership journeys. These mentors pushed the participants to seek out and apply for leadership positions and help guide them in these positions. The mentors also believed in the participants' abilities which allowed the participants to believe in themselves.

As the participants described their paths to the top of their profession, they identified and described several barriers and obstacles that they faced along the way. Many of these barriers and obstacles were directly related to their gender and their place in a traditionally male-dominated profession. The participants described coping mechanisms that each of them developed through the years to help deal with and overcome these barriers and obstacles.

The participants also exhibited and described the value and unique qualities that females bring to the field of law enforcement. All the participants expressed a desire and need to add more females to the field and more females to leadership roles in law enforcement.

Lastly, all the participants emphasized the important role education, training, and experience has played in their journeys. The participants were very proud of their educational accomplishments and credited their educational and training credentials for getting them to where they are today.

The remainder of this chapter will discuss the common key threads identified above in more detail and in relation to each of the participants' interviews. The narratives of the interviews will be used to further describe and explain the themes and threads and to provide further insight into the lived experiences of the participants.

THEME #1: MENTORS

All eight participants described having one or more people in their career who acted as mentor figures and helped them move up the ranks at their agencies. Mentoring in law enforcement is described as a mutually beneficial relationship between a more experienced and knowledgeable officer and a lesser experienced officer (Pola, 2020). The mentor provides important insight and guidance to help the mentee along their career journeys. Each of the female police executives who were interviewed described at least one person in their careers who provided this valuable insight, advice, encouragement, and guidance. Interestingly, all eight of the participants described the mentors as strictly "informal" and not a formal mentor/mentee relationship.

All the participants described the importance of these mentor figures in their career journeys. Executive A explained that the mentors in her life made her feel that she was competent enough to take that next step into a leadership role. She said, "you need somebody to tell you that you're good enough." Executive B explained the importance of mentors in her career: "A lot of the things I did were based on people seeing something in me that I didn't see in myself. And becoming Chief was one of these." Executive G explained that she does not think she ever would have promoted without the encouragement from her mentors. Executive D credits her mentor for believing in her during a tough time in her career. She explained, "He [her mentor] knew from the get-go that I was destined to do bigger things, and I absolutely credit him for kind of helping put me back together and recognizing that I can actually do this job. He was a large part of that for me." Executive E said she never would have applied for the Assistant Chief's job which later led her to the Chief's role if it wasn't for the encouragement and pushing from her mentor.

THEME #1 DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

The literature also emphasized the importance of mentorship and the barrier that a lack of mentorship plays in the career journeys of female leaders (Elacqua et al., 2009; Pola, 2020; Babic & Hansez, 2021). The National Institute of Justice (2019) and Babic and Hansez (2021) explained that the lack of formal mentors made females in leadership positions feel isolated and feel that they lacked support in the organization. Franklin (2005) and Kingshott (2009) describe the organizational culture in policing as hypermasculine where a preference and dominance of male traits over female traits exists. This hypermasculinity has led to a culture

that is not conducive to a formal mentoring system for aspiring female leaders and has left female leaders feeling further isolated.

THEME #2: BARRIERS AND OBSTACLES

All the study participants expressed that they had faced many obstacles and barriers in their career journeys. When describing these obstacles and barriers, the participants conveyed that they felt these obstacles and barriers were directly related to their gender. While discussing obstacles and barriers, Executive A explained, "I think there's always that group of people who had no intentions of ever working with a female." She further explained, "When women came into law enforcement, you were either a slut, bitch, or lesbian, one of those three, and it's like the guys try to figure out real quickly which one you were because you couldn't be more than one of those." Executive A said this mentality in law enforcement has caused her to tell new female officers that their reputation is at stake and is being evaluated every single day. She admits this is something that she never has to tell male officers.

Executive B, who represents both a racial and gender minority, said she was treated "so badly" as a new officer. She explained that during one of her first special assignments, a fellow officer said to her, "You know what? You need to be home somewhere making someone a pie." Even when she started to get promoted, she was told that she was only getting promoted because they needed to put some diversity in the department. Executive B said she thought this perspective had ended when she became Chief of Police; however, she overheard a colleague at her promotional ceremony say, "They must just let anybody become the Chief of Police now."

Executive C also described several instances of harassment that she has endured based on her gender. She said as a brand-new officer, her fellow officers told her that she was only hired because the police chief at the time was a lesbian and wanted to convert her. Executive C described another incident where she received a text message from a fellow officer that contained an image of an "attractive woman with gigantic dangling boobs." Executive C said her heart dropped as she looked at the image knowing that it was supposed to depict her. She said a few minutes later, the officer texted her saying, "sorry, I meant to send that to someone else." Executive C said she didn't report the incident right away to her Chief as she was too embarrassed. However, years later, she discussed it with her Chief, who just brushed it aside and said it was too late then to do anything about it. Executive C said that throughout her career, she thinks she has heard all the female or blond jokes that are out there. When discussing dealing with the obstacles, Executive C said, "You're [as a female officer] going to be viewed under a different lens than another male chief. You are, no matter how you slice it."

Executive D explained that she has dealt with sexism and harassment throughout her career even as she moved up the ranks to Deputy Chief and the role of Chief. She said that many of the departments she worked for were what she called "good old boys' networks." When asked if she ever reported any of the harassment, she said, "I generally dealt with it on my own. I had seen enough other females go through it, where if it was reported, it very much set a tone in their career and pigeon-holed them. So, I figured out fairly early on that wasn't the path I was going to take." Executive D said dealing with these incidents on her own led her to develop a coat of armor as a coping mechanism.

Executive E described similar obstacles in her career. She explained that early on in her career she had to report a supervisor for inappropriate behavior, which ultimately cost him his job. She said that other officers blamed her for the supervisor losing his job, and it took several years to gain their trust back again. She also explained that a fellow female officer also reported the behavior of her supervisor who repeatedly told her she needed "to lose that baby weight" after she returned from maternity leave. The supervisor even required the officer to report early to shifts to work out. Executive E said that, throughout her career, she constantly felt like she was having to prove herself beyond what a male officer doing the same work would have to. She said, "People thought I was just put in these roles because I was a woman."

Executives F and G also described similar obstacles and barriers in their careers. Executive F described an incident she experienced when she first got the promotion to Director. She said the former Director called her supervisor and said, "this agency is not ready for a woman leader. You do know she's a mom and has kids. Now, how is that going to work out? Who would put a woman in charge?" Executive G said as she started to get promoted and move into more leadership roles, she felt like she was not valued as a command officer because of her gender. When she became the first female Lieutenant at her department, her superior officer told her, "Be happy where you're at, and just don't make any waves." Executive G went on to explain that there were special rules as to how command officers could communicate with each other, and these rules seemed to only apply to her.

Executive H, who similar to Executive B, identifies as both a racial and gender minority, explained some of the obstacles that she felt she faced during her career. First, she said her biggest obstacle was being a woman in law enforcement. She explained, "when women speak,

[what we say] is not as listened to as when our male counterparts speak." She described the criticism that she endured when she took on her Deputy Chief role. She said, "You want to hope that it's not racist or sexist, but it appears to be a little bit of both, and so you just deal with it and continue to march ahead." She further described her treatment in her new leadership role: "We were highly scrutinized when we got this job, in a way that a male would not have been. My high school transcripts were requested. There were even rumors that I was a stripper." She said treatment like this causes women to second guess themselves and their ability to lead.

All the participants explained that balancing life responsibilities and work responsibilities presented significant challenges and obstacles in their career journeys. They found these obstacles to be particularly challenging as a female in law enforcement and became even more challenging as they started to promote up the ranks. Executive A explained, "women still put family first." She went on to explain that the way promotions tend to work in law enforcement is that, once you are promoted, you have the lowest seniority in that rank and, therefore, could be bumped back to midnight shift or afternoon shift or working weekends. Executive A said that this type of shift change doesn't always work when you have children at home. Executive F described one of her biggest challenges as just being a mom. She said, "It's a huge obstacle for a woman police officer because you might have a husband who helps out, but still the bulk of the home responsibilities are on your shoulders." Executive C described the challenges of motherhood while working in law enforcement:

> Women are usually the primary parent in the house, and if you're going to promote, you know that means you can't put your family first, unless you have an awesome support system and a supportive partner. It creates hurdles on a daily basis. For example, picking up the kids. Nobody else is going to do it if you get a late call and get held over. So, I think that limits a lot of mothers from trying to make that leap into supervision.

Executive E also discussed the challenges that motherhood posed in her career:

> Our patrol officers work twelve-hour shifts and work every other weekend, which makes it difficult to raise a family. We are currently struggling with the retention of female officers. Most men don't have to take on the bulk of the responsibilities of raising a family like women do. I would still come home and have to do the bulk of the other tasks at home. I think that naturally falls on the woman, and that's not easy to do. Those were hard days when I had little ones at home and working. And then you come here and face a lot of the stresses that you face on this job, and it's not for everyone.

Executive H similarly spoke of the unique challenges that women faced balancing their careers and motherhood. She explained that as you start receiving promotions, hours and shifts change, which is especially challenging for women with children. She said, "You're not going to be able to find daycare from midnight to 7 am." Executive D also found balancing her role as a mother and her job as a Police Chief challenging:

> I don't feel like females necessarily get that same backing a lot of times. And certainly, we have different responsibilities. I mean, regardless that I'm the Chief of Police here, I'm still mom and wife at home, and so I still have all of those same duties. Whereas men get to come be the Chief of Police, and they have a wife at home to handle all of that stuff. We don't, so the work-and-home-life balance becomes really challenging, and I think a lot of women just choose not to want to trade off. And you know, my kids will be the first to tell you there's been things that I've missed, or I've been late for because, you know, dead bodies and officer-involved shootings never time themselves well. And I have had to work through a lot of mom guilt because of that.

