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Who am I? Who are We? Exploring the Factors that Contribute to Work-Related Identities in Policing

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Abstract

Using social identity theory, this study examines the conditions under which police officers become attached (or not) to their organization and to their work, and whether one's sex influences these relationships. Through an analysis of secondary survey data collected from a large Canadian police organization, the study found that fair treatment and psychological safety were significantly related to officers' identification with their organization, and in turn, their work. The findings also demonstrated that when officers perceived their workplace as a masculinity contest, they were less likely to identify with their organization. Additionally, perceptions of a masculinity contest were associated with a greater likelihood that officers reported lower levels of psychological safety, and this effect was more significant for female officers. While women overall were no less likely than men to be attached to their organization or their occupational role, women who perceived their workplace as psychologically less safe, reported lower levels of identification. The study also found that race and level within the organization may have a greater effect than sex on work-related identification. Overall, the study makes a significant contribution to the nascent literature on work-related identification and policing, as well as to the body of research on women in policing.

Introduction

Despite increased efforts to recruit more female officers, policing continues to be a male-dominated occupation. For instance, women account for 22% of all police officers in Canada (Conor et al., 2018). In the United States the number is much lower, with women representing just 12.6 percent of all full-time law enforcement officers (Duffin, 2019). Role incongruity is often offered as an explanation for the continued low representation of women as the traits typically associated with the female sex are inconsistent with the desired attributes of a police officer. In other words, the prototypical police officer tends to be cast as masculine (Archbold et al., 2010; Workman-Stark, 2017); therefore, there is "a perceived incongruity or lack of fit between being a woman and the work identity of a police officer" (Veldman et al., 2017, p.2).

Social identity and self-categorization theories are useful frameworks for explaining what may happen when women join the male-dominated ranks of policing. As people categorize themselves into in-groups and out-groups based on their similarities or differences to others (Tajfel, 1972), dissimilar identities tend to become a salient basis for comparison (Tajfel and Turner, 1979). Because masculine characteristics continue to be promoted in policing, it should be expected that women are more likely to be viewed in relation to their sex (a stigmatized identity associated with negative stereotypes and lessor value), rather than their roles as police officers.

A study conducted within the Israeli police found that the occupational identity of a police officer was more salient for female officers than their identity as a woman. Additionally, both male and female officers perceived they possessed the traits to do the job (Moore, 1999). More recent work involving police officers in a Western European country, revealed that when female police officers perceived that their male team members saw their sex as conflicting with

their work identity, they were less likely to identify with their team and to report important work-related outcomes; including intentions to remain with the organization (Veldman et al., 2017).

Prior research has shown that evaluations of whether individuals can safely invest their social identities within the group are based on judgements of how they are treated (Blader and Tyler, 2009), yet the conditions under which police officers form attachments with their work and the differing experiences of male and female officers has not been sufficiently examined in the literature. For example, Bradford et al. (2014) studied the relationships between organizational justice and organizational identification in a study of police officers in the UK; however, the authors did not examine whether these relationships differed based on one's sex. Thus, the purpose of this study is to bridge this knowledge gap by examining the conditions under which officers are likely to identify (or not) with their organization or their occupation, and whether these work-related attachments are influenced by sex-based differences. Building on prior studies, I specifically examine the relationships between organizational justice, psychological safety and work-related identification. I also consider the effects of organizational culture and sex on these same relationships. The theoretical model is depicted in Figure 1. I begin this paper with a review of the relevant literature and presentation of hypotheses. I then present the methods and results, followed by a discussion of the implications for research and practice.

INSERT FIGURE 1 NEAR HERE

Work-Related Identification

In identity theory, identity refers to the various meanings attached to an individual by themselves and/or by others, as group members, as occupiers of specific roles, and/or as distinct individuals (Gecas and Burke, 1995; Savage et al, 2019). Identities that matter most to people are

those that align with how they think about themselves and want to be thought of by others (Dutton et al., 1994). Within the workplace, there are generally two types of group memberships that are important for the social identities of employees: (1) membership with the organization; and (2) membership with a specific occupational group (Conroy et al., 2017).

