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Pedicures in Combat Boots: Navigating Gender in the Syracuse Police Department, An Ethnographic Analysis

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**Pedicures in Combat Boots: Navigating Gender in the Syracuse Police
Department, An Ethnographic Analysis**

A Capstone Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements of the Renée Crown University Honors Program at
Syracuse University

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and Renée Crown University Honors
May 2014

Honors Capstone Project in Anthropology

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Abstract

In an ethnographic analysis, I seek to answer the question: how, if at all, does gender interact with police work? Using the women of the Syracuse Police Department (SPD) as the defined population for my study, I conducted 4 in-depth ethnographic interviews along with 5 sessions of participant observation, accompanying female officers during their shifts for anywhere from 4-8 hours at a time. Historically, women's presence in law enforcement has been almost nonexistent, particularly in police work which is overwhelmingly perceived as the domain of men. Women in police work have made some progress parallel to social progress over time, but have stagnated at a national average of only 12%. My research identifies key aspects of officers' careers that are affected by or interact with their gender in specific ways, demonstrating why police work continues to be a difficult field for women to enter and how they navigate their gender once there. The first aspect is the way that gender interacts with the often immovable structure of a paramilitary organization and the adaptation of gender identity that women perform in order to function within it. The second aspect is how women perform their duties as officers in ways that highlight the strengths they associate with their gender and employ a different style of policing. The third and final aspect is how women form relationships on the force, both with male and female officers, and how they use these to manage their work within the police environment. Overall, policewomen are valuable assets to any force because they bring different perspectives to their work, but also must constantly adjust their gender identities and perceptions to the constraints of a highly structured, male-dominated environment.

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Executive Summary

This paper is an ethnographic analysis of the role of gender in modern day policing and seeks to answer the question “How, if at all, does gender interact with police work?” In Chapter One, I trace the history of women in police work and provide a literature review in order to situate my study into the greater body of research. Historically, women have been underrepresented in law enforcement professions, particularly police work. Women first entered police work during the labor shortages of WWI, but went unsworn and usually performed duties that many perceived as an extension of their home duties, like childcare, preventing them from working as equals to men. Perceptions about women in police work began to change in the 1960s as part of larger processes of social and legal changes concerning women in the workplace. Despite improved perception, women currently only make up 12% of the nation’s sworn police officers. Past studies have examined the various aspects of women in police work including but not limited to low numbers, differences between the actions of male and female officers, and interactions between female officers and the public, however the majority of these studies have been empirical and quantitative. My study seeks to analyze the problem from a different perspective, a qualitative perspective, assessed through ethnography.

In Chapter Two, I discuss in depth the structure of the force and my methodology for the research. Ethnography consists of deep observation and personal, layered communication with members of a population in order to understand the significance of their experiences from their perspectives. It

depends on storytelling and the immersion of the researcher into the experiences they are attempting to understand. The two key methods of research that achieve the required depth of understanding on the part of a researcher are ethnographic interviews and participant observation. The former are long, formal interviews, usually recorded, that become more of a conversation prompting extensive responses and cannot be completed with only pre-written questions. The latter is a method researchers use to understand experiences and behavior through their own eyes and the eyes of group members. In my work, I balanced immersing myself in my target group in order to understand it personally and observing full-fledged group members' behavior in order to understand multiple perspectives and from these experiences drew conclusions. While qualitative and thus up to interpretation, ethnographic analysis also represents a multitude of perspectives, allowing for a richer, more detailed analysis.

For my study, I worked with the women of the Syracuse Police Department (SPD) because of an already established connection, the ease of access, and the current demographics of the force. It is a comparably small, local police force precisely on the national average for percentage of female officers. Of 54 female police officers working for the SPD, I conducted my research with 9, or 1/6 of the available population. I completed 4 in-depth ethnographic interviews, each lasting around an hour, and 5 sessions of participant-observation with 5 different officers, riding with each one during their shift and responding to calls with them for anywhere from 4-8 hours at a time. At the end of each session, and during when possible, I compiled notes on my observations and experiences

and transcribed each interview. Then, I searched through all text for codes and patterns. These codes and patterns became the foundation for my arguments and discoveries throughout my work. The other key aspect of ethnography is how the researcher addresses bias and ethics since it is heavily dependent on perspective. In my project, preventing bias was a continual process. Making sure I did not imprint any personal bias towards the women and their situation because of my experience in gender studies meant structuring neutral questions that did not lead officers to any particular answers and involving myself in the work but not to the point where I affected its outcome. Finally, in terms of ethics, the key was to do justice to views presented to me by every officer and to protect the identity of officers by eliminating identifying details from quotes and discussion about other officers during research. Through these methods, I have achieved a pure, qualitative analysis which, though subject to my own interpretation, is founded upon the perspectives, experiences, and stories of female officers.

In Chapter Three, I examine the strict structure of the SPD in order to assess how women navigate and adapt to the work in order to better associate with their male-dominated work environment. Women shift between identities as “women”, meaning to them mothers, caretakers, and emphasize, and as “officers”, tough-guys, law-enforcers, and protectors, in order to be able to operate within the police environment. Despite identification with male qualities and attributes, like sense of humor and athleticism, and the equalizing effects of the Academy and the civil service test, women must contend with various personal aspects of their gender and adapt them to the structure of the force. One

key aspect of identity is pregnancy, something only women must adapt to because of their gender and the nature of their work. SPD does not have a pregnancy policy, meaning women choose when to remove themselves from the line of duty and thus must navigate the responsibilities of both identities simultaneously and frequently without example. Additionally, the structure of the force prevents women from achieving higher ranks because they must adapt their personal lives and identities in order to advance in the force, something that can be more complicated for women because of personal needs and desires, like time with and care for their children.

In Chapter Four, I examine the way women incorporate gender into their work as officers in order to practice differently effective methods of policing and how they perceive their actions in relation to other officers and the force as a whole. My sample showed that women's reasons for beginning police work were often linked to greater, broader ideas of doing good rather than of fighting crime. Focusing on their work in patrol and the use of force, women believed themselves to be more successful communicators as officers, reducing the need for the use of force. Additionally, the way people perceived them and their ability to use force because of their gender also impacted their methods of policing, making them differently effective than male officers. Suspects tended to be less confrontational with women because of their identity as mothers, however women felt the need to prove their willingness to use force in critical situations to their fellow officers because of their gender.

In Chapter Five, I explore the ways in which gender can affect the formation of beneficial relationships between police officers of the same or opposite gender by looking at the ways male officers interact with female officers and the ways female officer interact with fellow female officers. Police officers have an incredibly difficult and emotionally exhausting job that can isolate them from the community at large, meaning relationships with fellow officers, who understand the intricacies of their work, are a critical aspect of police work. However, the ways in which female officers relate to male officers and female officer are complicated by their gender which serves to isolate women in some respects. Male officers tend to employ inappropriate jokes in order to relate to fellow officers and relieve stress, something women rationalized and accepted in order to truly fit into the police environment. Additionally, women related to each other in specific ways but because of the way their low numbers interacted with the division of patrol, were forced to find time outside of the force to create deeper connections, something that sometimes became unmanageable as their lives progressed.

As I sum up in Chapter Six, overall, my study shows that gender continues to be a considerable factor in the lives of police officers that creates new and effective modes of policing but also greatly affects personal life and relationships, particularly for women. Above all, women find ways to adapt their identities in order to better fit into the strict structure of the police force, emphasizing the fact that officers conceive their work as both a duty and a job, and that they must adapt to it because its purpose is greater than their individuality.

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First and foremost, to the women of the Syracuse Police Department. This project may be my work, but it is your life. Yourselves. I feel incredibly privileged to have shared one small portion with you and I am forever grateful to you for allowing me to sit on your “desks” and listen to your stories. The job you do is one of balance, of mental, emotional, and physical endurance, of care. I represent your views with pride and hope to do you justice through my endeavors.

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Advice to Future Honors Student

It is unreal how many times you can look at one thing and find something else you like about it. Want to change about it. Hate about it. Don't understand about it. I have found the rollercoaster of opinions about my Capstone to be an exhausting whirlwind, but they have made it better than anything it could have been. However, always remember that there is only so much you can and should do. It is your job to change your mind about you Capstone, to challenge yourself so you can better prove yourself to your readers. But it is also your job to decide what you have to say, to say it honestly, and to say it well. Recognize what your project is and channel your buzzing mind into a string of focus that connects your entire work and experience. A Capstone is whatever you make it, but make it yours. Know where it is strong and where it is weak, and fortify both aspects with your knowledge. It will be entirely more meaningful, more honest, and more relevant.

CHAPTER ONE

Beating the System: Policewomen Then and Now

Introduction: The Project

From the outside, the building's upper floors look like they consist entirely of thin, tall windows stacked one upon another for about five stories. The lower floor, however, is almost all glass, the entrance marked by red, square columns that protect the doors. My first thought upon seeing it is an outlandish vision of how fragile it would be should someone choose to drive by with a machine gun, something I am sure came from a movie somewhere. In reality, the street is quiet, a few cars pass now and again, and a large American flag waves gently in a light breeze, standing directly in front of the building and a blue sign with gold lettering that reads "*City of Syracuse Police Department*" in a stately and elegant font. The entranceway, a civilian's first encounter with the building and the people who work there, consists of a high roofed lobby with a few large columns scattered throughout. The columns and the floor appear to be made of some kind of warm, brown marble. The effect is something like walking into the ballroom of an old mansion, except with vending machines.

The Public Safety Building (PSB) on State St. in downtown Syracuse is the central hub for the Syracuse Police Department. Officers answer roll call and pick up their patrol vehicles at the station on Erie Blvd., but the PSB is where they bring people to jail, where they complete paper work, where investigations and trainings take place, and where they encounter other officers, sometimes for the first time all shift. When I entered this building, I really had no idea how familiar

I would become with it. In a way, it is the centerpiece around which the force forms. Everything eventually leads back to this building, whether it is an individual under arrest, a piece of evidence to be analyzed, or an officer finishing up an investigation.

After my months of research immersed in police work and its culture, I've come to think of the PSB as almost the physical representation of the force itself; not merely its function, but its character. At first, it is striking, authoritative, impressive; marble columns evoking similar emotions to when a civilian sees an officer in uniform. But, behind the "Personnel Only" doors, or underneath the uniform, a different perspective emerges. No marble back here, just regular white walls and simple linoleum. Clusters of messy desks are placed haphazardly out in the common area, one with an open box of candy that looks like it was for a fundraiser. Officers fill the space with not only their trinkets, but also their conversations. Discussing the details of recent calls, showing off pictures of someone's new puppy, inquiring about who is retiring in the coming months. Papers shuffle and phones ring. If you close your eyes, you could be in any old office, really. It's not too terribly different. However, juxtaposed to these everyday work place amenities are the authority of matching uniforms, corkboards filled with flyers about the handling and disarming procedures of confiscated weapons, a television that constantly flicks between missing persons, reported robberies, and outstanding arrests. Much like the space around which they structure their shifts, police officers are constantly transitioning between the necessities of an everyday workplace and the realities of civil service.

Even though office life is a critical aspect of police work, it is neither the crux of the profession, nor the side most people associate with the job.

Perceptions of policing in any community come almost exclusively from when officers act in the line of duty, often the only part of police work civilians experience. As officers have often reminded me, a civilian in need of the police is having his or her worst day, but it is the officer's every day. The public interacts with and judges the police during crises and looks to people who have qualities that will better help them cope with them, like the physical strength necessary to apprehend someone who makes them feel unsafe and the authority to command others for their protection in times of conflict and confusion. Overwhelmingly, throughout history and today, these qualities, and thus police work, have been perceived as the domain of men.

As social attitudes have progressed, more women have entered the work force and become invaluable assets to the public sphere, but policing lags behind the curve with an average of only 12% female officers working at a local level (Langton 2010). Women have continually struggled to integrate themselves equally into the unique environment of police work. In a job so intricately linked to the public and public perception, civil service, and historically male-dominated duties, the reality of what role gender plays in the life of a police officer is multifaceted and often difficult to definitively state. Numbers so low, however, warrant further investigation as to the influence of gender in what is often conceived as a masculine environment. Officer Baker, with over 20 years of

experience working for the Syracuse Police Department conceived the difference like this:

One of the females who retired back in 98, she decided... 'Any female that can get to 20 years and retire has beaten the system,' she said, 'because it's not set up for women.' And that holds true to today. Because when women get hired here, if you're not already married and have children, chances are that they will, and when that happens, they have to take the time off. The burden usually falls to them for child rearing – taking nothing away from the men because more men are involved today than they were back then – but it still tends to be the onus is on the female. And so you're doing all that, and if you have any aspirations of maybe climbing the ladder, or rank, or different positions, you have to adjust for that, you have to take time out... And these are adjustments that men don't have to make. They can just come to work [and] go home. They take care of their houses and whatnot, but chances are they're not also dealing with different shifts, childcare issues, [a] sick child. So to me, I always thought that the statement was pretty interesting because I think it was very accurate and I think it holds true to today. I think we're progressing, but we're not bulldozing the place over.

