Policing in Unsettled Times:
An Analysis of Culture in the Police Organization

by

Holly Campeau

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Department of Sociology
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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines how actors within a public sector institution - a police organization - use culture to make sense of a shifting occupational landscape. Interviews with 100 police officers and field notes from 50 ride-along hours were collected over the course of 18 months in the police service of a medium-sized city. Rather than conceive "police culture" as an ideal-type of values and attitudes, this project engages with concepts from sociological literature on culture and organizations to re-conceptualize police culture as a "resource" officers deploy to navigate what can be risky work in a contentious organization. First, contrasting traditional cultural depictions of police officers as unremittingly mission-oriented and indivisible, findings reveal the fragility of officer solidarity and unwillingness to engage with risky situations. Expanding surveillance outside the reach of law enforcement (e.g. cellphone videos, social media, etc.) contribute to uncertainty as officers carry out their duties. Second, police engage with a combination of myths and generational scripts in ways that both defend and challenge the status quo in their organization. "Old-school" scripts sustain the prominence of paramilitarism, camaraderie and athleticism. And while "new-generation" scripts are mainly deployed ceremonially to signal legitimacy to external policing constituents, some officers also use them to express the importance of education, the banality of military mindsets, and the need

for equitable practices to be implemented on a more routine basis. Finally, results show that police rely on jointly established understandings about their local community to both perform and justify their organization's non-conformity with certain industry standards. Overall, insofar as change in policing is the objective in the current era of wavering public confidence and fiscal crisis, this study suggests that mere top-down policy reform is insufficient: organizational policy and actual practices are only loosely-linked and those charged with implementing a new course of action (i.e. senior officers) are often the staunchest supporters of non-change. Without a disruption to the lock-step hierarchical structure of the police organization, institutional reform is likely only to emerge generationally, as the most promising energy for transformative change rests among cohorts entering the occupation at a particularly unsettled time.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

The City of Toronto is still abuzz with the court case of Constable James Forcillo, who was convicted of attempted murder for the 2013 shooting of Sammy Yatim on a Toronto streetcar. Video surveillance from the Toronto Transit Commission, cameras on a nearby building and civilian cell phone images provided the public with immediate access to footage of these events. Adding to the controversy around Toronto policing, Black Lives Matter organizers continue to rally around the shooting death of Andrew Loku, who was shot by a Toronto Police officer last July when he refused to drop a hammer. Members are protesting the Special Investigation Unit's finding that officers acted reasonably (no charges were laid) and demanding that the names of the officers responsible be released. The province of Ontario has since stepped in and recently announced that an inquest will be launched to further investigate these events. Also at the provincial level, Ontario's Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services has announced that, in light of crises of both sustainability and legitimacy, they are now in the early stages of overhauling the Police Services Act.

Meanwhile, south of the border, 2015 marked a time when President Obama faced nation-wide unrest about law enforcement and police reform in America. Even presidential candidates find themselves in conversation with the Black Lives Matter movement and are called on to answer difficult questions about their plan for curbing police violence and repairing police-community relationships. And now in 2016, Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel is still trying to quell calls for his resignation after the release of video footage showing a police officer shooting a black teenager 16 times back in October, 2014. Numerous city-wide walkouts have taken place

following what many perceive as a cover-up by Chicago City Hall and Chicago Police Department to conceal police brutality and unjust law enforcement practices. Moreover, in urban centres all throughout North America, police departments are rolling out body cameras for officers to wear on their person to visually document encounters with citizens.

Policing today is front page news. Police officials find themselves under the microscope, but not only for the violence that has unmasked numerous issues around use of force, police-minority relations, and police governance. Policing is also currently a top political concern, top city concern, a budget concern, and of course in many cases, a public relations nightmare. The waves of protest, movements, resignations, investigations, court proceedings, research, task forces and implementations of new policy that surround numerous recent high profile events involving law enforcement are all symptomatic of a broader shift toward what we might call an "unsettled moment" in the policing landscape. Put simply, things are changing in policing, both within and outside the doors of police stations, in ways that are ultimately unearthing new perspectives about the police function as well as different views about how police officers should orient themselves in a rapidly changing society.

The research presented in this dissertation reflects on the changing dimensions of policing today in order to better understand how these current unsettled times impact how police officers themselves understand their role and establish meaning in their work lives. *In short, this dissertation is about "police culture".* However, readers will note that this project represents a patent departure from previous work on the topic. The underlying theme of what follows is the assertion that, if we want to capture how social change influences policing, the task requires us to 1) adopt an understanding of culture that is quite nimble and 2) reposition the unit of analysis to focus more distinctly on policing *not* simply as an occupation, but as an *organization.* In

addition, what is particularly exciting about the current unsettled scene of policing is that now is a time of negotiation, new ideas, and innovation – and is thus a generative moment for culture to reveal itself. Drawing on the sociology of culture and of organizations, this study examines the police department as an organization which is embedded in a social context, is made up of rules or norms upon which individuals act and react, and which constrains behaviour in meaningful ways.

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This chapter provides a general introduction to the overall subject matter, previous approaches, theoretical contribution, guiding questions and methodological considerations of three separate (but related) journal article-style papers. Readers will note that each of these articles – which comprise chapters 2, 3 and 4 – are self-contained and therefore hold their own literature reviews, as well as their own specific set of research problems and questions. Each, however, shares in common that which is presented in this first chapter and the broad theme of police culture in the context of change.

POLICING & ITS "CULTURE"

The public police are seen as central to the maintenance of social order, and we rely heavily on their institutionalized authority. Indeed, the police are an exclusive group authorized to use coercive force in dealing with the citizenry. Given the unique and sometimes dangerous occupational mandate of law enforcement, job-related pressures and officer perceptions of their role can have violent or, in the case of recent events (i.e. Sammy Yatim in Toronto, Michael Brown in Ferguson, Walter Scott in Charleston, Freddie Gray in Baltimore, etc.), even fatal

consequences. As such, it is essential that we understand the occupational realm in which police operate. To do so, police scholars coined the term "**police culture**". This single comprehensive term is meant to encompass a wide-range of cultural categories, all relating to the complex system of values and attitudes that define the normative social world of police. Robert Reiner (1985) outlined the core elements comprising police culture, which include a tendency toward excitement, a cynical outlook, incessant suspicion of others, isolation, strong solidarity with fellow officers, conservative morality and political beliefs, and exaggerated masculinity. Reiner's "ideal type" has since informed most police culture literature and these traits combine to engender a social environment that, since the 1960s, is said to be highly *resistant* to change. In the last thirty years, however, police departments have undergone substantial transformation that may hold implications for the culture within, particularly when coupled with broader macro-level shifts in North American society, such as increasingly diverse cities, more women in the workplace, pervasive economic austerity and a more educated, legally aware and demanding public. This section examines how previous research has approached the study of police culture in the context of change.

Studies of police culture have placed particular emphasis on demographic shifts within police ranks, on the widespread trend toward community-policing principles, and on increasing levels of accountability. For instance, demographic change is largely rooted in efforts to be more representative of the increasingly diverse communities in which police perform their function. This has prompted several modifications to recruitment objectives and application requirements in order to attract more women, racial minorities, and educated individuals generally. Furthermore, the need to professionalize law enforcement, efforts to control the behavior of patrol officers and increasing demand for transparency have all coalesced over time to form a matrix of formal accountability mechanisms in policing. These include open complaints

processes, external civilian oversight bodies, written procedures for exercising force, legislation which governs police training and mandate, and moves toward standardization of police service generally (Walker 2005; see also Walker and Archbold 2014). In recent years, informal policing oversight has also intensified. The citizenry itself is now routinely engaged in its own form of surveillance of the authorities – referred to as "sousveillance" – through the increased use of video recording technologies, particularly on cell phones, and through video sharing platforms such as Facebook and YouTube (Goldsmith 2010).

Through attempts to uncover the actual impact of shifting personnel demographics and departmental policies on the traditional police occupational culture, some studies find evidence of change, while others report cultural stagnation.[1] Indeed, changes within personnel and policy often coincide. Walker (1985) argued that if the increase in the number of female and minority police officers has more to do with affirmative action policy than it does with a genuine desire to diversify the police force – for community relations, for example – then this influx of newcomers can actually be counterproductive. Members of the dominant group may resent the special treatment accorded to the protected group. Thus, white male officers express suspicion that women and racial minorities could not have made it on their own merits, thereby resisting their full participation. Sklansky (2006) notes, however, that such social fragmentation reduces police insularity. Female and minority officers often form alliances with organizations both within and outside of law enforcement which support individual rights in the workplace. Police culture, he argues, is thus "now being transformed, segmented, and rendered more porous by the growing diversity of the police workforce" (p. 1240).

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[1] See, for example, Chan 1997, 2003; Loftus 2010; Marks 2005; O'Neill et al. 2007; Paoline et al. 2000; Punch 2007; Sklansky 2006; Skolnick 2008.

Given the heavy emphasis placed on the "hypermaculinity" of police culture (colloquially referred to as a "boy's club"), much of the previous research focuses on the gender-related influences of changing officer demographics. Evidence has shown that women often bring an efficient style of policing that does *not* feed into the traditional cultural ideal of suspicion and aggressiveness (Sun 2007; see also Berg and Budnick 1986; Franklin 2007). Rabe-Hemp (2009) explains, however, that despite efforts to weaken police hypermasculinity by "doing femininity" or increasing the number of female officers, this does *not* result in significant change. Instead, women who support and socialize with other female officers were labeled an "estrogen mafia" and "further isolated from the police culture" (p. 126). It has also been argued that many policewomen simply try to fly under the radar in order to "fit in" a male-dominated world (Martin and Jurik 2007).

Policies directed at enhancing diversity throughout police ranks are rooted in community-policing principles which promote representativeness. Herbert (2001) examined the cultural impact of the broader shift toward community partnership. These principles reduce the need for a police officer to handle incidents through coercive invocation of the criminal law because the more proactive tactics encouraged through community-policing (i.e. talking and building rapport with citizens) do not depend on police legal authority (Paoline et al. 2000). These "supportive skills", however, are often refuted as "social work" or even "tokenism" – not "real police work" – and are feminized or dismissed accordingly. Brown (2007) supports these findings, arguing that the shift away from the "crime fighter" mandate toward intelligence work and reassurance policing has done little to chip away at the "us versus them" culture.

The relationship between an influx of educated police and classic police culture themes is understudied. Punch (2007) notes that conditions which prompted an increase in police education

credentials are also those which transformed the police institution from one that is inward facing to one that is now looking outside itself. This willingness to engage with the outside community in turn dilutes the power of dominant cultural ideas that hinder openness to forging new inter-institutional relationships and new modes of thought (Cockcroft 2013). In other words, education is believed to be a channel which facilitates organizational change through its ability to break down barriers with the outside world.

Finally, research which examines the impact of the new landscape of accountability on police culture specifically is also limited. Study is in part made difficult by the fact that police departments are continually adapting to changing standards, but also because failures of oversight measures are commonly attributed to the occupational culture itself (Goldsmith and Lewis 2000). Cover-ups and an "us versus them" police mindset is said to excuse abuses of power (Bayley 1995) and encourage administrators to handle officer misconduct quietly in-house. Chan (2003) observes that, regardless of reforms and attempts to eliminate corrupt practices, police socialization is powerfully indoctrinating. Officers are said to orient themselves to the practicalities of the job, which are often either extraneous to or in direct conflict with academy training. She finds that, in short, stereotyping is inevitable, suspicion is necessary because people lie, and insensitivity develops because victims so often share blame (Chan 2003). Another key challenge is echoed in Obama's recent *Interim Report of the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing*, which cites an old saying: "Organizational culture eats policy for lunch" (2015, p. 10). Loftus's (2010) research supports a similar conclusion when she argues that renowned features of police culture "remain virtually untouched by initiatives aimed at changing everyday assumptions and behaviours" (p. 17). Still, others highlight that cultural variations certainly exist and that the orthodox conception of police culture should not be adopted uncritically.

Therefore, findings from studies about changes in policing and the influence these may or may not impose on the dominant culture yield mixed results. Much of this research attributes such inconsistencies to the incomplete integration of minorities and women into upper ranks, to constantly shifting policy and, most importantly, to difficulties in measuring cultural change. Walker (1985) points to the need for police scholars to move beyond descriptive, policy-based accounts and to instead study the implications of "glacial" changes in departments. The problem is that the police culture template (i.e. solidarity, suspicion, masculinity, etc.) used in police research has led to "cognitive burn-in" (Sklansky 2007) – a collective imprint in how scholars *think about* the topic – and this diverts our attention from emerging intellectual trends. More work is needed to push the study of police culture in new directions and into new territory.

THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTION: BUILDING BRIDGES

Though police scholars have referred to a distinct "police culture" as early as the 1960s, they have largely done so with little to no interaction with the wave of culture scholarship that has happened in the academy. This movement is originally rooted in what is known as "the cultural turn". The cultural turn denotes an epistemological shift in the 1970s away from positivism and toward placing the concept of culture at the forefront of contemporary debates (Jacobs and Spillman 2005). Sociologists in particular began increasingly emphasizing the key role played by meaning systems, scripts, symbols, cultural frames and cognitive schema when theorizing social processes and institutions of various forms. This turn marks a recognition of the "empirical, theoretical, methodological, and ontological limits of existing intellectual frameworks" and reflects a "reconstitution of the sociological project" (Friedland and Mohr 2004, p. 4) seeking to better understand culture in our society. As I elaborate in Chapter 2, *police research must not*

only further theorize police culture, but interweave the study of policing with strides made by sociologists of culture and of organizations. The limitations of theoretical approaches used in police studies are described below, followed by a justification for building bridges between these conceptual domains.

The State of Theory in Police Studies

> Police studies has now been characterized for some time as studies *for* policing rather than studies *of* policing as instances of broader socioeconomic and political trends, as a part of the political economy of control, as an aspect of the production of further inequalities and contradictions in the democratic state, and as a type of institution (Manning 2005, p. 34).

When first explored by foundational police scholars fifty years ago (Banton 1964; Bittner 1970; Skolnick 1966; Westley 1970), policing was studied as an occupation defined by its environment, with emphasis placed on the struggles faced by officers attempting to navigate the realities of the job. Over time, however, as departments began to focus inward on organizational output and the practical exigencies of the job, police literature witnessed a shift away from studying policing as a broader sociological phenomenon and moved toward short-term evaluative empirical projects, many of which are privately funded.[2] This research is often focused on questions with ameliorative aims, such as how to increase efficiency, improve training, reduce excessive force, increase citizen satisfaction with police interaction, and

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[2] Many examples of such studies are published in journals such as *Police Quarterly* (1998), *Police Practice and Research* (1999), and *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies & Management* (1997). With the soaring popularity of criminal justice programs in American universities in the 1990s, this decade marked the launch of numerous police-specific academic journals.

perfecting the programmatic contingencies of community policing. Moreover, these studies are largely driven by low-level policy-shaped questions, not theoretical ones. Peter Manning (2005) argues that police studies are unfortunately too "ready and eager to atheoretically study any current fashionable question without theorizing it" (p. 38). [3] Thus, broadly, police studies seemed to lose touch with social, cultural, political and economic forces operating outside the doors of police stations, but which undeniably infiltrate the department and its practices. Specifically, many do not effectively account for the *embedded* qualities of policing – a prospect which is more aptly achieved by framing policing "organizationally".

Theorizing Police Culture: Sociology of Culture & Organizations

Why theorize police culture? And moreover, why is it important to study policing as an organization? According to Vaughan (2002a), criminologists can usefully adopt theories and concepts that address the "environment/organization/individual connections" to refine our understanding of situated action (p. 121). I argue that those of us studying police organizations must "bring society back in" (Friedland and Alford 1991), because after all, policing is also an institution. In order to take this task seriously, we must ask ourselves the following question: *How do changing macro-level social processes in the 'field' of an organization permeate micro-level practices and systems of meaning within?* The underlying mechanism to effectively capture this process is "culture": culture serves as the interpretive link between external social structures and subjective experiences (Bourdieu, 1984, 1990, 1993; Geertz, 1973; Sewell, 1992). To be sure, police scholars coined the term "police culture" in recognition of the impact of threatening work conditions (Bittner, 1970; Skolnick, 1966), as well as the constant pressure to be

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[3] Though largely unrelated to questions around police culture, Nagin et al. (2015) offer a noteworthy exception to this trend. Their study expressly positions theory at the forefront of analysis to develop a "what works" mathematical model for police deployment strategies.

productive and efficient in what are often uncertain circumstances (Wilson, 1969). However, as described above, this term has largely been distilled down to a comprehensive "list" of monolithically applied police characteristics, including descriptors like suspicious, masculine, mission-oriented, conservative and isolated (Reiner, 1985; see also Loftus, 2009). Moreover, police studies typically appropriate the term "culture" without engaging with its deeper sociological significance.

In the social sciences, given that culture is understood as an interpretive process (Geertz, 1973), theoretical principles are particularly important for establishing indicators of cultural practice. Specifically, one cannot presume to simply begin by outlining the distinctive dimensions of a unique "police culture" without first establishing the foundations of cultural meaning. Doing so dooms culture to a static and one-dimensional understanding of social life. This is particularly problematic for a public institution like policing, which is especially vulnerable to the whims of social, political, legal and economic fluctuations. Indeed, as Banton argued decades ago, "not a single social change fails to change the institution of policing" (1964: IX).

More importantly, however, there are practical matters within policing that would derive benefit from theorizing police culture. As Diane Vaughan's (1996) seminal work on NASA and the Challenger explosion teaches us, organizational culture is inevitably "on the hook" when something goes awry. For example, when police participate in some form of misconduct – mild or severe – his/her behaviour is commonly attributed to the department's culture. Accordingly, police chiefs are subject to constant external pressures from political figures, media groups and

the general public to "change the culture of the department".[4] What does this mean? The ambiguity of such an order is evident, and only exacerbated by the lack of guidance offered by these parties or even by police literature.[5] Inherent in this demand is also an assumption that "the culture" – presumed to be known – can indeed be changed by the commanding authorities. Is this accurate? Where is culture located so that we may begin to change it? What insights do those who study culture specifically have to shed on these questions? These queries call for a more nuanced understanding of police culture. Investigating police culture theoretically entails – just as it did for Vaughan to study NASA – connecting it to sociological theories of culture and organizations, which connect culture to broader socioeconomic and political conditions.

Applying the Cultural Lens

Understanding culture sociologically involves examining the extent to which cultural representations map onto the social world, and vice versa: connecting meaning with context – culture to structure. Many sociologists, particularly those influenced by the works of Pierre Bourdieu (e.g. Lamont 1992, 2000; Lamont and Molnar 2002; Powell and DiMaggio 1991; Swidler 1986, 2001; Vaughan 1996, 2002b, 2008), have moved toward a multi-faceted and "practice" oriented approach towards studying culture. This research places focus on how culture is *used:* individuals actively engage with their environment by creatively drawing from various cultural "resources" which may be used interchangeably, but depend on the structural conditions in which they find themselves. These resources include a rich variety of scripts, myths, social and symbolic boundaries, routines and cognitive schema.

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[4] One need only search "change police culture" and many news articles are generated that use this type of language.

[5] Chan (1997) investigates a failed attempt to change a departmental culture in New Zealand.

Moreover, sociologists distinguish between instances of stability and moments where social life is fundamentally disrupted. This notion is applicable to the continuously evolving institute of policing. When courts set a new precedent, or bureaucrats make legislative changes to the Police Services Act, or when a city votes in a new mayor, or the local unemployment rate soars abruptly, the police occupational mandate and organizational routines are ruffled. The cultural order of a police organization is impacted not only by externally rooted transformations but also by those that develop internally, such as a change in a department's leadership, a diversifying rank-and-file, or the implementation of new policy (e.g. issuing "police contact cards", better known as "carding"). In both instances, institutional lives are temporarily disturbed and the usual ways of orienting oneself on the job are both revealed and challenged.

Swidler (1986) argues that the best time for researchers to uncover culture is during moments where lives are "unsettled". In settled times, "culture is intimately integrated with action… culture and structural circumstance seem to reinforce each other" (p. 278), and because of this, it is obscured as "implicit", "tradition", or even "common sense". However, unsettled moments raise culture to the level of conscious thought, and prompt actors to contemplate the status quo, or even pursue new strategies for action. This allows the researcher to catch a better glimpse at culture because meaning systems are being renegotiated.

Diane Vaughan's work (1996, 2002b) echoes that of Swidler when she discusses the exposure of culture brought on by moments of crisis or organizational breakdown, like the Challenger launch decision. Vaughan's analyses are particularly useful for assessing cultural patterns around 'sudden' and critical disruptions, both pre and post event. She (2002b) argues that a reliable relationship exists between organizations and the cognitive tasks in which their component actors engage. In her NASA case study, this means that engineers and administrators could disregard the many warning signs they encountered because objection to launch defies the

institutional logic of the organization, which promoted the doctrine of "acceptable risk" and a "culture of productivity". How does this apply to policing? As a public service endowed with many powers, police make critical errors (e.g. shoot unarmed civilians or arrest innocent persons) and even engage in corrupt activity. The result is often a public relations nightmare and extensive investigations into the department as a whole. In my own field site (see *Methodological Considerations* below), incriminating details of a veteran detective brutally assaulting a local doctor surfaced in the media. These include video surveillance footage and evidence that the department's administration took various measures to cover up the attack. I entered a department in turmoil, in a climate of uncertainty, under intense media scrutiny and community backlash. The works of Diane Vaughan and Ann Swidler are particularly relevant to the research presented here; I endeavored to seize the opportunity to observe whether taken-for-granted cultural ideas in this organization were flushed out in the current unsettled times.

Concepts within sociological literature on culture and organizations are applied in my research to account for varied ways in which cultural dispositions and environmental contexts reciprocally shape one another. Though clear patterns and/or inertia may certainly exist – in an organization in particular – this literature yields the necessary conceptual mechanisms to explain *how* culture is deployed and to examine how *even the status quo*, or stasis, is itself perpetually and actively negotiated. Thus, theoretical tools within the sociology of culture and organizations allow researchers to unveil the dynamic, *not* static, processes through which actors come to make sense of their daily lives. Throughout this dissertation, these tools are wielded to overcome limitations of existing approaches to studying police culture; by establishing a link between meaning and context, change unfolding in the broader field of policing can be more effectively incorporated into cultural analysis.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES & GUIDING QUESTIONS

My dissertation developed from an interest in challenging rigid conceptions of "police culture" rooted in descriptors gathered over 30 years ago in America's largest cities. To do so, I aim to utilize the theoretical potential of cultural sociology applied to police research. Through my case study, I argue that theories and concepts employed by sociologists who examine culture and systems of meaning within a broader structural context offer valuable insight to the study of policing and further help bridge macro-level social processes with micro-level practices unfolding inside the organization. Employing a theoretical lens in this way allows me to pursue the primary objective of this research: *to carve a space to empirically examine police culture as both contingent and dynamic in unsettled times*. In what ways have changes unfolding throughout the policing landscape contributed to organizational culture change or stasis? More specifically: How have evolving forms of citizen oversight (e.g. social media, mobile recording devices, etc) impacted how police officers approach their work? Do increasingly varied measures of accountability influence how officers understand solidarity, or view their sense of mission? Has changing police demographics diversified the pool of cultural resources officers deploy? How have trends toward policing standardization been integrated into cultural practices within the police organization? And finally, in what ways do perceptions of the political, economic and social context within which the police department is embedded permeate the culture within?

Though the police culture topic is typically the domain of criminological inquiry, this dissertation innovatively draws on sociological literature in the areas of culture and organizations. Therefore, I propose that my research may be of interest to a broad set of readers, including those studying the workplace, occupational identity, organizations, culture, as well as policing, law and society, social policy and criminal justice.

METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In the last twenty years, observational research of policing has witnessed resurgence (Herbert 1998; Foster 1989; Chan 1997; Loftus 2009). As Marks (2004) argues, "in order to understand cultural knowledge... it is important for the researcher to immerse herself in the daily organizational field of the police" (p. 866). Understanding what kinds of cultural patterns exist and to what extent these inform practices requires access to "deep-level assumptions" (Geertz 1973), a level that cannot be achieved solely through quantifications of police attitudes, or solely through interviews (Marks 2004; Waddington 1999). In line with this work, I acquired data by implementing a mix of various methods which include observation, in-depth interviews, as well as archival analysis of the department's annual "business plan" reports and summaries of internal survey data. I spent a total of 18 months doing field work and collecting data.

Research Site

Blueville is a medium-sized city in Ontario with a population of approximately 250,000 people. A blue-collar town, Blueville's economy is largely fueled by auto manufacturing and tool and die "feeder plants" that supply various parts to larger factories. Blueville is also recognized as a leading trade and transportation hub in North America where shipments – legal or otherwise – pass through rail and vehicular tunnels, bridges, the airport, deepwater ports and river barges on a daily basis.

A common perception in Blueville is that the city is not truly part of Canada, largely owing to the perception that the city is very much Americanized. In fact, due to its position within the television and radio market territory, Blueville broadcasters are exempt from Canadian Content requirements and residents receive predominantly American news and

entertainment. Moreover, Blueville residents often support major professional sports league teams in the United States, and regularly cross the border for concerts and shopping.

Labeled a "lunch-bucket town", Blueville's many labourers are typically employed in shift work – a schedule which has far-reaching impacts for the pulse of the city. For instance, Blueville's largest employer, a factory, works three shifts (days, afternoons, and midnights), which stimulates a flow of traffic and people along transition times, as well as business for local shops and restaurants. Also, when large factories run annual "shutdowns", thousands are without work for a number of weeks and enjoy a great deal of free time.

Given the recent financial downturn and the disproportionate impact this has had on the auto industry, Blueville's unemployment rate increased to one of the highest in Canada, holding at around 9%. Consequently, Blueville also manages one of the largest per capita welfare caseloads in Canada. Many vehicles can now be spotted with a popular bumper sticker which reads "Out of a job, yet? Keep buying foreign!" To be sure, this city's economic story resembles that of many rust-belt cities throughout the United States. Blueville's downturn began approximately two decades ago with the closing of large trim plant, as well the downsizing of a major automotive factory. Previously thriving bars that would attract the afternoon shift crowds from nearby plants are now boarded up, and many streets largely deserted.

A recent publication by the Conference Board of Canada found that Bllueville's average annual population growth over the past five years (2008-2012) was one of the worst in the country. This is largely due to outward migration of the younger 20-39 age group who are flocking to cities with healthier labour markets. This shrinking population is also very quickly becoming more diverse. According to the 2011 National Household Survey, racial and ethnic minorities comprise nearly 25% of the people in the area, where the largest minority groups

identify as Arab or Black. Also, one quarter of Blueville's population were foreign-born, 15% of which came to Canada between 2006 and 2011. These trends have earned Blueville a spot in the top five most diverse cities in the nation.