Organizational Identity

Social identity theory (Tajfel and Turner 1988) stipulates that people have a fundamental motivation to create and maintain positive images of themselves (Aberson et al., 2000); therefore, they tend to identify more strongly with social groups, including organizations, that helps them to create and sustain positive self-views (Dutton et al.,1994; Tyler and Blader, 2000). Organizational identification can be defined as the "perception of oneness with or belongingness to an organization" (Mael and Ashforth 1992, p. 104), and represents the extent to which an individual incorporates the organization into their concept of who they are as a person (Sluss and Ashforth, 2008). As people are more likely to identify with an organization with attributes, values, and practices that are appealing and distinctive from other organizations (Ashforth and Mael,1989; Dutton et al.1994; Tyler, 1999), they are likely to pay attention to various cues that illustrate the relative prestige, status or image of an organization (Mael and Ashforth, 1992). Through organizational identification people become attached to one another based on their common connection (Abrams et al., 1988). Further, when group members perceive they share commonalities with other group members, feelings of trust and acceptance increase (Tajfel, 1982). In a policing context, officers may derive feelings of trust and acceptance based on their shared identities as members of a police organization they hold in high regard.

Although organizational identification has received limited coverage in police-related studies, prior research has illustrated that officers who were more emotionally attached to the

organization were more likely to indicate a readiness to take on discretionary activities, to be more confident and empowered to use their own initiative, to be more aligned with the principles of community policing (Bradford et al., 2014), and to remain with the organization (Veldman et al., 2017).

Occupational Identity

Work is a primary source of identity that helps individuals construct a sense of who they are and how they represent themselves to others (Christiansen, 1999), particularly in social settings (Unruh, 2004). Occupational identification refers to (Mael and Ashforth, 1992: p. 106) "the extent to which one defines him or herself in terms of the work he or she does and the prototypical characteristics ascribed to individuals who do that work". As socialized roles, occupational identities enhance the potential for individuals to create meaning and a sense of belonging to something greater than themselves (Phelan and Kinsella, 2009). They also function to provide members with shared ideologies, values, and beliefs (Ashforth and Kreiner, 1999). Depending on the occupation and the prestige associated with it, people may also have different types of relationships with their work. For instance, work can be viewed as simply a means to make a living, a career, or a calling in which individuals' personal and professional lives are intertwined (Wrzesniewski et al., 1997). Thus, occupational roles can serve as important identities, particularly if these roles are regarded favorably by others (Ashforth and Kreiner, 1999).

The police occupational identity can be described as both complex and evolving. Prior research has shown that individuals seek to become police officers primarily based on the desire to help others and to make a difference (Raganella and White, 2004; Ridgeway et al., 2008; White al., 2010). Yet, societal expectations (and even of police officers themselves) have crafted

policing as masculinized, thereby placing greater value on this masculine identity rather than one that might permit acceptance of more 'feminized' aspects of the role, such as displaying vulnerability (Tracy and Scott, 2006). Additionally, policing is often viewed as a tainted occupation due to the dirt and danger of the work, the moral ambiguity associated with the exercise of coercive authority, and the stigmatized groups of which the police deal with on a regular basis (Dick, 2005). As such, police officers tend to adopt and preserve a strong 'in-group' identity in which they legitimate their roles as protectors of society (Dick, 2005; Waddington, 1999).

Occupational identification can conflict with or complement organizational identification, depending on the alignment between occupational and organizational goals (Conroy et al., 2017). In other words, should occupational and organizational goals conflict, it is likely that the police occupational identity will be more salient. Conversely, if officers generate meaning from their identities as members of an esteemed police organization, they are more likely to identify with their role. Accordingly, I hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 1: Officers who identify with their organization are more likely to identify with their occupational role.

Contributors to Work-Related Identification

People's experiences as group members are impacted by the processes and treatment they are exposed to within the group, which suggests that people's evaluations of whether they can safely invest their social identities within a group are based on judgements of how they are treated (Blader and Tyler, 2009).

Organizational Justice

Research has shown that organizational justice is a primary dimension that people use to evaluate the processes and treatment they encounter in their groups (Tyler and Blader, 2000). Organizational justice refers to employee assessments about how fairly they are treated by organizational leaders (Roberson and Colquitt, 2005), and is typically recognized as comprising three main elements: distributive, procedural justice, and interactional justice (Skarlicki and Folger, 1997; Whitman et al., 2012). Whereas distributive justice is concerned with the fairness of outcomes (Greenberg, 1990), procedural justice pertains to the fairness of the processes in which outcomes are determined (Thibaut and Walker, 1975). Interactional justice refers to the perceived fairness of interactions and the information associated with decision-making processes (Colquitt, 2001). In short, fair treatment conveys to employees that they are valued and respected members of the organization, which can cause them to identify more strongly with and to take more pride in their group and organization (Blader and Tyler, 2009; Kreiner and Ashforth, 2004).

Tyler and colleagues (Blader and Tyler, 2009; Tyler and Blader, 2003) suggest there are limited conceptual differences between perceptions of fair process and good interpersonal treatment and communication; therefore, they conceptualize procedural justice as a combination of both procedural justice and interactional justice. The current study follows this same approach and distinguishes between two just dimensions of organizational justice: distributive and procedural justice.