As this officer reveals, gender is still a considerable factor in the greater picture of police work and in the individual lives of each officer because of the nature of the work and how it is perceived. Examining the ways in which female officers navigate their gender while performing this job not only offers insight into the

intricate workings of a modern day necessity, one many people conceive negatively or take for granted, but also reflects social attitudes surrounding gender.

Throughout this project, I have sought to answer a broad question and let those who experience the answer daily and know its intricacies best dictate the appropriate direction of more focused probing: how, if at all, does gender interact with police work? On a physical level, answers have centered on three aspects of an officer's career: how they navigate the structure of the force throughout their career, how and why they use force, and how they interact with their fellow officers. Expanding upon these three aspects, each in its own chapter, reveals more than the play-by-play interaction of gender and the police force; it shows, most critically, that officers consider the force and their work to be bigger than themselves and that women must adapt to the work, not the other way around. As Officer Baker stated, female officers are not "bulldozing the place over" because the work itself is both highly structured and highly necessary, meaning that sweeping changes would be ineffective and inefficient to its mission. Whether this has been ingrained by training or by a natural inclination and appreciation for the work, or both, is not something this work seeks to answer. What my research will show is how women compromise and adapt their gender, and thus their perceptions of themselves, to progress around old-world ideals. Therefore, while their progress is certainly substantial in many respects, it is also limited by the essentially immovable structure of the force and its ingrained ideals.

In order to demonstrate the progress of women, below is a short history of how they have advanced over time, and where they lag behind, followed by a literature review of similar officer gender studies and explanations of where my work challenges, reinforces, and redirects the current body of literature. I will conclude this chapter with a statement about how my work advances this greater literature and lead into my next chapter, a description of my research process and how I navigated the ethics of ethnographic research and my own bias.

Women's Progress in Policing

Historically, women have been underrepresented in the criminal justice system, but their involvement has fluctuated due to the economic needs and ideological barriers in the U.S. throughout the last century. The first female police employees began in the early 20th century but their roles expanded due to the need for labor during the First World War. Initially, women were only allowed to reach limited circles and positions which were viewed as extensions of their gender roles, like those associated with social services (Prenzler & Sinclair, 2013; Martin & Jurik, 2006). These initial forays created a space for women, but it was often in an unofficial capacity. Women performed their jobs unsworn and unranked, and they were paid less for it with fewer benefits (Prenzler & Sinclair, 2013). They were predominantly assigned as matrons, or individuals who cared for women and children in police custody, and lacked the authority to arrest, keeping them involved in police work but separate from the police structure (Archbold & Schulz, 2012).

The gendered hierarchy created by unofficial and underserved positions was not truly challenged until the 1960s and 1970s. By this time, the prosperity brought on by the post-World War II economy was fading, which allowed for previously glossed over social inequalities to be brought to the forefront of national debate, culminating in the first and second waves of the feminist movement (Martin & Jurik, 2006). Women fought for and gained key legal changes, including the 1964 Civil Rights Act, the Equal Pay Act of 1963, the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972, and several lawsuits filed and won against police departments for preventing women from gaining promotions to higher ranks despite their proven capabilities. Through legal action and social movement, women were able to change not only the prevailing social attitude towards women in the public sphere, but also critically the perception of women's roles within the criminal justice system itself (Martin & Jurik, 2006; Archbold & Schulz, 2012).

However, improved perception and social attitude does not necessarily translate to an increase in female employment nationwide. In the last two decades, the presence of women in law enforcement has increased overall, but only slightly and with some key discrepancies. As of 2008, the last year in which the Bureau of Justice Statistics accumulated national data on the number of female law enforcement officers, roughly 100,000 officers working at the federal, state, and local level were women (Langton 2010). While this number sounds large, it represents a small portion of the total law enforcement force: at the federal level, women only account for 15.2 percent of the work force, at the local level, 12

percent, and at the state level, a significant low of 6.5 percent. However, each level has increased its female work force from where it stood in 1987: 14 percent, 7.6 percent, and 3.8 percent respectively. Women also tend to be underrepresented in agencies that employ fewer than 500 officers, essentially reducing their presence by half (Langton 2010). The growth of gender equity within the force is obviously slow and, according to Prenzler and Sinclair, is expected to stagnate at around 30 percent in in the next decade (2013).

Previous Research

Numbers as low as 15 percent nationwide with no expected increase beg the question as to why women continue to be underrepresented in police work and what can be done to improve their status. Several studies throughout the 1990s and early 2000s have explored the presence and experience of female officers and how, if at all, gender affects their work, predominantly focusing on two key areas of police officer interactions: 1) how, if at all, gender affects their relations with other officers in the workplace; and 2) how, if at all, their behaviors as officers and the public's perception of them differ from those of male officers. Below, I will present a broad overview of the research compiled on female officer experiences and behavior in order to demonstrate the body of research in which my work will fit. I will also expand upon a few key studies in order to highlight important theories and discrepancies within the larger body of research.

Looking first at the workplace interactions and perceptions of female officers, several studies have found that women tend to experience difficulty and discrimination upon entering the police force, both in everyday office life and in

job advancement. Policing is still considered a male dominated field, and as such, the value of officers is based on characteristics associated with masculinity, like physical strength and authority, conceived in terms of the use of threats and demands (Archbold & Schulz, 2012). Studies performed in the late 1970s and early 1980s explored this idea and found mixed results. While some male officers believed that women were not physically strong enough to perform police duties (Hindman, 1975; Vega & Silverman, 1982), others believed that women were equally as capable as male officers (Bloch & Anderson, 1974; Morash & Greene, 1986). Similarly, research into female officer acceptance by fellow female officers offered mixed results; some studies found female officers distancing themselves from their peers in order to fit in better with male counterparts while others found fellow female officers as a source of support (Archbold & Schulz, 2012). However, social attitudes and perceptions of women in the workplace have advanced significantly in the last 30 years, thus studies which are more up-to-date are necessary to examine if results remain mixed or if the effects of social progress have affected female officers' status within the work place.

In 2009, Poteyeva and Sun compiled a comprehensive literature review that looks at the entire body of quantitative research on gender and police work in order to solidify the basis for existing theoretical explanations of gendered differences in police work, thus allowing them to grow, and provide succinct and justified evidence for the poorly supported though often touted claim that women on the police force benefit the community in a unique way. The debate about gendered attitudes can be categorized into two frameworks: sameness, or the idea

that without social historical influence and the disadvantage of low numbers, women would act and be treated no differently than men, or difference, the idea that gender does shape attitudes and thus influences individual characteristics and on-the-job decision making. The literature review looks at 33 articles that use empirical evidence, the majority of which were published in the 1990s. On the whole, it found that the literature revealed very little attitudinal difference between genders, meaning the theory of difference had little support in police officer experience. However, the evidence did show a gendered difference in the attitudes toward the role of police and job-related stress, sighting men's perception and treatment of female officers as physically weak and unfit for police work as a cause for discrimination, isolation, and low job satisfaction for female officers. The review also shows that the most effective recruitment tools for female officers have been affirmative action and the implementation of a standardized academy and field training, which have helped women not only to enter the force but also to demonstrate their equal ability while encourage hiring more women in order to help reduce stress in the work environment (Poteyeva & Sun, 2009). The overview of gender related police studies provides an overall picture of the experience of female police officers on the force and the ways in which gender interacts with their work environment. However, it is necessary to examine other characteristics that may affect workplace experiences as much, if not more, than gender.

One study in particular by Stroshine and Brandl (2011) used Kanter's theory of tokenism to explore female officers' experiences in the work place.

According to Kanter, a “token” is an individual who possesses a characteristic that comprises less than 15 percent of an entire group, like women in the police force, and because of this low representation experience social and occupational problems in the work place. Kanter found that females in non-traditional gender roles experience hardship in three specific ways: visibility, or feeling the need to work twice as hard as their counterparts in order to prove themselves; contrast, or the exaggeration of difference that results in the isolation of individuals in the token group; and assimilation, or relegating women to stereotypical positions, positions perceived as “women’s work”, that typically receive less pay and prestige. Yoder further expanded the theory in a later study to show that women face this hardship not simply because they are small in number, but more critically because they are women in non-traditional roles, and gender denotes a certain status in U.S. society and organizations. While the theory is somewhat limited in its analysis as it only examines one factor that could affect possible work place hardships, it has received much praise in examining the experiences of women in what Kanter calls “gender-inappropriate” roles like policing. In their empirical study that took place in 2004, Strohine and Brandl applied the theory of tokenism to women, specifically minority women who represent an even smaller portion of the police force nationwide, working in the Milwaukee Police Department in order to determine if Kanter’s ideas of tokenism were experienced by female police officers and if it was experienced differently by Latino female police officers. They found that both gender and race were responsible for tokenism and, while race was a greater indicator than gender, all token groups

experienced Kantor's three designations of tokenism to some degree, negatively affecting their ability to perform on the job. The researchers suggest that restricting the use of crude and disrespectful language, distributing promotional opportunities with an eye for gender and race equality, and the use of more positive and constructive feedback are possible methods to reduce the effects of tokenism and improve tokens' experiences in the police force (Stroshine & Brandl, 2011). This study demonstrates that when studying female officers in police work, it is critical to consider a multitude of characteristics, like social pressure, meaning the perceived or actual pressure that minority group members experience to perform their jobs to higher standards than majority group members, representation at all levels of the police hierarchy and throughout the force as a whole, the perception that any officer can achieve a higher rank, and the impact of race, which may play a role as or more important than gender itself in defining their work place experiences and perceptions. My study found considerable validity to Kanter's ideas of tokenism, particularly in terms of isolation and visibility. However, my study shows more critically that it is not merely the low presence of women, but also the high structure of the force preventing them from accessing the few peers with whom they identify that truly defines a token's experience.

In addition to how women interact with and are perceived by their colleagues in the workplace, it is also critical to see if gender affects how women perceive themselves and monitor their own actions on the force. One study performed by Morash and Haarr (2011) chose to examine this question by looking

at the gender identity of female police officers as they compared themselves to male counterparts. Morash and Haarr defined gender identity among female police officers through the concept of “doing gender”, meaning how an individual acts and interacts with others may either reinforce or challenge common conceptions of gender and define how she identifies herself. In their study, Morash and Haarr explore the theory that in doing gender, policewomen act in such a way as to blend the stereotypical gender identities in order to create new kinds of femininity for their roles as officers. Interviewing female officers from a wide range of ranks and races, the researchers addressed three key areas of experience: identity at work, gender and racial solidarity at work, and discrimination in police work. The researchers found that, while many women did differentiate themselves from their male counterparts in their actions as officers, most did not agree on the specific differences or see this as some kind of disadvantage for either gender. Some women believed characteristics they associated with their femininity actually improved their job performance (e.g. “motherliness”, communication, compassion, “nosiness”), reversing the typical gender hierarchy. Additionally, many women found gender differences negligible in aspects of their work, seeing actions as more of a result of similar training and individual characteristics. The researchers also found ethnicity and race to correlate to some aspects of how women perceived their identities, suggesting that cultural influences are a key part of identity that should be further examined. Women also resisted stereotypes, blending qualities they saw as positive and associated with both genders in their own work performance to highlight their

enhanced capabilities (Morash and Haarr, 2011). As the researchers demonstrate, women's perceptions of their gender and if/how it affects their work is key to understanding the experiences of female officers on today's force. My study also examines the impact of identity and how women perceive themselves and their role on the force, supporting Morash and Haarr's conclusion that women employed qualities they associated with their gender and blended different identities in order to police effectively; however, in my study, women did not perceive gender as negligible and did not perceive themselves as "better" officers, but rather as acting on their strength and abilities given each situation they encountered.

While analyzing the workplace interactions of female officers offers insight into the role of gender on the police force, perhaps even more critical, and thus further studied, are the ways in which gender affects decision-making and behavior while on the job. When women first entered the force, studies of officer competency dominated the research field, distinctly proving that female officers were equally as competent as their male counterparts (Archbold & Schulz, 2012). As the research moved towards more specific and intricate aspects of female officers' behaviors on the force, it found that male officers tend to make more arrests and issue more citations than females, but that no difference was found in female and male decision making during encounters with suspects (Archbold & Schulz, 2012). However, results on whether gender affects the use of force and decision making have been mixed, particularly in the case of sex related violence,

one of the more contentious aspects of gender in police work (Archbold & Schulz, 2012).