The participants expressed several barriers and obstacles that created additional challenges in their career journeys. Many of these barriers were related to gender stereotypes in their role as a female police officer. Other barriers described by the participants illustrated incidents of harassment and sexual harassment. Many of these incidents went unreported as the women feared the retaliation and reputation that might result from reporting these

incidents. Lastly, the participants described several obstacles related to their role and responsibilities as mothers and primary caretakers in their homes.

The literature indicates that the obstacles faced by the study participants are not unique to them. The literature on females in law enforcement consistently shows a high prevalence of harassment and sexual harassment (Haarr, 1997; Martin & Jurik, 2007; Somvadee & Morash, 2008; Lonsway et al., 2013). Also, many of the study participants indicated that the harassment was either never reported or there was a hesitation to report the harassment, a situation that is also consistent with the literature (Lonsway & Alipio, 2007; Lonsway et al., 2013). Lonsway and Alipio (2007) and Lonsway et. al. (2013) explain that the fear of retaliation is often the primary reason for not reporting the harassment. This was also consistent with the responses from the study participants who expressed that they feared retaliation and thought reporting it would have negative consequences for their career. Lastly, the culture of masculinity and misogyny described by Franklin (2005), Kingshott (2009), and Batton and Wright (2019) that exists in law enforcement creates an environment ripe for harassment and hostility toward females.

The literature is also consistent with the study participants' description of balancing family responsibilities and a career in law enforcement as creating an additional barrier (Wertsch, 1997; Cooper & Ingram, 2004; Cordner & Cordner, 2011). Schulze (2010) and Batton and Wright (2019) explain that this obstacle affects female officers differently than male officers, as females are more likely to take on the bulk of the family responsibilities. Muller et al. (2020) and Anton Rubio et al. (2021) found that female officers felt they faced an ultimatum having to choose between their family and their profession, often leading to their abandoning

85

their law enforcement career or deciding not to seek promotion. This was consistent with the sentiments of many of the study participants who found themselves at a similar crossroads at some point in their career.

THEME #3: QUALITIES OF FEMALE LEADERS IN LAW ENFORCEMENT

During the interviews, the study participants described several qualities and characteristics that they felt were unique to female leaders in law enforcement. The participants described these characteristics within themselves and also saw these characteristics in other female leaders they worked with. The participants explained that these characteristics not only made female law enforcement leaders unique, but also added something to the field of policing that makes it better and could be used to improve the current state of policing.

First, all the study participants described female police leaders as having a unique sense of empathy and caring that differed from their male counterparts. Executive A explained, "we [female police officers] exhibit some level of calm and we have a relatability to victims. For example, in domestic violence situations, female and child victims are much more likely to talk to a female officer." Executive D explained that females bring a notion that you can have emotion and still be professional too and, in fact, the public appreciates seeing this emotion in police officers. When talking about her current leadership role, she said, "My guys never doubt that I care about them, and to me that's one of the most important things that I can bring." Similarly, Executive F explained that females have a nurturing part of their brain that allows them to care for others in a way that males often do not. Executive G also explained that women are better nurturers. When discussing her leadership role, she said, "You're there to

nurture and encourage and build people up along the way. And I'll say women, we do some of

this stuff better. We just do." Executive H similarly described female law enforcement leaders

as better nurturers. She said that even when female police leaders are forced to discipline

officers, they handle these situations differently than their male counterparts.

The participants also agreed that females bring a different communication style and

better interpersonal communication skills to policing. Executive H explained that because

women are better at communicating, they are naturally better at de-escalating situations. She

said:

> I think we have proven over time that when you bring more women into an agency, the
> use of force goes down, the officer-involved shootings go down, the citizen complaints
> go down, and that tends to be because we just do a better job of really just scaling down
> and bringing the temperature down.

Executive G agreed that women are better at finding other ways to deal with a situation

besides using physical force. Similarly, Executive E explained that women naturally bring de-

escalation skills to a situation: "often you can avoid that physical confrontation just by bringing

a female into the situation and developing rapport with that person." Executive C and D also

agreed that women use communication skills differently that often results in de-escalation of

difficult situations.

The participants also described a humbleness and strong sense of work ethic exhibited

by female police leaders. Executive A described this phenomenon as women are able to take

the ego out of the job. She said, "we're just here to do the job." Executive A also explained that

women in law enforcement tend to try harder and do things better because they have to, to

prove themselves. Executive B explained that she always knew she was going to work harder

than anyone else. She said, "What they quickly learned about me is I did things right and I

worked." When discussing her work ethic, Executive F said, "I always knew that there is nobody who can out work me. I always went to work early and was the last one to leave." Executive C explained that she always knew that, as a female in law enforcement, she was going to have to work harder than her male counterparts if she wanted to advance in the ranks and she said, "so that's what I did."

THEME #3 DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

Consistent with the study participants' description of the characteristics of female police officers, the literature shows that there are significant differences between the way in which men and women police (Garcia, 2003; Schuck & Rabe-Hemp, 2005; Bolger, 2015; Bergman et al., 2016; Klemko, 2020). Just as indicated by the study participants, several studies have indicated that female police officers are less likely to use force against a suspect than their male counterparts and less likely to receive a citizen complaint (Garner et al., 2002; Lonsway, 2003; Johnson, 2011; Bergman et al., 2016). Lonsway (2003) and Franklin (2005) also found female officers to be better communicators and, therefore, more likely to be able to diffuse a volatile situation without the use of violence. Rabe-Hemp (2009) found female officers were better at serving the needs of victims, particularly female and child victims. All these traits were characteristics described by the study participants as traits they saw in themselves and in other female officers that they had worked with during their careers.

THEME #4: EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Each of the participants had unique educational and training credentials and unique journeys to earning these credentials. However, all the participants emphasized the importance of earning these credentials and the important role they played in their journeys to top

leadership positions. All the participants also emphasized how proud they were of their educational journeys and encouraged other females in law enforcement to continue and finish their degrees and advanced degrees. All eight of the participants had completed some type of specialized law enforcement leadership course, either a staff and command school, which is generally hosted through a college or university, or the Federal Bureau of Investigation's National Academy, which is a prestigious law enforcement leadership course hosted by the FBI. Seven of the eight participants had a minimum of a bachelor's degree and about half of the participants had earned a master's degree.

Each of the participants spoke about the importance of education in their career. Executive C described her biggest accomplishment as earning her master's degree while working full time as a patrol officer and being a mother. When discussing her journey through her education, Executive B said, "I didn't know at the time how important going to college and getting my degree would be to me later on. My degree made me a better Police Chief." Executive B said she always believed in the value of education and training and throughout her career tried to get as much of it as possible. Executive G explained that she didn't go back and finish her bachelor's degree until she was in her 40s and had started to promote through the ranks. She said, "that was a huge accomplishment for me. I felt good about that." Executive D described one of her favorite accomplishments as completing her master's degree. She said, "That is still one of my most favorite days. It's something that I never thought I would do."

THEME #4 DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

The literature shows a relationship between the level of education of a police officer and their relative performance and quality as an officer (Roberg & Bonn, 2004; Rydberg &

Terrill, 2010; Gardiner, 2021). Roberg and Bonn (2004) and Rydberg and Terrill (2010) found

college educated officers were better at report writing, received fewer citizen complaints, were

more innovative and less resistant to change, and less likely to use force. This parallels the

study participants' perspective that their education played a key role in their career successes.

Gardiner (2021) also found that female police leaders, on average, had higher levels of

education than their male counterparts. This is also consistent with the demographics of this

study as at least half of the study participants had earned their master's degree and all the

study participants had completed some type of advanced police leadership training.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter began with an overview of the demographics of the study participants and

then detailed each participants' career journey. Each participant had a unique story to tell

detailing their journey from deciding to become police officers, to entering leadership roles,

and finally to earning the top leadership spots in their agencies.

While each of the participants' stories were unique, after analyzing the data, common

threads were discovered throughout each of the eight interviews. All the participants described

informal mentors that helped lead them in their career paths. Each of the participants also

described several barriers and obstacles they faced during their careers and many of these

barriers were related to their gender. These barriers included harassment, lack of respect, and

balancing work and family responsibilities. The participants described several unique

characteristics that they felt female law enforcement leaders bring to the field different from

their male counterparts. These characteristics included a strong sense of empathy and caring,

strong interpersonal communication skills, and a strong work ethic. Lastly, the participants

emphasized the important role that education and training played in their career journeys. Many of the participants even described their proudest moments as earning their college degrees. The common threads discovered through analysis of the data were consistent with the literature on this topic.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND FUTURE RESEARCH

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a summary of the study and discusses implications and conclusions that can be drawn from this study. This chapter includes the key findings of this study in relation to the research questions, the implications for females aspiring to be police leaders, implications for institutions of higher education, and recommendations for future research related to this topic. Females still find themselves largely absent from the top leadership positions in law enforcement agencies. Only about 3% of police chiefs (or the top leadership position) in law enforcement agencies in the United States are female and this number has remained mostly stagnate for the past decade (Hyland & Davis, 2019). At a time when society has differing views about policing and has demanded reforms in policing, adding more women into the field may be the catalyst for change. The literature shows female police officers are more trusted by their communities, exhibit better interpersonal communication skills, tend to be better at deescalating volatile situations and are less likely to use force (Roman, 2020).

