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Women in Modern Policing

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Abstract

How and why does the American institution of policing remain masculinist? What does this mean for women who enter the field and for the field as a whole? Is there something that sets apart women who have "broken the brass ceiling" from other women who have not? This study interprets the experiences of 8 female police officers from a large department in a mid-sized city in the Northwest United States, and uses pre-existing data on women in policing to bolster findings. Officers were interviewed in early 2015. The data obtained reveal that the gender gap in policing continues to be significant, and narrowing of this gap is negligible in last decade. Women in policing face obstacles that men do not, such as the effects of labeling and sexual harassment, but the data suggest that these women choose not to advance their careers because of structural family expectations and norms.

Keywords

Women, Policing, Labeling Theory, Conflict Theory, Brass Ceiling

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1. Introduction

Since the conception of police work, municipal policing has been a masculinist institution. There is an unfounded assumption in policing that there is inherent worth in being masculine within the profession. The idea that women are not competent enough to be effective cops is pervasive throughout police culture (Lersch, 2006). The result is that women are underrepresented in the police, and those women who do become officers are denigrated, deemed incompetent, and seen as threats to the police brotherhood (Prokos and Padavic, 2002). It is problematic that despite laws that serve to promote gender equality in the workplace and prevent discrimination, women continue to be undervalued and treated unfairly in the institution of American policing. Women who do enter policing become limited by the "brass ceiling," which is the metaphorical ceiling that prevents them from entering leadership positions in the police, despite their qualifications and skills. This originates from women being excluded from all aspects of police culture simply on the basis of sex. Female officers are limited to a number of stereotypes, such as "badge bunny" and "dyke," thus preventing them from being integrated into the masculine police culture (Rabe-Hemp and Beichner, 2011). Women officers are left out of majority social groups, policing functions, and duties from the minute they enter training, making it nearly impossible to ever become integrated into police culture. Without integration, women are not considered for promotions and are usually confined to doing routine patrol work, as well as "social services" and secretarial type work. This contrasts to male officers who are promoted more readily and are given more of a variety of assignments. Women compose 11.3% of all police officers, and more than half of all police agencies nationwide have reported that there are no women holding high-level positions in their departments (Shelly, Morabito, and Tobin-Gurley, 2011).

Several studies evaluating the attitudes toward women will be used in this research in order to examine the systematic exclusion of women. Such articles include Esther J. Koenig's

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(1978) study entitled "An overview of attitudes toward women in law enforcement" and "Equality denied: The status of women in policing," published by the National Center for Women & Policing (Lonsway et al., 2002). Both studies give descriptive statistics on how many women are incorporated in policing and what their duties are as well as explain the history and progress of female officers. Also utilized will be articles illustrating specific experiences of policewomen such as Chaiyavej Somvadee and Merry Morash's (2008) article, "Dynamics of sexual harassment for policewomen working alongside men." From these and similar sources, this study will analyze and predict what the future of women in policing will be.

It is important to study women in policing because of the institution's scope and potency in the lives of both the public and private, and the hidden discrimination continuing to exclude half of the population. Within such a broad problem, this research will address:

- How and why are women excluded from policing and what does this mean for them and the institution as a whole?
- Is there something that sets apart women who have "broken the brass ceiling" from other women who have not?

2. Review of the Literature

Sources chosen span several decades of research in order to understand the history of women in policing, track changes in practice, and deduce general trends. Though some sources referenced are more than 30 years old, the findings are in accordance with what has been found in the current study and in research done more recently. These sources are examined for statistics, stories, and terminology relevant to women in policing. Those same facts and ideas will be analyzed through the theoretical frameworks of labeling theory and conflict theory in order to gain deeper insight into what policing is like for female officers. The literature will also be used to extrapolate the future of policing and the future of policewomen, as well as scrutinized for evidence of promotional exceptions of women.

Many articles detail the use of masculine and feminine language associated with female police officers. For the purposes of this paper, masculinity will be defined as "behavior and traits stereotypically associated with men" (Barratt et al., 2014). These include aggression, dominance, and a focus on individuality. Femininity will be defined as "behavior and traits stereotypically associated with women" (Barratt et al., 2014). These include sensitivity, nurturing, and affectionate. Included in the abstract of language are words, phrases, and names, all of which serve to categorize female officers based on their gender instead of their performance (Archbold and Schulz, 2008; Shelley et al., 2011; Worden, 1993). These terms can be directed at women specifically, used behind their backs, or applied to male officers that behave in more feminine ways (Archbold and Schulz, 2012; Herbert, 2001; Worden, 1993).