Ever since women entered into policing, many studies have examined the role of gender in police officer attitudes and decision making on the job and returned varied, and sometimes conflicting, results. As McCarthy (2013) discusses, female officers are often assigned to or choose to work in areas that are perceived as extensions of their “nature”, such as child protection, social service activities, and what is termed “soft” policing. “Soft” policing, or community policing, is made up of various proactive and service-oriented practices that build a relationship with the community in order to prevent crime. Typically, this type of policing has been simultaneously disdained by the police hierarchy which values control, authority, and active policing and deemed the area where female officers can have the greatest success. McCarthy’s study examined the identities and roles of female officers in community policing initiatives undertaken in two cities in the UK that focused on a preventative, multi-agency, and collaborative approach to policing. In order to demonstrate the effectiveness of “soft” strategies, officers had to challenge and subvert the dominant police culture by reframing preventative policies as pragmatic tools that produced effective and efficient results, two concepts highly valued within police culture. The process assigned both male and female officers to soft policing assignments, such as family visits and the removal of children from homes, with equal consideration for gender, but generated gendered results in terms of motivation. Female officers were more likely to see their role in soft policing doing a moral duty first while

male officers carried out the policies with sympathy and care, but sighted crime prevention as their primary motivation. Critically, despite differing viewpoints and motivations, both genders of officer were able to adapt and legitimize their perspectives on the project to the police culture and achieve positive results.

There is also some research to suggest that the promotion and success of “soft” policing has allowed for a restructuring of police culture in order to include and value the “femininity” of community oriented preventive care and thus the female officer (McCarthy, 2013).

Rabe-Hemp, however, expands and critiques the research on the association of female police and “soft” behavior in an empirical study by incorporating situational factors into the study. Situational factors are the aspects of any police encounter that are individual to each specific case, like individual characteristics of the suspects and victims, the previous experience of the officer, the behavior of the suspects and victims during their interactions with the officer, the presence of supervisors, and the expectations of the officer. Rabe-Hemp examines whether any of these factors create a different reaction on the part of officers because of their identification with the situation or their feelings of pressure to act a certain way. Drawing on the concept of the “feminine worldview”, or the idea that women see situations and possess certain skills because they are women, Rabe-Hemp examined the use of forceful (associated with masculinity) and supporting (associated with femininity) behaviors and the situations under which they were used by female officers in order to examine how gender impacts a wide array of police behaviors, whether the nature of the

assignments given to officers can explain gender differences, and the role of situational factors in gendered police behavior. The study found mixed results. Women typically used extreme controlling behaviors (e.g. threats, arrest, physical restraints) less than their male counterparts as research has shown, but only when situational factors were controlled for. The reduced use of force by females, though criticized by some as dangerous and ineffective policing, is actually believed to reduce issues of excessive force and negative police-public relations. Reduced use of force is partly explained by the fact that female officers are more likely to be assigned as community policing officers, thus engaging in fewer situations that required extreme controlling behaviors, and the ethics of care theory, or that women are more likely to employ empathy and negotiation. Female officers were also found to be less susceptible to situational factors than their male counterparts. Critically, female officers were also found less likely to use supporting behaviors than male officers, contradicting several previous studies, but employed more verbal and psychological methods of control (Rabe-Hemp, 2008). The study emphasizes the role of factors outside of gender that can affect how other officers and citizens perceive the role of female police officers on the force while also disassociating female officers from the world of strict “feminine policing” or supporting behaviors. This provides an important viewpoint that forces the study of female police officers to categorize actions by broader criteria than gender alone and reexamine the association of female officers and “supporting” or “softer” behaviors. My study follows some aspects of Rabe-Hemp’s analysis of the use of force by examining how and when women

choose to employ forms of force, but expands the study to look at how factors like public perception of female officers and women's perception of the reality of differences in physical strength affect their choices surrounding force.

Within this field of research, many studies focus on the actions and decisions of female officers in cases that involve sexual violence, namely for two reasons: first, since women are the victims in the majority of cases, research has explored the belief that female officers may process and judge sexual assault cases differently than male officers (e.g. more likely to make an arrest, more likely to believe victims, less likely to believe rape myths), and second, female officers are more frequently assigned to sexual assault cases as they are expected to be more sensitive to female victims. While it is important to note that situational factors surrounding the assault, the suspect, and the victim also affect decision-making, the role of personal characteristics of the officer, including gender, in assessing sexual violence cases also needs to be examined. Alderden and Ullman (2012) used empirical data gathered from 328 assault cases in order to determine gender's impact on the process of justice, hypothesizing that female detectives would be more sensitive to the claims and more likely to make an arrest. However, their findings showed that men more frequently chose to arrest suspects in cases of sexual assault and women were often harsher than men in dealing with victims. This calls into question the gendered hiring and assigning of female officers to deal with female victims in order to improve public relations and suggests that officers need to be professionally evaluated through multiple lenses (Alderden & Ullman, 2012).

The concept that women typically show less leniency, even aggression, towards members of their own sex who have been victimized has been titled the Intra-Female Gender Hostility Thesis (IFGHT) (Batchelder, Koski, & Byxbe, 2004). The theory becomes particularly problematic when dealing with female officers, as their constant exposure to rape and rape stories can begin to lessen each story's credibility, resulting in victim blaming and fewer arrests by female officers, something Wentz and Archbold (2012) sought to test through a qualitative and quantitative study of officers' rape beliefs. While the study upheld the IFGHT to a certain degree in that female officers expressed less belief in the credibility of rape cases than male officers, it found no difference between the rape perceptions of male and female officers (Wentz & Archbold, 2012). Studies frequently focus on hypotheses concerning female to female interaction in police work when examining the gender and policing, thus it is a key aspect to acknowledge, however it is not a major focus of my study. My research is focused internally, on the inner-workings of the police force and how women navigate it. It has the potential to be expanded into an examination of the external ramifications of the internal design of police work, but that is not within the scope of this study.

Why This Study?

As is evident, research has analyzed the role of gender in policing through a plethora of lenses, coming to often divergent conclusions. My study presents a new lens by looking at the issue of gender through an ethnographic study. The majority of previous studies have been quantitative and empirical, based on

surveys, research, and numbers. My study will enhance this information because it adds the dimension of action. Observing and interviewing officers as they perform their gender and their work and experiencing interactions and behaviors through their eyes provides a deeper level of understanding. Obviously, my ethnographic research is more qualitative than its predecessors, thus it is richer in detail and necessarily less straightforward. However, the complexity of it will help to enlighten current and future police departments about the reality of gender in policing and how best to bring forces to a gender ratio that is more reflective of the communities in which they work. Another benefit is simply in the timing; many of the more detailed studies took place in the 1990s or earlier. My work provides a reference to see if and how gender in policing is progressing compared to the progression of social attitudes over time.

CHAPTER TWO

The Premise: Methodology, Bias, and Ethics

Syracuse: Female Officers in a Small, Local Environment

My choice to use the Syracuse Police Force for this study started primarily as one of access. One year prior to my research, I completed an ethnographic analysis of the relationship between women in the Syracuse community and the Syracuse police, with the desire to interview female civilians who had extremely positive and helpful police encounters and female civilians who experienced any kind of police brutality. As a part of this study, I interviewed six officers of the police force, three male, three female, to discuss their side of the relationship. While the officers spoke about how they believed themselves to be perceived in the community and the range of their experiences with women, it became evident that the police work itself existed in a subculture that could not fully be explained in the course of six interviews where the focus was external. Having always had an interest in the experience of gender, I reached out to the female officer who had coordinated my initial research to see if the force would be interested in taking the project in a new, internal direction. As I immersed myself in this organization, the structure, demographics, and experiences of women on the force revealed how women embody and are perceived in shifting identities that adapt to specific needs of police work.

The Syracuse Police Force is classified as “paramilitary”, meaning key aspects of the organization, including its training, system of hierarchy, and use of force, mirror aspects of the national armed forces. In order to join the police force,

individuals must take the civil service exam and pass the Police Academy. This creates a unique job environment that is equal parts the duty of civil service, like the camaraderie of shared experience, training, and use of weapons, and equal parts everyday workplace activity, like filing paperwork, earning retirement benefits, and getting lunch with co-workers, even if that lunch is at 3 AM. The environment is also highly structured in division of labor and hierarchy, both of which interact with gender in ways that affect women differently than men.

A police officer's workday is based around divisions and shifts, while a police officers' career is structured around rank. The patrol division, the face of the police in the community, is where every officer begins his or her career after the Academy. As one officer states, "It all starts out of patrol. That's who's responding to that first call, that makes that follow-up happen." Over 150 officers work collectively to be a constant presence in all areas of the city 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The day is divided into three shifts: first platoon, also known as Midnights, which operates from 10 or 11 PM until 6 or 7 AM, second platoon, or Days, which operates from 6 or 7 AM until 2 or 3 PM, and third platoon, or Thirds, which operates from 2 or 3 PM until 10 or 11 PM. Starting times are staggered in order to make sure there are police officers in the community at every moment. Additionally, police work is structured around a paramilitary hierarchy. The highest rank, the Chief of Police, and the people directly under him, the Deputy Chiefs of Police, answer to the mayor of Syracuse and the City Council. The next highest rank is Captain, followed by Lieutenant, Sergeant, and then Police Officer. All officers answer directly to the rank above them, unless a

smaller division is headed by a Lieutenant or Sergeant who answers directly to the Chiefs. Officers advance through the ranks by taking the promotional civil service test, the highest score receiving the next available promotion. The scores are valid until another test is offered, usually about 1-3 years.

The strict structure of the force requires significant adaptation for all its members, male or female, but requires specific lifestyle, identity, and attitude fluidity on the part of women, particularly if they want to advance in and become part of their work environment. Structure and, more critically, the way that the organization is perceived as bigger than the individual, are key aspects of police work that interact with the gender of officers. Women adapt to this environment physically, mentally, and emotionally in distinct ways in order to advance in a field which, to this day, is still ultimately associated with male ideals.

As of March, 2014, the Syracuse Police Department has a total of 434 officers policing a 144,170 person city (Syracuse (city), New York, 2012). Syracuse's population, however, is far from homogenous. People who live here range in economic class, racial background, and cultural identity. Focusing specifically on the latter two, 56% of residents are white, 29.5% are African American, and 8.3% are Hispanic; additionally, 11.1% are not native citizens of the U.S. and 16.8% speak a language other than English in their homes (Syracuse (city), New York, 2012). However, despite efforts, the police force does not align with this diversity, something officers are acutely aware of:

The Chief's goal, from what I've been told, is that he wants the department to reflect the community more. So he's working on getting

more – any minority officers – because we are predominantly white male, like is stereotypical for law enforcement agencies...I want to say we probably have 50+ females out of 400 and... close to 450, 440s. The black population in the department is ridiculous...I want to say it's less than 10%...I think we have one or two Asians on the department, Hispanics are even worse than blacks I believe.

While it is impractical and impossible to assure that the police force perfectly reflects the diversity of the community it serves, there is an inherent value in having a significant portion of your force able to identify and work with any and all citizens who may call them for help. When looking at the numbers specifically, the unequal ratios of the SPD are blatant. Of 434 officers on the force, 350, or roughly 81% are white males. Additionally, there are 23 African American male officers, 5 Hispanic, and 2 Asian, bringing the total percentage of males on the force up to 88%. The percentage of non-white, male officers on the force is less than the total percentage of Hispanic people living in the city. And, despite a population that is 52.3% female (Syracuse (city), New York, 2012), the entire Syracuse Police Department only has 54 female officers: 45 are white, 7 are African American, and 2 are Hispanic, making up only 12% of the force. While this is on par with the national average of policing at the local level, it is completely out of line with the demographics of the city itself. The police exist to serve the community, but do not reflect the community, complicating internal and external relationships.

Methodology and Bias

The true value of ethnography lies in the depth of first person experience, the richness of detail, and the multifaceted and layered perspectives it reveals. However, it is limited in the sense that it is perceived through my personal understanding and, unless addressed, tempered by my own bias. While I sought to engage officers in gender-focused conversation, as both a female and someone who studies gender relations, I constantly addressed my own actions during the research in order to make them less of an influence in the work and its results. The key aspect of this process was assuring that my interest in gender equality and my understanding of gender relations in my own life and studies did not distort the reality of gender's role on the force. I do not assume that officers experience discrimination in the workplace just because I believe it is prevalent; I observe and probe their interactions and the circumstances surrounding them from all possible angles and then analyze the results. It is also critical to recognize what my research actually says; what it shows is unique to women on the force, is unique to an individual officer, or is part of every officer's experience. While I might be tempted to say my sample speaks for the females in the SPD, in reality my sample speaks for itself and through what its members and I experience, I can draw likely conclusions as to how gender fits into the greater structure of the force. The perspectives I present in this work are those of the officers and I seek to maintain the truth of their voices throughout my analysis.

The process of creating this work started with a population of 54, the entirety of the female police force in Syracuse. The sample was evenly divided

between women who work “in the building”, the PSB, every day and those who work patrol. However, since every officer began her career on patrol and patrol is where officers perform the aspects of their job that involve using force, decision making, and interacting with other officers, time on the road is a centerpiece of every officers’ experience and my interviews. For my sample, I interviewed 9 different officers, or one sixth of the entire population, in both formal and informal settings. The four formal interviews lasted from 45 minutes to a full hour and were held in the officer’s office or area she worked. They were conducted in privacy to reduce any issues of social pressure about their answers as much possible and all interview participants were informed of their confidentiality. Interviews generally began with some demographic questions about time on the force, how my subject’s career in police work started, what previous exposure and expectations she had before becoming an officer, and traced through various stages of her career in a convoluted train of grand and mini tours. Each of these four interviews was later transcribed and coded based on patterns I determined through my own experience, analysis of key works of literature as described in the previous chapter, and close analysis of the transcription.