The purpose of this study was to look at the lived experiences of female leaders in law enforcement through qualitative interviews. Data was collected by interviewing 8 female leaders in law enforcement and the following research questions and sub-questions were used to guide the interview questions:

- RQ 1: What are the lived experiences of female leaders in law enforcement on their pathway to becoming the leader of their department?

  o What helped them break through the glass ceiling and advance their career?

  o How did their educational journey and leadership training help them advance their career?

- RQ 2: What significant obstacles and barriers did these women overcome in their journey to become chief or deputy chief?

  o Were any of these barriers related to their gender?

  o From their perspective, did male officers face the same barriers to career advancement?

- RQ 3: What reasons do current female law enforcement leaders identify for the ongoing underrepresentation of women in leadership roles?

  o How can we improve college criminal justice programs to help recruit more females into the field and create more female police leaders?

- RQ 4: What are the strategies women leaders in law enforcement identify as helping them cope and excel in male dominated police departments?

Based on these questions, the researcher developed and conducted semi-structured interviews via Zoom with each of the participants. The data collected from these interviews and the information gained is meant to assist police agencies and criminal justice programs at institutions of higher education to encourage and recruit more females into the law enforcement field and ultimately lead to more females in leadership positions in law enforcement.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Feminist theory and Tokenism were used as the underlying theoretical framework to guide the researcher in the collection and analysis of the data. Feminist theory examines gender inequalities and examines the world from the female perspective, a historically

marginalized group. Chafetz (2004) describes feminism as the realization of a system of

inequality between males and females where men have greater access to valued social

resources. Leavy and Harris (2019) describe feminism as a human rights position that seeks to

expose and remedy gender inequalities. However, Leavy and Harris (2019) also explain that the

modern form of feminism also recognizes intersectionality as part of feminism. In other words,

females are not only a part of a marginalized gender group, but also belong to certain racial and

ethnic groups which may also be marginalized. Leavy and Harris (2019) further explain that

feminist theory does not just attempt to recognize and identify inequalities, but rather

attempts to change the status quo. In other words, feminist theory first states and describes

the problem, then attempts to solve the problem. The researcher, in this study, used the lens of

feminist theory to first construct meaningful interview questions that allowed the study

participants to describe and explain their lived experiences as a female leader in law

enforcement. Feminist theory was then used to analyze the data and understand the

experiences of the study participants as a marginalized gender group and also how their gender

intersected with their race, ethnicity, and sexuality. Lastly, as feminist theory is used as an

engine for social change, the participants discussed and described the possible impact of adding

more females into law enforcement, particularly leadership positions, and what their agencies

and other agencies need to do to accomplish this.

Kanter (2010) coined the term "tokenism" to describe organizations where women

found themselves in an organizational culture completely dominated by men. The few women

in these organizations were seen as "tokens", symbolizing all women, and essentially used by

the organization to show they had achieved gender diversity. Kanter (2010) explains that these

94

few women in these organizations faced increased visibility and scrutiny, increased pressure, and total social isolation from the dominant group. Additionally, Kanter (2010) found that women were constrained by their social roles defined by gender stereotypes and found themselves conforming to these roles rather than challenging the majority group. Several participants in this study group described feeling like "tokens" in their early positions in law enforcement or their first leadership positions. They also described instances, particularly early on their careers, of trying to fit in with the other male officers in the organization. Some of the participants even described this phenomenon as wanting to "be one of the guys." This process of trying to assimilate also caused several of the participants to refrain from reporting clear instances of harassment from other officers. All the participants emphasized the fact that they always felt they needed to work harder than their male counterparts to achieve a promotion or accolades. These feelings could be attributed to the reality that these female leaders in law enforcement grappled with as "tokens" in their agencies.

KEY FINDINGS

The following key findings were deduced after analysis of the data collected. The key findings will be discussed in relation to the research questions and sub-questions.

RESEARCH QUESTION 1 AND SUB-QUESTIONS: FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The first research question inquired about the lived experiences of female leaders in law enforcement on their pathway to becoming the top executive of their department. The sub-questions broke down the idea of lived experiences and looked specifically at what helped these female leaders break through the glass ceiling and advance their careers. This researcher

also examined how the participants' educational journey and leadership training helped advance their careers.

The study participants begun their stories of their lived experiences as a female leader in law enforcement explaining why they decided to become police officers. All the participants had a unique specific reason for entering law enforcement ranging from a particular incident with police when they were young to having family and friends in the law enforcement community. Although their reasons were unique, the participants all described their desire to help people and make the community better as their primary reasons for entering the field. Each police executive described their unique journey from graduating from the police academy to being a patrol officer to being promoted for the first time to a first line supervisor and finally becoming the Chief or Deputy Chief of their respective departments. All their journeys were filled with challenges, obstacles, and barriers that they had to find ways to overcome in order to reach the top. Despite all these challenges and obstacles, the participants showed genuine pride in their journeys, gratitude for the opportunity to lead their agencies, and still showed immense pride that wearing their badge represents.

The literature explains that the glass ceiling is particularly relentless in law enforcement and even more so in leadership positions in law enforcement (Schulz, 2004). The study participants were asked what helped them break through that glass ceiling. Although a combination of contributing factors led to these particular females breaking through that glass ceiling, there were a few factors that all the participants shared as a key contribution. First, all the participants described someone or a few individuals that acted as informal mentors to them throughout their careers. The participants described these mentors as people that genuinely

believed in them even when they didn't believe in themselves. The mentors encouraged them to get advanced degrees and seek out advanced training. They also gave them the confidence to apply for special assignments and promotional opportunities. One participant explained that she never would have applied for her first leadership promotion let alone the Chief's job if it hadn't been for the encouragement from her mentor. The literature confirms the importance of mentorship and the challenge that a lack of mentorship plays in women struggling to break through the glass ceiling (Elacqua et al., 2009; Pola, 2020; Babic & Hansez, 2021). Notably, very few of the participants identified another female officer as their informal or formal mentor, however, several of the participants indicated that they thought having another female officer as a mentor would have been beneficial.

When discussing the factors that contributed to these females breaking through the glass ceiling, all the participants mentioned external support systems that contributed to their success. The participants agreed that the irregular and 24/7 schedules of policing made their journeys challenging. Additionally, as they took on more leadership roles, the job responsibilities and pressures increased. They found these challenges to be even more cumbersome as females trying to balance work and family responsibilities. The participants explained that it was their external support systems that helped them navigate through these challenges. One participant explained that although she took on the bulk of the home responsibilities when it came to their children, her husband was always willing to step in and help out. Another participant explained that her sister and mother always assisted with childcare when she had to work midnight shifts or weekends. The participants explained that

97

without these external support systems promoting up to higher leadership positions may not have been possible.

As the police executives discussed their journeys from patrol officers to Chiefs, they emphasized the important role that education and advanced leadership training played in their journeys. Several participants described their master's degree graduation ceremonies as one of the proudest moments of their life. Another participant explained that her college education made her a better police chief. One of the police executives explained that earning her master's degree was extra challenging because she did it while working as a patrol officer full time and raising two young children. All the participants completed some type of advanced leadership training either at a staff and command school or the FBI's National Academy. The participants felt this advanced training helped them become better leaders as they promoted through the ranks. The literature confirms the participants belief that their advanced education contributed to their success finding that a police officer's level of education was positively correlated with their job performance and quality as an officer (Roberg & Bonn, 2004; Rydberg & Terrill, 2010; Gardiner, 2021). Additionally, studies have shown that female police leaders tend to have higher education levels on average than their male counterparts (Gardiner, 2021).

Another factor contributing to the study participants' ability to break through the glass ceiling was something not said by the participants themselves, but something observed and deduced by the researcher. Through the stories of the participants' journeys from patrol officers to top police executives, the participants exhibited perseverance and grit in the face of adversity. Duckworth (2016) describes grit as passion and perseverance for long-term goals. She further explains that grit is not talent nor luck, but rather it is caring so much about a goal that

it gives meaning to everything you do even while facing adversity and challenges (Duckworth, 2016). One participant continued her policing journey after being told by several of her male colleagues that as a woman she belonged in the kitchen rather than in a patrol car. Another participant was told after receiving a promotion that she should just keep her mouth shut and be happy where she was. Another participant explained that at one of the first police agencies she worked at there wasn't even a designated women's locker room and she was expected to change clothes in the men's locker room. As one participant explained she always had to prove herself beyond what a male officer had to do. To overcome these challenges and breakthrough that glass ceiling, these women police executives had to possess and demonstrate that grit on a daily basis.

RESEARCH QUESTION 2 AND SUB-QUESTIONS: FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The second research question examined more specifically the obstacles and barriers that female leaders in law enforcement face and how these obstacles and barriers are related to their gender. The participants were also asked whether they felt the obstacles and barriers they faced differed from their male counterparts.

