To Promote or Not to Promote: An Inquiry into the Experiences of Female Police Officers and their Decisions to Pursue Promotion

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TO PROMOTE OR NOT TO PROMOTE: AN INQUIRY INTO THE EXPERIENCES OF FEMALE POLICE OFFICERS AND THEIR DECISIONS TO PURSUE PROMOTION

by

Kristin Poleski

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy School of Public Affairs and Administration Western Michigan University June 2016

Doctoral Committee:

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Despite an increase in the number of female police officers in U.S. police agencies, female representation in supervisory (sergeant and lieutenant) and command (captain, assistant chief and chief) positions in most agencies is limited. This research study focuses on the promotional aspirations as an explanation of limited female representation with attention to the decision-making criteria female police officers use when deciding to participate in the promotional process. This study also examines the institutional, political, organizational structures, and/or personal factors which may impact the female police officers’ decisions to participate in the promotion process. And, this study examines a factor mentioned but not researched by Archbold and Hassell (2009) of how being married to a fellow police officer (or part of a “cop couple”) can restrict the upward mobility of female police officers.

Prior studies of promotional aspirations of female police officers as an explanation of the limited representation in supervisory and command positions were limited to one police department for each study. This study expands the scope of promotional aspirations and other factors with inquiries sent to 135 local police agencies with 14, 299 sworn officers in the Great Lakes region of the United States.
Of the 14,299 sworn officers, 1,658 are female. Twenty-one of the 135 agencies with 451 sworn female officers responded to the inquiry (15.5% response rate). Twenty-seven of the 451 (6% response rate) female police officers who met the eligibility requirements for promotion participated in the semi-structured interviews, utilizing a questionnaire modified from a questionnaire by Archbold and Hassell (2009). Interview data were analyzed by the primary researcher and a secondary researcher without law enforcement experience to identify primary dimensions with supporting conceptual categories and properties.

Findings of this dissertation study revealed the primary factors female police officers use deciding whether or not to pursue promotion were shift assignment, duty assignment and the impact on children/family life.

Limitations of the study were the small sample size and limited region of the country calling for caution when generalizing of findings. Additionally, there was disproportionate representation from each of the five states. Although each state was represented by a female officer, some states only had one officer represent it while others (such as Wisconsin-13 and Michigan-9) had multiple representatives.

By identifying factors female police officers utilize when deciding whether or not to pursue promotion, the researcher was able to make recommendations for potential administrative changes which may encourage more female police officers to pursue promotion.
DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to the women in law enforcement with whom I served and who are serving today. My hope is this study will help to inspire change in law enforcement agencies to facilitate the upward mobility of female police officers.

“The wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the righteous are as bold as a lion.”

Proverbs 28:1
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Many occupations remain skewed toward either men or women, with women working in traditional settings such as in a reception area or classroom and men working in the trade professions. Jacobs (2003) cites statistics reveal women are highly represented in secretarial, child care, or nursing jobs and underrepresented in nontraditional professions such as the construction trades, medicine, the military, and academe. Some professions such as law, medicine and management have experienced a large influx of women in the past four decades, yet few women reach the top positions in their organizations. Public safety professions, and specifically, law enforcement is no exception. Despite an increase in the number of female police officers in U.S. police agencies, female representation in supervisory (sergeant and lieutenant), and command (captain, chief, and assistant chief) positions in most agencies is limited. To encourage more female officers to participate in the promotional process and to solidify a female presence in the supervisory levels within the law enforcement environment it is helpful to determine if there are institutional barriers to the career advancement of female police officers, if the officers themselves make the determination not to seek promotional opportunities, or both. By uncovering this information, it is possible to initiate administrative changes which may increase the number of female officers who participate in the promotional process.
There has been little research regarding the promotional aspirations of both genders but particularly, why so few female police officers are promoted within police agencies across all ranks. One of the earliest studies conducted on the promotion of female police officers was undertaken by Wexler and Quinn in the mid 1980s. Wexler and Quinn (1985) used survey data to examine whether female sergeants would be perceived differently than male sergeants in the San Francisco Police Department. Additionally, their study examined whether female police officers felt they needed additional support services once they were promoted to sergeant. The Wexler and Quinn study revealed the following: both male and female police officers felt they need additional training upon promotion; female police officers rated themselves as less competent than their male coworkers; and female officers expected hostile attitudes from male officers once they became sergeants (Wexler & Quinn, 1985). “The findings from this study indicate that female police officers believe that they will face several organizational barriers (specifically a lack of experience necessary to be promoted, as well as resistance from male peers within their organization) if they choose to participate in the promotion process” (Archbold & Hassell, 2009, p. 58).

It wasn’t until 1998 that Teresa Lynn Wertsch conducted a study examining “how perceptions of “tokenism” among female police officers influenced the decision to participate in the promotion process” (Archbold & Hassell, 2009, p. 58). Wertsch (1998) used face-to-face, structured interviews with female police officers in a medium-sized police agency in the Pacific Northwest. Her study revealed numerous factors (such as
tokenism, family/childcare, and organizational barriers, including administrative bias) played a role in the decision of female officers to pursue promotion (Wertsch, 1998).

The Wertsch (1998) study was closely followed by a study conducted by Whetstone and Wilson (1999) which also examined factors which contribute to the under-representation of women in police supervisory or management positions.

Whetstone and Wilson (1999) collected data in a large Midwestern police agency using a combination of focus groups and survey data. This study found male and female police officers had similar reasons for choosing not to participate in the promotion process. The reasons included a preference for their present shift and assignment, child care and family matters, lack of interest in promotion, and potential for salary reduction due to lack of overtime availability. One striking difference between the male and female responses was the female officers’ concerns regarding bias from administration. The male officers did not list administrative bias as a concern (Whetstone & Wilson, 1999).

Archbold and Hassell (2009) built on previous research by examining some of the personal and organizational factors which influence female police officers’ decisions to participate in the promotion process. They conducted face-to-face, structured interviews with female police officers employed by a Midwestern, municipal police agency. Data were collected “to explore how officers’ attitudes toward the promotion process, perceptions of leadership abilities, job satisfaction, negative experiences at work, and factors related to family and children influence female police officers’ decisions to participate in promotion” (Archbold & Hassell, 2009, p. 60). The study identified several organizational and personal factors which influence female police officers’ decisions to
participate in the promotion process. Additionally, the study uncovered a factor not addressed in previous research: how being married to fellow police officers (or part of a “cop couple”) can restrict the upward mobility of female police officers (Archbold & Hassell, 2009).

Finally, Guajardo (2016) conducted a longitudinal assessment of female officers in supervisory positions in the New York City Police Department. Unlike the qualitative studies cited above, Guajardo’s study quantitatively examined the growth in the number of female officers in supervisory and command positions in the New York City Police Department (NYPD) from 2000 to 2013. His study focused on assessing whether institutional factors within the NYPD such as the comparison between the number of female officers in supervisory positions (i.e., sergeant to bureau chief) and their male counterparts explained the disparity. A second institutional factor Guajardo (2016) examined was the influence of internal labor dynamics (e.g., growth in positions, growth in the number of female officers) to determine how these factors influence the growth in the number of female supervisors and commanders within the agency.

Guajardo’s (2016) regression analysis revealed “the number of female officers in supervisory and command position is not influenced by annual changes in the number of male and female officers or male supervisors and commanders that have occurred in the NYPD since 2000” (p. 33).

Research conducted thus far on the promotional aspirations of female police officers has been limited in scope to one police department for each study. This study reviewed 135 local police agencies with 14,299 sworn police officers, in the Great Lakes
region of the United States. The Great Lakes region includes Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, and Ohio. Of the 14,299 sworn police officers, approximately 1,658 are female. Utilizing the questionnaire designed by Archbold and Hassell (2009) and conducting semi-structured interviews, this study examined the lack of female upward mobility in the profession of U.S. law enforcement, attempting to provide an explanation for this phenomenon. This dissertation focused on institutional, political, organizational barriers, as well as personal factors and the choice of women to pursue promotion by researching the experiences of female police officers and examining their decisions to pursue promotion. Finally, this study examined the previously unresearched factor uncovered by Archbold & Hassell (2009) of how being married to fellow police officers (or part of a “cop couple”) may impact the upward mobility of female police officers. It should be noted “women” and “females” are used interchangeably throughout this dissertation.

**Problem Statement**

Gender inequality is still a defining aspect of law enforcement, even in today’s world of slowly increasing employment fairness. Though the presence of women in the police force dates back to the beginning of the 20th century, it’s only been noticeable in the past 40 years. In the 1970s, women accounted for roughly two percent of sworn officers, with most of the women holding clerical positions. Yet, despite progressive legislation aimed at procuring gender equality in the United States, in 2013, the most recent data available, the Bureau of Justice Statistics (2015) report women make up only
13 percent of the force, most significantly in larger departments. Women in law enforcement are often inexplicitly resented by their male counterparts and many face harassment. Additionally, many women encounter a ‘brass’ ceiling and are unable to rise to supervisory positions despite their qualifications. Many women do not even try to reach these positions because of fear of oppression from male coworkers (Crooke, 2013).

To encourage more female officers to participate in the promotional process and to solidify a female presence in the supervisory levels within the law enforcement environment, it is helpful to determine if there are institutional barriers such as the police subculture, opportunities for promotion and promotional examinations to the career advancement of female police officers, if the officers themselves make the determination not to seek promotional opportunities or both. By uncovering this information, it is possible to initiate administrative changes which may increase the number of women officers who participate in the promotional process.

A barrier to female police officers’ career advancement may reside in the fact that females frequently battle the negative effects of stereotyping. A stereotype is something conforming to a fixed or general pattern; a standardized mental picture that is held in common by members of a group and represents an oversimplified opinion, prejudiced attitude, or uncritical judgment (Merriam Webster, n.d.). Therefore, stereotypes may lead to inequitable or unfair thinking for women police officers which may present obstacles to their career aspirations as well as their psycho-social wellbeing (Correll, 2004; Gardiner & Tiggemann, 1999; Kuehn, 2012; Morash & Haar, 2012; Rudman & Phelan, 2010; Schmader, Johns, & Forbes, 2008; Swan, 2016).
Differences in psychological propensities, communication styles, socialization, differing leadership styles, and attitudes toward power call into question the suitability of women for leadership roles (Deuhr & Bono, 2006; Oakley, 2000; Ridgeway, 2001).

Ironically, female officers bring different attributes to police work, such as empathy and emotional communication; although these characteristics are different, this difference does not equate to inferiority. The skill set women bring to policing are desirable traits for police officers. These differences may be perceived by the majority as feminine and stand in sharp contrast to those characteristics deemed as masculine. Thus, the dichotomy between masculine and feminine may result in controversy and foster stereotypical thinking.

Such differences transform not into inferiorities but rather into skills which aid the female police officer in her professional world. Scholars and practitioners have argued policewomen rely more heavily on interpersonal skills, negotiation abilities, collaboration, and communication (Heidensohn, 1992; Lersch, 2002). Waugh et al. (1998) noted female officers generally are less coercive, more inclined to share information, offer more supportive behavior, and display less verbally abusive and defensive behavior compared to male officers.

Research has shown women rely on a style of policing that utilizes less physical force, are more adept at defusing and de-escalating potentially violent confrontations with citizens, and are less likely to become involved with use of excessive force. Female officers possess better communication skills than male officers and are more successful at cultivating the cooperation and trust required to implement a community policing model.
Additionally, “female officers respond more effectively to incidents of violence against women” (Lonsway, 2003, p. 2–3).

For basic patrol functions, both men and women must be able to investigate crime scenes, resolve disputes, gather evidence, write reports, interview victims and witnesses and respond to calls for service. According to a study conducted by Seklecki & Paynich (2007), a high percentage of respondents felt women do many of these functions better than men (p. 25).

For leadership competencies, both men and women exhibit leadership competencies essential in law enforcement such as team building, ability to clearly communicate a mission or sense of purpose, resource identification and acquisition, communication and enforcement of standards, conflict resolution and interpersonal sensitivity, however, women appear to exhibit many of those as well or better than men. Additionally, women possess “a greater power of observation,” the ability to visualize, better linguistic skills, more effective communication, supportiveness, participation, and greater ability to coach and nurture employees than men (Eagley & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001; Hazenberg, 1996; Hughes, 2011; Ortmeier & Meese, 2010). Thus, according to Hughes’ study, women are well suited to leadership roles, which ironically, they do not frequently enjoy at the senior levels due to the fact they are not promoted to these senior leadership positions. It is clear that although women police officers may exhibit differences in attributes or characteristics, these differences can complement their professional work, thereby permitting for the emergence of a variety of skills that serve them in their roles.
Position Profile: Women Police Officers and Senior-Ranking Level Officers

The number of female police officers employed by American police agencies has increased over the past four decades; however, the Federal Bureau of Investigation Uniform Crime Report (2013) indicates women account for 11.6% of nationwide full-time sworn law enforcement positions. That is a decline in representation of women from the statistics reported by the National Center for Women and Policing (2002) where women accounted for 12.6% of all sworn law enforcement positions in police agencies employing 100 or more officers in 2001. The National Center for Women and Policing (2002) also reports within large police agencies, sworn women currently hold 7.3% of top command positions (chiefs, assistant chiefs, commanders and captains), 9.6% supervisory positions (lieutenants and sergeants) and 13.5% of line operations positions (detectives and patrol officers) and women of color held 4.8% of these positions. The National Center for Women and Policing (2002) reports in small and rural police agencies, women held 8.1% of all sworn positions. Within large police agencies, sworn women held 7.3% of top command positions, 9.6% of supervisory positions, and 13.5% of line operation positions. In small and rural agencies, sworn women held 3.4% of all top command positions, 4.6% of all supervisory positions, and 9.7% of all line operations positions. Sixty percent of the large police agencies surveyed reported no women in top command positions. For small and rural agencies, 97.4% have no women in top command positions. In recent years the numbers have not increased significantly. The number of women in law enforcement varies by local, state and federal agencies with women
constituting almost 12% of full-time sworn personnel (Reaves, 2010). In 2010 the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported women held 15.4% of first line supervisor positions.

Further, according to Schulz (as cited by Archbold & Hassell, 2009, p. 57) “women represent only 1% of all chief of police positions in the U.S.” These statistics signal the degree of underrepresentation of female police officers who have advanced through the ranks beyond the position of patrol officer.

The issue of underrepresented female police officers in the United States, as well as in other countries, is global in context. The rippling effects lend to outcomes that are neither pluralistic nor egalitarian, the fundamental premises of our Constitution. Further, the ideas of inequality lend to notions regarding women’s competence to serve as senior level police officers, thereby perpetuating stereotypes that can negatively impact all. This study provided a phenomenological inquiry into female police officers’ perceptions of equal opportunity regarding their career advancement as law enforcement officers and whether women self-select out of career advancement opportunities and/or if failure to advance is a created institutional barrier perpetuated by stereotypical attitudes.

Global Similarity

The same general picture of female police officers’ lack of advancement is not limited to the United States. Natarajan (2008) reports this similar phenomenon is evident in countries such as the United Kingdom and Australia. There is a low representation of women in police services within the European Union (mean under 20%) with large differences between countries. The Institute for Public Security for Catalonia (2013)
reports women’s participation in police services is higher in northern Europe (Scandinavia, Baltic countries and Anglo-Saxon countries) with a mean of 22.2%. Further, it is lower in Southern Europe (Portugal, Spain, Italy, and Greece) and Eastern Europe (Belarus, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and the Ukraine) with means of approximately 13% each. In European police organizations women occupy mostly lower ranks. Whatever advancement women may enjoy in the police profession occurs not as a result of direct agitation for these rights, but due in an ancillary way as the result of shifting social reform movements which began in the first half of the Twentieth century. The acceptance of women in policing has been influenced by favorable public attitudes, the entry of women in the labor force, particularly into male dominated professions, female support groups and legislation related to sexual harassment and sexual discrimination (Gultekin, Leichtman & Garrison, 2010; Moses, 2010; Natarajan, 2008; Strobl, 2010).

Research conducted by Cordner and Cordner (2011), Moses (2010), and Stroshine and Brandl (2011) indicates for organizations in most developed democracies the percentage of sworn women police remains at or below 25%, with much lower numbers in management ranks. Women from racial or ethnic minorities reflect even lower numbers as indicated below. Women police officers also remain grossly underrepresented in most non-democratic nations or emerging democracies; (Gultekin et al., 2010; Natarajan, 2008).

In a 2012 study conducted by the Institute for Public Security of Catalonia, the number of women in police services in countries belonging to the European Union was
slightly higher. European Union countries reported percentages of women in police services range from 10.3% to 33.8%. Women holding medium to top ranks ranged from 0.02% to 26.7%. Women holding the top ranks ranged from 0 to 29.5% with an average of 11.8%. The Eighth United Nations Survey of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems covering the period 2001–2002 (2005) identified the total number of female police personnel compared to total police personnel for 51 countries; however, data on rank were unavailable. The percentage of women for the 51 countries ranged from 2.0% to 44.8%. Natarajan (2005) reported the 7th UN survey in 2000 indicated the representation of female officers in 13 countries in the Asia region varies between 2.2 to 19.1 percent. There is no information concerning the ranks held by these women or their duties. Finally, integration of women into policing in Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries was similarly low. In the six GCC countries: Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), women make up zero percent in Saudi Arabia, approximately five percent of the police forces in Oman, the UAE, and Qatar, and 10 percent of the force in Bahrain (Strobl, 2010).

**Underrepresentation of Women-Downward Spiraling**

Prenzler and Sinclair (2013) examined the number of women in policing in England and Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, Eire, the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Ghana Nigeria, India, Pakistan, Hong Kong, Papua New Guinea, and Fiji. They noted data were available from 18–23 locations. The proportion of female officers ranged between 5.1% and 28.8% with trend data suggesting
the growth in the numbers of female officers was slowing or leveling out. Representation in the supervisory/command ranks (sergeant to chief superintendent) ranged from 7% to 12% and 0% representation in the top positions in many countries. It was noted “overall, the study showed an urgent need to improve gender-based statistics in order to better inform strategies aimed at maximizing the participation of women in policing” (Prenzler & Sinclair, 2013, p. 1).

Although culture and the role of women within those cultures in some countries, particularly the United Kingdom, Canada and Australia are similar to the United States, some differences do occur as a result of their political structures, their social systems, and religious beliefs. For example, in the United States, women are more forthright in demanding equality in the police force, employing litigation as necessary, and have more extensive and well organized networks (Heidensohn, 1992). Next, the United Kingdom has a unitary policing system, meaning one police agency for the country, which limits opportunities for women police officers (Hirschel, Walkefield & Sasse, 2008). In addition, policing structures in other countries vary from American policing. However, despite the differences in culture, history, and nation, the research cited indicates this issue of underrepresentation of female police officers is pervasive, as measured by the number of women in policing compared to the number of men, in terms of being a global phenomenon.
Significance of the Research

The statistics previously stated reveal much about the degree of contemporary female progress and indicate not only low representation of women in the law enforcement profession but also women are not advancing to the senior-level ranks within the law enforcement profession. There are few established indicators that account for this phenomenon.

There has been little research regarding the promotional aspirations of both genders but particularly, why so few female police officers are promoted within police agencies across all ranks and research has been limited in scope to examination of one police agency. Of the studies conducted, some themes emerged. These themes were professional such as 1) preference for current assignment/shift, and 2) lack of interest/preference for their current assignment; organizational such as 3) number of available openings, or 4) concerns over bias within the current administration; and 5) personal such as childcare/family responsibilities (Archbold & Hassell, 2009; Whetstone & Wilson, 1999).

The data cited above indicate a lack of upward mobility for women in law enforcement and indicate women continue to be absent from the essential policy-making positions in policing. This dissertation study focused on what criteria female police officers utilize to decide whether or not to pursue promotion.

Research into the experiences of female police officers and their decision to pursue promotion is important for several reasons. First, there is a dearth of research not only on promotion in law enforcement but specifically on the promotion of women in law
enforcement. Given this limitation in available research, this study will advance the academic conversation in a much needed area. Further, additional research is needed to understand the perceptions of female police officers related to promotions and the promotional process to determine if there are institutional, political, or organizational barriers in place or if the barriers are internally imposed. The exploration and identification of the patterns and types of obstacles women encounter in advancing to supervisory and command positions are important because information generated might reduce existing biases regarding gender in leadership opportunities. The findings of this study will help to increase the understanding of the perceptions of male and female police officers regarding the under representation of women in supervisory and command positions.

A second significance of the research is related to diversification of police agencies. Local police agencies across the country are under increasing pressure to diversify their forces, particularly in light of recent events in several places across the country. Although diversity is the sought after goal, many police agencies have experienced difficulty recruiting and selecting applicants. In particular, agencies continue to have an especially hard time recruiting and hiring women and minority applicants. If agencies are unable to recruit and hire diverse applicants, they are also unable to promote diverse personnel. The police are the face of the criminal justice system and they are going to have more legitimacy, respect and personal relationships if they reflect the diversity of the community. In addition to the community benefit of a diversified police agency, higher levels of workplace performance and satisfaction within organizations
arise when diversification is sought as a way to truly incorporate different employee viewpoints, experiences, and cultures (National Institute of Justice, 2011).

A third significance of the research is the identification of potential barriers to promotion. Organizational leaders can use this information to make administrative or policy changes to remove barriers to promotion and to encourage female officers to participate in the promotional process.

Next, the egalitarian perspective that emerges may be extended to police training at the academies and also underscore university curricula, particularly social sciences and gender studies, as well as other disciplines that are centered in social justice endeavors and that seek for social responsibility. Most importantly, it is the voice of female police officers who will resonate, telling their own stories and lending richness and robustness to this study.

Lastly, this research will examine, on a broader scale, the impact of being part of a “cop couple” and its impact on a female police officer’s decision to pursue promotion—a theme that emerged from the Archbold and Hassell (2009) study. Their study first uncovered this factor had not been addressed in previous research. This dissertation study, by enlarging the population studied in prior research, examines how being married to fellow police officers (or part of a “cop couple”) can restrict the upward mobility of female police officers.
Research Questions

RQ1. Do female police officers make a conscious decision to participate or not participate in the promotional process?

RQ2. What are the decision making criteria female police officers use to make this determination?

RQ3. To what extent, if any, do the institutional structures of a police agency impact a female police officer’s decision to participate in the promotional process? Institutional structures refer to the police subculture for the entire law enforcement community, as well as the culture specific to an individual agency.

RQ4. To what extent, if any, do the political structures of a police agency, impact a female police officer’s decision to participate in the promotional process? Political structures refer to such elements as management/leadership style of supervisors and commanders in the agency (micromanager, empowering, etc.), confidence in executive leadership, including their ability to run the agency and diversity and gender sensitivity. Political structures also encompass the relationships with political leaders outside the police agency such as in the city/municipality.

RQ5. To what extent, if any, do the organizational structures of the police agency impact a female police officer’s decision to participate in the promotional process? Organizational structures refer to the agency size, number of female police officers, policies and procedures (i.e. nepotism, married persons working with/supervising one another, synchronization of schedules for married persons, “family friendly” policies, contractual requirements, etc.)
Structures are the edifice in which people work and, therefore, it is necessary to understand the influence of the structural environment on the decision of female police officers to participate in the promotional process. Previous research (Archbold & Hassell, 2008, 2009; Dick & Metcalf, 2007; Natarajan, 2008; Rabe-Hemp, 2007) has identified that these structures have had an impact on whether or not female police officers choose to participate in the promotional process.

RQ6. To what extent, if any, do female police officers think that marriage to a fellow police officer in the same agency restricts the career progression of those female police officers?

RQ7. To what extent, if any, do female police officers think that marriage to a fellow police officer in a different agency restricts the career progression of female police officers?

RQ8. To what extent, if any, do female police officers who are mothers versus those who are childless impact those officers’ decisions to participate in the promotional process?
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The History of Women in Policing

Early Law Enforcement Initiatives

In order to understand the direction of law enforcement, a historical overview plus a discussion of the evolving roles of women in the field sets the context. Systems for protecting citizens and property existed before the thirteenth century. The *frankpledge* system was a system of dividing a community into tithings where groups of ten families agreed to uphold laws and keep order. Members were responsible for the conduct of the other members of the group and for the assurance that a member charged with a breach of the law would be produced at court. “By custom, every male person above the age of 12 was part of the system” (Cole & Smith, 2011, p. 99). Next came a parish constable system where “the constable was a man chosen from the parish to serve without pay as its law enforcement officer for one year” (Cole & Smith, 2011, p. 99). Law enforcement continued to evolve and Sir Robert Peel established the first organized police force in London in 1829. “The agency was organized like a military unit, with a thousand-man force…” (Cole & Smith, 2011, p. 100).

Policing in America drew from the English system but was implemented in an American way. Law enforcement in America transitioned though several different eras.
In the Colonial Era Americans along the East Coast modeled the English offices of constable, sheriff, and night watchman. For example, Boston’s watch system was such that “each male citizen was required to be a member of the watch…” (Cole & Smith, 2011, p. 100).

**Political Era of Policing**

Increased urbanization and social change led to efforts to modernize policing and the Colonial Era gave way to the Political Era of policing, which ranged from 1840–1930. This era was marked by close ties with political leaders, eventually leading to corruption. The limited number of women involved in policing had a nurturing role and were not involved in crime fighting. Additionally, styles of policing differed dramatically in different regions of the United States and often involved the police in multiple roles (Cole & Smith, 2011). Northern Americans modeled their police officers after Peel’s police force with a philosophy of crime prevention without using repressive force, maintaining order by nonviolent means and showing efficiency through the absence of crime and disorder rather than visible police actions.