Additionally, I completed 5 separate sessions of informal interviews and participant observation. The Syracuse Police Force allows for “ride-alongs” or civilians to sit in a car with an officer on patrol during his or her shift. Each shift is 8 hours long and I rode with an officer for anywhere between half and the full shift. Depending on the day and the area we worked, officers would be jumping from call to call or attending the occasional call between long stretches of

downtime. Each shift had its high crime times, like when businesses open around 9 AM on Days and when people starting heading home after a night out between 2 and 3 AM on Midnights, but every day on the job is different, something all the officers seemed to appreciate. During breaks, when we were either driving or waiting out somewhere in the city, I would ask officers some of my interview questions or about their thoughts on specific calls we had attended. Unless there was a weapon or suspicious person at a call, officers were more than willing to allow me to wait patiently in the background of a call while they handled various duties. I documented as much as possible in fieldnotes on my cellphone, then fleshed out the notes from memory upon my return to a computer. Repeating the process I performed on my transcriptions, I further coded my notes to understand the context of each officer's thoughts and behaviors. Using these codes, I then discovered how officers' actions and stories fit into larger patterns I was interpreting, whether through viewpoints that reinforced, redirected, or challenged general sentiment in the interviews and observations. Through the process of long exposure, deep conversation, and detailed analysis, I have been able to conclude how gender affects the officers I interacted with and draw conclusions about gender on a larger scale within the force.

Ethics

The Syracuse Police Force does an incredibly difficult and dangerous job 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and I am beyond grateful to the officers for offering me so much of their time and so much of themselves. By no means did they have to devote hours of their workday to explaining police procedure and

their personal experiences to an anthropology student from SU. This report will be shared with them upon its completion with my sincerest thanks to all the officers who helped make it a reality and the hope that they find value in it for the future of women on the force. With this in mind, I have taken certain precautions to protect the individual officers involved because the focus should and will remain on their experience and how to interpret it, not how to identify them.

Confidentiality has been paramount throughout the research and will continue to be so throughout the report. Complete confidentiality of who I interviewed on the force was not possible as my initial contact put me in touch with fellow officers, but wherever possible, I separated, or removed, names and the information associated with them. The population of women on the force is small, the number of women on patrol smaller, meaning that even when mentioning other ride-alongs and interviews I completed on different shifts, most female officers knew immediately to whom I had spoken. In order to balance this, no information any officer discussed in a ride-along or interview was ever brought up in conjunction with their identity; any question I derived from interviews with officers were phrased along the lines of "I'm sensing that.." in order to keep the information focused on the topic and myself as the source, not the individuals who initially presented it.

Additionally, given how small the network of women is, I have chosen not to reveal any other forms of identifying information in this report, including specific numbers of years on the force, rank, and race. There are only six female officers with a rank higher than Police Officer, one per Deputy Chief, Captain,

and Lieutenant, and 3 Sergeants, and only 9 female officers of non-white heritage, meaning any specific information on these topics is almost the same as stating an officer's name. I will say that my sample consisted of a diversity of experience and rank and a slight diversity of race. Where possible and helpful, I will give ranges of numbers to enforce points and assign a pseudonym to an officer if having the ability to refer to her clarifies a story or point and is valuable to the greater purpose of the work.

Finally, any and all material generated from my research, including my fieldnotes, interview recordings, transcripts, coding sheets, and keys to pseudonyms and codes, are kept constantly in my possession. Pieces were shared with my advisor, but never complete documentation that would have allowed for identification.

CHAPTER THREE

At the End of the Day, I'm Mom: Navigating Gender and Structure in Police Work

Introduction: Entering Police Work

In police work, every officer is accountable. Whether it is to their community, their supervisors, their wingmen, or their own personal goals, officers must seek to appease any multitude of wills that constantly influence their day-to-day routines. While it may make for a complex work environment and a web of social connections to navigate, it also makes every day different, something almost all the women in my sample loved about their job. However, this network of diversity is built upon an incredibly defined structure, both vertically and horizontally. Vertically, there is the structure of rank: a defined hierarchy that requires specific milestones to be achieved in order to reach the next rung of the ladder with every member reporting to the level directly above him or her. Horizontally, there is the structure of time, particularly on patrol: the work week for patrol officers runs on a four on, two off system. For example, if an officer begins a work week on a Monday, they will work their shift every day through until Thursday, have Friday and Saturday off, and then begin their shift again on Sunday, repeating a six day cycle, not a seven day one as is typical of the rest of the community. In order to have officers available all days of the week, not every officer operates on the same six day cycle, meaning officers can be on different schedules than both their colleagues and the community. To add further structure

to their routine, days on patrol are broken into three 8-hour shifts with very little overlap. The structure divides officers by both time and skill, frequently isolating them from those around them, while the diversity forces them to adapt themselves and their perspectives to the needs of each particular situation.

For female officers, the act of navigating the structure of the force and performing the necessities of their job also becomes an act of navigating and shifting their gender. Despite progress in percentages, ultimately police work is still perceived to be a male domain, even by the women who currently work within it. More so than other professions, police work is an identity as much as it is a job, one that has specific perceptions and expectations of masculinity. Given my sample, it appears that the majority of women see police work as men's work and themselves as being able to adapt to that identity. One officer describes her affinity for police work, stating, "Growing up I was always on sports teams, always the athlete, so I was comfortable being around other guys." And, more specifically, another officer states:

I was a tomboy growing up. I was – this is going to sound odd – my brother had been a two-time All-American wrestler for Syracuse, so I was always really involved with the sport of wrestling. So I became a wrestling manager, and I was a wrestling manager up at SU too. So I mean I was always around men, you know, my brothers, so I sort of developed that sense of humor.

Here, we see typical associations with male identities and the way women connect to them. Sports and athleticism are often characterized as the male domain, much

like police work. Women displaying how they fit into and identify with these larger ideals of maleness is one way in which they adapt their gender to integrate themselves into police work. Thinking of themselves as tomboys and being able to appreciate the male sense of humor are common themes throughout the experiences of women on the force. Additionally, a third of my sample spoke of coming from “police families” where either close relatives or parents served on the force. Interestingly, however, each officer identified a male figure as the individual who initially introduced her to police work, a father or an uncle. While this makes sense historically, as there simply were not as many female police officers in that generation, it is also key that the women identified with the male figure in their household, speaking to an overall affinity and understanding of male qualities and identities. However, female officers cannot simply play the male part in order to fit into the police world, especially since they will continue to be perceived as females first by some members of the community and the force. More critically, they have roles to play outside of their workplace which, because of its physical nature and strict structure, prevent women from simply being officers. They are policewomen and that has a particular connotation, its own difficult identity, and complex interactions to navigate.

In order to operate in this environment, women have had to show that they are capable in their own right, as women, but also capable within the immovable structure of the force. A key aspect of the latter is the Police Academy training and Civil Service Test, both of which act as equalizers for perceptions surrounding gender. Every single individual must pass both the Civil Service Test

and the Police Academy before he or she becomes a police officer. Despite the fact that women were underrepresented in past Academy classes, with a minimum of one and a maximum of six female members in classes numbering in the high 20s to the low 40s, the value of shared experience and the process of accomplishing it as a unit equalizes members of the class, facilitating initial entries into the force:

I think it's a good testing process to get through the Academy. You get through defensive tactics...[and] a crimes in progress section where we actually re-create different scenarios that recruits have to go through before they graduate I think that helps. And then three months of FTO [Field Training Officer] where you're with the senior officer so that's where you would be weeded out if you were going to be – I don't want to use the word coward, but if you are going to be not able to do the job or you are going to be afraid or physically not able to do the job.

The weeding out process is highly valuable in that it gives the accomplishments of the Academy, and the recruits who earn them, greater respect and elevates all successful members to the level of a police officer and not merely a male or female recruit:

I think there were six of us initially that were hired and one girl quit after the first day and so you kind of get, you know, that's what you're measured up to. But pretty quickly the class kind of came together. You kind of knew who everybody was and what you could expect. And there was definitely more of a bonding experience so it wasn't so much guy and

girl, it was your Academy mates, so as long as you were holding your own. Like I said, you know, the first girl, who couldn't do the half-mile run, you know, she kind of – I think stereotypically they said, "Well it's 'cause she's a girl," but I think as time went on that became less of an issue.

However, the identity of officer cannot completely eclipse the identity of women. Academy mates may have grown throughout the process with each other, but the reality of the rest of the force, with even more males, greater experience, and old-world perspectives, comes into play. As one officer recounts in a description of her first month of FTO (Field Training Officer) with a particular officer:

When I first came on and I was being FTO'd, the officer who FTO'd me had 17 years on at the time and he told me straight out in the car that he didn't believe females should be in police work. Now this is back in 88 when I graduated and ...I looked at him and I said, "Yes I've heard that." So now he gets defensive and he says, "Well, it doesn't mean that I don't like you, it's just that – I just don't think that females belong in this profession." And I said, "Well, you know, you're entitled to believe what you want. I don't agree with it." So, you know, to his credit, we never had any issues. I never had a feeling that he was trying to undermine me or downgrade my performance to get rid of me. I think he was fair, quite frankly. I think he had a point; I think if you met that point, he gave you the credit you deserved whether you were male or female. It was his personal view and thankfully he worked through it and I wasn't penalized

because of it. But that was told to me straight out at that time...[but] I never had any officer where I felt – made me feel that I was lacking or my performance was being rated because I was a female. I can't say that – I know that there are other females that have had that happen, but I was very fortunate and I don't know why. I don't know.

Here, the officer presents two interesting intersections of police work and gender. First, she reveals the difference of time and age. Individuals who have a significant amount of years on the force and maintain old-world perspectives were consistently referred to as “dinosaurs” by my sample and always in the context of their difficulty accepting or working with female officers. Second, she suggests the idea that the force as a whole and its needs are bigger than the individual officers. Police work is often viewed from a wider perspective or as a great body: *the police*. The ways in which women fit into this mass workforce, are perceived within it, and adapt to it are all critical aspects of how structure and gender interact.

Women have advanced around these perceptions so that they identify equally as women, as communicators, mothers, and empathizers, and equally as police officers, as thick-skinned law enforcers, tough-guys, and protectors. Throughout this paper, I will explore the ways in which women balance, blend, and adapt these equally important identities in order to do their jobs effectively within a predominantly male environment in terms of both demographics and ideologies. In this chapter, I will expand on how the vertical and horizontal structure of the force interacts with the personal lives and thus gender identity of

women, showing how it can isolate women and create barriers to advancement and how women, as a collective and as individuals, navigate themselves within these identities.

Pregnancy in Police Work

The structure of police work is a balancing act between personal and professional needs for every officer regardless of gender; however, women must navigate an additional layer in this puzzle because of their roles as child-bearers and mothers. Of the officers I spoke with, two-thirds were in long-term committed relationships or married, and two-thirds, comprised of a slightly different set of individuals, had children and went through at least one of their pregnancies on the force. Two officers were navigating the difficulties of simultaneously being single mothers and officers, while two other officers had children, but they were not the children of their current partners. Women also mentioned the difficulties of maintaining these relationships, both with their children and their partners, because of the constraints of structure on their personal lives. While every officer acknowledged that times have changed and men play a larger role in family care than they ever have before and must also face this challenge to a certain degree, the officers had the general consensus that it was more complicated and more prevalent for women.

First and foremost, women are biologically child-bearers. While men have begun to play a greater role in child care and child rearing, pregnancy is still pregnancy. As one officer put it, “I’m the only one in my relationship that can carry a child. You know, I would abdicate it if I could, but I can’t. So if I want to

have a child, I have to do it.” However, pregnancy as a police officer is more complex than for most working women just because of the nature and the structure of the work. As it currently stands, SPD does not have an official pregnancy policy, but it has “always been very accepting once a female and her doctor decide that she should not be on the road for her to be able to come in and work light duty.” This means that, when women are ready to tell their supervisors about their pregnancy, they are taken off the road (in the case of patrol) and placed on desk duty within the building. Not establishing a definitive pregnancy protocol creates two interesting gender dynamics. First, women must balance their personal feelings about themselves as mothers and their duty as officers in order to come to a decision that is in the interest of both identities. The ability to make this choice on their own gives them the freedom to define their identity within the realms of these two spectrums, as both a mother and a police officer. One officer’s thought process was:

You’re in law enforcement. You could be getting punched in the stomach, whatever, which, again, probably won’t affect the fetus, but when you’re a new mom, you don’t know, and you could be put in a deadly physical force situation. And you got to kind of balance between, “oh, well I got to take care of two people now” versus “is it worth it for me, I don’t want to affect my performance in the field.” ...The first time I think I waited three months and then I waited a little longer the second time knowing that I was going to be in a light-duty position and probably bored out of my mind sitting behind a desk

In the SPD, women decide how and when to prioritize their personal life and their professional life which means they are constantly assessing and shifting between different identities. As the officer shows, personal identification, preferences, and experience in the needs of being a mother and being a police officer play a considerable role in the decision making process when it comes to pregnancy:

As a new mom you're like paranoid, so most of them, as soon as they find out, they call somebody. I think once you get to the second or third, you're like "I know I'm going to – whatever, be sitting behind a desk, so I'm going to wait a little longer this time" but it is all personal once you know what you're in for.