Two names are frequently used in police culture to describe types of officers and the ways in which they perform their duties: "Hard chargers" and "Station queens" (Herbert, 2001; Shelley et al., 2011) A hard charger is an officer who tends to rush into dangerous situations and usually is successful, emerging with a war story of feats to share. A station queen is an officer who avoids dangerous situations and refrains from day-to-day patrol work, instead focusing on mundane and stereotypically feminine tasks like paperwork. Being a hard charger is a characteristic that is valued more highly in policing and is more accepted by fellow officers. Hard chargers are revered and often are seen as the epitome of masculinity (Herbert, 2001). To contrast, officers see station queens as weak and feminine, making this characteristic much less favorable (Herbert, 2001; Rabe-Hemp, 2008; Shelley et al., 2011). The language of these names denotes gendered opinions of what is favorable in policing. Using the word "queen" to describe an officer who is weak and cowardly enforces the idea that femininity is associated with these same traits. Excluding any traditional language associated with women from the term hard charger conveys that bravery and danger are not associated with women. These terms illustrate that to be a valued warrior is to be masculine and to be an undervalued coward is to be feminine (Herbert, 2001; Shelley et al., 2011; Somvadee and Morash, 2008).

Men and women are automatically labeled with masculine and feminine characteristics, respectively, which in policing can determine job function (Dodge et al., 2011; Herbert, 2001; Paoline, 2003; Warner et al., 1989). Since men are assigned masculine traits, they are most likely to be given the dangerous jobs mentioned in the previous paragraph. Men are more likely to be on patrol, are called out more often to violent situations, placed on SWAT teams more readily, and are assigned fewer desk jobs and secretarial work. Women are more likely to be assigned desk jobs, are less likely to be sent to violent situations, have difficulty being placed on SWAT teams, and are often sent to domestic violence calls (Dodge et al., 2011; Koenig, 1978; Melchionne, 1967; Shelley et al., 2011; Warner et al., 1989). Women are assigned to these jobs because of their assumed capacities for nurturing and their sensitivity. To many men in the organization, it makes sense to place women where they will flourish, which means keeping women away from danger and

in situations requiring the skills that women are inherently talented at, such as communication (Barratt et al., 2014; Dodge et al., 2011; Herbert, 2001; Shelley et al., 2011).

Some labels in policing can stem from actions and hidden values as opposed to explicit language. While not stated out loud, female officers are faced with a daily labeling dilemma, where they can become either "POLICEwomen" or "policeWOMEN" (Martin, 1979). A POLICEwoman is one who puts her career first, behaves in more masculine ways, and attempts to fit in with her male peers through job duties or appearance. A policeWOMAN is one who embraces her femininity through appearance and tends to stick closer to the office as opposed to out in the field (Archbold and Schulz, 2008; Martin, 1979).

Whether or not a female officer falls into either of these categories is based upon her attitudes, actions, and appearance. Those women who fall into the policeWOMAN category are more likely to use gender stereotypes advantageously and tend to believe that they are not equals in policing. POLICEwomen try harder to fit in and will behave in more masculine ways in order to achieve a sense of equality (Archbold and Schulz, 2008). These labels of the types of officers women can become limit the female officer, forcing her to choose one category in which to belong and one method to use to attain success. A woman can forgo her femininity to blend in with male officers or she can keep a permanent femininity and stand out. While male officers are able to behave in accordance with their personalities and what is suitable for a situation or day, women are funneled into two attitudes and sets of actions if they wish to remain in policing (Archbold and Schulz, 2008; Barratt et al., 2014; Shelley et al., 2011).

This inadvertent and purposeful labeling enforces traditional gender stereotypes and propels them through what is deemed acceptable behavior by female officers. It is evident that females are rarely welcomed into policing, and if they are, they must either constantly prove themselves as tough and equivalent to men or behave in a hyper-feminized manner (Martin, 1979; Rabe-Hemp, 2008; Somvadee and Morash, 2008). However, everything they do should still conform to some aspect of femininity (Rabe-Hemp, 2008).

This phenomenon is evidenced by female and male arrest behaviors. A study was performed to see how, when, and why officers would make arrests depending on the officer's gender. It was found that women were more likely to seek out low visibility arrest locations than male officers. Men were more comfortable making arrests in public, highly visible locations as compared to women. When officers were accompanied by their peers, men were more likely to make arrests, while women were less likely to make arrests (Novak et al., 2011). This can most likely be attributed to women abiding by traditional gender rules associated with femininity when others were present. The goal of behaving in this manner is to receive acceptance by these peers because female officers understand that the best way to fit in is to act as they are expected so they do not stand out (Haarr, 1997; Novak et al., 2011). By not making an arrest, the female officer appears more passive and thus more feminine, making her appear to fit in through conformity.

The literature demonstrates that women are labeled quickly in policing. These labels can be verbal or nonverbal and purposeful or inadvertent. However, the labels serve to place women into boxes, limiting opportunities in the field, for promotion, and in socialization. Women are assigned feminine characteristics that they must constantly challenge or submissively accept (Archbold and Schulz, 2008; Barratt et al., 2014; Haarr, 1997; Koening, 1978; Martin, 1979; Rabe-Hemp, 2008). By not accepting feminine labels, a female officer stands out and must accept sexual jokes and potential isolation from her peers (Martin, 1979; Novak et al., 2011; Rabe-Hemp, 2008; Shelley et al., 2011; Somvadee and Morash, 2008). However, in accepting a more masculine persona, a female officer has a better chance of succeeding in the organization, achieving promotions, and being accepted into elite groups (Archbold and Schulz, 2008; Dodge et al., 2011, Novak et al., 2011; Worden, 1993).