In contrast, Southern Americans had their own model to use. Southern Americans based their policing on the existence of slavery and racial oppression…” (Rogers, 2004). Police agencies developed in cities with large numbers of slaves, where white owners were fearful of slave uprisings. Westward expansion saw the creation of the American sheriff “who depended on the men of the community for assistance…Local men above
age 15 were required to respond to the sheriff’s call for assistance, forming a body known as a posse” (Cole & Smith, 2011, p. 102).

**Professional Era**

This era was marked by close ties with political leaders, eventually leading to corruption. Ranks in the police agency were often offered for sale to the highest bidders. This era gave way to the Professional Era from 1920–1970 and was based on a movement that sought to professionalize police and remove the connections between police and local politicians. This led to the Community Policing era of today, a philosophy of policing which combines service delivery with maintaining order and a subsequent shift in the demographics of police agencies.

In 1972 Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act was expanded to include public agencies. Police departments were prohibited by law from discriminating against women in hiring, recruiting, promotions, and working conditions. Also at this time two laws, the Revenue Sharing Act and the Crime Control Act, focused on withholding funds from departments that discriminated. The percentage of women in police agencies doubled from 1960–1980 (National, n.d.), and by 2008 there was a total of almost 100,000 female sworn officers nationwide in federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies.

**The Role of Women in Early Policing**

Women suffered marginalization and segregation in early policing. The role of women was primarily policing their own group. They were required to have higher
qualifications compared to white men. In addition, women were typically denied advancement or consideration for special assignments unless gender was of importance in the particular instance (Cole & Smith, 2011; Rogers, 2004).

Although women have played a limited role in law enforcement, historically, police departments were composed mainly of white male officers. “The fraternity of white males called ‘policemen’ was a group who did not want to be invaded by others” (Rogers, 2004, p. 6).

Traditionally, women were excluded from law enforcement duties due to a societal view that women were to take care of family and home (Rogers, 2004). For most of the twentieth century, the number of women officers remained small due to the belief law enforcement was “men’s work” (Cole & Smith, 2011). In addition, height and weight standards were widely used by police agencies as part of their selection criteria until the late 1970s when they were struck down by the Supreme Court in Dothard v. Rawlinson (1977) (National, 2003) and most were unable to meet both the height and weight requirements.

The original role of women in law enforcement was different from the role of women today. Women in police work have been referred to by titles such as jailers, matrons, and policewomen. “Throughout the United States, women were traditionally hired to protect and administer to incarcerated women and juveniles” (National, n.d.). In 1845, two women were hired to work as matrons in New York City’s two jails after the American Female Moral Reform Society campaigned for the matron positions to be created. It was hoped the police would hire matrons for the police stations as well;
however, this initiative was blocked by the New York City police department (National, n.d.).

Occasionally, police departments would employ widows of fallen officers as a kind of compensation as death benefits were not typically offered. In 1893, the Chicago Police Department appointed Mary Owens to the rank of policeman after the death of her husband. Mrs. Owens was the first woman to receive arrest powers and worked for 30 years for the department, assisting on cases involving women and children (National, n.d.).

It was not until 1905 that the first woman was hired to work as a sworn police officer in the United States. Lola Baldwin was hired by the Portland, Oregon Police Department. Her role was somewhat limited as she was put in charge of a group of social workers to aid the department during the Lewis and Clark exposition as “city leaders felt that some measures had to be taken to protect the ‘moral safety’ of the young women of Portland” (National, n.d.). Shortly thereafter, the City of Portland created the Department of Public Safety for the Protection of Young Girls and Women, appointing Baldwin as the director of the program (National, n.d.).

In 1910, Alice Stebbin Wells was hired by the Los Angeles Police Department and was the first woman to be called a policewoman, or more accurately as asserted by some historians as the “first woman police officer” (National, n.d.). Simpson-Smith (as cited by Rogers, 2004) reports by 1916, policewomen were serving in twenty-five cities covering twenty-five states, with Indianapolis, Indiana having the largest department of police women. Throughout the 1920s many women’s bureaus were started in police
departments across the country as a result of society’s recognition of the inherent nurturing qualities of women. These bureaus focused on cases relating to women and children, such as young runaways, shoplifting, and prostitution (National, n.d.).

The 1930s and the Great Depression brought a shift in how employment was viewed and employment of women suffered as a result. Married women were viewed as wrongfully taking jobs away from men who needed to support their families. It was assumed women were on their way to getting married, if they were not already, and were thus not in need of a job. As jobs became scarcer, women’s career aspirations suffered. Additionally, a change was taking place in law enforcement. Law enforcement officers’ perceptions of their social role shifted from police working as social agents against moral decline to becoming “combatants of crime” (National, n.d.). Consequently, the continued entry of women into law enforcement was hindered by these two dynamics.

The 1950s saw a doubling of the number of women in law enforcement in the United States. In 1950, the first woman was assigned plainclothes detective duties in Miami, Florida (Rogers, 2004). There was a new push to advance women in the profession through integration with the men. Some of the younger working-class women wanted to work in the same departments with men, doing the same work. There were greater demands for equal treatment and opportunities for women police officers. In 1968 two women from the Indianapolis Police department were assigned to patrol duty. By the 1970s there were 5,617 female law enforcement officers across the country; however, they had limited authority. It was not until 1972 that men and women were hired on an equal basis, performing the same functions (Rogers, 2004).
Theoretical Foundation

Grounded Theory

Grounded theory serves as the main theoretical platform for this research. Grounded theory methodology uses data to generate a theory. According to Charmaz (2008) it is useful in conducting emergent qualitative research. Emergent methods can allow pursuit of unanticipated directions and are particularly well suited for studying undiscovered, contingent, or dynamic phenomena. The use of grounded theory allows for exploration of how female police officers decide to pursue promotion by minimizing preconceived ideas during the research and data analysis and allowing the researcher to remain open to varied explanations or understandings of the data. Since a theory arises directly from the data, grounded theory is relevant to the data and reveals what is really taking place (Simmons, 2006).

Although grounded theory is the main theoretical platform for this research study, other theories may be applicable in providing a context for how female police officers decide to pursue promotion. Those theories are decision making theory, tokenism, gender role theory, and stereotyping and the police subculture. These theories are discussed below.

Decision Making Theory

Research question one inquires as to whether female police officers make a conscious decision to participate or not participate in the promotional process.
Additionally, it seeks to identify what, if any, decision making criteria are used to make this determination. Decision making theory can provide a framework to help understand the decision making process, not only to provide answers to RQ1 but may also provide insight into the relationship of factors examined in RQ2 through RQ8.

Decision theory resulted from the efforts of economists, mathematicians, philosophers, social scientists, and statisticians to make sense of how individuals and groups make decisions. The theories range from the abstract by philosophers to the practical and logical of mathematicians. Many social scientists attempt to account for the behavior of individuals but it is generally agreed upon decision making is fundamentally based on two motives: the desire to reduce pain/uncertainty and the desire to obtain pleasure (Franken & Muris, 2005). Decisions, whether group or individual, involve a choice between two or more options, each of which produces one or more outcomes (Resnick, 1987). Choices are influenced by preferences, emotion, intuition, and the decider’s social group which includes gender, the occupational environment, and underlying environmental and institutional variables.

Traditional decision making theory has been based on making rational choice to achieve optimal outcomes. Decisions are considered to have been made intentionally utilizing a highly structured process, examining all alternatives and consequences. Once all alternatives and consequences are evaluated, an ordered list of preferences is developed and the decision maker selects the optimal choice (Okros, 1993). Alternative theories suggest decision making is not based on rational choice but rather on the individual’s hedonistic motives. People have a tendency to maximize pleasure rather
than rationality in decision making (Bonniot-Cabanac & Cabanac, 2010). Yet another assertion is the rational person will choose an option that maximizes utility or what they expect to gain from their choice (Roeser, Hillerbrand, Sandin & Peterson, 2012).

In contrast, Litt, Eliasmith & Thagard (2008) and Coricelli, Dolan & Sirigu (2007) assert decision making is based on cognitive, emotional and socially motivated phenomena and rejects the assumption of traditional mathematical decision theory holding choice is a “cold” process that calculates the expected values and utilities. Affective consequences enable specific mechanisms which cognitively control the choice processes. Neural affective decision theory, asserts there are specific brain mechanisms that underlie human preference and decision. Neural affective decision theory incorporates principles of affect—a cognitive-affective process dependent on emotional evaluation of possible actions; brain—a neural process driven by interactions of multiple brain areas; valuation—preferences formed by the brain for positive and negative outcomes; and framing—varied judgments and decisions vary reliant on the context and manner of the presentation of information and neural activation patterns (Litt et al., 2008).

**Tokenism**

Tokenism is defined as “the practice of making only a perfunctory or symbolic effort to do a particular thing, especially by recruiting a small number of people from underrepresented groups in order to give the appearance of sexual or racial equality within a workforce” (Oxforddictionaries.com, n.d.). Kanter (1977) identified tokens as
those who constitute a numerical minority, which is identified as less than 15%. Research questions three, four and five inquire about the institutional structures, including the police subculture, the political structure, and the organizational structure of an agency and the possible correlation to female police officers’ participation in the promotional process. “What goes on in the larger organization as a whole has an effect on those who are marginalized or on the periphery” (Scarborough & Collins, 2002).

The impact of tokenism on female police officers has been the focus of numerous studies using both quantitative (Belknap & Shelley, 1992; Gustafson, 2008; Krimmel & Gormley, 2003; Taylor-Greene & del Carmen, 2002) and qualitative research methods (Archbold & Schulz, 2008; Martin, 1979; Martin, 1980; Martin, 1994; Wertsch, 1998). Some of the studies had used survey data (Belknap & Shelley, 1992; Gustafson, 2008; Krimmel & Gormley, 2003; Taylor-Greene & del Carmen, 2002), while others had utilized interview (Archbold & Schulz, 2008; Martin, 1979; Martin, 1980; Martin, 1994; Wertsch, 1998) and/or observational data (Martin, 1979; Martin, 1980). These studies had used sample sizes ranging from as few as fourteen police officers (Archbold & Schulz, 2008) up to 1,106 police officers (Gustafson, 2008). Most of these studies had used samples of only female officers (Archbold & Schulz, 2008; Belknap & Shelley’ 1992; Krimmel & Gormley, 2003; Martin, 1979; Martin, 1980; Martin, 1994; Taylor-Greene & del Carmen, 2002; Wertsch, 1998), while only one study had used a sample that included male officers as a comparison group (Gustafson, 2008). Some studies used data from one police agency (Archbold & Schulz, 2008; Gustafson, 2008; Martin, 1980;
Wertsch, 1998) while others used data from multiple police agencies (Belknap & Shelley, 1992; Krimmel & Gormley, 2003; Martin, 1994; Taylor-Greene & del Carmen, 2002).

Significant to this research are studies by Wertsch (1998) and by Archbold and Schulz (2008) which “focused on how perceptions of ‘tokenism’ among female police officers influenced the decision to participate in the promotional process” (Archbold & Hassell, 2009). The studies conducted by Wertsch and Archbold and Schultz provide the theoretical foundation as well as the interview questions, although slightly modified, for this study.

Tokenism was first identified by Kanter (1977) in relationship to women entering the male dominated sales field. Tokenism theory has most often been applied to women working in “gender-inappropriate” occupations (e.g., academic faculty, auto workers, and firefighters). Tokenism theory has further been extended to the study of men in female-dominated professions (e.g., nursing, teaching). “Tokens” may be defined as a small portion (usually less than 15% of a group’s total). Individuals designated as “tokens” may experience hardships in the workplace, including feelings of heightened visibility, isolation, and limited opportunities for advancement.

Men and women enter the law enforcement profession for many of the same reasons such as helping others, pay and benefits, and excitement of the job. However, they tend to leave the profession for different reasons. One of those reasons was the unique stress experienced as a token in the organization (Gustafson, 2008; Haar, 2005; Krimmel & Gormley, 2003). Tokenism also appeared to have an effect on a female
officers’ decisions to pursue promotion (Archbold & Schultz, 2008; Kellerman & Rhode, 2007; Wertsch, 1998).

From early research into tokenism in law enforcement, Wertsch (1998) observed although women had been increasing in number in the law enforcement profession, the majority of higher ranking positions continued to be held by male officers. Wertsch conducted a study to determine if tokenism, along with other contributory factors, played a role in presenting barriers to the advancement of women in higher ranking law enforcement positions. Wertsch utilized a qualitative methodology to determine if female officers experienced tokenism, if tokenism affected their job satisfaction, and also whether they considered promotional processes to be open and equal. The researcher discovered tokenism, combined with additional factors, such as family obligations, presented a barrier to the advancement of women within the organization (Wertsch, 1998).

Kanter (1977) was cited throughout the article as supportive documentation concerning tokenism. Gustafson (2008), building on Wertsch’s (1998) work, utilized quantitative data to test the theory of tokenism in a large metropolitan police agency. He theorized women and minorities continued to experience difficulties in the work place and explored if there was a connection between these difficulties and Kanter’s (1977) tokenism theory (Gustafson, 2008). According to Gustafson, Kanter posited a series of social processes were set in motion in the presence of tokens that tended to create additional isolation and barriers resulting in higher levels of stress (Gustafson, 2008). This scenario did not present itself with non-token status individuals. Based on Kanter’s
framework concerning tokenism, Gustafson asserted his study would reveal token officers experienced more stress, isolation, and barriers in their law enforcement occupation. The results of Gustafson’s findings were token officers did experience higher levels of performance pressure and more social isolation as a result of their token status in their organizations. Evidence was inconclusive however whether the officers’ token status affected their advancement opportunities or work assignments (Gustafson, 2008).

Kanter’s (1977) work concerning token women, although dated, has been referenced by numerous previously reviewed authors and considered foundational to Archbold and Hassell’s (2008) study. It also serves as the theoretical basis for this dissertation study as it is a replication of the Archbold and Hassell study. Kanter (1977) utilized the labels dominants and tokens. Kanter (1977) described dominants as those members of a group or organization who were of a similar classification and numbered in the majority. Tokens were members of a subgroup, typically 15% or less of the overall group and perceived to be different from the rest of the group. This description of tokens has application to defining women in the law enforcement profession. Tokens were typically highly visible, under performance pressures, kept on the outside of social interaction, and are often victims of role entrapment (Archbold & Schultz, 2008; Gustafson, 2008; Kanter, 1977). Usually, female law enforcement officers are highly visible in their organizations and are under additional pressure to perform routine tasks and responsibilities. Many female officers find themselves steered into specific roles that appear to be suited for their natural traits such as investigation of crimes against women and children.
A qualitative study by Archbold and Schultz (2008) concerning the effects of tokenism on the promotions of female officers resulted in some unexpected findings. As one views the law enforcement profession, women can be considered the few among the many or tokens. If one considers not all female law enforcement officers participate in promotional processes, the few become even fewer. Through in-depth interviews with female officers, the researchers revealed most of the women were at one time or another treated as a token female in their department (Archbold & Schultz, 2008). This included being showcased in the media as representative of the department as well as being called upon to assist in the recruitment and promotion of female officers. Additionally, the female officers believed they were being treated as tokens if they were asked to handle a male officer’s call to a sexual assault case or being called in to search a female suspect when that task typically would be performed by a male officer had a female officer not been working the same shift (Archbold & Schultz, 2008).

Another element revealed in the Archbold and Schultz (2008) study was male supervisors’ encouragement of female officers’ participation in promotional processes had the opposite effect. The encouragement resulted in some female officers deciding not to test for promotion, demonstrating law enforcement tokenism involved more than just the numerical representation of women in sworn officer positions (Archbold & Schultz, 2008).

Contrary to the expected feelings, the majority of the female officers interviewed during the Archbold and Schultz (2008) study stated they did not feel isolated. The female officers’ responses included comments concerning doing their job and being
accepted by those on their squads. In another area that proved contradictory, more than half of the female officers stated they felt their chances for promotion were either very good or good (Archbold & Schultz, 2008).

**Visibility, Polarization and Assimilation**

Kanter (1977) identified three consequences of tokenism or membership in a skewed group. The first consequence is visibility. Token members stand out in comparison to dominant group members; they are different. As a result of their heightened visibility, individuals designated as tokens feel their performance is under the constant scrutiny of the dominant group members. Reaction to the added pressure may take two forms. Some tokens may overachieve in an attempt to have their performance evaluated positively. Conversely, others will underachieve, hoping to “fly under the radar” and avoid calling attention to themselves (Kanter, 1977).

In the second consequence, polarization/isolation, differences between the token group and dominant group members are exaggerated and commonalities minimized. Boundaries are heightened and tokens may respond by remaining socially isolated from group members of the dominant group (Kanter, 1977).

Finally, token members may experience assimilation into the dominant group. Tokens may be relegated to organizational roles that are deemed fitting or appropriate for their gender. In policing, these roles may include assignment to administrative or support units, community-oriented assignments or being disproportionately assigned to handle domestic violence and sexual assault complaints.
Researchers have found support for the premise female officers experience the first aspect of tokenism: visibility. Consequences resulting from visibility, include feeling the need to work twice as hard to prove one’s competency, underachieving or overachieving, and expending extra effort to maintain satisfactory working relationships (Stroshine & Brandl, 2011).

The second aspect of tokenism cited by Kanter (1977) is contrast or polarization. Female officers have identified feeling isolated from male officers on the basis of gender, lack of acceptance by males in either their unit or the department as a whole, and exclusion from invitations to lunch or coffee or activities after working hours (Archbold & Schultz, 2008; Wertsch, 1998).

Although Kanter’s (1977) tokenism theory has received a great deal of attention, it is argued that the theory is too simplistic in with its numerical emphasis. Tokenism is more complex than focusing on numerical representation alone. Focusing solely on numerical representation might diminish difficulties related to characteristics such as sex, race and age. Additionally, a focus on the theory of tokenism based on numbers fails to acknowledge the impact of organizational and societal gender-based discrimination (Stichman, Hassell & Archbold, 2010).

**Gender Roles**

Research questions inquiring about the extent to which female police officers think marriage to a fellow police officer in the same agency, marriage to a fellow police officer in a different agency, and the extent to which female police officers who are
mothers versus those who are childless impact a female police officer’s decision to participate in the promotional process (RQ6, RQ7 and RQ8) and are linked to the issue of gender roles. West and Zimmerman’s (1987) landmark article on gender roles in society provides a framework in which to understand the relationship of women’s roles in policing. West and Zimmerman (1987) assert the following:

In Western societies, the accepted cultural perspective on gender views women and men as naturally and unequivocally defined with distinctive psychological and behavioral propensities that can be predicted from their reproductive functions. Competent adult members of these societies see differences between the two as fundamental and enduring-differences seemingly supported by the division of labor into women’s and men’s work and an often elaborate differentiation of feminine and masculine attitudes and behaviors that are prominent features of social organization. (p. 127–128)

There has been a shift, particularly in the last half of the last century in the roles and expectations of women in society. However, while most jobs are open to both males and women, there are still stereotypical attitudes in the workplace such as jobs involving physical strength still being more suited to males and the expectation of women to prioritize childcare over work. Considerable evidence indicates men and women experience career advancement differently. The trajectory of men’s careers tends to be linear while women’s are characterized by interruptions and exits (Alimo-Metcalf, 1995; Kumra and Vinnicombe, 2008; Lyness and Schrader, 2006; Mainiero and Sullivan, 2005; Ohlott et al., 1994). Women’s stereotyping as communal beings clashes with commonly held notions that career advancement requires single-mindedness and the display of agentic traits such as independence, confidence, and assertiveness. Here, women face a double disadvantage: if they display agentic traits, they are penalized for gender non-
conformity, and if they display communal attributes, they are judged as not agentic enough (Korabik, 1990).

Women also face a unique biological reality. The foundational career building years generally coincide with women’s fertility, and women can find themselves having to make choices men do not experience. Studies also suggest women have a hard time finding eligible partners to begin with because their professional ambitions are generally not appealing to men (Ezzedeen & Ritchey, 2009; Hewlett, 2002).

Many women still face the dilemma of successfully combining work and family roles and the expectation to do both. The responsibility for childcare and domestic duties often rests more heavily with the female officer (van Wormer & Bartollas, 2000). Maume (2006) conducted a study to support those findings. Maume’s study examined two samples of full-time married workers from the 1992 National Study of the Changing Workforce, analyzing the determinants of placing restrictions on work efforts (reducing work hours, refusing to travel, etc.) for the sake of family life. Maume’s research revealed women impose more job trade-offs in response to the husband’s work efforts, but men’s work restrictions were largely unresponsive to familial characteristics. Maume concluded that prioritizing work and family obligations is governed more by gender traditionalism than egalitarianism. For women raising children on their own and having to work outside the home, the issue is exacerbated as the burden of childcare and domestic duties falls entirely on them.

Differences in psychological propensities, communication styles, socialization, differing leadership styles and attitudes toward power, play a role in sexual stereotyping
and the suitability of women for leadership roles. Additionally, division of labor and
equity of roles and responsibilities for household or child care tasks becomes an issue
with female police officers married to fellow police officers and those who are mothers
(West & Zimmerman, 1987).

**Stereotyping and the Police Subculture**

RQ3 examines institutional structures, including the police subculture, and the
impact of a female police officer’s decision to participate in the promotional process.
Society’s perspective on gender and gender roles permeates the police subculture.
Gaines and Miller (2013) define police subculture as a “broad term to describe the basic
assumptions and values that run deep in law enforcement agencies and are taught to new
members of a law enforcement agency as the proper way to think, perceive, and act” (p.
112). Herbert (1998) further characterizes the police as a group who see themselves as
distinct from the general population, possessing a “we/they” mentality (p. 343). The
police personality and subculture has created a great deal of barriers for women
(Marshall, 2013).

It has been argued career women, and particularly those in male-dominated
professions, have to make a choice between femininity and professionalism. They must
balance their gender identity with career choice and manage what society has established
as norms for women with those that is considered appropriate for police officers.
“Policewomen who attempt to meet the crime-fighting image of ruggedness and
masculinity may be negatively labeled as ‘butch or dyke’…but female officers who do
not attempt to meet this perceived ideal may risk being defined as weak or ‘pansy police’” (Rabe-Hemp, 2009, p. 114). In analyzing female police officers and their gender roles, Susan Martin (1980) concluded women in policing adopted one of two roles: the “POLICEwoman” identity or the “policeWOMAN” identity. The “POLICEwoman” identity is characterized by overachievement and conformity to the police subculture. The “policeWOMAN” identity is characterized by “conformity to stereotypical feminine roles (as cited in Rabe-Hemp, 2009, p. 114). The premise that women possessed “unique feminine skills,” the assumption they lacked physical strength and inability to maintain an authoritarian presence determined the roles women assumed in policing. These roles included guarding juveniles and women inmates and protecting young girls from social evils (Rabe-Hemp, 2009).

Traditionally, individuals entering the police organization were predominantly young, uneducated, white males frequently from a “police family.” This homogeneity perpetuated the police subculture. However, recent social movements have resulted in the influx of women into this once exclusive club. In 1972, an amendment to Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibited employment discrimination based on gender. This provision has resulted in a transformation of many police organizations, markedly increasing the number of women and minorities (Britz, 1997).

Neiderhoffer’s (1967) depiction of the police subculture was characterized by high levels of chauvinistic individuals. Policing is characterized as masculine (Fielding, 1994; Heidensohn, 1992; Herbert, 1998; Reiner, 1992). Policing involves dealing with violence and danger, promotes masculine values, acting in a tough, unemotional and
decisive manner. Many traits thought to be necessary for successful crime-fighting operations such as aggressiveness, dominance, logic, and mental stability were assumed to be innately masculine. This “cult of masculinity” engenders views of women in a particular way. Male officers still express ambivalent and often antagonistic feelings toward women on patrol. The research indicates male officers overwhelmingly perceive women as too weak and lacking the ability to deal with violent situations. Women are expected by their peer group to behave in accordance with organizational norms and expected by society to maintain consistence with gender role stereotypes (Lorber & Farrell, 1991; Lord, 1986). It has been argued ambiguities such as these reinforce the male occupational subculture because the reaffirmation of masculinity can only be achieved through interactions with other males. Female officers threaten the culture because, in enacting the role in more “feminine” ways, women fundamentally challenge what counts as police work. The intrusion of women into the police subculture has the potential to change norms, values and the customs of male officers (Rabe-Hemp, 2007), consequently, inhibiting the acceptance of women into the group.

Law enforcement, in particular, has been viewed as the masculine domain. Women are viewed as having less physical strength than male officers which calls into question their physical ability to subdue and apprehend combative suspects, and come to the aid of male officers when involved in physical confrontations with suspects. Specialty assignments such as Special Weapons and Tactics teams (SWAT) have been viewed as the sole domain of male officers because it is considered more strenuous and physically demanding. The social organization of policing is replete with norms and
values that embody traditional forms of masculinity (e.g., aggressiveness, toughness, emotional control, and physical strength). In practice, it appears SWAT teams have managed to maintain distinctive features in which performance is defined by the embodiment of masculinity and the internal contradictions between a sex-gender dichotomy inhibits “gender democracy” (Connell, 2008; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). The presence of women on SWAT may result in a cognitive dissonance that disturbs the balance between perceived sex category and gender behavior (Messerschmidt, 1993, 2009). This represents the “we/they” mentality and resistance to the intrusion of women into what has been viewed as a strictly male policing assignment.

Most women have met performance requirements of law enforcement, but it is at the social level that poses the greatest resistance. Male colleagues sometimes doubt their physical capabilities in addition to subjecting the women to sexual harassment (Cole & Smith, 2011). In a study conducted by Haarr and Morash (2013) on the effect of rank on police women and their ability to cope with discrimination and harassment, female police officers with varied years of experience and varied rank were interviewed. Several of the women interviewed noted they sought out opportunities to prove their physical ability to male officers such as jumping in to make a resisted arrest. In addition to physical ability the emotional make up of female officers are many times called into question. Women are “tested” and “retested” throughout their careers to prove their ability to make appropriate decisions, endure particularly gruesome crime scenes, and supervise teams.