When the participants were asked whether they faced any obstacles or barriers in their career journeys, all the participants expressed without hesitation that they had faced many obstacles and barriers. One participant explained that there wasn't enough time in this interview to fully explain all the obstacles and barriers she had faced. All the participants discussed instances of harassment they had endured during their law enforcement careers. Many of these instances of harassment described by the participants were sexual in nature. These stories ranged from simply being told they were unfit for the job because they were

female to being sent sexually explicit images to enduring sexual comments about their physical appearance in uniform. The participants agreed that this harassment was directly related to their gender and was not something their male counterparts in policing had endured. Much of this harassment went unreported as the participants explained that fears of retaliation and wanting to fit in with the other officers dominated the reasons for not reporting. The literature substantiates the participants' claims of female officers enduring prevalent harassment, particularly sexual harassment (Haarr, 1997; Martin & Jurik, 2007; Somvadee & Morash, 2008; Lonsway et al., 2013). Studies also indicate fear of retaliation as being the primary reason for not reporting harassment (Lonsway & Alipio, 2007; Lonsway et al., 2013).

Another obstacle that was highlighted in the interviews by the participants was the challenge of balancing police work with their family responsibilities. One police executive explained that she chose not to take the Sergeant's exam several times because she knew this meant she would have to go back to the midnight shift which was too burdensome with young children at home. As another participant further explained that finding childcare to watch your children during the night was impossible. The participants agreed that because the bulk of family responsibilities fell on females, this obstacle was especially challenging for them. Schulze (2010) and Batton and Wright (2019) confirm that this obstacle affects female officers differently than male officers as females are more likely to take on the bulk of the family responsibilities. Studies also indicate that the balance of family responsibilities and shiftwork in policing as the main reason that many female officers choose not to promote (Wertsch, 1997; Cordner & Cordner, 2011).

Several of the participants also emphasized the challenges that becoming pregnant while serving as a police officer posed. One participant explained that early on in her career, her agency had no protocols or procedures for providing light duty assignments to female officers while pregnant. These officers were still expected to work normal road patrol while wearing a traditional uniform and gun belt while pregnant. Another participant explained that most agencies still do not have dedicated lactation rooms or spaces for female officers once they return to work after having a baby. One participant described her colleague returning to work after having a baby and being told by a superior officer that she needed to lose that baby weight and forcing her to report for shifts early to workout. The literature explains that the role of females as child bearers is almost incompatible with policework (Silvestri, 2006). Studies show that very few police agencies have policies and procedures regarding accommodations for female officers during and after pregnancy (Schulze, 2010; Rabe-Hemp & Humiston, 2015).

Considering the literature on obstacles and barriers faced by females in law enforcement, the participants' stories in this study were not unique to them. The hypermasculine organizational culture of policing continues to create an environment that perpetuates harassment, particularly sexual harassment. Females in law enforcement, particularly those who have been promoted or are seeking to promote up the ranks, continue to face challenges of balancing family responsibilities with the untraditional and demanding schedule that law enforcement requires. Despite some increases in the number of females entering law enforcement, most agencies still fail to address issues and accommodations related to female officers and pregnancies. The participants in this study felt that these obstacles and barriers were not things that their male counterparts dealt with and therefore

they expressed always feeling like they had to work harder to get promoted and be successful in leadership roles.

The third research question and sub-questions addressed the issue of overall underrepresentation of females in law enforcement leadership roles. The question sought to elicit the reasons current female leaders in law enforcement give for the underrepresentation. Additionally, a sub-question sought to explore the connection between this underrepresentation and the work of criminal justice academic programs and how these programs can be improved to increase female representation in law enforcement.

First, the participants again emphasized the barriers and obstacles mentioned above in the findings and conclusions for research question 2 as a main reason the underrepresentation of women in law enforcement continues to perpetuate. Several of the participants were either retired or close to retirement and explained that these obstacles were an issue when they came into law enforcement thirty years ago and continue to be an obstacle today. One participant expressed discontent and frustration with the fact that not much has changed in terms of the organizational culture of policing in 30 years. She further explained:

> We just haven't grown as a profession. I mean the fact that in 2023 I'm still having to talk about the fact that female officers are being treated differently and don't feel welcome is a problem. I can still walk into a room of my colleagues and be the only one that looks like me there. And men still won't talk to me.

Harassment, challenges related to balancing family and work, and issues related to motherhood continue to discourage women from entering the field and cause women already in the field to leave law enforcement.

Several of the participants expressed that law enforcement also creates some occupational barriers. These participants explained that law enforcement agencies use a physical performance test to screen out candidates prior to entering a police academy and these tests tend to disproportionately screen out female candidates. The participants further explained that that they did not feel these tests were a good indicator of becoming a good police officer and that many of the physical standards used were archaic. The literature agrees with the study participants that the physical fitness tests used by law enforcement agencies has a disparate impact on female recruits (Austin & Hummer, 1998; Parsons & Jesilow, 2001; Cordner & Cordner, 2011; Nevers, 2019; Diaz & Nuño, 2021). Additionally, the literature questions whether the physical fitness tests employed by police agencies have any correlation to the current job of policing (Garcia, 2003; Cordner & Cordner, 2011; Schuck, 2014).

During the interviews, the notion of how we can improve the representation of women in policing was explored and the connection to criminal justice academic programs. All the women expressed that having female representation in criminal justice programs as instructors and in police academies was extremely important. One participant explained that females aspiring to be police officers and police leaders need to see people that look like them both in the field and in academia. They also explained that learning from a female instructor may be less intimidating for some women and provides the confidence to female recruits showing them that females can do this job and can be successful in this job. One participant succinctly explained this issue:

> I think it would require a culture change. I think it would require us to bring more women in at the academy level. I feel like we are stuck in 1982 at some of our academies and criminal justice programs. I feel like it's literally the same instructor

that's been there since 1982, he stays there until he dies and then we replace him with someone that looks just like him.

Another participant explained that there needs to be more purposeful and intentional recruitment of females for criminal justice programs. The marketing materials need to show female officers and female recruiters need to be present at career fairs and recruiting events. Another participant explained that this representation of female officers also needs to also be shown in leadership ranks. Aspiring female officers need to see that not only are they capable of entering this field, but they are also capable of promoting up the ranks, and even leading a police agency.

The participants concluded that many of the same reasons that have kept women out of policing for decades continue to exist today. The hypermasculine culture of policing described in the literature continues to dominate the law enforcement field (Franklin, 2005). This culture creates an environment where male traits are favored over female traits and the very presence of women in the field doing what was traditionally seen as man's work poses a threat to the male officer (Franklin, 2005; Martin & Jurik, 2007; Batton & Wright, 2019). If this culture continues to dominate policing; harassment, challenges related to family and motherhood responsibilities, and occupational barriers will continue to be prevalent. Police academies and criminal justice academic programs need more female representation and there needs to be purposeful and intentional recruiting of females. The participants agreed that until there is real transformational change in the organizational culture of policing, there will continue to be underrepresentation of women in the field.

Research question 4 explored the strategies and coping mechanisms that the study

participants' use or have used to cope with and excel in male dominated police agencies.

When discussing this idea of coping mechanisms, all the participants identified support

systems as being extremely important in law enforcement. The participants explained the

importance of having both support systems within law enforcement and support systems that

are external to the field. The participants' internal support systems included their informal

mentors. One participant explained that female officers need to have a very rounded circle of

friends and supporters within law enforcement and on the outside. She further explained that

she always found it particularly important to have a circle of women within policing that she

knew she could always count on. Several of the participants identified their families, particularly

their significant others, as being an important support system for them. One participant

identified her sister as being an important part of her support system and she emphasized the

importance of talking to friends and family, explaining that you can't hold it all in.

Several of the participants identified practical things they use to help cope with the

stressors of working in law enforcement. One participant explained that when she started to

promote up the leadership ranks, she started to play golf. She said learning a challenging sport

like this allowed her to take her mind off work for a bit. Another participant explained she

always feels much better and can deal with stressors at work more effectively when she eats

healthy and gets plenty of sleep. Several of the participants expressed that finding physical

activities that they enjoy doing such as running or working out was extremely important. One

participant explained that when she took on a police leadership role, she started training for

and ran a marathon. Another participant said she recently started undergoing acupuncture procedures to help relieve job induced stress.

The participants agreed that identifying coping mechanisms and strategies is extremely important while working in law enforcement and becomes even more important in police leadership roles. As one participant explained, everyone must find something that works best for them. The coping mechanisms used by the study participants ranged from internal and external support systems to eating healthy and exercising.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

One of the purposes of this study was to initiate and effectuate real reform in policing, police academies, and criminal justice academic programs. The study participants emphasized their willingness to participate in this study was based upon the hope that their stories and experiences would help to move the status quo and initiate change.

All the study participants expressed the importance of mentorship in their career journeys. However, all the study participants described only informal mentor relationships and expressed that law enforcement agencies lacked formal mentorship programs. The literature coincides with the sentiment of the study participants in the importance of mentorship. Elacqua et al. (2009) and Babic and Hansez (2021) both describe a lack of access to mentors as a major barrier for females trying to break through the glass ceiling. Additionally, the National Institute of Justice (2019) suggested formal mentorship programs as one of their key recommendations to improving the representation of females in policing and in police leadership positions.

Despite the overwhelming evidence pointing to the importance of mentorship programs, most police agencies have not implemented any type of mentorship program.

Consequently, criminal justice academic programs, police academies, and other organizations (such as female or minority police networking organizations) need to take it upon themselves to create these formal mentoring programs. Criminal justice academic programs in conjunction with police academies should create mentoring programs that pair a seasoned police officer with an aspiring police officer who is currently attending a criminal justice program at a university or community college. This would create a mentor relationship very early on in the student's police training and academic journey, which could help encourage the student to finish their academic degree and pursue a police career. This mentor relationship would be most effective if students and recruits could be paired with police officers that represent their gender and ethnicity. Given that many police agencies are currently experiencing a shortage of new police officers and recruits, this mentorship program could also benefit police agencies by providing a pipeline of potential new police officers.