Second, women become somewhat isolated. Many women do not have a strong role model for how to address pregnancy in their job because of overall low numbers in the force and particularly low numbers in a supervisory capacity. So while they may still consider themselves "one of the guys", males simply cannot empathize or act as a support on a comparable level when it comes to pregnancy. There is almost no situation in which men have to completely adjust their professional performance to the same extent as a pregnant woman, and there are very few females from which to draw experience and advice. This complicates the relationship between men and women and between women and each other on the force. One of the few female officers who had advanced through the ranks addressed this concern:

I was the only female in my academy class, more and more females came in the Academy classes after me, so I went through my pregnancies and

really only had [two female supervisors] to ask anything about and, being on Midnights and third platoon, there was no role model in patrol. So now these girls, I fielded like three phone calls, you know “What do I do? I just found out that I’m pregnant,” so I actually was the unofficial liaison for letting the supervisors know that there was a female officer that had to come off the road and [we] had to find a light-duty assignment for them.

Here, when the resources are available, we can see that the needs of the female in the workplace can fit into the structure of the police force. Women are seeking their immediate superiors with similar experiences and goals in order to facilitate the process of integrating gender into the structure of the force. However, when this resource is cut off by a lack of female leadership, the structure which could have assisted their advancement of personal and professional goals then becomes a method of isolation. Women lack guidance with how to manage their pregnancy within the structure of the force and, while the SPD is amenable to their needs and works with them, women still face barriers due to the conflict of their personal needs, particularly if more women want to continue breaking the glass ceiling in police work:

If you have any aspirations of maybe climbing the ladder or rank or different positions, you have to adjust for that, you have to take time out. Like right now, I think there’s four women who are pregnant and so you know those are – you’re losing them off the road. But when they’re done, they’re done, they go back, and these are adjustments that men don’t have to make. They can just come to work, go home. They take care of their

houses and whatnot, but chances are they're not also dealing with different shifts, childcare issues, [a] sick child.

As previously mentioned , and as this officer reiterates, there is no comparable male experience to pregnancy; even illness and injury, though obviously difficult and requiring special circumstances, does not require the same adjustments as pregnancy. Policing is a dangerous job and officers, both male and female, receive injuries, something the force has been managing since its inception. Managing pregnancy has only come about with the slowly rising numbers of women in the ranks. It is a uniquely female experience that has to fit into the greater structure of the force and requires a significant amount of identity shifts between identities of “mother”, “pregnant woman”, “pregnant officer”, and “policewomen” to name a few. Additionally, an officer emphasizes that the “progress” women have made in the police force is subject to the progress women can make in society:

Men and women are still men and women, and everybody has their roles.

As much as we've evolved.... at the end of the day, I'm mom. I have to worry about making sure my daughter's hair is done just right for her

clarinet recital, we go for manicures and pedicures. ...At the same time I put [my uniform] on every day and when I wear my uniform, I have

combat boots and I love my combat boots, most comfortable thing ever.

So it's a balancing act...I mean there's always a give but...you have to be able to figure out what sacrifices are doable for you

As the officer explains, women continue to represent larger portions of the workforce, but that has not lessened their roles as caregivers and mothers. While difficult in almost any profession, managing double workloads in terms of a career and a family in police work is particularly complicated because of the nature of the job. Police work requires long shifts that are inconveniently scheduled to the rest of the community and consists of physical, dangerous work. Policewomen manage and shift their identities to the necessities of the work, but needs or wants specific to their gender interact with the structure and operations of police work, requiring a balancing act where many officers will sacrifice advancement for security and personal gains.

Rising through the Ranks

“We only have her, the [Deputy] Chief, we have one female captain, [one] female Lieutenant, and we have...three Sergeants....So you’ve got [six] supervisors. We are down to 440 – we used to be about 500. You have [six] supervisors that are female in a ...440 person department.”

While female officers make up an already small portion of the police force, they occupy an even smaller portion of high-rank positions. The process necessary to obtain these positions can often place women in a difficult choice between personal and professional life that can prevent advancement. For every rank under Deputy Chief, officers who want to advance to the next level must take a promotional test. Officers are ranked by their score and by their score alone. The test is offered in June and the results list is posted in August with every officer who took the test in the order of the highest score to the lowest. The

department promotes officers directly from the list; no demographics come into play. There is a single list with all scores ranked, and if a woman earns the highest score, she is the first promoted. The scores are valid until another test is offered, usually within 2-3 years, so as positions open up the people with the next highest scores are promoted in turn. In this sense, the structure is fairly equal. A promotion based purely on the skills exemplified on a neutral exam is actually an excellent tool for removing sexism from the workplace. It makes for a transparent system in that the department cannot choose who to promote on arbitrary criteria or the decision of one supervisor that could exclude women. However, despite this, women are still not making a significant amount of headway in the higher ranks of police work. There are two possible reasons: women are doing poorly on the promotional exams or women are simply not taking the promotional exams. Of the officers I spoke to, the latter was the true concern. Why women do not choose to take promotional exams to earn higher ranks is inextricably linked to their individual desires which are a part of the way they identify themselves as both women and officers.

Of my sample, the women were evenly split between those who were interested in advancement or had already been promoted, and those who had yet to seriously consider or were not planning on advancement in their career. Of the first category, the officers emphasized that women in particular would excel in a supervisory capacity, believing that female leadership benefited not only the personal career of the officer, but the whole force. However, they also

acknowledged that seeing themselves as supervisors was a critical aspect. One officer stated:

You either want to be a supervisor or you don't. There's a lot of responsibility with it. I also think that we need supervisors, we need female supervisors, and they are the only ones that can take the civil service exam....I want to push these girls to try and do more. And it's not a bad thing to be a patrol officer for 20 years, but there's so much more to experience...[But] if they're happy with it, they're happy with it.

More personally, one officer commented:

Back in my Academy days, we had to write where we wanted to be and I think I ended up staying that I wanted to be a Lieutenant ...I was so young I'm not even sure I knew why, but I knew I want the advancement and more authority and supervision. And to be quite honest I'm a much better supervisor than I ever was a cop...I just I think I have more of an affinity for it. I think I'm just better at looking at big pictures and putting out fires and making sure that things are where they should be. There are some people that have amazing police instincts. Not that I was a bad cop, I just didn't have that. There are cops that should have TV shows I wasn't one of them.

Women who do not see themselves as "the boss" may not be interested in taking a test and advancing through the ranks, as one officer explained when describing her attitudes towards the tests:

JB: Yeah I took a couple of [the tests] just on a lark. Never seriously.

RI: Why were you not considering them seriously?

JB: I don't know. I don't know frankly...I guess there was no driving force. There was no real incentive for me. I didn't have that "I want to make supervisor, I want to be a Sergeant, and then I want to be a Lieutenant." I think you have to have kind of a tilt that way, to see yourself that way, I never did.

Any multitude of factors can play into this perception. Perhaps women do not see themselves as supervisors because they lack role models, similar to how they struggle with the intersection of pregnancy and police work. Perhaps they find themselves to have more of an affinity for patrol, which almost all officers called the "backbone of the force", and believe their best job can be done as patrol officers. What became most prevalent throughout my study, however, was that advancement in the ranks means a change of lifestyle for every officer, something that because of their gender identity and roles was a more complicated shift for women.

In order to protect the authority of supervisors and an effective chain of command, officers cannot move to higher positions within the same shift. One officer described it as, "one day I'm your wingman, the next I'm your commanding officer." It does not work for the particular needs of the force, so any officer promoted must completely rearrange his or her lifestyle which, for female officers, can be a much bigger or undesired change:

For some women, it's that they get into their jobs where they're finally on days patrol and if you become a supervisor, you're not staying on days

patrol. You're going back to midnights or thirds, so it affects your family life. If you have young children, if you're just getting married, or whatever... The gentleman that I took this position from, he was a police officer at the time, he made Sergeant, out he went, even with all that training. He got back here later as a supervisor, but it took a lot of years. And that's just the protocol, you know, you make rank, you gotta [go]. And you know that going into it so you understand that... But I think for some females, it affects their personal lives so they may not be as quick to do it.

While child care is more of a shared duty today than in years previous, as officers have stated, the main responsibility still falls to women, particularly in the case of single mothers, like a portion of my sample. They are the ones that must rearrange their lives, perhaps sacrificing time with their children, the ability to have them cared for when at work, or even relationships with partners, husbands, and civilian friends. For some, it does not align with their desires and identities. One particular officer, Theresa Barnard, explained that she preferred her midnight shift above any other. Despite the fact that it meant a terrible night's sleep, rearranging her whole sleeping pattern every four days, and often having to come in for trainings and annual tests during day shifts when she was supposed to be recuperating, the timing meant that she could be there for her son. He was sleeping during her shift, she would see him off to school in the morning, and then she would sleep while he was away. It was not a lifestyle she was willing to part with. One officer described Officer Barnard's choice in this way:

Like with Theresa, she likes working midnights. It works for her. I think she'd make a great supervisor, but I know that she'd want to stay on nights. So what she does works for who she is and that's what each woman has to – each officer has to look and figure out. ...you want females to advance but, you can't expect that they're going to be given special considerations either.

My sample suggests that women prioritize other life goals over their careers, out of both desire and necessity, because as they navigate their identities in the workplace, that is where they find their personal balance to be. As one officer explains:

Frankly, women tend to retire. So I think they take this job as what it is, as a police officer. And not that they can't go through the ranks and make rank and still retire in 20, but chances are you're not going to if you start making rank because you're in a better position as you go up that ladder. But a lot of women, I think they look at this: "Okay, it's a career and I walkout here with a pension, equal footing with men on that end, I'll be young, relatively young, my family's young I'll have those years." A lot of women retire and their children are finishing high school going into college. Or they're young like 13-14 years old, they came on maybe they had them after, and now you've got those years that you can run around. It's the nature of being a female and I just don't think that, as much as the women love the job and respect it and are proud of it, there are other parts of life out there that I think draw them to it. Whereas I think you have

male officers who are here forever, and nothing wrong with that, but I think that they limit themselves because they see only this...Whereas women, I think you got other things to do and they retire. They hit that 20 and are gone. Maybe stay a couple extra years, but then they're gone...It depends I think on your age, on where you're at in your life, but I don't think women hesitate as much as men.

Conclusion

Evidently, structure, gender, and identity all intersect in the lives of women on the force and must constantly be negotiated in order for women to succeed in police work, no matter whether they define that success as perfectly structuring their day so that their children never feel like they are missing time with their mother or whether they define it as being named a Sergeant, Lieutenant, Captain, or Deputy Chief. As is obvious, gender and structure can complicate the professional experience of women as police officers. In the next chapter, I will explore how women use their identities in order to be able to perform their jobs in such a way as to be as successful, in certain definitions, as male officers because of the ways in which they relate as females to the community.

CHAPTER FOUR

You Always Got More With Honey than With Vinegar: Policewomen's Strategies of Law Enforcement

Introduction: Policewomen

Policing is a unique career because it is as much an identity as it is a profession. While every career has its associated perceptions and stereotypes, the ones that surround policing are more ingrained. The job, or at least one side of it, is incredibly visible. The police are a symbol in the community and are expected, by both the public and their fellow officers, to act appropriately and in the best interest of all the parties during times of crisis, which involves constantly weighing the wills and outcomes of any action. While the goal is the same, the female police officers in my sample all perceived situations in a particular, female way and employed a different set of skills to achieve necessary outcomes. By recognizing that they are not merely police officers and do not fit into that stereotype of masculinity, women are able to perform equally effective police work by drawing on qualities they associate with their gender.

Interestingly, it seems that many women initially frame the work of police officers and their reasons for pursuit of the career differently from men, which could be a factor in the different approaches to policing. Similar to a study completed by McCarthy (2013), five of the nine women I interviewed spoke about how they believed their role as officers was to make a positive impact in their communities. One officer stated:

Of course, as everybody probably says as they first start out, you felt like you were going to change the world. And as you get here you realize you can only help one person at a time, you're not going to change the world. So that was the thing: just trying to help, trying to get out there and take care of people that can't take care of themselves, like the elderly and children, women of domestic violence.