The study of organizational justice within policing has increased in recent years, with several scholars illustrating that fair treatment produces positive outcomes for police organizations, such as creating supportive organizational climates (Bradford et al., 2014; Myhill

and Bradford, 2013; Tyler et al., 2007; Wolfe and Piquero, 2011), changing how officers interact with members of the public (Skogan et al., 2014), increasing police officer support for the use of procedural fairness (Wolfe and Piquero, 2011), increasing compliance with agency rules (Rosenbaum and McCarty, 2017), and positively influencing organizational commitment (Rosenbaum and McCarty, 2017), and organizational identification (Bradford et al., 2014). Through a study involving a police organization in the UK, Bradford et al. (2014) found that both distributive and procedural justice were significantly associated with organizational identification, which in turn was significantly related to extra-role behaviors. Based on prior research, I hypothesize that:

Hypotheses 2: When officers perceive that they are treated fairly they are more likely to (a) identify with their organization, and in turn, to (b) identify with their occupation.

Psychological Safety

Psychological safety has been defined as the state in which an individual is "feeling able to show and employ one's self without fear of negative consequences to self-image, status, or career" (Kahn, 1990, p. 708). It also been referred to as a common belief among team members that they can take personal risks within the team (Edmondson,1999). Experts suggest that a psychologically safe environment is dependent on the extent to which group members seek feedback, ask questions, ask for help, propose a new idea, or openly discuss mistakes without fear of rejection, humiliation, or any other negative consequences (Edmondson, 1999; Kahn, 1990; Nembard and Edmondson, 2006). According to Chan and McAllister (2014), when employees experience a psychologically safe workplace, it can cause higher organizational identification. The opposite is also true. Similarly, Liu et al. (2016), suggest that psychological safety is a form of open communication that helps shape the organizational identification of

employees. In a study examining the relationships between abusive supervision and employee creativity, Liu et al. (2016) found that psychological safety was positively related to organizational identification. Psychological safety was also found to mediate the effects of abusive supervision on organizational identification. Likewise, other studies have demonstrated that psychological safety helps facilitate organization identification (Ashforth et al., 2008; Stets and Burke, 2005).

While the direct relationship between psychological safety and organizational identification has not been studied in a policing context, the nature of the police working environment presents a compelling case for the inclusion of psychological safety as an important antecedent for organizational identification. For example, the authority to use force means that the police are often in the difficult position of having their actions judged by others as justified (or not) after the fact. Such an environment can create a dilemma of feeling both powerful and powerless as every interaction could potentially have lethal consequences, with police officers "constantly scrutinized, supervised, and reined-in by their department' (Kirschman, 1998, p.128). With the recent resurgence of the #BlackLivesMatter movement, and the enhanced scrutiny of the police that has come with it, I propose that a psychologically safe workplace is essential to support officers in seeking feedback, asking questions, asking for help, and admitting mistakes. I also propose that psychological safety is a direct contributor to officers' identification with their organization. Specifically, I theorize that:

Hypotheses 3: Officers who perceive their workplace as psychologically safe will be more likely to identify with (a) their organization, and in turn, (b) their occupation.

Within the workplace, high-status individuals more likely to be asked for their opinions and listened to (Nembhard and Edmondson, 2006); therefore, low-status group members have a

higher level of interpersonal risk associated with speaking up, particularly, when they perceive that doing so would be ineffective, or that they may be subjected to the disapproval of others and/or negative personal consequences (Ashford et al., 1998; Nembhard and Edmondson, 2006). Status is typically defined as the relative social position, prestige, or esteem of an individual or group compared to others, which is often determined by a prescribed social value that places personal characteristics, such as sex, age or race, at the lower end of a social hierarchy (Magee & Galinsky, 2008). Due to the masculine prescriptions associated with police work, male officers tend to have a higher status than women (Workman-Stark, 2017); therefore, they should be less concerned with psychological safety than female officers. Accordingly, I theorize and test the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 4: Sex will be positively associated with psychological safety, with female officers less likely than male officers to perceive their workplace as psychologically safe.