The Blueville Police Service (BPS) itself is comprised of 450 sworn officers. A significant majority are white males: racial minorities comprise just 13% of sworn personnel, while females make up approximately 16%. Many members identify the service as "behind the times": without a single female or non-white administrator, diversity among personnel is mostly represented in the lower ranks. Only 2% of BPS sworn officers self-identify (or are willing to disclose) as gay, lesbian or bisexual, and 71% are legally married. The majority of sworn personnel hold some form of post-secondary education, such as a college diploma (26%) or university degree (46%), though most of the educated members of the organization are younger and therefore do not occupy positions of authority.

Gaining Access in Tumultuous Times

> *The Superintendent welcomed the Sergeant into the office, at which point I was introduced as a "researcher from the University of Toronto" and the potential respondent was assured by his superior that my project was "totally independent from us [BPS]"… I told Sergeant G about my dissertation, that I had always been interested in policing, and being from a blue-collar city myself, that I was interested in performing research in a city that is characteristically similar. I also used my "typical blue-collar family" – dad a truck driver and mom factory line worker – to root myself more solidly to his city. My goal in doing this was to alleviate any concern that I might be some external reviewer from Toronto. This seemed to break the ice at least somewhat because he divulged that he too came from a blue-collar family of Italian immigrants who came to find work in the factories. Finding some common ground, I felt I had undone some of the*

> *awkwardness created when [we were] introduced by the Superintendent (Field note: June 29, 2012).*

My initial inquiry into gaining access to Blueville Police Service was channeled through a personal contact who is a retired police detective with the department. Following a quick debriefing about my research intentions, he forwarded my name to the senior constable responsible for such inquiries, and notified the officer that I would be sending along a proposal letter. In September of 2011, the constable confirmed receipt of the request, and stated that he had sent the letter up the ranks for approvals.

However, in the months following my initial request to execute research with BPS, incriminating details of a veteran officer's violent assault on a local doctor who he mistakenly took for someone else surfaced in the media. These included video surveillance footage and evidence that the department's administration took various measures to cover up the attack.[6] Disgraced, the Chief stepped down and his Deputy assumed the position of Acting Chief until a new person could be permanently appointed. Finally, after numerous attempts to determine the status of the request, my access to the department was subsequently approved in April 2012. I began attending headquarters in May.

It is within this context of considerable turmoil and a climate of uncertainty that I entered this police department. Within my first field visit, I was told by two different officers that morale had never been lower, that the media was condemning them daily, and that BPS had never been so hated by the city's residents. Not surprisingly, this impacted my associations with officers in

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[6] The officer responsible was dismissed without pension, formally charged and sentenced to a term in prison, and was sued civilly for over a million dollars.

an important way. Due to the timing of my arrival, officers may have been suspicious of my motives and whether they involved a fact-finding mission on behalf of the Police Board. The common methodological problem of gaining access to contentious organizations is therefore, in this case, directly related to the very objective of this dissertation: it is precisely because I studied the organization at a time when members were feeling vulnerable – when their work lives were unsettled – that contributed to the perception that I may be an auditor. The concept of "unsettled times" is therefore particularly relevant to my research on multiple levels. This belief that I may be "reviewer from Toronto", of course, can result in highly guarded behaviour, thereby challenging my ability to engage in genuine interactions. The opening field note above exemplifies the kind of interactions I shared early on in the study. While this problem is not completely surmountable, I used two key strategies to minimize the effects. First, I drew on common backgrounds whenever possible; as someone who was born and raised in a city that shares much in common with Blueville, many officers seemed to take comfort in knowing that I understood their community at some level rather than have to speak with an urban dweller from Toronto looking to study them.

A second strategy I used was to enlist the help of the officers themselves for ways to recruit more interviewees and for topics about which I should consider investigating. In giving them some of the control over whom I might speak with and what I might talk about, I was attempting to demonstrate that I was not simply doing the bidding of their superiors and was open to suggestions from those below. Using this strategy, I am also simultaneously reducing the control of administration in choosing my next interview by collecting names from my respondents of people who would be willing to speak with me. By expanding the pool of individuals who would send me officers for future interviews, I moved toward a broader sample within what were initially very restrictive conditions.

Interviewing:

Despite a reputation for being suspicious of outsiders, I quickly found that police respond very well to being asked to share their "expertise" about their occupation. Assigning them the role of teacher and assuming my role as student, I believe, is the ideal strategy when researching police officers because it is a common statement among this group that *only* they can know what it is like to do this job. I performed semi-structured interviews with sworn officers of varying rank, units and time served. A total of 100 interviews were conducted – 85 with active officers and 15 with retirees of the service. Interviews spanned from 30 minutes to over 2.5 hours. I asked a series of open-ended questions that focused on the objective and subjective dimensions of the officers' work experiences and of policing generally (see Appendix A). Conversations were recorded and later transcribed; when recording was denied, notes were hand-written during and after discussion.

Access to my field was contingent on respecting specified guidelines, the availability of willing participants, and the unpredictability of the volume of calls for service. Officers were mainly recruited for interviews one of two ways. First, officers working within headquarters (i.e. sergeants, detectives and administration members) were simply called by the Staff Sergeant tasked to assist with the project when needed. If they could spare time, they agreed to an interview, or scheduled a later time (convenience sampling). Second, "road officers" were randomly selected from shift rosters at the start of the work week and their name was inserted into a day/time slot to report back to headquarters. If the officer was on a priority call or call volume was too high during that time, the officer would reschedule, and another would take his/her place. A small number of officers were recruited through referrals by other respondents, or simply through volunteering to participate during an encounter with me in headquarters.

Therefore, the interview sample is non-random and partly subject to self-selection bias. The implications of my sampling are elaborated in the dissertation's conclusion (Chapter 5).

Participant Observation:

Over time, the officers became more acquainted with my purpose in speaking with them, and even became much less concerned about my whereabouts throughout the headquarters. After just three months of visiting the department, an Inspector issued me an I.D. pass card that would allow me to enter the secure entrance, as well as access areas which require authorization. His reason for providing me with such open access, he explains, is because he was "sick and tired" of the phone calls from the front desk seeking permission to let me in, or having to come down to the lobby himself in the mornings to direct me to an available interview room. This pass card greatly facilitated my movements throughout the building and allowed me to expand the areas in which I was able to interact and observe officers and civilian personnel at work.

In the initial stages of the research, the administration advised that ride-alongs were not permitted at BPS (with the exception of Police Auxiliary), and that I would have to limit my data collection to speaking with police. However, as I neared the halfway mark of my interviews, I began floating the idea of ride-alongs only to patrol officers who seemed especially keen to share their job experiences with me. A common response was "Yeah! If they will let you!". Armed with a number of volunteers to take me along on their shift, I ventured to the Inspector's office to revisit the request to do ride-alongs. The following field note describes this encounter:

> *I quietly knock on Inspector J's door in hopes that he is in a good mood – I have been met with both pleasant as well as very cold reception from J in the past 8 months. "Yeah its open!", he shouted from within. I peak my head through a*

small opening in the door and politely ask if he has quick moment to speak. "For you, Holly? Of course!" Oh good, he's happy today, I think to myself.

I tell the Inspector that since starting the interviews with the road officers, a number of them have mentioned that "the only way to truly understand what it's like to be on the job is to do the job", and that the only way to "even get a taste of this would be to do ride-alongs". Before I could even finish speaking, the Inspector turned away to rifle through a file cabinet drawer, but only briefly. When he faced me again, he was holding a very large stack of papers. "Do you know what these are Campeau? These are years and years of civilian requests to do a ride-along...hundreds! All denied! So what do you think about that?" His tone was serious, but he was smirking. I decide – perhaps stupidly (but I really want these ride-alongs) – that his smile suggests he is open to discussing this. I respond: "I think these people are trying to get into the back of a police car for a cool thing to do and that's pretty much it..." His smile grew larger. "Ok Campeau... decide how many you wanna do, and get a letter from your school that says this would be helpful for your project. Once I get that you gotta sign a waiver saying we are not responsible for anything that happens to you, you gotta wear a vest at all times, and you gotta get out of my office!" Taking my cue, I thank him with a "yes sir", and close the door behind me (Field note: March 28, 2013).

I spent 50 hours riding along with police officers over the course of summer 2013. Though patrol shifts run days (7am-5pm), afternoons (5pm-3am) and midnights (11pm-9am), I participated in a mix of full shifts and cross-over shifts as well. For example, some days I did a full 10 hour afternoon shift, others I did the last 4 hours of the day shift and the first 4 hours of the afternoon shift. Moreover, I rode with officers from all districts throughout the city in order to witness the very diverse interactions officers share with citizens in very different

neighbourhoods – from the poor in the west end to the affluent in the east. While in the car, I made very brief point-form notes to be elaborated when I left the field.

Positionality: A Note on my Role as the Researcher

The nature of qualitative research is such that the researcher – her identity and subjectivities – becomes part and parcel of the field site (Adler and Adler 1987). In my own field work, my status as an outsider was particularly salient, both as a non-uniformed civilian and as a female in a male dominated organization. Though it is impossible to determine the full impact of my presence on the study participants and to what extent my own identity markers influenced the data collection process, here I make the case that my position as the "PhD student" and my gender actually facilitated my overall access and ability to gain trust from police officers. In other words, I agree with Bucerius (2013) that

> … being an outsider is not a liability one must overcome, because achieving status as an outsider trusted with "inside knowledge" may provide the ethnographer *with a different perspective and different data* than that potentially afforded by insider status (p. 691; emphasis added).

A *very* common statement made by members of BPS is that their organization is the equivalent of "high school with guns". Throughout my time in the department, I was repeatedly informed about the "rumor mill" and "backstabbing" operating within the walls of headquarters. In light of this supposed tendency for people to "gossip", one senior constable suggested to me that "there is simply no way another cop could do [my] study because people would worry that he would tell his buddies all the shit that was said". I was also told on numerous occasions that the organization's internal "peer support" program was fundamentally flawed because the "last person an officer wants to talk about his problems with is another cop". In many ways, I believe

my student status was perceived by the officers as "safe"; my presence posed no real threat to them because not only would I not benefit personally from contributing to the "rumor mill" or breaking confidentiality, but my research efforts would actually be compromised in doing so.

Unlike many sociologists and criminologists who employ ethnographic methods to observe "vulnerable populations" in urban settings (e.g. Bourgois 1995; Bucerius 2014; Contreras 2012; Maher 1997), the power differential in this case study is much less prevalent, if not reversed. Something I became keenly aware of in the first few weeks of my fieldwork is that my research involves engaging with a group of individuals who are specifically trained to spot deception, anxiety and stress. I now understand that if I had not passed impromptu tests to which I was continuously subjected, not only would the data presented in this dissertation be severely lackluster, but I may not have gained access at all. In the following note, I recount a tension I felt in my initial meeting with two BPS administrators in April 2012 when I first proposed my research in person:

> *... I hand-write my notes as they speak, but find myself being very careful about what comments for which I put pen to paper. I notice that while one officer speaks, the other looks at me or my paper – not the speaker. In the moment, I have two suspicions: 1) either they are trying to see how I react to what they tell me or 2) they are trying to see which details I take note of. With respect to the latter, it is possible they are looking to see if I am especially writing when something "unflattering" is said about their department. Perhaps I was over-analyzing the situation, but for both to look at me rather than the speaker – not common conversation conduct – I feel I should be careful. As the meeting progresses, they seem to do this less and less.*

This is not the only circumstance in which I found myself in a situation where I would have to prove that I was not an "anti-police" academic. Although, in hindsight, I am grateful for these moments as they served as key turning points in which my outsider status shifted from liability to benefit. Once viewed as "harmless" – and as a person that held no bearing on their occupational advancement – suspicion and guarded behaviour diminished considerably.

Carrying out research in an organization filled with men, I had expected to encounter comments related to my gender. Admittedly, however, I had not expected to run into it so quickly. Once people became accustomed to my presence in the building, I was met with many comments about my physical appearance, my relationship status, or how I felt about being surrounded by men all day. I was also taken aback by *who* were so willing to relate such comments to me. One sergeant told me about his daughter who was "very close to my age", and then proceeded to tell me that I was "the new hot chick that the guys are asking about". A training sergeant advised that I should "wear a low cut top if I want to get the guys to talk to me" as he laughed. In ride-alongs, I was twice shown sexually explicit videos (on cell phones) that had just been circulated by the platoon (i.e. current shift of deployed road officers). I was also reminded by the women in the building to "always wear my wedding ring".

Negotiating my female status within masculine space undoubtedly coloured my data, but it also provided a set of advantages that I do not expect would be afforded to a male researcher. For instance, policing is an occupation that requires a great deal of emotional labour; calming people in crisis, maintaining self-composure in heated or violent situations, or showing care and sympathy in moments of tragedy. However, amongst the rank-and-file, masculinity reigns and open displays of raw emotion – regardless of what officers have witnessed – is carefully avoided as it is associated with femininity (Herbert 2001; Martin and Jurik 2007). Over time, it became

clear to me that officers (particularly men but also women) were counting on my gender to guarantee them a willing and sympathetic ear. On over a dozen occasions, grown men broke down in tears before me, and nearly all of the women I interviewed laid out all of their frustrations and insecurities about being a female police officer. In the former case, I was told I was "easy to talk to", in the latter, I was a hardworking woman who "gets it", even if I could not relate to their specific professional context. Therefore, as a female researcher, I was not expected to engage with the same standards of stereotypical masculinity that operate within their occupation, thereby carving a space for officers to be expressive and discuss matters that may reveal their own personal vulnerabilities on the job.

Data Coding and Analysis

An inductive approach to data analysis is employed, coding interviews and field notes according to theme. Though I have reviewed transcripts multiple times, emerging themes or categories continue to develop and will serve in future research contributions beyond this dissertation. In light of my research objective to examine police culture from the perspective of cultural sociology, I focused in particular on the various resources (scripts, myths, boundaries, etc.) officers deploy in order to draw meaning from their work and navigate their occupational environment.

For example, in my first paper (see Chapter 2), basic coding revealed many quotes that reflect on intensifying public scrutiny, video surveillance, and accountability. Grouping these broadly as "oversight", I realized that these were often followed immediately by discussions about officer "solidarity" and concerns about heightened levels of "risk" related *not* to the dangers of the street but to disciplinary measures that could compromise a career with the

service, or even lead to criminal charges.[7] Accordingly, further coding was performed for subthemes that tap into notions of (1) "group solidarity" and (2) "mission-action". For the first, these include "trusting fellow officers", "covering for fellow officers", and "support at work". There are also several quotes that address feeling "comfortable" around coworkers and the "cohesiveness" of their working group. These were incorporated under "trust" or "support", depending on the context. The second consist of quotes relating to "thrill/action scenarios", "digging" (proactive policing), and "excitement" on the job. Similar processes were followed for subjects that speak to the reverse of mission-action, such as "staying out of trouble", "covering your butt", "risk and liability", and "avoidance/disengaging" generally.

Coding procedures for data and analysis presented in chapters 3 and 4 were approached in a similar manner, although – as the following section describes – center on other themes. Chapter 3 focuses on "generational differences", with subthemes to divide quotes as (1) "old-school" or (2) "new generation" scripts as they relate to shifting "officer demographics" and organizational "policies and practices". Finally, chapter 4 themes correspond to interview and observational data which touch on the "uniqueness" of the police department compared to others in the province with respect to (1) the "performance" of the job and (2) the "justifications" for this perceived distinctiveness.

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[7] In light of the case where a fellow senior officer was charged, imprisoned, dismissed and sued, accountability and the risks associated with misconduct were particularly salient to the officers.

DISSERTATION STRUCTURE & OVERVIEW

This dissertation is organized into five chapters. The introduction is followed by three independent analytical papers (written in publishable format), each of which focus on a distinct topic that endorses the dissertation's title, "*Policing in Unsettled Times*". In other words, the substantive chapters examine three different "entry points" into studying the somewhat amorphous notion of organizational culture in the context of a perturbed occupational terrain. Specifically, these include:

a) Intensifying structures of accountability and oversight, and how police officers strategically use culture to negotiate these (Chapter 2);

b) Changing people, policies and practices, and the institutional myths that are sustained to counter their impact on the status quo (Chapter 3);

c) Mounting political efforts to standardize policing, and repertoires of uniqueness that are wielded to justify non-conformity (Chapter 4).

Given that each chapter represents a distinct stand-alone empirical analysis, the report involves some reiteration of the study's methodology and theoretical orientation. Then, a concluding chapter of provided to unify the findings and their broader implications for policing, organizational culture, and future lines of inquiry.

In chapter 2, the first of the substantive chapters, I stake out a claim that common approaches to studying police culture as a set of "values and attitudes" do not adequately account for the resourceful ways in which actors use culture to make sense of their experiences and of the institutional constraints in which they find themselves. In support of the theoretical commentary I provide in this article, I present an empirical case study drawing on the timely examples of heightened police visibility and surveillance in the media (i.e. social media, YouTube) and more

strenuous accountability mechanisms (i.e. Special Investigations Unit, OIPRD). In applying the proposed sociological lens, I find an increasingly weakened sense of officer solidarity and unwillingness to take on risky work. These findings contrast those insisting continued emphasis on a police culture which is unremittingly mission-oriented and indivisible. Furthermore, the analysis presented here establishes a firm theoretical foundation on which the rest of the dissertation will continue to build.[8]

In chapter 3, the second empirical study, I provide an account for the "puzzle" behind police culture: that it *has changed* along with shifting industry principles and police demographics, and yet *remains unaltered*. This seeming contradiction is apparent in the academic literature and also, particularly over the past year, in national media. In the wake of fatal police shootings and civilian deaths due to police use of force (i.e. Sammy Yatim in Toronto, Michael Brown in Ferguson, Eric Garner in New York, etc.), understanding which institutional structures are driving police culture becomes increasingly important. My analysis underscores the role of myths and generational boundaries in sustaining "cultural inertia" – a reluctance to adapt to changing environmental conditions – in the police organization. I report on how police officers strategically deploy both "old-school" and "new generation" cultural scripts in ways that ultimately uphold the status quo but which also highlight the *slowing* momentum of the dominant organizational culture.

The final substantive piece, chapter 4, examines how actors within the police department – a public institution – use the social order of their local setting to hinder institutional efforts toward standardization. Using my case study, which draws on the historical and socio-political features of a city in economic decline, this analysis demonstrates how these local conditions

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[8] This paper was published in the *British Journal of Criminology* in Summer 2015. See Campeau, H. (2015). 'Police Culture' at Work: Making Sense of Police Oversight. *British Journal of Criminology, 55*(4): 669-687

inform the cultural resources police officers deploy. [9] I argue that individuals connect these features with repertoires of uniqueness – what they call "the Blueville Way" – to justify, sustain and even perform a general non-conformity with political efforts to standardize the provision of policing services in Ontario. Through this analysis, I contribute an account for the significance of "cultural match", a concept referring to the notion that practices are driven by the social and cultural context in which an organization is embedded, thereby impeding full compliance with industry standards that are deemed incompatible.

Lastly, chapter 5 concludes the dissertation with a commentary on how the three empirical studies presented here entwine and build on one another to ultimately reveal the dynamic qualities of police culture. In closing, I acknowledge the overall limitations of the research and make a number of recommendations for how future efforts can advance our understanding of how police organizations and the actors within respond and adapt to a changing occupational landscape.

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[9] At the time of submission of this dissertation, this article is currently under review with *Qualitative Sociology.*

CHAPTER 2

'Police Culture' at Work: Making Sense of Police Oversight[10]

July 26th, 2013, Sammy Yatim, 18, pulled a knife on a Toronto streetcar. A witness video – later posted online and viewed over a million times – shows a verbal interaction between Yatim and officers on the ground. Yatim can be seen taking a step forward when an officer fires three gun shots at him, at which point he falls to the floor. Six more shots are fired. A taser can then be heard in the video. The public fervently protested the actions of the police. The incident was investigated by the Special Investigations Unit and the shooting officer charged with 2nd degree murder.

INTRODUCTION

Three decades ago, Robert Reiner (1985) famously summarized the 'core characteristics' of police culture. These include descriptors such as conservative, mission-oriented, isolated, masculine, pessimistic and suspicious – an "ideal-type" that has withstood the test of time. Within police studies more broadly, the "police culture" concept is dually invoked to describe both an *overarching* occupational ethos (e.g. cop code of silence, "us versus them" mentality, and the thin blue line) and *individual* officer typologies (e.g. enforcers, optimists, and dirty-harrys). At either level, culture is often depicted according to a series of police values or attitudes acquired through on-the-job socialization, and is said to play a vital role in predictably explaining officer behaviour.

Outside of criminology, however, the "culture" conversation has witnessed a dramatic shift away from the idea that an internalized set of values alone motivates people's decisions and actions, and now more commonly conceives culture as a resourceful tool on which people rely to

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[10] Published with the *British Journal of Criminology* (http://bjc.oxfordjournals.org/content/55/4/669.abstract)

make sense of situations they navigate in everyday life (Boltanski & Thevenot; Kaufman, 2004; Lamont et al. 1996; Swidler, 1986, 2001). Scholars working in this area do *not* argue that people are immersed in a culture which dictates how they will act, but refer instead to a "repertoire" of skills that are deployed in order to bring justification to their experiences. Accordingly, people know more culture than they use at a given moment (Swidler, 1986); the key to unpacking culture, then, is to unveil when, where and how particular sets of cultural resources are put to work. Rather than isolating overarching attributes, or typologizing individuals as one type of officer over another, this article presents an alternative conceptualization of police culture rooted in more current definitions provided by the sociology of culture and institutional theory.

The aim of this paper is twofold. First, I contribute to a growing group of scholars seeking to more explicitly unpack the role of "culture" in the police organization to move beyond traditional conceptions by embedding policing in its current socio-political context (see Chan, 1996, 1997; Cockcroft, 2013; Crank, 2003; Loftus, 2009, 2010; Oberweis & Musheno, 2001; Paoline, 2003; Reiner, 2010; Waddington, 1999a, b). Culture is therefore located inside institutional considerations, allowing for situated action that is both intentional and also structured.[11] Theoretical tools from the sociology of culture are appropriated to effectively capture this process while also challenging common value-based approaches used in police studies.[12] Second, an application of this theoretical model is presented. I suggest here that police departments are currently experiencing transition – a time of disruption which sociologists consider to be a prime moment to examine social patterns; both habitual and renegotiated

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[11] This view is in line with ideas put forth by Bourdieu (1984, 1993), and elaborated by Sewell (1992), Powell and Dimaggio (1991) and Swidler (1986, 2001).

[12] Though the term "police *culture*" is four decades old, police studies have only rarely directly drawn from cultural sociology. For examples, see Chan (1997), Crank (1998, 2003), Herbert (1998) and Shearing and Erickson (1991).

routines (Swidler, 1986, 2001). Specifically, this analysis focuses on the current era of heightened accountability and public visibility in the media – referred to here broadly as "oversight". The recent high profile streetcar shooting of Sammy Yatim in Toronto represents an extreme example in a growing number of cases where citizen surveillance videos are used by oversight agencies for their investigations.

How is police culture employed by officers to navigate an intensification of police oversight? This study uses two commonly discussed police characteristics as indicators of culture at work: a tendency toward group "solidarity" and a sense of "mission-action".

Drawing on interview and observational data from eighteen months of field work in a Canadian urban police department, findings reveal how police culture is *used* by officers as a *resource* to make sense of their occupational lives. Specifically, my analysis shows that, when considering the current conditions of oversight, police variably employ scripts about solidarity and mission-action in ways that not only differ across officers, but also from what classic accounts suggest. These include rebuffing a sense of unity with fellow officers and superiors, avoiding impulsive or truculent partners, disengaging from potentially threatening scenarios, and managing risk. This study also highlights that culture becomes particularly observable during unsettled times: these are generative moments at which to examine, and rethink, police culture. This research therefore represents an explicit attempt to theorize police culture sociologically, and further invoke a more adaptive framework for uncovering how officers use culture within particular organizational conditions.

POLICE CULTURE REVISITED

Rooted in foundational works of the 1960s and 1970s is the idea of a "special character" that often dictates police behaviour (see Banton, 1964; Bittner, 1970; Skolnick, 1966; Van Maanen, 1974; Westley, 1970; Wilson, 1969). Referred to as the "blue curtain" (Westley, 1970) or the "blue wall of silence" (Bittner, 1970), early police scholars refer to a protective and united "brotherhood" which is mainly attributed to the isolating and threatening nature of the work (Skolnick, 1966), as well as the constant pressure to be productive in what are often uncertain circumstances (Wilson, 1969).

Distilled over time to the concept of "police culture", this single comprehensive term is meant to encompass a complex system of values and attitudes that define the normative social world of police. Reiner (1985) famously summarized the core elements comprising this occupational culture. In short, police officers are said to actively pursue excitement (mission-action), possess a cynical outlook, be very suspicious of others, lead isolated lives, strongly support solidarity with fellow officers, subscribe to conservative morality and politics, and exaggerate displays of masculinity. This combination of traits is best interpreted as an "ideal-type"; a synthesis of police values and perspectives into a unified analytical construct. Since Reiner's contribution, many studies have confirmed the pervasiveness of these core characteristics: solidarity (Punch, 2009), danger/mission (Barker, 1999), masculinity (Fielding, 1994; Herbert, 2001), conservatism (Loader and Mulcahy, 2003; Skolnick, 2008), and suspiciousness (Kappeler et al., 1998). In fact, in a recent and oft-cited ethnographic account of an English police force, Loftus (2010) reveals remarkable durability of nearly all of these themes. Her findings reinforce that police culture is often presumed a monolith because, it is argued, the core police "function" remains largely unchanged over time and across space: police

are appointed a unique position in the law, hold a monopoly on the sanctioned use of coercive force, and are obligated to perform society's "dirty work" on a routine basis (Bittner, 1970; Westley, 1970).

It has been argued, however, that the overarching analytical approach to studying police culture has led to "cognitive burn-in" (Sklansky, 2007). The conceptual template of Reiner's list now serves as a collective imprint in how we *think about* the topic (see also Waddington, 1999a), and this diverts our attention from new directions and emerging trends. To be sure, Reiner himself cautioned that police culture "is not monolithic, is embodied in individuals who enjoy autonomy and creativity" and that variation "can be discerned within the broader police culture, generated by distinct experiences..." (2010:116). Furthermore, these descriptors come from data gathered over thirty years ago in America's largest, and most crime-ridden, cities. This is problematic because, though underlying features of the policing function remain largely the same, police organizations themselves have undergone substantial change in the last twenty-five years in particular, including: diversity in recruitment, more community-based initiatives, more stringent hiring and training standards, and most relevant to this analysis, increasing levels of mediatization and accountability. Therefore, familiar applications of the police culture ideal-type provide what may be an incomplete reading.[13]

Other works apply a narrower lens, focusing instead on a multitude of individual styles through which the authors establish a series of police typologies. For instance, Reuss-Ianni and Ianni (1983) distinguish the "street cop culture" from the more impersonal business-oriented "management cop culture". Manning (1977, 1995) also argued that police culture is hierarchically specific. Some accounts further suggest that there are many policing methods,

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[13] See Manning (2005) for a critique on police studies.

prompting even more categories such as traditionalists, enforcers, idealists, old-pros, professionals, peacekeepers, dirty-harrys, etc. (Broderick, 1987; Brown, 1988; Muir, 1977; Paoline, 2001, 2004; Paoline, et al. 2000).