Despite that this particular officer's ideals started somewhat broadly and naively, her primary motivation was to help others through her work, focusing on the victims she could assist rather than the criminals she could deter. Similarly, another officer cited her desire when she began her work was to make a bigger impact in the community. She was struggling to be fulfilled by police work because, as she put it, she was "trying to save the world but couldn't touch enough people." She was hoping to add to her role in criminal justice by starting a rehabilitation center for women on parole. By helping them reconnect with loved ones and children, assisting in the job search for jobs that would hire them, and offering more targeted support than what currently exists for people who have just been released from prison, she hoped to prevent women from relapsing into criminal activity. Both officers may have found different values in their work, but they both emphasized a great desire to effect serious change in the community on an individual level and, initially, both saw police work as a vehicle for that. Another officer saw police work as a method to achieve positive, community-wide change but not through idealistic pursuits:

I wish I could tell you that there was some underlining driving force to right the wrongs of the world. No. You can't right the wrongs of the world. Only people can do that. You can help them but I was never delusional into thinking that I was going to... I can write the traffic pattern for you, get you somewhere that way, but people are gonna do what they're going to do.

For this officer, it is neither her goal nor her role to "save the world" like the previous two. However, she does believe in leaving a positive impact on people and effecting change by example. She expanded upon this, stating:

You can influence [people] by going to schools and talking and trying to be a positive role model...I am very conscious of when I'm in uniform or in a police car that eyes are on me...If you're ever downtown, people cross intersections and whatnot. I never crossed in between, like the jaywalk thing. I always went to cross at the corner and I always waited for the light. And if I stood there in uniform and waited for a light, most people stood with me. Do that in plainclothes? People walk right past you. But I stood there. So I learned early on that whether you know it or not, people are watching you and take their cue from you half the time.

More so than simply addressing crime, this officer aims to create a conscious community through her actions as an officer. While I did not interview any men and thus cannot draw direct comparisons, McCarthy's study suggests that this is a more common drive for women whereas male officers frame their goals predominantly in the context of crime prevention. This is not to suggest that either

method is better than another; it merely highlights a difference between genders that could result in different styles of policing. As one female officer acknowledged, “It’s no officers’, in my opinion that I’ve ever worked with or talked to today, desire to have to go hand-to-hand with people. The goal is to come safely to work and go home safely.” How officers go about creating safer interactions for all parties involved, however, does interact with their gender.

The previous chapter focused on how a female’s identity and personal attributes outside of the force interact with her identity and job performance. In this chapter, I will explore how women bring their gender into the force throughout their careers so that they are not merely “the police”, but rather “policewomen”, a blend of attributes that highlights the characteristics they associate with their gender and that make them a differently effective kind of cop. The focus of this chapter is policewomen in action, so the experiences and stories I look at are from the patrol portion of officers’ careers, where women are actively engaging in situations and representing the police. The aspect of this that I will focus on for this chapter is the use of force. How women identify with force, how they go about choosing to use it or, critically, how they create situations where they remove the need for it are all associated with how women see themselves and their role on the force.

Communication and Perception

“As you gain more experience, you learn how to talk to people. And that’s what this whole job boils down to, I think, is talking to people.”

Policing is often perceived as highly physical work: constantly chasing down criminals, wrestling weapons out of a suspect's hand, or using a gun as a method of control. However, while this is sometimes an accurate depiction of a scenario an officer finds him- or herself in, every officer in my sample said that the true crux of their job boiled down to problem solving. While they are bound by the law to achieve a certain outcome depending on the crimes and people in question, the process by which they come to that final outcome can be as individual as the officers themselves. For example, in New York State, civilians can make what they call a citizen's arrest. If an act of violence occurs against an individual before the police arrive, the individual who was injured, and has proof of injury, is the only one on whose authority the officer can arrest the aggressor. If the victim demands he or she be arrested and signs paperwork stating such, the officers are bound by law to take him or her to jail. However, there are key moments in between the arrival of the police and putting a suspect in the back of a police car that officers have to manage every day that can completely change the nature and the outcome of an interaction. Above all, the women I spoke to emphasized their ability to communicate more effectively and their greater patience, that enabled them to reduce the chance of danger to themselves and others in various situations:

When I was in the Academy, the veteran officers came in and they always said that if you could talk to people, that really could diffuse the situation.

I've always been able to do that and so that was always my approach.

Because if it wasn't a hands-on situation right away, if it was a disturbance

or dispute verbally where you didn't have to be into the throes of physical altercation, then that was my hope, that I can maybe separate the parties and say maybe let's talk, try to calm it that way.

While talking to people was one of the key skills of the job that my sample believed every officer should and did utilize, regardless of gender, women tended to see themselves as having more of an affinity and greater success with it because they were women and how they went about rationalizing:

I feel, and this is just a personal opinion, that women are able to talk more. Like I used to talk people into handcuffs instead of trying to physically fight them into handcuffs... I think I've only been struck maybe twice in my entire career...As you just appeal more to the reasoning side, a lot of times people are out of control and that's when there's no talking. [But] if you can say, "Look what you are doing to your family, look what you're doing" ... "Just calm down, let's talk about this" ... If a male came in, he would probably handle the situation totally differently, like, "We need to get this guy in handcuffs", whereas I would come in and try to talk first, and if that didn't work, move to the next level. I'm not saying all males do that, but you can tell.

One situation in which the differences in approaches became apparent occurred during a ride along with Officer Small. Although I was never a part of a situation that involved the use of force by any officer, in one particular situation, I accompanied Officer Small on a call about a fight that had just occurred and saw a key difference in behavior between her and her wingman. Her wingman arrived

within a few seconds of us pulling over and before we had even had a chance to get out of the car, a young couple approached us, clearly infuriated, describing how a guy who owed them money had come out of nowhere and clocked the female in the mouth as they attempted to go into a store, at which point they had called the officers. Before Officer Small had a chance to respond, her wingman was shooting questions at the couple in a confrontational tone that clearly threw them off. They became more heated and struggled to explain their situation, the woman at one point pulling her mouth open to show the officer that her tooth was broken from where she had been struck, as the officer continued to question their word and their situation. Eventually, one of them declared the store in front of which the fight had occurred had cameras, and if the officers went and checked, they would see the reality of what had happened. As we all walked to the store, the couple now fuming in their car, the male officer walked with purpose and joked to his partner that he was “in no mood for this today” and made no secret of the fact he thought the couple was not telling him the whole story. When the video tape revealed nothing, the officer turned to the other patrons of the store, easy going and joking, and asked if they had seen anything, all of whom responded that the couple had antagonized the other guy who had then struck the female. Returning to the couple, the tone of accusation and the demands for a true story continued, with the eventual threat that if the couple continued to fabricate or withhold details, the officer would arrest both parties and they could sort the problem out in jail. The couple chose to leave the situation, clearly hurt and angry with their treatment. Throughout this entire process, Officer Small asked one

question, “Why are the people in the store saying that you attacked him first?”, in order to gain a clearer understanding of the relationships at work in the problem, which was essentially lost in the barrage of questions coming from her wingman.

This creates a complex picture of the role of communication and gender in police interactions. In this particular instance, an officer, whom Officer Small described when I asked about his manner as “that’s just who he is”, began the initial interaction with the civilians in an authoritarian and accusatory tone before anyone, either the civilians or Officer Small, had a chance to employ another method. It is not within the scope of my research to comment on why this officer automatically took control of the situation over Officer Small, whether it was because she was a woman, because “that’s just who he is”, or because Officer Small believed it was her duty as an officer to support her wingman in his chosen path and not steer the interaction into a more communicative direction. What I can analyze is the way in which the officer set the tone for a negative interaction and how that compared with other interactions with female officers. Regardless of whether the civilians were lying or not, they became defensive and angry after the officer’s confrontation thus eclipsing any ability of Officer Small to begin a more open communication as I saw her do in the cases that followed. She was stern and did not compromise on what needed to happen, but when mediating a dispute between a husband and wife over their child, both parties ended the dispute with steps to take after the police had left and, while they may have still had negative feelings about the situation in general and each other, those feelings were not expressed or directed towards the officers, unlike in the first situation. Dictating

the course of interactions whenever possible by their own behavior is a key method of controlled problem solving employed by women over violence whenever the situations allowed, as other officers described:

You have to have a threshold where you start at this end and then if a person's not going to cooperate, you have to raise your voice. And when you get to a certain point, you can't go back down, okay, so you want to get there slowly. And that was how I approached it. I was never you know, if I had to physically take somebody into custody and they fought, then it had to go that way, but a lot of times my approach could be this, then I tried that, and it worked, quite honestly, quite a bit, but it wasn't always the case as people have their opinions and if they're that angry, they don't want to hear the police.

A second officer described setting the tone for conversation through mutual respect, stating:

JL: I always like to start with the respect level high. So if I were to meet you, I would say, "I'm Officer Lawson, what's your name?"

RI: Rebecca

JL: "Rebecca what?"

RI: Ierardo

JL: "Ms. Ierardo, this is what we need to do – " Now I set the level here. I've already established that respect. I'm calling you [by name] and then I went a step further and said "Ms. Ierardo." You can choose to bring that down and I can follow just as quick, but I've established that respect. And

I feel that most of the time people appreciated that, so I would diffuse a lot of situations. Not always, you get a lot of drugs and alcohol and craziness that were involved and if it got physical, it got physical. But you can start it at a level and you can bring it down.

Although it appeared that these skills could be overpowered by shows of dominance and accusations, female officers continued to show that they worked towards facilitating as positive an interaction as possible when it was within their ability to influence the situation.

Using verbal skills over physical strength and authority is one of the defining differences my sample discussed between their method of policing and the strategies employed by male officers. Of all the officers I spoke to, most mentioned having to resort to physicality at some points in their career, but it was a noticeably small number of times, suggesting that women had more success with and thus employed less physical methods of coercion. One officer had never needed to fight with a suspect in her three-year career. In fact, all the officers in my sample spoke with ease about the fact that they simply were not as physically strong as men and thus recognized that their most successful methods of policing were never going to be physical. Instead, women spoke of using their abilities as empathizers and communicators in order to broker necessary and beneficial solutions: As one officer said:

I think we talk to people better, you know, we have a more calming effect. We're not as quick to go hands-on as the guys are. If they're not getting where they're going then – and we're justified in doing it if we need to

physically remove someone – they go to that. Whereas I'd rather spend five more minutes getting them to turn around and put their hands behind their back by talking them into it. That has always worked for me.

Other officers spoke of similar strategies. More critically, they emphasized the ways in which working with their female identity became an advantage in facilitating better outcomes to interactions. One officer described her methodology in this way:

I learned a long time ago to work with what God gave you. Like I said, I'm not a 6'3", 250 pound guy. I was 5'6" and at the time, 120 pounds, you know, so I found that learning to talk to people is key. Not being confrontational, not getting in their face, not trying to exude my authority over them in a physical manner, because that was going to come into a situation where I could probably do what I could do, but I'm gonna need some help. So I found that talking sweet –we'd arrest guys and they'd go, "Will you handcuff me?" [and I'd answer] "I sure will"...and that's okay. You got the job done. I didn't feel it diminished my abilities at all. You just added another layer to the mix. I mean, I would go up to big guys and go, "You don't want to do that, you know your mom or your grandma or your aunt raised you better than that. You don't want to do that, come on," and talk to people. You always got more with honey than with vinegar...if somebody tended to be more on the side of trying to woo me, I'd smile and go along with it because if it got them to be compliant, it's better than

rolling around with them on the floor and wrestling and somebody getting hurt. And then it always made for a good story after.

This particular example illuminates ways in which women can use perceptions of their gender in order to practice an effective, yet feminine, mode of policing.

While it may be uncivil for the public to demean policewomen through sexual comments, women can work with this perception of themselves to perform their job safely successfully. The other key aspect of female identity that allows for effective feminine policing is the identification with female caretakers. A majority of my sample mentioned that many of the people they deal with every day in Syracuse were raised by a female relative, a mother, grandmother, aunt, etc., meaning they were accustomed to a female authority figure and thus able to respect and work with them. While my work does not focus on race, this perception could also be affected by the race of the officer and the individual. Typically, African American and Hispanic cultures, two of the main minorities in Syracuse, have very different opinions of female authority figures. One officer, as she was describing the different people encountered when working different areas of the city, stated that African American males were more likely to respect the authority of a female officer than a Hispanic male. Although not within the scope of this study, the role of race, as examined by many previous studies, as it converges with gender also affects police work. Focusing on gender, however, being associated with a mother and caretaker by any race of suspect and employing qualities typically associated with those roles throughout their work,

actually worked well for many officers because they were able to draw on familial connections and identities to effectively reason with suspects and victims.

I think in a lot of situations it's an advantage to be a female... I think we use our communication skills... There's always those moments when you never know how it's gonna go, but we tend to try to communicate and rationalize and sort it out, not going the physical violence route. And I think for the most part people tend to be less confrontational with us. Not always. There's that sliver of the population who will be more confrontational because I'm a female, but I don't think that's the majority... there are times when women tend to have more of a natural compassion that will come through. Not just in traditional family services type of roles, I think it's in any situation.