Despite opposition by male officers, research has demonstrated that due to their size and strength differences, women rely on a style of policing that utilizes less physical
force, are more adept at defusing and de-escalating potentially violent confrontations with citizens, and are less likely to become involved with use of excessive force. Female officers possess better communication skills than male officers and are more successful at cultivating the cooperation and trust required to implement a community policing model. Additionally, “female officers respond more effectively to incidents of violence against women” (Lonsway, 2003, p. 2–3).

In the police subculture the operating norm is “you are never alone.” Female officers must present themselves as loyal and trustworthy in order to be seen as “one of the guys.” Otherwise, they will not integrate into the organizational culture. Those that do not fit within the culture may not be given fair consideration when applying for promotions or other duties. Female officers have to make an extra effort to be seen as “one of the boys,” an officer that can be trusted and will be loyal to the team. This may prove difficult for female officers if they do not have the time or desire to make themselves appear as “one of the guys” (Marshall, 2013). McLean (1997) asserts that many female officers adopt the language, the mannerisms, and/or the roles of male colleagues in order to become integrated into the organization and culture and be accepted. In other words, for many women it is a “survival tactic.”

Officers generally have a very small social circle outside of work and instead tend to socialize primarily with other officers as they feel that their co-workers understand the stress and dangers associated with the occupation. Female officers that have difficulty becoming part of such a social group can become alienated. Those who do not make it into the “old boys club,” a term often used to describe this social group, could face a
barrier that results in them not being given fair recognition for their work and accomplishments. Many times, promotions come from members of this “old boys club” as the members feel it necessary to take care of their own and show respect to those that are seen as being their closest friend and partner (Marshall, 2013).

The Nexus between Marriage and Upward Mobility

As with gender roles, research questions inquiring about the extent to which female police officers think marriage to a fellow police officer in the same agency, and marriage to a fellow police officer in a different agency impact a female police officer’s decision to participate in the promotional process (RQ6 and RQ7) are linked to the issue of the nexus between marriage and career/professional mobility. Most public employers embrace the values of “individual autonomy, competition and commitment to work” (Reed & Bruce, 1993, p. 190). When dual career couples are introduced into the equation, the family may be perceived as a threat to the organizational mission and the separation between work and family (Reed & Bruce, 1993). According to Reed (1988), dual career couples are becoming increasingly common place in the workforce and can significantly impact the organizational values previously described. Dual career couples may turn down promotions or reassignments which conflict with the careers of their spouse. They are more likely to strive for equity in domestic and child rearing duties and an environment where work and family roles are more closely integrated. They “represent a new generation…who want a better balance between work and family” (Reed, 1988, p. 223–224).
Literature regarding the relationship between female police officers who are married to other police officers is scant. Whetstone and Wilson (1999) noted “the issues related to familial and childcare responsibilities and the adjustments required for a promotion were even more salient for those women whose partners were also employed by the department” (as cited in Archbold & Hassell, 2009, p. 68). The authors did not elaborate on this issue in the original article; however, for those female officers whose partners were employed by the same department such elements as synchronization of schedules, including days off and shifts became significant. This factor suggests a nexus between personal and organizational factors in the decision of whether or not female police officers choose to participate in the promotional process and the compounding effect this relationship has on the ability to balance their professional and personal lives (Archbold & Hassell, 2009).

Although there is not much literature regarding the relationship between female police officers who are married to other police officers, comparisons may be made to other professions. Coltrane (2004) suggests there is a modern-day “career advancement double standard” in which professional women who marry or have children are considered less serious about their careers, whereas professional men who marry or become fathers are considered more likely candidates for promotion. Additionally, research has revealed a work-life conflict exists where in dual-income homes, women overwhelmingly took on the bulk of childrearing and household work. “Advancements in technology, daycare options and flexible scheduling have been introduced putatively to help women at the executive level to manage their work and home responsibilities.
However, regardless of the supportiveness and flexibility of workplace benefits, many women still find that the demands and requirements of work conflict with family responsibilities” (Brown, 2010).
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

As a methodological approach, phenomenology plays a vital role in understanding the experiences and perceptions of female police officers related to promotion. According to Hanson, Morales, Clark Plano and Creswell (2007), the “basic purpose of a phenomenology is to reduce the experiences of persons with a phenomenon to a description of the universal essence (‘a grasp of the very nature of the thing’)” (p. 252). Patton (as cited by Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p. 19) describes a phenomenological approach as how the lived experiences of individuals are analyzed and “how they perceive it, describe it, feel about it, judge it, remember it, makes sense of it and talk about it with others.”

This study was based on a phenomenological epistemology, which emphasizes the richness of people’s “lifeworlds” and their intensely personal perspectives on whether or not to participate in the promotional process. Factors that impact the decision to participate or not to participate in the promotional process are experienced differently by people and greatly reflect their context, which makes them ideally understood phenomenologically (Ezzedeen and Ritchey, 2009). In order to uncover how female police officers perceive, feel about and make sense of the promotional process, leading to
whether or not they participate in it, semi-structured interviews were utilized to collect data. According to Rubin and Rubin (1995), qualitative interviewing captures some of the richness and complexity of the subject matter and explains it in a comprehensive way.

Rubin and Rubin (1995) state:

Interpretive researchers try to elicit interviewees view on their worlds, their work, and events they experienced or observed. To reconstruct and understand the interviewee’s experiences and interpretations, interpretive researchers seek thick and rich descriptions of the culture and topical arena they study to develop an empathetic understanding of the world of others. (p. 35)

The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological study was to identify themes and patterns shared among the lived experiences of female police officers in medium sized police agencies. Utilizing a modification of the questionnaire administered by Archbold and Hassell (2009) and conducting semi-structured interviews, this study examined the lack of female upward mobility in the profession of U.S. law enforcement, attempting to provide an explanation for this phenomenon. This study focused on institutional, political and organizational barriers and the choice of women to pursue promotion by researching the experiences of female police officers and examining their decisions to pursue promotion. Finally, this study examined the previously unresearched factor uncovered by Archbold & Hassell (2009) of how being married to fellow police officers (or part of a “cop couple”) may impact the upward mobility of female police officers.
Research Questions

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to identify themes and patterns shared among the lived experiences of female police officers and how they perceive, feel about and make sense of the promotional process, leading to whether or not they participate in it. The semi-structured interview questions used to obtain the data and address the research questions are included in Appendix A. The following research questions were used to guide this study:

RQ1. Do female police officers make a conscious decision to participate or not participate in the promotional process?

RQ2. What are the decision making criteria female police officers use to make this determination?

RQ3. To what extent, if any, do the institutional structures of a police agency impact a female police officer’s decision to participate in the promotional process? Institutional structures refer to the police subculture for the entire law enforcement community, as well as the culture specific to an individual agency.

RQ4. To what extent, if any, do the political structures of a police agency, impact a female police officer’s decision to participate in the promotional process? Political structures refer to such elements as management/leadership style of supervisors and commanders in the agency (micromanager, empowering, etc.), confidence in executive leadership, including their ability to run the agency and diversity and gender sensitivity. Political structures also encompass the relationships with political leaders outside the police agency such as in the city/municipality.
RQ5. To what extent, if any, do the organizational structures of the police agency impact a female police officer’s decision to participate in the promotional process? Organizational structures refer to the agency size, number of female police officers, policies and procedures (i.e., nepotism, married persons working with/supervising one another, synchronization of schedules for married persons, “family friendly” policies, contractual requirements, etc.).

Structures are the edifice in which people work and, therefore, it is necessary to understand the influence of the structural environment on the decision of female police officers to participate in the promotional process. Previous research (Archbold & Hassell, 2008, 2009; Dick & Metcalf, 2007; Natarajan, 2008; Rabe-Hemp, 2007) has identified that these structures have had an impact on whether or not female police officers choose to participate in the promotional process.

RQ6. To what extent, if any, do female police officers think that marriage to a fellow police officer in the same agency restricts the career progression of those female police officers?

RQ7. To what extent, if any, do female police officers think that marriage to a fellow police officer in a different agency restrict the career progression of female police officers?

RQ8. To what extent, if any, do female police officers who are mothers versus those who are childless impact those officers’ decisions to participate in the promotional process?
Sample Size

Sample sizes in qualitative research, and particularly in in-depth interviews, are often smaller than for those used with quantitative research. “This is because qualitative research methods are often concerned with garnering an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon or are focused on meaning (and heterogeneities in meaning)—which are often centered on the how and why of a particular issue, process, situation, subculture, scene or set of social interactions” (Dworkin, 2012).

A common misconception regarding qualitative research is that the sample size is too small to allow generalization of findings. “Although qualitative findings cannot be generalized in the same way as quantitative findings—through statistical inference from the study sample to the population that it represents—they can be generalized across similar contexts…Qualitative results can provide details about the settings studied and explanations of how and why things worked the way they did in each of those settings” (Foreman, Creswell, Damschroder, Kowalski & Krein, 2008). Results from this study can provide useful information and insight for police agencies.

Participants for this study were female police officers solicited from 135 local police agencies with 14,299 sworn police officers, in the Great Lakes region of the United States. The Great Lakes region includes Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, and Ohio. Of the 14,299 sworn police officers, approximately 1,658 are female (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2013). Creswell (2007) notes that 5 to 50 participants may be accurate depending on a number of factors. Trotter (2012) suggests the best determinate for appropriate sample size is “to interview to redundancy” or when no new concepts or
themes emerge. Moorse (2001, p. 1) asserts factors include “the quality of data, the scope of the study, the nature of the topic, the amount of useful information obtained from each participant, the use of shadowed data, and the qualitative method and study designed used” (as cited in Dworkin, 2012). Charmaz (1990) argued the number of participants was not as important as “developing the range of relevant conceptual categories, saturating (filling, supporting, and providing repeated evidence for) those categories and fully explaining the data” (as cited in Dworkin, 2012).

**Sample Selection**

This research project solicited participants from local police agencies in the Great Lakes region of the United States. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics (2010; 2011) there were 17,985 state and local police agencies in the United States, employing 765,246 sworn personnel, with 78,700 being women (US Department of Justice, 2010; US Department of Justice, 2011). As a result, the police agencies utilized were limited to medium to medium-large sized, local/municipal police agencies (50–550 sworn personnel). Medium to medium-large sized agencies comprise approximately half of the local/municipal agencies in the United States. Police agencies with 50–550 sworn personnel were selected as they have the potential to offer a number of opportunities for promotion and would provide a reasonable representation of female officers for purposes of this research project. One hundred thirty-five local/municipal police agencies with 14,299 sworn police officers, in the Great Lakes region of the United States, met the criteria of 50–550 sworn personnel. The Great Lakes region includes Wisconsin, Illinois,
Indiana, Michigan, and Ohio. Of the 14,299 sworn police officers, approximately 1,658 are female.

Previous research conducted was limited to one agency in each study. This research expanded the number of agencies examined to gain a broader perspective. A single region of the country was utilized as there are sufficient cultural differences by region which may cause lack of consistency in results based on the regional differences. This may create the inability to draw conclusions from the results. Research dating back to the early 1970s indicate a large body of evidence identifying regional variation across the United States on political, economic, social, and health indicators as well as creativity, work ethic and energy. Research suggests that activities in political, economic, social, health, creativity, work ethic and energy areas are typically influenced by psychological variables (Krug & Kulhavy, 1973; Mondak & Canache, 2014; Rentfrow, 2010; Rentfrow, Gosling, Jokela, Stillwell, Kosinski & Potter, 2013).

The FBI Uniform Crime Report (UCR) for 2013 was used to identify medium to medium-large sized local police agencies in the United States, and then those police agencies in the Great Lakes region. Next, all agencies with fewer than 50 and more than 550 sworn personnel were eliminated from the table.

The 2013 UCR was the most recent full year report available. In addition to providing crime statistics, the UCR provides information regarding law enforcement personnel. Table 78 of the 2013 UCR lists local law enforcement personnel by state and by city, identifying the total number of personnel, the number of sworn personnel and the number of civilian personnel. There is a limitation to this data however. Reporting
information to the FBI for the UCR is voluntary. As a result, some police agencies don’t report and would not be listed in table 78 of the 2013 UCR.

The name of the agency head/police chief as well as an email address was obtained for each agency head/police chief. Emails were sent to each agency head/police chief explaining research is being conducted regarding promotion of women in local police agencies and requesting information on the agency’s promotional eligibility criteria, information regarding the promotional process (i.e., single test, multiphase test, appointment without testing) and the number of sworn male and female police officers. Additionally, the agency head/police chief was asked for assistance in contacting the female police officers in their agencies to invite them to participate in this research project.

Of the 135 police agencies, agency head/police chiefs with 21 agencies responded to the request for information and participation with the study providing an agency response rate of 15.5%. All five states in the Great Lakes region were represented. The 21 agencies had a total of 2,334 sworn male police officers and 451 sworn female police officers. Out of the 451 sworn female police officers, it is unknown how many meet the eligibility requirements for promotion for their respective agencies, however, 27 participated in this dissertation study for a response rate of 6%.

**Ethical Assurances**

Prior to beginning data collection, an application was filed with the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (HSIRB) and approval of the research was secured
prior to scheduling any interviews. A copy of the approval letter is provided as Appendix C. The study did not include any target participants in special consideration categories. All interviews took place during off duty hours and away from the participants’ work sites. Consequently, no approval to conduct the research was required from the agency heads/police chiefs. All participants signed an informed consent letter prior to beginning the interview. The letter, provided as Appendix D, identified participation requirements, time commitment for those participating, risks and benefits of participation, costs, if any, to the participant, access to research information and their ability to withdraw from the study without consequence, and information on confidentiality.

The identity of participants was protected, utilizing only an interviewee number for the interview and interview transcripts. Further, despite the police agencies facilitating researcher contact with their female personnel, agencies were not told whether or not anyone from the agency participated in the study. At the time of the interview, participants were again told their identity was confidential and agencies would not be notified of whether or not their personnel participated.

**Description of Participants**

The participants for the study were all active sworn female police officers who meet the eligibility requirements to participate in a promotional process for any level of promotion (sergeant, lieutenant, captain, assistant chief or chief) for their respective agencies. The promotional eligibility criteria for each responding agency was evaluated
and compared with the participants’ years of service/time in grade to assure they met the qualifications for promotion.

Female officers were sent an email to their workplace explaining the nature of the research project and inviting them to participate in interviews should they meet the eligibility criteria for promotion in their police agency. Additionally, they were informed as to how to contact the researcher should they wish to participate in the research project. The participation request email gave potential participants a two-week time period to express their interest to participate in the study.

Interested potential participants were asked to notify the researcher of their interest to participate in the project via email to expedite the data collection phase. Once participants contacted the researcher expressing interest in participation in the study, they were screened to ensure they meet the eligibility requirements for promotion for their respective agencies and an interview was scheduled.

The study group consisted of 27 sworn female police officers, from a potential pool of 451 female police officers in 21 agencies for a 6% response rate. Participants were from each of the five states in the Great Lakes region (Illinois-1, Indiana-1, Michigan-9, Ohio-3, and Wisconsin-13). The average participant age was 44 years with 19.7 years of service in law enforcement. Twenty-one of the participants are married, and four of those are same sex marriages. Twelve of the married participants are married to a fellow police officer, either in their own agency or another agency. Twenty participants have children. The participants represent ranks from patrol officer through captain, and job assignments include patrol, community policing, Canine, Peer Support,
investigations and other administrative assignments. Table 3.1 provides a detailed
demographic description of participant characteristics.

Table 3.1

**Participant Demographics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Husband a police officer - same agency</th>
<th>Husband a police officer - different agency</th>
<th>Number of Children</th>
<th>Current Rank</th>
<th>Total time in Law Enforcement (years)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Bachelors</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Lieutenant</td>
<td>21.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Bachelors</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Police Officer</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>Bachelors</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Police Officer</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Bachelors</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Police Officer</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>Bachelors</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Police Officer</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Bachelors</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Police Officer</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>Associates</td>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Police Officer</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>48</td>
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<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Lieutenant</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Associates</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Peer Counselor</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Bachelors</td>
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<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Police Officer</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Bachelors</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Sergeant</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Bachelors</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Lieutenant</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>Bachelors</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Police Officer</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Bachelors</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Sergeant</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>Associates</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Police Officer</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Masters</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Police Officer</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>Bachelors</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Lieutenant</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Associates</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sergeant</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>Bachelors</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Police Officer</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Masters</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Police Officer</td>
<td>23.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Bachelors</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Detective</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>Bachelors</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Lieutenant</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>Masters</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Captain</td>
<td>25.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Masters</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Sergeant</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>Bachelors</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Detective</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Associates</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Police Officer</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>Bachelors</td>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Detective</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Data Collection: Interviewing**

Qualitative data analysis generally involves a process of data reduction that seeks
to enhance the data’s meaning. The data are evaluated, simplified, and then reconstituted
Data analysis generally begins with a holistic interpretation of the participants’ experiences through examination of the raw data (Moustakas, 1994).

Interviews were conducted in off duty settings away from the participant’s police department or by telephone. Those within 200 miles of the researcher’s geographic location were interviewed using a face-to-face format in a public location. Participants from greater distances were interviewed by telephone. The participants’ identities remain confidential along with the specific police departments with which they are employed. The 27 participants represent diverse perspectives based on race, sexual orientation, years of experience, rank, and geographic location. The interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim into text documents for analysis. Interviews were completed until theoretical saturation occurred. This means that no new core dimensions arose from the interview data (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007).

This study utilized semi-structured interviews as a means to determine how female police officers experience the promotional process. Individual semi-structured in-depth interviewing is the most prevalently used qualitative research mechanism for examining lived experiences. Kvale and Brinkman (2009) asserted the purpose of the interview is to understand the themes of the lived daily world from the subjects’ own perspectives, as was the case for this study. Further, the in-depth interview allows the interviewer to deeply examine social and personal matters in a more private manner as opposed to group interviews or focus groups (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006).

The interview questions for this study were modifications of the questions utilized by Archbold and Schultz (2009) when they conducted their 2006 study. The use of
specific interview questions and their relation to the research questions (RQ1–RQ8) are charted in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2

*Primary Dimensions, Conceptual Categories, and Properties with Related Interview Questions*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary Dimension</th>
<th>Conceptual Category</th>
<th>Properties</th>
<th>Interview Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Institutional Structures</td>
<td>Being a police officer</td>
<td><em>It’s a calling The Thin Blue Line</em> Somebody has to do It Making a difference</td>
<td>11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It’s still a Man’s You don’t belong here World</td>
<td>Double standard The token female Good ol’ boys</td>
<td>15, 21, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social Expectation to be Promoted</td>
<td>Timing They told me I should Feeling prepared</td>
<td>10, 18, 36, 37, 39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Structures</td>
<td>Shift Work</td>
<td>I like my shift I don’t want to go to nights again 2nd or 3rd shift won’t work</td>
<td>29, 33, 34, 36, 37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Duty Assignments</td>
<td>Can I pick? What if I don’t I like what I do</td>
<td>34, 36, 37, 39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Structures</td>
<td>Management and Leadership</td>
<td>The chief The management team Who’s getting promoted Diversity perspective</td>
<td>18, 36, 37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Politicality”</td>
<td>Politics of rank The next political layer Politics of the city</td>
<td>18, 36, 37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constructs of Gender</td>
<td>Gender roles</td>
<td>Family first It’s a balancing act Married to a cop</td>
<td>3, 4, 5, 20, 24, 25, 26, 27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Skills to lead</td>
<td>It’s been a while since I’ve done that I haven’t done that It’s a growing process Fear of failure</td>
<td>18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 36, 37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interview questions were provided by Archbold along with written permission to use the questions. These interview questions were previously used in studies by Morash and Haar (1995) and Wertsch (1998) which contributes to validity and reliability of the questionnaire.

Some of the interview questions in this dissertation study were modified slightly to remove the name of the police agency in which Archbold and Schultz conducted their
study. Some questions were modified to provide consistent terminology from question to question utilizing “police agency” in all questions rather than “police department,” “police agency,” or “law enforcement agency” in different questions. One question was changed from “do you think males make better leaders than females” to “do you think the gender of the officer impacts whether or not he/she is a better leader? Please explain” to facilitate more conversation. Finally, the question “if you are married to a fellow police officer, has that had any impact on your decision to pursue promotion. If yes, explain” was added as a theme that arose, but was not explored in the prior Archbold and Schultz study related to whether or not being married to a fellow police officer or part of a “cop couple” restricted a female police officer’s career progression.

All interviews followed the same structure utilizing the modified Archbold and Schultz questionnaire. Participants were encouraged to expand on answers to their questions as they felt comfortable and without limitation on time. The typical interview lasted approximately 40 minutes.

Participants were made aware of the researcher’s law enforcement background during the solicitation for participation in the research study. Prior to the start of each interview, the researcher assured each participant that there were no predispositions, or any other issues that may inhibit participant contribution. None of the participants indicated any concern regarding any preconceived ideas or conclusions the researcher may have. Further, participants seemed more comfortable openly sharing information knowing the researcher had prior law enforcement experience.
**Data Management**

A contracted professional vendor provided transcription services and provided a secure file transfer protocol (FTP) server to manage the data and protect it from intrusions. All data were stored on a password-protected computer. Confidentiality was strictly maintained, and the identity of participants was closely guarded to mitigate risks. Participants were identified by an interviewee number only. Transcription of the interviews took place immediately after the interviews and without editing content or language used by the interviewees. Every transcript was reviewed for accuracy against the audio recording and anonymity of the speaker prior to the transcript being uploaded into Nvivo 10 for data analysis.

**Data Analysis**

Coding is the nascent analytical stage in a qualitative methodological approach. This approach recognizes the researcher brings specific perspectives to the research based on one’s own lived experiences. In order to mitigate potentially detrimental effects of any preconceptions or biases that may taint the research process, it is critical for the researcher to set aside any potential biases or sensitizing concepts. This may be accomplished through a process described as bracketing.

Tufford (2012) argues there are a litany of definitions for bracketing, none uniform, and notes

Drew (2004) posits bracketing as ‘the task of sorting out the qualities that belong to the researcher’s experience of the phenomenon’ (p. 215). Gearing (2004) explains bracketing as a ‘scientific process in which a researcher suspends or
holds in abeyance his or her presuppositions, biases, assumptions, theories, or previous experiences to see and describe the phenomenon’ (p. 1430). Starks and Trinidad (2007) note that the researcher ‘must be honest and vigilant about her own perspective, pre-existing thoughts and beliefs, and developing hypotheses…engage in the self-reflective process of “bracketing,” whereby they recognize and set aside (but do not abandon) their a priori knowledge and assumptions, with the analytic goal of attending to the participants’ accounts with an open mind’ (p. 1376). Within the grounded theory research tradition, Creswell and Miller (2000) note the importance of researchers’ acknowledging their beliefs and biases early in the research process to allow readers to understand their positions, and then ‘bracket or suspend those researcher biases as the study proceeds … individuals reflect on the social, cultural, and historical forces that shape their interpretation’ (p. 127). (p. 83)

On occasion, a close relationship between the researcher and the research topic may exist during the process of qualitative research. Bracketing is a mechanism to protect the researcher from what may be emotionally challenging material and mitigate any adverse effects of the research endeavor. It also facilitates the researcher reaching deeper levels of reflection during qualitative research process. Bracketing has the potential to greatly enrich data collection, research findings and interpretation—to the extent the researcher as instrument, maintains self-awareness as part of an ongoing process (Tufford, 2012).

The use of bracketing is crucial for data analysis in this study. First, the researcher has firsthand experience as a female law enforcement officer with promotional processes which, as Starks and Trinidad (2007) note, the researcher must be honest and vigilant about her own perspective, pre-existing thoughts and beliefs, and developing hypotheses. Additionally, this study is a slightly modified replication of Archbold and Schultz’s 2006 study where specific themes emerged. In order to set aside any presuppositions related to the results of that study, bracketing is necessary.
Coding

There are three phases of coding: initial coding or open coding, focused coding and axial coding. The first step is an open coding process that seeks to uncover major categories of information or central phenomenon. Charmaz (2006) identified coding as “the first step in moving beyond concrete statements in the data to making analytic interpretations. We aim to interpretive rendering that begins with coding and illuminates studied life” (p. 43). Nvivo 10 software was used to conduct coding and data analysis.

The analysis focused on identifying codes and themes which emerged from the data. These codes and themes were examined to develop categories or dimensions. Finally, a dimensional analysis was completed to interpret the data.

Initial Coding

Data analysis for this study began with a two-phase initial coding process. The first phase involved a key word frequency analysis of the interviews through NVivo 10. Next, from this analysis a list of words which defined key concepts from various areas of the interviews was generated. Finally, the key words were analyzed to determine which properties they might represent when developing conceptual categories and primary dimensions.