Another area where reform is critical to the future of policing is regarding recruitment of new and future police officers. The study participants identified the lack of female representation in recruiting and marketing as a major contributing factor to the stagnant number of female police officers and female police leaders in recent years. Police agencies must make valiant efforts to extend their recruitment campaigns ensuring they are reaching female and minority populations. Historically, police agencies have recruited toward the status quo, people that look and act like the officers currently in their agency. However, as society demands more from policing today and the importance of diversity and representation in policing is realized, this practice must end. Police agencies need to cast their recruiting searches wide and far to create a diverse pool of potential police officers that are reflective of the

community they will be serving. One study participant described a program she started at her agency recently to help recruit more female officers. She created a recruiting event that invites female high school students to the police department for the day to learn more about a career in law enforcement. The program is led by a group of all female police officers. Programs like this need to be implemented and expanded in police agencies across the United States to show females that a career in law enforcement is feasible and attainable for them. Marketing materials created by police agencies need to show female and minority police officers and these marketing materials must also be intentional about depicting officers engaging in a wide range of police activities including community policing.

For decades police agencies have been able to resist change by hiding behind a cloak of tradition, secrecy, and a culture of hyper masculinity. This attitude and culture has led to a police force that is still dominated by white males. Large scale reform and diversification of the police force will take time, however, there are things we can implement now to initiate reform. First, creating and implementing formal mentoring programs will encourage new police officers, particularly women and minorities, to choose law enforcement as a career path, ensure new recruits successfully navigate the police academy and department training programs, and put new officers on a pathway to future leadership positions within the agency. Second, police agencies can also work toward diversity in their agencies by extending recruitment efforts that specifically target female and minority populations and being intentional and purposeful about depicting female and minority officers in marketing materials. As changes and initiatives like these are instituted by police agencies, it is important to note that sustained effective changes will only occur when we begin to make transformational changes in the organizational culture

of police agencies. It is not enough to just recruit female and minority officers; these officers must feel supported, valued, and included in the organizational culture. Real transformational change will be realized when female and minority officers are not just represented in patrol officer positions, but rather we see them as sergeants, lieutenants, captains, deputy chiefs, and chiefs. Diversity without inclusivity and belonging is not sustainable or effective and is simply applying a smoke and mirrors solution to a complex problem.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This research study explored the lived experiences of female police leaders specifically exploring how they broke through the glass ceiling and the obstacles and barriers they faced along the way. The interviews of the study participants were analyzed to identify key commonalities and threads. Factors relating to the causes of the underrepresentation of females in law enforcement were also identified and explored. As the body of research involving female law enforcement officers and more specifically female law enforcement leaders is sparse, this research study contributes to the research and literature.

Since the research and literature in this area is lacking, this study provides opportunities for future research. First, this subject area is lacking current comprehensive quantitative data regarding the number of female officers, their ranking, and their respective agencies. Even the law enforcement data collected by the Federal Bureau of Investigation does not provide in depth information that separates out male and female officers and their rankings. Additional quantitative data could be gathered regarding age, education level, training, and years of experience. This information would be useful to compare male and female officers and how

they move up the ranks. It could also be useful to be able to better track the number and demographics of female police officers over time.

Second, the research on female police officers that identify as a minority race or ethnicity could be greatly expanded upon. The literature explains that officers that identify as both a female and minority experience multiple layers of oppression (Collins, 2009). Additionally, the literature that does examine minority women in law enforcement treats that as a homogenous group without recognizing, for example, that the experience of a Black female officer may be quite different from the experiences of a Hispanic female officer or a female officer of Asian descent (Yu, 2021). The subject of the intersectionality of race and gender and how female police leaders experience this phenomenon was mentioned in this study, but not fully developed as only two of the participants in this study identified as both a female and a minority. Research on the experiences of female minority police leaders is a notable gap in the literature on this topic.

Another area of study that would add to the body of research on this topic is studies that take an in depth look at females who were in law enforcement and chose to leave and females that are in law enforcement but choose not to enter leadership roles. Research in both areas would further add to the information regarding the challenges of females in policing and the challenges that female police leaders face. These studies would also add to our overall understanding of the organizational culture of policing.

Lastly, research regarding the experiences of female first line supervisors and mid-level managers in law enforcement is needed. There is little research, particularly in-depth qualitative research, regarding the experiences of female police sergeants, lieutenants, and

captains. These first line and mid-level supervisors have direct supervision over patrol officers, the majority of which are male. The experiences of these female police leaders, the obstacles and challenges they faced, and the strategies they used to succeed, would be helpful and informative as we explore the underrepresentation of women in law enforcement.

DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Although this study added to the scholarly research and literature on female leaders in law enforcement, this study is limited in scope. First, the participants in this study were all from law enforcement agencies from the midwestern United States. The experiences of these female police executives may be different than female police executives from other parts of the country.

Second, the sample size for this research study was relatively small. Although conducting eight qualitative interviews provided a plethora of data, interviewing more female police leaders would provide more comprehensive data and thereby be more generalizable.

Finally, the interviews in this study were conducted using Zoom, a video conferencing platform. Using this platform, the researcher did have the opportunity to see the participants, however, the researcher relied on written transcripts of the interviews to analyze the data. Personal interviews conducted at the participants' workplace would have provided the researcher with a better opportunity to observe the body movements and non-verbal cues of the participant. It also would have provided the researcher with an opportunity to see and observe the participant in their workplace setting, which could have provided an even richer dataset.

RESEARCHER'S REFLECTIONS

This research had a personal element to it as a former female police officer who once aspired to leading a police department. I found the stories of the women interviewed for this study to be both powerful and relatable. So many of the obstacles and challenges described by the study participants I have either personally experienced or witnessed. I am grateful that these women were willing to share their personal journeys with me. All the women in this study have chosen to overcome and endure immense challenges in their career journeys because they believe the traits and skills that they and other females bring to law enforcement can help create transformational and sustained change in policing. Their voices and stories revealed their deep pride in the work they do and their unwavering conviction in the belief that police ultimately exist for the betterment of society. These women were able to break through the perpetual and persistent glass ceiling in law enforcement because of their tenacity, perseverance, and grit.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

As we strive to make police departments more reflective of the communities they serve, it is important to examine the reasons that females continue to be severely underrepresented in law enforcement. We must strive to understand the experiences of females in the law enforcement field, particularly in leadership roles, in order to make progress toward a more diverse police force. This study sought to provide a better understanding of these experiences by sharing and analyzing the career journeys of eight female leaders in law enforcement.

This chapter summarized the findings and conclusions to the research questions posed in this study. First, the lived experiences of the study participants were explored, specifically

looking at what helped them break through the glass ceiling and how their education and training helped them advance in their careers. The participants identified mentors and external support systems as helping them break through the glass ceiling. All the participants also found their education and training to be key contributors to their success. The obstacles and barriers faced by the study participants were also examined. These obstacles and barriers included enduring incidents of harassment and the challenges of balancing a career in law enforcement and family responsibilities. When asked to identify the reasons for the continued underrepresentation of females in law enforcement, the study participants identified the barriers females continue to face in the field, the lack of female representation in criminal justice academic programs and police academies, and the lack of meaningful transformational change in the hypermasculine organizational culture of policing. Lastly, the study participants identified coping mechanisms and strategies which included both internal and external support systems and other stress reducing activities.

It is this researcher's hope that this study will lead to further studies, many of which are mentioned in the chapter, on this topic. The ultimate goal is that these studies will give us a better understanding of the experiences of females in law enforcement which will then lead to transformational changes in the organizational culture of policing. All the female police executives interviewed in this study explained they agreed to participate because they want to be a part of these much needed changes in policing. Their hope is that not only will their stories help effectuate change but that their stories may also inspire some little girl to grow up and become a police chief. Hopefully her journey through that glass ceiling will be a little bit easier because of the females that courageously came before her and paved the way.

REFERENCES

2017 Crime in the United States—Full-time law enforcement employees. (2017). FBI: UCR. https://ucr.fbi.gov/crime-in-the-u.s/2017/crime-in-the-u.s.-2017/tables/table-74/table-74.xls

Acker, J. (1992). From sex roles to gendered institutions. *Contemporary Sociology*, *21*(5), 565–569. JSTOR. https://doi.org/10.2307/2075528

Advancing diversity in law enforcement. (2016, October). US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. https://www.eeoc.gov/advancing-diversity-law-enforcement

Antón Rubio, C., Grueso Hinestroza, M. P., & Marín López, M. (2021). Is it because you don't want to? A content analysis of police executive leaders' perceptions of policewomen's careers in Europe. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *12*. https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.713696

Archbold, C. A., & Schulz, D. M. (2008). Making rank: The lingering effects of tokenism on female police officers' promotion aspirations. *Police Quarterly*, 11(1), 50–73. https://doi.org/10.1177/1098611107309628

Archbold, C. A., & Schulz, D. M. (2012). Research on women in policing: A look at the past, present and future: Research on women in policing. *Sociology Compass*, *6*(9), 694–706. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1751-9020.2012.00501.x

Assessing the Evidence—Policing by the numbers. (2020). Council on Criminal Justice. https://counciloncj.foleon.com/policing/assessing-the-evidence/policing-by-the-numbers

Austin, T. L., & Hummer, D. (1998). What do college students think of policewomen?: An attitudinal assessment of future law enforcement personnel. *Women and Criminal Justice*, *10*(4), 1–24. https://heinonline.org/HOL/P?h=hein.journals/wwcj10&i=357

Ba, B. A., Knox, D., Mummolo, J., & Rivera, R. (2021). The role of officer race and gender in police-civilian interactions in Chicago. *Science*, *371*(6530), 696–702. https://doi.org/10.1126/science.abd8694

Babic, A., & Hansez, I. (2021). The glass ceiling for women managers: Antecedents and consequences for work-family interface and well-being at work. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *12*. https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.618250

Baldwin, L.G. (2008, May 16). *Lola G. Baldwin*. Opb. https://www.opb.org/television/programs/
oregonexperience/article/lola-g-baldwin-/

Bass, B. M. (1999). Two decades of research and development in transformational leadership.
European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology, *8*(1), 9–32.
https://doi.org/10.1080/135943299398410

Batton, C., & Wright, E. M. (2019). Patriarchy and the structure of employment in criminal
justice: Differences in the experiences of men and women working in the legal
profession, corrections, and law enforcement. *Feminist Criminology*, *14*(3), 287–306.
https://doi.org/10.1177/1557085118769749

Beaton, B., Todak, N., & Shjarback, J. A. (2022). The benefits and supervisory styles of women
police leaders. *Feminist Criminology*, 15570851211066108.
https://doi.org/10.1177/15570851211066107

Belknap, J. (2021). *The invisible woman: Gender, crime, and justice* (Fifth edition). Sage.