The Effects of Organizational Culture

Schein (2010) proposes that certain cultures may develop within occupations, particularly if members have common backgrounds, and are trained and socialized in the same way with the same values. As a powerful aspect of an organization's culture, norms represent the basic assumptions that are taught to new members as the accepted way to think, feel, and act (Schein, 2010). Early research on police culture suggests that it evolved from a preoccupation with proving masculinity and the use of violence to control members of the public (Wilson, 1968). Indeed, Fielding's (1994, p. 47) depiction of the police 'cult of masculinity' captures the stereotypical values of certain forms of masculinity within policing, including

> (i) aggressive, physical action; (ii) a strong sense of competitiveness and preoccupation with the imagery of conflict; (iii) an exaggerated heterosexual orientation, often articulated in terms of misogynistic and patriarchal attitudes to women; and (iv) the operation of rigid in-group/out-group distinctions whose consequences are strongly

exclusionary in the case of out-groups and strongly assertive of loyalty and affinity in the case of in-groups

More recent examinations of police culture have highlighted a continuing masculine ethos that is associated with conflict and danger (Loftus, 2010). Atkinson's (2016) work involving the Scottish police highlighted the distinctions between the tasks of proper policing and those that were regarded as 'feminine' and 'women's work' (i.e., intelligence work). Similarly, Silvestri's (2017, p. 292) recent review of police culture illustrates how the expression of manliness continues to be central to the construction and identity of the 'ideal' police worker.

In a study involving a Canadian police organization, Rawksi and Workman-Stark (2018) demonstrate that police cultural norms are akin to a masculinity contest culture, in which masculine norms are promoted and endorsed. As a result, masculinity contest norms put pressure on officers to conform to these masculine ideals to gain and maintain status (Cialdini and Trost, 1998). Those who live up to these norms are likely to be embraced by fellow officers, and to be defended and backed up in dangerous situations (Reus-Ianni, 1993), whereas officers who do not may be viewed as weak and subjected to ridicule and isolation (Nolan, 2009).

Through empirical research, Rawski and Workman-Stark (2018) showed that masculinity contest norms promoted poorer organizational and individual outcomes, including lower organizational identification, job dissatisfaction, higher turnover intentions, and reduced psychological wellbeing. Based on prior studies, I propose that police officers' attachment to their work and organization is partially dependent on organizational culture and the specific norms that are endorsed and promoted. Specifically, I hypothesize that:

Hypotheses 5: When officers perceive that their workplace as a masculinity contest culture, they will be less likely to (a) identify with their organization, and in turn, (b) their organization.

To successfully compete in the masculinity contest culture, male officers may engage in extreme work hours and cutthroat competition. They may also disparage, marginalize, sexually harass, and discriminate against women (Hassell and Brandl, 2009; Morash et al., 2006; Seklecki and Paynich, 2007). As female police officers are less likely to be winners of the masculinity contest, they should be more sensitive to masculinity contest norms. Thus, I also posit that:

Hypothesis 6: Sex will be significantly related to a masculinity contest culture, with female officers more likely than male officers to perceive their workplace as a masculinity contest culture.

The Current Study

The current study utilized secondary survey data collected from a large regional police organization (i.e., approximately 1,000 police officers and civilian employees in total) covering both municipal and rural jurisdictions in Central Canada. The data were collected in 2018 as part of a workplace assessment to establish a baseline assessment of employee perceptions about various aspects of the workplace. The survey link (using SurveyMonkey) was distributed to all employees through an email message from the Chief, who encouraged, but did not require participation, and assured anonymity of responses. The response rate was approximately 50%.

While the original study included both civilian employees and police officers, the current study utilized secondary data pertaining to police officers only (approximately 650 officers; 84% men). The current study also incorporated measures that assessed organizational culture and climate, and work-related identification, along with the demographic variables of age, level, sex, race, and tenure. As the original survey included both civilian staff and police officers, 'level' was delineated by level of supervisory/managerial responsibility rather than a specific rank (i.e., frontline and support staff, supervisor, manager, executive). Additionally, due to the lack of

racial diversity within the organization and to ensure anonymity of respondents, the original study included the following categories only: white, visible minority and indigenous.[1]

Participants and Procedures

The study sample (*N* = 298; approximately 46% response rate) was reflective of the total police population with one exception; female police officers were overrepresented (i.e., 24% versus 16% in the total population). Overall, the sample was 76 percent male and 94 percent white. Most participants had between 10 to 14 years (25.3%) and 15 to19 (27%) years of service, and were between the ages of 35 to 44 years (32.8%) and 45 to 54 years (41.3%). Finally, 61.4 percent of respondents were in a nonsupervisory role (i.e., constables).

Measures

The levels of internal consistency for each of the study scales exceeded conventional thresholds (.70), indicating that the scales were reliable (Hinkin, 1998). Except where explicitly stated, participants indicated their agreement or disagreement with each item on a scale from 1, (strongly disagree) to 7, (strongly agree).

Organizational Justice: Eight items were used from Colquitt (2001) to measure organizational justice (3 - distributive justice, 5 - procedural justice). Example items included: "Compared with other people in the workplace, I am satisfied with the recognition that I receive."; and "I am provided with explanations for why decisions are made". [Chronbach's alphas = .91 (DJ); .87 (PJ)].