Though they acknowledge greater variability, there are also a number of limitations associated with typology-based conceptions. First, many use rigidly defined "attitudinal dimensions" to measure culture, often fitting officer responses into pre-imposed, and thus static, categories. Survey summaries of officer "values" and "attitudes" are not always conducive to accessing unrecognized normative obligations in an organization; they also do not effectively account for external socio-political features of police institutions and their link with internal cultural practice. Second, this approach largely abandons the unifying facets of culture altogether. [14] If we adhere to a purely micro-level analysis of individual traits – like those which form the basis for the numerous police styles above – we end up with a long list of character types which relate more to preexisting psychologies and personal perspectives than they do to how institutional structures and practices shift officer orientations (Herbert, 1998).

Finally, both monolithic and narrower depictions are equally devoid of deeper engagement with the meaning of "culture" explicitly (Crank, 1998). Broadly, the area of police studies has been criticized for investigating a plethora of topics without theorizing these (e.g., Manning, 2005). Outlining the distinctive dimensions of a unique "police culture" without a theoretically rooted definition of "culture" itself misses a critical component, namely that (and how) culture is socially embedded.

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[14] This significantly diminishes the sociological usefulness of the police culture concept. Culture is commonly understood as a construction of *public* meaning through interpretive processes (Geertz, 1973).

How then can police culture be re-conceptualized to avoid sweeping or narrow definitions used in much of police literature while also accounting for the connection between culture and environment? Cultural sociology is an area which can be fruitfully applied. The remainder of this article outlines relevant connections between police studies and sociology of culture to re-define "police culture," and demonstrates an application of this theoretical model using the example of today's intensified police oversight.

POLICE CULTURE REDEFINED

A Shift from "Values" to "Resources"

Many cultural sociologists (especially those influenced by Bourdieu) now pursue a "semiotic" understanding of culture. Definitions emerge more through the various ways in which culture is *used* than simply from internally held beliefs or some grand "way of life." This shift reflects a move away from the Parsonian (1937, 1951) model of culture based on voluntaristic "value orientations". Values and goals alone cannot motivate people because we hold values (e.g. a healthy environment) that are often inconsistent with the decisions and actions we pursue (e.g. failing to recycle). Given this contradiction, we should instead study culture with a focus on the symbolic 'means', which Swidler (1986) identifies as one's "tool kit" or "repertoire" of skills, styles and habits – a set of resources – which people may use in varying configurations to problem-solve and make sense of everyday life.

Paralleling Swidler's work is that of other sociologists who study institutions, organizations and culture.[15] Like Swidler, neo-institutionalists "view culture as the symbolic-

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[15] See Powell and DiMaggio (1991), Meyer and Rowan (1977); Vaughan, (1996, 2002); Zucker (1987).

expressive aspect of human behaviour" which are "not confined to the subjective, inner thoughts or values of individuals or to some amorphous notion of a collective consciousness" (Scott, 1991: 168). Rather, culture is a "resource" that serves as link between structure and action.[16]

In a recent debate concerning the role of values in understanding culture, Vaisey (2008) argues that certain "moral intuitions" or cognitive "schemas" do serve to ground which choices people are likely to see as viable. For example, teenagers who choose "I do what God or scripture says is right'" on a survey about moral decision making behave quite differently from those who select ''I do what makes me happy'' (Vaisey, 2008, 2009). There thus appears to be at least some connection between values and action. This may indeed explain the tendency for police studies to reiterate Reiner's "ideal type" as fixed; officers perhaps share moral codes about group solidarity or "getting the bad guy" and attempt to fit their views within these parameters. Swidler suggests, however, that even though these (micro-level) "cultured capacities" may be recurrent, they are also anchored by institutional constraints: "there are powerful cultural consistencies, but they are less a consistent set of internalized individual beliefs than coherent orientations to the dilemmas institutional life poses in a given society" (2001:176). The implication, then, is that change which is impactful on institutional life can prompt actors to wield these cultured capacities in very different ways. How do officers talk about solidarity in the context of intense scrutiny? Is this cultural idea deployed in a consistent manner? Where Swidler and Vaisey converge is on the significance of *person-situation* interactions: we must better theorize "how cultural dispositions and environments reciprocally shape one another"

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[16] This echoes the work of Sewell, who argues that "structures shape people's practices, but it is also people's practices that constitute (and reproduce) structures" (1992: 4). Readers should also note that the terms "action" and "practice" – when used in the culture-as-resource context – include subjective acts of justifying, problem-solving and sense-making.

(Vaisey, 2008: 607) and determine "when and where particular sets of meanings will be brought to bear on experience" (Swidler, *in response to* Vaisey, 2008: 617).

Taken together, tools within cultural sociology can be applied to address two related problems of previous research on police culture discussed above. First, the extant police literature tends to employ either monolithic or individualized typology-based definitions of culture. Cultural sociologists, by contrast, reject a micro-macro duality in favour of a constitutive relationship between structure and meaningful action. Second, previous conceptualizations of police culture that reference "attitudes" and "values" as the key definers of culture are cast in a new light as "resources" that are variably harnessed for action. [17] This strategy therefore situates police culture within more contemporary discourses surrounding the topic of culture more broadly.

Unsettled Times

Swidler argues the best time to study culture is during moments where lives are "unsettled."[18] In settled times, "culture is intimately integrated with action" (1986: 278), and implicit ways are thus obscured as tradition or common-sense. In *unsettled times* – such as unprecedented police oversight, or when damaging police videos surface online – custom ways of orienting oneself are revealed and contested. In such moments, people are forced to either demonstrate commitment to past strategies of action or develop new ones. Consequently, when courts set a new criminal procedural precedent, or politicians make legislative changes to the Police Act, or when a city

[17] Many typology-based studies do base policing styles on various individual reactions to the demands of the job (e.g. Broderick, 1977; Muir, 1977), and are thus inadvertently engaging ideas about using repertoires. However, these works commonly focus on officer "discretion" and do not address police culture *per se*. This article therefore reconsiders earlier contributions to advance our understanding of police culture specifically.

[18] Vaughan's work (1996, 2002) parallels that of Swidler when she discusses the exposure of culture brought on by moments of crisis or organizational breakdown, like the Challenger launch decision.

elects a new mayor, the police occupational mandate and organizational routines are disrupted, thereby raising culture to the level of conscious action and prompting diverse strategies. In light of a wide range of circumstances police officers deal with – both routine and volatile – this concept can effectively capture complex nuances of cultural practice rather than adhering to static notions.[19]

The following analysis implements the concept of unsettled times to characterize the disruptive influence of society's changing accountability standards for police and of the bright spotlight that is now being shed on an organization that has historically hidden behind a "blue curtain". This study highlights an alternative conceptualization of police culture that underscores its dynamic qualities and contextually contingent nature.

POLICE CULTURE AT WORK: AN EXAMPLE

Police Oversight

Anybody who's got a phone in their hand becomes a video journalist, and we've all seen it, right? With the emergence of You Tube and Facebook and everything... I tell people that all the time now - "Always assume you're on camera. Always assume ... if you take that advice, then you'll govern yourself accordingly (Sergeant B, Media Relations)

In the past, witnessing police-citizen encounters was largely limited to those dealing personally with law enforcement, or to bystanders of officers executing their mandate. In recent years, the visibility of policing has increased substantially with the advent of surveillance equipment on commercial establishments and visual recording technologies in the hands of the citizenry (e.g.

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[19] For examinations of police culture under more extreme circumstances of socio-political turmoil, see Glaeser (2000) and Marks (2005).

mobile phones and cameras) (Goldsmith, 2010). These images are easily accessed by a mass audience through social media networking sites like Facebook or Twitter, and video-sharing platforms such as YouTube. [20] This trend is paralleled by increased demand from public and political groups for greater police accountability (Walker, 2005).

In Ontario, for example, the role of the Special Investigations Unit (SIU) and of the Ontario Independent Police Review Director (OIPRD) – the province's two main oversight bodies – has become more prominent as the number of cases pursued has dramatically increased (see SIU *Stats Report* and OIPRD, 2012).[21] In a recent interview with the Globe and Mail (2013), outgoing director of the SIU, Ian Scott, stated:

"... more cases are coming to the SIU as a result of the public and media notifying us... there's been a game changer in my five years, and that is social media. More and more of our cases are involving video imagery taken by members of the public".

In many recent cases, including the Toronto G20 Summit and the shooting of Sammy Yatim, agencies utilized both confidential and publically available videos and audio recordings as evidence for their investigations.

Growing "oversight" in this paper is thus understood as increasing *accountability* and public *visibility*. Accountability is receiving momentum through reinforced legislation that now mandates the procedural relationship and compliance police departments will maintain with the aforementioned bodies (PSA, *Ontario Regulation 267/10*). The legislation further outlines the

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[20] The "mediatization" of the police refers to how media outlets contribute to a wider transformation of social and cultural life in the organization and among personnel (Lundby, 2009).

[21] *SIU* is a civilian law enforcement agency (independent of the police) which conducts investigations of incidents involving the police that have resulted in death, serious injury, or allegations of sexual assault. The OIPRD, by contrast, manages and oversees the investigation of public complaints against Ontario's police.

disciplinary measures to be taken in the event of disreputable conduct, including suspension with pay, termination of employment, and even the laying of criminal charges. The amplified visibility of the police is reflected in widespread use of video surveillance technologies and media outlets to showcase officers in execution of their job, usually involving misconduct. These trends reflect a move toward what Savage (2013) has recently referred to as a civilian control-based model, or "civilianness", in police oversight.

For an institution that has traditionally been characterized as the "blue wall of silence" (Bittner, 1970), pervasive media and the public's watchful eye pose interesting challenges to the organizational status quo. What are the implications for police culture in this rapidly changing occupational landscape? That is, *in a moment marked by intense police oversight, including increased accountability measures and public visibility, how do officers employ police culture?* Applying theoretical tools from cultural sociology to reconceptualise how we think about police culture, the following analysis argues that police culture provides *resources* used by officers to guide them in constructing meaning about their work. In doing so, this analysis minimizes the importance placed on *values* presumed to channel behaviour in predictable ways.

Officer Solidarity & Mission-Action

Historically, the main obstacle to uncovering police misconduct or outright corruption has been identified as the protective "cop code of silence", owing to an "us versus them" mentality among officers (Marche 2009; Punch 2003; Reiner 1985). S*olidarity* is an exceptionally strong tendency for police to turn within their occupational milieu for support. This offers members reassurance that other officers will "pull their weight" in police work, and will defend and assist colleagues

when confronted by external threats (Goldsmith 1990). This police characteristic has been deemed a major hindrance to police cooperation with independent review agencies in Ontario, SIU in particular (Wortley and Roswell, n.d). Solidarity is here chosen to be an indicator of culture for this reason.

Additionally, the impact of oversight on officers' desire for mission-action – another commonly cited cultural trait in police literature – is also examined. *Mission-action* refers to the sense of fervour officers enact in "getting the bad guy", as well as their general tendency toward action packed scenarios and excitement (Reiner 1985). These types of pursuits reflect the very tendencies that formal oversight mechanisms seek to restrain in the first place, but are nonetheless a common mark of police work.

Previously assigned by police scholars the status of actual "culture", solidarity and mission-action in this study reflect instead indicators from which cultural meaning is revealed based on how they are appropriated – not just that the officers talk about solidarity or mission, but *how* they put them to use. By shifting away from a value-based definition in this way, police culture is neither accepted as a given or a typology of certain groups, but rather is subject to variation according to circumstance.

DATA & METHODOLOGY

Methods for this project involve eighteen months of fieldwork in Blueville Police Service (BPS)[22], a medium-sized city police department in Ontario. Data come from field notes and participant observation, as well as semi-structured interviews with sworn officers of varying rank, units and time served. A total of 100 one-to-one, in-depth interviews were conducted – 85

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[22] The name of the city has been changed to maintain anonymity.

with active officers and 15 with retirees of the service.[23] Most interviews spanned 1.5 to 2.5 hours.[24] To supplement interviews, interactions among officers within headquarters, at the training branch, and in morning line-ups were observed. I also spent a total of 50 hours riding along with various patrol officers on duty.

Respondents were asked a series of open-ended questions focusing on the objective and subjective dimensions of their work. In line with many sociological studies of culture (e.g. Boltanski and Thévenot 1999; Lamont 1992, 2000; Swidler 2001), this technique aims to reach the discursive consciousness of respondents in order to unveil the justifications they bring to experience.[25] Conversations were recorded and later transcribed, or notes were hand-written during and after discussion. After each field visit or ride-along, I also took detailed notes of observations. An inductive approach to data analysis was later employed, coding interviews and field notes according to theme. This analysis in particular draws on officers' verbal accounts of how recently intensified accountability policies and increased public visibility influence occupational practices associated with policing: an affinity toward group 'solidarity', and a sense of mission.

This research reflects an instrumental case study (Stake 1995) of a single police department and is not meant to serve as an account of police officers everywhere.[26] Although,

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[23] A significant majority of respondents are white males. At BPS, racial minorities comprise just 13% of sworn personnel, while females make up 16%.

[24] Though many road officers were randomly selected, the complexities of studying in a police department (i.e. call volume, swinging shifts, etc.) impacted recruitment. Much of the sample is therefore self-selected.

[25] Though commonly applied in culture research, this method is not without criticism. For an elaborated critique of interviews and post hoc rationalizations for accessing culture, see Vaisey (2009).

[26] An instrumental case study involves using a single case to gain insights into a particular phenomenon, where there is also an explicit expectation that learning can be used to refine a theory (Stake 1995).

representativeness of the sample itself is not the primary objective; instead I aim to use this case study as the analytical platform from which I hope to showcase the theoretical and methodological value in bridging cultural sociology and police studies.

Research Site

Blueville is a medium-sized city in Ontario with a population of approximately 250,000 people. A blue-collar town, Blueville's economy is largely fueled by auto manufacturing and tool and die "feeder plants" that supply various parts to larger factories. Labelled a "lunch-bucket town", Blueville's many labourers, usually employed in shift work, are known to "work hard and play hard". This, according to many officers, leads to dealing with a "tough town", to which they attribute their own reputation of being a tough, or even heavy-handed, police service. The following quote illustrates this notion:

> **Inspector L**: *We're a lunch bucket town. I've always said the people from this city are a hardworking people. They're factory workers. They're not afraid to get grease on their hands, and it's a tough town. Blueville, I think for the most part expects their policemen, or police officers to be tough too. I think the culture of the city, the silent majority would say, "Yeah, somebody needs to be cracked in the side of the head." So we do what we have to for our town. They would have no opposition to it as long as it's not them being cracked, mind you, but that type of mentality – blue collar, lunch bucket mentality.*

Given the recent financial downturn and disproportionate impact this has had on the auto industry, Blueville's unemployment rate increased to one of the highest in Canada, holding at around 9%. Consequently, the city also manages one of the largest per capita welfare caseloads in the province of Ontario. Furthermore, according to the 2011 National Household Survey, racial and ethnic minorities comprise 23% of the people in the area, where the largest minority

groups identify as Arab or Black. Also, 27% of Blueville's population were foreign-born, 15% of which came to Canada between 2006 and 2011.

Experiencing rapid economic and demographic shifts *over and above* the recent "game changer" in oversight in the last five years, this setting provides a prime example of an unsettled milieu. More importantly, in light of Blueville Police Service's reputation for implementing forceful means, rising levels of public accountability and a provincial trend toward standardization through legislation implies a necessary adjustment on behalf of the police.

ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

Rather than values to which officers orient their behaviour, evidence suggests that solidarity and mission-action are used as resources employed to produce meaning within a particular moment – in this case, a time of intense oversight. Furthermore, rather than overarching or individual traits to which police subscribe, the ways in which cultural scripts about solidarity and mission are appropriated uncover a more dynamic process where considerable shifting can occur. Notions of solidarity are differentially deployed both within and across rank while mission-action appears to be avoided, both by frontline officers and the administration, in favor of strategies for risk-management.

Waning Solidarity: Within and Across Rank

Officers report a break in solidarity both across rank (that is, patrol versus administration) and within rank. The quotes considered below illustrate varied ways in which culture is mobilized and linked to experience.

Across Rank

A lack of solidarity across workers and managers is not surprising and is consistent with previous police research (e.g., Reuss Ianni and Ianni 1983). However, it is worthwhile to note that officers attribute a growing wedge between the administration and patrol officers to the very mechanisms of oversight explored in this article. Responding to a question about how he feels the increasing role of SIU and OIPRD is impacting the organization, Sergeant T explains that the department's administration is now too quick to concede to the pressures of the media and of oversight bodies. He recounts an event where an immediate suspension was imposed on an officer even before SIU performed an investigation. He goes on to describe his views about "having each other's backs" and clearly has great difficulty in relating to his administration – officers he once felt he could count on:

> *Sergeant T: We don't have backing… I mean, as a police officer you're supposed to watch each other's backs, right? It's a unique job. It's not like Chrysler or working at a factory. It's a unique job because here you rely on someone for your life. You know, someone could save your life. Well, not just sometimes – most times, right – and there's a different camaraderie between, you know, police officers and labourers at a plant or something like that, and people don't understand it because they don't come through here. You know, you'd have to actually have a career here to understand how it works, and it doesn't seem like they've got our backs anymore… I just don't know how administration is thinking. I don't know where they're coming from. I don't understand it. Some of the things they implement, the decisions they make. It just doesn't make sense. If you woulda told me that [these guys] would be the 4 top guys here, I'd a said we're golden! We got it made! But it's not like that... They change, I guess, right, and you're not supposed to like everything the Chief does...but these differences are way… yeah too much.*

This quote showcases what police studies have for years described as an officer's internalized belief in solidarity – or what Vaisey (2008) would label a "moral intuition" for "having each other's backs". However, it further demonstrates the restriction of a purely value-based understanding of culture. Indeed this sergeant *is* conveying ideas about the organizational routines he expects others to abide by, but he further connects them directly to his institutional environment: a police department, and *not* a factory like so many others in his community. In doing so, he is reproducing police culture – emphasizing the meaning that he brings to his job as being fundamentally "different" than other kinds of work – but he is also *using* scripts about solidarity in a manner which reveals the instability of it altogether. Specifically, he deploys solidarity to protect his own worthiness as a police officer but struggles to even comprehend those who pursue incompatible lines of action. Ultimately, T, among others, experiences a collapse in support with his administration. This unsettled moment in his occupational experience prompts Sergeant T to rally culture in order to make sense of institutional conditions.

Within Rank

A breakdown of solidarity *within* the uniformed patrol division is a more unusual finding for police culture research. In contrast to Sergeant T – who tries desperately to hang on to what he deems customary – others are more adaptive to new strategies for action in the wake of changing accountability standards:

> **Sergeant F***: When you hear all that bitter stuff, that's just people complaining because they don't wanna deal with change. I buy the Chief's business plan. I'm on his team. Maybe I'm just old school like that... I am a staunch supporter of his plans and for the right reasons… People need to understand that this service is only strong by the people that are doing the right things.*

By implying that "teams" are forming in response to increasing oversight and the implementation of policies to deal with this, Sergeant F, the same rank and blue uniform as Sergeant T, conveys not only a waning cohesiveness among his fellow patrol officers, but also demonstrates how actors in similar positions wield a cultural idea in dissimilar ways. This parallels the following quotes, where constables explain the present need to actively avoid teaming up with impulsive partners who may force an officer into the compromising position of having to choose between covering a co-worker or guarding his or her self during a high-stakes moment:

> **Constable K**: *You don't want to get somebody you can't trust, but you don't want to be with somebody who you know is...heavy handed or deals with things in a way that they shouldn't... because times have changed so, yeah, and he [previous partner] would be one of those guys where I'd be, like, "I don't want to work with you because you're going to get me in trouble. You're going to put me in a bad position, and then I'm going to be forced to pick between you and what's right". Because you can lose your job now...*

> **Constable G**: *You can't be a cowboy out there anymore, so I think with all these different avenues for people to complain, and all these different ways that they're checking up on us... you hope your partner is on the same page as you because the last thing you need is your partner to do something stupid and you're there, and then what are you going to do, right? And then it's difficult because, I mean, you're working for a big team and you want to look out for people, but now it's like, well, if you did something stupid, my hands are tied. I can't... what are you going to do? And even when I started it was kind of, like, alright, well, how are we going to say this went down because we got to make sure this goes smoothly. Like now – whatever went down, that's what went down because you're on camera and you did this... You want me to lie and say that you didn't do this or he took a swipe at you first? There's a camera right there. You know, we're like, "what are you doing?" so you hope that you got someone with a level head.*

In addition to exposing the sheer vulnerability of police solidarity, these quotes suggest that just because an officer is well aware of the importance of team, simply valuing the "brotherhood" is not sufficient motivation for action. Instead, the cultural idea of solidarity is negotiated to bring justification to the current condition.

Similarly, in the vast majority of the interviews, officers spoke passionately against all being "painted with the same brush" by the public. Rather than attempt to either rationalize or defend the questionable actions of fellow officers, respondents fervently demarcated themselves from not only "the bad apples" but from the notion of being "grouped" at all:

Sergeant T*: They just read the newspaper or go online and now they don't like the police. So, you know, [that guy] is [that guy] okay? He's paying a price for what he did. We're not all him here, and that's what I'd like to tell people... I'm not that guy in the video!*

Constable M: *There are some traits that I think some officers get pegged as a... they get grouped together, and it's unfortunate that when you wear a uniform everybody kind of gets painted with the same brush, so if there's one bad apple everybody gets the same...*

Detective J: *If we got a guy that's a thief or that's committing sexual assaults… I don't want him here. I'd be the first one to jump on the bandwagon and start the investigation because we don't need that. We don't need them here... we need to get rid of that, and I know of… my peers won't be happy to hear that, but I don't care. I have no sympathy for someone who's using their position here for wrong. We don't need you. Fire his ass.*

In the initial stages of data analysis, multiple references to "camaraderie", and "we have each other's backs" proved rather deceiving; I incorrectly assumed that solidarity was firmly intact and key to how people both understood and practiced police work. This impression was soon challenged when I discovered that these scripts served as a kind of backdrop against which more complex processes were unfolding during this unsettled time. Having your fellow officer's

back physically when confronted with danger in the line of duty seems to be a given, but as these quotes suggest, this does not always translate seamlessly into covering or supporting one another within the headquarters or when faced with discipline. These examples demonstrate how officers who share similar cultural equipment or repertoires – in this case about solidarity – can and do integrate them differently. Not only do the data show that solidarity is not as unyielding as common value depictions of police culture suggest, but intense levels of oversight also reveal new ways of asserting and negotiating solidarity altogether. Analyzing police culture as a resource thus paints a much clearer picture of "the when and where" certain sets of meaning will be invoked by officers to make sense of their work lives.

Fading Mission-Action Across the Police Hierarchy

Evidence suggests the sense of mission and excitement among officers is fading when officers contemplate their current work environment. This appears to be occurring at both the organizational and individual levels. Interviewees revealed numerous ways in which cultural scripts about risk management are mobilized to make sense of the institutional constraints in which they find themselves.

Administrative Level

In addressing their organizational concerns with evolving legislative platforms and changing standards for accountability, administration members and high-ranking officers described an increasing tendency toward training that is reactive, standardized, and focused on liability:

Superintendent M: *The level of accountability being much higher than it ever was – well, with that you need to be trained. You need to be trained about what SIU is*

responsible for, what their expectations are – OIPRD – so you have to be trained in all areas of oversight. Because of all these oversight bodies, we as an administration have to develop and implement training with regard to risk management. So people have to understand, even though you force feed them, you think, well, it's obvious… like yourself as an outsider might say, "Well, it's obvious to me that, you know, a young educated officer ought to know what risk is." Well, you'd be surprised. They sometimes don't, and you have to constantly have them in a classroom to remind them of what the expectations of the organization are, and what the expectations of the community is, and that of these oversight bodies, and how is it that we mitigate risk. That takes up training... SIU brought two investigators down and put on a half-day seminar. "This is what we're about. This is clearly what our mandate is; as a result, this is what your responsibilities are," and every single person in the organization had to be trained... and it wasn't like that back then.

Detective G: *I think part of the problem… like don't get me wrong, the training has really, really improved. But I think part of it you got to think about is liability. Sometimes they force things down your throat just to be able to say, "We trained him; we taught him that,", so it's off them. But, you don't even know if the person absorbed it or not...*

In the first of the quotes, a superintendent describes in great detail how the department responded to shifting rules around oversight and the significance of training – even though low-level officers do not have the power to call these agencies directly. The second quote is one of many examples where rank-and-file officers describe the administrative response to oversight as an effort to offload responsibility onto individual officers, thereby diminishing organizational liability. DiMaggio and Powell suggest that "when organizational technologies are poorly understood, or when the environment creates symbolic uncertainty, organizations may model themselves on other organizations" (1983, p. 151) – a mimetic process which they term "institutional isomorphism". The administrative response to train and align the organization more

carefully to the provincial standard in implementing accountability may be explained by this process. Put another way, far from appealing to a sense of mission to motivate officers, the administration deploys a repertoire of ideas about risk and liability to justify recent actions taken by the organization.

These examples highlight once more the significance of moving beyond value or ends-based definitions of culture because, in fact, "people may have in readiness cultural capacities they rarely employ; and all people know more culture than they use (Swidler 1986, p. 277). For instance, for an administration member whose daily preoccupation involves the smooth operation of an entire organizational machine, appropriating risk-based strategies for action means informing and training – engaging others to act in accordance. In contrast, for the typical patrol officer performing his or her job out on the road (somewhat removed from organizational matters), mobilizing cultural ideas about risk are manifested through other means. I now turn to individual level strategies for action that indicate a fading sense of mission.

Individual Level

At the individual level, officers avoid mission-action in their own ways. In the following quotes, officers address a range of substantive meanings that they derive from mutual cultural ideas about managing risk. These include disengagement and second guessing.

> **Constable A:** *Now it's completely different. I spend my days trying to stay out of trouble, then serve the public, then look out for my partners. In fact, that's not even right. I spend... the first thing is... I don't want to get in trouble. I don't want to get nailed by somebody with a camera phone or by our own service, and then I have to take care of <u>myself</u> [emphasis]. And then I have to take care of my partner, and then the*

community... [Accountability] has swung so far in the other direction now. It's gotten to the point of ridiculousness; and I go to work and, like I said, I just spend my days not trying to get in trouble. People tell me fuck off, and I do. And it breeds... "Oh, I don't care. Those two guys are fighting. Alright, well, I'm not getting involved because, you know what, then something will happen. I'll break it up; break a guy's arm trying to break it up, and then they'll have SIU coming down here and they'll investigate me."