Belknap, J., & Shelley, J. K. (1993). The new lone ranger: Police women on patrol. *The American
Journal of Police*, 12(2), 47–76.

Bergman, M. E., Walker, J. M., & Jean, V. A. (2016). A simple solution to policing problems:
Women! *Industrial and Organizational Psychology*, *9*(3), 590–597.
https://doi.org/10.1017/iop.2016.59

Birzer, M. L., & Craig, D. E. (1996). Gender differences in police physical ability test
performance. *American Journal of Police*, *15*(2), 93–108.

Bolger, P. C. (2015). Just following orders: A meta-analysis of the correlates of American police
officer use of force decisions. *American Journal of Criminal Justice*, *40*(3), 466–492.
https://doi.org/10.1007/s12103-014-9278-y

Chafetz, J. S. (2004). Bridging feminist theory and research methodology. *Journal of Family
Issues*, 25(7), 953–967. https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X04267098

Collins, C. S., & Stockton, C. M. (2018). The central role of theory in qualitative research.
International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 17(1), 160940691879747.
https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406918797475

Collins, P. (2009). *Black feminist thought: Knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of
empowerment* (Second edition). Routledge.

Cook, A., & Glass, C. (2014). Above the glass ceiling: When are women and racial/ethnic
minorities promoted to CEO? *Strategic Management Journal*, 35(7), 1080–1089.
https://doi.org/10.1002/smj.2161

Cooper, C., & Ingram, S. (2004). Retention of police officers: A study of resignations and transfers in ten forces. *Home Office Research, Development, and Statistics Directorate*, 64.

Cordner, G., & Cordner, A. (2011). Stuck on a plateau?: Obstacles to recruitment, selection, and retention of women police. *Police Quarterly*, 14(3), 207–226. https://doi.org/10.1177/1098611111413990

Crank, J. P. (2004). *Understanding police culture* (2nd ed). Anderson Pub.

Dejong, C. (2004). Gender differences in officer attitude and behavior. *Women & Criminal Justice*, 15(3–4), 1–32. https://doi.org/10.1300/J012v15n03_01

Diaz, V. M., & Nuño, L. E. (2021). Women and policing: An assessment of factors related to the likelihood of pursuing a career as a police officer. *Police Quarterly*, 24(4), 465–485. https://doi.org/10.1177/10986111211009048

Dodge, M., & Pogrebin, M. (2001). African-American policewomen—an exploration of professional relationships. *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies & Management,* 24(4), 550–562. https://heinonline.org/HOL/P?h=hein.journals/polic24&i=553

Duckworth, A. (2016). *Grit: The power of passion and perseverance* (First Scribner hardcover edition). Scribner.

Eagly, A. H., Johannesen-Schmidt, M. C., & van Engen, M. L. (2003). Transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles: A meta-analysis comparing women and men. *Psychological Bulletin,* 129(4), 569–591. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.129.4.569

Eagly, A. H., & Johnson, B. T. (1990). Gender and leadership style: A meta-analysis. *Psychological Bulletin*, 108(2), 233–256. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.108.2.233

Elacqua, T. C., Beehr, T. A., Hansen, C. P., & Webster, J. (2009). Managers' Beliefs about the Glass Ceiling: Interpersonal and Organizational Factors. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 33(3), 285–294. https://doi.org/10.1177/036168430903300304

Elting, L. (2019, August 21). *Why women quit*. Forbes. https://www.forbes.com/sites/lizelting/2019/08/21/why-women-quit/

Engel, R. S. (2001). Supervisory styles of patrol sergeants and lieutenants. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 29(4), 341–355. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0047-2352(01)00091-5

Federal Glass Ceiling Commission. (1995). *Good for business: Making full use of the nation's human capital.*

Federal Bureau of Investigation. (2017). *Criminal justice information services: 2017 crime in the United States: Table 74.* FBI. https://ucr.fbi.gov/crime-in-the-u.s/2017/crime-in-the-u.s.-2017/tables/table-74/table-74.xls

Felkenes, G. T., & Schroedel, J. R. (1992). A case study of minority women in policing. *Women & Criminal Justice*, 4(2), 65–90. https://heinonline.org/HOL/P?h=hein.journals/wwcj4&i=255

Fielding, N., & Fielding, J. (1992). A comparative minority: Female recruits to a British constabulary force. *Policing and Society*, 2(3), 205–218. https://doi.org/10.1080/10439463.1992.9964642

Fitzsimmons, E. G., Watkins, A., & Southall, A. (2021, December 15). Keechant Sewell to become first woman to lead N.Y.P.D. *The New York Times*. https://www.nytimes.com/2021/12/14/nyregion/keechant-sewell-nypd-commissioner.html

Fossey, E., Harvey, C., McDermott, F., & Davidson, L. (2002). Understanding and evaluating qualitative research. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry,* 36(6), 717–732.

Franklin, C. A. (2005). Male peer support and the police culture: Understanding the resistance and opposition of women in policing. *Women & Criminal Justice*, 16(3), 1–25. https://doi.org/10.1300/J012v16n03_01

Freeman, E. (2019). Feminist theory and its use in qualitative research in education. *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Education*. Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190264093.013.1193

Gaines, L. K., Falkenberg, S., & Gambino, J. A. (1993). Police physical agility testing: An historical and legal analysis management issue. *American Journal of Police*, 12(4), 47–66. https://heinonline.org/HOL/P?h=hein.journals/ajpol12&i=529

Gannon, E. (2017, July 17). Fitness test ruled unfair to female officers. *Courthouse News Service*. https://www.courthousenews.com/fitness-test-ruled-unfair-female-officers/

Garcia, V. (2003). "Difference" in the police department: Women, policing, and "doing gender." *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice*, 19(3), 330–344. https://doi.org/10.1177/1043986203254530

Gardiner, C. (2017). Policing around the nation: Education, philosophy, and practice. *Policing Institute*. www.policinginstitute.org

Gardiner, C. L. (2021). College cops around the nation: A 30-year and 40-year update on the state of higher education in US policing. *Policing: A Journal of Policy and Practice*, 15(2), 798–816. https://doi.org/10.1093/police/paz029

Garner, J. H., Maxwell, C. D., & Heraux, C. G. (2002). Characteristics associated with the prevalence and severity of force used by the police. *Justice Quarterly*, 19(4), 705–746. https://doi.org/10.1080/07418820200095401

Glass, C., & Cook, A. (2016). Leading at the top: Understanding women's challenges above the glass ceiling. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 27(1), 51–63. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2015.09.003

Grant, C., & Osanloo, A. (2014). Understanding, selecting, and integrating a theoretical framework in dissertation research: Creating the blueprint for your "house." *Administrative Issues Journal Education Practice and Research*, 4(2), 12–26. https://doi.org/10.5929/2014.4.2.9

Grieve, J., Harfield, C., & MacVean, A. (2007). *Policing* (By pages 116-120). SAGE Publications Ltd. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446214763

Haarr, R. N. (1997). Patterns of interaction in a police patrol bureau: Race and gender barriers to integration. *Justice Quarterly*, 14(1), 53–85. https://doi.org/10.1080/07418829700093221

Haarr, R. N., & Morash, M. (2004). Police workplace problems, coping strategies and stress; Changes from 1990-2003 for women and racial minorities. *Law Enforcement Executive Forum*, 4(3), 165–185.

Haslam, S. A., & Ryan, M. K. (2008). The road to the glass cliff: Differences in the perceived suitability of men and women for leadership positions in succeeding and failing organizations. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 19(5), 530–546. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2008.07.011

Hassell, K. D., & Brandl, S. G. (2009). An examination of the workplace experiences of police patrol officers: The role of race, sex, and sexual orientation. *Police Quarterly*, 12(4), 408–430. https://doi.org/10.1177/1098611109348473

Hoyt, C. L. (2010). Women, men, and leadership: Exploring the gender gap at the top. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, 4(7), 484–498. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1751-9004.2010.00274.x

Hyland, S. S., & Davis, E. (2019). *US department of justice: Local police departments, 2016: Personnel.* 21. https://bjs.ojp.gov/content/pub/pdf/lpd16p.pdf

Jermier, J. M., & Berkes, L. J. (1979). Leader behavior in a police command bureaucracy: A closer look at the quasi-military model. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 24(1), 1–23. https://doi.org/10.2307/2989873

Johns, M. L. (2013). Breaking the glass ceiling: Structural, cultural, and organizational Barriers preventing women from achieving senior and executive positions. *Perspectives in Health Information Management*, 10(Winter), 11.