Officers in my sample emphasized that, as much as possible, they aimed to dictate the course of events through their actions. However, no matter how rational or compassionate they are as officers, there will always be some suspects who simply do not respond and must be dealt with in a physical manner

Strategic Use of Force: Proving Herself

Occasionally, women find themselves in situations where they have no choice but to use force, however violence is no officer's preferred method of handling any situation, regardless of gender. The women in my sample suggested that the aversion to force was perceived of females more so than males, meaning whether subconsciously or consciously, other officers initially expected female officers to be less able or willing to physically engage suspects in necessary

moments. Some female officers felt that they had to prove themselves slightly more than male officers when it came to fighting. One officer spoke of this during a ride along, saying that unless her fellow officers trusted her to have their backs, she could not do the job. If people expected you to pull away from a dangerous situation and dreaded going on calls with you, you created more complicated, and thus more dangerous, interactions for everyone involved. This is not to suggest that female officers used force unnecessarily as compensation for other officers' expectations, but that when use of force was necessary, women took that responsibility on themselves. As one officer stated:

We had to prove ourselves a little bit, even from when I started...It's almost like when you come in here, you have to show that you can do the job...I would say to a degree it's true of any new recruit, but I always felt like people were watching me a little bit more just because we haven't historically been in law enforcement. So after that first time that you show that you're not afraid to get involved in that physical part of it, then you're good...I would say that they would probably do that with males also, but obviously I can't speak from that perspective. You have to show that you're going to be there for your wing man so you're not going to be a coward.

While the officer acknowledges that this can be a common experience for any officer beginning his or her career and learning to navigate the police environment, she also qualifies her statement this way:

But I don't know I think a lot of that was my own self-induced stuff like I felt like being the only female in the Academy class, you know, I have to prove – I had to stay up with the guys.

So, while it is a common experience, it can also be more intense for women perhaps because, despite progress in social attitudes about the capabilities of women, the fact of the matter is they will never physically be as strong as men. It is critical that these women acknowledge the reality of that throughout their work and explore alternative methods to be effective policewomen.

Conclusion

Policewomen use their gender throughout the process of their work, blending their identities of woman and officer in order to employ a differently effective method of policing. Their ability to successfully communicate and problem solve without the use of force whenever the situation allows them to derives both from their complete understanding of their own capabilities and the public's perception of them as women. However, women are willing to utilize force in order to show that they can manage what other officers and the public perceive as "typical" police work. Often, police play off perceptions of themselves, whether it is as a mother, authority figure, or sex object, even if it is offensive or demeans them, in order to achieve the necessary end result, demonstrating once again how officers view their work and the force as a whole as more important than them as individuals.

CHAPTER FIVE

Belt-High with a Flat Head: Managing Intra- and Cross-Gender Relationships

Introduction: Police Relations

After the third or fourth hour of a ride-along, when our territory was quiet and we were sitting in an empty parking lot sharing stories or eating snacks, listening to the radio occasionally buzz with a few words hinting at what was going on in other areas of the city, our conversations often turned to relationships: with children, with husbands or partners, with fellow officers. Through their stories, officers began to reveal how difficult it was to maintain functional relationships throughout their career. Of the nine officers I interviewed, only two were currently in relationships with the father of their children. Of the other seven, one had neither a partner nor children, two had partners but no children, two were single mothers, and two were in relationships but not with the father of their children. As I touched on in the first chapter, personal relationships outside of the force are sometimes eclipsed by the structure within which officers must operate. Many officers explained that their work-week and shift hours, and thus their sleep patterns and time for personal obligations, are scheduled in blocks that run independently of the “normal” work week, isolating them from their family, friends, and the community at large. One officer slept in the same bed as her husband one night a week while another had only had Christmas off one time in the last three years. Many officers explained how personal relationships were

some of the most difficult aspects of their jobs to negotiate, which made the relationships they made within the force of an even greater significance for a variety of reasons.

Police officer interactions and connections mean a great deal more than someone to talk to through a car window on a quiet night, reliable back up in a fight, or an audience for a funny arrest story. Fellow officers are a resource for mental and emotional support. Officers take charge in situations of trauma and hardship, situations that civilians experience maybe once in a lifetime, every day in their line of work. They experience the full spectrum of human emotion: despair, humor, fury, violence, abuse, gratitude, hostility, fear and occasionally have to work around predispositions of hate towards them and their profession. Other officers are some of the few people who understand the mental and emotional stress of doing a complex job well and rarely being thanked for it. One officer described the need for police-to-police relations this way:

You're going to have your police family. Police friends become your family because they have shared experiences and they understand. And if you go places and listen to people complain about the police, because they only see one side of it, and it's usually negative... Very rarely do you ever call the police to celebrate your happy moment... There's probably a family instance, or something got stolen, or sadly somebody got hurt, but usually you are not inviting them in and saying, "Hey, you know, this is the best day of my life and I want to share with you." No. And the joke was always that people were always glad to see the fire guys show up

because they're helping them and even though the police are helping them, we can also take you to jail. ...Domestics can turn quick. You can call the police and you're having it out with your husband, boyfriend, mother, father, whoever, and then we get there and we start the "Hey!" you know, it's going to crap fast and somebody's going to jail because theS

Negative public perception of the police isolates officers in their profession, strengthening their dependency on each other. However, while the connection through shared experience seemed to be intrinsically felt by all the officers with whom I spoke, the ability to use these connections to relieve work-related stress is limited. In this chapter, I will explore how an officer's gender affects her ability to connect with fellow officers. Looking at the ways in which men interact with and talk about women and how these actions are progressing reveals key perceptions and differences which can isolate women and the need for identities that fit easily into the prescribed male ideals of police work.

Relating Man to Woman

While all of the women in my sample spoke of being able to relate to the men on the force, they also emphasized situations in which their gender complicated their relationships at work and how they were predominantly the parties that had to make adjustments. These interactions occurred both out on the road and in the office, but it was usually the comments made and actions taken outside the line of duty that had the greater effect and were more complicated to address. On duty, officers had an evenly mixed experience between those who felt that their job was affected by male perceptions and comments and those who did

not. Two key examples came from two officers with roughly the same amount of time on the force and completely different experiences. One officer expressed:

I have never had an issue with responding on calls with male officers and feeling that I am being disrespected because I am a female or they think less of me because of that or they somehow think that I'm not worthy.

While another recounted the story:

There are some, especially older officers, who felt that a woman should not be in law enforcement...When I was a young officer on the road, I had an officer who was requesting another unit. I was the only unit available, I was coming from a different side of town, and he said, "Don't you have a male officer?" So I went anyway and he and I had some words and you know, we kind of sorted out. You don't get to choose. This is what it is. [Reiterating what she said earlier on pg. 63, the officer reminded me] I may not be a 6'3", 250 pound guy, but I can do what I can do.

Additionally, another officer spoke of a time where a male officer had berated and belittled her in front of other officers and civilians at a scene. She confronted the officer after their shift was completed, extremely angry, warning him never to treat her in the same way again. Women confronted officers about mistreatment or discrimination having to do with their gender that occurred in the line of their work whereas comments, jokes, and treatment outside of the job itself were much more likely to be rationalized by women. Many of the women in my sample saw the manner in which men related to their fellow officers, whether male or female,

to be crude and inappropriate, but also associated it with typical male humor, something they had to adjust too.

All of the women in my sample spoke of the way that male officers tended to joke about gender and the job and, while they found it crude, they often just accepted it as part of the police environment. Only one officer I spoke to said that the guys knew better than to say something like that in front of her. They had been around her long enough to know that she would immediately address it with them. Most of the other officers tended to turn the blame upon females when situations like that became problematic, suggesting that the female was being too “sensitive” as one of the officers I interviewed termed it. She believed that guys were just “nasty” and women had to toughen up if they were going to work as police officers. Another officer expressed similar sentiments when she described her method for teaching Equal Employment Opportunity trainings during the Academy:

My caveat to people was that you should know your audience. I mean, I have a thick skin, things like that don't bother me, you know. I can usually tell if somebody's trying to be personal and say something to offend me, or if they're just busting my chops which is – that's human nature, we bust each other's chops on who we are. So depending on the person and how it's said, somethings you can tell somebody's gotta predisposition against you, and sometimes it's just bonding almost. You gotta know your audience and you gotta know the person who's saying it.

While this officer acknowledges that there is a difference between the times people are genuinely being discriminatory and when people are trying to joke, she also condones the comments in a way, so long as they are said in the right spirit to the right people. It is not anyone's place to tell anyone else to be offended by actions that are not offensive to them personally; that is not what this example serves to do. It merely shows that it is again women who have to accept the environment and terms of the relationships into which they enter, or they will be considered "sensitive" and a poor sport. Another officer emphasized this point, that the field was dominated by men and women had to accept the workplace interactions that went along with that in whatever way worked for them. The story that follows describes Officer Baker's experience with derogatory comments and an analysis of the way in which women handle these comments.

You just have to look at the source in my opinion. First off, and I understand when some other females might say that you should be offended, you're going into a male-dominated profession. I'm not sitting here telling you that it's appropriate, but I'm also not gonna sit here and tell you that – sometimes women make inappropriate comments. If men really wanted to be picayune about it, they could. I mean you're talking menstrual cycles, whatever, I mean, and some men find that offensive "Hey, I don't want to hear that" – talk about it anyways. And you know you have men making crass statements, but you're working in an environment where for the most part it's male-dominated. And at no point am I saying that it's all right to disparage a female, or belittle, but jokes,

you know, ridiculous comments, in law enforcement, sadly – I was [working] when the Challenger flew and took off and blew up, okay? I'm going down the hall and I'm like – the Sgt. comes out and he says the Challenger just blew up and I thought he was joking because that's the mentality. I said, "Oh no," and he's like "Yeah," so he hustled back in, he put the TV on, and sure enough, there it is. You're just appalled. You're seeing it split up all over and... I was probably 25 years old and now these veteran officers in their late 40s and 50s, maybe 60s for all I know, they looked old at the time, and all of a sudden, here it comes, the jokes that are flying... "What color were Christa McAuliffe's eyes? Blue. They blew here, they blew there." You know, I never forgot that, but that's what they were saying. That's not a besmirch to her, but that's how you work through it in law enforcement. You make jokes. Are they always appropriate? No. But you can understand it because it gets you to that level where you have to deal with something that's very traumatic. Are you making that joke when it's happening? No. But afterwards all of a sudden – and it's a diffusion. So have I been around where comments have been made? Yes. I had a Capt. he's long gone now and I tell everybody this I don't care it's not the best thing in the world but...he said that "The ideal female's belt-high with a flathead so you can rest your beer on it." I looked at him, "Uh huh...gotta go." Just walked away. So what do you say? That was a Captain.....I don't know what the conversation was, why he would say it I mean he didn't just say out of the blue there was a reason

for it, but you know. And was it directed totally at me? No, there were other people in the room, but it was said...I took it as hey, he felt comfortable enough to say it in front of me, it's who he is. But I remembered it. "Really? Is that so? Well, gotta go." But he also recommended me to become an [Evidence Technician]...He viewed my work as good and if I wanted to do other aspects of the job, he allowed it.

This story is extremely layered, revealing a multitude of factors that influence the way that men interact with women in the police environment. The first aspect is how this officer chose to address clearly offensive comments. While she interpreted it as offensive, she also did not confront the officer about his behavior and found a way to rationalize it instead. She viewed the comment as an indicator of an achieved comfort level, similar to the way in which other officers described it as a way to bond and fit into a male-dominated environment, and it was her role to make adjustments to her own perceptions to accept this. The other key rationalization was that it was a process of stress release to deal with the reality of their work. As officers mentioned earlier, a mutual understanding exists among the members of the force about the difficulty of managing the trauma of their work. However, women seem to be more sympathetic to the needs of officers to find methods of stress release and are thus more willing to accept comments viewed in this light. As evidenced, despite social progression in making gender neutral work environments, policing is still ultimately conceived as the domain of men but women accept and adapt to this on a personal level much more so than they do on a professional level.

However, while officers still affirmed that comments and jokes were a part of the job, my sample also emphasized that both personal and professional gender based discrimination was much less common today and that time and age played a great role in dictating perspectives on the force. One officer described:

When I first came on the Department, I had delusions of grandeur and I really thought, “It’s 1986 and women can do anything they want, that predisposed disposition of it not being a woman’s job? Oh that’s long gone.” But you know we’re still in that struggle. It’s not completely gone...There are some, especially older officers, who felt that a woman should not be in law enforcement.

A word that almost all officers in my sample threw around to describe these individuals was “dinosaurs”, meaning to them old, white men who had been on the force for upwards of 20 years, having started years before most of the officers had even begun their Academy classes. However, factors other than age played into this perspective; it was more of a traditional outlook on both policing and women associated with an older generation. One officer hypothesized that a large part of the more traditional perspectives were derived from the personal experience of older officers, explaining:

I find that most officers today, especially the younger generation, all have moms that worked so women in the work field are not a surprise for them. In comparison to the 80s, where a lot of the officers, especially the ones that have been on for a significant amount of time, didn’t have a lot of women in the workplace. At least not in a toe-to-toe job with them. They

were used to women in clerical positions, more traditional female positions, nurses...With law enforcement, they weren't used to having females in the same role as them, so I think it was more prevalent...I would call them the dinosaurs. There were certainly more dinosaurs back then and their mindset was different. Their mindset was more that you're taking the job away from a guy.