Psychological Safety: Four items were adapted from Edmondson's (1999) psychological safety scale. Example items included: "People are able to bring up problems and tough issues"; and "When people make a mistake it is often held against them" (Chronbach's alpha = .74).

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[1] These latter two categories are consistent with the Canadian government's employment equity group designations.

Masculinity Contest Culture (MCC): To measure a masculinity contest culture, the eight-item short form of the MCC scale was used (Glick et al., 2018). The MCC scale consists of four separate dimensions with two items each: put work first, strength and stamina, show no weakness, and dog eat dog. Example items included: "Taking days off for family reasons is frowned upon"; "People who are physically smaller have to work harder to get respect"; "Admitting you don't know the answer looks weak"; and "You're in or you're out, and once you're out, you're out". (Chronbach's alpha = .81).

Organizational Identification: Seven items were used from Mael and Ashforth (1992) to assess member perceptions of identifying with the organization. Example items included: "I find that my values and the XXX[2] values are similar"; "I would describe the XXX as a large family in which most members feel a sense of belonging"; and "there is a common sense of purpose in the XXX". (Chronbach's alpha = .88).

Occupational Identity: Four items were adapted from Luhtanen and Crocker's (1992) social identity importance and centrality scale. The occupation of "police officer" was inserted as the target of social identification. Example items included: "Being a police officer is an important part of who I am"; and "I feel a sense of solidarity with other police officers". (Chronbach's alpha = .86).

Demographic Variable of Interest: Dichotomous variables were used for police officer *sex* (0 = female, 1 = male), *level* (0 = nonsupervisor, 1 = supervisor); and *race* (0 = nonwhite, 1 = white).

[2] "XXX" refers to the name of the organization, which is not identified for this article

Analyses and Results

Means, standard deviations, and correlations are shown in Table 1. As Table 1 reveals, significant correlations were found between organizational justice and both organizational and occupational identification, and between psychological safety and organizational identification. Perceptions of a masculinity contest culture were also significantly correlated with lower organizational and occupational identification. Further, organizational identification was positively correlated with occupational identification. In addition, the results revealed significant relationships between sex and psychological safety, and between sex and perceptions of the workplace as a masculinity contest culture.

INSERT TABLE 1 NEAR HERE

For Hypotheses 1, 3, and 5, I utilized structural equational modeling in AMOS 26 to test the hypotheses through two separate models; the second of which included the masculinity contest measure. SEM was selected for this study as it has the advantage of being able to simultaneously test all variables in the hypothesized model, which enables an assessment of the extent to which the model is consistent with the data (Byrne, 1994). Based on the correlation results, I controlled for sex, level and race in all analyses. The results of these analyses are presented in Table 2. As illustrated, the models supported Hypothesis 1, revealing a strong association between organizational and occupational identification. Consistent with Hypotheses 2 organizational justice was significantly related to organizational identification, which in turn, was related to occupational identification. Psychological safety was found to be significantly related to organizational identification only, thereby providing support for Hypothesis 3a. The fifth group of hypotheses predicted that when officers perceived their workplace to be a masculinity contest culture they would be more likely to identify with their organization, and, in

turn, to identify with their occupation. Table 2 (Model 2) reveals that Hypothesis 5a but not 5b was supported. An interesting observation is that the introduction of the masculinity contest measure in Model 2 significantly mediated the direct effect of psychological safety on organizational identification. The total, direct, and indirect effects for both models are depicted in Table 3.

INSERT TABLES 2 and 3 NEAR HERE

Hypotheses 4 and 6 suggested that sex would be significantly related to psychologically safety and a masculinity contest culture, with female officers less likely to perceive their workplace as psychologically safe, and more likely to view their workplace as a masculinity contest culture. Table 4 reveals the results of the regression analyses, which show that sex was significantly associated to both psychological safety and perceptions of a masculinity contest culture. Independent t-tests demonstrated that female officers (M=3.47, SD=1.26) were significantly less likely than male officers (M=3.92, SD=1.37) to feel psychologically safe [$t(296) = -2.444$, $p = .015$]. Female officers (M=4.29, SD=1.11) were also significantly more likely than male officers (M=3.94, SD=1.16) to perceive their workplace as a masculinity contest culture [$t(296) = 2.262$, $p = .024$]. Hence, Hypotheses 4 and 6 were supported.