Johnson, R. R. (2011). Suspect mental disorder and police use of force. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 38(2), 127–145. https://doi.org/10.1177/0093854810388160

Jovanović, G. (2011). Toward a social history of qualitative research. *History of the Human Sciences*, 24(2), 1–27. https://doi.org/10.1177/0952695111399334

Kanter, R. M. (2010). *Men and women of the corporation*. Basic Books.

King, E. B., Hebl, M. R., George, J. M., & Matusik, S. F. (2010). Understanding tokenism: Antecedents and consequences of a psychological climate of gender inequity. *Journal of Management*, 36(2), 482–510. https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206308328508

Kingshott, B. (2009). Women in policing: Changing the organizational culture by adopting a feminist perspective on leadership. *Criminal Justice Studies*, 22, 49–72. https://doi.org/10.1080/14786010902796481

Klemko, R. (2020, March 26). This police chief is hiring female officers to fix 'toxic' policing. *Washington Post*. https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/interactive/2022/women-police-nebraska/

Leavy, P., & Harris, A. M. (2019). *Contemporary feminist research from theory to practice*. Guilford Publications. http://public.ebookcentral.proquest.com/choice/publicfullrecord.aspx?p=5432900

Lee, T. P. (2005). The myth and reality of affirmative action: A study using the perceptions of female police. *Race, Gender & Class*, 12(3/4), 56–72. https://www.proquest.com/docview/218810458/abstract/D3F5C9E8DB224188PQ/1

Lockert, M. (2022, March 10). Understanding what the glass ceiling is and how it affects women in the workplace. *Business Insider*. https://www.businessinsider.com/personal-finance/glass-ceiling

Lonsway, K. A. (2003). Tearing down the wall: Problems with consistency, validity, and adverse impact of physical agility testing in police selection. *Police Quarterly*, 6(3), 237–277. https://doi.org/10.1177/1098611103254314

Lonsway, K. A., & Alipio, A. M. (2007). Sex discrimination lawsuits in law enforcement: A case study of thirteen female officers who sued their agencies. *Women & Criminal Justice*, 18(4), 63–103. https://doi.org/10.1080/08974450802096083

Lonsway, K. A., Fickling, M., Wood, M., DeLeon, A., Moore, M., Harrington, P., Smeal, E., & Spillar, K. (2002). Men, women, and police excessive force: A tale of two genders. *The National Center for Women and Policing*, 11.

Lonsway, K. A., Paynich, R., & Hall, J. N. (2013). Sexual harassment in law enforcement: Incidence, impact, and perception. *Police Quarterly*, 16(2), 177–210. https://doi.org/10.1177/1098611113475630

Marciniak, L. M., & Elattrache, A. D. (2020). Police chiefs' opinions on the utility of a college education for police officers. *Journal of Criminal Justice Education*, 31(3), 436–453. https://doi.org/10.1080/10511253.2020.1791352

Marroni, S. (2021, April 13). $2.2 million agreement reached in state police lawsuit that claimed fitness test discriminated against women. *Pennlive*. https://www.pennlive.com/news/2021/04/22-million-agreement-reached-over-pa-state-police-fitness-test-lawsuit-claimed-discriminated-against-women.html

Martin, S., & Jurik, N. (2007). *Doing justice, Doing gender: Women in legal and criminal justice occupations*. SAGE Publications, Inc. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781452204185

Martin, S. E. (1989). Women on the move?: A report on the status of women in policing. *Women & Criminal Justice*, 1(1), 21.

Maskaly, J., & Jennings, W. (2016). A question of style: Replicating and extending Engel's supervisory styles with new agencies and new measures. *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies and Management*, 39(4), 620–634. https://heinonline.org/HOL/P?h=hein.journals/polic39&i=614

Merriam, S., & Tisdell, E. (2016). *Qualitative research—A guide to design and implementation* (4th ed.). John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated.

Miles, D. A. (2017). Let's stop the madness part 2: Understanding the difference between limitations vs. delimitations. *Research Gate*, 15.

Miletich, S., & Beekman, D. (2018, July 17). Carmen Best, once rejected, is Seattle mayor's pick for top cop. Citizens have 'a lot of questions' about how this went. *The Seattle Times*. https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/politics/carmen-best-picked-as-new-seattle-police-chief/

Miller, A. R., & Segal, C. (2019). Do female officers improve law enforcement quality? Effects on crime reporting and domestic violence. *The Review of Economic Studies*, 86(5), 2220–2247. https://doi.org/10.1093/restud/rdy051

Miller, S. (1998). Rocking the rank and file gender issues and community policing. *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice*, 14(2), 156–172. https://heinonline.org/HOL/P?h=hein.journals/jccj14&i=144

Morin, R., & Mercer, A. (2017, February 8). A closer look at police officers who have fired their weapon on duty. *Pew Research Center.* https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/02/08/a-closer-look-at-police-officers-who-have-fired-their-weapon-on-duty/

Muir, W. K. (1977). *Police: Streetcorner politicians*. University of Chicago Press.

Muller, J. S., Hiekel, N., & Liefbroer, A. C. (2020). The long-term costs of family trajectories: Women's later-life employment and earnings across Europe. *Demography*, 57(3), 1007–1034. https://doi.org/10.1007/s13524-020-00874-8

National Institute of Justice. (2019). *Women in policing: Breaking barriers and blazing a Path*. 44.

Network of Executive Women. (2018). *The female leadership crisis: Why women are leaving (and what we can do about it)*. https://www.nextupisnow.org/research/the-female-leadership-crisis-report/

Nevers, K. (2019). Predictors of successful police academy recruits and rationalizations for attrition. *Police Practice and Research*, 20(4), 343–359. https://doi.org/10.1080/15614263.2018.1484289

Oakley, J. G. (2000). Gender-based barriers to senior management positions: Understanding the scarcity of female CEOs. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 27(4), 321–334. http://www.jstor.org/stable/25074386

Parsons, D., & Jesilow, P. (2001). I*n the same voice: Men and women in law enforcement*. Seven Locks Press.

Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research & evaluation Methods* (3rd ed.). Sage Publications, Inc.

Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative research & evaluation Methods* (4th ed.). Sage Publications, Inc.

Peshkin, A. (1988). In search of subjectivity. One's own. *Educational Researcher*, 17(7), 17–21. https://doi.org/10.2307/1174381

Pola, R. (2020, March 5). *Mentoring programs are a win-win*. American Police Beat Magazine. https://apbweb.com/2020/03/mentoring-programs-are-a-win-win/

Potts, L. W. (1983). Equal employment opportunity and female employment in police agencies. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 11(6), 505–523. https://doi.org/10.1016/0047-2352(83)90004-1

Rabe-Hemp, C. E. (2009). POLICEwomen or policeWOMEN?: Doing gender and police work. F*eminist Criminology*, 4(2), 114–129. https://doi.org/10.1177/1557085108327659

Rabe-Hemp, C. E., & Humiston, G. S. (2015). A survey of maternity policies and pregnancy accommodations in American police departments. *Police Practice and Research,* 16(3), 239–253. https://heinonline.org/HOL/P?h=hein.journals/gppr16&i=239

Reaves, B. A. (2015). *Local police departments, 2013–personnel, policies, and practices*. US Dept of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics.

Richardson, J. F. (1974). *Urban police in the United States*. Kennikat Press.

Roberg, R., & Bonn, S. (2004). Higher education and policing: Where are we now? *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies & Management,* 27(4), 469–486. https://doi.org/10.1108/13639510410566226

Roman, I. (2018, September 6). *A police pioneer on her unfinished business*. The Marshall Project. https://www.themarshallproject.org/2018/09/05/a-police-pioneer-on-her-unfinished-business

Roman, I. (2020, April 22). Women in policing. *Police Chief Magazine*. https://www.policechiefmagazine.org/women-in-policing/

Ryan, M. K., & Haslam, S. A. (2007). The glass cliff: Exploring the dynamics surrounding the appointment of women to precarious leadership positions. *The Academy of Management Review*, 32(2), 549–572. http://www.jstor.org/stable/20159315

Rydberg, J., & Terrill, W. (2010). The effect of higher education on police behavior. *Police Quarterly,* 13(1), 92–120. https://doi.org/10.1177/1098611109357325

Saleem, S., Rafiq, A., & Yusaf, S. (2017). Investigating the glass ceiling phenomenon: An empirical study of glass ceiling's effects on selection-promotion and female effectiveness. *South Asian Journal of Business Studies*, 6, 00–00. https://doi.org/10.1108/SAJBS-04-2016-0028

Sarver, M. B., & Miller, H. (2014). Police chief leadership: Styles and effectiveness. *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies and Management*, 37(1), 126–143. https://heinonline.org/HOL/P?h=hein.journals/polic37&i=127

Schuck, A. M. (2014). Female representation in law enforcement: The influence of screening, unions, incentives, community policing, CALEA, and size. *Police Quarterly*, 17(1), 54–78. https://doi.org/10.1177/1098611114522467

Schuck, A. M., & Rabe-Hemp, C. (2005). Women police: The use of force by and against female officers. *Women and Criminal Justice*, 16(4), 91–118. https://heinonline.org/HOL/P?h=hein.journals/wwcj16&i=341

Schulz, D. M. (2003). Women police chiefs: A statistical profile. *Police Quarterly*, 6(3), 330–345. https://doi.org/10.1177/1098611103254317

Schulz, D. M. (2004). *Breaking the brass ceiling: Women police chiefs and their paths to the top.* Praeger Publishers.