Conflict theory helps to explain the subjugation and degradation of women in the institution of American policing. Policing is one of the few institutions left to be dominated by men and to be characterized as distinctly masculine. Keeping the police as a masculinist institution is reliant on the exclusion of women. The current state of policing includes the "construction of images, symbols, and ideologies" which help to legitimize the hegemonic masculine police culture (Shelley et al., 2011).

Many efforts are made to ensure that power is maintained by the ruling majority. Those who threaten the interests of the male majority in policing are punished and characterized as inferior so that they do not have opportunities to flourish in the institution. Policing maintains a patriarchal structure by deliberately and systematically excluding women because women are the most evident threat to this ruling class (Shelley et al., 2011). This can be seen in the ways that women in the police are controlled and segregated, through methods such as violence and exclusion, as well as the political and legal practices which support the maintenance of the police patriarchy (Shelley et al., 2011; Kraska & Kappeler, 1995). Women and men are subjected to the same physical tests, which are largely tests of upper body strength, and women are biologically disadvantaged (Schulze, 2012). This ensures that they do not move up the ranks in the police,

thus eliminating the chances of a perceived *takeover* by women.

In the institution of American policing, those who enter the academy are socialized from day one to help reinforce the patriarchal structure of the system. Through a hidden curriculum, cadets are taught that masculinity is essential to be a competent and efficient police officer (Prokos & Padavic, 2002). The differences between men and women in the academy are exaggerated, and both sexes begin to believe that men are the crime-fighting heroes and that women do not belong there (Prokos & Padavic, 2002).

In policing, there is a pervasive myth that women are not competent enough to be effective police officers (Koenig, 1978; Prokos & Padavic, 2002; Lersh, 2006). Male officers frequently feel that women on the force will only make their jobs harder, forcing them to pick up the slack of female officers because of their perceived physical and mental deficiencies (Koenig, 1978; Schulze, 2012). Women are believed to make mistakes that a man on the job would not make, such as accidentally shooting a bystander instead of the target (Koenig, 1978). Male officers also tend to believe that women officers are undependable, slow to learn, unable to handle violent encounters, difficult to supervise, unreceptive to discipline, are poor drivers, and a myriad of other negative qualities that make them unfit for police work (Koenig, 1978). Maintaining the patriarchal idea that women are somehow deficient and are inferior to men progresses the agenda to keep the police a 'boys club,' as explained by the conflict theory (Prokos & Padavic, 2002).

Present in the culture of policing is the notion that the institution is inherently masculine, and that women do not have the inherent capabilities to be successful or to contribute to the institution because of their lack of conventional masculine values (Worden, 1993). There is a perception among police officers and administration that "real policing" is a man's job, and that it is dangerous, difficult and physically tenuous (Worden, 1993; Koenig, 1978; Shelley et al., 2011; Schulze, 2012; Bayley & Bittner, 1984). Because of this, women are better apt to do work outside of "real police work."

Male officers see women as only capable of fulfilling feminized aspects of the job, such as filing, paperwork, and care taking jobs. To contrast, they see themselves and other men as the ones capable and responsible for crimefighting and taking care of hardened criminals (Rabe-Hemp & Beichner, 2011). Female police officers who wish to do "real police work" and be taken seriously in the profession have a difficult time doing so, largely because of how women are thought to be incapable of excelling in the catching of criminals while maintaining their femininity. Women in policing are forced to negotiate the incongruence between woman and cop because of the portrayal of police officers in both the media and in the real world, leaving them to conform to stereotypes of female cops (Rabe-Hemp & Beichner, 2011).

The subjugation and exclusion of women in the American institution of policing can be explained through the theoretical framework of labeling theory and conflict theory. These theories help to show how the male dominant group benefits from the exclusion of women, and why the institution of policing remains to be a 'boys club' when nearly every other profession has made progress toward gender equality in the last several decades. The current literature helps us to understand why the institution of policing has taken the path that it has, and what the future holds for women in the policing profession.

3. Data and Methods

The data are derived from an original research sample of female police officers employed by a large police department in the Pacific Northwest, as well as preexisting data compiled by other researchers which corroborated new findings. For original research, snowball sampling was used to conduct interviews with 8 female officers from the police department, which is comprised in total of about 250 commissioned officers on the streets, 28 of whom are females.

Interviews fulfill a descriptive function very well, and are extremely useful for "describing various dimensions of social reality" (Champion, 2006). Email requests to participate in interviews were sent to several female officers in the department. Officers participating in interviews were asked for referrals for other female officers who might be willing to participate.

Outside data were gathered from the Bureau of Justice's Crime Data Brief "Women in Law Enforcement, 1987-2008," The National Center For Women & Policing's report "Men, Women, and Excessive Force: A Tale of Two Genders," and Chaiyavej Somvadee and Merry Morash's 2008 study, "Dynamics of sexual harassment for policewomen working alongside men." The original data cited are based on the qualitative research extracted from interviews. Secondary data are measured both qualitatively and quantitatively.