INSERT TABLE 4 NEAR HERE

Beyond the study hypotheses, the correlations indicated that level within the organization and race were also related to organizational identification. Accordingly, I conducted further regression analyses to verify the effects of personal characteristics on this outcome variable and their relationships with the climate and cultural variables. Table 4 reveals that in addition to organizational identification, level and race were associated with perceptions of psychological safety and a masculinity culture. Particularly, minority and nonsupervisory officers reported

levels of psychological safety, and identification with their organization, and increased perceptions of their workplace as a masculinity contest culture. Minority officers were also less likely than white officers to perceive they had been treated fairly (i.e., procedural justice). Based on the preceding analyses, I tested the differing interaction effects of sex, race and level on psychological safety and a masculinity contest culture (i.e., through univariate analyses). None of these interaction effects were found to be significant. I will discuss these and other results in the next section.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine the conditions under which police officers form attachments with their work and their organization. Specifically, this study examined whether certain climate and cultural factors were related to work-related identification, and whether these relationships were influenced by sex-based differences. Consistent with expectations, the findings provided evidence that when officers perceived they were treated fairly they were more likely to identify with their organization. In turn, officers who identified with their organization were more likely to identify with their occupation. Similarly, when officers perceived their workplace as psychologically safe they were more likely to report higher levels of identification with their organization. Of note, fair processes had a greater effect on organizational identification than the perceived fairness of outcomes, which is consistent with prior research (Greenberg, 2011; Tyler, 2011). Fair treatment was also more important than psychological safety in terms of officers' identification with their organization.

In accordance with the study predictions, female officers reported lower levels of psychological safety than men. Whereas there were no significant differences in organizational identification between male and female officers overall, additional analyses (i.e., univariate)

demonstrated that female officers who viewed their workplace as less safe were less likely to be attached to their organization [$F(20, 251) = 1.70$, $p = .034$]. Further, minority and nonsupervisory officers reported lower levels of psychological safety and attachment to the organization. Minority officers were also less likely to perceive they were treated fairly. In short, fair treatment and psychological safety were important considerations in the attachments officers formed with their organization and their work, particularly for minority officers and officers in nonsupervisory positions. Contrary to expectations, officer sex was not as significant a factor in officer perceptions about their workplace and their relationships with their organization/work.

In addition to the workplace climate factors previously discussed, this study also considered the effect of organizational culture on officers' work-related identification. The findings showed that when officers perceived their workplace as a masculinity contest, they were less likely to identify with their organization. The findings also suggested that perceptions of a masculinity contest culture had the greatest effect on psychological safety. In other words, officers who perceived their workplace as more representative of a masculinity contest were unlikely to report it was psychologically safe. As expected, female officers were more sensitive to and more likely to perceive their workplace as a masculinity contest than male officers. However, they were still no less likely to identify with their organization. These outcomes are noteworthy as they imply that masculinity contest norms were not a significant factor in female officers' work-related identification. In contrast, officers who were not in a supervisory or managerial position (i.e., constables) tended to perceive the workplace as a masculinity contest, which in turn contributed to lower levels of organizational attachment.

Implications for Research and Practice

Prior research on women in policing has revealed that female officers often respect

women who adopt a masculine approach to policing. At the same time, they may also show contempt for female officers who express their femininity, and question their effectiveness as police officers (Rabe-Hemp, 2009). Female officers have also been accused of buying into the ‘cop culture’, and actively stigmatizing members of their own sex identity group (Kurtz et al., 2012), thereby suggesting that success within policing requires women to adopt masculine norms. Whereas the current study illustrated that fair treatment and a sense of psychological safety influenced the attachments officers form with their work and organization, being female did not relate to significant differences in attachment, particularly, in the context of a masculinity contest culture. However, the findings illustrated that masculinity contest norms had a significant, negative effect on perceptions of psychological safety, and these effects were greatest for female officers. In turn, female officers who perceived their workplace as less psychologically safe were less likely to identity with their organization.

Although the current study was primarily focused on exploring differences by sex, the findings demonstrated there were also significant differences in workplace perceptions and identity based on race and level within the organization. Perceptions of racially diverse officers that they were treated less fairly, may be partially explained by identity theory, which suggests that individuals who are in the numerical minority are less likely to feel valued by their team or their organization, particularly, when they are members of a stigmatized identity group (Inzlicht and Good, 2006). In terms of the relationship between level and perceptions of a masculinity contest culture, prior research has identified two distinct cultures with policing that are differentiated by position/rank: the street cop culture and the management cop culture (Reuss-Ianni, 1993). Whereas the management culture is focused on rules, regulation and management functions, the street cop culture is consistent with elements of the masculinity contest culture.

Therefore, it would be expected that lower ranking officers would be more likely to describe their workplace as a masculinity contest. Of note, officers overall reported higher levels of occupational identity than organizational identity, implying that the role identity was more salient and less influenced by an officer's sex, level within the organization or race.