Schulze, C. (2010). Institutionalized masculinity in US police departments: How maternity leave policies (or lack thereof) affect women in policing. *Criminal Justice Studies*: A Critical Journal of Crime, Law and Society, 23(2), 177–194. https://heinonline.org/HOL/P?h=hein.journals/cjscj23&i=177

Silvestri, M. (2006). 'Doing time': Becoming a police leader. *International Journal of Police Science & Management*, 8(4), 266–281. https://doi.org/10.1350/ijps.2006.8.4.266

Silvestri, M. (2007). "Doing" police leadership: Enter the "new smart macho." *Policing and Society*, 17(1), 38–58. https://doi.org/10.1080/10439460601124130

Smith, B. B. (2019, March 28). Police history: The evolution of women in American law enforcement. *Police1*. https://www.police1.com/police-history/articles/police-history-the-evolution-of-women-in-american-law-enforcement-wMo8P1wLSxGQRes9/

Smooth, W. G. (2013). Intersectionality from theoretical framework to policy intervention. In A. R. Wilson (Ed.), *Situating Intersectionality: Politics, Policy, and Power* (pp. 11–41). Palgrave Macmillan US. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137025135_2

Snow, R. L. (2010). *Policewomen who made history: Breaking through the ranks.* Rowman & Littlefield Publishers; eBook Academic Collection (EBSCOhost). https://ferris.idm.oclc.org/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=e000xna&AN=336950&site=ehost-live

Somvadee, C., & Morash, M. (2008). Dynamics of sexual harassment for policewomen working alongside men. *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies & Management*, 31(3), 485–498. https://doi.org/10.1108/13639510810895821

Stroh, L. K., Brett, J. M., & Reilly, A. H. (1996). Family structure, glass ceiling, and traditional explanations for the differential rate of turnover of female and male managers. *Journal of Vocational Behavior,* 49(1), 99–118. https://doi.org/10.1006/jvbe.1996.0036

Stroshine, M. S., & Brandl, S. G. (2011). Race, gender, and tokenism in policing: An empirical elaboration. *Police Quarterly*, 14(4), 344–365. https://doi.org/10.1177/1098611111423738

Thomas, A. M., & Cangemi, J. (2021). Authoritarian, transactional, and transformational leadership styles in law enforcement. *Organization Development Journal*, 39(1), 33–44. http://www.proquest.com/docview/2536823134/abstract/E8DF11203E3A4F9APQ/1

Todak, N. (2017). The decision to become a police officer in a legitimacy crisis. *Women & Criminal Justice, 27*(4), 250–270. https://doi.org/10.1080/08974454.2016.1256804

Tucker, E. (2021, December 15). *NYPD top cop pick highlights the slow rise of female police chiefs nationwide*. CNN. https://www.cnn.com/2021/12/15/us/female-police-chiefs-rise/index.html

Tyler, T. R. (2011). Trust and legitimacy: Policing in the USA and Europe. *European Journal of Criminology, 8*(4), 254–266. https://doi.org/10.1177/1477370811411462

US Department of Justice. (2019). *Law enforcement best practices: Lessons learned from the field*. Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 168.

Waddington, P. A. J. (1999). Police (canteen) sub-culture: An appreciation. *The British Journal of Criminology*, 39(2), 287–309. JSTOR. http://www.jstor.org.ferris.idm.oclc.org/stable/23637974

Warner, J., Boesch, D., & Ellman, N. (2018, November 20). The women's leadership gap. *Center for American Progress*. https://www.americanprogress.org/article/womens-leadership-gap-2/

Waxman, O. (2017, May 18). *How the U.S. got its police force.* Time. https://time.com/4779112/police-history-origins/

Wertsch, T. L. (1997). Walking the thin blue line: Policewomen and tokenism today. *Women and Criminal Justice*, 9(3), 23–62. https://heinonline.org/HOL/P?h=hein.journals/wwcj9&i=223

Williams, B. (2017, August 9). *Ex-Minneapolis police chief Harteau out, but not down*. MPR News. https://www.mprnews.org/story/2017/08/09/janee-harteau-ex-minneapolis-police-chief-interview

Williams, F. A., & Higgins, G. E. (2022). Physical fitness standards: An assessment of potential disparate impact for female state police applicants. *International Journal of Police Science & Management, 24*(3), 250–260. https://doi.org/10.1177/14613557221074984

Wilson, J. Q. (1968). *Varieties of police behavior: The management of law and order in eight communities*. Harvard University Press.

Wirth, L. (2001). *Breaking through the glass ceiling: Women in management*. International Labour Office.

Women in the labor force: A databook: BLS Reports. (2021, April). U.S Bureau of Labor Statistics. https://www.bls.gov/opub/reports/womens-databook/2020/home.htm

Yu, H. H. (2021). Multiracial feminism: An intersectional approach to examining female officers' occupational barriers in federal law enforcement. *Women & Criminal Justice*, 31(5), 327–341. https://doi.org/10.1080/08974454.2020.1734146

Ziegler, S. (2021, March 30). Police agencies sign national pledge to recruit 30% women by 2030. *Police1*. https://www.police1.com/women-officers/articles/police-agencies-sign-national-pledge-to-recruit-30-women-by-2030-NAeOiIHClnyIEeqH/

APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Haley Slade: Ferris State University, DCCL Program
Dissertation Topic: Experiences of Female Police Leaders
Study Format: Semi-structured Interview

Interview Questions:
1. Can you please tell me your name and current position?

2. Can you tell me about your background?
- When did you decide you wanted to be a police officer?
- Why did you want to be a police officer?

- What educational credentials do you hold?
- What type of training have you done? Specialized training?
- Have you had any sort of training specific to leadership?
- Why did you decide to become a police leader?

3. Describe your path to get to the position that you are in now.
- Have you faced any obstacles or barriers in this path?
    - Obstacles or barriers that you feel other female officers may have faced?
- Have you ever faced any discrimination or harassment based on your gender and/or race?
    - If you have, did you report it? What was the end result?
    - Have you witnessed or noticed any other female officers that may have dealt with discrimination or harassment?
- Why do you think more female officers don't try for promotions?

4. Did you have any formal or informal mentors along your journey? Tell me about them.

5. Have you used any strategies or coping mechanisms to advance in your career?

6. What do you think female police officers can bring to the police organization and culture? What about female police leaders?
- Do you think there are situations that female officers handle differently than male officers?
- Do you think there are situations that female police leaders handle differently than male police leaders?

7. Why do you think we have not seen vast improvements in the number of policewomen overall and in the number of female police leaders?
- How do you think we can improve these numbers?
- What are your views on the current physical requirements for new police officers?
- Do you think we can use education and/or training to increase the number of female police officer or police leaders?

      o   How can we improve criminal justice programs at community colleges or universities to help promote policing or recruit more female and minority candidates?

8. What has been your biggest challenge you have faced in your career?
- Biggest challenge as a leader?

9. How would you describe your leadership style?

10. What is your biggest accomplishment in your career?

11.. What advice would you give to aspiring female police leaders?

12. How do you think we can improve the current state of policing in the United States?

13. Is there anything else you would like me to know or to add to this conversation?

APPENDIX B: IRB APPROVAL LETTER

FERRIS STATE UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
1010 Campus Drive FLITE 410 Big Rapids, MI 49307
www.ferris.edu/irb

Date: November 21, 2022

To: Susan DeCamillis, EdD and Haley Slade
From: David R. White, Ph.D, IRB Chair
Re: IRB Application *IRB-FY22-23-70 The Persistent Glass Ceiling in Law Enforcement: A Phenomenological Study Examining the Experiences of Female Police Leaders*

The Ferris State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your application for using human subjects in the study, *The Persistent Glass Ceiling in Law Enforcement: A Phenomenological Study Examining the Experiences of Female Police Leaders*(IRB-FY22-23-70) and approved this project under Federal Regulations Exempt Category 2.(iii). Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if at least one of the following criteria is met:
The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects can readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, and an IRB conducts a limited IRB review to make the determination required by §46.111(a)(7).

Your protocol has been assigned project number IRB-FY22-23-70. Approval mandates that you follow all University policy and procedures, in addition to applicable governmental regulations. Approval applies only to the activities described in the protocol submission; should revisions need to be made, all materials must be approved by the IRB prior to initiation. In addition, the IRB must be made aware of any serious and unexpected and/or unanticipated adverse events as well as complaints and non-compliance issues.

This project has been granted a waiver of consent documentation; signatures of participants need not be collected. Although not documented, informed consent is a process beginning with a description of the study and participant rights, with the assurance of participant understanding. Informed consent must be provided, even when documentation is waived, and continue throughout the study. The Ferris IRB requires submission of annual status reports during the life of the research project and a Final Report Form upon study completion. **The Annual Status Report for this project is due on or before November 20, 2023.** Thank you for your compliance with these guidelines and best wishes for a successful research endeavor. Please let us know if the IRB can be of any future assistance.

Regards,

David R. White, Ph.D, IRB Chair
Ferris State University Institutional Review Board