Questions asked in interviews were aimed at discovering particular experiences of female police officers. From these experiences and stories, labeling and conflict theories will be applied where relevant. Questions regarding promotion, culture, and the future of the organization will serve to explain conflict theory, while questions regarding culture, harassment, and job function relate to labeling theory. While responses might provide insights into both theories, questions

were framed with these theories in mind. Each interview was semi-structured. The same list of questions was asked with each officer, but if relevant tangents were offered in a response, those stories were followed up with subsequent inquiries for deeper understanding and more data. Interviews lasted from 25 minutes to one hour, depending on officer availability and level of detail provided.

The data compiled help to understand how and why women are excluded from the institution of policing, and what it is that sets the few women who have broken the "brass ceiling" apart from the female police officers who have not.

4. Conclusions and Discussion

4.1. Gender Disparities in Policing

Of the approximately 90,000 sworn police officers in the United States, 18,200 (just over 20%) of these individuals are women (Langton, 2010). These numbers represent the slowly narrowing gap between men and women in law enforcement (Figure 1). The numerical gap in the representation of men and women in the American police force can be explained by both labeling and conflict theories, which can be applied to determine how and why women are underrepresented in sheer numbers.

The gender gap in policing varies slightly between small, medium, and large sized departments (Figure 2). Smaller departments (those with 1 to 10 sworn officers) tend to have lowest percentage of sworn officers who are women, fewer than 6%. Medium sized departments (those with 11-100 sworn officers) had slightly more at between 7 and 8% of sworn officers being women. Finally, large departments (those with more than 100 sworn officers) showed the highest percentage of female officers at about 15%.

As long as the American police have existed, the American police have been dominated by men. The narrowing of the gender gap has been negligible between 1997 and 2008, during which time The Bureau of Justice Statistics published their crime data brief entitled "Women in Law Enforcement" (Figure 3). Among the 13 largest police departments in the United States, the department with the most rapid growth of women was the Detroit Police Department which increased from 22% in 1997, to 27% in 2007. Other departments, particularly smaller ones, have tended to increase the number of women serving in their departments at slower rates, or are even making negative gains in integrating more women into the field.

4.2. Femininity in Policing

The qualitative data reveal that female police officers are forced to balance their femininity with the demands of the job.

The female officers indicated that there is a perception by male officers that they fit into one of two categories: "a slut or a lesbian, you better pick one." Younger, more attractive female officers are often are perceived as "the sluts," and older, more "butch" female officers are perceived as "the lesbians." One of the officers said that if a woman was not sleeping with a man in the department, then she was assumed to be a lesbian. The application of labeling theory shows the detriments of the dichotomy that female police officers are forced into, and how labeling female officers both limits and stalls their mobility in the field (Figure 2-1 about here).

One officer discussed her experience with labeling as an attractive female at the Spokane Police Department. She said that her field training officer attempted to call her at the house of one of the sergeants because he had heard that she was having sex with him, which was not true. The sergeant let the rumor spread throughout the department by not denying this or admitting that he was not, which resulted in her being labeled by fellow officers.

Another officer discussed how the "slut/lesbian dichotomy" can play out in the police. She and another female showed up on a disturbance call to two drunken men who thought that they were hired strippers instead of police officers. The officer said that it took a lot of convincing to get the men to believe that they were in fact cops.

The research also indicated that many female police officers who conformed to expected standards of beauty and femininity felt that they were a "token" female police officer. One of the officers who discussed "token" females among police officers said that her sister was the only female officer in a small police department in Montana, where she was constantly harassed and had even had threats of rape made against her.

4.3. Sexual Harassment

The data show that female police officers experience a broad scope of gender-based harassment and victimization, ranging from offensive jokes and suggestive stories all the way to sexual assault and coercion (Figure 4). The sexual harassment and victimization of female officers is closely related to the qualitative data found in femininity. Chaiyavej Somvadee and Merry Morash's qualitative and quantitative research (2008) on workplace sexual harassment experienced by female police officers working with male officers shows that harassment in the workplace is pervasive, and is experienced by nearly all women who are police officers. Some of these experiences described by the women in Somvadee and Morash's study included pressure for dates with male officers, deliberate unwanted sexual contact, retaliation for rejecting a fellow officer, and explicit, derogatory comments made by male officers about female police officers.

In the original data, many of the female officers interviewed reported that they had been sexually harassed on the job. These experiences, like those found by Somvadee and Morash, ranged from seemingly harmless to being very destructive to the victims.

One woman said that she had sex with her field training officer after months of relentless flirting on his part. While there were no consequences for the field training officer, she was given a lecture by superiors and was called names by fellow officers. She explained, "I've been called a slut and a whore several times throughout my career by both women and men. The women seem to do it behind my back but men with say it behind my back and to my face."

4.4. Proving Competency

The qualitative data collected suggested that women in policing have to prove themselves to be competent more than a man would in the same position. It also revealed that female police officers perceive themselves possessing a special skill set that is advantageous in the field. This counters the presuppositions made about these skills by men in other studies.