In some regards, police work is acclimating to prevailing social attitudes of female capability and value in the workplace, keeping up with progress and changing perceptions as a whole throughout society. One officer states:

Well it's a mindset. I don't necessarily mean age-wise. You have to evolve and police work has evolved. And you've got technology advancements today, there are things that you can do differently, it doesn't have to be this ritual thing of "this is how we've always done it." And I think more and more, they're coming around and they're definitely more progressive and the Syracuse Department is one of the more progressive departments around here and we're still not at the pinnacle of it, we're still climbing. Some of its financial; you only can do what you can do, but some of it is just the way people think.

And qualifying her stories from earlier, Officer Baker also explained:

Now that wouldn't be said today, that was said 20 some odd years ago. Today that person would probably be blown in [brought in on a harassment charge]. Well they wouldn't even say it if they were smart. That was an old timer who was a dinosaur then... Today that probably

wouldn't even be uttered and if it was, it would be uttered with a group of men...So I mean it was just the way it was back then, but that's 20 some odd years ago, 25 easily. 25 years ago and it's a different world today.

Comments today may not be nearly as extreme as those described by Officer Baker and the attitude that allowed for them to be said appears to be changing in conjunction with social progress. However, when it does occur, it remains a policewomen's responsibility to "toughen up" in order to fit in to a male dominated environment and handle the stress of the job. The women of my sample showed that, while women adapted to males, they also need to manage stress but could not achieve it through the same method of lightheartedness, and thus struggled to relate on that level to male officers. However, given the small female population, relationships with female officers were difficult to maintain throughout careers.

Relating Woman to Woman

For female officers, relating to male officers is complicated by gender perceptions, however relating to female officers is also complex and often results in isolation. There is a general assumption that women will relate better to other women simply because of gender. One officer mentioned that the lack of women equals meant "There wasn't anybody to talk to if they were female things to talk about, like if you just felt bad because you had your period." While it is not within the scope of my research to say that women relate better to one gender than any other, my sample showed that women relate in specific ways to men and specific ways to other women, and that both interactions provided crucial support

throughout their careers. Focusing in on the woman to woman interactions, one officer explained:

I'm a single mom, I have a very busy job, and my abilities to socialize are more limited. I mean I do try. I am [part] of an organization called New York Women in Law Enforcement ...I try to encourage the girls to join that, to do different varied activities with that, and to try to keep that bond and that momentum going because it is important. I think anytime you can be with like-minded people in the same room – I mean what interacting with other individuals brings to the table, there's also the comfort when you walk into a room full of women in law enforcement because you know that they know, that by they have very similar stories to what you have gone through.

Another officer, while waiting at the hospital to take a statement from a man who had been stabbed by his girlfriend, saw one of the five other women on her shift. They spoke like co-workers more than friends, discussing recent changes in the force and past events, but it was clear they both appreciated the moment to acquaint themselves and share, especially when they stated their need to have another girl's "night" out again with all the other Midnight females. For these officers on the Midnight shift, a night out is more like an afternoon, but it is time that they can spend together, with "like-minded" individuals. They also joked about their toes, saying they hoped nothing happened to them tonight because their toes were in no state to be seen, something I did not immediately understand. When I gave my companion officer a confused look, she laughed, explaining that

the one thing female officers always made sure were in order were the feet. If, God forbid, anything happened to them and they ended up at the hospital, they would not want any of their co-workers, except perhaps their fellow female officers, to see the state of their feet. It was the small connection, but it highlighted the nature and importance of the female relationship. The antidote not only show how familiar officer are with the procedure after accidents, but that they relate in a way that a man, or even a civilian like myself, could not fully comprehend. Although lighthearted, it was an affirmation of support. However, as both officers emphasized, women are frequently prevented from making a resource of their connection to each other by the way that their small numbers interact with the structure of the force.

Structure is a significant factor in connecting and isolating policewomen from each other in particular because of their small numbers, as Kanter's theory in part suggests. The most significant structure is each officer's shift on patrol, as it determines every person an officer can interact with, both during their work day and during their personal time. Throughout my many hours on patrol, I saw just how lonely of a job policing can be. While more than one officer answers any in-progress call and officers stop by the PSB to finish up reports, the time between calls, the time when officers are driving their cars around the city or waiting for a call in an empty parking lot, are extremely isolating. There are only two patrol officers in a territory at any time, therefore officers are unlikely to encounter any officer without intending to, let alone a female officer given the gender ratios within the department. Truly personal connections for women tend to occur

outside of work. An officer described her connections with other women on two different shifts in the following way:

There weren't hardly any females at all on midnights so I didn't really interact with anybody except the males but it was the nature of being a minority in the department, there wasn't those females to reach out to you... There are cliques; there are people – and a lot of it has to do with our shiftwork. When I was on third platoon, I saw all the third platoon girls quite a bit, so once in a while we would have an after work party for a promotion or an after work party for whatever, we'd have a Super Bowl party or something.

Clearly, connections are possible, but they are less likely to occur when women are infrequently coming into contact with each other and they have to go the extra mile to make time outside of their job to create solid relationships. One female officer attempted to achieve this through the following method:

We made a concerted effort, probably about close to 10 years ago now, where we had a softball team... So the women got together, and it was different shifts, so it was a way to stay connected... That was one of the primary reasons, it was to connect with the new groups that were getting hired and with some of the older veterans that had been here. And we actually had a nice run with it, about five or six years. But then what usually happens and always does is that people who get hired at a young age get married, start having families, so the time they're taking to play softball goes towards other parts of their lives which is the usual. And

that's exactly what happened. So it kind of ran its course, but the whole point of it was so that we could reconnect and, sure enough, I believe that that has been helpful and benefited the reconnecting with some of the younger female officers on the job with less than 9, 10 years on...It was nice because that was a real cross-section of the department. Bunch of the girls were on patrol at the time a bunch were working inside at the time so that did basically reunite us in some capacity.

Evidently, women find outlets outside of the force to create relationships with fellow female officers because the structure does not allow such relationships to foster on the force. The same officer emphasized the difference between gender relationships and the role of structure by stating:

I think that varies on who you are working with. So like if you're working with a bunch of women on the same platoon, you're closer with them just because of the interaction. You see them, you might end up on a call with them, you might get together for lunch, where is the best place to go to the bathroom, you know. Men don't have to worry about those kinds of things, you know stuff like that. And if you have children or if you have a family you might pair up like, "Hey I'm doing this, I'm going to the zoo," so those connections. Once you leave patrol, unless you're close to people, unless you already have that bond and stay connected, you can get kind of – and that's not just women, that's men, that's everybody, that's people who you work side-by-side with and then all of a sudden you're not with

them every day. Unless you have that connection outside of the place per se, chances are you'll drift apart a little bit.

However, when personal and professional structure change in women's lives, it becomes difficult to maintain these relationships as outside obligations begin to take priority over police relationships. As personal changes and desires become a factor, changing structure serves to isolate women as one officer described:

There were two females that worked on this side. One retired and actually the other retired shortly after that, so I had interaction that way, but as far as with patrol, I had friends that were out in CID, detectives, but direct females on patrol at that time? No. Cut off completely from it. And again it's because either their working different shifts and you know I'm in here doing something and they're doing their thing out there.

As evidenced, police work is both extremely lonely while also being extremely people dependent. The ways in which women navigate the convergence of low numbers, personal desires, and structure serves to simultaneously create female connection and interaction and yet complicate officers' ability to achieve the necessary level of connection.

Conclusion

Officers rely on the mutual understanding of shared experiences found in fellow officers in order to manage the extreme difficulty and stress of their work, but female officers can be cut off from this resource because of the way their gender interacts with the force and the way the force interacts with their gender. The way that male officers joke in ways that are generally offensive to women in

an environment that continues to be associated with male ideals creates a situation in which women must accept these jokes and rationalize them, or be considered “weak”, an identifier that does not serve police officers well throughout their careers, thereby removing mechanisms through which women could legitimately address this concern. When women attempt to foster connections with fellow female officers, they are once again restricted, this time by the structure of the force that keeps all officer separate but is more significant for women because of low numbers, isolating them from a large portion of potential resources.

CHAPTER SIX

Conclusion

You know women, like any other minority, bring a needed piece of the puzzle. The more diversity you have in your department, the better it is because all those pieces work together, and what one officer may not have, another brings to the table. And that's really kind of how the infusion of male and female, and even other races, comes together and works together in any good department.

The women of the Syracuse Police Department add a necessary and beneficial diversity to the profession that is helping, however slowly, to change gender perceptions, both on the force and in the community at large, and to change policing. Policewomen still face adversity in many forms, whether it is a victim or a wingman who sends them away from a call because he or she wants a male officer, a suspect who sexually objectifies them while being placed under arrest, or a dinosaur who cracks jokes and undermines their authority, but they have found ways to navigate their identities around old world perceptions of gender to advance in a field that, even today, is conceived as the domain of men. Police work may not be “set up for women” as one officer described it, but women find ways to make their identity and their gender valuable to the overall structure and purpose of police work, showing how officers perceive the job itself to be much greater than themselves.

Ultimately, women are the ones who make compromises and adaptations to their lives and themselves in order to fit into the greater structure of police

work. The structure of the force divides them by rank and by shift, essentially defining the ways and, more importantly, the times in which officers can live their lives. While this is true for any officer, women often have to perform a more complicated balancing act between obligations and desires, like pregnancy, child-care, and aspirations of advancement. However, women find ways to balance their personal and professional goals, which can mean identifying more strongly with qualities that are perceived to be masculine in order to advance in and fit into the force but also choosing to remain at a particular rank or on a shift within the force in order to accommodate the needs of life outside of it. Women find a delicate balance between being themselves as women and being themselves as officers. The process of finding the balance is as individual as the policewomen themselves, revealing ways in which women adjust to the force and not the other way around.

Women have found ways to adapt what most people perceive as their ultimate limitation in policing, their lack of physical strength, and other gender based perceptions into a beneficial aspect of the way in which they police. Policewomen know they cannot achieve safe and necessary results in certain situations by force alone. Sometimes force is the only option and women handle it without hesitation, but sometimes physical action is only one of several choices, and women see themselves as more apt to explore other options, particularly communicative and collaborative options. Respect, empathy, open communication, all of these are critical aspects of a policing strategy less dependent upon force, which women believed they utilize with greater success,

both because they naturally associated these skills with their gender but also because the community often perceived them first as women and second as officers. Drawing on their female identity, whether it was simply as a woman or more specifically as a mother or sexual object, suspects projected their own perceptions of identity and adapted their own behavior to ways that their personal beliefs tell them is appropriate for a woman rather than an officer. Policewomen's adaptability to the plethora of perspectives through which they can be identified allows them to work with the big picture, the structure and law of police work, while simultaneously allowing them to create individual and feminine methods of fitting into that greater picture.

Ultimately, men, their perspectives, and their behavior characterize police work, and women must adapt to this environment in order to be able to function within it. Officers depend upon their abilities to connect with fellow officers because of the stress management that comes from sharing stories with like-minded individuals who have similar experiences. Female officers, however, can find these relations difficult to navigate as, despite progress in many respects, men in the police environment occasionally make inappropriate comments. Instead of isolating themselves by reacting to the comments, women rationalize and accept them in order to incorporate themselves into their environment. Relations to women, though equally as critical, are equally difficult, as low numbers and staggered shifts keep women from connecting. Women may integrate their personal and professional life outside of the workplace to achieve these connections, but it becomes a large time constraint on an already tightly

scheduled lifestyle, resulting in a semi-integrated, semi-isolated work environment for women.

Police work is an identity as much as it is a job, a lifestyle as much as it is a career. For women, combining their gender identity with their professional duties creates unique dynamics within the police force, only some of which I have explored throughout this study. The ways in which women blend, adapt, shift, and use their identity throughout their work contributes significantly to the quality of their experience as officers. Policing requires a commitment to civil service, the community, and the work itself, something that defines officers' experiences throughout their careers and lives. Looking back at her life and the impact of police work upon it, one officer described:

It's at least a 20-year career normally, so it's 20 years of your life and those are very influential years. You're usually hired in your mid-to-early 20s, here to your late 40s, and you've raised a family or you've lost loved ones or people at work you've lost, got maimed or injured, so you're strong towards the police side. You connect very strongly with it and I think that's why when people retire it's a tough goodbye. It's not the same as military but it's a paramilitary organization so in some ways it is. Platoons breakup when they get back from serving; they say it's very difficult, you know, that post-traumatic stress. Your world changes.

And, as officers often joke, you can't make this stuff up.

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