Beyond contributions to existing knowledge, this study offers several practical implications. First, it illustrates that by focusing on the implementation of fair policies, practices, and outcomes, police organizations are likely to increase officers' attachment with their work and their organization, which have been shown to produce several positive outcomes, including reduced intentions to leave (Veldman et al., 2017), and extra-role behaviors (Bradford et al., 2014). Secondly, the results suggest that efforts to create the conditions in which lower status officers (i.e., women) feel safe enough to report challenges and tough issues, to admit mistakes, and/or ask for help can also lead to increased organizational identification. Further, the study findings shed some light on the role of identity within police organizations. Specifically, they imply that a singular focus on sex as a means of improving the workplace experiences of women misses how sex intersects with other identities that might have greater implications for how individuals experience and perceive their workplace.

Limitations and Future Research

This study makes several important contributions to both research and practice, yet it also has some limitations. For instance, the study relied on survey data from one organization only and did not explore these complex concepts through individual interviews. Second, the sample size was relatively small, which limits the generalizability of the results. Additionally, as the sample was also largely white, race was examined as a binary variable only. Future research should consider a cross-section of police organizations with an emphasis on recruiting a higher

percentage of women and minority participants. Third, the survey relied on individual officer perceptions of their workplace rather than the shared reality of the group. In addition, the study examined sex and did not consider gender identities and whether officers may have identified with femininity, masculinity, or a combination of both. Researchers should consider examining the salience of gender identity, particularly whether high or low-identifying female officers experience the workplace differently. Given the findings associated with race and level, future research should also consider the intersectionality of gender, race and other personal identities. Finally, the original data were also collected during a period in which the provincial government was considering additional avenues of police oversight, which may have affected the results. Notwithstanding these limitations, the study is one of few to examine work-related identification in policing, and the conditions under which officers become attached to their organization and/or their work.

Conclusions

Increasing the representation of women continues to be a priority in many police organizations with efforts often focused on understanding the challenges of being female in a male-dominated organization. The current study demonstrated that fairness and a sense of safety are important factors for all officers as they consider whether to adopt an identity as a member of a specific police organization, and/or as a police officer more generally. The study also illustrated that race and level may be more important variables shaping officers' work-related identities than their biological sex. Thus, focusing on sex, together with the additional effects of race or other personal identities, may help police organizations develop a greater appreciation of how these diverse identities may produce different workplace experiences and to tailor their interventions accordingly.

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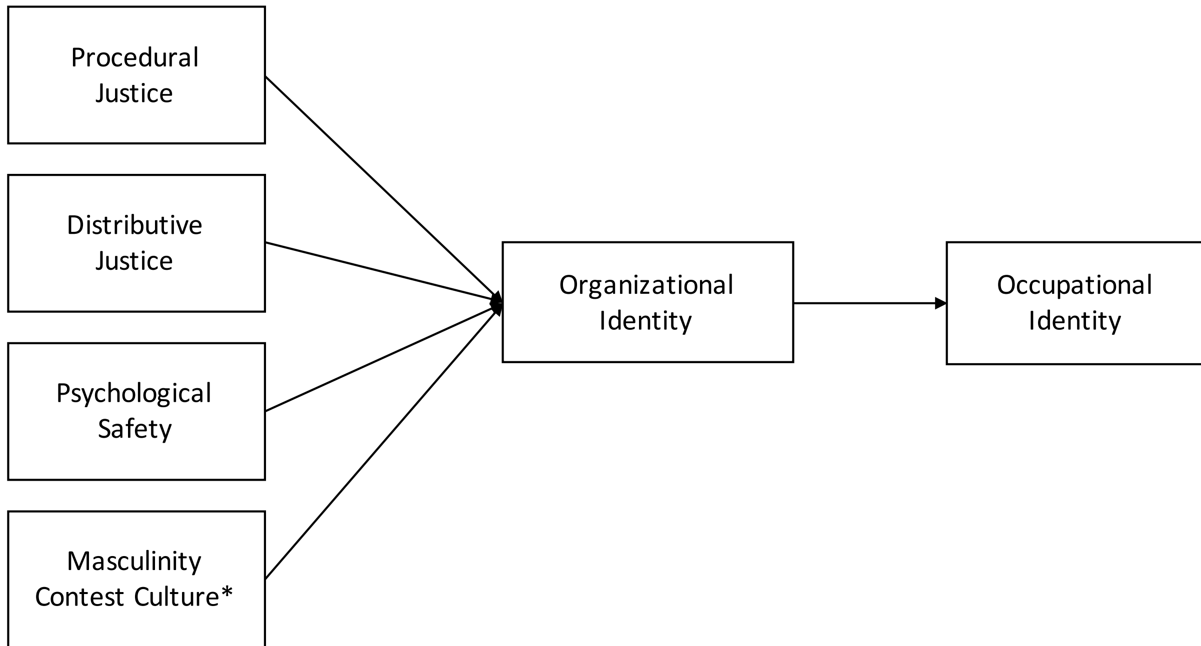

Figure 1. Theoretical Model
*Masculinity Contest Culture is added to second SEM model.
Control variables are not depicted.