Quantitative data also help to debunk the myths that women do not make competent police officers. One of the ways that this can be seen in numbers is in the area of excessive force and the police. The data shown are reflective of research conducted in 2002 by the National Center for Women & Policing, a division of the Feminist Majority Foundation. The study assessed the gender gap in civil liability cases, sustained allegations, and citizen complaints against the Los Angeles Police Department from 1990 to 1999.

While women account for 13% of all sworn police officers, they accounted for only 5% of citizen complaints of excessive force, and only 2% of sustained allegations of excessive force (Lonsway et al., 2002). Male officers are eight and a half times more likely have an allegation of excessive force sustained against him, and they are two to three times more likely to have a citizen name him in a complaint of excessive force (Lonsway et al., 2002). In addition, female police officers are responsible for only 6% of the dollars paid out to the public in court judgments and settlements in complaints regarding excessive force (Lonsway et al., 2002). (Figure 5)

Female officers are often questioned by male officers about their ability to "do the job" that they are assigned to (Somvadee & Morash, 2008). The consensus of the officers that were interviewed was that women must work much harder to "prove themselves" than men do. Women are less easily accepted into police culture, and are heavily scrutinized before receiving the approval of men in the department, or not.

One aspect of the scrutiny that female officers face appears to be how they look. "It seems that the prettier you are, the harder it is to fit in. Men don't think you can do this job just because you don't look like they do," one officer explained. In addition to this, the research revealed that women do not want to associate too closely with other female officers because it might "ruin their chances of fitting in" and proving themselves competent with male officers.

4.5. Women Gaining Ranks in the Police

Based on the data collected through interviews, it can be projected that while theoretically women have the same opportunities to gain ranks in the police, there are obstacles which prevent them from receiving an equal chance when up against a man for a promotion. The tests given to those up for promotions are standard; however there is bias present when people are promoted. One female officer explained the departmental politics of gender and promotions:

Some of being promoted at least to the really high ranks is based on how much you are liked by other higher ups. And women just aren't the people liked…men are the ones in these supervising positions and they look to their friends and the people they know are the toughest first. So often times women are overlooked even if they've passed the tests and done all the right things because they're not friends with the people above or just aren't in the male majority. And like I said, the lower promotions aren't very discriminatory like this, but for the leadership roles like lieutenant there is usually only one spot and a couple of people who could fill the role. Chances are they're going to go with the guy unless the woman is really highly qualified. So in the end, my chances aren't the same as a male colleague's. I would need to exceed every expectation in every situation and basically never fail and be friends with everyone to climb the ranks.

The tests are a bit unfair to women if they want to have a family too. How can you have kids and study, take tests, and work graveyard again. It's one thing if you're a man and you aren't expected to stay home. But when you're a woman and that's expected, it's nearly impossible to do both, working from 7am to 5pm four days a week is doable, but going back and working shitty shifts more days of the week just isn't appealing for women with family obligations.

There was a majority consensus among female officers that were interviewed that they were not interested in advancing their employment or being promoted by becoming a superior officer. Those women who did have an interest in rising in rank cited that they had only considered it recently because of their new police captain. There were a number of trends present in the reasons cited for them not wanting to move up

in the organization.

The most common reason cited for wishing to stay where they were was because of family obligations. Multiple officers interviewed said that they did not want to change their schedule because they were better able to balance work and a family by working more normal hours. If they were to be promoted, they would have to go back to working nights. Being a patrol officer allows them to work during the day and spend evenings with their families.

Other reasons given by female officers for not wanting to seek out a promotion at the police department was that it was "too much bureaucracy" and that it is "too time consuming," as well as saying that they simply were not interested in the added responsibility of being a superior officer.

4.6. Experiences in SWAT and Paramilitary Units

The qualitative data gathered about women and their experiences with SWAT and paramilitary units within police departments revealed that women are excluded from these elite-status positions.

One of the female officers reported that she was asked to attend SWAT school in Whitman County, Washington at the age of 24. She was the only female in her cohort, and was isolated in separate barracks from the men. There were no bathroom accommodations for her when training and the SWAT uniform did not fit her right because the vest was constructed with a man in mind. The officer described the atmosphere as unwelcoming to women, saying that the men who planned to be on the SWAT team "had a thing against having women on the team."

SWAT training, as the literature suggests, is an environment where women are few and far between. It is often regarded as the group in the police that has the most elite and masculine status. The officer trained in Whitman County described it as a "meat market," where the male officers often talked about who was going to have sex with her and who she had already allegedly had sex with. "Guys are disgusting," she explained, and she did not want to be on the SWAT team because of the treatment she received during training.

This same officer also reported that there are currently no women on the SWAT team for the large Pacific Northwest police department where the research was conducted. She also said that she had never heard of a woman being on it because the physical standards are so difficult that "women couldn't get on." Another female officer said she loved the idea of joining the SWAT team, but never took the test because she was not confident that she would pass the physical part of the exam.

5. Theory

Labeling theory was prevalent in all aspects of data. According to Williams and McShane (2010), labeling is the "process of defining, identifying, and segregating someone and then making them conscious and self-conscious of their faults and shortcomings." In the literature, women were presented as "badge bunnies" and "dykes," placed into categories of capability based on appearance, and had their gender used in negative terms to describe less desirable officers. Within interviews, female officers described the names they were called by fellow officers including "bitch," "slut," "whore," etc. They also faced being labeled as less competent because of their gender, noting that the prettier the officer, the harder it was to be seen as competent.