Detective J*: They really have to be careful when the oversight body is… in how it functions because it's a huge issue because if it doesn't work properly, if it's doesn't have the correct safeties put in place, police officers won't do their job. We have a saying, which I probably shouldn't say… but it's FIDO, and I don't know if you know what FIDO means? Well, "Fuck It, Drive Off". Yeah, and that's exactly what happens, so I don't have any problem with the oversight; I never have, but you just really need to make sure that it's done right.*

Constable A and Detective J speak to culture here in performative terms. For them, cultural scripts about risk – communicated as "staying out of trouble" and "FIDO" – prompt them to pursue alternative strategies for action which entail avoiding scenarios that would typically warrant their attention. They simply disengage. Several examples of disengaging also presented themselves throughout the ride along stage of this research, including the following instance where two constables discussed a pursuit from the night before as we settled into the patrol car for the afternoon shift:

Constable C: *Hey I wonder if we'll see that white caddy again today*. (She settles into the passenger seat)

Constable J: *Why so you can lose it again?* (Laughs as he adjusts the MDT[27] to his height)

Constable C: *Okay asshole... I had that pedal to the floor. Any harder and my foot woulda been sticking out the bottom of the car. It's these shit cars... they can't keep up with a Cadillac. So yeah...* (turns back to face me in the backseat)... *we lost him. This guy blew by us and so we followed him lights and sirens, and he just went even faster, flying through red lights. Of course, we're not really supposed to pursue anymore, plus we gotta slow at every red light to make sure it's safe. But yeah he was gonezo so I let him go. Last thing I need is to get called in for chasing after some asshole, even though he coulda killed someone the way he was driving.*

Constable J (laughing sarcastically): *Just sayin'... if I was driving, we wouldn't have lost him.*

Constable C: *Whatever! You're the last person to stick his neck out!*

Constable J: (Looks at me through the rear view mirror, still laughing) *It's true!* (Looks back to his partner) *Well at least not anymore... it's not worth it anymore.*

Similarly, numerous officers also report a trend toward "second guessing" their police powers on the job when dealing with situations where force may be necessary:

Constable T: *All this technology* [points to phone on table]... *Yeah, people are second-guessing themselves when they could've done something that they had every right to do, saying, "Oh, I don't know if I should do that," and they don't, and either somebody gets away with something or you're involved in a fight; and if you have to be aggressive because the person is aggressive with you, you're second-guessing yourself. The next thing you know you're getting punched or you're getting kicked or you're getting thrown to the ground or whatever...*

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[27] A Mobile Data Transmitter (MDT) is a laptop computer fastened inside police vehicles which links communication systems between local, provincial and even national law enforcement databases. Information requests and call dispatches all run through the MDT without need for radio.

Faced with new institutional constraints, this constable describes a workplace where people are even expressing doubt about their basic, foundational authority to establish order and ensure their safety and the safety of others, let alone a sense of mission.

Therefore, it appears that mission-action as a means to making sense of one's job loses ground for police in a time of intense oversight and public scrutiny. Instead, police draw on cultural scripts about risk because these are better suited to navigating their current circumstances. Rather than an overarching value which explains officers' behaviors, mission-action in this particular unsettled moment seems de-emphasized altogether.

DISCUSSION

The above analysis is not meant to contradict the police culture "ideal type" but rather to demonstrate a novel strategy for empirically capturing the contextual nuances so commonly alluded to in study disclaimers and comments on future research. Indeed, core descriptors such as mission-action, isolation, solidarity, machismo and conservatism seem to stand the test of time, even across dissimilar spaces. For instance, more recent studies conducted by Loftus (2010) in England, Paoline (2004) in Indiana and Florida, and Hulst (2013) in the Netherlands all confirm the resilience of all or at least some of these traits. However, conclusions are often followed by reminders that these characteristics waver at the individual-level and across groups facing divergent roles, there is inconsistency between attitudes and behaviors, and future research should endeavor to reconcile these issues. Thus, what is missing is an account of the "when and where" particular sets of meanings will be linked to experience (Swidler, 2008).

Accordingly, if scholars continue to approach the study of police culture with an eye for the "core characteristics", the answer to whether these persist is likely to remain affirmative: we can confirm the ideal-type every time. But when situational contingencies are summoned by actors, a far more nuanced cultural picture can emerge. This picture illustrates not only cultural accounts which outright challenge longstanding beliefs about "cop code", but also shows *how* officers evince these cultural repertoires along a continuum – not just that they do. Police may draw on *more* or *less* solidarity depending on the contextual circumstances at hand, or, alternatively, may supplant this resource all together in favor of others that are more suitable to the condition. To more effectively appreciate these processes as fundamentally cultural, police studies must reach beyond its disciplinary boundaries and outline the concept of "culture" more explicitly.

Finally, this paper represents a more overt attempt to theorize police culture by implementing an adaptive framework designed to uncover how actors negotiate meaning within a definable set of structural constraints.[28] The present analysis examines an instance of a wide-ranging occupational circumstance, namely oversight, but future studies may also apply this framework to uncover the possibility of gendered and racialized patterns in how individuals use culture – both within and outside of the criminal justice system. In the context of law enforcement, inquiries about officer "positionality" could shed light on ongoing debates surrounding the impact of officer diversification (see Sklansky, 2006; Skolnick, 2008) without having to rely on summary measures of police values and attitudes. Specifically, if findings reveal important distinctions in the cultural scripts deployed by minority officers compared to their white male counterparts, this would challenge assumptions about the cultural relevance of

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[28] Cultural sociologists argue that such conditions need not be completely concrete so long as there is shared meaning, as in the case of Swidler's (2001) work on the institution of love, and Lamont's (1992, 2000) on labor.

police socialization processes. In other words, this research can inform whether the cultural resources officers engage on the job are rooted primarily in the uniform and the organization, or whether these emerge from deeper identity markers.

CONCLUSION

With more stringent legislative policy to impose accountability, as well as elevated visibility in the community, police are *less* able to rely on informally instituted behavioral codes to maintain solidarity in the new environment. Moreover, officers report that they are less likely to eagerly engage in activity that may be deemed exciting or dangerous in light of the greater risk of being caught doing something that can be construed as a violation of policy. Thus, traditional value-based police culture representations do not sufficiently capture how officers understand their work when we embed these within shifts occurring in the broader context of policing. This article therefore proposes integrating cultural sociology and institutional theory. Using an analysis of policing in unsettled times, I examine the condition of increased oversight as a generative moment to shed light on how officers produce cultural meaning about their work. Evidence highlights that solidarity and mission-action serve instead as cultural resources that get appropriated (or not) in varied ways when intense accountability and public visibility characterize their experiences. The task of understanding police culture is more effectively served by identifying the means through which officers put it to work to make sense of their occupational lives.

CHAPTER 3

Institutional Myths and "Old-School" Officers: Cultural Inertia in the Police Department

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary policing has undergone substantial transformation. Not only have the ranks of police departments diversified, but more demanding policies and procedures surrounding officer oversight, organizational accountability, training, and technological proficiency demand that both front line officers and police administrators adapt to a rapidly changing occupational landscape. In light of increasing public expectation for transparency, there has also been a greater tendency for police organizations to turn outside themselves in order to foster better relationships with their local communities. And yet, despite such progress, certain events continue to remind us of policing from days gone by. High profile cases of extreme use-of-force in particular (e.g. Sammy Yatim and Andrew Loku in Toronto, Walter Scott in Charleston, Freddie Gray in Baltimore, Laquan McDonald in Chicago) and attempts to insulate the rank-and-file have prompted an overwhelming perception that policing has *not* changed after all. In Ontario, Canada, police legislators are revising the *Police Services Act* in light of mounting pressure to better manage civilians experiencing crisis, and recent unrest in the United States has even impelled Barack Obama to initiate nation-wide justice reform through launching the *President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing* by executive order in December 2014. According to the recommendations set out in the final report (published in May, 2015), along with the general message conveyed through the media across both countries, it is "police culture" that is responsible for so many problems that remain in policing today. In light of so much change in policing, what explains this apparent cultural persistence within police departments?

Perhaps the most confounding message about police culture is found in the academic literature, which reveals a seemingly contradictory conclusion that it has both changed *and* remained the same. For instance, Sklansky (2006) refers to a generational transition, arguing that modern-day police organizations are "not your father's police department", and "police officers today report lines of division" (p. 1232). Conversely, Loftus's (2009; 2010) oft-cited work suggests that, despite altered times, police culture "displays remarkable continuity with older patterns", including solidarity, machismo, and the "us/them" mindset. How should we interpret such differing findings? More importantly, what might account for *both* a shifting and stagnant culture in an organization?

Drawing on sociological literature in the areas of culture and organizations, the following analysis accounts for *cultural inertia* – a reluctance to adapt to shifting environmental conditions (Carrillo and Gromb 2007) – in the context of three dimensions of change that have characterized policing over the last two decades: who they are (officer demographics); what they are instructed to do (policy); and how they do it (practices). Unlike the common approach to studying police culture as an "ideal-type" of police values and attitudes, this study understands culture as a set of resources deployed by actors to make sense of experiences, such as one's social positioning in a hierarchy, daily routines, or a changing environment (Lamont and Molnar 2002; Powell and DiMaggio 1991; Swidler 2001).

The following analysis demonstrates that police *do* report lines of division, as suggested by Sklansky (2006). These tend to reflect generational boundaries among co-workers: "old-school" versus the "new generation". Cultural inertia, it is argued, is sustained through a delicate balancing of both old and new cultural scripts: informal myth-management of *internal* practices on one hand, and formal ceremonial myth-building with *external* policing constituents (i.e. local

government, oversight bodies, etc.) on the other. Put another way, in preserving certain institutional myths, highly ranked officers display to outsiders their "social fitness" as a progressive police department while simultaneously maintaining the old-school status quo within the organization. Similarly engaged in a strategic use of culture, new generation officers engage both old and new cultural scripts to improve their opportunity for professional advancement in the department but also preserve their own sense of moral integrity as modern day police.

These results, however, are not indicative of absolute stasis. As the term "inertia" implies, in physics, an object in motion will continue to move in its current direction and velocity until some force interrupts this momentum. This study suggests the tenacity of old ways has been somewhat weakened. That is, frustrations on behalf of both generations reveal a small but notable impact of demographic, policy, and practical shifts: the dominance of old-school ideas grows increasingly precarious as the reigning myths lose legitimacy for the new, diverse, more educated officers who are entering a career marked by increasing professionalism and accountability. This study provides insight on the relationship between organizational change and internal culture and further highlights how institutional structures can inhibit transformation.

INERTIA AND CHANGE IN ORGANIZATIONS

Organization scholars have long raised critical questions about how organizations implement, adapt and respond to change. An important finding within this literature is that, though organizations experience moments of transition or instability, organizational structures are broadly subject to strong inertial forces (Carrillo and Gromb 2007; Dimaggio and Powell 1983; Hirshleifer and Welch 2002; Tushman and O'Reilly 1996). This means that organizations and their members react slowly to both opportunities and threats in their environments. Furthermore,

organizational structures and cultures are reproduced through institutionalization – a process which occurs when social processes, obligations, routines or structures come to take on a rule-like status in social thought and action (Meyer and Rowan 1977; Zucker 1977*)*.

For instance, studies have noted that employees often do not use new programs that are designed and implemented for their benefit, such as those involving diversity or civil rights-based policies (e.g., Edelman 1990; Kalev, Dobbin, and Kelly 2006). Similarly, Coburn's (2004) work on the education sector suggests that change to routine ways of instructing depends largely on how teachers mediate the influence of new policies and whether guidelines correspond with their beliefs. Other research shows that organizations are also likely to resist change when powerful actors within have professional identities or interests that conflict with proposed changes (e.g., Anteby 2010; Barley 1986; Fligstein 1985; Heimer 1999). In her NASA case study, Vaughan (1996; 2002b) found that engineers and administrators disregarded multiple warning signs because an objection to launch would defy the organization's principal logics, which promote the doctrine of "acceptable risk" and a "culture of productivity". Studies which underscore inertial forces in organizations therefore highlight that, once routines become institutionalized, arrangements come to be defended along moral and political lines rather than technical ones (Hannan and Freeman 1984).

Despite the existence of strong pulls toward preserving the status quo, a number of studies have uncovered how change can occur in organizations of all kinds, particularly in response to external pressures. Sauder and Espeland (2009) show how the growing popularity of school ranking systems influenced how actors in law schools think about their institution and how administrators make decisions. Studying legal fields, Dezalay (1990) examined the deregulation of capital markets and finds that the arrival of a new kind of financially savvy

player accelerated the breaking down the "old legal order", making both "possible and urgent the construction of new norms" (p. 283) needed for firms to prosper. Espeland (1998) also highlights the impact of newcomers, explaining how "new guard" bureaucrats used environmental impact projects to reshape the "old guard" engineering ethos and halt the harmful construction plan of the Orme Dam in the American Southwest. Finally, in the hospital sector, Kellogg (2009) studied new regulations in U.S. teaching hospitals designed to reduce the 100 hour work week for surgical residents and interns. She finds that middle-management reformers and subordinate employees are able to challenge defenders of the status quo by developing a cross-position collective. For example, when interns were paired with reform-minded chiefs and residents, views associated with the decision to sign-out shifted from "I must be the first one here and the last to leave" to "the rules require me to leave the hospital". However, this was most effective when views on the night float – surgical residents receiving the hand-offs from day employees – also shifted from old school ideas about "paying their dues" to recognizing that "the purpose of the night float is so the intern can leave" (p. 694).

Policing and Inertia

Though typically the domain of criminological inquiry, just like sectors studied by organization scholars, policing is subject to external social and political pressures to evolve. And yet, when compared to other types of organizations, police departments have long been recognized as exceptionally resistant to change. Despite widespread declines in violent crime, consistent evidence which invalidates the "crime fighter" model, and attempts to shift toward community-based policing principles, police departments remain paramilitary in structure (Bittner 2006; Kraska and Kappeler 1997) and faithfully define their role as a moral commitment to crime

prevention and public protection. As such, it may be said that police organizations adhere to classic theories of administration described by Weber (1947) which emphasize: rigid rank-based member relationships, centralized chain of command structure, hierarchical communications where information travels upward and orders flow down, and obedience. Factors which are believed to strengthen the resistance of police organizations include their unique position in the law, their monopoly on the sanctioned use of coercive force, the obligation to routinely perform society's "dirty work" (Bittner 1970; Westley 1970), and most importantly, a notoriously stubborn "culture" (Loftus 2010; Reiner 1985; Skolnick 2008). Drawing on the lens of organization-based research, this article thus examines a case where inertial forces are known to be particularly strong.

In the 1960s and 1970s, police scholars (Banton 1964; Bittner 1970; Skolnick 1966; Van Maanen 1974; Westley 1970) contributed the idea of a "cop code of conduct". They argued that police officers are called upon to develop a specific "working personality" (Skolnick 1966) to deal with elements peculiar to the environment of law enforcement, especially danger, stress, and the hierarchical structure of the organization. Over time, "police culture" became distinctly recognized as a single comprehensive term meant to encompass a range of values and attitudes that define the normative social world of police. Some have developed a series of typologies to describe various policing styles, such as optimists, traditionalists, dirty harrys, old-pros, or peacekeepers (Broderick 1987; Brown 1988; Paoline 2004). Others draw on Reiner's (1985) 'ideal type', outlining core elements comprising this occupational culture: an exaggerated tendency toward excitement, a cynical outlook, incessant suspicion of others, isolation, strong solidarity with fellow officers, conservative morality and political beliefs, and masculinity. Broadly, these descriptors of police culture are monolithically applied in police studies, alongside persistent claims of consistency over time and across space (Loftus 2009; 2010).

Police studies which have tried to determine whether pressure to change has imposed on the dominant police culture yield mixed results: some find evidence of change, while others report cultural stagnation.[29] Chan (2003) observes that, regardless of policy reforms, police socialization is powerfully indoctrinating and is the main culprit behind resistance to change. Still, much of this research attributes inconsistencies in findings to difficulties associated with measuring cultural change to begin with. Police studies can benefit from theoretical and analytical tools found in the sociology of culture and organizations to effectively connect shifting environmental conditions with culture.

THEORETICAL LENS:
MYTHS & BOUNDARIES IN POLICING

Sociologists have moved toward a multi-faceted and "practice" oriented approach to culture. For these scholars (e.g. Lamont and Molnar 2002; Powell and DiMaggio 1991; Swidler 1986, 2001), definitions emerge more through the various ways in which culture is resourcefully *used* than from individually held principles or a general "way of life". Individuals are found to be actively engaging with their environment by creatively drawing from cultural myths, scripts, and boundaries which may be used interchangeably, but depend on the structural conditions in which they find themselves. Concepts within this literature are therefore used to account for varied ways in which actors react *within* institutional spaces – that is, within a context (*see Table 1*).

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[29] Space constraints do not permit a full review of this research. Readers should see the dissertation's introduction and review the following studies: Brown 2007; Chan 1997; Franklin 2007; Herbert 2001; Loftus 2009, 2010; Marks 2005; O'Neill et al 2007; Paoline 2004; Punch 2007; Skolnick 2008.

Table 1:

Bridging classic definitions of "police culture" and sociological conceptions of "culture"

Traditional Definition (Police Studies)	Alternative Conceptualization (Sociology of Culture)
System of values and attitudes that define the normative social world of police.	Cultural resources are engaged to bring justification to experience. Culture is meaning.
Reiner's (1985) ideal type: isolation/solidarity, mission-action, suspicion, conservatism, machismo *Typologies*: realists, optimists, dirty harrys, traditionalists, old-pros, peacekeepers, etc.	*Key cultural resources*: myths, boundaries, scripts, classifications, routines, and schema. Analyst determines when/where sets of meanings will be brought to bear on experience.
Static → Classic police culture definitions do not effectively account for a changing environment	*Contingent* → Culture is socially embedded and serves as the link between structure and action[30]

According to classic works within new institutionalism, certain *institutional myths* prevail in organizations; these are widespread understandings of social reality which possess an intrinsic quality of "truth" about them, and are often used to justify ways of doing things (Meyer and Rowan 1977). More recent work (e.g. Hallet and Ventresca 2006; Hallet 2010) effectively connects the macro focus of institutional theory with the micro-level meaning-making done by the people who "inhabit" institutions. Specifically, sociologists of culture and organizations can capture "how myths become incarnate" in organizations (Hallet 2010, p. 52) by examining how they are propelled by individual actors through their social interactions and articulation of interests. In other words, this local foundation of myths allows researchers to observe how they are sustained through the scripts people employ when they describe life in their organizations.

Myths also operate in both a formal and informal sense. The formal structure is the official blueprint of the organization's explicit mandate, technologies, policies, procedures, as well as its network of offices, departments and programs. These are highly rationalized, bureaucratic, public and impersonal. Conversely, informally coordinated commitments are

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[30] This view is in line with ideas put forth by Bourdieu (1984, 1993) and Sewell (1992).

employed by participants "back stage" of an organization to manage everyday routines and inter-member relationships according to preferred methods. Yet, just as Edelman (1990) found in American workplaces, or Coburn (2004) found in the classroom, structural arrangements are only loosely linked to one another and to activities (Meyer and Rowan 1977): rules are often violated, decisions and programs go un-implemented and evaluation systems are compromised. Given the gap between the formal structure and actual workplace behaviors, in practice, organizations often adopt formally institutionalized myths ceremonially: they merely "perform" various ritual activities to validate their "social fitness" among external institutional constituents.

In the policing context, executive leadership and senior administrators are quite actively engaged in myth-building in order to demonstrate that they indeed *look like* and *function as* a police department (Crank and Langworthy 1992). This preserves the legitimacy of their organization in the broader community of relevant actors (i.e. police boards, oversight bodies, the media, or city council). Examples of ceremonially adopted institutional myths identified in policing include the movement toward adopting a "community policing" model (Mastrofski and Uchida 1996), recruitment tactics which target minorities (e.g. "open houses"), or internal reviews for police conduct (Crank 2003) (*see Figure 1*).

Yet another form of cultural resource that is often engaged by actors in an organization is boundaries. According to Lamont and Molnar (2002), *symbolic boundaries* are "conceptual distinctions made by social actors to categorize objects, people, practices, and even time and space... they are tools by which individuals and groups struggle over and come to agree upon definitions of reality" (p. 168). Boundaries can become so firmly agreed upon that social interaction is constrained along exclusionary patterns. Similar to Kellogg's (2009) cross-position reformers and defenders, or Espeland's (1998) "old guard" and "new guard", this concept can be

used to identify the most salient principles of classification operating behind police evaluations of their organizational hierarchy – which, in this case, correspond to generational differences.

Figure 1: **Institutional Myth Building in a Police Service (Formal and Informal)**

**Police Service
Institutional Constituents**

INTERNAL   EXTERNAL

**Police
Leadership**

Formally Institutionalized Myths
- maintain legitimacy (social fitness)
- adopted ceremonially
- e.g.: diversity recruitment,
  community policing, internal
  reviews, etc.

Police Board
Oversight agency
City Council
Legislation
Media

Informally Institutionalized Myths
- maintain the preferred status quo
- adopted routinely
- e.g.: to be determined by analyst
  (may vary by police department)

**All Organization
Members**

The following analysis examines how the status quo is both sustained and challenged by the ways in which these cultural resources of myths and boundaries are mobilized by police officers. In doing so, it provides an account for *cultural inertia* – a reluctance to adapt to changing environmental conditions (Carrillo and Gromb 2007) – in policing. Three dimensions of change that have characterized the police environment over the last two decades are assessed:

who they are (officer demographics); what they are instructed to do (policy); and how they do it (practices).

DATA & METHODOLOGY

In the last twenty years, observational research of policing has witnessed resurgence (Chan, 1997; Foster 1989; Herbert 1998; Loftus 2009). As Marks (2004) argues, "in order to understand cultural knowledge... it is important for the researcher to immerse herself in the daily organizational field of the police" (p. 866). This study includes both observation and in-depth interviews performed over the course of 18 months in the police department of a medium-sized Canadian city. A total of 100 one-to-one, semi-structured interviews were conducted – 85 with active officers and 15 with retirees of the service. To supplement interviews, interactions among officers within headquarters, at the training branch, and in morning line-ups were observed. I also spent a total of 50 hours riding along with patrol officers in a number of districts and during various shifts (days, afternoons, and midnights).

Respondents were asked a series of open-ended questions focusing on the objective and subjective dimensions of their work experiences and of policing generally. Conversations were recorded and later transcribed; when recording was denied, notes were hand-written during and after discussion. Following field visits or ride-alongs, I also took detailed notes of observations. The data presented here relate specifically to the scripts officers adopt to describe what they perceive to be the "truths" of their organization (myths) and to maintain distinctions between themselves and others (boundaries). These classifications are resourcefully used by respondents to make sense of the institutional hierarchy of their workplace.

Research Site

"Blueville"[31] is a blue-collar, medium-sized city in Canada with a population of approximately 250,000 people. Blueville's economy is fueled by auto manufacturing and tool and die "feeder plants" that supply various parts to larger factories. Given the recent financial downturn and the disproportionate impact this has had on the auto industry, the city's unemployment rate and welfare case load increased to one of the highest in Canada. Blueville's economic story resembles that of many rust-belt cities throughout the United States. Previously thriving bars that would attract afternoon shift labourers from nearby plants are now boarded up, and many streets largely deserted. Despite the financial strains of its residents, the city maintains a low crime rate.[32]

Blueville's population is quickly becoming more diverse. According to the 2011 National Household Survey, racial and ethnic minorities comprise nearly 25% of the people in the area, where the largest minority groups identify as Arab or Black. Also, one quarter of Blueville's population are foreign-born, 15% of which came to Canada between 2006 and 2011. These trends have earned the city a spot in the top five most diverse in the nation.

The Blueville Police Service (BPS) itself is comprised of 450 sworn officers. A significant majority are white males: racial minorities comprise just 13% of sworn personnel, while females make up approximately 16%. Many members identify the service as "behind the times": without a single female or non-white administrator, diversity among personnel is mostly represented in the lower ranks. The idea that this particular department is somewhat of a "throwback" is also related to a reputation for being "heavy handed", which officers themselves

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[31] The name of the city has been changed to maintain anonymity. Officer names are also changed.

[32] Statistics Canada (2014) reports Blueville's Crime Severity Index is below the Canadian national rate of 68.7.

relate to their "tough" town. As the data will show, parallels officers draw between their city's socio-economic circumstance and their police department provide a platform for "old-school" perspectives to not only survive, but also continue to feed institutional myths about what it means to be police.

ANALYSIS: "OLD-SCHOOL" versus "NEW GENERATION"

Sergeant Joanne and I pull up just as Constable Courtney, a recent hire, is handing Pete an orange. Sergeant smiled proudly. Pete is a well known local "bum", "drunk" or "cripple" – depending who you ask – who spends his days and nights in the downtown core riding around on his electric wheelchair, taking swig after swig from a brown paper bag. Courtney was directing him away from a motorcycle he had accidently knocked over after bumping into it with his chair. Sergeant rolled down the window on the passenger side and shouted "Get outta here Pete! You listen to Courtney here and have yourself a good night! Stay outta trouble!" Pete smiled at her with a wave, shouted something inaudible, and rolled away. The constable waved to us and resumed her foot patrol. Sergeant continued: "He's not so bad when he's not drinking… he's dry right now. Some can't handle him. But that one [she points to Courtney], she gets it. I've got a good feeling about that one… she's smart and knows how to talk to people. And she's not like some of these other new girls…"

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"A lot of them are flaky now, they don't prioritize the job. Like… ok for example, they ruin it for the rest of us when they come on now and get pregnant right away. When I came on, you would never think of doing that until you had proven yourself and put in a solid 5 yrs at least, earned your stripes. Now they get hired and get the big salary, barely on for a year and they miss a period and they go on mat leave, then they have another one, and before you know it's been 3 or 4 years, they come back and have to get re-trained, and are fuckin' useless. So for all of us who have tried to pave the way for women, this is dragging us down. Because then it's just a job to them... they're not gonna get into things because they got responsibilities."

"There must be some women on the job who are able to balance things properly?" I asked.

"Look, I know how it sounds. And I see the ones who are really trying. Even the ones who put in the time at the beginning. But it's just that once that maternal instinct kicks in, they're different. They try to be the same, but they're just not. It's not through any fault of their own, it's just that 'hey, I got kids at home who need me and so I'm not sticking my neck out for a job'. You know? Like they can't be selfish but at the same time, everyone else on the job can't rely on them."

This analysis addresses how police officers establish boundaries along the key parameters of change most commonly discussed in the literature: police demographics and reforms surrounding policy and practices. Specifically, topics which prompted respondents to distinguish among officers the most include race, gender and education, as well as policies and practices related to officer conduct, accountability and promotion. The terms "old-school" and "new generation" are here used to reference a generational divide (or symbolic boundary) within Blueville Police Service. These labels were chosen because officers themselves often referred to older counterparts as "old-school guys" or "dinosaurs", and to younger counterparts as the "me generation", or "Y-generation". However, inter-generational differences are reflected not only in the more tangible identifiers of age and seniority, but also conceptually in "old" and "new" cultural scripts that are adopted by police officers in relation to the above topics. For instance, older and highly-ranked individuals may wield contemporary ideas about the value of higher education, but may employ old-school scripts about women on the job. The cultural repertoire from which police officers can draw has thus broadened in the advent of organizational change. Therefore, these categories are not meant to be understood as complete dichotomies but rather as symbolic distinctions constructed by respondents to define their occupational environment.