Table 3.3 provides a listing of the key words based on a word frequency query in Nvivo 10 and their relationship to dimensions, categories, and properties. The key terms are organized under their primary dimension. Some of the terms overlap dimensions and
### Table 3.3

**Key Terms**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutional Structures</th>
<th>Primary Dimension</th>
<th>Organizational Structures</th>
<th>Political Structures</th>
<th>Constructs of Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accepted</td>
<td></td>
<td>Autonomy</td>
<td>Accountable</td>
<td>Abilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aspirations</td>
<td></td>
<td>Choice</td>
<td>Blatant</td>
<td>Pregnant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calling</td>
<td></td>
<td>Desired</td>
<td>Bureaucracy</td>
<td>Balancing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camaraderie</td>
<td></td>
<td>Enjoy</td>
<td>Cutthroat</td>
<td>Promoted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenge</td>
<td></td>
<td>Opportunity</td>
<td>Develop</td>
<td>Barrier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Climate</td>
<td></td>
<td>Rewarding</td>
<td>Development</td>
<td>Qualified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colleagues</td>
<td></td>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
<td>Differential</td>
<td>Choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committed</td>
<td></td>
<td>Shift</td>
<td>Effective</td>
<td>Reformation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cutthroat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Incompetent</td>
<td>Competent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differential</td>
<td>Preferential</td>
<td></td>
<td>Influence</td>
<td>Respected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulties</td>
<td>Prove</td>
<td></td>
<td>Interference</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discouraged</td>
<td>Support</td>
<td></td>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>Supportive</td>
<td></td>
<td>Micromanaging</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal</td>
<td>Token</td>
<td></td>
<td>Power</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Favoritism</td>
<td>Treatment</td>
<td></td>
<td>Reputation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frustrations</td>
<td>Uncomfortable</td>
<td></td>
<td>Respected</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fulfilling</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Status</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

are listed under both related dimensions. Primary dimensions, conceptual categories, and properties are referenced in Table 4.1 and discussed fully in chapter four.

The next phase in the initial coding process, utilized a line-by-line analysis of the data. Each line of text was analyzed and coded to place data in categories. During the initial coding process, particular points related to the overall purpose of the study were kept in mind such as the specific focus of the study, what does the data suggest and to what dimensional categories do the specific datum fall.

The intent of initial coding was to very quickly assemble a large amount of data based on the coders’ initial reactions to the key word and line-by-line text analysis. A second researcher, without law enforcement experience, was used to assist in coding the transcripts to identify codes and themes and maximize the perspectives contained within
the data. The intent of utilizing a second researcher for coding is not for confirmation of the initial coders’ findings but rather it is a deliberate attempt to find difference. The important task is to uncover all possible nuances and alternate meanings found within the data. The team coding approach adds valuable perspectives that can be missed when conducting this work in isolation. Utilizing a second researcher without law enforcement experience provides for a fresh perspective, free from any potential biases or preconceived ideas resulting from having law enforcement experience, for reviewing the data. To ensure the fresh perspective of the second researcher during coding, a set matrix for evaluation/coding was not used. Rather, each researcher used an individual perspective or “lens” with which to view and interpret the data.

**Focused Coding**

The next phase of coding was focused coding. This phase involved grouping the codes for more analysis and sorting. Data to data comparison took place, examining responses to each question by interviewees. The data were considered in larger segments based on their attributes such as the frequency of occurrence, thematic relationships, and overall relationship to the phenomena of interest. This allowed for the evolving of conceptual categories or general framework to which certain recurrent information appeared to fit. This allowed for movement to the next phase, axial coding.
Axial Coding

The final phase is axial coding where each major category or “core phenomenon” was examined to develop subcategories or other conditions that influence the phenomenon being examined (Charmaz, 2006; Creswell, 2007). Charmaz (2006) noted that at this phase of analysis the researcher relates categories with subcategories to identify meaning. She further stated, “Axial coding specifies the properties and dimensions of a category” (p. 60). Similarly, Strauss and Corbin (1990) designate the types of categories around the core phenomenon. “They consist of causal conditions (what factors caused the core phenomenon), strategies (actions taken in response to the core phenomenon), contextual and intervening conditions (broad and specific situational factors that influence the strategies), consequences (outcomes from using the strategies)” (Creswell, 2007, p. 64–65).

There were concerns regarding the development of the codes for two reasons. First, previous research outlined in chapter two revealed an overarching dimensional organization in terms of institutional structures, organizational structures, political structures and personal factors to determine how female police officers chose to participate in the promotional process. It was important to view the data without preconception related to this dimensional organization and “let the data speak for itself.” However, after analyzing the data without regard to previously identified dimensional organization, those dimensional organizations very clearly re-emerged.

Second, there was overlap in dimensions and conceptual categories related to gender roles and gender characteristics (defined by the primary dimension of Constructs
of Gender). Gender is a significant variable which permeates both overarching dimensions of institutional structures and personal factors. Additionally, some categories under the personal dimension overlap in the structural organizational category.

A component which arose when reviewing the findings and the categories was the issue of race not being included in participant demographics. Four of the women mentioned their race and experiences as an African American female police officer in addition to gender during interviews. Interestingly, the officer commented “…I don’t associate myself as being a black female either, because I grew up, I was adopted and I grew up in a white family so…” when discussing the issue of tokenism. This dissertation study focused solely on gender and did not research race as an additional consideration in the women’s decisions to pursue or not pursue promotion.

Of concern in data analysis is validity and reliability of results. Validation and reliability of the study was ensured a number of ways. First is identification and awareness of any researcher bias. The researcher is not only a former female police officer but also has experience in the police promotional process and, as a result, attained a command position in a police agency. To avoid the potential of bias, the researcher did not interject any opinions or commentary into the interviews. Next, emergent dimensions and categories from the interviews reflect concepts from previous research. Finally, results of this study were compared to the 2006 Archbold and Hassell study to identify any consistency or points of departure in results.
CHAPTER 4

DIMENSIONAL ANALYSIS

The purpose of this study was to develop an understanding of the lived experiences of female police officers as it relates to their decisions to pursue promotion. Interview data from 27 participants were coded and analyzed. Dimension analysis focuses on complex and in-depth analysis of a social phenomenon which allows the researcher to generate opportunities to reconstruct “multiple components of a complex social phenomena” (Kools et al., 1996, p. 316). The goal of identifying dimensions of a phenomena is to gain understanding of what is taking place (Schatzman, 1991).

Purposefully, this approach is to extend beyond merely identifying themes in an effort to understand the underlying meaning and social processes at play within complex social dynamics.

Dimensional analysis disaggregates interview data and reassembles it based on how the participants make meaning of the phenomena under study. According to Schatzman (1991) it is necessary to provide “a structure of terms that totally frame a given direction or methodological perspective to analysis” (p. 308). When describing this analytic framework terms used are dimensions, categories and properties. Dimensions are the largest conceptual constructs, then more fully detailed through categories and properties. In dimensional analysis, a core or central dimension or concept emerges as most explanatory of the social processes described by participants (Eklin, 2015).
This chapter provides an overview of each dimension along with detailed descriptions of the underlying conceptual category. When conducting dimensional analysis, the most explanatory dimension or concept of the social processes, as described by the participant, emerges. Other significant dimensions are considered primary dimensions and are directly related to the core dimension.

In this chapter, the findings were organized around each primary dimension followed by those categories that are conceptually related to the dimension. Quotes from the participants’ interviews further detail the properties that describe and illustrate the conceptual categories. A labeling system of P1 through P27 was used to identify participants to protect their identities. The title police officer is used to generally describe personnel regardless of assignment to areas such as patrol, community policing, Canine, school resource officer, etc., and who have not gone through a promotional testing process. Other titles such as Investigator, Detective, Sergeant, Lieutenant, and Captain are used to describe personnel who have “promoted” positions. It should be noted that titles such as Investigator and Detective may represent a “promoted” position, but this is not consistent for all agencies. In some agencies, a police officer (rank) who is assigned to an investigative unit or division may utilize the title Investigator or Detective.

**Overview of Primary Dimensions, Conceptual Categories, and Properties**

Several primary dimensions, conceptual categories, and properties emerged from the data. The conceptual categories and properties were nested in a larger primary dimension. Table 4.1 provides a representation of the primary dimensions and are
Table 4.1

**Primary Dimensions, Conceptual Categories and Properties**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary Dimension</th>
<th>Conceptual Category</th>
<th>Properties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Institutional Structures</strong></td>
<td>Being a police officer</td>
<td><strong>It’s a calling</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>You don’t belong Double standard</td>
<td>The Thin Blue Line</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social Expectation to be Promoted</td>
<td>They told me I should</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It’s still a Man’s World</td>
<td><strong>Making a difference</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feeling prepared</td>
<td><strong>Good ol’ boys</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Timing</td>
<td><strong>2nd or 3rd shift won’t work</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organizational Structures</strong></td>
<td>Shift Work</td>
<td>I like my shift</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Can I pick?</td>
<td>I don’t want to go to nights again</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Duty Assignments</td>
<td>I like what I do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Political Structures</strong></td>
<td>Management and Leadership</td>
<td>The chief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Politicality”</td>
<td>Politics of rank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Politics of the city</td>
<td>The next political layer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Constructs of Gender</strong></td>
<td>Gender roles</td>
<td>Family first</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Skills to lead</td>
<td>It’s been a while since I’ve done that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It’s a growing process</td>
<td>Married to a cop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It’s a calling</td>
<td>Family first</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

reflected in bold font as follows: Institutional Structures, Organizational Structures, Political Structures, and Constructs of Gender. Institutional structures refer to the police subculture for the entire law enforcement community, as well as the culture specific to an individual agency. Organizational structures refer to the agency size, number of female police officers, policies and procedures (i.e., nepotism, married persons working with/supervising one another, synchronization of schedules for married persons, “family friendly”) policies, etc. The primary dimensions, conceptual categories and properties began to emerge after analysis of the key words listed in Table 3.2. The Political Structures refer to such elements as management/leadership style of supervisors and
commanders in the agency (micromanager, empowering, etc.), confidence in executive leadership, including their ability to run the agency and diversity and gender sensitivity. Political structures also encompass the relationships with political leaders outside the police agency such as in the city/municipality.

Constructs of Gender encompass differences between men and women in psychological propensities, communication styles, socialization, leadership styles and attitudes toward power and the view of women in policing. Additionally, division of labor and equity of roles and responsibilities for household or child care tasks becomes an issue with female police officers, and more so for those who are married to fellow police officers and those who are mothers (West & Zimmerman, 1987).

The conceptual categories and ancillary properties nested within each primary dimension more fully explain each dimensional construct. Words of the participants (properties), derived from the text of the interviews, more fully characterize each related conceptual category. Similarly, conceptual categories provide the foundation for the development of each primary dimension.

In Table 4.1 conceptual categories that were used to describe each primary dimension are presented in sentence case font. The conceptual category, Being a Police Officer, is comprised of the following properties: it’s a calling, The Thin Blue Line, somebody has to do it, making a difference, and variety. The conceptual category, It’s still a Man’s World, contains properties of you don’t belong here, double standard, the token female, and good ol’ boys. The conceptual category, Social Expectation to be Promoted, contains the properties of timing, they told me I should and feeling prepared.
The conceptual category, Shift Work, is comprised of the following properties: *I like my shift, I don’t want to go to nights again,* and *2nd or 3rd shift won’t work.* The conceptual category, Assignments, includes *can I pick, what if I don’t like it,* and *I like what I do* as properties. The conceptual category, Management and Leadership, includes the properties *the chief, the management team, the boss, who’s getting promoted,* and *diversity perspective.* The conceptual category, “Politicality,” includes the conceptual categories *politics of rank,* *the next political layer* and *politics of the city.* The conceptual category, Gender Roles, include properties of *gender roles, family first,* *a balancing act* and *married to a cop.* The conceptual category Skills to Lead, include *It’s been a while since I’ve done that,* *I haven’t done that,* *it’s a learning process,* and *fear of failure* as properties.

**Institutional Structures**

Institutional Structures refer to the subculture for the entire law enforcement community as well as the culture of an individual agency. Police subculture is a broad term which, in part, describes the values in law enforcement (Gaines & Miller, 2013). The process of becoming a police officer and the reasons for remaining a police officer can be attributed to the police subculture and values in law enforcement.

**Being a Police Officer**

Perhaps the best way to begin to understand the lived experiences of the female police officers interviewed regarding their promotional aspirations is to explore not only
why these women became police officers but also why they remain police officers and their level of commitment to the job. Sixty-three percent of the women (17 out of 27) became police officers serendipitously, by looking for variety and a challenging career, hearing stories about it or taking a criminal justice class and getting hooked. Some of those women also were headed toward or were in other careers that they decided not to pursue. Participants described situations as follows: “I was in high school, actually, when I had a sociology class, and the teacher was talking about juvenile delinquency, and that kind of sparked my interest.” (p. 6)

Well, I was working in insurance and my husband and I decided that we would want, I wanted to go to medical school and [I thought] I’ll just work this for a year or so and save some money and quit and go to medical school. But I got here and stayed. (P17)

My only other career choice was being a teacher and I wasn’t really one of those to sit behind the desk kind of people. I was more of a tomboy/athlete kind of person growing up so it just appealed to me. I would want to know where the cops were going when they drove by my house with their lights and sirens on. (P20)

I was working at a— I was a kinesiotherapist at a Veteran’s Hospital…and I saw an ad in the newspaper for the police and they were recruiting and they said have you ever been a teacher or a social worker that was kind of going—reaching out to all of these other professions. And I saw the ad…I’m like, ‘I bet I could do that.’ So I applied and they hired me on the first time. (P23)

I needed a job. I didn’t make it in the fire academy so I put in for the police academy. (P25)

Twenty-two percent of the women (6 out of 27) decided to become police officers because they were either encouraged by someone to do so or had family or friends in law enforcement. One participant cited “I was a civilian with the police department and knew
a lot of people in law enforcement and they said I’d be very, very good at it. And
I…after a couple years I applied and got hired.” (P1)

I think it’s kind of the climate that I grew up in probably, just that was kind of
what I knew and it just interested me about my dad’s employment and what he
did for work and talking to him about it and I think that kind of pushed me in that
direction…(P16)

I had always had kind of an [inkling] interest in it. My father was a cop, several
of my cousins were police officers. And I took a circuitous route to it. I was a
hairdresser and then went back to college and on my way to law school I just kind
of took a turn that I would apply for the department. And didn’t really take it
seriously. I was planning on moving to another state and I kept making it
through…and I kept making it through every part of the application process. And
when they offered me the job, I couldn’t turn it down. Initially when I got into
police work I had promised my dad that I would eventually go back to law school
but I never did. (P12)

The remaining women who were interviewed cited wanting to be in law
enforcement from when they were young, either from always having an interest or
becoming interested in it from television.

Many of the women interviewed may not have intended to enter law enforcement,
however, their rating of their commitment to the job and their reasons for remaining in
law enforcement provide a new perspective. On a scale of one-to-five, with one being
not committed and five being fully committed, ninety-three percent of the women (25 out
of 27) rated their level of commitment at four or five. Only one participant rated her level
of commitment at three. One participant did not rate her level of commitment. Even
participants who were nearing retirement (6 out of 27) or 22% rated their level of
commitment as four or five.
When asked why they choose to remain a police officer, 33% (9 out of 27) of the participants interviewed cite law enforcement as a calling and specifically describe it as such: “I’m called to do it and I love it.” (P9)

Another participant said:

I believe for me it was an actual calling. I believe that this is where I was always supposed to end up and that it was no different than like a priest or any other vocation where you just feel like you’re called to serve. (P12)

Another property supporting the conceptual category of being a police officer is referred to as the Thin Blue Line. The Thin Blue Line is usually represented in graphic form where there are two black stripes separated by a thin blue line. The top black stripe represents the public. The bottom black stripe represents violence and criminals. The thin blue line in the center represents law enforcement and “the officers’ role of separating good from evil while creating order from chaos” (Hamden Police Department, n.d.). The Thin Blue Line may also be representative of the relationship between officers and the camaraderie that develops as a result of the dangers of the job and duties performed. When describing why she is committed to the job, one participant made the statement:

Because without us you have chaos. People should be able to go to bed at night and be able to close their eyes and not sleep with one eye open. And without your police policing your community, how can the American people—it’s a quality of life, we’re committed. We swore—we took an oath that we would protect the people of the community. And we take that pretty seriously. Even the ones that hate us, we protect them too. (P4)

Participant 18 cites “…I think it’s my fundamental duty and my responsibility, my oath in office…”
Another participant said “…you get that family feel, that thin blue line. I mean people that you work with, you really do become a family. So it’s a family unit, it’s a support unit” (P10). Yet another sentiment expressed was “we’re trying to keep the people safe and that’s a tremendous responsibility and frankly what I believe is kind of the foundation for our democracy” (P11). Finally it was said that “it’s rewarding when you can catch a bad guy, and if you can in turn be able to protect that victim” (P6).

Fifty-two percent (14 out of 27) of the women cited concerns related to the current negative public sentiment toward law enforcement. This issue permeated several areas of the interviews from the inquiry regarding the job being what they expected to recommending the job to another female to level of commitment to the job. Despite the negative sentiment toward law enforcement, one participant expressed “everybody hates the cops now…someone has to do this job…and I love it” (P1). Following the same rationale, a participant cited

…with the culture of society right now and the challenges of being in law enforcement, I think…that I find [satisfaction] in doing something that I know is right that’s not exactly the popular choice, or we’re not receiving any awards or anything like that. Again it just goes back to kind of the noble profession. I feel like I have job satisfaction because there’s a small majority of the public that might try to paint us into a negative picture but, again, I feel like we are still fighting a good fight. (P2)

As with some of the reasons why the women entered law enforcement, 48% (13 out of 27) cited the ability to make a difference, either with the public or within their departments.

The participants echoed sentiments such as

I do believe when I go in to work every day I make a difference as I’ve gone through the different ranks in the department, police officer to kind of—we have
something…which are our street level drug enforcement units and I was a detective several years before becoming a sergeant. The job is very different in each of those roles…I certainly view the public as my primary customers. But also the officers are my customer (P11).

Another participant voiced

I have a reason for being here and it’s important and has potential to change our organization which needs to happen; the whole culture of our organization (P17).

Those female officers who were looking for variety in a career indicated they found it. “I love the variety, the different people, the craziness I get to see” (P15). “I like that events change and you never know what you’re going to come across” (P10).

It’s Still a Man’s World

As cited in chapter two, law enforcement has been viewed as a masculine domain. Women are viewed as having less physical strength than male officers which calls into question their physical ability to subdue and apprehend combative suspects and come to the aid of male officers when involved in physical confrontations with suspects. The social organization is replete with norms and values that embody traditional forms of masculinity (e.g., aggressiveness, toughness, emotional control, and physical strength) (Connell, 2008; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Women are viewed as having intruded into the male dominated police subculture (part of the institutional structure), which in turn, has inhibited the acceptance of women into the group.

The conceptual category It’s still a Man’s World encompasses the properties of you don’t belong here, double standard and the token female. Each female officer who participated in the interviews was able to provide several examples of or experiences with
manifestations of these concepts. The examples were either with individual male officers or entire agencies. Even those female officers who indicated they got along well with their coworkers, felt accepted or even described themselves as “one of the boys” were able to provide examples. As there are many stories, for illustration purposes, the more noteworthy stories are provided.

Although the participants were able to provide examples of disparate treatment related to many of the interview questions, the questions focusing on this area specifically addressed negative experiences impacting their decision to pursue promotion, differential treatment based on gender, differences in calls for services, feelings of isolation, having to work harder to prove yourself and feelings of tokenism.

During discussion of this primary dimension, it is important to be cognizant of an overlap in dimensions and conceptual categories related to gender roles and gender characteristics, defined by the primary dimension of Constructs of Gender, in personal factors and It’s still a Man’s World under Institutional structures. Gender is a significant variable which permeates both overarching dimensions.

The first conceptual category which supports It’s Still a Man’s World is that of you don’t belong here. The participants cited examples such as “we can’t prove it. I mean it’s not blatant…It’s always this whisper or you hear…” (P3) and stories told about hazing type incidents such as “…when the women first joined the police department as full time officers. The hazing type of thing with tampons left all over…” (P2). An incident related to concerns regarding the participants’ physical strength was described:

It was probably about ten years ago when I was in patrol. Myself and another female officer were dispatched to a run regarding a mental patient who was out of
control, which is typical. We have a lot of group homes. It was not a run out of
the ordinary. And one of our supervisors, a male supervisor, got on the radio and
made the comment he wanted a male officer sent with us. (P26)

Another participant describes

…there were just times when being a female, you were pretty much…or at least I
was anyway, marginalized and ostracized and your opinion is not really being
accepted or…And it wasn’t by the majority but there were a few...some as a boss
or somebody of a higher rank who punished…and we all knew who they were
who thought that women weren’t supposed to be there or African American
women, in particular. We had no say....And while there weren’t words that were
spoken, but the actions were there and we all knew it. (P17)

Thirty-seven percent (10 out of 27) of the participants expressed a feeling of

isolation and lack of belonging when they described the following situations:

...I began to notice that like I said—in command posts that the men were getting
the quote, sexier tasks—than a lot of the interviewing. Many of the men had
these reputations and when I had worked with them, I knew that my female
counterparts were much more able to get because of their communication skills
and actually their nurturing of suspects, they were able to oftentimes get—their
work project was more detailed...there exists a good old boys’ club that’s very
tight and quiet and underground, but you know it’s there. I don’t know if I’m
going along the right lines. A lot of it is how information is passed and how those
relationships are fostered. Because when the guys are golfing or fishing together,
those things are cemented. And as a female, I’m not going to go fishing with
these guys. I’m not going to go golfing with them...And so you know, they’ve
access to—as they go—the higher ups because they have more access to the
captains, the assistant chiefs, the chiefs. And by virtue of those things, it’s kind of
like what happens in the meetings but the fact—it’s in the urinal, they’re hanging
out in the bathroom together shooting the s**t. (P12)

…I went to the detective bureau and I was…in Sensitive Crimes and there
were six of us that worked those cases, and that was five males and me. Now
these guys were a little bit older than me but they all hung out. They’d all fished
together, they all did tons of things together. You know, that whole deal. There
was always definitely separation of them and me… (P9)

…I tried out for the SWAT team and then several officers made comments like I
was going to make the SWAT team and the day that the announcement was to
occur, and I went in and sat with the supervisors. They said ‘you know what, you
did really great on the SWAT test, blah, blah, blah. But we just don’t feel like
you’re ready to be a SWAT officer on the team. I mean they didn’t really give you any real reason or things to improve upon…Later on there were a couple officers who were on the SWAT team and ended up leaving the department. And I was given information by a couple of those offices that the commander of the team was not going to have a woman on his SWAT team. So I would have never made it on that team because I was a woman. (P3)

…one of the frustrations—and this is, so from my personal experience is the—good old boys’ club. The work doesn’t really get done in meetings. So you go to a meeting. You have a discussion. You think you know what’s going on. You come back later and you hear, why didn’t you do x, y and z? And you’re like, what are you talking about? I have no idea what you’re talking about. Or you find the real meeting happened over the poker game or at the golf game or in their little clutch of guys that they made—and so then there’s no communication about what’s going on…I attribute it to gender because the girls didn’t get invited to any of—not that I would go anyway. But it’s—it was all just the guys and their friends and their little guy activities. (P23)

The next conceptual category related supporting It’s Still a Man’s World is the Double Standard. In addition to feelings of isolation, opportunities were not equally provided to both male and female officers. Behaviors or practices that were not considered acceptable for the female officers were not only acceptable for the male officers but were admired and commended when exhibited by men. One participant outlined the following situation when she was pregnant with her twins and how the department handled her request for light duty assignments:

…when I was pregnant being told by a captain, yeah, we don’t have any light duty assignments for you. You just need to be off the rest of—you just need to go home and be off the rest of your pregnancy. Well I looked around and there seems to be plenty of light duty assignments for those people who were temporarily injured in other ways or temporarily disabled in other ways and my argument was, I am basically temporarily disabled, if you want to call it that, just like these other people are. This is temporary. It’s not going to last forever. I’m going to have these babies sooner probably rather than later. So I spoke up and actually the situation was then handled to my benefit. That person changed their mind probably because they were told they had to change their mind and I was given light duty. (P16)
Participant 8 explained:

…going back to my first couple of years as a lieutenant, the other lieutenant that was promoted with me had a younger child at the time and always left every day after her eight hours. And people would complain that she was never there. She was always gone. And that’s because she took her child to a private school and had to drop him off and pick him up at certain times…after two years there, I was reassigned to a different position, and a male lieutenant came in and took my spot. And interestingly, during school season or whenever the fall sports started, he coached his son’s football team, in the spring coached his baseball team. And he left every day at a particular time. But the sentiment that I would hear back, is he’s really dedicated to coaching. And it was a very positive spin on him doing the same thing that the female counterpart was doing, which was looked upon very negatively. (P8)

Another participant cited:

…I was in training and a suspect took off out the back door, I was chasing him. That became a problem, and I should not have left my FTO. So I recognized that. But if you fast forward five, seven years—we had a male officer that was also in training do the same thing and it was nothing but slaps on the back, and great job and that’s just the kind of guy we’re looking for. (P10)

The last conceptual category related to the primary dimension of It’s Still a Man’s World is the token female. The impact of tokenism on female police officers has been the focus of numerous studies, both quantitatively (Belknap & Shelley, 1992; Gustafson, 2008, Krimmel & Gormley, 2003; Taylor-Greene & del Carmen, 2002) and qualitatively (Archbold and Schulz, 2008; Martin, 1979; Martin, 1980; Martin, 1994; Wertsch, 1998). Manifestations of tokenism include being showcased in the media as a representative of the department as well as being called upon to assist in the recruitment and promotion of female officers. Additionally, female officers believed they were being treated as tokens if they were asked to handle a male officer’s call to a sexual assault case or being called in to search a female suspect (Archbold & Schultz, 2008).
Kanter (1977) articulated three consequences of tokenism: visibility, polarization and assimilation. She asserted token members stand out in comparison to and are different from dominant group members. Multiple participants provided support for this assertion as described below:

…not only am I a female, I’m also a minority…I’m kind of in a specialty unit as a K-9 officer…I guess I just felt like I’ve kind of reached this quota in different ways for the agency. And I don’t know like I said, if that’s on me because I look out and I see there aren’t a lot of people like me or what that is. But I have felt that way whether it’s validated or not. (P2)

…but female officers and black officers, yeah, I think definitely. They’ll send a female and a black to any recruiting event. (P7)

…it was suggested that I help organize some sort of breast cancer awareness, which I though was really—why me? And one of the lieutenants that was standing there when this was said—he goes ‘why, just because she has breasts: And the person that said it was like—‘well yeah.’ It’s like men get breast cancer too… (P10)

…like they’d say run a picture of a female for whatever reason I felt like a token. I remember being cross trained, the newspaper wanted to do an article on me because I was the first female firefighter…and I called and said I wasn’t having any part of that. Now to me that’s a token. I’m not somebody’s poster child. I’m just the same as anybody else out here doing a job and whatever plumbing I have has no bearing on anything in my opinion. (P2)

Another reaction Kanter (1977) identified in response to token visibility was the attempt to over achieve in an attempt to have their performance evaluated positively. Sixty-three percent (17 out of 27) participants expressed a need to prove themselves. “I always feel like everything better be perfect that I put out, because it will be judged…” (P1)

Another explanation included:

If you’re going out for the SWAT team, you better ace the shooting test. Your fitness test better be out of the-heads above, you know. You got to do everything.
I mean, you got to slam it out of the park when you’re doing the oral board because your fitness is never going to be as good as the makes because you are never going to be—I mean, it’s very rare that you are going to be as strong as the males that are going out for the SWAT team... (P3)

Ninety-six percent (26 out of 27) of the participants cited experiencing one or more examples of tokenism, exemplified by feeling the need to work harder, differential treatment or differences in calls for service. Although participants cited these experiences and viewed them negatively, 26% (7 out of 27) of the participants said they have felt like a token police officer. Out of those seven, two participants felt being of a minority group was advantageous, not only to the citizens but also to the department.