Table 1
Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations

Variable	*Mean*	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Distributive Justice	4.67	1.50								
2. Procedural Justice	4.23	1.38	.637**							
3. Psychological Safety	3.81	1.36	.497**	.611**						
4. MCC	4.02	1.16	-.445**	-.481**	-.661**					
5. Org. Identification	4.65	1.30	.508**	.547**	.495**	-.442**				
6. Occ. Identification	5.22	1.36	.219**	.172**	.103	-.197**	.402**			
7. Sex	.76	.43	.075	.064	.141*	-.130*	.064	.042		
8. Position	.38	.49	.113	.064	.295**	-.211**	.288**	.046	.080	
9. Race	.94	.24	.086	.156**	.112	-.073	.140*	.079	-.010	-.063

Note. MCC = Masculinity Contest Culture.
Sex = 0(female), 1(male); Position = 0(nonsupervisor), 1(supervisor/manager); Race = 0(nonwhite), 1(white)
* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01.$, *** $p < .001$

Table 2

Test of Hypotheses Using Structural Equation Modeling

Hypotheses	Paths	Model 1 Standardized estimates	Model 2 Standardized estimates (with MCC)
Hypothesis 1	OI → OccID	$.47^{***}$	$.45^{***}$
Hypothesis 2a	DJ → OI	$.22^{***}$	$.21^{***}$
	PJ → OI	$.30^{***}$	$.30^{***}$
2b	DJ → OI → OccID	$.10^{***}$	$.09^{***}$
	PJ → OI → OccID	$.14^{***}$	$.13^{***}$
Hypothesis 3a	PS → OI	$.13^{*}$	.07
3b	PS → OI → OccID	.06	.03
Hypothesis 5a	MCC → OI		$-.13^{*}$
5b	MCC → OI → OccID		-.05

Note. OI = organizational identification; OccID = occupational identification; DJ = distributive justice; PJ = procedural justice; PS = psychological safety, and MCC = Masculinity Contest Culture.
$^{*}p < .05$, $^{**}p < .01$, $^{***}p < .001$

Table 3

Mediation Model

		Model 1 Occupational Identification (standardized estimates)	Model 2 (with MCC) Occupational Identification (standardized estimates)
Distributive Justice	Total effect	.189**	.166*
	Direct effect	.087	.073
	Indirect effect[a]	.119***	.093***
Procedural Justice	Total effect	.073	.062
	Direct effect	-.067	-.071
	Indirect effect[a]	.108***	.133***
Psychological Safety	Total effect	-.059	-.160
	Direct effect	-.120*	-.191*
	Indirect effect[a]	.061	.031
Masculinity Culture	Total effect		-.185**
	Direct effect		-.133
	Indirect effect[a]		-.053

[a]Mediated by organizational identification.
$^{*}p < .05$, $^{**}p < .01$, $^{***}p < .001$

Table 4

Climate, Culture and Outcome Regression Models

	PS	MCC	OI	PJ	DJ
Variable	*B* (SE)	*B(SE)*	*B(SE)*	*B(SE)*	*B(SE)*
Sex	1.51*(.70)	-2.49*(1.23)	.90(1.17)	1.00(.96)	.73(.63)
Position	3.29***(.62)	-3.95***(1.08)	5.50***(1.03)	1.01(.84)	1.09(.56)
Race	3.01*(1.25)	-3.37(2.20)	6.04**(2.10	4.77**(1.71)	1.84(1.13)
F (df)	3,13.16***	3, 6.80***	3, 12.09***	3, 3.38*	3, 2.60
R^2	.12	.07	.11	.03	.03

Note. Beta values are reported unstandardized, standard errors are reported unstandardized and in parentheses. PS = psychological safety; MCC = masculinity contest culture; OI = organizational identification; PJ = procedural justice; DJ = distributive justice; Sex = 0(female), 1(male); Position = 0(nonsupervisor), 1(supervisor/manager); Race = 0(nonwhite), 1(white)
* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$., *** $p < .001$
† < .10, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, $^{***}p < .001$