Individuals within an organization may also engage strategically with cultural scripts, adjusting according to the demands of circumstance or the intended audience. For police administrators and other senior-level officers, this includes the rank-and-file within the department as well as external constituents (i.e. police board, media, city council). For younger and lower-level officers, this largely entails interactions within their rank and generation, as well as across-generation contacts with superiors (*see Figure 2*). As the data will reveal, the various ways in which "old-school" (OS) and "new generation" (NG) cultural scripts – relating to demographics, policies and practices – are deployed by officers map onto the institutional myths to which old-school officers adhere in order to promote the status quo even in times of change. The complete picture of cultural inertia in Blueville Police Service is then visually represented by combining the *Figures 1 and 2*, followed by a discussion of findings.

Figure 2: **Intergenerational Difference at BPS (Old-School and New Generation)**
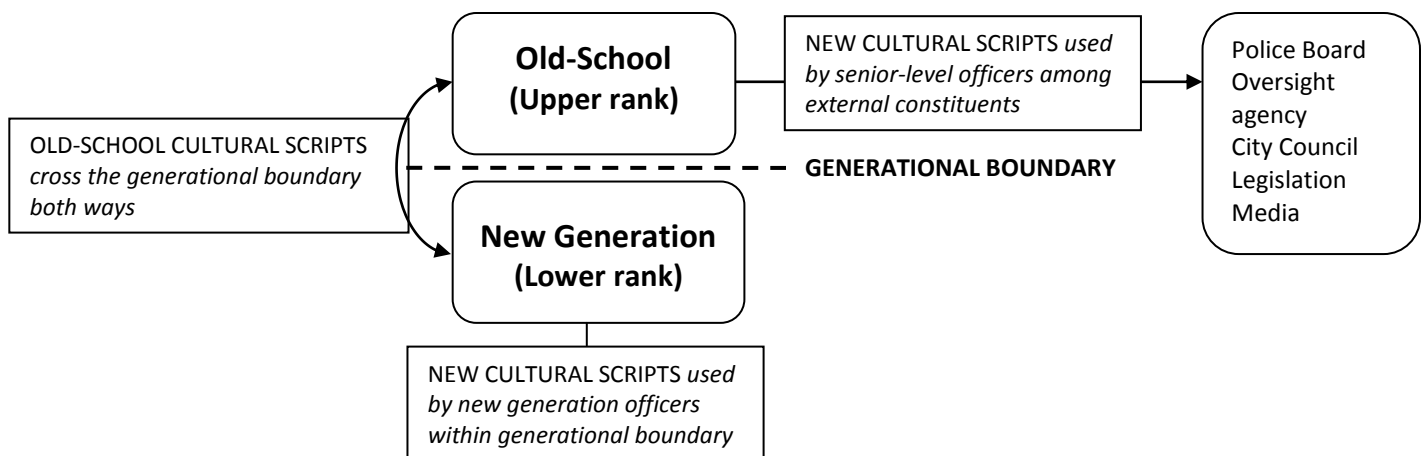
Officer Demographics

Demographic change within police organizations is largely rooted in efforts to be more representative of the communities in which police perform their function. This has prompted

several modifications to recruitment objectives and application requirements in order to attract more women, racial minorities, and educated individuals generally.

Minorities (Race and Gender)

Women and racial minorities are slowly but steadily entering police ranks across North America. Statistics Canada (2014) reports, in the last few years, the number of female officers grew at a faster pace than males – now representing 20 percent of all sworn officers (see *Figure 3*). While racial minorities accounted for just 4% of police officers in 2001, the most recent national survey shows this number has increased to 14%: 5% Aboriginal persons and 9% other racial minority group (Statistics Canada, 2004). In the American context, women comprise just 12% of sworn law enforcement, while 1 in 4 officers identify as a racial or ethnic minority (Bureau of Justice Statistics 2012). Generally, however, most female and minority officers remain in subordinate positions.

At Blueville Police Service, similar to Sergeant Joanne in the above excerpt, many officers distinguish themselves as believers in the "old fashioned" way of recruiting the right people for a career in law enforcement. A common statement is that BPS should simply focus on hiring "the best candidate" rather than hiring minorities for the sole purpose of achieving a representative police service. According to Joanne, this has led to many women entering policing that are simply too "flaky" and less committed to the job than their female predecessors. Both she and the following Constable, Aiden, establish clear boundaries between those hired for the sake of diversity and those who are "meant to do the job":

Figure 3: **Female officers as a percentage total of police officers, by rank, Canada (1986-2014)**
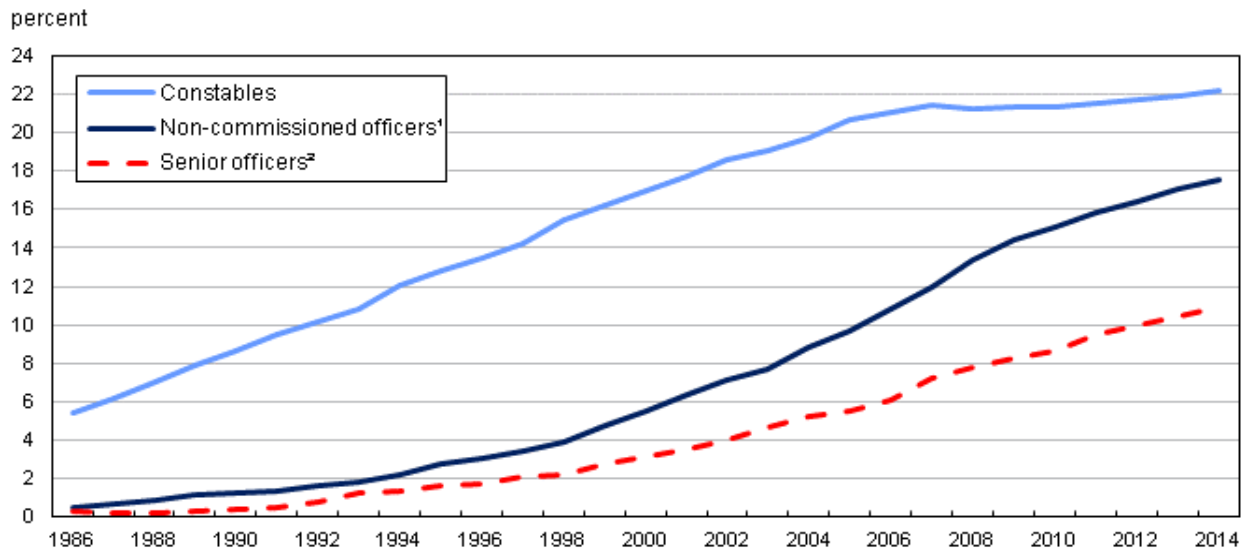
[1] Includes staff-sergeants, sergeants, detective-sergeants, corporals and all equivalent ranks.

[2] Includes chiefs, deputy chiefs, superintendents, inspectors, lieutenants and all equivalent ranks.

Source: Statistics Canada (2014), Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Police Administration Survey.

(OS) Constable Aiden: Fortunately, I'm from the old-school where you have the best for the job. Purple, green, female, male – whatever. Over time we've seen that it's backfired on them because they haven't hired the best person for the job. They hired based on race. "Okay, we need an Indian officer, a Chinese officer," whatever, and they aren't the best officer on the job and that gets exposed when they come here because your true colours come out... either you're meant to do this job or not... I think years ago they hired more based on: you play team sports and you get it. That always really transferred well into the police service. Now they're hiring people for the wrong reasons and it doesn't transfer well over here… and that kind of hurts everybody. It puts my life in danger, other people's lives in danger, and it causes low morale.

Both Aiden and Joanne go so far as to make claims about an inability to rely on people who, in their view, did not become police officers on their own merit. Such morally driven ideas strongly

endorse informally institutionalized myths about "the team" as paramount, thereby justifying practices which continue to favor the white male officer.

In discussing the demographics of their police department, other officers are more critical of the reigning myths surrounding diversity recruitment, arguing that the service is not only failing in this regard – let alone hiring minorities for the sake of it – but is blatantly uninterested.

(NG) Constable Mark: Our senior guys, huge white men over 5'10", so when they look around the table they see their like image, orientation and history. When they go out to recruit, that tall white male is not representative of the person you're talking to in the audience. The person in the audience, if they're a visible minority or a woman, looks up and goes, "I'm not 5'10". I'm not a white male. This guy tells me he wants me. Who is around here that looks like me that's in any position at all? None. Well, I guess it's pretty clear that they don't want me and it's window dressing," right? So that's what this place's problem is. They are not trying hard enough, and that's the bottom line. If they wanted them, they'd get them.

Mark draws a boundary between those reflected in the members of their working group or potential employer, and those who are not. His comments highlight the ceremonial quality of formally institutionalized myths, where modern and transparent police organizations are expected to engage in operational strategies such as "open houses" to recruit minorities. Nonetheless, exclusionary boundary-work that has led to an entirely white male administration acts not only as the very impediment to even the most genuine efforts to diversify, but also as the impetus for old-school ideas to continue thriving despite changing times.

Education

Historically, college and university graduates were once actively avoided by police departments in favor of recruits with military backgrounds. Over time, however, in response to more

sophisticated crime, terrorist threats, cross-border policing, technological advances and a general societal trend toward credential inflation, education became increasingly important to the success of police departments. The police service then came to be perceived in many respects as a well-resourced, well-equipped, well-trained, well-paid and sophisticated 'semi-profession' that attracts many educated individuals, whose academic backgrounds are welcome (Punch 2007).

Royal Canadian Mounted Police – Canada's federal police service – reports that 60% of recruits in the 2013-2014 fiscal year hold post-secondary credentials, ranging from certificates to graduate degrees (Forberg 2014). Similarly, 83% of recruits entering a police service in Ontario over the last two decades possess a college diploma or university degree (OPC 2013). In the United States, a national survey revealed that approximately 85% of officers attended college and 28% obtained a four-year degree (up from 9% in 1974) (Weisburd et al. 2001). In both Canada and the U.S., education credentials of police personnel continue to climb despite little change to actual formal minimum requirements for application to a police department.[33] This suggests that meeting basic requirements is no longer sufficient for becoming a sworn member.

At BPS, an influx of university and college educated individuals in policing is also prompting officers to draw boundaries among the rank-and-file. Findings illustrate that educational credentials are a significant marker of distinction, but in different ways for different officers. Old-school or new age positions on education are not themselves determined by one's own educational attainment – in fact, the majority of sworn personnel hold a college diploma (26%) or university degree (46%). Thus, some well educated officers indeed possess old-school

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[33] Only 9% of American agencies require a 2-year degree, whereas 1% require a 4-year degree (Hickman and Reaves 2006). Canadian police departments only require successful completion of high school (OPC 2013).

views. Instead, classifications are influenced by informally held institutional myths about the importance of maintaining paramilitary roots and the dangers of an "entitled" generation:

(OS) Administrator Larry: It was very paramilitary when I came on… mouth shut, no opinion, eyes and ears open. Fast forward to today and they're more educated than senior guys. They confuse education with street smarts. The passion is still there, but there's that Y factor, they're not afraid to challenge people.

(OS) Sergeant Tom: The attitudes are a little cockiness. "I'm a university graduate… I know this; I know that." Well, maybe it's unorthodox, but some guys have been doing it this way for 30 years and it works. Before if you didn't listen to your training officer, you're blackballed… and it seemed to work a lot better back then, I think, from now… there's a lot more people who are less open to suggestions from someone who may not have a university degree.

(OS) Sergeant Brian: They're more highly educated, the recruits that are coming on now. I think they're less inclined to settle for the status quo... There was always a culture around here – and there still is... you know, the old line - "Keep your ears and eyes open, mouth shut," and "Don't speak unless you're spoken to". It's that command structure and the seniority. I think it's still a good thing, but the recruits now are just much more apt to question the status quo; and along with that there's a little bit more of a sense of entitlement… It's more of a 'me' culture, whereas before there was more of a sense of a team and, you know, for the greater good…

Larry, Tom and Brian – all holding supervisory roles – are engaging cultural ideas about what it means to have respect for both the formal and informal organizational hierarchy. Their comments point to an apparent incompatibility of entertaining overly inquisitive recruits and preserving the "greater good" of the "team". Those who question their superiors are characterized as "cocky" and "entitled", and are further perceived as violating certain

understandings of social reality (i.e. mouth shut, ears open, etc.) – or informally institutionalized myths about paramilitarism – which, according to old-school notions, are justified as the most effective methods for accomplishing their mandate.

In contrast, officers who espouse new generation ideas about education view an acquisition of greater knowledge as the key to protecting their own sense of identity outside of policing and to retaining a critical eye as they navigate their work environment. Though many referred to the significance of education to "avoid becoming hard headed", or to allow a young person to "figure out who they are before someone [a training supervisor] tries to mould them", Constable Chris connected these ideas to police culture specifically:

(NG) Constable Chris: I take classes at the university. I really enjoy that. I find it keeps me... it gives me kind of a perspective on the police culture... because it's a very closed culture.

Interviewer: What do you mean – a perspective on police culture?

Chris: When you become a police officer, because of shift work and court, you're at work a lot... It's common knowledge that you end up only being friends with police officers just by default, and we were told when we were hired, "Try not to let that happen." So [my wife and I] kept in touch with different friends, but you still see mostly people from work, and there's a certain culture and respect that that culture has, and it's a very strong, longstanding perspective on the way things should work. It's not necessarily that it's wrong, but I think to get caught in any one ideology is not a good thing. Plus, I don't want my job to define my thoughts and my life and who I am, so I try to keep my job at arm's length. At least when somebody says something, you can kind of take it apart and not just take them at their word like other people do; but if you have nothing else to reference, then you only know what you're told.

Chris, and others like him, therefore sees his educational pursuits not as a liability but as an asset for what will be an ongoing effort to manage the multiple roles he assumes as a partner and police officer. He further demarcates himself from those who "only know what they're told" and does not subscribe to institutional myths about the import of paramilitary-like deference. Quite contrary to sweeping claims about police assimilation (see Chan 2003; Loftus 2010), for Chris, education is the tool that shields him from certain longstanding "ideologies" and allows him to negotiate an "arm's length" distance from his work. However, this very tendency on behalf of certain new generation officers to build symbolic walls serves to validate the old-school charge that these individuals are simply not team players.

Police Policies & Practices

Prioritization of the need to professionalize law enforcement, efforts to control the behavior of patrol officers and increasing demand for transparency have all coalesced over time to form a matrix of formal accountability mechanisms in policing. These include open complaints processes, external civilian oversight bodies, written procedures for exercising force, and legislation which governs police recruitment, training, promotion and mandate (Walker and Archbold 2014).

Police Conduct & Accountability

In the context of American policing, recent unrest incited by high profile cases of police brutality – particularly involving racial minorities – has led to the *President's Task Force on 21ˢᵗ Century Policing* and the implementation of 40 new measures in 24 states, including limits on military equipment for use by law enforcement, racial bias awareness training and independent investigations (Associated Press 2015). Similarly, in the Canadian province of Ontario, the role

of the Special Investigations Unit (SIU) and of the Office of the Independent Police Review Director (OIPRD) has become more prominent as the number of cases pursued has dramatically increased (see SIU *Stats Report* and OIPRD 2012).[34] The Police Services Act (*PSA* Ontario Regulation 267/10) further reinforces their role by legislating the compliance police departments will maintain with these bodies.

In recent years, informal policing oversight has also intensified. The citizenry itself is now routinely engaged in surveillance through the use of video recording technologies, particularly on cell phones. Images of police use-of-force are now rapidly and easily accessed by a mass audience through social media networking sites and video-sharing platforms such as YouTube (Goldsmith 2010). Outgoing director of the SIU, Ian Scott, even made the following statement in national media: "There's been a game changer in my five years, and that is social media. More and more of our cases are involving video imagery taken by members of the public" (Globe and Mail 2013). The recent death of Walter Scott, an unarmed man shot in the back by a police officer in North Charleston, is a prime example of how this citizen-lead oversight unfurls when graphic police violence is captured on video. These images are also often used by police departments, independent reviewers and district attorneys in their investigations.

Moreover, though police have long used dash cameras to capture police-citizen encounters (primarily vehicle stops), recent tactics include body cameras. This strategy has gained even more attention following the non-indictments of police officers in the deaths of Eric Garner and Michael Brown in the United States. President Obama even called for $75 million in federal spending to increase the use of body-worn cameras for police. In Canada, investigation

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[34] *SIU* is a civilian law enforcement agency (independent of the police) which conducts investigations of incidents involving police that resulted in death, serious injury, or allegations of sexual assault. The OIPRD, by contrast, oversees the investigation of public complaints against Ontario's police.

into officer conduct during the 2010 G20 Summit and the 2013 shooting of Sammy Yatim have also prompted the Toronto Police Service to test lapel cameras in summer of 2015.

As recruits enter a career in policing, they are now met with these unprecedented levels of both formal and informal scrutiny from internal and external entities. The rank-and-file are acutely aware of this new occupational reality and that workplace practices must be adapted to meet the new requirements of a more demanding populace (Loader and Mulcahy 2003; Loftus 2010). However, old-school sentiments about the best way to police remain, often condoning policing methods that will "just get things done". At BPS, these officers, many of them highly ranked, employ various cultural resources to help them justify police conduct, one of which includes informally institutionalized myths about giving Blueville residents what they want and would expect from their police service. The administrator in the following quote casts the people of his town in a particular light in order to distinguish a particularly tough policing style:

(OS) Administrator Larry: We're a lunch bucket town.   People in this city are hardworking. They're factory workers... and it's a tough town. [This city], I think for the most part expects their policemen, or police officers to be tough too. I think the culture of the city, the silent majority would say, "Yeah, somebody needs to be cracked in the side of the head." So we do what we have to for our town. They would have no opposition to it... that type of mentality – blue collar, lunch bucket mentality.

Perspectives that parallel a tough blue collar town with tough police are, however, in clear contradiction with dominant narratives in the larger field of policing and policing constituents. Training initiatives geared directly toward reducing use of force and the expansion of various outlets for citizen complaints about police conduct comprise a small fraction of the broader momentum toward more accountable policing.

Policies relating to accountability have become firmly institutionalized in contemporary policing and require police actors (review boards, administrators, etc.) to organize along prescribed lines. Though oversight procedures weigh heavily on the formal organizational structure of the police department, new generation and old-school officers view their incorporation into the informal organization quite differently. For the former, these operate as myths in a purely ceremonial and superficial fashion, allowing leaders to flaunt a commitment to transparency and legitimacy while simultaneously protecting the old-school status quo:

(NG) Constable Hayley: What bothers me... we are still being governed by those old-minded people that came from the tactical team that was, like, "We fight; we protect our own" and as a result of that mentality, the public started losing trust in us, and that has hurt us. I don't think there's anything good in that, but there's still this argument from within that "well, I don't care; we still have to protect our own, and we have to sweep things under the rug because, you know, if the public hears about this"...You know what? The public needs to hear that the upper administration is holding people accountable... rather than sweeping it under the rug...

(NG) Constable Shawn: No system is beyond change... there's a resistance to change. Management says they want to change. They don't... because things work. They tell the public they're changing, but they still rely on the same practices they were internally – as opposed to externally. This police service has undergone a huge change outside. There's little changed in here at all, nor will there be, but policy... and public hangings... It's "We'll air our dirty laundry for you, and we're going to promise you we're going to be better, but we're still going to continue business the way we've always continued business and try to insert here or there a couple of examples to say, "See, we're holding you accountable."

Hayley and Shawn erect a boundary between themselves and those with old minded ways of doing things in an era where the public is demanding more from their police. Views like

Administrator Larry's are no longer considered relevant, even in Blueville. Similarly, where informally institutionalized myths about covering for one's peers may be unquestioningly adopted by some for their intrinsic quality of "rightness", those possessing new age ideas about police conduct do not recognize the legitimacy of these practices and simply perceive them as corrupt or disruptive to their work lives. As Shawn highlights, "policy change" related to transparency in his police organization is merely a ploy to intensify surveillance in the lower ranks and make examples out of select cases. This "loose coupling" of the formal and informal structure of the organization thus permits business as usual for those running the department.

Officers who self-identify as old-school but are not in positions of power in the organization are also critical about oversight campaigns, but differently than their new generation counterparts. Constable Aaron, for instance, does *not* distinguish between myth-building in the formal structure and informally held understandings of social reality. The following quote reveals a clear frustration with accountability that has "gone too far" and the deleterious impact it has had on the "cohesiveness" of his fellow officers:

(OS) Constable Aaron: Accountability has swung so far in the other direction now... there was more cohesiveness amongst police officers 14 years ago. You're getting a lot of this "I don't feel comfortable with that" bullshit now and that doesn't fly well with the police service. I never heard another police officer say, "I don't really feel comfortable with this," and I'm not talking about drinking in a car somewhere on shift... But now I hear it more times than I would like, and it's troubling in a way because you don't have that sense of family so much. There's a core group of guys around here that I would trust with my kids – absolutely, but there used to be more people that belonged to that group... So guys like me got the old-school way, and now they're saying, "No, that doesn't exist anymore," so everything you've learned... stop learning that. And it's made it pretty difficult for a lot of guys. You know, the guys are like... just back off, and don't engage anybody. Forget it. Come in and get my paycheque and call it a day.

Aaron demarcates his own "core group of guys" from those who are now more openly expressing an unwillingness to engage in certain behaviours. He attributes what he deems an excessive amount of prudence to heightened police oversight and perceives it as "troubling" because this violates the informal institutional myths of a police service. In other words, regardless of whether accountability exercises are merely "window dressing" (as some believe), many old-school officers perceive the consequences as real, and this "doesn't fly well" in this particular environment because it breaks up the "sense of family".

Promotion Practices

Yet another organizational practice which prompts police officers to distinguish amongst themselves is the promotional process. Building seniority, preparing for examinations, acquiring new certifications and updating one's skills inventory comprise the typical path toward qualifying for promotion. Police departments across North America claiming to have adopted community policing principles have also purported to place less emphasis on "crime-control" performance indicators (e.g. arrest and clearance rates) and focus more attention on an officer's community-mindedness and ability for improving citizen satisfaction (Sklansky 2011).

Performance evaluation and promotion serve as tangible evidence on which individuals base old-school and new generation perspectives. In Blueville Police Service, it is a widely held belief that the quickest route to getting promoted was *not* through demonstrating one's community mindset but rather to serve a stint in the department's Emergency Services Unit – commonly referred to as TACT Team. Not surprisingly, a clear majority of the upper administration worked in this unit. This sentiment is optimistically conveyed by Administrator Jacob, a BPS member of 33 years:

(OS) Administrator Jacob: I've always taken great pride in my efforts to bring improvements to the tactical unit, I did well there... The guys there work hard and receive top of the line training.

Along with this is an overwhelming sense of nepotism throughout the organization. Those in positions of power are seen as actively boosting those officers who most clearly espouse the reigning institutional myths, which, for old-school officers, are often conveniently packaged as "teamwork", "hard work", "athleticism" and most controversially, "camaraderie". In contrast, new generation views dismiss these as blatant favoritism for those who play sports (hockey in particular), are consumed with physical fitness and weight lifting ("getting jacked"), socialize with co-workers after a shift, or are simply related to someone on the job. This is commonly referred to as "the old boy's club". A newly hired constable even mentioned that he recently took up hockey because it "seems to be pretty important around here". The following excerpts demonstrate these conflicting positions: Sergeant Moe conveys old-school cultural scripts which bolster certain informally institutionalized myths, while Constable Jack adamantly refutes them:

(OS) Sergeant Moe: I personally believe people that are related to somebody on the job jump through more hoops than anybody else because there's a perception about nepotism. I know some of the people who were hired here: they're sharp; they're fit; they're at the top because that's expected of them... Young [Chief's son] has big shoes to fill because his dad is the Chief. Well, he toed the line. He works hard. Boom – he's a fitness nut – carries himself well. [Administrator's son], he does victim service volunteering. He's fit. So will that young man get hired here? Yes, he will eventually, but he's got to work extra hard. The bar should be raised for some to remove people sitting around the corner in a bar saying, "Can you believe that? They went and hired the Chief's kid." Yeah, because he's sharp and he's a good grab for us! So I think we're getting it. We are there.

(NG) Constable Jack: *I'm sure people told you... they'll eat their own in here. People on the outside would take a bullet for you, but in here they would stab you in the back. You know, people getting jobs... like, you can see when they walk in the door from the first day, that guy is going somewhere. He's done nothing to prove himself or herself, right, but the way that they're treated you just know that this guy is the next superstar... or they play hockey really well or... their old man is on the job...whatever. It's part of the game. It's ridiculous. But it's what it is, and you either have to decide you're going to play that game or be satisfied with where you dig a niche for yourself... It's all about the guy above you pulling the next guy up, and they've created a little corner for themselves....the boy's club… it just goes all the way up through the ranks. There's no room on TACT team for me so I'm not going anywhere. There's a reason why every single person who has ever passed through that unit is promoted.*

Formal institutional myths also play a role in the promotional practices of the police department. At BPS, officers must build up their skills inventory by assuming certain tasks and are further evaluated by their superiors. These provide an official measure of performance and thus serve a basis for senior officers to justify their decisions about which individuals to promote. However, many officers communicated that this process was not nearly as transparent as it seems: the training and jobs that are most heavily weighted are not made available to all, a select few are prepped for promotional exams, and superior evaluations most commonly favor those with whom the sergeant or staff sergeant shares camaraderie. Constable Sam describes these formally established promotion policies as purely ceremonial – they are loosely coupled with actual practices, confer legitimacy onto the organization, allow old-school cultural ideas to flourish, and permit those in power to reproduce the status quo:

(NG) Constable Sam: It's frustrating to see good, hardworking individuals passed up because of lack of affiliation with a particular individual who was put in a spot of responsibility and

didn't deserve to be in it in the first place. It's perpetuated. It's this haphazard approach all under a veil of – "well, we're being transparent and we're utilizing your skills inventory and we're placing you appropriately". I find it hard that management above wants to throw this garbage down our throats when... you know, we're no longer who they were. We're university-educated people. We're very aware of what's going on. You don't realize that holding our feet to the fire has created very analytical, very open, clear-minded individuals... and we're seeing through your garbage. We're seeing that this is not right! It's the internal strife that's most difficult in policing. It's the attack from inside that's so offensive because we're prepared outside all the time. When we come in these walls we're supposed to feel comfortable. The biggest danger is your own people.

Officers like Jack and Sam draw on new generation cultural scripts to effectively demarcate themselves from those who engage in what they perceive as "ridiculous", unfair, "garbage", and out-dated promotion practices. Though they see themselves as fully capable of identifying the old boy's club "corner", or seeing through the organization's "veil", they opt-out of "playing the game" entirely. Jack insists one must simply find their niche, while Sam succumbs to frustration and appears defeated. While this tactic protects the new generation officer's sense of integrity, the boundary they set in doing so allow the bearers of old school cultural notions and the practices these promote to go on unchallenged.