They cited:

…Like the female thing: ‘hey we have this issue. Can you come help us with that? Or during recruiting we’ve always had problems with recruiting women and African Americans. And of course, I did recruiting for a while…I think sometimes you are exposed to more opportunity because that particular time calls for a particular person. (P17)

…I think gender played a role to my benefit when I became promoted to sergeant at my first department. Like I said, I was the first female sergeant, so I think it was the token. I got hired because I was female. I was their token because they had a lawsuit. I didn’t know that. It goes both ways. (P25)

The most commonly occurring example was that of differences in calls for service based on gender. Seventy-percent (19 out of 27) of participants cited differences in calls for service, most often for sexual assault calls, but also for searching women, domestic violence and calls involving children. Several of the participants explained the differences in calls for service based on gender were much more frequent in years past than in recent years, but they do still occur. There was also some contradiction between
participants working in the same agency. Some participants specifically stated it did not occur in their agency, while others from the same agency described specific situations.

Examples related to tokenism are outlined below:

I was on the SWAT Team for a while and I’ve had like men hand me babies during search warrants, assuming that I like babies. That’s [preferential] treatment. I’m like wait a minute, I don’t have a kid. You have a baby; you take the baby. Yeah, kind of that unthinking kind of thing where it’s four in the morning and you crash through a door and there’s kids crying and they’re like here, take this kid. I’m like, I don’t want the kid. I don’t hate kids but I don’t have kids for a reason. (P11)

Related to promotion:

…you’ll hear people say, “Oh, you’re gonna get promoted ‘cause you’re the female and there’s only two on the list.” And I’ve gotten into arguments with people and some of that’s the chip on my shoulder where I’m like, “Okay, am I just the token chick or do you think”—“Well no, no you’re qualified, I’m not saying that.” And it’s like well then don’t throw out there because I’m a female on the list. But then I’ve heard other people say, “Hey, we realized you’re gonna get promoted and you are the female in there, but we’re 100% behind you and support you and we think you’ll make a great supervisor...Oh, I’m the token girl now.” I think that there is, I think people do think that, whether its gender or race or whatever. (P22)

**Social Expectations to be Promoted**

Interview questions inquiring about aspirations of promotion provided the data from which this conceptual category is derived. Participants were asked if, at time of hire with their agency, they had aspirations of promotion and if they still have aspirations of promotion. An additional question examined factors which precipitated their change in decision to promote.

The third and final conceptual category related to institutional structures is the Social Expectation to be Promoted. This dimension encompasses the properties *Timing*
and *They told me I should*. This concept suggests there is a social expectation to be promoted as part of the natural career progression:

...I think it was just, again, trying to move forward and take that next step. When I started, I didn’t have any aspirations to really lead because I feel like, I think at least at that point it was so much about learning the job and doing the job and getting that experience, where that wasn’t even my thought process. Not that I probably didn’t ever think that maybe someday I would do it, it’s not something that I thought about. And now I’ve reached a position in my career where I feel like it’s a logical step. (P2)

...It’s a natural progression. It’s more of an adult job to put a suit on and go to work every day…” (P7)

...definitely wanted to move up within the department just as part of my career...Once you get hired in with the same group of people and other people start to take the test, it’s definitely a motivator...I feel that I should be moving up as opposed to just remaining an officer, and then having these younger officers get promoted above me. (P26)

A second component looks at timing from a slightly different perspective. This includes a “socially acceptable” time at which to take the test:

...when I got on it took another female officer that was a friend of mine, that I knew before I got on the police department, she and another supervisor—they weren’t supervising at the time. They were speaking and they said ‘if you’re going to take the sergeant’s test and you have aspirations of being a supervisor, you need to do it at eight years, right around eight, that is the perfect place. If you wait too long, it’s not, you know and I didn’t understand what they were talking about. I remember them saying that but looking back now, that is the time. That’s the time to do it. I agree with them. I think I waited too long. (P4)

Another time consideration includes the timing of the promotional exam/process within the agency and available positions:

...when the time came for promotion it was just kind of one of those timing things more than anything. I could have tested last time and decided to pull my name because I liked what I was doing...But also looking ahead to the future of the department as far as retirements and you know, when would it be a good time to test or not to test? I had 14 years on file when I tested and I felt like that was just the right—if I was going to do it, that was the time to do it. (P14)
The final timing consideration is the stage of the officer’s career or how close the participant is to retirement. Several of the participants were nearing retirement. Participant 10 suggested “I’m fairly close to retirement, so that is probably the big thing.” One of the participants explained “if I were going to I think the prime time would have been 10 years ago or more…” (P16) Yet another participant explains “the biggest thing is timing in your total career.” (P21)

The next conceptual category under Social Expectation to be Promoted relates to *They told me I should*. Participants who were not considering promotion related their experiences:

I think I had a lot of people express to me that they thought I would be good at it. I felt like I had been able to do a lot of different things within the police department that would me a good candidate for being a sergeant especially. I mean I got to do a lot of different things as an officer. When the time came to test for promotion it was just kind of one of those timing things more than anything. (P14)

…speaking with other females, more specifically in leadership positions, and them saying we need more female officers in these positions. We think that you would be exceptional or a good fit for these positions. (P2)

…some people said, why don’t you just interview for sergeant? Even if it’s not what you want to do, it’s good interview practice. So I did…I had a great interview, and I made the panel, and I was the first person promoted off that panel. (P8)

…there was one sergeant who badgered me about taking the test. And I thought I don’t want to take that test…I took it so he would stop bugging me. I really didn’t study for it…and I took the sergeant’s exam and I did well and I was promoted through the first round. (P17)
Organizational Structures

Organizational Structures specifically refer to the agency size, number of female police officers, policies and procedures (i.e., nepotism, married persons working with/supervising one another, synchronization of schedules for married persons, “family friendly” policies, contractual requirements, etc.).

Shift Work

Shift work is a conceptual category related to the primary dimension of organizational structures of a police agency. Interview questions specifically inquired about the participants’ satisfaction with their current shift. Questions also asked participants to cite three factors that would influence their decision to go through promotion, then to cite three factors that would influence their decision not to go through promotion. The majority of the participants’ responses resulted in factors related to shift work. The properties include I like my shift, I don’t want to go to nights again and 2nd or 3rd shift won’t work and are derived from the participants’ interview data.

Once again, during discussion of this conceptual category, it is important to be cognizant of an overlap in properties related to gender roles and gender characteristics. These define the conceptual category of Constructs of Gender, and are found permeating personal factors related to Shift work under Organizational Structures. Gender is a significant variable which permeates both overarching dimensions.

Participants were asked if they were satisfied with their current shift. Ninety-three percent (25 out of 27) participants expressed satisfaction with their current shift.
Twenty-three of the participants cited they were working some form of day shift (7:00 am–3:00 pm, 8:00 am–4:00 pm, etc.) and it was most conducive to their job duties, personal life or sleep schedule. Two of the 25 participants who were working the night shift indicated they were working their preferred shift. “I like third shift. I like being off during the day, and during the evenings to be able to do the things I enjoy, so it works out perfect, and the work is different” (P6). Another response was “I love night shift. When I first came on the night shift I didn’t really like it, but I guess I’ve been there almost 12 plus years now, and I just think I like being proactive” (P5). The remaining two participants expressed dissatisfaction with their shift as they were working night shift and that was not their preferred shift.

The next property supporting the Shift Work dimension is I don’t want to go to nights again. The participants were asked to cite factors that would influence their decision to either go through or not to go through the promotion process. Thirty-nine percent (18 out of 46) of the reasons cited were because the participant didn’t want to go to nights. When asked whether or not their shift would change if they were to be promoted 81% (22 out of 27 participants) said their shift would change, resulting in a transfer to 2nd or 3rd shift. They further indicated it would be several years before they would be able to bid their shift of choice (day shift) due to seniority/contractual constraints. Participant 13 noted “Well, I am 53, as I mentioned, and sleeping at night is a priority in my life. If I was to promote that would mean nights…and I can’t do that.” “It’s just a big change in sleeping. I mean we only have 12-hour shifts so I didn’t have a choice when I came to nights” (P14). A second participant also commented on the sleep
issue: Another sentiment echoed was “going back to midnights or working a 12-hour shift from 7:00 pm to 7:00 am does not interest me in the least” (P10). Finally, “…feeling that I would be stuck on 3rd shift for a long time would be definitely against it” (19).

Shift constraints occur for two primary reasons. First and most obvious is law enforcement is an around the clock profession and personnel must be assigned to cover a 24-hour period. Resources must be allocated appropriately to accomplish that goal so not everyone gets their preferred shift. The second and usually most governing factor is that of unions and contractual dictates. One participant addressed this issue when she stated

If they could guarantee me that I would have specific hours, then I would probably do it. But I need—I would—that would be the only way that I could take that test, is that I could guarantee that I would get that shift and that’s not—that’s going to be a union issue, they don’t do that so I would be stuck on 3:00 to 11:00 shift…(P4)

Equity or fairness was also a concern raised with shift assignment:

…just because you have seniority in that rank to say I wanted to go to day shift, just because you have seniority doesn’t mean that’s where you’re going to go. They will just put you wherever they want to. If you’re either being punished, or they feel that this spot is opening and you’re low man… (P6)

This conceptual category stood out as one of the more frequently reoccurring reasons cited when considering promotion. However, it was related to the primary dimension Constructs of Gender and its conceptual categories and properties. As such, in-depth discussion of factors regarding preference for current shift assignment and lack of desire to work 2nd or 3rd shift will be reserved for that area of analysis.
Assignments

The second conceptual category under the primary dimension of Organizational Structure is Assignments. Related properties reflexive of the data include can I pick, what if I don’t like it, and I like what I do. As with the inquiry regarding satisfaction with current shift, interview questions related to assignment were posed. Participants were asked if they were satisfied with their current employment status, referring to duty assignment. Ninety-six percent (26 out of 27 participants) said they were satisfied with their current assignment. One participant who was asked about her lack of satisfaction with her current employment status responded “I don’t hate being a patrolman, but the nature of the work is no longer satisfying to me…I was really kind of savoring for detective work” (P7).

The participants were asked to cite factors that would influence their decision to either go through or not to go through the promotion process. As with shift work, comments were replete. Twenty-eight percent (13 out of 46) of the reasons cited were related to duty assignment; either the participants liked what they were currently doing, expressed concern about the potential of not liking the duty assignment, or wanted to be able to select their own duty assignment rather than being assigned by the chief or restricted by seniority/contract requirements. One participant who is a canine officer expressed “one of the factors that I had to heavily consider was am I ready to leave the position that I’m currently doing, because I enjoy what I’m doing very much? And was I
willing to change that” (P2), and “I’m happy doing what I’m doing, and personally don’t have the interest of doing something different and life changing at this point” (P8).

In describing a specialty assignment that she particularly liked, one participant explained:

I just have no desire to put the suit back on and wear a gun belt and all of that. No desire to do that. It’s not so much of what I don’t want honestly. It’s that I absolutely love…this position that I’m in was created in January for me. I pitched it to the chief and to the commission and then they said yes. (P9)

Related to being assigned by the chief, another participant explained

…what I would want to do is probably be a lieutenant and in our department, when you get promoted to lieutenant, you can’t say—every year get to pick where we want to work and as a lieutenant, it’s not based on seniority, it’s kind of based on where the chief wants to put you. So if I had aspirations of being a detective lieutenant, that doesn’t necessarily mean I’m gonna get it…So there’s no guarantee of what you’re gonna get when you get promoted. It’s basically a title and then even though you have that extra length of time…you’re kind of low on the totem pole. (P27)

**Political Structures**

The Political Structures in a police agency refer to such elements as management/leadership style of supervisors and commanders (e.g., micromanager, empowering, etc.), confidence in executive leadership, including their ability to run the agency, and diversity and gender sensitivity. Political structures also encompass the relationships with political leaders outside the police agency such as in the city/municipality. Lastly, Political Structures can include the interface between outside community leaders, the public and the police agency.
Management and Leadership

The first conceptual category under the primary dimension of Political Structures is Management and Leadership. This dimension provides the general framework for understanding the dynamics between executive leadership, commanders, supervisors and their subordinates. Properties related to this conceptual category include the chief, the management team, the boss, who’s getting promoted, the diversity perspective. While considering factors that would influence their decisions to either go through or not to go through the promotion process, the interrelationship between officers and management emerged as an influential factor. This topic was a bit of a sensitive issue for the participants. Although they expressed concerns regarding management/leadership, most made generic comments, opting not to elaborate on their rationale for the statements. Comments included “a change in the current administration would make a difference” (P10), and “the people that are currently on the management team is what we call it when we have all the captains and the chiefs in with those different personalities I guess” (P1).

Related to this was the level of competence participants felt management/supervisors possessed. “I saw who was getting promoted and thought I could do a better job than them” (P1). Other expressions included:

…so I worked for a lot of people who didn’t understand my job from any level, whether it was just processed or whether it was stress and how having a case load and having the victims attached to you can affect you… (P12)

…I think part of the reason I decided to continue through the ranks was because I would see the lieutenant and now the major and I’d say if they do it, I certainly can. And I don’t mean it in a mean way, but I thought…because it’s for me, I think I would never do that. I would never have made that decision. I would have done it like this, this, and this. And I can listen to things that they say, ‘Now
this is how we’re going to handle this particular situation.’ I’m thinking that is all wrong. I would never ever do that. And you can’t do that. So I think part of the thing that drives me as a leader is knowing that I know what I’m doing. And I think as far as these people who…it is amazing to me they think that they know and they have it. On the surface they think that they know it. (P17)

The climate related to diversity in an agency was a comment heard from the participants. Some comments were positive in that the participants recognized a management philosophy that embraced diversification of the agencies and attempts were being made to expand the diversity of the department related to gender. As a note, this topic was bifurcated. From one perspective it was positive. The other aspect gave the appearance of tokenism, especially when involving recruiting and the gender of who was assigned to be involved with recruiting initiatives.

Participant 2 positively expressed sentiments such as “speaking with other females…more specifically in leadership positions, and them saying we need more female officers in these positions…” and

…because management is very politically correct, and I think that from the outset, like I said before I even was hired with the police department, it was very obvious to me that one of the recruiting objectives was to get members of the community that were reflective of all aspects of the given minority, sexual orientation, whatever that might be. It was clear at the outset that diversity was valued… (P2)

Another positive expression was “…management people seem to be really on board, especially the chief as far as making sure that everybody gets treated fairly and is respected.” (P27)

Conversely, one participant related the sentiment that “…our department does not particularly encourage from within and I’ve noticed it specifically with females.” She expanded that thought to the philosophy with management in general to employee
development when she observed “I still don’t see a lot of development—attempt to
develop people to become leaders within our organization...cultivate people that show
leadership skills” (P3)

“Politicality”

The second conceptual category underlying Political Structures is “Politicality.”
This refers to the political behavior or environment within a police agency or jurisdiction
and is not considered the same as the police subculture referred to in Institutional
Structures. “Politicality” encompasses the ideologies, interests and power dynamics of
and between ranking individuals within an agency. A term frequently heard in law
enforcement circles is “drinking the Kool-Aid.” One participant specifically used this
term when she observed it was considered “[going] with the program” (P25).

Properties derived from the data related to “Politicality” include the politics of
rank, the next political layer and politics of the city. Politics of the city takes into
consideration the political dynamic between the police department and city leaders,
between the police department and the public and between city leaders and the public.
The current sentiment of the public toward policing as well as political posturing which
occurred in response to high profile incidents involving the police arose during the
discussion in this area.

The political dynamic was most often viewed as a negative and an impediment
rather than a positive when looking at upward movement and the ability to effect change
at a higher level. Participants made observations such as “…there’s more politics in
getting promoted and becoming part of the administrative section of the department as opposed to being an officer” (P26) and “…the higher you promote the more political things get” (P14).

A newly promoted lieutenant (who noted “I’m command staff now, aren’t I”) commented “I’m not political—I open my mouth too much to be a political guinea pig” (P22). She continued to express frustration, specifically about the power dynamic:

I’m much more of a doer than an administrator. I don’t enjoy administration, but then I get annoyed at what administrators do. So then it’s like do I want to sit around? I don’t want to sit around and bitch like the rest of you in this circle. I mean, if you wanna complain about it, then do it and change it and be the person then. But I’ve had people tell me before they don’t try to change things, ‘it’s not gonna work, you can’t make a difference around here.’ Somebody told me, ‘you’re gonna learn eventually, you’re gonna keep hitting your head against the wall, it’s gonna become flat and then you’re gonna—that’s what’s going to happen, so just stop trying.’ So when I hear about that, then I think I don’t want to go to the next step. (P22)

The political dynamic within the city was also of concern when considering promotion:

I guess the big [one] for me influencing my decision are that next political layer and given the climate currently in our city. We had an officer-involved shooting earlier this year. And there’s sort of this very negative feeling against police. And it’s a very political city, so I’m not interested in dealing with the next layer. (P8)

**Constructs of Gender**

The dimension Constructs of Gender is the construct that permeates all of the primary dimensions in some manner and is most hermeneutic and to “get a grasp of the very nature of the thing” (Creswell, 2007) related to female police officers’ decisions on whether or not to pursue promotion. The conceptual categories that more fully explain
this dimension are Gender Roles and Skills to Lead. When analyzing all of the data to gain understanding of what was taking place, it became apparent that Constructs of Gender was the core dimension that best described the participants’ lived experiences related to promotional aspirations.

Constructs of Gender encompass differences between men and women in psychological propensities, linguistic styles, socialization, leadership styles and attitudes toward power and the view of women in policing. Additionally, division of labor and equity of roles and responsibilities for household or child care tasks becomes an issue with female police officers, and more so for those who are married to fellow police officers and those who are mothers (Swan, 2016; Wertsch, 1998; West & Zimmerman, 1987).

Gender Roles

Many women still face the dilemma of successfully combining work and family roles and managing the expectations of both. The responsibility for childcare often rests more heavily with the female officer (van Wormer & Bartollas, 2000). Research has revealed that women prioritize work and family obligations, but this is more governed by gender traditionalism than egalitarianism. For women raising children on their own and having to work outside the home, the issue is exacerbated as the burden of childcare and domestic duties falls entirely on them (Maume, 2006). Participants observed

…at least when I got married and entered the career, there were still some very social norms that I was pushing the boundaries on. For example, my mother was always home at the end of the day to care for my father when he got home, so she would have the meal on the table and the house would be cleaned and et cetera, et
cetera, the laundry done. And so when I first started out with my career, I worked nights and second shift and I could not be home for when my husband got home. And so he was okay with that but I felt a little—I don’t want to say pressure. I felt a little obligation, I guess you could say, to be there…And so now I had to break that mold. (P13)

…within our society, for the most part, males are not considered the primary caregiver of their child, and so typically that falls on their-typically—don’t want to be a generalist because certainly my partner and I are females so we’re not a traditional family. But the traditional family structure puts that onto the female in the family, the mother in the family. Although both male and female within the same couple could be officers, I think you know, I think it’s the female’s responsibility to provide childcare. (P3)

Another discussion related to gender roles, was from the perspective of a patriarchal versus matriarchal family structure. An added component was the tendency of women to try and manage both work and family without out asking for help:

…my husband’s very good, he comes from one of the—a farm family background. So in watching how his family interacted, I was always very shocked that the women waited on the men because in my house that wasn’t how it was done. My father came from a very matriarchal Irish family where the women ruled. So he was just you know, my mom never waited on my dad. So when Dad got ill, basically I was for the last two years working two full time jobs. So the majority of the work—and that’s partly my own fault you know, by not asking for help…but a matter of pride—and I can take care of this… (P12)

Our culture has the perspective that women possess distinctive psychological and behavioral propensities (West & Zimmerman, 1987). These differences were described by Participant 12 when referencing caretaking responsibilities for a sick parent:

…there’s not a man in this department who would be taking care of a parent and working the night shift. The wife, the partner, the girlfriend, the sister, somebody wearing a female body would step in. It’s just—they—meaning men—and you know, some of my best friends are men as they say. But it’s just a wiring difference. There’s—there are men who do caretaking but it’s very rare. And so I don’t think that—their brains are just wired so very differently that I don’t think they’re even capable of how women think. (P12)
In this study, 78% (21 out of 27) of the participants were married. Three of the unmarried participants who identified themselves as single or divorced indicated they were in relationships where they were living with their significant other. This is relevant as it correlated to balancing work and family. Seventy-four percent (20 out of 27) had children.

Inquiry was made into any changes in personal or family life, whether or not the participant was the primary caregiver of any children, and if not, who was. Additionally, participants were asked about difficulties they encountered while attempting to balance work and family life. Changes in personal or family life identified were marriage, having children, divorce and caring for aging/sick parents.

Of the 20 women who had children, ten identified as the primary caregiver, nine indicated care was shared with their spouse/significant other and one didn’t articulate whether she was the primary caregiver, if someone else was or if duties were shared. Some participants had grown children who no longer required care. Those participants were asked if, at the time the children were home, they or someone else were the primary caregiver. They were counted in the appropriate category based on their response.

For a number of the women, there was some ambivalence in their response about whether they were the primary caregiver which leads one to believe, despite wanting to feel childcare is equally shared, they have the primary responsibility for childcare. This was reflected in statements such as “we’re pretty 50-50 now” (P15), “I guess both of us share it” (P19), “I mean, we both are I guess” (P22), “I think both of us” (P25), and “Sometimes I do, I think we both equally take care of the kid. I feel like sometimes I am
but I don’t think that’s a fair assumption, I think we both equally care” (P3). Participant 3’s position was somewhat contradictory about equally sharing childcare responsibilities.

When she was discussing childcare in relation to shift work she noted

…certainly the outside world does not cater to shift work and so having some sort of daycare available for shift workers can be difficult…when I look at the positions that come out in the fall, I really have to consider the scheduling because if I can’t make the schedule work with daycare, then I can’t put in for a position like that…When I was on patrol, I had to be very careful about calls for service too, because if I got—and some of it obviously you can’t control, but you know, I had to be careful if I was going into overtime, figure out—okay, who can I—or do I need to call and let know so I have childcare for my kid. So or can come and pick up my kid from the daycare provider. (P3)

Another contradiction occurred when a participant noted “Well we both are…I guess in my mind I am but we’re equal” (P20). She went on to note “kids always turn to their mom so…” (P20).