One of the problems that accompanies labeling is the change that can occur in self-perception when a label is attached. When someone is negatively labeled, they can begin to see themselves in that way. Seeing oneself in a negative manner can become a self-fulfilling prophecy where a person acts in accordance with the label because that is what people expect from them and what they expect from themselves.

Reading the literature on women in policing makes it seem that labeling would contribute to high levels of dissatisfaction with the job and negative self-perception among female officers. This is because of the high prevalence of labeling, severity of the labels, and the low numbers of women in policing overall. While these factors may serve as a deterrent for women entering the field, they did not affect the female police officers interviewed. Every woman interviewed reported high satisfaction with the job and with coworkers despite prevalent labeling and harassment. Further, all but one woman reported being okay with the labels given because they were able to laugh it off and keep doing their jobs anyway. Instead of letting the label remove them from the job or drive them to a lower position, the female officers interviewed simply worked harder to prove competence. While this was a point of frustration for many, the fact that a label caused most women to work harder demonstrated the importance of resilience within labeling theory.

Conflict theory worked concurrently with labeling theory in the data. It was hypothesized that men in policing would attempt to maintain their position of majority and power within the organization by limiting women in job function and creating an inhospitable work environment. It proved true in the literature and in interviews that men used labels to try to maintain their position of authority within policing. This was the primary method used in order to attain this goal. However, the interesting aspect of these attempts is that they were largely unsuccessful among female officers.

While again, such labels might deter women from becoming officers, an angle not investigated in this research, they were unsuccessful in limiting the power of women. Women interviewed attempted and received promotion, incorporated themselves into the culture of the department, making friends with many of the male officers, and proved competence to bosses and citizens alike despite labels. When a woman was called a "slut" or "lesbian," she either laughed it off or pretended not to notice the name. More often than not, this caused the female officer to work harder and become better at the job, more visible, and more ready for promotion, which defied the goals of men within the framework of conflict theory.

Conflict theory describes the brass ceiling present in law enforcement. Women are seemingly unable to attain high-ranking positions in policing which has been attributed to men controlling the hierarchy and women continually being treated as lesser. Because policing is a masculinist institution, male officers have a "vested interest" in maintaining male domination in the force, and whether they know it are not are active participants in exerting influence on their own behalf as related to conflict theory (Williams and McShane, 2010).

In original data, women who were able to break the brass ceiling as compared to those who had not did little differently. Women interviewed who became lieutenants and captains had families and did not change their personalities or appearances to fit in, which was the exact same as women who were still working as patrol officers. The biggest difference between women who promoted from those that did not appeared to be desire to promote. Women still working as patrol officers did not want to give up the good hours they had earned to go back to graveyard or have to take the time to study for the tests required for promotion. However, even many of these women expressed a desire to promote at some point in the future, usually after their children were older. Thus time became an important determinant of a woman breaking the brass ceiling as well. Women on the force for longer periods of time were generally those who promoted because they had already raised their families. So from original research, it appears that traditional conflict theory ideas are irrelevant in a woman's ability to move up in policing. A woman does not need to conform to men's ideas by changing to fit in or sacrifice having a family. She simply needs to have the desire to promote and the time to devote to doing so.

6. Social Policy

An important addition to ensure continued acceptance of women in policing are anti-harassment policies within police departments. Most departments now have anti-harassment policies in place that are designed to prevent sexual, verbal, or other kinds of harassment in the workplace. To make sure that women continue to feel safe within policing when doing their jobs, these policies must be visible to employees and thoroughly enforced. One of the issues today is that these policies are present, but are not strictly enforced or used often enough for people to act in accordance with them. There is also a fear that the policy may not work or make a woman more visible and targeted than she already is. So making the policies as generous to women as possible if they find themselves being harassed is key to ensuring a safe and positive work environment. Also making these policies visible to the public is important so that women considering a career in policing will know that they are being considered and protected by the department.

Another policy within departments is testing requirements. It should be stipulated that physical testing requirements for police officer positions should be fair to women, by creating different standards for men and women, lower numbers for certain strength activities for both genders, and/or eliminating irrelevant physical tests. Many departments' physical tests are still too demanding for women, creating fear for women considering entering the field or eliminating quality female candidates unnecessarily. The physical tests should measure capability of performing essential job functions instead of measuring quantity of upper body physical strength. Many departments still require a bench press, with some departments requiring the press to be 100 percent of the applicant's weight. Other departments require wall climbs and jumps of up to twelve feet, while others require rope climbs to the ceiling of a room (Lonsway, 2003).

While some argue that these tests are relevant to policing or that women and men should have the same standards to promote true equality, it is important for departments to evaluate such testing policies. These counterpoints may be valid, but requiring such upper body strength for preliminary tests can be a deterrent for women wanting to enter the field simply because of the low percentage of women who can do such activities or are willing to train to become capable. Some departments have worked around this dilemma by lowering requirements for entering the academy and simply training recruits within the academy so that they exit capable of performing such rigorous physical tests. What is important in regard to this policy is making sure that the tests are passable by women and men in the same shape and that they are relevant to police work. Constant evaluation of pass and fail rates is necessary for fair physical testing policies.