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION:
Out with the Old, in with the New (?)

Our organization is just going to continue... as the theory of evolution goes... the senior administration that's there now is going to be moving on, and I can only see that being better because it's a fresh start almost. It's a younger part of the police service that has grown up in this current new age policing. You know what I mean? So it's going to be managed that way

now: not old school way managing new school police officers. It's going to be new school police officers managing new school police officers, so I think it's just going to be very well organized and more accountable, I would hope... I hope. (Constable Hayley)

Using theoretical tools rooted in the sociology of culture and organizations to better account for a shifting institutional environment, this article provides an account of cultural inertia in policing. Old-school officers, many of them in highly ranked positions, construct symbolic boundaries and use institutional myths – both formal and informal – to preserve the status quo. Old cultural scripts reveal the continued power of informal myths about the importance of team work and conformity, the dangers of entitlement, the "tough town" mentality, and the importance of sport and camaraderie. The hierarchical structure of a police organization secures the supremacy of these cultural ideas because individuals who wield them most currently occupy the highest levels of authority. Furthermore, as new generation officers seek advancement in their workplace, they must cross the generational boundary and draw on old-school scripts – whether they identify with them or not – in order to align themselves more closely with the reigning institutional myths. Those who play the game rather than simply "dig a niche for themselves" are more likely to be rewarded (*see Figure 4*). These findings parallel organization studies such as Vaughan's (1996), which underscore how dominant players with particular identities and interests wield their power in ways that ultimately persuade subordinates to play by their rules, even if they do not agree with classic strategies for winning the game: police constables may not want to play sports and NASA engineers may not want to wear a manager's hat, but they do so to get ahead.

Figure 4. The Complete Picture:

Institutional Myth Building + Intergenerational Difference → Cultural Inertia in BPS

- BPS -
Institutional Constituents

Old-School

Formally Institutionalized Myths
- NEW CULTURAL SCRIPTS
- maintain legitimacy
- adopted ceremonially
- e.g.: diversity recruitment, transparency, promotion policies

Police Board
SIU, OIPRD
City Council
Legislation
Media

Informally Institutionalized Myths
- OLD-SCHOOL CULTURAL SCRIPTS
- maintain the status quo
- adopted routinely
- e.g.: team work, paramilitarism, tough town=tough police, athleticism, camaraderie

GENERATIONAL BOUNDARY

New Generation

Old-School Cultural Scripts Used by NG Officers:
- <u>Across</u> generational boundary
- For upward movement in the hierarchy

New Cultural Scripts Used by NG Officers:
- <u>Within</u> generational boundary
- To preserve their own sense of moral integrity as modern-day police
- To call "bull-shit" on the status quo
- To make sense of a changing occupational environment

New generation officers are entering a field marked by increasing professionalism and oversight. As such, these diverse, often young, more educated officers may not attach great importance to reigning old-school myths because these do not suit the institutional moment in which they are entering a career in policing. Instead, these officers share their criticisms about "old minded people" or officers who "only know what they're told", and speak openly in interviews and patrol cars about the disruptive influence of nepotism and corrupt practices in the organization. These officers are also quick to dismiss their administration's formal attempts to appease external constituents as purely ceremonial – they underscore the legitimacy imperative associated with diversity recruitment, with demonstrations of transparency and oversight, and with performance indicators for promotion. However, although new generation officers wield cultural scripts that allow them to preserve their own sense of moral integrity as modern police, the boundaries they erect tend to root them more firmly to their inferior status in the hierarchy.

Though the above analysis provides an explanation for cultural inertia in policing, the abundance of frustration in narratives provided by both parties points to a slow but real impact of demographic and policy shift in policing. The mere fact that new generation officers draw on scripts which depart from old-school ideas is viewed by superiors as threatening to the status quo. For instance, one of the most powerfully incarnate myths among officers wielding old-school cultural scripts is that solidarity – the "team", "family", "cohesiveness" – is paramount. As the data show, this plays out in multiple ways, but is often deployed by the old-school generation in a defensive manner which showcases the myth's vulnerability, *not* its durability, in the current era of policing. Expressions about the significance of team work are submerged in frustration over changes (and diversity of views) within the organization that threaten solidarity. Diversity recruitment leads to 'unreliable' officers, higher education leads to questioning authority, and heightened accountability makes people overly cautious; all of which are believed

to breakdown team trust among the rank-and-file. If senior officers see less and less of themselves reproduced in the lower tiers of the hierarchy, the qualities which get promoted may also eventually adjust. As a young female officer stated: "We just have to wait for the dinosaurs to die out". This study therefore offers evidence in favor of cultural change through two means: generational turnover or a change in organizational structure which disrupts the distribution of power and lock-step path upward in police departments.

These findings lend support to Kellogg's (2009) research, which attributes institutional change to cross-position collectives that challenge status quo defenders. If highly ranked officers crossed the generational boundary while genuinely supporting new cultural scripts *within* the organization, this may signal to younger officers that old-school ways are not the only route to advancement. This study also suggests these "glacial" changes, as referred to by Walker (1985), cannot be accelerated through policy initiatives alone – these appear to serve primarily as formal institutional myths which are only loosely coupled with routine practices.

Much has changed in the policing landscape, and these changes have broadened the repertoire of cultural scripts that are engaged by police. In order to successfully "play the game", younger officers must strategically deploy both old and new cultural resources. Therefore, the status quo persists not simply because police socialization is powerfully indoctrinating, not because "cops are cops", and also not only because diversity has not sufficiently filtered throughout the ranks (although this is part of the answer). Indeed, the data reveal that the new generation of police officers can be critical of the status quo and even establish their own methods of working within it. Cultural inertia is instead rooted in the hierarchical organizational structure of police departments: the old-school has power and the new-generation seeks success.

CHAPTER 4

"The Right Way, the Wrong Way, and the Blueville Way": How Cultural Match Matters for Standardization in the Police Organization

Inspector Jacob: *Well, what's unique to here, we have a labour mentality in Blueville in general, right? ... We have a very... you know, people call us a lunch bucket town. We are more apt to protect our gains and our rights as far as our lifestyles than other communities, so Blueville is unique in the sense that we have this blue-collar... we don't have head offices here. We are a worker town, and as workers we are more apt to protect our lifestyles... Blueville is different because of where we are. We are very surprisingly compassionate in the community as far as our causes. We're very compassionate overall for the underdog because to a large extent we are an underdog! Right? So we've been there... but Blueville is unique for so many reasons.*

INTRODUCTION

The world is full of "standards". Standards provide people with an instruction manual on how to navigate their lives: at home, at work, at school, driving in the car, traveling to another country, and even when choosing their outfit for the day in order to "fit a dress code". The ubiquity of standards is further compounded by ever more trends toward "standardization" for governance and regulatory purposes; to establish a commonality of experiences and to facilitate predictability as we traverse one institutional sphere to the next. However, merely defining and disseminating standards do not guarantee their suitability, or "fit", for all people in all settings over which they are meant to govern, leaving some to negotiate a "mismatch". Indeed, to modify a standard for a select group or locale nullifies the very essence of it.

This article examines how actors within a public organization that is inundated with standards – a police department – make use of the social conditions of their local setting in ways that ultimately serve to thwart institutional efforts toward standardization. Using a case study which draws on the historical and socio-political features of a city in economic decline – a rust belt city – this analysis shows how these local conditions inform the cultural resources police officers put to use. It is argued that, like Inspector Jacob above, individuals connect the features of their community with repertoires of uniqueness – what they call "the Blueville Way" – to perform, justify and sustain their non-conformity with political efforts implemented to standardize the provision of policing services. Moreover, standards are here construed as cultural tools in order to theoretically account for the significance of "cultural match". *Cultural match* refers to the congruence between a society's formal institutions of social control and dominant cultural norms (Cornell and Kalt 2000; Swidler 2013). Findings lend support to the idea that practices – in this case, within the workplace – are driven by the social context in which the organization is embedded, thereby impeding full compliance with industry standards that are seen as locally incompatible.

SOCIOLOGY of STANDARDIZATION and the CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

Standards and standardization are a powerful and widespread means of regulating and organizing modern life. Though standardization presumes the existence of standards, Raymond Williams (1985) notes a critical tension between these two related terms: while "standards" are typically deemed a form of aspiration, or something to live up to, "standardization" is often used in a derogatory manner as an erasure of individuality, or the architect of a dull sameness. The latter is

effectively captured by Ritzer's (2000) Weber-inspired thesis on the McDonaldization-of-society. Despite the difference in their popular uses, both terms infer a *rationalization* in service of formalized uniformity and efficiency across time and space (Bowker and Star 1999).

Standards and standardization are particularly salient in the workplace. They operate at all levels of the labor force, from the "standard operating procedures" (SOP's) in low-skill factory line work, to specialized education and training credentials required of the professions. Standards are imperative to the workplace because they serve as a productive substitute for other forms of authoritative rule. When standards coordinate behaviour successfully, direct orders (or coercion) are not necessary and the required level of supervision can be minimized: at this point, standards become voluntary (Higgins & Tamm Hallström 2007; Lampland and Star 2009). Once promulgated, standards can also reduce the need for experts – standardization can be a method of embedding authority into rules, systems and norms rather than the hands of certified individuals (Brunsson and Jacobsson 2000). According to Timmermans and Berg (2003), standards can be grouped into four categories: *design* standards set explicit structural specifications of tools, products, and social or technical systems; *terminological* standards secure the stability of meaning across various sites; *performance* standards specify outcomes, often in quantifiable terms of minimums and/or maximums; and *procedural* standards delineate 'how' performance should proceed, usually specified as steps taken as successive conditions are met. Furthermore, standards are often reinforced by external bodies, including manufacturer's associations, professional organizations, oversight agencies, or the state.

Standards can be international, national or field-specific. In law and the criminal justice system, standards are exercised in many areas, such as courts, corrections and policing. For instance, all across Western societies, evidentiary standards for laying criminal charges and

securing convictions in court (i.e. the standard of proof) are becoming increasingly rigorous due to rising expectations around the presence of DNA evidence and the capabilities of forensic science generally, as well as the growing reliance on surveillance technologies (i.e. for audio or video footage at crime scenes).[35] Under the paradigm of "the new penology" (Feeley and Simon 1992), the use of standardized risk assessment tools has also become common practice for managing offenders. These include instruments to foster reintegration (e.g. Custody Rating Scale [CRS]; security classification tool used by Correctional Service of Canada) or to rehabilitate troubled youth (e.g. Risk-Needs-Responsivity [RNR] Model; see Brogen et al. 2015), as well as standardized behavioral modification techniques both within and outside correctional facilities (Andrews, et al. 1990; Mackenzie 2000).

In policing, standards are present in the design features of police equipment and uniforms, as well as in the terminology of officer rank titles (e.g. constable, detective, sergeant, etc.), units (e.g. vice, major crimes, paramilitary police unit [SWAT], etc.) and enforcement strategies (e.g. community-based policing, problem-oriented policing, hot-spot policing, etc.). However, the ubiquity of standards in policing figures most prominently as performance and procedure. For example, it is not uncommon to hear of police "quotas" for arrests and summonses in the name of officer "productivity goals". Although quota-based performance measures are illegal in some locales (e.g. New York), these operate as informally held standards and exert their influence in police morning lineups and Compstat[36] meetings across North America. Performance standards are also upheld for various re-qualifications, such as carrying

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[35] There has even been a term attached to this trend called the "CSI Effect" (see Tyler 2006).

[36] Compstat is a data-driven management model of policing that facilitates timely analysis of crime and disorder data, and which is used to identify and promptly target crime patterns and problems through the most efficient allocation of resources available.

firearms or first aid. Moreover, procedural standards are clearly manifest in requirements relating to due process afforded to all citizens; as an apparatus of the state, police officers must follow the exact course of the law. Finally, in Canada and the United States, police use-of-force is also standardized through the implementation of a "national use of force model" (also known as the "Use of Force Continuum") which outlines a step-by-step iterative process whereby the officer is expected to assess, plan and act based on his or her perception of the situation at hand.

Recent high-profile events involving law enforcement (i.e. Sammy Yatim and Andrew Loku in Toronto; Michael Brown in Ferguson; Eric Garner in New York; Walter Scott in South Carolina; and Freddie Gray in Baltimore) suggest, however, that certain performance and procedural standards for the use of force are either insufficient or blatantly ignored by those for whom they exist. In the Canadian context, efforts are currently underway to rewrite legislation that governs policing in the province of Ontario in order to bring policing standards more in line with the needs of today's public, with particular emphasis on how to better manage people in crisis and those suffering from mental health problems. Following the deaths of so many unarmed black men, President Obama launched the Task Force on 21st Century Policing in order to promote the adoption of more specific policies and procedures that will reduce incidents of police violence across the country.

Just weeks after the Task Force published its recommendations in May, 2015, Amnesty International also released a report which finds that in all 50 states, written statutes were too broad to fit international standards, such as the enshrinement of the right to life and the United Nations basic principles limiting lethal force to "unavoidable" instances "in order to protect life" after "less extreme means" have failed. The report also uncovers that nine states have *no* laws to

deal with police force at all, prompting the following statement from Amnesty USA's executive director, Steven Hawkins:

> Those states can of course argue that they follow common law or Supreme Court standards, but is that good enough? Certainly we would expect that international human rights standards are what should govern... and our fear is that, unless these are clearly quantified, a citizen in any state can't look at what the law is. That's critically important to ensuring accountability. (quoted in The Guardian, 2015)

The currently unsettled landscape of policing sheds rigorous light on standards with respect to their deficient adoption, enforcement, or even absence in police departments – a light which bolsters the need for deeper understanding of how standards are integrated into the everyday meaning systems operating in police organizations of cities across North America.

Though standards and standardization pervade criminal justice and legal systems – in design, terminology, performance and procedure – the study of standardization itself as the object of inquiry in criminal justice settings and practices is limited. Mastrofski and Ritti (2000; see also Crank 1994) examined the widespread transmission of community policing standards as the 'right way' to do police business due to its emphasis on mutual partnerships. Hulsse and Kerwer (2007) studied the development of global standards for anti-money laundering regulation. More recent work on prisons (Rubin 2015) draws on neo-institutionalism (DiMaggio and Powell 1983) to trace the diffusion of specific prison designs across the United States. The promulgation of standardized prison models and their confinement practices are attributed to the isomorphic nature of pressures throughout the prison industry. In legal fields, Jenson and Levi (2013) note the growing emphasis on standardizing the human rights regime, with a proliferation of human rights terminology, measures, NGOs, and compliance reporting strategies. These

works demonstrate the rich potential of a deeper sociological engagement with standards and standardization in legal and criminal justice sectors.

Standards-as-Culture & "Cultural Match"

A sociological analysis of standardization recognizes that standards are plugged into particular physical and cultural infrastructures that allow them to function (Timmermans and Epstein 2010). The adoption and adherence to standards is a fundamentally social act that requires others to "buy-in". In other words, standards are repositories of collective meaning actors use to organize their lives – they are culture. Furthermore, whatever their form, standards are entrenched – like culture, they necessarily carry with them traces of the local setting (Timmermans and Berg 1997). Consequently, *the implementation of standards is influenced by the receiving site*. This compatibility requirement invites the following questions: What if people do not "buy in" to standards or standardization? If standards are inherently "voluntary", what factors contribute to noncompliance?

A small number of studies have explicitly examined non-conformity with standards or resistance to the trend of standardization itself. Some research has focused on resisting "the standard human", or measures which seek to reduce people and their bodies to "ideal types" for purposes of efficiency or even profit (e.g. Busch 2000; Epstein 2007; Igo 2007). An emerging literature within organization studies has examined standard non-compliance in various settings, including engineering (Sandholtz 2012), food co-ops (Haedicke 2012), and HIV clinics (Heimer 2013). These works in particular adopt an approach to organization research which views institutions as "inhabited" (Hallet and Ventresca 2006) in order to account for both micro-level interactions as well as formal organizational structures. Indeed, the systems of meaning that

operate within organizations are propelled by the people who engage them. And although these studies are key to understanding blocked standardization efforts in certain sectors, the extent to which they focus on the role of the milieu within which they are embedded and its impact on the compatibility of standards is mixed, thereby minimizing the full "cultural" significance of standards. For this reason, the current analysis aims to bring the subject of standards more explicitly into the culture conversation. As Babon (2006) demonstrates, "place" is central to understanding how cultural forms – in this case, standards – are evaluated, received and put to use. What is the role of place, or "local setting", in contributing to non-compliance with standardization measures?

These questions and the standards-as-culture lens are especially relevant for a public institution like policing for two main reasons. First, for decades, police organizations have been characterized as holding onto a very distinct, isolated and powerful "police culture" (e.g. Bittner 1970; Chan 1997; Loftus 2009; Reiner 1985) that is exceptionally similar across time and space, and is resistant to externally-rooted directives. Secondly, as recent events illustrate, the stakes can be high in policing: unclear standards, the lack thereof, or non-compliance can determine the course of life-or-death situations. Sociological analyses of standards and standardization in law enforcement must therefore account for "*cultural match*": the notion that culture serves as "the glue that holds a society's formal and informal institutions of social control and organization together", and that a society's formal institutions are most effective when closely matched with those institutions "that emanate from cultural norms" (Cornell and Kalt 2000, p. 453).

The trope of "cultural matching" has typically been used by sociologists examining network formation (Dimaggio 1993) as well as hiring practices (Rivera 2012) as it relates to the "fit" or "shared culture" of an individual for recruitment into a group or workplace. Though this

conceptualization is relevant to questions surrounding selective officer recruitment into the rank-and-file of a particular police service, the current analysis looks to literature which uses practice theory to focus more distinctively on the "match" and inclusion/exclusion of various "formal practices" into a specific local context. For instance, Cornell and Kalt (2000) examined economic development in Indian country, and found that there is no single solution to fit every tribe: "…answers will be tribally specific, responding to particular sets of opportunities, constraints and cultural contexts" (p. 467). Specifically, they find that commonly implemented government strategies such as endowments and access to human and financial capital are nearly useless if tribes lack the necessary collective action and institutional structures needed to sustain the proper environment for investment. The "cultural appropriateness" of these development efforts ultimately lies in the informal, sociocultural infrastructure in place; some tribes thrive while others flounder. Drawing on this and similar works (see also Swidler 2013; Tsai 2007), the following analysis assesses how police officers strategically use the social, historical, economic and political order of their local setting in ways that reveal how organizational practices are ultimately driven by these contextual factors, thereby impeding full compliance with formal industry standards that are deemed to be locally "mismatched".

Though much of the police-based research refers to the monolithic nature of police culture, this study examines standards-as-culture to show that officers engage strategically with standards to both *perform* and *justify* non-conformity with the standardizing tide of their institutional counterparts in the broader field of policing. In doing so, officers connect the features of their local community with repertoires of "uniqueness" – the antithesis of standardization – in ways that bolster perceptions of their police organization as "different" than their counterparts. The department is believed to be so unique, in fact, they are said to practice a distinct method of policing named after the very city in which they police: "The Blueville Way".

DATA, METHODS & LOCAL CONTEXT

Understanding what kinds of cultural patterns exist and to what extent these inform behaviour requires access to "deep-level assumptions" (Geertz 1973), a level that cannot be achieved solely through quantifications of police attitudes, or solely through interviews (Marks 2004; Waddington 1999). This study therefore encompasses both observation and interview-based methods. In light of a reputation for police organizations to be suspicious of outsiders, 18 months of field work were devoted to data collection for this project: long term access to the police department allowed respondents time to adjust to the presence of a researcher. This research thus reflects an instrumental case study of a single police department and is not meant to serve as an account of police officers everywhere. An instrumental case study involves using a single case to gain insights into a particular phenomenon, where there is also an explicit expectation that learning can be used to refine a theory or conceptual lens (Stake 1995).

A total of 100 semi-structured, one-on-one interviews with sworn officers of varying rank, units and time served were conducted – 85 with active officers and 15 with retirees of the service. Interviews spanned from 30 minutes to over 2.5 hours. A typical interview involved a series of open-ended questions that focused on the objective and subjective dimensions of the officers' work experiences and of policing generally. Much of the data reported in the current analysis stem from interview questions about the officer's relationship with his or her city. In these discussions, a key theme about what interviewees called "the Blueville Way" began to emerge somewhat organically, and was later integrated into subsequent interviews when appropriate. Conversations were typically recorded and later transcribed; when recording was denied, notes were hand-written during and after discussion. Approximately 50 hours were also spent riding along with patrol officers for a variety of shifts. For example, some days involved a

full 10 hour afternoon or midnight shift, others entailed the last 4 hours of the day shift and the first 4 hours of the afternoon shift. Moreover, time was spent with officers from all districts throughout the city in order to witness the very diverse interactions officers share with citizens in very different neighbourhoods – from the poor in the west end to the affluent in the east.

Research Site: All about Blueville

Blueville[37] is a medium-sized Canadian city in the province of Ontario with a population of approximately 250,000 people. A blue-collar city, Blueville's economy is largely fueled by auto manufacturing and tool-and-die "feeder plants" that supply various parts to larger factories. Labeled a "lunch-bucket town", Blueville's many labourers are typically employed in shift work – a schedule which has far-reaching impacts for the pulse of the city. For instance, the area's largest employer runs three shifts (days, afternoons, and midnights), which stimulates a flow of traffic and people along transition times, as well as business for local shops and restaurants. Also, when large factories run annual "shutdowns", thousands are without work for a number of weeks and enjoy a great deal of free time.

Given the recent financial downturn and disproportionate impact this has had on the auto industry, Blueville's unemployment rate increased to one of the highest in Canada. Consequently, the city also manages one of the largest per capita welfare caseloads in the province. Many vehicles can now be spotted with a popular bumper sticker which reads "Out of a job, yet? Keep buying foreign!" To be sure, this city's economic story resembles that of many rust-belt cities throughout the United States. Blueville's downturn began approximately two decades ago with closures and downsizings of major factories. Previously thriving bars that

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[37] The name of the city has been changed to maintain anonymity. Officer names are also changed.

would attract the afternoon shift crowds from nearby plants are now boarded up, and many streets largely deserted. The city also shares close proximity with a city historically plagued by both violent and organized crime. Despite these trends, Blueville maintains a low crime rate.[38]

The Conference Board of Canada found that Blueville's average annual population growth over five years (2008-2012) was among the worst in the country. This is largely due to outward migration of younger age groups who are flocking to cities with healthier labour markets. This shrinking population is also very quickly becoming more diverse. According to the 2011 National Household Survey, racial and ethnic minorities comprise nearly 25% of the people in the area, where the largest minority groups identify as Arab or Black. Also, one quarter of Blueville's population is foreign-born, 15% of which came to Canada between 2006 and 2011. These trends have earned Blueville a spot in the top five most diverse cities in the nation.

Blueville Police Service (BPS) itself is a municipal police department comprised of 450 sworn officers. A significant majority are white males: racial minorities comprise just 13% of sworn personnel, while females make up approximately 16%. Many members identify the service as "behind the times": without a single female or non-white administrator, diversity among personnel is mostly represented in the lower ranks. Only 2% of BPS sworn officers self-identify (or are willing to disclose) as gay, lesbian or bisexual, and 71% are legally married. The majority of sworn personnel hold some form of post-secondary education, such as a college diploma (26%) or university degree (46%), though most of the educated members of the organization are younger and therefore do not occupy positions of authority.

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[38] Statistics Canada (2014) reports Blueville's Crime Severity Index (CSI) is below the Canadian national rate of 68.7. The CSI "tracks changes in the severity of police-reported crime by accounting for both the amount of crime reported by police in a given jurisdiction and the relative seriousness of these crimes" (Statistics Canada 2009, p. 8).

Provincially Standardized Policing

In addition to standards existing in the broader policing sector, police departments are also bound by more local standards of their institutional constituents. As a municipal police department in the province of Ontario, BPS is subject to the *Police Services Act of Ontario* (PSA), which is a governing legislation within the responsibility of the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services. The *PSA* and related provincial regulations set the standards for police services and how departments will operate. The Ministry itself develops and updates a "Policing Standards Manual" explaining in detail the standards Ontario's police must follow, including guidelines on *how* to follow the standards. Inspection for compliance with this standardized model of policing also falls within the duties of the Ministry.

Much of the training for policing in Ontario is also standardized. Upon successful completion of standardized testing and interview protocols, all recruits throughout the province must attend a thirteen week program at the Ontario Police College (OPC) before they can be officially sworn in as police officers in their respective communities. The OPC training program is designed to provide officers with a uniform understanding of the policing role in society, issue and test officer knowledge of the Criminal Code of Canada and provincial statutes, as well as develop specific tactical techniques – both physical and communicative – for handling citizens. Oversight of police standards is also managed at the provincial level by external bodies which investigate citizen complaints against police officers (i.e. Office of the Independent Police Review Director) and police-related incidents resulting in the death or serious injury of a civilian (i.e. Special Investigations Unit). All of the above measures are implemented in order to establish a commonality of experience for Ontario's police organizations and to standardize the provision of policing services for its public. In light of this provincial picture, police

administrators often coordinate across municipalities, and members of police organizations throughout Ontario share relationships – personal and professional – with officers from other departments.

PERFORMANCES of UNIQUENESS
& PRACTICES of NON-CONFORMITY

"What you have to remember is that there's the right way, the wrong way, and the Blueville Way."- BPS Staff Sergeant

Members of Blueville Police Service perceive their organization as different from their provincial counterparts. Though perceptions can be powerful generators of culture and meaning, uniqueness at BPS – the "Blueville Way" – is also performed and takes shape through police practices. Indeed, it is touted as a "method". Furthermore, as the name implies, it is a distinct method that is believed to belong to a single city, and is therefore *not* the standard throughout the province. When describing their unique way of policing, respondents most commonly discussed two types of non-conforming practices: those which allow situations to be handled efficiently and expediently to "get the job done", and those which relate to deploying their organization's resources, including personnel and equipment.

Efficiency & Expediency: "We get things done"

Procedural standards in law enforcement are not only numerous, but comprise an essential component of citizen due process. When procedural due process is deemed to have been violated, this offends the rule of law and the prosecution of offenders is weakened or even rendered null due to the exclusion of illegally obtained evidence. For this reason, it is not

uncommon for police to complain about what they deem to be a recent "pendulum effect" in criminal justice: the notion that the law and legal rights have swung too far in favor of the offender, thereby tying the hands of law enforcement in their attempts to manage crime and make arrests. Members of BPS often spoke of this pendulum, and as one senior constable confidently assured: "The tide will change back... you'll see. People will start getting hurt – civilians and officers – and we'll go back to handling things right!" Despite this eagerly awaited pendulum swing back in their direction, respondents explained that the Blueville Way affords them the same capacity to police more efficiently:

Sergeant Brandon: From what I'm told, it was a pretty bad-ass town way back in the day, right? You know, it's just a Wild West town. Like my brother and I have conversations about this all the time, and he's up in Oakville – and he'd say it: "Can't believe you fucking guys get away with that. I can't believe you're doing this. I can't believe you're doing that." It's just the way it's done, you know, and they do things like bang, bang by the book, and sometimes we circumvent the process a little bit to get the job done...