Ninety-three percent (25 out of 27 participants) identified balancing work and family as presenting challenges. Most often, the challenges occurred in relation to children. For those that did not have children this was related to balancing time with a significant other or other family members who didn’t understand shift work involved in policing. This topic was closely related with shift work but also exemplified challenges of working in the law enforcement profession. Examples included “I miss a lot of things with my immediate family and my family. I miss birthdays, holidays, events. It took a long time for my parents to understand that Thanksgiving didn’t have to be on the day” (P1), “I think it’s a day-to-day challenge…it’s every day balancing work with finding quality time to spend with kids.” (P2)

…It’s—you’re exhausted and you listen to people all day for eight hours a day. You try to solve in 20 minutes what they’ve screwed up for 20 years of their life.
And you try and play that counselor and you try to make a quick fix and a Band-Aid on a really bad marriage or a really bad home life and you’re in and out the door and on the next call. And you do that for eight hours a day or now on—and it’s exhausting. And then when you come home your kids get your leftovers and it’s hard. It’s really hard on family life. You know, we’re spiritual, we—you know, we’re jaded. We go to church to try to keep the mental mindset that you need to have to have a happy life. But when you look into the eyes of evil eight hours a day, it becomes a part of you. And you have to remember that when you walk in those doors, and into your home, you’re looking into the eyes of a four-year-old and a six-year-old and a ten-year-old, you have to remember how old they are and you have to remember that you’re not talking to somebody on the street. And you’re not talking as a police officer, you’re talking as a mother. You’re talking as a mentor. You’re talking, you know, you have to be loving and affectionate and you’re not talking to some thug on the street. And that’s—you really have to learn how to turn your job off at 3:00 and walk out. And really turn on your mom mode. That’s not easy, you know, so when you get home, being sweet, loving and you’ve been that hammer all day for eight hours, that’s a hard adjustment. (P4)

…When I first started and I worked midnights, you know, coming home on Saturday morning and the kids want—they had soccer games—one would have a game at 9:00, one would have a game at 1:00, trying to decide, are we going to sleep? Are we going to a soccer game? And that creates a lot of strife. My husband didn’t necessarily understand shift work; it took a while to understand that jump roping in the kitchen at 11:00 in the morning when I’m trying to sleep isn’t necessarily a good thing. You know, mostly just trying to—he’s an engineer—so mostly just trying to balance those two things and have him understand that this is different and sometimes it’s good and sometimes it’s bad and sometimes there’s things that we want to talk about and sometimes there’s things we don’t want to talk about, over the last 15 years, that has worked itself out. (P10)

…I also am on call and work strange hours so I always have to have a back up to my back up to get kids back and forth to school events and athletic events and make sure and things of that nature. So it’s a constant scheduling and juggling of things. (P18)

The women face a dichotomy of emotion when it comes to working in law enforcement. Despite deriving enjoyment from their job, the role of mother and caregiver and the obligation to be at work produces stress and a sense of guilt. One participant acknowledged:
…I was on call for 15 years, so I missed birthday parties and Christmases and whatever, but yet I enjoyed the thrill of being called out and going on the case. I said to my kids several times, ‘cause my husband and I just about divorced several times and it’s—I’ve asked them, ‘have I failed you because I wasn’t around?’ And that kind of stuff. My kids will look at me and they’re like ‘no, you left us with Dad and we know you’re a strong woman and you’re our role model,’ but you forget… (P22)

Research question eight asks “to what extent, if any, do female police officers who are mothers versus those who are childless impact a female police officer’s decision to participate in the promotional process?” For those participants who had children, care for their children was, understandably, an important issue. The perpetual challenge participants cite about juggling schedules and families extends to their decisions regarding engaging in the promotional process. Fifty-two percent (14 out of 27) of the participants expressed constraints regarding their desire, ability, or opportunity to pursue promotion because of family. Although they felt males had the same considerations when it came to shift and assignment, they didn’t feel males experienced the same constraints to the extent that women do regarding childcare. Observations included “…for the most part, males are not considered the primary caregiver of their child…so they are more free to be able to put in for promotion” (P3), “I think they probably have similar factors but they don’t have as much issues with—pertaining to family because all of the other officers in my department are men and they all have wives who do take care of the children as primary caregivers” (P18), “…the majority of men in our profession have wives that have schedules that are able to more easily work around theirs” (P19), “I would say that things are probably a little better with the family life responsibilities. They have more flexibility.” (P24)
Marriage to a Fellow Police Officer

Research conducted by Archbold and Schultz (2009) revealed a factor not addressed in previous research: Does being married to fellow police officers restrict the upward mobility of female police officers? As noted in chapter three, the interview questions for this study were the questions utilized by Archbold and Schultz (2009) when they conducted their 2006 study, however, with some slight modifications. The question “if you are married to a fellow police officer, has that had any impact on your decision to pursue promotion. If yes, explain” was added to explore whether or not being married to a fellow police officer or part of a “cop couple” restricted a female police officer’s career progression.

Fifty-seven percent (12 out of 21) of the married couples were “cop couples.” Eight of the participants had spouses who worked in the same agency. Four of the participants had spouses who worked in different agencies. Two of the participants didn’t indicate if being married to a fellow police officers had an impact on promotion. Three of the participants indicated their spouse being a fellow police officer did have an impact on their decision to pursue promotion. One participant stated “…if I got promoted to being a supervisor, with her also being a supervisor, I think it would be very difficult on our family” (P3). A second participant related that the impact would be they had to be able to maintain movement within the department for child care:

…the only impact is just making sure that we both—that we are able to kind of maintain movement within the department. Like you know, we both can’t be stuck on third shift on the same rotations because we wouldn’t have anything to do with our son. (P19)
The last participant described a scenario where her husband was resistant to her movement within the police department but she wasn’t sure if it was specifically related to promotion. She commented:

I don’t know about promotion, but different areas in my department. When we first met I put in for [a unit] way back in the day and then he’s like ‘I don’t want you doing it,’ so I took it out and my husband’s very—was a very jealous person, like kind of wanted to keep me—‘hey, I want to steer you this way’… She went on to talk about being in an assignment where she was away from home.

Frequently, he wanted her to leave the assignment, she wanted to remain and it left them on the brink of divorce. She said she took the position,

…‘hell no, I don’t gotta leave.’ So since then promotional-wise, he’s like, ‘Do whatever you wanna do, do whatever you wanna do’ because we almost got divorced pretty much over him kind of steering stuff…He’s a sergeant right now and everybody gave him smack going, ‘Oh, your wife’s a lieutenant and she’s a higher rank than you’ and he just says, ‘Oh, she always has’ and kind of a joke about it, but we try not to talk about it much. So I don’t know. (P22)

The remaining seven participants said that being married to a fellow police officer not only didn’t prevent them from pursuing promotion, but they felt it was of benefit being married to a fellow officer. One participant said

He’s kind of like, you know, do whatever makes you happy sort of thing. He’s my biggest cheerleader when it comes to that kind of thing so if that’s what I want to do, you know even if the schedule’s gonna change like it did in this instance, you know, he’s—he’s very supportive and all that, so no. (P14)

Another participant noted:

I think that being married to a fellow police officer actually helps in—most female police officers are married to male police officers because they’re the only ones who could understand and put up with this mess. (P18)
Skills to Lead

The second conceptual category under Constructs of Gender is Skill to Lead. This conceptual category is supported by the properties "it’s been a while since I’ve done that, I haven’t done that, it’s a growing process and fear of failure." These properties relate to the confidence or lack of confidence the participants express when deciding whether or not to pursue promotion. Underlying these sentiments are the dynamics of gender stereotyping and self-efficacy. Women’s stereotyping as communal beings clashes with commonly held notions that career advancement requires single-mindedness and the display of agentic traits such as independence, confidence, and assertiveness. Here, women face a double disadvantage: if they display agentic traits, they are penalized for gender non-conformity, and if they display communal attributes, they are judged as not agentic enough (Korabik, 1990).

Self-efficacy is a second integral factor. According to Carey and Forsyth (n.d.)

Self-efficacy refers to an individual’s belief in his or her capacity to execute behaviors necessary to produce specific performance attainments (Bandura, 1977, 1986, 1997). Self-efficacy reflects confidence in the ability to exert control over one's own motivation, behavior, and social environment. These cognitive self-evaluations influence all manner of human experience, including the goals for which people strive, the amount of energy expended toward goal achievement, and likelihood of attaining particular levels of behavioral performance. (Para 1)

Participants in this study had an average of 19.7 years of total law enforcement experience. The least senior participant possessed 7.5 years of law enforcement experience and the most senior participant possessed 30 years of law enforcement experience. When asked if they felt they had either the leadership skills or law enforcement experience to command their own shift or unit, 30% (8 out of 27) expressed
a lack of confidence in their skills/ability, despite extensive law enforcement experience.

Although not identified in the specific terms, one participant acknowledged this was consistent with gender stereotyping and self-efficacy:

I think when I talk to my female coworkers about promotion on the whole there’s a little bit more insecurity or discomfort about the potential to be in a leadership role. I think that’s kind of societally based but on a whole I think the same factors are being considered but they may be the feedback on the perception of one’s own competence, I think can sometimes vary with women. (P11)

The participants acknowledged they had extensive experience but were still not confident with their own leadership abilities, either because they had never worked in a particular area, or hadn’t worked in an area for quite a while. They relate:

I’m my biggest critic I think so that’s why I say it like that. Kind of in jest but kind of at the same time–I mean there are still going to be things that I don’t know or experiences that I haven’t had so I think that the promise of those makes me nervous. But I think that I have the skills to work through it and you know, have good people to work through it with...I think because I haven’t been a road officer or I hadn’t been a road officer for a while I think that in my mind there are a lot of things that, even with training and going through, you know, mandatory trainings and whatnot I think that there were–especially in tactical situations like critical incidents or big situations like that, that I’m–that I’m nervous about getting into it more than anything...I’m always like Monday morning quarter backing myself, like what could I have done better? And even if somebody tells me good job, I might be, well I didn’t do this, this or this, or I could have done this, this or this. I guess that’s what I mean by my biggest critic. (P14)

I feel like I have experience in some aspects and not in others. I’m really strong at crime scenes, like homicides and give me all that. But you give me an accident and I’m like, ‘I don’t know what we’re supposed to do. I don’t know who’s at fault anymore’ because I haven’t done that in 15 years… (P22)

…That’s again where I make the differentiation. I’ve been in investigations for twenty years, leaving about three years of patrol experience. I don’t have a lot of experience in that aspect of police work. I have a lot of experience in investigations. So would I be uncomfortable if I had to go back to road patrol which if I were promoted in our agency I would have to go back to road patrol, would I be uncomfortable? Yeah, I’d be uncomfortable for a while I think. I
think there would be a lot of relearning things that I did years ago but I think I would feel like a fish out of water for a while. (P16)

Another participant, when asked if she had the leadership skills to command her own team or unit commented:

Yes. In saying that I think I’d make a better vice president than a president. I can lead. I have no problem doing that but I would tend to second guess myself and decisions I make sometimes so I think that may tend to hinder my ability to be a very effective leader. And I wouldn’t do it vocally where my subordinates would hear but in my own head I would question in–so I think I have the leadership ability but that one piece–it keeps me from wanting to promote…(P20)

Other participants expressed a sentiment of vulnerability, citing “a fear of failure” (P7) and being “more open to criticism” (P2) for reasons not to pursue promotion.
CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

Summary of the Research

The purpose of this study was to examine how female police officers decide to participate or not to participate in the promotional process. With ensuring confidentiality of participant identity and department, this study created a forum for female police officers to have their voices heard and to have a mechanism to express their lived experiences of not only working in law enforcement, but regarding their promotional aspirations. It is the voices of the female police officers who resonated, telling their own stories to give richness and robustness to this study.

This research aids in understanding the perceptions of female police officers related to promotions and the promotional process to determine if there are institutional, political, or organizational barriers in place or if the barriers are internally imposed. This is important because exploring and identifying the patterns and types of obstacles women encounter in advancing to supervisory and command positions and may serve to reduce existing biases regarding gender in leadership opportunities. It is also important as it serves as a mechanism to build upon existing literature and advance the academic conversation in a much needed area.
Another purpose of the research was related to diversification of police agencies. Local police agencies across the country are under increasing pressure to diversify their forces, particularly in light of recent events in several places across the country. Although diversity is a sought after goal, many police agencies struggle to recruit diverse applicants. Specifically, agencies continue to have difficulty recruiting and hiring women and minority applicants. If they are unable to recruit and hire diverse applicants, they are also unable to promote diverse personnel. The police are the face of the criminal justice system and will have more legitimacy, respect and personal relationships with the community if they reflect the diversity of the community they serve. In addition to the community benefit of a diversified police agency, higher levels of workplace performance and satisfaction within organizations arise when diversification is sought as a way to incorporate different employee perspectives, experiences, and cultures (National Institute of Justice, 2011).

The identification of potential barriers to promotion was another important goal of this research. Researchers can hypothesize regarding potential barriers to promotion, but hearing the women’s voices can provide information to permit deeper understanding of what actually occurs. Organizational leaders can use this information to make administrative or policy changes to remove barriers to promotion and encourage female officers to participate in the promotional process. Policy changes may include implementation of “family friendly” policies to facilitate coordination of work schedules for female officers who are married to male officers in the same agency. Another area of concern expressed by participants was regarding their new assignment if promoted, their
ability to decide where they would be assigned, and whether or not they would like it. Police agencies could provide an informational listing of positions available for personnel seeking promotion, and once promoted allow them to select their desired position rather than having administration assign the position.

Finally, this research examined a previous unresearched factor of the impact of being a “cop couple” and its impact on a female police officer’s decision to pursue promotion; a theme that emerged from the Archbold and Hassell (2009) study. This study delved further into how being married to a fellow police officer (or part of a “cop couple”) impacts the upward mobility of female police officers by enlarging the population studied.

In order to conduct this study and gain understanding of these women’s lived experiences the data were collected using semi-structured, in-depth interviews with twenty-seven active duty, sworn female police officers who met the eligibility requirements for promotion in their police agencies. The specific methodology was outlined in detail in chapter three.

**Summary of Demographics**

The participants’ ages ranged from 32 to 59 years old, with an average age of 44 years old. Four of the women possess master’s degrees, 18 of the women possess bachelor’s degrees, and five of the women possessed associates degrees. Degrees were in a wide range of disciplines and were not limited to criminal Justice. Most of the women were married and had children.
Each study participant was asked to discuss their lived experiences as female police officers in the following areas: police work in general, leadership, family, schedule and benefits of promotion, and overall work place experiences. Police work in general examined how the participants became interested police work, level of commitment and reasons for their commitment and whether they would recommend law enforcement to another female. The leadership category examined promotional aspirations, the participants’ perceived level of competency-both their own perception and their co-workers perception of them, and the relationship between gender and leadership. The family category examined the relationship between work and family including any major changes in the participants’ personal life during the course of their tenure with their police department, whether or not they were the primary caregiver of any children and difficulties encountered balancing work and family. Schedule and benefits of promotion category examined satisfaction with current employment status, shift, salary, the perception of promotional availability, and most importantly, factors influencing their decisions to participate in the promotional process. Finally, the area regarding overall work experiences related to differential treatment/experiences based on gender.

**Discussion**

This study examined the experiences of female police officers and related to four primary dimensions: Institutional Structures, Organizational Structures, Political Structures and Constructs of Gender. The primary dimension Constructs of Gender is a
core dimension as it underlies the other three primary dimensions. It also contains the most properties listed as consideration factors in promotion. It’s important to keep sight of this construct as it permeates the responses of the participants regarding how they experienced policing and decisions related to the promotional process.

The institution and culture of policing, which has historically been sharply divided according to gender and sex, is characterized by activities and skills that are stereotypically masculine (e.g., use of force, guns, physical protection) and stereotyped as a job for which women are not qualified or successful due to their “unique feminine skills” (Barratt, Bergman & Thompson, 2014; Kakar, 2002; Palombo 1992; Rabe-Hemp, 2009;). Buist (2011) notes

Gender roles relate to these characteristics because gender is something that we are constantly performing both personally and professionally (Butler, 1990; Barak et al., 2007). In turn, the perceptions of these gender roles and characteristics are amplified in the world of policing because it is such a male dominated profession. (p. 194)

Although participants entered law enforcement for different reason, 93% (25 out of 27) indicated they were highly or very highly committed to their job as a police officer, even with many of the participants nearing retirement. Seventy-eight percent (21 out of 27) were satisfied with their current salary (although it was not uncommon to hear “you can always use more”). Fifty-two percent (14 out of 27) of the participants commented on the current negative public sentiment toward law enforcement being challenging and having an impact on whether or not they’d recommend law enforcement as a career to another female. Despite the public’s negative perception of police and the challenges that presents, 74% (20 out of 27) of the participants said they still very much
enjoyed their jobs and were committed to their jobs because of the intangible benefits of helping others and serving their communities, challenge and variety in their jobs and camaraderie with fellow police officers.

When addressing their experiences regarding leadership, 44% (12 out of 27) of the participants discussed their opinions of whether gender of the officer impacts whether or not he/she is a better leader. Some of the participants commented on the differing socialization, leadership styles, linguistic styles, and particularly attitudes toward power. All agreed, however, that gender was not significant in defining a leader, rather personal characteristics were paramount.

Participants were asked to provide their opinion of whether or not they felt they had both the leadership skills and the police experience to command their own team or unit. The gendered process of defining women’s roles in society and the feminine traits attributed to women have been devalued by society. These cultural definitions of femininity have led to claims that women are inherently not competent to perform the police function (Garcia, 2003). Women have a tendency to internalize that perceived lack of competence when evaluating their own abilities. One hundred percent (27 out of 27) of the participants in this study indicated they felt they had both the leadership skills and police experience to command their own teams/units. They described situations where others have told them they had confidence in the participants’ abilities or had come to participants for direction related to performing the job. For police experience, participants cited years of service or gaining experience from working in various units throughout the police agency. Contrary to expressing this opinion of their own abilities, 30% (8 out of
27) later described doubts in their own competency or experience when deciding whether or not to pursue promotion. They expressed they either didn’t have enough experience, or had not worked in a particular area for so long as to have skills deteriorate.

Another area of inquiry was if the participant had any negative experiences in their department that would impact their decisions to pursue promotion. Despite numerous examples of negative experiences, participants indicated they were not usually dissuaded from promotion by these experiences. However, these experiences did cause them to more deeply examine their level of desire for promotion.

Past research has revealed many women face the dilemma of successfully combining work and family and the expectation to do both (Maume, 2006; van Wormer & Bartollas, 2000). Results from this study support those findings as the participants experienced challenges finding balance between work and family, especially those participants who had children. Even those participants who were single or did not have children noted there were challenges finding balance with extended family. They cited a lack of understanding of police work by family members as rationale for the difficulty. This work/family balance was heavily related to the ability of the participant to select the shift of their choice so as to be able to arrange for adequate child care, and most often, to be able to spend time with their children. Research question eight asked to what extent, if any do female police officers who are mothers versus those who are childless impact the female police officer’s decision to participate in the promotional process? Fifty-two percent (14 out of 27) of the participants cite family as a factor when considering promotion. As one participant succinctly put it “I was selfish…I choose my kids” (P4).
Participants were asked about their promotional aspirations five and ten years from now. Five years from now eleven felt they would be at the same rank, eight were desirous of promotion, seven were retired and one participant was uncertain whether or not she would pursue promotion five years from now. Ten years from now and due to the seniority of the participants, 15 saw themselves retired, three saw themselves at the same rank, six were desirous of promotion and three were uncertain whether or not they would pursue promotion.

**Decision Making Criteria**

Research question one (RQ1) for this study asked: Do female police officers make a conscious decision to participate or not participate in the promotional process? Research question two (RQ2) asked: What are the decision making criteria female police officers use to make this determination? On “first blush” one would think it obvious that female police officers make a conscious decision to participate in the promotional process, and they do. It is more interpretive to add these choices are influenced by preferences, emotion, intuition, and the decider’s social group which includes gender, the occupational environment, and the underlying environmental and institutional variables (Benniot-Cabanac & Cabanac, 2010; Coricelli, Dolan & Sirigu, 2007; Franken & Muris, 2005; Litt, Eliasmith & Thagard, 2008; Resnick, 1987).

Decision making is congruent with the discussion of decision making in chapter two. There are several schools of thought regarding decision making. The first is that decisions are based on rational choice after all alternatives and consequences are
evaluated and an ordered list of preferences is produced. The preference with the most optimal outcome is then selected (Okros, 1993).

A second school of thought regarding decision making asserts that decisions are not necessarily based on rational choice but rather hedonistic motives, maximizing pleasure or personal gain from their choice (Benniot-Cabanac & Cabanac, 2010; Roeser, et al., 2012).

To answer the question of what decision making criteria they use to make the determination, the participants were asked to cite specific factors which would influence their decisions to pursue promotion and their decisions to not pursue promotion. Based on the results of this dissertation study, it is clear female police officers do make a conscious decision to participate or not to participate in the promotional process. Their decision making process does not appear to reflect a single school of thought as described above to make their decisions, but rather utilizes a combination. The decision making process may have been started based on rational choice and an evaluation of benefits and consequences of pursuing promotion (e.g., having to change shift/duty assignment). The benefits and consequences may be based on a hedonistic rationale, selecting the alternative which provides the most pleasure or personal gain (e.g., spending time with their children).

Table 5.1 provides a summary of the most frequently cited consideration factors broken down by primary dimension. All responses were categorized by the primary dimensions Institutional Structures, Organizational Structures, Political Structures and Constructs of Gender, as well as with conceptual categories and properties.
Table 5.1

Influential Factors for Decisions to Pursue or Not to Pursue Promotion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary Dimension</th>
<th>Institutional Structures (RQ3)</th>
<th>Political Structures (RQ 4)</th>
<th>Organizational Structures (RQ5)</th>
<th>Constructs of Gender (RQ6, RQ7, RQ8)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conceptual Categories</td>
<td>People I work with</td>
<td>“Politicality”-Politics/next political layer</td>
<td>Shift work-Shift*</td>
<td>Timing-Where at in career</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairness of the promotional process fairness (good ol’ boy system)*</td>
<td>Management and Leadership-the chief, the management team</td>
<td>Duty Assignment*</td>
<td>Skills to lead-Sense of own competency</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Expectation to be Promoted-Timing (Age)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Salary/Benefits</td>
<td>Gender Roles-Family First (Impact on family)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Having to go through the promotional process*</td>
<td>Stress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Difference in amount of work/responsibility*</td>
<td>Skills to lead-Able to make a difference</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Most frequently cited reason

a Overlap with Constructs of Gender-where at in career
b Overlap with Political Structures-politics and current administration
c Overlap with Constructs of Gender-impact on family
d Overlap with Constructs of Gender-like what I’m doing, if I would enjoy my job, age, and stress
e Overlaps with Political Structure-politics and current administration and Constructs of Gender-impact on family
f Overlaps with Constructs of Gender-if I would enjoy my job and stress

Institutional Structures

Research question three (RQ 3) asked: To what, if any, do the institutional structures of a police agency impact a female police officer’s decision to participate in the promotional process? Conceptual categories under institutional structures included It’s Still a Man’s World, with properties of you don’t belong here, double standard, the token female and good ol’ boys and Social Expectation to be Promoted with properties of timing, they told me I should and feeling prepared. Based on the participant responses
discussed below, institutional structures have minimal impact on the female police officers’ decisions to pursue promotion.

Findings in this dissertation study were in accordance with the discussion in chapter two on tokenism to the extent that the participants either identified themselves as a token police officer or had experiences consistent with indications of tokenism. Indications of tokenism within a police agency include women experiencing hardships in the workplace, feelings of heightened visibility, isolation, and limited opportunities for advancement, feelings of stress because of token status, disparate treatment based on gender, handling a male officer’s call to a sexual assault case or being called in to search a female suspect when that task typically would be performed by a male officer had a female officer not been working the same shift (Archbold & Schultz, 2008; Gustafson, 2008; Haar, 2005; Kanter, 1977; Krimmel & Gormley, 2003).

Thirty-seven percent (10 out of 27) of the participants expressed a feeling of isolation and lack of belonging within their police agency. These participants discussed experiences such as not being included in get-togethers of the male officers or not being included in decision making processes that took place outside of formal meetings during work hours but rather occurred on the golf course or during other social activities the females were not included.

Conversely, 63% (17 out of 27) of the participants indicated they did not feel isolated within their police agency. These participants explained they were included in decision making processes/meetings or social activities with male officers. Those participants who said they did not feel isolated but were not included in social activities
with male officers said it was more due to lack of a common interest rather than because they were female. They provided examples such as they didn’t fish or golf (or have an interest in it), much like their male coworkers didn’t necessarily like to go shopping or have craft hobbies.

Ninety-six percent (26 out of 27) of the participants provided examples of disparate treatment based on gender, as well as differences in calls for service based on gender. Differences in calls for services were most frequently described as being for sexual assault response. Disparate treatment is related to the dynamics of the police subculture, including tokenism, in Institutional Structures. Despite 96% of the participants experiencing disparate treatment based on gender, none said this would discourage them from pursuing promotion.

Related to the Social Expectation to be Promoted, 26% (7 out of 27) of the participants cited a reason for deciding to go through the promotional process or not to go through the promotional process was the participants’ natural career progression. Participants discussed reasons such as having a particular number of years of experience and “it was time,” or they had obtained one rank, such as sergeant, and “it was natural” to go to the next step.

Thirty-seven percent (10 out of 27) of the participants cited timing, either of when the promotional examinations were given in relation to how much time in grade they had, how long they had been in their current assignment, or most often, how close they were to retirement. This is also related to Constructs of Gender where participants identified their own sense of competency, liking what they were doing and their age as factors.
Finally, under Institutional Structures fairness of the promotional process (good ol’ boy system) involved the police subculture and culture in an individual agency. This was intertwined with the conceptual category of It’s Still a Man’s World and related properties of double standards, the token female and good ol’ boys. It was also related to Political Structures and the conceptual categories of administration and “Politicality” related to the attitudes of police administration toward diversity as well as gender roles under Constructs of Gender and the (perceived) suitability for promotion of female police officers who have children.

**Political Structures**

Research question four (RQ4) asked: To what extent, if any, do the political structures such as management/leadership style (micromanager, empowering, etc.), confidence in executive leadership, diversity and gender sensitivity, impact a female police officer’s decision to participate in the promotional process. For this dissertation study when political structures were first considered as a factor which may impact whether or not female police officers pursued promotion, the internal environment of the police agency was considered. Further it originally related to elements such as management/leadership style of supervisors and commanders in the agency (micromanager, empowering, etc.), confidence in executive leadership, including their ability to run the agency and diversity and gender sensitivity. What evolved from the interviews was the dynamic of “Politicality” or the ideologies, interests and power dynamics of and between ranking individuals within an agency. Political structures
addressed in factors the participants considered when deciding to participate in the promotional process was the aforementioned power dynamic with the current leadership. What also evolved was the political environment outside of the police agency such as the next political layer, which included politics related to the city leaders and the public’s sentiment toward police.

Political structures played a slightly larger role in their decisions to pursue promotion than did institutional structures. Forty-four percent (12 out of 27) of the participants cited the political structure as a factor when deciding whether or to not go through the promotional process. One participant cited the next political layer from the police department to city government. Two participants cited the public’s sentiment toward police/politics of the city, explaining that their city leaders are more influenced by public sentiment than supporting the police department. Four participants cited the interests and power dynamics of and between ranking individuals within the agency. Five participants cited current leadership/management, either because they felt they were not competent, they didn’t fairly promote employees, they didn’t develop employees for promotion, or they didn’t encourage diversity within the agency.