Equally important are non-discrimination laws. These are already in place federally to protect discrimination based upon sex. It is important that states incorporate equally comprehensive laws to provide protections for women in the workplace and that police departments are required to uphold the provisions of these laws. Anti-harassment policies and

fair testing policies are included in this, as described above, but non-discrimination laws also encompass other unfair hiring and firing practices, duties offered to women officers, pay rates, etc. These laws must be evaluated to guarantee that women are being protected and then departments must confirm that their own policies work in tandem and that the policies are lived out in practice.

7. Future

The department examined in this paper and many others like it are focusing on recruiting more women. Departments are running marketing campaigns in order to improve visibility and appear more appealing to female applicants. The hope is that they can get more women to apply to take the civil service test because a greater percentage applying would likely result in a greater percentage becoming officers later. The majority of female officers believe that these recruiting strategies will be successful because they will make it evident that policing is welcoming to women. And the fact that police departments want to have more women on the force represents a drastic change from years past. Whether or not these strategies to recruit women are successful remains to be seen, but departments and officers are optimistic. The department examined within interviews is now averaging two women for every three men in the academy, an increase from zero to one woman per five or four men, respectively.

There are still many harassment obstacles to overcome within departments, however, which present the greatest challenge women face. The male dominated culture, name-calling, sexual jokes, and threats are still prevalent in policing. If recruitment strategies prove successful, more women in departments can begin to change this negative culture by sheer numbers. In being less of a visible minority and becoming an important subgroup instead, women can begin to eliminate many of these negative aspects. While this is the easiest way to bring greater inclusion for women in policing, other methods include using policy changes and evaluation techniques described above or waiting for a longer amount of time for society to change further and simply allowing the change on the outside to trickle inside departments, as was done in years past.

However, looking at the numbers of female officers, the slow change over the past several years, and the current practices and mentalities still lingering in departments, it seems that such changes are still far off. While departments may be able to increase numbers of female applicants in the near future, it will likely be years before they have been truly accepted into the culture and able to remove the built up mindset of masculinity dominance. This change will likely take much longer in the case of female applications not increasing because it will then be the responsibility of the few token officers to continue changing the culture. The smaller the minority, the more difficult it is to enact change and the longer it takes to do so, which can explain the slow change within police departments.

In future research, it would be important to examine the reasons women do not apply to be officers. In the present study, it was explained why women are excluded from policing and what this means for them, but what was never studied was why women become police officers in such few numbers. Whether or not this has to do with historical prejudice, current perceptions of the police, testing practices, or some other factor would be an important diagnosis. By knowing why women are not applying to be officers in as high of numbers as men, departments can better develop their marketing strategies or re-develop policies.

Appendix

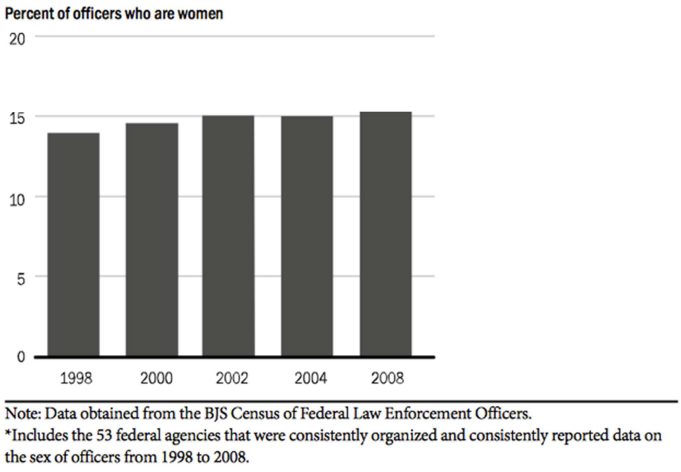

Figure 1. Percent of federal law enforcement officers who are women, from 1998-2008*.