Constable Donna: The Blueville way is a cowboy way. It's just about dealing with it as it comes. Politically relevant people in Toronto can't act that way, but we do what we gotta to get it done.

Constable Donna and Sergeant Brandon reveal that the Blueville Way is fundamentally about performing their duty more expediently, even if this means non-compliance with provincial procedural standards, or "the book". Sergeant Brandon was not the only officer to recount interactions with officers from other police organizations where outsiders were taken aback by this overt resistance to standard police practices. In a related discussion, Sergeant Colleen describes the clash that unfolds when the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) – Canada's federal police agency – attempts to work with members of BPS on special projects:

Sergeant Colleen: *The Mounties will follow the book and you can't deviate... no other avenue. It's like tunnel vision, and dissect everything 15,000 times before you can make a decision... because nobody can make a decision there. That's kind of their mantra, right? Everything has to go through their chain 1,500 times, and the Mounties won't sign on a project without a municipal police agency unless they have full power and control over the whole thing. They're freaky that way, but you never get any work done because... everything is like, "Let's call a meeting" and "Let's call another meeting." They'd never make a decision on the fly. So we used to have guys that worked in our unit with us; and oh my god, they'd have to ship them out of Blueville when they were done because these [Mounties] would be like, "We can't control them!" It's kind of funny. You know, they'd work in our drug squad, and they would work alongside of us to go get the job done right. Most supervisors here are... it's "Don't come to me with problems," right? "Just get the job done," and "Follow the rules and make sure you cover everything," (waves off her hand nonchalantly as if to say "don't bother me"). Most supervisors don't want to be supervisors to "supervise" here. They just want it to be in a cushy job.*

In many ways, Sergeant Colleen's reaction to her own story reveals a playful pride of the Blueville Way; the idea that her organization is able to ruffle the stringent methods of the RCMP with a laissez-faire attitude when it comes to supervision is amusing to her. She even uses the term "mantra" to contrast the "call a meeting" approach of the Mounties and the "get the job done" practice at BPS.

Other ways in which members of BPS perform uniqueness by "circumventing" standard practices is to adjust their application of the law in more efficient ways. One example involves Feeney Warrants. A Feeney Warrant – named after the accused in the Supreme Court case R v Feeney, [1997] 2 S.C.R. 13 – refers to the search warrant police must obtain before entering someone's dwelling in order to avoid violating section 8 of the Charter, which protects citizens

against unreasonable search and seizure. Further into my interview with Sergeant Colleen, she more explicitly connects the Blueville Way to police practices using Feeney Warrants:

Sergeant Colleen: Like, having a Feeney Warrant before you go to someone's house to arrest them, for example. So the Blueville Way would be "What do I need a Feeney Warrant for? I'm just going the comb the street until the guy comes out; and you know, if he's stepping on the edge of his property, my report is not going to say that. It's going to say he was on the street." You know what I mean? That would be kind of like the Blueville Way. We have our strong-armed way of doing things...

Colleen is one of a dozen respondents who made reference to Feeney Warrants as a point of uncomfortable tension in the organization, usually between older officers who prefer not to evolve with the case law, and younger ones who encountered the Feeney rule early in their career. While field observations did not yield any examples of a section 8 violation like that described above, a non-standard application of the criminal law by BPS members was witnessed when two officers invoked a Breach of Peace – a section of the Criminal Code typically reserved for restoring order in situations involving protest demonstrations. In light of the considerable discretionary power it grants police, Breach of Peace is rarely used during routine patrol. In the following quote, a Sergeant defines this process and explains how this practice differentiates BPS from their provincial counterparts. This explanation is followed by a field note which recounts a performance of this efficient method for maintaining order:

Sergeant Lauren: An example of Blueville Way I could say is, under the Criminal Code, Section 31 is Breach of Peace, which is not a criminal charge; it's a process. So if I go to a scene and everybody is screaming and going crazy, rather than arrest you for causing disturbance by fighting or drinking, I may lock you up for Breach of Peace because it's a 1-page report, and I release you in the morning once you've sobered up. So it's a way to handle

it. We use that often. Well, other [police] services very rarely use that section of the Criminal Code. If they bring you in, it's for a solid charge that's going to go to court, and you're going to have to face a judge. Whether we're taking a shortcut because we can and it's tolerated here… it's like I lock you up, 1-page report, you go out in the morning and that's the end of it. Where if I arrested you for causing a disturbance, it's now a Criminal Code offense which requires me to do a more detailed report - get statements, interview people, do all the paperwork. It goes to a Detective who has to process the file for court, so there's much more involved. Well, Blueville – we've always done the shortcut. We've just done breaches of peace and away you go. It solves the problem to some degree. It doesn't hold the offender as responsible, but it's been tolerated here, where other agencies, they don't tolerate that.

As we exited the home and crossed the street toward the cruiser, a voice coming from behind told us that we weren't done here. "He's doing it again officer!" said the young man as he shouted from his front door. "He just screamed at my dad! See what I mean? He doesn't stop!"

Initially, officers Todd and Steve accepted this domestic call with the expectation of a routine police-to-citizen conversation to resolve a heated argument between landlord and tenant. Once we arrived at the address and entered the home, we found an old man seated on a dingy couch with an oxygen machine at his side, his clearly distraught wife pacing the living room, and their very angry adult son shouting at a man with tattered jeans and messy long hair. According to the son, the disheveled (and obviously intoxicated) man is their upstairs tenant and was berating the old man, who has severe health problems. The tenant was shouting something about the inadequacy of his welfare cheque to pay the rent.

Turning back toward the home, Steve ordered: "Well we warned him. Stay out front in case he bolts." Remaining outside with Todd, I witnessed Steve re-enter and re-emerge from the house without struggle with the man in handcuffs. Placing the man's back to the cruiser, Steve proceeded to explain that the reason they have to take him in is because he defied their very clear orders to stop harassing the couple and remain in his bedroom, thereby breaching the peace of their home and making them feel unsafe. The man nodded along as if struggling to keep his head up. "This is not a criminal charge", he assured, "We are just going to take you in for

the night to rest up, sober up, and you will be released in the morning". We awaited the arrival of the police van to pick up the man and return him to headquarters.

Practices that circumvent what "the books" demand and implementing sections of the Criminal Code that are not typically warranted are understood by officers as acceptable in their local setting. As Sergeant Lauren states, they use the Blueville Way "because they can" and "it's tolerated here". These examples demonstrate performances of uniqueness that nurture an "adjustment" of policing standards as merely the most efficient way to carry out their duties.

Deployment of Human and Technical Resources: "We're a throwback department"

Uniqueness is also performed at BPS in the way the department deploys its multiple resources. Respondents explained that Blueville's non-compliance with provincial standards is woven into the organization's dispersal of personnel as well as the very equipment and modes of control they have in their arsenal. The former relates most to the palpable lack of women and racial minority officers in positions of seniority, while the latter involves both the physical and verbal means members routinely employ in their work. These practices are interpreted as dated, or "old-school", and therefore reinforce the notion that BPS is a "throwback" in comparison to other police services.

The fact that the fourth floor of Blueville Police headquarters – the administration's section of the building – was comprised entirely of tall brawny white men was immediately apparent. Many officers, both male and female, lamented this sad truth about their organization. One young constable admitted that when he recently attended the Police College without a single woman or minority sharing his BPS uniform flash, he "felt a little embarrassed, because all the

other services had really diverse recruits from all different backgrounds". A female detective attributed this tendency to the Blueville Way:

Detective Meghan: Blocking up the system and not promoting women and purposely holding women back in the organization, that's part of the Blueville Way. "Just because the province is doing it doesn't mean I have to do it, right?" Not effecting change. And then you take that up to the College where you're with other police services that are more progressive, right – more accepting of minorities, and it's not without purpose that we don't have diverse groups in this organization. You know, it was white male, jock, hockey player. That's who's getting on here. That's how it is.

Sergeant Lauren, quoted earlier, shared this view, and even remarked that with encouragement from similarly ranked peers, she applied for promotion on multiple occasions, only to be denied as less qualified men vaulted ahead of her:

Sergeant Lauren: They denied my promotion for years. Only once a few big wigs in other departments in the province commented on the huge white male administration at BPS did they come knocking on my door. "Oh Lauren... we think you would be a really great asset to the administration". Well where were you before? Forget it! If I go along with this now, than it's obviously just because I'm a woman and so fuck it... they can keep looking foolish up there with their old-school ways.

Though it is not uncommon for people to complain about their superiors for not recognizing them as suitable candidates for promotion, the Sergeant's experience is most revealing of the organization's performance of an overt resistance to standards for representativeness across the ranks. Her story underlines the fact that her administrators were only willing to succumb to pressure to conform when it became glaringly obvious to their provincial counterparts that they were unusual in this regard.

In this particular police organization, it is not only the dispersal of people that is non-standard – so too are the tools they use to perform their function. In the following field note, an officer reveals that the incorporation a more sophisticated, safer alternative to their current firearms was long overdue:

Setting myself up in the front seat of the cruiser, I reached over to click in the seatbelt when I noticed a strange looking piece propped up on the middle console of the vehicle between the driver and passenger – a piece that was not in any of the patrol cars I had driven around in previously. Officer John was inspecting the outside of the vehicle and inside the trunk before placing his lunch cooler in it and slamming the door shut. As he too settled in for the shift and signed onto the MDT, I asked him: "What's this piece for? I don't remember seeing this in any of the other cars."

"Oh that's for the new rifle" he answered. "We haven't been fully trained on them yet so they aren't in the cars yet, but the holders were put in last week. We'll probably have them by next week... and it's about damn time."

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"Well every other fricken' service in the province has had them for years already! We've always had these old shitty 12-gauge shotguns... which, you know, aren't the most reliable. But these rifles are way more accurate, and you don't have to reload them as much. We're such a throwback department (looking over his shoulder as he backs out of the parking spot) – living in the Stone Age (laughing).

Though the availability of modern technology and police equipment is a complex matter that entails budgetary restrictions as well as decisions implemented beyond the organization itself (and instead by the municipal police board), the fact that officers interpret the condition of their resources as a practice of non-conformity with the provincial norm is key to understanding the Blueville Way. The above interaction with John suggests that members of BPS use these

deficiencies in their organization as cues that further signal their "throwback" status among police departments – signals that emphasize their uniqueness.

Firearms are not the only equipment police have in their arsenal for exercising control when carrying out their work. Perhaps the most common association officers made with the Blueville Way was toughness, both physical and verbal. However, as levels of police oversight intensify and the province creates more outlets for citizen complaint and mechanisms for accountability, overt defiance of use-of-force standards which limit when, why and how much force can be applied becomes increasingly difficult. This, as the following quote suggests, contributes to the loss of Blueville's "hockey fight" rules for governing how force is brandished:

> **Constable Marshal**: *Blueville Way is falling by the wayside. We may be becoming more like the rest of the province. It was once the criminal's code... like street justice you know. People knew if they messed with the police, they were gonna get messed up (laughing). It was hockey fight rules once upon a time. You beat the guy down, and then you help him up.*

Though Constable Marshal is suggesting that the Blueville Way may be waning somewhat in this specific regard – that is, using fists to enact justice – a number of events that occurred just before and also throughout the 18 month data collection phase for this study suggest that what many referred to unofficially as the "Ways and Means Act" lingered on. A Staff Sergeant explained this "Act" through a brief demonstration:

Tim raised one fist, and said "See this? This is 'Ways'", then he raised the other fist, "...and this is 'Means'". So yeah we have the Criminal Code and we have the Police Act, but we also have the Ways and Means Act. Now I'm not saying we should be slammin' people or pickin' fights out there, no. I'm just saying this is something you gotta use sometimes."

One event where this method was enacted involved the severe beating of an innocent man who was wrongly identified by a veteran detective – an encounter that lead to his dismissal only after

it was revealed that the organization attempted to cover it up. Another was still undergoing court proceedings at the time of this research and is referenced by Sergeant Chris below when he attributes a tendency for violence to the stamina of the Blueville Way:

Sergeant Chris: Guys would tell me stories about when they were young constables and the shit that went on. You'd hear about the guys working the night shift and going to Blueville booze camps and drinking and playing cards all night. That was their shift; and if they got called out of a camp and had to go to a call for a domestic, they'd go beat the people up at the house because "How dare you interrupt my card game," you know. That was the thuggery behind it. So 50 years of policing is what we're dealing with, right? So it's hard to break that cycle here. We see the incidents that we have now, and we have the one officer who kicked the guy in the hallway here. A reason for that is the thug mentality that he thinks is okay through the Blueville Way.

Chris's quote suggests that he believes that if the officer in question was not in Blueville, he would not have found the rationale to behave in the way he did. He positions these actions expressly within the local setting, a place which has condoned a thug mentality for decades.

Finally, performances of uniqueness in how Blueville deploys its resources relate to communicative modes of control. According to Sergeant Jack, one strategy through which the Blueville Way emerges is by hard-line verbal exchanges:

Sergeant Jack: A classic example: I used to work with a partner, and a super guy. He's been retired about seven years... but he had been on 37 years and just a real hard-nosed guy. He would talk about going down the street and try to get somebody… "Hey, sir, can you come here, please? Can you come here, please?" and they'd just totally ignore him. And finally it was: "Get your fucking ass over here now!" and the guy comes right over. So sometimes you have to talk to people at their level. Even with dispersing a crowd downtown… like, you know, "Can you please be quiet?" You're getting nothing. "Listen up!" (shouts) When you start talking at their level, you get the attention. They start listening. So with Blueville, the reputation – and there's some truth to it – is that because of the dynamics that make up the city

is basically your autoworkers, that's the level you deal at. Not that they're any lower by any means. That's just the dynamics – what makes up our city is different than what makes up Toronto, so it makes us... us!

This vignette illustrates what Jack considers to be a "classic example" of how the autoworker "reputation" of Blueville as a city prompts a particular style of communication that is consistent with the needs of its residents. This particular connection is explored more deeply below, but its relevance here relates to the critical distinction that this BPS member emphasizes between resource deployment in his organization and others: this forceful means of speaking to people in Blueville, he says, is a product of working in Blueville, and not Toronto, for instance.

All of the above examples of the ways in which uniqueness is performed share an important common thread; members root these practices of non-conformity with provincial standards – their "method" – in the local setting. Respondents were often explicit in their assertions that these occur "here", and not out there. Whether this is indeed the case is an empirical question and would require a provincial comparison, but the significance for the current analysis is that the social order of the local milieu matters to actors precisely because practices of defying the standards unfold *in situ*. Their local condition is thus imbued with meaning.

JUSTIFICATIONS for UNIQUENESS & SOURCES of NON-CONFORMITY

The previous section establishes the relevance of local setting for the ways in which organizational non-conformity to standardization measures is routinely practiced. However, it does not address *how* the local setting infuses standards with their cultural meaning. Justifications BPS members use to explain their "uniqueness" are rooted in the meanings they

draw from the history and political economy of their local setting. Two particularly prominent sources of the organization's shield against standardized policing are here examined. The first is an enduring reputation for being the "renegade" police department – an idea that is perpetuated within the very space that is meant to promote uniformity; the Ontario Police College. The second is a deeply entrenched sense that Blueville's manufacturing industry and the type of blue-collar mentality this engenders among its population produces a certain expectation – an "unwritten understanding" – for how both citizens and police officers should behave.

History: Reputation of a "Renegade" Police Department

Constable Samuel: When I was in college 10 years ago it was... they spoke in front of all people, and then they say, "Okay, Blueville people, you can do what we're doing here, but you're going to do something down there that's different". It was a really weird kind of thing.

Interviewer: Weird to be singled out?

Constable: Yeah, really! Like, no other police force in Ontario except Blueville. "Blueville, you're different"...

Attending Police College for training marks a key moment in the career of an Ontario police recruit. Not only are the men and women of every intake members of departments across the province, so too are the instructors. This diversity in the geography of personnel affiliation is significant because, although respondents were unable to pinpoint the original source of their organization's reputation for shirking provincial standards, the college was well recognized as a major contributor to its widespread circulation:

Sergeant Brandon: I don't know if anybody has told you this or not, but it's a well known idea; any police recruit, or anybody who has worn a uniform with this flash on it (points to the arm of his uniform) goes up to the Police College has said – and you can probably finish the sentence. You know, "this is the way that..." (pauses expectantly)

Interviewer: The Blueville Way, yes.

Sergeant: (nodding yes) ... "This is the way we police in the rest of the province, and this is the way Blueville does it." But that's historical. You know, I don't say that off the top of my head. I've been hearing that for as long as I've been around here, and it's consistent every time we go to the Police College. Anybody who's been there – any other officer from Ontario... I don't care where it is. It doesn't matter if you're in Timmons or if you're in Ottawa. They've all heard it, and they will all tell you that – we have our own unique way of doing things...

By referring to the Blueville Way as "historical" and "consistent", Sergeant Brandon – and many others – provides a very circular reasoning to justify the uniqueness of his organization: the simple fact that this reputation is known and promulgated is used to explain it. This occurred in the majority of the interviews where respondents referred directly the Blueville Way: they justify that they do things differently because outsiders continuously tell them that they do. In the following quotes, constables recount their first experience being labeled with this reputation of being non-compliant:

Constable Brett: One of the first things they would say... I remember being, like, day two at police college and, you know, every morning you would stand out in front of your classroom and it would be like an inspection, right, and they would walk down and they'd look at different things, and they'd look at your... I remember the sergeant looking at my boots and he's like, "Those boots aren't very shiny," and then he looks up. He looks at my Blueville patch and was like, "They don't give a shit so why would I?" and then he just keeps going. That was probably the first time I heard of the Blueville Way, right... and it made you feel very... like you didn't

know what you were going to expect when you got back. You know what I mean? Like, "What is this Blueville Way they keep talking about? What's going to happen to me?"

Constable Brian: Just every scenario, instructors... like even about partners, right, they'd be like... they'd be showing you how to do a vehicle stop and, like, "Well, this is how we do it in Ontario, except in Blueville... because Blueville, you work with partners so you guys do it different", right, and every time you'd go into a scenario they would say the same thing.

Up until these kinds of encounters with instructors, Constables Brett and Brian were unaware that they were perceived as unique. More importantly, this interaction signaled two critical pieces of information to the recruits: 1) that the organization to which they were headed is not only a defector, but that this non-conformity is ignored rather than addressed and 2) that they should prepare themselves to be non-compliant in their local setting. Moreover, the fact that the sources of these encounters are rooted in the very place that is meant to foster a standardized experience serves to strengthen "history" as a justification for the organization's continued resistance to standards, as well as nurture a sense of inevitability of their uniqueness.

Other conversations with more senior ranked officers reveals that some members of BPS perceive their organization as being historically "excluded" from provincial level decision-making and, according to Sergeant Lauren, this may contribute to their organization's ability to "get away" with policing differently than their provincial counterparts:

Sergeant Lauren: So much of policing and the initiatives that come out of the government are for the greater Toronto area, right, where Blueville is usually not part of that loop... I know a lot of decisions that get made provincially in regards to policing are made by that group of agencies. Blueville is left out of that completely, so I don't know for us how much impact

we're able to have on that kind of stuff. That makes us unique just because we are separate so, you know, when we went to Police College, it was this: You got trained at the Police College how to do stuff, and it was a common joke that "This is our [provincial] way; Blueville does it different." And I think that's still at Police College. I'm sure they still make those comments now… When I got on, that was the joke because "This is how you get trained, but we do it this way".

Interviewer: So what's that about?

Sergeant: I don't want to say we're a renegade kind of service, but we've always done things our own way and we've gotten away with it. I don't know if it's because our community is so small that the judges know the defense lawyers, know the crown attorneys. They're all friends. Like I said, I don't want to say "renegade," but we've done things our own way, and have been able to do that. We're not tied, I guess, to the same oversight as other agencies. Like [Ontario Provincial Police] is very stringent, where Blueville has never been that way…

This Sergeant is seeking to explain BPS's reputation as a "renegade" police department in a way that avoids the circular reasoning described above, but still relies heavily on the significance of her milieu. She draws on a history of locally entrenched relationships across sectors and players of the criminal justice system: they share a tie to a city that is "out of the loop". In turn, the lack of oversight that comes from being excluded, she argues, leaves BPS free to police with far less "stringent" emphasis on standards.

Political Economy: The Blue-Collar Worker and the "Unwritten Understanding

Constable Jordan: The aggressive reputation, you know, is because we're an auto-worker city. Blueville is more blue-collar, and sometimes you have to speak to people in the way… what they understand, right?

In an effort to move further beyond a circular reasoning for the resilience of the Blueville Way, respondents were asked to elaborate more thoroughly on why this alternative "method" of policing is able to thrive in an institutional moment of increasing standardization of policing in the province. Not unlike Sergeant Jack from the previous section, Constable Jordan in the above quote justifies a "manner of speaking" to the auto-worker, blue-collar status of the citizens living and working in the city of Blueville. The political economy of their local setting was the single-most credited source of the Blueville Way; it is believed to contribute to a more informal tone, a more aggressive style of managing people, and to an overall common expectation that situations be dealt with swiftly. Behaviours, it is believed, are governed by Blueville's *own* standard – an "unwritten understanding" – a justification that, despite its vague proposition, was communicated by respondents with remarkable consistency:

Constable Clifford: Blueville always had that blue collar mentality... the auto worker... So I think people in Blueville, for the good and the bad, expect that. Even the way conversations go. It's something I've adapted to even being here. And you talk to people like "you're from Blueville". I don't know. It's an unwritten understanding here, I guess, when you talk to people. I didn't get any of that growing up in Toronto.

Interviewer: What do you mean by "unwritten understanding"?

Constable: I guess there's more of a casual... when I talk to someone here I don't need to be (sits himself up right)... I think they're more accepting of me being 'Hi how are ya', like I would be talking to a friend or neighbour, as opposed to... well I dunno I've never policed in Toronto, but there I would be a lot more formal. "I'm officer so and so and how can I help you?" (deeper tone). I've worked in different areas of the city and it doesn't matter whether the socioeconomic is... well whether its west end, east or south, it seems you gotta approach people the same way. You know you're remaining professional, but it's more of a home-towny approach. That's why I call it like an unwritten thing... My sister [also a police officer] always says that her experiences are completely different from mine. Where she is out west [different

province], I call it very stiff... We compared notes. I think what works here in Blueville wouldn't necessarily transfer in other cities, and vice versa. If someone came here that was always formal all the time, they wouldn't be able to relate to the people of Blueville. I think they would have a difficult time just to... it doesn't matter who they were... just to gain acceptance from them.

Constable Clifford is here trying to convey what he, among others, believes to be the key to successfully connecting with members of the local community; a laid back "home-towny" approach, regardless of the fact that he works in an urban – not rural – environment. He is also careful to specify that this "informal" method of interacting with the citizenry is *not* class specific *within* Blueville – he believes *all* residents (i.e. the low-income in the west end, middle-class in the east and south) respond better to this feature of the Blueville Way. He does, however, attribute this policing style to the difference in socioeconomic conditions *between* Blueville and *other* cities: Toronto (where he grew up) and cities in Canada's west are too "stiff", and this would not transfer well into the "blue-collar", "autoworker" mentality in his city. In fact, he even admits to having to adapt to this "unwritten understanding" in order to better relate to the people he encounters through his work.

The "unwritten understanding" in Blueville is further characterized by an expectation that residents engage in a brutal honesty – a feature that likely facilitated the data collection process for this study; many officers were quick to let me know that they were not one to "sugar coat anything". Sergeant Clayton, a non-native of Blueville, describes this tendency for people to openly share their thoughts much more than they do where he came from:

Sergeant Clayton: *I think that economy wise... that has something to do with the way we are. It's always been a blue collar town and people aren't afraid to tell you what they think. I mean,*

when I lived in Ottawa... two totally different towns. I came here and I got a big wakeup call! Right? People, you know, had their mouth full of shit up there, only wouldn't say it. Here you're going to get it! Coming from there and coming here going, "Holy shit!"... just the two different cultures. You have to police your city the way the culture of people is here, and you're going to take a different approach with a white-collar than with a blue-collar, and I think that's got a lot to do with it. It has to! And that's the biggest thing I've found is that people aren't afraid to tell you what they think around here... Say what's on your mind and do what you got to do, right? I think people have that attitude here. I think that comes with the factories and with that type of work.

Much like his fellow coworkers, Clayton attributes Blueville's attitude toward honesty to the cultural facets he associates with the local economy. He is convinced that blue-collar "towns" expect a different type of communication than those comprised of white-collar economies, which is a reality he too had to adjust to, much like Clifford. Here we can draw parallels to the previously discussed notion of efficient and expedient policing: the emphasis placed on "getting things done" shares much in common with the belief that people "say what's on their mind" and "do what they got to do". This sentiment is similarly conveyed by both Inspector Lionel and Constable Adrian, although they speak to less verbal means:

__Inspector Lionel__: We're a lunch bucket town. I've always said the people from this city are a hardworking people. They're factory workers. They're not afraid to get grease on their hands, and it's a tough town. Blueville, I think for the most part expects their policemen, or police officers to be tough too. I think the culture of the city, the silent majority would say, "Yeah, somebody needs to be cracked in the side of the head." So we do what we have to for our town. They would have no opposition to it as long as it's not them being cracked, mind you, but that type of mentality – blue collar, lunch bucket mentality.

Constable Adrian: We're a blue-collar town, so people have a certain acceptance of how they want their police service to be and what they expect, for the good or the bad I guess. But it seems to work for Blueville.

Interviewer: So it's about a kind of mirroring of the people?

Constable: Yeah! I think it's changed a little bit but I think if you took a poll of the people, and said "look, how do you want your police service to be? Seriously? When the crime happens, how do you want them to approach it, to approach the citizens?" I think you would get a consensus from the large majority that...you know [respondent motions a fist rather than use words].

All of the above examples illustrate once again a performance of the Blueville Way and non-conforming practices to what should be a more "professional" and formal persona for a public official who is engaging with the community on a regular basis. However, they are included here as justifications for uniqueness because respondents readily identify a source for these practices, which they perceive as being rooted in the socioeconomic condition of their city.[39] The policing style referred to by Lionel and Adrian implies the use of a much more aggressive "hands on" approach than that which provincial procedural standards dictate – and is therefore "changing a little bit" in light of this – but they both firmly insist that if we are genuinely consulting the citizens of Blueville (and *not* the province of Ontario), their preferences would be more in line with the Blueville Way.

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[39] Readers should note that many other features of this city not included here but which contribute greatly to its uniqueness could not be disclosed due to ethics-related requirements for anonymity of the police organization.