Organizational Structures

Research question five (RQ5) asked: To what extent, if any, do the organizational structures such as agency size, number of female police officers, policies and procedures (i.e., nepotism, married persons working with/supervising one another, synchronization of schedules for married persons, “family friendly” policies) of the police work
environment impact a female police officer’s decision to participate in the promotional process? Shift Work and Assignments were the conceptual categories that emerged within Organizational Structures.

Seventy-four percent (20 out of 27) participants cited the main reason for deciding to go through the promotional process or not to go through the promotional process was shift. Ninety-three percent (25 out of 27) of the participants indicated they preferred their current shift (usually day shift) and were either unable or unwilling to go to 2nd or 3rd shift. They explained that their current assignment was most conducive to caring for children and other family responsibilities. This overlapped with the impact on family promotion would have in the Constructs of Gender dimension. Participants who didn’t have children but preferred day shift said it was because it was most conducive to their sleep schedule, family life or social life.

Continuing under the primary dimension Organizational Structures the next most frequently cited reason for deciding to go through the promotional process or not to go through the promotional process was duty assignment. Ninety-three percent (25 out of 27) of the participants indicated they liked their current work assignment/job duties. If they were to be promoted, their duty assignment would likely change and because of department policy/procedure, they would not be able to select their assignment. If the participant was currently in the detective division, they most often would be required to go to the patrol division. This caused concern over either not being prepared for or not liking the new assignment. This also overlapped with conceptual categories in the Constructs of Gender dimension in terms of their own sense of competency, and their
liking of their current assignment. Additionally, this was tied to shift and impact on family. The assignment (e.g., detective division) is most frequently a day shift position with weekends off.

Shift and duty assignment evolved as the two most profound factors (as indicated by frequency of occurrence in response) for the participants in deciding whether or not to pursue promotion and would lead one to believe that Organizational Structures of the police agency are most compelling when deciding whether or not to pursue promotion. Organizational Structures are not as organic as they appear for factors which influence the decision to pursue promotion. They were adumbrated by the participants’ desire to put family first.

Finally, under Organizational Structures, the factor of having to go through the promotional process (hoops to jump through) difference in amount of work/responsibility related to impact on family (amount of time taken from family to study for promotion). It was also interrelated with stress of engaging in the promotional process, and additional work/responsibilities if promoted.

**Constructs of Gender**

Research question six (RQ6) asks: To what extent, if any, do female police officers think that marriage to a fellow police officer in the same agency restricts the career progression of those female police officers? Research question seven (RQ7) asks: To what extent, if any, do female police officers think that marriage to a fellow police officer in a different agency restrict the career progression of those female police
officers? Being married to a cop is a property supporting the conceptual category gender roles and falls under the dimension Constructs of Gender. As discussed earlier, this area arose out the research conducted by Archbold and Schultz (2009) and was suggested as an area for future research to examine the implications.

In this dissertation study, more than half of the married participants were part of a “cop couple,” and most of those had spouses who worked in the same agency. Results of this dissertation study are congruent with results found in the limited previous studies (Archbold & Hassell, 2009; Whetstone & Wilson, 1999) only to the extent of recognizing a nexus between marriage and upward mobility and that adjustments may be required for childcare and familial responsibilities. Results were not consistent with the previous research which suggested this nexus as a decision factor when considering promotion. In this dissertation study 70% (19 out of 27) of the participants said being married to a fellow police officer was not a factor which had an impact on their decision to pursue promotion. Of the participants who said being married to a fellow police officer was not a factor when considering promotion, they explained their spouses were supportive of them in whatever career decisions they made, including the decision to pursue promotion. They also said they felt being married to a fellow police officer was of benefit as their spouse had more of an understanding of their job.

Research question eight (RQ8) asks: To what extent, if any, do female police officers who are mothers versus those who are childless impact those officers’ decisions to participate in the promotional process? Seventy-four percent (20 out of 27) of the participants had children. Fifty percent (10 out of 20) of those participants having
children identified as the primary caregiver, nine indicated care was shared with their
spouse/significant other and one didn’t articulate whether she was the primary caregiver,
if someone else was or if duties were shared. Some participants had grown children who
no longer required care.

Findings in this dissertation study are congruent with the discussion from chapter
two related to career advancement, gender roles and women with children. Women face
a unique biological reality. The foundational career building years generally coincide
with women’s fertility, and women can find themselves having to make choices that men
do not experience (Ezzedeen & Ritchey, 2009; Hewlett, 2002). Many women still face
the dilemma of successfully combining work and family roles and the expectation to do
both. The responsibility for childcare and domestic duties often rests more heavily with
the female officer (van Wormer & Bartollas, 2000). Ezzedeen and Ritchey (2009)
explain, “Western family norms still hold women accountable for hearth and home,
which makes it harder for them to advance (Bartley et al., 2005; Beatty, 1996; Rowney
and Cahoon, 1990; Tichenor, 2005). And although having children does not change their
professional orientation (Korabik and Rosin, 1995), women are more likely than men to
amend their careers in response to parenting (Blair-Loy, 2001; Stroh et al., 1992)”
(p.390).

Ninety-three percent (25 out of 27) participants identified balancing work and
family as presenting challenges. The participants indicated they derived enjoyment from
their job but the role of mother and caregiver and the obligation to be at work produced
stress and a sense of guilt. As such, those female police officers who are mothers chose
not to pursue promotion if it resulted in a change of shift or duty assignment which impacted if they could spend time with their children.

**Comparison of Findings to the Archbold and Hassell (2009) Study**

Table 5.2 provides a visual comparison of this dissertation study’s research questions and findings to the Archbold and Hassell (2009) study. There are some differences between this dissertation study and the Archbold and Hassell (2009) study which creates limitations on an item by item comparison. The differences are discussed below.

The Archbold and Hassell (2009) study had two dimensions, categorized dimensions as either personal or organizational. Personal factors influencing decision making from their study were family responsibilities, confidence in leadership abilities and policing experience, and being married to a fellow police officer. Organizational factors influencing decision making from their study were opportunities for promotion, experiences on the job, and promotional examinations.

Data from this dissertation study revealed four dimensions, which were categorized as Institutional Structures which included experiences of being a police officer, the police subculture (double standards, tokenism and the “good ol’ boy” system), and social expectations to be promoted (timing, encouragement from department members and feeling prepared). Organizational Structures included shift work and duty assignments. Political Structures included management and leadership (competence and diversity perspectives) and “Politicality” (political dynamics within and outside the
Table 5.2

Comparison of Findings to the Archbold and Hassell (2009) Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>This Dissertation Study Findings</th>
<th>Consistent with Archbold &amp; Hassell (2009) Study (Y/N)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RQ2. What are the decision making criteria they use to make this determination?</td>
<td>Shift assignment, duty assignment, ability to spend time with children/family were the main determinants in deciding whether or not to pursue promotion</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ3. To what extent, if any, do the institutional structures such as the police subculture, impact a female police officer’s decision to participate in the promotional process?</td>
<td>Institutional structures have little to no impact on the participants’ decisions to pursue promotion</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ4. To what extent, if any, do the political structures such as management/leadership style (micromanager, empowering, etc.), confidence in executive leadership, diversity and gender sensitivity, impact a female police officer’s decision to participate in the promotional process? Political structures also encompass the relationships with political leaders outside the police agency such as in the city/municipality.</td>
<td>Political structures had slightly more impact on the participants’ decisions to pursue promotion specifically related to “Politicality” or the ideologies, interests and power dynamics of and between ranking individuals within an agency.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ5. To what extent, if any, do the organizational structures such as agency size, number of female police officers, policies and procedures (i.e. nepotism, married persons working with/supervising one another, synchronization of schedules for married persons, “family friendly” policies) of the police work environment impact a female police officer’s decision to participate in the promotional process?</td>
<td>Organizational structures specifically related to shift assignment and duty assignment, were two of the factors which had the largest impact on the participants’ decisions whether or not to pursue promotion.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ6. To what extent, if any, do female police officers think that marriage to a fellow police officer in the same agency restricts the career progression of those female police officers?</td>
<td>Marriage to a fellow police officer, in the same or another agency, had little to no impact on the participants’ decisions whether or not to pursue promotion.</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ7. To what extent, if any, do female police officers think that marriage to a fellow police officer in a different agency restrict the career progression of female police officers?</td>
<td>Marriage to a fellow police officer, in another agency, had little to no impact on the participants’ decisions whether or not to pursue promotion.</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ8. To what extent, if any, do female police officers who are mothers versus those who are childless impact those officers’ decisions to participate in the promotional process?</td>
<td>Having a child/children was the third factor which had the largest impact on the participants’ decisions whether or not to pursue promotion.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
agency). Finally, Constructs of Gender included gender roles, including family responsibilities and skills to lead, including confidence in the participants’ own leadership abilities.

Research questions two (RQ2) asks: What are the decision making criteria they use to make this determination? Results from this dissertation study were consistent with the Archbold and Hassell (2009) study only to the extent of consideration for factors such as shift assignment, duty assignment and the ability to spend time with family/children in their decision making process on whether or not to pursue promotion. Archbold and Hassell’s (2009) study revealed other factors significant to their participants when considering pursuing promotion that this dissertation study did not reveal.

Research question three (RQ3) asks: To what extent, if any, do the institutional structures such as the police subculture, impact a female police officer’s decision to participate in the promotional process? Police subculture for this dissertation study included double standards and tokenism, including differential treatment. Interview question 21 asks about differential treatment and whether or not that would be a factor when deciding to pursue or not pursue promotion. Archbold and Hassell’s (2009) study found this to be a major factor in their participants’ decisions not to participate in the promotional process. This dissertation study revealed that was not a factor presenting a barrier for participants when considering promotion and is not consistent with Archbold and Hassel’s (2009) findings.

Research question four (RQ4) asks: To what extent, if any, do the political structures such as management/leadership style (micromanager, empowering, etc.),
confidence in executive leadership, diversity and gender sensitivity, impact a female police officer’s decision to participate in the promotional process? Political structures also encompass the relationships with political leaders outside the police agency such as in the city/municipality. RQ4 was not applicable to the Archbold and Hassell (2009) study as their study did not examine the political structures within the police agency they studied.

Research question five (RQ5) asks: To what extent, if any, do the organizational structures such as agency size, number of female police officers, policies and procedures (i.e., nepotism, married persons working with/supervising one another, synchronization of schedules for married persons, “family friendly” policies) of the police work environment impact a female police officer’s decision to participate in the promotional process? This area appears to be the most consistent with findings by Archbold and Hassell (2009) regarding the most influential factors on female police officers’ decisions to pursue or not pursue promotion. In their study Archbold and Hassell (2009) found “issues related to marriage and children were identified as a significant barrier to the promotional advancement for many of the female police officers interviewed…” (p. 62). Additionally, the female officers were satisfied with their current shifts and assignments and were uncomfortable not knowing which shift or assignment (assigned by the chief) they would receive because it might interfere with family life. Archbold and Hassell’s (2009) participants indicated they had experienced difficulty balancing work and family life and the female officers had obtained a balance with their current work schedules and
family schedules. Pursuing promotion and the potential to change shifts would upset that balance and consequently presented a barrier to promotion.

Findings in this dissertation study paralleled not only the findings of Archbold and Hassell (2009) but also the findings of Whetstone and Wilson’s (1999) study which revealed:

The most common reason that female police officers chose not to pursue promotion was because they were satisfied with their current shift and assignment. Most of the women in Whetstone and Wilson’s (1999) study stated that they had already organized their family life around their current shift, and that it would cause conflict between their family and work schedules if they were promoted to a position of sergeant (Archbold and Hassell, 2009, p. 62).

Research question six (RQ6) and research question seven (RQ7) respectively ask: To what extent, if any, do female police officers think that marriage to a fellow police officer in the same agency restricts the career progression of those female police officers? And, to what extent, if any, do female police officers think that marriage to a fellow police officer in a different agency restrict the career progression of female police officers? Archbold and Hassell’s (2009) study uncovered a factor that had not been addressed in previous research: how being married to fellow police officers (or being part of a “cop couple”) can restrict the upward mobility of female police officers—a situation they referred to as resulting in a “marriage tax” for female police officers. Their research revealed a “compounding effect that being married to a police officer, either in the same agency or another police agency, can have for the female officers trying to balance their professional and personal lives. They also cited Whetstone and Wilson (1999) as saying “the issues related to familial and childcare responsibilities and the
adjustments required for promotion were even more salient for those women whose partners were also employed by the department” (p. 68).

In this dissertation study, 58% (12 out of 21) of the married participants were part of a “cop couple.” Of the 12 participants that were part of a “cop couple,” two of the participants didn’t indicate whether being married to a fellow police officer had an impact on their decision to pursue promotion. Of the remaining 10 participants, 70% indicated being part of a “cop couple” had no impact on their decision whether or not to pursue promotion. Subsequently, being married to a fellow police officer did not create a barrier to pursuing promotion.

Research question eight (RQ8) asked: To what extent, if any, do female police officers who are mothers versus those who are childless impact those officers’ decisions to participate in the promotional process? As discussed earlier, Archbold and Hassell’s (2009) study revealed balancing work and family presented difficulties to the female police officers in their study, and problems were compounded when having to balance shift work and daycare.

Findings in this dissertation study were consistent with the findings of Archbold and Hassell (2009). Participants in this study expressed despite deriving enjoyment from their job, the role of mother and caregiver and the obligation to be at work produces stress and a sense of guilt. Further, attempting balancing shift work and daycare created difficulties. As a result, issues related to children were identified as a barrier to the promotional advancement for many of the female police officer interviewed in this dissertation study.
This dissertation study focused around eight research questions which inquired into the experiences of female police officers and their decisions to pursue promotion. Utilizing a series of semi-structured interview questions, participants provided answers to the questions that were able to be categorized into dimensions, conceptual categories, and properties as well as factors they considered when deciding whether or not to pursue promotion. The big question to be answered is how do female police officers decide to participate in the promotion process? The answer to this question is they consider several factors and make their decisions based on those factors.

**Theoretical Analysis**

Examination of relevant literature, which was discussed in chapter two, provided a context for how female police officers decide to pursue promotion. The relevant literature included decision making theory, tokenism, gender role theory, and stereotyping and the police subculture and grounded theory.

Table 5.3 provides a visual representation of the relationship between the primary dimensions, conceptual categories, and properties, research questions, and theoretical constructs.

**Decision Making Theory**

Research question one (RQ1) asks: Do female police officers make a conscious decision to participate or not participate in the promotional process? Research question two (RQ2) asks: What are the decision making criteria female police officers use to make
Table 5.3

**Primary Dimensions, Conceptual Categories and Properties, Related Research Questions, and Theoretical Constructs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary Dimension</th>
<th>Conceptual Category</th>
<th>Properties</th>
<th>Theoretical Constructs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Institutional Structures</strong> (RQ3)</td>
<td>Being a police officer</td>
<td>It’s a calling</td>
<td>The Thin Blue Line</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>You don’t belong here</td>
<td>Double standard</td>
<td>The token female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social Expectation to be Promoted</td>
<td>Timing</td>
<td>They told me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organizational Structures</strong> (RQ5)</td>
<td>Shift Work</td>
<td>I like my shift</td>
<td>I don’t want to go to nights again</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Duty Assignments</td>
<td>Can I pick?</td>
<td>What if I don’t like it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Political Structures</strong> (RQ4)</td>
<td>Management and Leadership</td>
<td>The chief</td>
<td>The management team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Politicality”</td>
<td>Politics of rank</td>
<td>The next political layer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Constructs of Gender</strong> (RQ6, RQ7, RQ8)</td>
<td>Gender roles</td>
<td>Family first</td>
<td>It’s a balancing act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Skills to lead</td>
<td>It’s been a while since I’ve done that</td>
<td>I haven’t done that</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This determination? Data revealed female police officers do make a conscious decision to participate in the promotional process and base that decision on specific decision making criteria. According to traditional decision making theory, decisions are to have been made intentionally utilizing a process by which alternatives and consequences are examined. Once the alternatives and consequences are evaluated, an ordered list of preferences is generated and the decision maker makes the optimal choice (Okros, 1983). Yet other literature asserts decision making is based on cognitive, emotional and socially
motivated phenomena and rejects the assumption of a “cold” process that calculates values and utilities (Litt, Eliasmith, & Thagard, 2008; Coricelli, Dolan & Sirigu, 2007).

**Tokenism**

Research question three (RQ3) asks: To what extent, if any, do the institutional structures of a police agency impact a female police officer’s decision to participate in the promotional process? Institutional structures refer to the police subculture for the entire law enforcement community, as well as the culture specific to an individual agency. Tokenism, stereotyping and the police subculture were contextual paradigms related to female police officers’ perception of tokenism within their police agencies. Specifically, a qualitative study by Archbold and Schultz (2008) revealed most of the women were at one time or another treated as a token female in their department. This included being showcased in the media as a representative of the department, being involved in recruiting initiatives and handling male officers’ calls to sexual assault cases. Prior research also revealed female police officers felt the need to work harder to prove their competency, often times overachieving to do so (Stroshine & Brandl, 2011). Data from this dissertation study revealed similar patterns, but it had a minimal effect on the participants’ decisions to pursue promotion.

**Gender Role Theory**

Research questions six (RQ6), seven (RQ7), and eight (RQ8) respectively asked: To what extent, if any, do female police officers think that marriage to a fellow police
officer in the same agency restricts the career progression of those female police officers?

To what extent, if any, do female police officers think that marriage to a fellow police officer in a different agency restricts the career progression of female police officers?

And to what extent, if any, do female police officers who are mothers versus those who are childless impact a female police officer’s decision to participate in the promotional process? Gender role theory was the next contextual paradigm related to how female police officers decided to pursue promotion. This dissertation study was also consistent with past research in the dilemma women face when trying to balance work and family responsibilities. This is particularly so with the responsibility for childcare and domestic responsibilities. Previous research reflected women do experience career advancement differently as it is characterized by interruptions and exits, frequently from having and caring for children (Alimo-Metcalf, 1995; Kumra and Vinnicombe, 2008; Lyness and Schrader, 2006; Mainiero and Sullivan, 2005; Ohlott et al., 1994). Participants from this dissertation study described situations where women who opted to have children were not considered for light duty assignments in the same light as male officers who suffered at temporary disability were. Additionally, they were subjected to ridicule when they placed children first in limiting the amount of their work hours. Conversely, males were praised for doing so and recognized as “good fathers.”

**Stereotyping and the Police Subculture**

The next contextual paradigm is stereotyping and the police subculture. This also related to research question three (RQ3) in regard to feelings of belonging, double
standards and the “good ol’ boy” system within the participants’ police agencies. Society’s perspective on gender and gender roles permeates the police subculture. Research abounds on the masculine characterization of policing and the necessity for police officers to act in a tough, unemotional and decisive manner (Fielding, 1994; Heidensohn, 1992; Herbert, 1998; Reiner, 1992). Further, women don’t characteristically exhibit these propensities calling in to question their ability to do the job. This results in male police officers’ ambivalent and often antagonistic feelings toward female police officers. This research study also supports this perspective and is replete with participant examples of their related experiences.

**Grounded Theory**

Each of the above listed theories has components which lend support to explain how female police officers decide to pursue promotion, but none of them are adequate in explaining the complete dynamic of this phenomenon. Grounded theory served as the main theoretical platform for this research. This research methodology allowed for the exploration of how female police officers decide to pursue promotion, while trying to minimize preconceived ideas during the research analysis and allow for emerging explanations or understanding of the phenomena being examined.

Research question one (RQ1) asks: Do female police officers make a conscious decision to participate or not participate in the promotional process? Research question two (RQ2) asks: What are the decision making criteria female police officers use to make this determination? In this dissertation study grounded theory helped in the use of
decision making theory for better understanding of how female police officers decide to pursue promotion.

Research question four (RQ4) asks: To what extent, if any, do the political structures of a police agency impact a female police officer’s decision to participate in the promotional process? The political structure refers to such elements as management/leadership style of supervisors and commanders in the agency (micromanager, empowering, etc.), confidence in executive leadership including their ability to run the agency and diversity and gender sensitivity. Research question five (RQ5) asks: To what extent, if any, do the organizational structures of the police agency impact a female police officer’s decision to participate in the promotional process? Organizational structure refers to the agency size, number of female police officers, policies and procedures (i.e., nepotism, married persons working with/supervising one another, synchronization of schedules for married persons, “family friendly” policies, contractual requirements, etc.). None of the theoretical constructs discussed above completely explain the dynamic of this phenomenon under study. Rather there appears to be a combination of explanatory factors.

Interaction Theory

One could assert in order to more adequately explain female police officers’ lived experiences and their decisions to pursue promotion the appropriate theoretical paradigm is the “theory of combined theories,” or more accurately, “interaction theory.” This may sound somewhat humorous as on its face it might not fit the academic paradigm for
theory development. Merriam Webster online (n.d.) defines theory as “an idea or set of ideas that is intended to explain facts or events.” This is not meant to be confused with a sociological interactionist perspective or symbolic interaction theory which looks at subjective meanings people impose on objects, events, and behaviors. It is also not intended to reflect social processes from human interaction. Rather, interaction theory from this perspective looks at the interrelationship between theoretical constructs which help to explain a phenomenon. This theoretical construct provides a basis of explanation for research question four (RQ4) related to political structures. Conceptual categories under the primary dimension of political structures include Management and Leadership which includes the properties the chief, the management team, the boss, who’s getting promoted, and diversity perspective. The conceptual category, “Politicality,” includes the conceptual categories politics of rank, the next political layer and politics of the city. The dynamics of the political structures within the participants’ police agencies is not fully explained by other theoretical constructs listed. Rather, there appears to be a relationship or interaction between management and leadership, their perspectives on diversity, and any “good ol’ boy” system that may be present in participants’ police agencies. There also appears to be a relationship or interaction between management and leadership, “Politicality” (the ideologies, interests and power dynamics of and between ranking individuals within an agency) and duty assignments (e.g., selecting the duty assignment rather than being assigned by the chief and liking or not liking the duty assignment). The interaction of these factors influence the female police officers’ decisions on whether or not to pursue promotion.
Research question five (RQ5) is related to organizational structures. Conceptual categories under the primary dimension of organizational structures include the conceptual category, Shift Work, which includes the following properties: I like my shift, I don’t want to go to nights again, and 2nd or 3rd shift won’t work. The conceptual category, Assignments, includes can I pick, what if I don’t like it, and I like what I do as properties. There appears to be a relationship or interaction between shift work and gender roles related to balancing family and work. Participants said they preferred their current shifts because they were most conducive to synchronizing family and work schedules. The interaction of these factors influence the female police officers’ decisions on whether or not to pursue promotion.

Research question three (RQ3) is related to institutional structures. Conceptual categories under the primary dimension of institutional structures include the conceptual category, Being a Police Officer, is comprised of the following properties: it’s a calling, The Thin Blue Line, somebody has to do it, making a difference, and variety. The conceptual category, It’s Still a Man’s World, contains properties of you don’t belong here, double standard, the token female, and good ol’ boys. The conceptual category, Social Expectation to be Promoted, contains the properties of timing, they told me I should and feeling prepared. Theoretical constructs of tokenism and stereotyping and the police subculture provide an explanation for the portion of institutional structures related to Being a Police Officer and It’s Still a Man’s World. Those constructs do not adequately explain the conceptual category of Social Expectation to be Promoted. Rather, there is a relationship or interaction between timing, feeling prepared and Skills
to Lead under Constructs of Gender and Management and Leadership in political structures. The *interaction* of these factors influence the female police officers’ decisions on whether or not to pursue promotion.

This study has applicable concept or concepts from each of the theoretical constructs discussed previously. The weight or significance of each theoretical context, however, was not determined or explored completely in this dissertation. The content analysis methodology and theoretical constructs align to answer the research questions.

**Limitations of the Study**

Some limitations of this study are within the methodology to conduct this research. A sample size of 27 was utilized for this research. This resulted in saturation, or no new information emerging regarding the area of study. The scope of this study was confined to female police officers in the Great Lakes Region (Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, and Ohio) of the United States who were employed by medium to medium/large-sized local police agencies (50–550 sworn personnel). Although the findings in this study support past research on how female police officers decide to pursue promotion, generalization of findings should be made cautiously due to the small sample size and limited region of the country.

The next limitation was regarding the solicitation of participants. The police chief/agency head for each of the 135 departments which fell into the size category was contacted via email. Of the 135 emails sent, responses were received from only 21 of the police departments. Although email is an expeditious way of making contact with
research participants, it results in lower response rates from potential participants (as was
the case for this study). Next, soliciting research participants was reliant upon the
chief/agency head’s willingness to forward information to their female police officers for
potential participation. In the event the chief was unwilling to do so, the researcher had
no way of knowing if the information was not forwarded or if female police officers from
the agency were just not interested in participating in the research.

A third limitation of the study was disproportionate representation from each of
the five states. Although each state was represented by a female officer, some states only
had one officer represent it while others (such as Wisconsin–13 and Michigan–9) had
multiple representatives. In addition, the female officers in larger agencies comprise a
relatively high percentage of sworn positions (approximately 20 percent) compared with
the national average of approximately 13 percent (National Center for Women and
Policing, 2002). Departments may not be representative of other female police officers
working in agencies where women comprise either more or less than 20 percent of all
sworn positions.

A final limitation of the study was the use of the semi-structured interview
questionnaire from the previous study. As stated previously, findings of this study are
reflexive of findings in the previous study. This provides a level of validity to the
questionnaire and research. This also presented limitations from the perspective that
other areas of inquiry were not explored so as to stay as close as possible to the original
study design.
Implications of the Study

Similar to findings of previous studies, this dissertation study revealed a number of factors which influence whether or not to participate in the promotional process and help to increase the understanding of the perceptions of police officers regarding the under representation of women in supervisory and command positions. Some potential barriers to promotion identified in this dissertation study may be addressed within police agencies by organizational leaders. Promotional barriers such as shift assignment and duty assignment may be addressed with administrative or policy changes to remove barriers to promotion and to encourage female officers to participate in the promotional process. Policy changes may include implementation of “family friendly” policies to facilitate coordination of work schedules for female officers who are married to male officers in the same agency. This would be of benefit to both male and female officers when considering promotional opportunities.