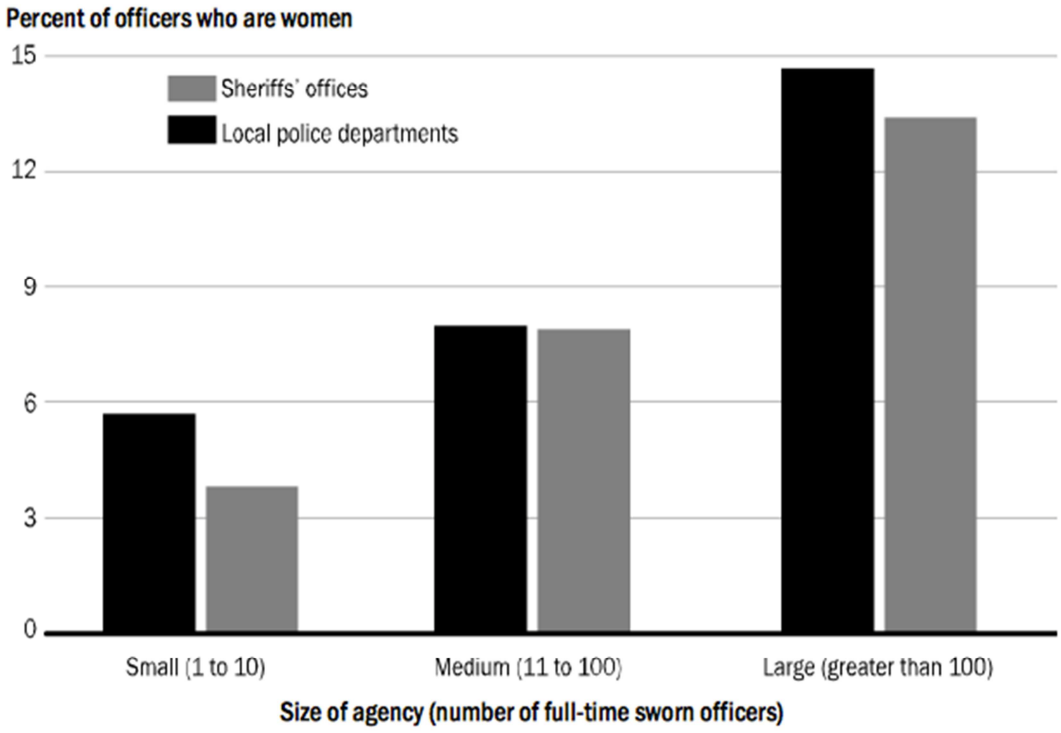

Figure 2. Percent of full-time sworn law enforcement officers who are women among local police departments and sheriff's offices, by size of agency, 2007.

	Percent		Number	
Agency	1997	2007	1997	2007
Detroit	22 %	27 %	880	829
Philadelphia	22	25	1,461	1,666
District of Columbia	25	23	904	916
Chicago	19	23	2,549	3,097
Los Angeles	17	19	1,644	1,779
Memphis	17	19	250	386
New York City	15	17	5,743	6,151
Dallas	16	17	444	527
San Francisco	15	16	303	378
Baltimore	14	16	432	485
Boston	13	14	275	293
Houston	12	13	637	656
Las Vegas Metro*	8	9	113	219

Note: Data obtained from the BJS 1997 and 2007 Law Enforcement Management and Administrative Statistics (LEMAS) surveys. Includes police departments with 2,000 or more sworn officers in 2007. Phoenix police department did not provide a distribution of officers by sex and was excluded.
*Las Vegas Metro numbers do not include correctional officers.

Figure 3. Percent and number of full-time sworn officers who are women among the largest police departments, 1997 and 2007.

Type of harassment	%	n
Gender harassment		
1.1 Suggestive stories or offensive jokes	83.7	98
1.2 Crudely sexual remarks	68.3	80
1.3 Treated differently due to sex	69.2	81
1.4 Displayed, used, distributed sexist/ suggestive materials	46.1	54
1.5 Sexist remarks	51.2	60
1.6 Putdown/condescending due to sex	53.8	63
Unwanted sexual attention		
2.1 Discussion of sexual/personal matter	45.2	53
2.2 Unwanted sexual attention	41.8	49
2.3 Attempts to establish a sexual relation	20.5	24
2.4 Unwanted sexual invitations	19.6	23
2.5 Unwelcome touching	36.7	43
2.6 Unwanted attempts to stroke/fondle	15.3	18
2.7 Sexual assault	0.0	1
Sexual coercion		
3.1 Subtle sexual bribery	5.1	6
3.2 Subtle threats of retaliation for sexual noncooperation	2.5	3
3.3 Implying better treatment for sexual cooperation	5.1	6
3.4 Treated badly for sexual noncooperation	5.9	7
3.5 Anticipated poor treatment for sexual non-cooperation	3.4	4
3.6 Treated badly for refusing to have sex	2.5	3

Figure 4. Types of Harassment Experienced by Female Police Officers.

Allegation	# Male Officer(s) Involved	# Female Officer(s) Involved	Male Payout	Female Payout	Total Payout
Assault and battery	100	11	$10,792,843	$334,945	$11,127,788
Shooting	38	6	$24,856,333	$2,232,667	$27,089,000
Killing	56	4	$9,045,544	$210,714	$9,256,258
Other excessive force/misconduct	53	6	$8,323,287	$23,077	$8,346,364
Sexual assault and molestation	7	0	$8,281,000	$0	$8,281,000
Officer involved domestic violence	1	0	$2,150,000	$0	$2,150,000
Total	**255**	**27**	**$63,449,007**	**$2,801,403**	**$66,250,410**

Source: *Gender Differences in the Cost of Police Brutality and Misconduct: A Content Analysis of LAPD Civil Liability Cases: 1990-1999*. Feminist Majority Foundation and the National Center for Women & Policing, 2000. Data obtained from the Los Angeles City Attorney's Office, Los Angeles City Council, and court pleadings.

Figure 5. LAPD Brutality and Misconduct Civil Libability Cases: 1990-1999.

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