One of the major barriers to participation in the promotional process for the participants in this dissertation study was shift assignment. This barrier may not be easily remedied as shift assignment is governed by union/labor contracts and assignment by seniority in many police agencies. Newly promoted supervisors are typically considered to be of lower seniority and would be relegated to the less desirable shifts (usually 2nd or 3rd shift). It would not be impossible to resolve this issue, although it may be unlikely that these policies would be changed quickly. Organizational leaders and labor union leaders would need to negotiate a possible remedy.
Another area of concern expressed by participants was regarding their new assignment if promoted, their ability to decide where they would be assigned, and whether or not they would like it. Police agencies could provide an informational listing of positions available for personnel seeking promotion, and once promoted allow them to select their desired position rather than having administration (the chief) assign the position. This may not be comfortable for some police administrators as it causes them to relinquish a certain level of control. However, if the organizational leader is truly committed to diversification of the agency this may be of benefit by increasing the number of female police officers in supervisory and command positions. Higher levels of workplace performance and satisfaction within organizations arise when diversification is sought as a way to truly incorporate different employee viewpoints, experiences, and cultures (National Institute of Justice, 2011).

Another area of research in this dissertation study was the relationship of being part of a “cop couple” to a female police officer’s decision to pursue promotion. This dissertation study revealed being part of a “cop couple” had little impact on the participants’ decisions on whether or not to pursue promotion, contrary to the findings in the Archbold and Hassell (2009) study. This dynamic may change should a larger population of female police officers and a different area of the United States be studied. Any organizational nepotism policies may be reviewed to determine whether or not they require amending to facilitate promotional opportunities not only for female police officers but for male police officers as well.
This study makes a number of contributions. It provides knowledge for the policing profession as a whole regarding the experiences of female police officers and their decisions whether or not to pursue promotion and to help increase the understanding of the perceptions of male and female police officers regarding the under representation of women in supervisory and command positions. The egalitarian perspective that emerged may be extended to police training at the academies and also underscore university curricula, particularly social sciences and gender studies, as well as other disciplines that are centered in social justice endeavors and that seek for social responsibility. Most importantly, it is the voices of female police officers who resonated, telling their own stories and lending richness and robustness to this study.

This dissertation study also assists in demonstrating the uses of phenomenology and grounded theory approaches and resulted in the emergency of an Interaction Theory. It also “experimented”/designed a methodology tool of analysis which may be worthy of additional exploration from others.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

Although this dissertation study expanded the scope of previously conducted research in one police agency to utilizing multiple police agencies, most of the research has been conducted in the mid-west region of the United States. Research supports differences in attitudes, values, and behaviors and social and political phenomenon of Americans based on geography (Mondak & Canache, 2014; Rentfrow, 2010).
Conducting this study in a different geographical region of the United States may yield different results.

A second recommendation for future research would be to conduct the study with male police officers in local law enforcement. This would be to ascertain any correlation between the experiences of male and female police officers and the factors they use when deciding whether or not to pursue promotion.

Another recommendation for future research would be to conduct the study with a focus on race. This would be to ascertain any impact race may have on the decision of female police officers when deciding whether or not to pursue promotion.

A final recommendation for future research would be to examine the decisions of female police officers to pursue or not pursue promotion through the lens of intersectionality. “The term intersectionality refers to the insight that race, class gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nation, ability, and age operate not as unitary, mutually exclusive entities, but rather as reciprocally constructing phenomena” (Collins, 2015). Intersectionality was not used as a theory for consideration or explanation in this dissertation but could be utilized in the future to examine the primary research question.
REFERENCES


http://dtpr.lib.athabascau.ca/action/download.php?filename=mais/
garymarshallProject.pdf.


http://static1.1.sqspcdn.com/static/f/733761/10990755/1298938496780/The+Dive


Appendix A

Interview Questions
Coding Identification Information

File #

Interviewee Name:

Interviewer Name:

Date of Interview:

Place of Interview:

Transcriber Name:

Date of Transcription:
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. What is your age?________________________________________

2. What is your highest education level?_______________________

3. What is your marital status?_______________________________

4. Are you married to someone in law enforcement?_____ If yes, does your spouse work in your police department or a different agency?_______________________

5. Do you have any children?____ If yes, how many? ________

6. What is your current rank?_______________________________

7. How long have you been at your current rank?______________

8. How many years have you been with your current agency? ________

9. How many years have you been in law enforcement (including employment at both at your current police department and other police departments)?_______________

10. Are you currently eligible to apply for promotion?

POLICE WORK

11. How did you become interested in police work?

12. Is the job what you had expected it to be before you began your career as an officer?

   If no, explain how it is different?

13. Do you see yourself employed as a police officer in the next year?______. 5 years from now?____ Through retirement?___________

   If no, explain:

14. What are two reasons that you choose to remain a police officer?
15. Based on your experience, would you recommend police work as a career to another female? Why or why not?

16. On a scale of 1-5 (with 1 being not committed and 5 being fully committed) how would you rate your current level of commitment to your job as a police officer and why?

17. What are some of the reasons that you are committed to your job as a police officer?

**LEADERSHIP**

18. When you were first hired at your agency, did you have aspirations of becoming promoted to a supervisory/command position (sgt, lt, and so forth)? Yes No

If yes, do you still have aspirations of being promoted to a supervisory/command?

If no, what circumstances changed your mind?

19. If you were a supervisor and were in command of your own team/unit, do you think that your colleagues would support and respect you? Please explain.

20. Do you think the gender of the officer impacts whether or not he/she is a better leader? Please explain.

21. Have you had any negative experiences in your police department that would impact your decision to pursue a promotion? Please explain.

22. Do you feel that you have the leadership skills to command your own team/unit?

23. Do you feel that you have enough police experience to command your own team/unit?
FAMILY

24. Have you had any major changes in your personal or family life during the course of your tenure at your police department? Please explain.

25. Are you the only full-time employee in your immediate family? If no, are there any other full-time employees? How many?

26. Are you the primary caregiver of any children? If not, who is?

27. Discuss any difficulties (if any) that you have encountered while attempting to balance your work and family life.

28. If you are married to a fellow police officer, has that had any impact on your decision to pursue promotion. If yes, explain.

29. If you are not married and/or do not have children, is this a personal choice or one that has been influenced by your career as a police officer? Also, in what ways do you believe that the choice to have a family of your own in the future will impact (if at all) your career as an officer?

SCHEDULE AND BENEFITS OF PROMOTION

30. Are you satisfied with your current employment status? Yes No
   If no, explain why not:

31. Are you satisfied with your current salary? Yes No
   If no, explain why not:

32. Do you know how much your current salary would increase if you were to be promoted?

33. How does this impact your decision to go through the promotion process?

34. Are you satisfied with the current shift you work?
35. Do you think your work hours would change if you were to be promoted?

   Yes   No

   If yes, and if you were to be promoted, how long do you think it would take you to be able to bid to your current shift or work schedule?

36. What is your perception of promotional availability in your police department?

   Very good   Good   Fair   Poor

37. List three factors that would influence your decision to go through the promotion process.

38. List three factors that might influence you NOT to go through the promotion process:

39. Do you think that male police officers encounter the same factors that you listed above when it comes to their decision to participate in the promotion process? Explain why or why not.

40. What is your desired rank in the next 5 years?_______, the next 10 years?__________

**WORK PLACE EXPERIENCES & STRESS**

41. During your time as a police officer in your police department, have you witnessed any incidents of differential treatment based on gender?  Yes  No

   If yes, explain the situation:

   If no, explain why you think that doesn’t happen in your police department.
42. Have you witnessed or experienced any differences in the type of calls for service you receive based on your gender? Yes  No

If yes, how do you explain these differences?

43. Have you ever felt isolated from the other officers because you are a female? Yes  No

If yes, please explain a situation when this has happened to you.

If no, explain why you believe that this does not happen in your police department.

44. Have you ever felt that you have had to work harder than male officers to prove yourself within your police department? Yes  No

If yes, explain what you have done to prove yourself:

If no, explain why you feel that you do not have to work harder.

45. Have you ever felt like a token police officer? Yes  No

If yes, explain when and why you felt that way.

46. What are some of the aspects of your job that are frustrating to you? Explain why.

47. Do you think that the frustrating aspects of your job that you just mentioned are similar to those of your colleagues? Explain why or why not.
Thank you for taking the time to speak with me about your experiences in your police department and your decision to pursue promotion. Each of the interviews I conduct will be transcribed by a transcription agency but you can be assured confidentiality will be strictly maintained and your identity will be known only to me. All names or identifying information of location, city, or specific police agency will not be released. I will make sure the transcript accurately reflects our conversation by comparing it against the audio recording.

Once all the interviews are complete and have been transcribed, I’ll be reviewing them to see if any common themes develop about how female police officers decide to pursue promotion.
Appendix B

Written Permission to Use Interview Questions
Kristin L Poleski

From: Carol Archbold <carol.archbold@ndsu.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, March 25, 2015 6:10 PM
To: Kristin L Poleski
Subject: Re: Your 2009 study of female police officers pursuing promotion in the FPD

You have my permission to use my interview questions as long as you note this in your methods section. Good luck with your project!

Sent from OWA on Android

From: Kristin L Poleski <KristinPoleski@ferris.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, March 25, 2015 3:21:48 PM
To: Carol Archbold
Subject: RE: Your 2009 study of female police officers pursuing promotion in the FPD

Thanks for your response. I had a meeting w/my dissertation chair and she asked me to follow up with you to see if there were any additional questions you wanted included when I do the interviews. Also, I want to confirm that I have your permission to use your questions. If so, would you be willing to give me written permission to use them for my HSIRB packet?

I’ll be happy to share the end product with you!

Kris

From: Carol Archbold [mailto:carol.archbold@ndsu.edu]
Sent: Wednesday, March 25, 2015 9:25 AM
To: Kristin L Poleski
Subject: Re: Your 2009 study of female police officers pursuing promotion in the FPD

Hi Kristin
It is nice to hear from you. It sounds like you are making some progress on your dissertation. In response to your questions...we used tokenism as the theoretical framework for the study. In regard to making it better...I will leave that up to you :)
I look forward to seeing the end product once you have completed it.
Take care! CA

Dr. Carol A. Archbold
Associate Professor of Criminal Justice, Director of Criminal Justice graduate programs
North Dakota State University
Department of Criminal Justice & Political Science
Fargo, ND 58105
701-231-5697
Appendix C

HSIRB Approval
Date: July 22, 2015

To: Barbara Liggett, Principal Investigator
    Kristin Polecki, Student Investigator for dissertation

From: Amy Naugle, Ph.D., Chair

Re: HSIRB Project Number 15-07-11

This letter will serve as confirmation that your research project titled "To Promote or Not to Promote: An Inquiry into the Experiences of Female Police Officers and their Decisions to Pursue Promotion" has been approved under the expedited category of review by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board. The conditions and duration of this approval are specified in the Policies of Western Michigan University. You may now begin to implement the research as described in the application.

Please note: This research may **only** be conducted exactly in the form it was approved. You must seek specific board approval for any changes in this project (e.g., *you must request a post approval change to enroll subjects beyond the number stated in your application under "Number of subjects you want to complete the study."*). Failure to obtain approval for changes will result in a protocol deviation. In addition, if there are any unanticipated adverse reactions or unanticipated events associated with the conduct of this research, you should immediately suspend the project and contact the Chair of the HSIRB for consultation.

**Reapproval of the project is required if it extends beyond the termination date stated below.**

The Board wishes you success in the pursuit of your research goals.

**Approval Termination:** July 21, 2016
Appendix D

Informed Consent Letter
Informed Consent

Western Michigan University
School of Public Affairs and Administration

Principal Investigator: Dr. Barbara Liggett
Student Investigator: Kristin Poleski
Title of Study: To Promote or Not to Promote: An Inquiry into the Experiences of Female Police Officers and their Decisions to Pursue Promotion

You have been invited to participate in a research project titled “To Promote or Not to Promote: An Inquiry into the Experiences of Female Police Officers and their Decisions to Pursue Promotion.” This project will serve as Kristin Poleski’s dissertation for the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Public Administration. This consent document will explain the purpose of this research project and will go over all of the time commitments, the procedures used in the study, and the risks and benefits of participating in this research project. Please read this consent form carefully and completely and please ask any questions if you need clarification.

What are we trying to find out in this study?
The purpose of this study is to gain an understanding of the personal experiences of female police officers and how they determine to participate or not participate in the promotional process. Past research has shown that despite an increase in the number of women in policing over the last several decades, the number of women in command/supervisory positions remains low.

Although there has been some research on promotion in law enforcement in general, there has not been much research on the experiences of female police officers and how they decide to participate or not participate in the promotional process.

Who can participate in this study?
To participate in this study you must currently be employed as a police officer, must be female and must have met the eligibility requirements in your agency to participate in the promotional process.

Where will this study take place?
In person interviews for this study will take place at a location mutually agreeable to the interviewer and you and away from the police department. Distance interviews will be conducted via internet video tool such as Skype or by telephone phone.
What is the time commitment for participating in this study?
If you participate in the study will have to commit to one interview that will last approximately 30-90 minutes, however the time may vary depending on the amount of information you wish to share.

What will you be asked to do if you choose to participate in this study?
You will be asked a variety of questions about your experiences in policing related to promotion and if you chose to participate or not participate in a promotional process.

What information is being measured during the study?
The information that will be obtained from participating in this study will be your own stories related to your experiences within policing and with promotion.

What are the risks of participating in this study and how will these risks be minimized?
Possible risks that may be encountered as a participant in this research may involve the sensitive nature of some questions being asked related to the decision to participate or not participate in a promotional process and possible painful experiences related to this, both personally and professionally. Risks such as becoming distressed, saddened, angry, anxious, frustrated or generally upset are possible. Although no personally identifying information for participants will be provided in the summary, it may be possible, based on specific responses to identify specific participants or specific agencies. While the possibility of these risks is present, the researcher will make every attempt to minimize these risks by giving you the option to not discuss aspects that are painful, distressing, saddening, etc. Should the situation arise where you do become distressed, saddened, angry, etc., you will be given an opportunity to take a break, continue, or discontinue either the particular question or the interview. If you wish to continue the interview but wish to take a break, you will be given the opportunity to do so until you are ready to proceed. So as to protect your identity, the researcher will not utilize your personally identifying information or police agency should quotations be used in the summary of responses.

What are the benefits of participating in this study?
Possible benefits that you may get from participating in the study is the knowledge you contributed to the body of research on women in policing and their unique experiences working in a non-traditional profession.

Are there any costs associated with participating in this study?
Costs associated with participating in this study are the use of your time as well as any transportation costs you might incur to meet the researcher at a mutually agreed upon location.
Who will have access to the information collected during this study?
Only the researchers will have access to the full information collected during this study. A professional transcription service will be utilized to type transcripts of the interviews, however, they will not be provided with the interviewee’s name. The results of the study will be published, in summary form with no personally identifying information of participants released, in the researcher’s dissertation. Additionally, the results may be published in journal articles and presented at professional conferences, with no personally identifying information of participants released.

What if you want to stop participating in this study?
You can choose to stop participating in the study at any time for any reason. You will not suffer any prejudice or penalty by your decision to stop your participation. You will experience NO consequences, either personally or professionally, if you choose to withdraw from this study. Additionally, I (Kristin Poleski) can decide to end your participation in the study without your consent.

Should you have any questions prior to or during the study, you can contact the primary investigator, Kristin Poleski at (616)717-2341 or kristin.l.walters@wmich.edu or Dr. Barbara Liggett at (269)387-8943. You may also contact the Chair, Human Subjects Institutional Review Board at 269-387-8293 or the Vice President for Research at 269-387-8298 if questions arise during the course of the study.

This consent document has been approved for use for one year by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (HSIRB) as indicated by the stamped date and signature of the board chair in the upper right corner. Do not participate in this study if the stamped date is older than one year.

I have read this informed consent document. The risks and benefits have been explained to me. I agree to take part in this study.

Please Print Your Name

________________________________________________________________________

Participant’s Signature                        Date
Appendix E

Email Script to Police Chiefs/Agency Heads
Dear Chief____________________,

Police agencies are challenged with the task of diversifying their work force both in recruitment/hiring and in promotion. As a former deputy police chief I know this is no easy task. One way to increase hiring and promotion of minorities and women in police agencies is to understand how candidates for hire or promotion decide to participate in those processes.

I am a PhD student in the School of Public Affairs and Administration at Western Michigan University and I am conducting research regarding the promotion of women in local police agencies for a research project titled “To Promote or Not to Promote: An Inquiry into the Experiences of Female Police Officers and their Decision to Pursue Promotion.” The purpose of this study is to gain an understanding of the personal experiences of female police officers and how they determine to participate or not participate in the promotional process. Past research has shown that despite an increase in the number of women in policing over the last several decades, the number of women in command/supervisory positions remains low.

As part of my research I will be interviewing female police officers who are eligible for promotion in medium to medium large sized, local police agencies in the Great Lakes region of the country to understand what criteria they use when deciding whether or not to participate in the promotional process.

To better understand the promotional process for your agency, I would appreciate it if you would share with me the following:

1. Your agency’s promotional eligibility criteria (years of service/years in grade, etc. to be eligible for promotion
2. What your promotional process consists of (i.e. single test, multiphase test, appointment without testing, other)
3. The number of sworn male and female police officers in your agency.

I would also like to ask for your assistance in contacting the female police officers in your agency to invite them to participate in this research project. There will be no cost to your agency related to this project nor would officers willing to participate do so on duty time.

Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Kristin Poleski
Appendix F

Email Script to Officers to Schedule Interview
Dear Officer___________________,

You contacted me and indicated you wish to participate in a research project titled “To Promote or Not to Promote: An Inquiry into the Experiences of Female Police Officers and their Decisions to Pursue Promotion.” I would like to schedule a date and time for an interview. The interview needs to take place during your off duty time. Please let me know some dates/times within the next one to three weeks that are convenient for you so we can schedule something.

Please let me know if you would prefer to make arrangements via email or telephone. If via email, please provide the email address (agency email or personal email) or the telephone number (agency phone number or personal phone number).

If you have any questions, concerns or would like additional information, feel free to call or email me at kristin.l.walters@wmich.edu.

Thank you,

Kristin Poleski
(616)717-2341
Appendix G

Script for Interviews with the Female Police Officers
Hello,

I am Kris Poleski, a PhD student in the School of Public Affairs and Administration at Western Michigan University. I am conducting research regarding the promotion of women in local police agencies for a research project titled “To Promote or Not to Promote: An Inquiry into the Experiences of Female Police Officers and their Decision to Pursue Promotion.” The purpose of this study is to gain an understanding of the personal experiences of female police officers and how they determine to participate or not participate in the promotional process.

Past research has shown that despite an increase in the number of women in policing over the last several decades, the number of women in command/supervisory positions remains low. Although there has been some research on promotion in law enforcement in general, there has not been much research on the experiences of female police officers and how they decide to participate or not participate in the promotional process.

You have agreed to participate in this study and answer some questions regarding your experiences and how you have decided to participate or not to participate in a promotional process for your police agency. Before we get started talking about your experiences, I want to make sure you understand the Informed Consent letter I’ve given you and answer any questions you may have.

I’ve already talked about what we are trying to find out in this study. I know you are currently employed as a police officer but I need to confirm you are able to participate in the promotional process for your agency. Have you met the eligibility requirements for your agency to participate in a promotional process?

If you choose to participate, you will be asked a variety of questions about your experiences in policing related to promotion and this should take between 30-90 minutes, depending on how much information you wish to share with me. Your stories about your experiences in policing and with promotion are what I am interested in understanding.

It is possible that during our discussion some of the questions relating to your decision to participate or not participate in a promotional process may cause you to become emotional. Also, the police agencies may receive a SUMMARY of the results of the study. Although no personally identifying information for participants will be provided in the summary, it may be possible, based on specific responses to identify specific participants or specific agencies. While the possibilities of these risks exist, every attempt will be made to minimize them during the process.

The only costs to you for participating in this study will be of your time and any transportation costs to meet me for the interview.
I want to assure you that only the researchers will have access to the information collected during this study and your identity will not be released. You may decide to end participation in this study at any time without penalty.

Do you have any questions?
Appendix H

Research Questions with Related Interview Questions
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Related Interview Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RQ2. What are the decision making criteria they use to make this determination?</td>
<td>18. When you were first hired at your agency, did you have aspirations of becoming a command officer (sgt, lt, and so forth)? Yes No If yes, do you still have aspirations of being a command officer? If no, what circumstances influenced your decision? 19. If you were a supervisor/command officer and were in command of your own team/unit, do you think that your colleagues would support and respect you? Please explain. 20. Do you think the gender of the officer impacts whether or not they are better leaders? Please explain. 21. Have you had any negative experiences in your police department that would impact your decision to pursue a promotion? Please explain. 22. Do you feel that you have the leadership skills to command your own team/unit? 23. Do you feel that you have enough police experience to command your team/unit? 29. Are you satisfied with your current employment status? Yes No If no, explain why not: 30. Are you satisfied with your current salary? Yes No If no, explain why not:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Question</td>
<td>Related Interview Questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ2. What are the decision making criteria they use to make this determination?</td>
<td>31. Do you know how much your current salary would increase if you were to be promoted?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>32. Does increased salary impact your decision to go through the promotion process?</td>
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<td>33. Are you satisfied with the current shift you work?</td>
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<td>34. Do you think your work hours would change if you were to be promoted? Yes No</td>
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<td>If yes, and if you were to be promoted, how long do you think it would take you to be able to bid to your current shift or work schedule?</td>
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<td>35. What is your perception of promotional availability in your police department? Very good Good Fair Poor</td>
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<td>36. List three factors that would influence your decision to go through the promotion process.</td>
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<td>37. List three factors that might influence you NOT to go through the promotion process:</td>
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<td>38. Do you think that male police officers encounter the same factors that you listed above when it comes to their decision to participate in the promotion process? Explain why or why not.</td>
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<td>39. What is your desired rank in the next 5 years?____<strong><strong>, the next 10 years?</strong></strong>_____</td>
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<td>RQ3. To what extent, if any, do the institutional structures such as the police subculture, impact a female police officer’s decision to participate in the promotional process?</td>
<td>40. During your time as a police officer in your police department, have you witnessed any incidents of differential treatment based on gender? Yes No If yes, explain the situation: If no, explain why you think differential treatment doesn’t happen in your police department.</td>
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<td>RQ4. To what extent, if any, does the political structure such as management/leadership style (micromanager, empowering, etc.), confidence in executive leadership, diversity and gender sensitivity, impact a female police officer’s decision to participate in the promotional process? Political structures also encompass the relationships with political leaders outside the police agency such as in the city/municipality.</td>
<td>41. Have you witnessed or experienced any differences in the type of calls for service you receive based on your gender? Yes No If yes, how do you explain these differences?</td>
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<td>RQ5. To what extent, if any, does the organizational structure such as agency size, number of female police officers, policies and procedures (i.e. nepotism, married persons working with/supervising one another, synchronization of schedules for married persons, “family friendly” policies) of the police work environment impact a female police officer’s decision to participate in the promotional process?</td>
<td>42. Have you ever felt isolated from the other officers because you are a female? Yes No If yes, please explain a situation when this has happened to you. If no, explain why you believe that this does not happen in your police department.</td>
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<td>43. Have you ever felt that you have had to work harder than male officers to prove yourself within your police department? Yes No If yes, explain what you have done to prove yourself. If no, explain why you feel that you do not have to work harder.</td>
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<td>44. Have you ever felt like a token police officer? Yes No If yes, explain when and why you felt that way.</td>
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| RQ5. To what extent, if any, does the organizational structure such as agency size, number of female police officers, policies and procedures (i.e. nepotism, married persons working with/overseeing one another, synchronization of schedules for married persons, “family friendly” policies) of the police work environment impact a female police officer’s decision to participate in the promotional process? | 45. What are some of the aspects of your job that are frustrating to you? Explain why.  
46. Do you think that the frustrating aspects of your job that you just mentioned are similar to those of male officers? Explain why or why not. |
| RQ6. To what extent, if any, do female police officers think that marriage to a fellow police officer in the same agency restricts the career progression of those female police officers? | 3. What is your marital status?  
1. If married, are you married to someone in law enforcement? If so, does your spouse work in your police department or a different agency?  
24. Have you had any major changes in your personal or family life during the course of your tenure at ___PD? Please explain. |
| RQ7. To what extent, if any, do female police officers think that marriage to a fellow police officer in a different agency restrict the career progression of female police officers? | 25. Are you the only full-time employee in your immediate family?  
If no, are there any other full time employees? How many?  
27. Discuss any difficulties (if any) that you have encountered while attempting to balance your work and family life.  
28. If you are not married and/or do not have children, is this a personal choice or one that has been influenced by your career as a police officer? Also, in what ways do you believe that the choice to have a family of your own in the future will impact (if at all) your career as an officer? |
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<td>RQ8. To what extent, if any, do female police officers who are mothers versus those who are childless impact those officers’ decisions to participate in the promotional process?</td>
<td>5. Do you have any children? If so, how many?</td>
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<td>26. Are you the primary caregiver of any children? If not, who is?</td>
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<td>27. Discuss any difficulties (if any) that you have encountered while attempting to balance your work and family life.</td>
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<td>28. If you are not married and/or do not have children, is this a personal choice or one that has been influenced by your career as a police officer? Also, in what ways do you believe that the choice to have a family of your own in the future will impact (if at all) your career as an officer?</td>
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