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

The practices of and justifications for uniqueness in the police organization ultimately reveal the significance of "cultural match"; that is, if a formal industry standard is unsuitable for the social, political and economic conditions of a particular setting, non-conformity can be justified by the actors for whom the milieu bears cultural meaning. In the case of Blueville, the "unwritten understanding" and the Blueville Way serve to weaken the "glue" meant to hold formal and informal institutions of social control and organization together. These findings parallel those of Cornell and Kalt (2000). Similar to failed strategies for economic development among certain Indian tribes, the "cultural appropriateness" of formalized standardization efforts – and therefore their successful integration – ultimately relies on the informal, sociocultural infrastructure currently operating at a local level.

In many respects, BPS has developed its *own* set of performance and procedural standards, which emphasize efficiency and expediency in an industry that scrutinizes due process; deploy "old school" resources in an increasingly modernizing, progressive and transparent occupation; garner the reputation of "defector" in a public service seeking uniformity; and promote a policing style perceived as more loyal to the sociopolitical condition of their local setting than that which would be more "professional" for a public official. This case study therefore underlines the benefits of the standards-as-culture lens and also the critical role of local embeddedness for explaining purposive action. In line with research which promotes a view of institutions as "inhabited" (Hallet and Ventresca 2006), this study shows how people's creative use of culture suffuses organizations with local force and significance.

Furthermore, the analysis demonstrates the usefulness of the sociology of standards and standardization framework in research involving the criminal justice system. The fact that public

servants interpret their work in standard-related terms – or as a elusion thereof – is not unimportant, particularly when the institution in question (i.e. police, prisons, courts, etc.) administers state-sanctioned force, can deprive citizens of their civil liberties, and routinely encounters some of the most morally-charged social and legal issues of modern society.

These findings are also consistent with the notion that standards require others to "buy in". Without the general support of its city's residents, BPS would not be able to continue its particular "method" of policing. According to a community satisfaction assessment survey performed by an independent market research company outside of Blueville, nearly 90% of the 400 resident respondents have confidence in the BPS and over half have "a lot of confidence". In comparison, a national survey suggests that 76% of Canadians have either "a great deal" or "some confidence" in the police (Statistics Canada 2015). When asked about the "effectiveness" of their police service, around 40% rated BPS as "very effective", and just over half of respondents rated it as somewhat effective (less than 5% indicated that they believed the service was ineffective). Though we can certainly question whether any of these residents have ever experienced the Blueville Way directly (only 1 in 4 indicated that they had police contact in the last 3 years), and even though we cannot infer from these numbers that the people of Blueville agree with their police service positioning itself as "unique" from the province, these statistics do reveal that they do not overtly object to how their city is policed generally.

A clear limitation of this study is the lack of comparison in order to empirically verify and confirm the uniqueness of the Blueville Way. Indeed, as organization scholars Dobbin and Strandgaard-Pedersen suggest, "what is unique about one organization tends to be 'unique' as well about others of the same time and place" (2006, p. 905). Although, this kind of verification is not itself in line with the objective of the current analysis, which underscores how the

perceived uniqueness of this "method" is informed by the cultural meaning members attach to the local milieu. Future research can, however, implement the theoretical framework presented here – the standards-as-culture lens – in order to uncover whether and how standards are appropriated or resisted differently by police organizations situated in socioeconomic contexts that are characteristically different than that of Blueville.

From a standpoint of public policy, results from this study show that the establishment of expansive legislation in policing – in this case, at the provincial-level – and the specification of standards therein may not garner compliance just by providing police organizations with the formal tools and mechanisms to meet their criteria. While all police departments and its members deal with a similar host of problems and concerns (i.e. crisis, conflict, crime, disorder, despair, safety, a diverse rank-and-file, etc.), some may approach these in a non-textbook manner, employing instead a set of shared preferences and implicit contracts for what they believe works in their own community. Indeed, even if members are sometimes merely "retrofitting" a standard to suit their "local" needs, the implication of this is such that efforts to standardize policing across the province are thwarted; the nature of standards is such that any "alteration" thereof eliminates its inherent purpose.

This article has shown that, through its political-economic manifestation, "culture informs and legitimizes conceptions of self, of social and political organization… and of how the individual and group appropriately work in the world" (Cornell and Kalt 2000, p. 467). Therefore, the "Blueville Way" is not simply titled as such because it is performed and justified by members of Blueville Police Service. Rather, non-standard approaches are performed and justified by members of BPS precisely because they police *in* the city of Blueville. In other

words, it is the systems of meaning police officers attach to the social order of the local setting

that fuels this organizational non-conformity with standardization measures.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusion

The institution of policing, its core function and the means used by law enforcement agencies are the subject of considerable debate and controversy. The term "police culture" is routinely wielded by the media, political figures, community stakeholders and even academics for condemnatory purposes – as synonymous with words like "corruption", the "thin blue line", or "secrecy". Though descriptors like these can certainly be applied to a number of police practices, I argue that researchers must broaden the analytical lens to avoid attaching inherently negative meaning to "police culture". In particular, we must study police culture as an organizational culture like any other: as the very thing that allows any meaning-making to take place at all. Organizations are complex sites of contestation and shared premises, change as well as stasis, and organizational culture provides members with a system of meanings to navigate accordingly. Police scholars must therefore reach for theoretical tools that can capture vital nuance behind the cultural resources police officers deploy as they traverse the various institutional structures of an unsettled occupational environment. This dissertation turns to the sociology of culture and organizations.

In chapter 2, I begin by presenting a broad theoretical argument using the timely example of intensifying oversight and accountability mechanisms used to govern police conduct. Specifically, I outlined the shortcomings of many police studies which define police culture only as a set of "values", or as an ideal-type, and demonstrate the utility of re-conceptualizing police culture as a resource which officers draw on to make sense of their work lives. For instance, I showed that solidarity is not as unyielding as common depictions of police culture suggest; a time of heightened scrutiny has prompted new ways of asserting and negotiating solidarity

altogether. Similarly, many officers de-emphasize a sense of mission in their line of work, or supplant it completely in favor of ideas about risk-management because these are more suitable to navigating their current experiences on the job. Rather than isolating overarching attributes, or typologizing individuals as one type of police officer over another, this chapter contributes an alternative approach which allows the researcher to account for and integrate vital contextual nuance into the study of police culture.

In the third chapter, my analysis provides a cultural framework to account for simultaneous change *and* non-change in a police organization. I examined how officers routinely use generational boundary work and institutional myths in ways that reproduce the status quo in the police department, even in the context of shifting demographics and workplace policies. However, the analysis also revealed the slowing "momentum" of old-school practices and common ways of thinking, suggesting that the kinds of cultural scripts new generation officers deploy serve to disrupt the inertial forces at play. This disruption operates subtly and slowly due to the hierarchical structure of a police organization: the reigning myths about "paramilitarism" or "camaraderie", for example, are most often promoted by those in positions of power, and must therefore be entertained (and thereby sustained) by the lower ranks seeking to move upward. This chapter thus presents an assessment of the internal system of relations operating within the police organization and of the cultural scripts people bring with them in navigating that system.

In chapter 4, I look beyond the walls of the police station itself to demonstrate that "cultural match" matters in policing: though industry standards are clearly communicated and even legislated, the local setting in which a police organization is rooted can filter how these standards are received and implemented. By uncovering a policing method referred to as the "Blueville Way", I explained how members of the Blueville Police Service draw on the history

and socioeconomic features of their city to establish repertoires of "uniqueness" which they use to justify their non-conformity with provincially standardized policing practices. Not unlike chapter 3, this analysis reveals the capacity for organizations to refract changes unfolding outside the police department, even if those changes are explicitly meant to bring about internal adjustments. But in contrast to the previous chapter, here I appraise the significance of "place" and the function it serves.

In this final chapter, I present a number of concluding remarks. First, I re-emphasize the critical importance of studying policing "organizationally", particularly when focusing on culture. In this next section, I also present three overarching themes that connect the substantive chapters presented in the dissertation. These common threads relate to 1) the role of policy measures to enact meaningful change, 2) the tendency for police culture scholars to think in terms of "resistance" and 3) the locally rooted nature of police culture. Then, I explain that my findings are subject to the implications of three key study limitations, and present a discussion of potential paths forward in police culture research.

STUDYING POLICING "ORGANIZATIONALLY"

Writing about the Challenger explosion, Diane Vaughan suggests "what happened at NASA was no anomaly, but something that could happen in any organization", and that decisions in the workplace must be particularly scrutinized "where loss of life and/or extensive social harm is a possible outcome" (1997, p. 81). I argue that a police department fits well within these criteria, even if much of police work is bureaucratic and mundane (Ericson 1982). Whether we consider high profile citizen deaths at the hands of police, the gaining momentum of protest movements (e.g. Black Lives Matter), or even a single case, like that of the BPS Detective's assault on a

local doctor (see Chapter 1, "Methodological Considerations"), each ignite social reaction that reveals the harm felt by the community. Studying policing "organizationally", as I have done throughout this dissertation, is thus critically important. To be sure, this is not the first empirical study of policing to promote this lens; Richard Ericson (1982; see also Crank 2003; Reiss 1971, 1991) applied an "organizational analysis within the social-action framework ... in order to contribute both to sociological understanding of organizations and to the substantive area of policing" (p. 31). However, very little scholarship has devoted the organizational lens to studying "police culture" explicitly. When we analyze the police organization (the meso) as something which is rooted in a particular environment (the macro), as well as comprised of and reacted upon by certain individuals (the micro), police scholars can better account for the cultural influence of unsettled times throughout the policing landscape. I further propose that connecting culture to context in this way can advance the study of police culture beyond the usual "template" or description of the "ideal-type" so that we may also begin to understand how to bring about change where needed (a point that will also be revisited below; see "Future Directions").

Organizations that do risky or contentious work are constantly implementing policy and taking action under conditions of uncertainty, and the unsettled moment in policing is shedding rigorous new light on this very fact. For instance, increased visibility and intensifying mechanisms of oversight (see Chapter 2) mean that officer decisions – misconduct and mistake in particular – are scrutinized more than ever. And, when police do wrong, the *broader* "police culture" is quickly denounced. However, a clear paradox arises when one considers the usual response to such criticism: reforms focus on misconduct or error-reducing measures for *individual* officers and the specific decision-making situation. Examples include advanced incident response training, better de-escalation techniques, less lethal weaponry, or body

cameras. My study supports Vaughan's assertion that, if cultural change is the objective, greater concentration must *also* be placed upon the organizational system, its internal relations and the environment because these serve as institutional constraints under which meaning is negotiated and cultural resources are wielded by members.

Old themes relating to police culture, such as the classic ideal-type (i.e. suspicion, solidarity, machismo, mission-action, etc.), police typologies (i.e. the dirty harry, the peacekeeper, the traditionalist, etc.), or the "street cop" (blues) versus the "management cop" (whites) are important, but studying policing organizationally reveals that we cannot continue defining the topic wholly through them because we risk missing too much in doing so. My research highlights other critical themes that warrant further consideration in the conversation about police culture. In this section, I discuss three.

#1: Organizational Culture Eats Policy for Lunch

The idea that "culture trumps" in organizations is an old one. Author and management consultant Peter Drucker is famously credited for the phrase "Culture eats strategy for breakfast", suggesting that organizations should never leave culture unattended when making plans. In 2015, the *President's Task Force on 21ˢᵗ Century Policing Interim Report* included a similar adage more suitable to a government-based institution, referring instead to 'policy': "Organizational culture eats policy for lunch" (p. 10). My study supports this assertion, but for different reasons than that which is cited in the President's report.

The argument put forward by the Task Force is that police officers tend to be trained like soldiers in the military, and therefore develop a "warrior-mentality" which promotes a culture that is inconsistent with the rules in place to govern police conduct as well as the principles of

community policing. Indeed, in my own case study, "paramilitarism" was alive and well in BPS and many senior officers believed this management style to be the most effective. Although, in addition to the military-mindset, I uncovered a number of other ways in which officers orient themselves that suggest organizational practices are only "loosely coupled" with policy (Meyer and Rowan 1977). Whether we consider scripts about FIDO (F*ck It Drive On) or risk management (Chapter 2), institutional myths about "the team" or "athleticism" (Chapter 3), or even the "Blueville Way" (Chapter 4), elements of each substantive paper point to instances where the particular cultural resources police rely on trump (or at least challenge) certain policies or standards in place to govern the provision of policing services. However, I argue that this does *not* mean officers are simply socialized into a unified police culture, as is so often argued (e.g. Chan 2003; Loftus 2009); nor does it imply that they adopt a certain police personality as part of their occupational identity (Skolnick 1966). Even those that may wield police culture successfully to avoid trouble or to secure promotion, for instance, do not simply assume a particular "way of being" uncritically. Indeed, the benefit of employing theoretical insights from the sociology of culture and organizations is that we are able to appreciate that members are actively (and sometimes strategically) using culture *as a resource* to make sense of and navigate their work lives. This research therefore helps understand how bureaucratic, policy-based imperatives are side-stepped or reinterpreted in practice.

An implication of this overall finding is that police officials and representatives would be hard pressed to bring about meaningful institutional change through top-down policy. Those in power who are charged with implementing a new course of action (i.e. upper administration, senior officers, etc.) are often some of the staunchest supporters of non-change (even if unknowingly); and this is either because their success in rising through the ranks is owed to the status quo or because new strategies for action do not suit their own repertoire of skills and

resources. In order for organizations to fully absorb new policy, the policy's principles must reach not only the level of routine, but also the deeper status of *informally* institutionalized myth – these must provide members a meaningful justification for how things are done, and not only for the sake of formality or to keep up appearances to external constituents. Furthermore, my evidence would suggest that the quickest route for policy change to achieve this deeper, more integrated level is a fundamental disruption in the power structure of police departments and their typical "lock step" organizational hierarchy. Provided the most promising energy for transformative change appears to sit predominantly within the lower tiers – that is, among those who have entered the profession amidst significant shifts across the policing landscape – it will largely remain "business as usual" in policing, and change will unfold very slowly (I elaborate on this point further below, in theme #2). Indeed, a couple months prior to submission of this dissertation, BPS was criticized in the media for once again hiring an all-white, mostly male, cohort of cadets despite a declared commitment to diversifying its organization.

#2: "Inertia" Instead of "Resistance"

My findings reveal that there is a great deal of culture change happening *even within* stasis. Classic definitions of police culture always refer to it as being "resistant to change", and though this is not entirely false, it misses the impact of significant shifts in the police organization that have created a growing undercurrent which ultimately serves to disrupt – albeit slowly – the status quo. As such, I purport that we should instead contemplate the implications of "inertia" in policing. Police scholar Samuel Walker (1985) similarly referred to "glacial change" and commented decades ago that police researchers should focus on how it unfolds in relation to police culture. Throughout this dissertation, I have presented data illustrating that the cultural

repertoire of scripts, routines, boundaries and myths from which police officers can draw has broadened in the advent of change in policing – the range of available cultural resources seems to have expanded, particularly among the younger generation of officers.

For example, scripts about "solidarity" are often cast it in a negative light as detrimental to one's job security in the age of heightened police visibility (Chapter 2), and bolstered myths about "camaraderie" in policing are reframed as unfair labor practices, or "nepotism" (Chapter 3). Meanwhile, "paramiltarism" can be both perceived as "best practice" or "ignorance", and education credentials can be deemed both a liability connected with "entitlement", or an asset that offers critical "perspective". And finally, scripts and routines relating to the "Blueville Way" can be wielded by members as a "uniqueness" to be proud of, or a deviant style (i.e. "thuggery") that has no place in policing today (Chapter 4). When police engage with these alternative resources in alternative ways, perspectives and behaviours start to show considerable variation from what traditional definitions of police culture would dictate: solidarity is easily rocked; generational conflict emerges that is far more complex than merely "blues" (street cop) versus "whites" (management cop); and *both* support and contempt for non-conform policing practices surface. This diversity of views also demonstrates the contentious facets of work life in a police organization, and further showcases the importance of implementing a theoretical lens that can incorporate these.

While it is not possible to argue that a causal relationship exists between the broader macro-level changes that are stimulating such unsettled times in policing and police cultural shifts, there is a strong case for a relationship in the direction of social change infiltrating *how* officers *use* culture in ways that fluster inertial forces.

#3: Police Culture is Wrapped Up in the "Moral Economy" of the Local

The significance of the local is a dominant thread throughout all of my analyses. Though I focused more exclusively on this idea in the third substantive chapter, the locally entrenched nature of police culture was an ever-present theme: policing in Blueville always meant that police officers *ought to* think and act in a particular way because residents would expect it. In hindsight, this is not surprising. Time and time again I was told that the organization "prefers" and "tends to" to hire from within its own jurisdiction and that BPS has even reached out to recent hires in other cities to "see if those boys wanna come home". Moreover, a "community mindset" – as they refer to it – is a required attribute for recruitment. In my interviews with five cadets, I was struck by how involved these young people had been with their community: years of volunteer work, coaching kids' sports teams, working with charities, or working in previous occupations which required a great deal of community interaction (e.g. paramedics, teachers, police auxiliary). As such, their local networks were firmly rooted, and they held a keen sense of the needs of their city.

The extent to which Ontario's *Police Services Act* allows municipal police departments and the Ontario Provincial Police to police according to the needs of their own communities is somewhat ambiguous, particularly given the hard push toward standardization across the province. The Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services is also in the early stages of revising the *PSA*. My findings suggest that no matter what their legislation dictates, the local will inevitably "colour" how organization members carry out their mandate because perceptions of their role are filtered by the "moral economy" operating around them. This "moral economy" refers to the interplay between a society's economic activity and dominant cultural norms. Though typically applied for understanding how economic actors curb their operations according

to traditional mores (e.g. Scott 1977; Thompson 1971) – even at the expense of profits – the same concept can be used to consider how a non-profit organization delivers a public service, even at the expense of being "non-compliant" in an industry that is government funded. For instance, as I outline in Chapter 4, the province may not condone the use of Breach of Peace as a routine measure, but BPS believes the people of Blueville want things handled expediently. Or, the province may curb use of force in specific ways, but the blue-collar labourers of Blueville subscribe to "hockey fight rules", which allow for a more "hands on" approach to managing conflicts.

Many respondents believe that the stringent rules placed around use of force and due process, coupled with the increasing levels of oversight around them, is stifling their ability to police Blueville the way it needs to be policed. Moreover, in light of the controversy that often surrounds police conduct, they believe that the result will be withdrawal and hesitation from officers as well as outcry from the community to do something about what will become a growing crime problem. As one officer working at the training branch told me, "I'm dreading the day when a citizen asks me to do something, and I have to tell them my hands are tied! It's already happening to some people who are in patrol right now, and that's terrible". Though we can certainly expect that police officers in other jurisdictions are engaging with a similar narrative about the "pendulum" of criminal justice, the fact that organizational actors are pitting new rules and broad trends against the moral economy operating at the local level speaks volumes about the role of culture in understanding situated action.

LIMITATIONS

There are a number of important limitations to my research design that must be addressed. Though systemic attention to comparison across contexts and kinds of people is a key component to both qualitative and quantitative research, my study is focused on a single police department. In other words, although my methodological choices have allowed me to speak with a variety of individuals *within* the organization (e.g. rank seniority, division [investigations, training branch, patrol], etc.) and to observe different kinds of situations, my case study cannot serve as an account of police everywhere. However, wide scale representativeness is not my objective. This research reflects an "instrumental case study" (Stake 1995), which is used to gain insights into a particular phenomenon, and where there is also an explicit expectation that learning will refine a theoretical framework. My aim is to use this single case as the analytical platform from which to showcase the utility of bridging sociology of culture and organizations with police studies to learn new lessons about the police organization and its culture. Indeed, qualitative projects like the one presented here introduce a number of difficulties that make comparisons hard to accomplish (at least in the short term), most notably the arduous task of gaining entrée into a field site which involves any public institution related to criminal justice.

There are also methodological implications associated with the various ways I secured my interviews. As I iterated in the dissertation's Introduction (Chapter 1), nearly half of the sample was collected through random assignment of names on a shift roster to an interview time slot. These officers were mostly limited to those with less than 20 years experience, and many were therefore constables working in the patrol division. However, a portion of my interview sample (approximately 5%) was achieved through officers volunteering themselves to speak with me (self-selection), while another segment (approximately 35%) was collected through the

convenience of their presence in BPS headquarters on days I was present. The convenience

sample was limited to those with over 20 years of experience in police service – these were

primarily comprised of administration members, members working in divisions other than patrol,

or in supervisory positions with patrol and thus often present in the building.

The implications of self-selection bias are significant: I do not know how these officers

differ from those that were approached for participation or randomly chosen on the shift roster,

and therefore I do not know how this impacts my findings. Nonetheless, as I was keenly aware of

their self-selection at the time of the interview, I was careful to note whether they were

particularly unique in their responses in any way. I did not find this to be the case. Though they

were usually very friendly and forthcoming with the kinds of information they were willing to

share, so too were *many* of the officers that did *not* self-select into the sample. Non-probability

sampling techniques are an unfortunate necessity when studying a group like police officers, as

my access to respondents was contingent on the availability of willing participants, and the

unpredictability of the volume of calls for service.[40] The use of these techniques does however

limit my ability to generalize findings across all sworn members of Blueville Police Service.

The methods applied in this dissertation are commonly applied in sociological studies of

culture (e.g. Boltanski and Thevenot 1999; Lamont 1992, 2000; Pugh 2013; Swidler 2001) in

order to reach people's discursive consciousness and unveil the kinds of cultural resources they

deploy. However, there are problems associated with using retrospective accounts collected

through the interview process. Like most qualitative interviewing, there is concern about

people's tendency to misremember, to reconstruct events, or to bias their answers in the direction

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[40] On busy days or weeks where a major event happened (e.g. a bomb threat, a murder, a festival), people were simply more likely to decline or to reschedule.

of social desirability. And though I certainly cannot rule these out, many respondents shared some of their darkest moments, exhibited a range of emotions, and even divulged unflattering details about themselves, their peers and their organization – all of which provided very rich data. Furthermore, Vaisey (2009) is particularly well known for articulating the problems relating to measuring culture through interviewing and the issue of post hoc rationalizations. He argues that accessing culture through the justifications people use to make sense of experience "rules out the possibility that cultural understandings or beliefs could be motives for action" (p. 1678). An elaboration of this ongoing debate is discussed in Chapter 2, and though it is largely beyond the scope of this dissertation, this criticism must be noted.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

In light of some of the shortcomings of this research, there are numerous paths forward to further improve upon our knowledge of police culture and approach to studying the police organization. Most notably is an expansion of the case study in order to not only incorporate comparison but to also refine the theoretical lens applied throughout this dissertation. For instance, in jurisdictions that share very little in common with Blueville with respect to geography, population and socioeconomic features, do the same processes of generational boundary work occur and do similar institutional myths reign despite their local differences (Chapter 3)? If so, then we can further contemplate the power of the *internal* organizational structure and system of relations inside police departments to influence culture. We might also ponder whether and how standardization measures are appropriated, retrofitted or resisted differently by police organizations situated in contexts that are characteristically different (e.g. white collar workers, knowledge economy, etc.) (Chapter 4). Examining this comparison would allow the researcher to

more explicitly focus on the *external* – that is, the role of the local setting and systems of relations unfolding outside the police station's doors.

Furthermore, as I outline in Chapter 2, future directions should endeavour to examine the possibility of gendered and racialized patterns in how individual police officers "use" culture. Inquiries around officer "positionality" could shed more light on ongoing debates surrounding the impact of officer diversification (see Sklansky, 2006; Skolnick, 2008) without having to rely on summary measures of police values and attitudes. Specifically, if there are significant distinctions in the cultural scripts deployed by minority officers compared to their white male counterparts, this would further challenge assumptions about the cultural relevance of socialization into a unified culture or the "police personality". In other words, this kind of research can inform whether the cultural resources officers engage on the job are rooted primarily in the uniform and the organization, or whether these emerge from deeper identity markers.[41]

 In order to further build on the research presented in this dissertation, I would also propose two more directions for future contributions. I discuss each in turn.

#1: Talk is Key: The Methodological Value in Using Interviews to Study Culture in Contentious Organizations

Critics of using "talk" for studying culture argue that interview-based methods are not an adequate way to access "culture in action" because what people say they do is divorced from behaviour (e.g. Jerolmack and Kahn 2014). They call this the *attitudinal fallacy* – the error of

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[41] My own project was not particularly suited to this kind of analysis given the unusually high level of homogeneity among the rank and file of BPS, and completely homogenous upper administration.

inferring situated behavior from verbal accounts – and promote ethnography to surmount this problem. Though I am not inclined to disagree entirely with this criticism – and indeed, I present a similar argument about the problem with simply measuring "attitudes" in Chapter 2 and also employed ethnographic techniques in light of these very same concerns – I argue that we absolutely need "talk" as data when studying people whose lives involve risky or controversial work and who are navigating contentious organizations. Methodological pluralism (Lamont and Swidler 2014) is thus particularly important to the study of police culture, and future directions should include in-depth interviews and observation of police officers in order capture a complete picture of what is often a complicated profession.

Unlike many other research subjects of ethnography who are free to be themselves (if they so wish) when they interact with others (and ethnographers therefore deem *this* as their genuine self), police officers do not share this freedom. Police are called on to act as authority figures and public servants, and to remain vigilant in carrying out their duty: they are always "on" and subject to the expectations of others (even if they are complete strangers). Therefore, on the job, it can be difficult to carve out the genuine from the disingenuous when observing "police culture in action". For example, without interviews, I would not have known that certain constables who were born and raised outside of Blueville are purposely adjusting the way they speak with Blueville residents because an informal tone allows them to more readily build rapport and avoid antagonizing. Without the benefit of one-on-one conversation, I would have merely witnessed the informal manner of interacting (among both native and non-native officers), and drawn a certain set of conclusions that would not have adequately captured the motive behind much police behaviour in Blueville. The one-on-one interview setting temporarily removes the officer from being "on the job" so that he or she can reflect on what they are doing when they are "front-stage" as an officer of law, and not simply a regular citizen.

But perhaps more importantly, this reasoning also applies to interactions *among* police officers themselves, in the absence of citizens or on break at headquarters. Even then, they are performing (see also Waddington 1999). Some officers are completely uninterested in team sports, but based on their interactions with fellow coworkers and their participation in various leagues, you would not know that sport is sometimes only pursued (dispassionately) as a way of padding one's skills inventory to improve chance of promotion. I could only have known this through one-on-one interviews with BPS members. Not only is this "talk" very valuable data for the researcher, it can also parallel officer behaviour insofar as they develop and implement strategies for how to navigate uncertainty in the line of duty (e.g. "I always assume I'm on camera") or how to succeed professionally (e.g. "I took up hockey because it seems to be pretty important around here"). The interview is thus what allows the subject's discursive consciousness to come forward in a way that is less restrained than when the officer is interacting on the streets or among coworkers.

Only through talking it out could I understand the true significance of culture as a resource that is used to establish meaning and navigate what can be a contentious work life. Therefore, future efforts in studying police culture *must* include interviews for accessing a police officer's personal thoughts and interpretations about his or her job, workplace *and their behaviour* because their public self is so heavily guarded and governed by the uniform.

#2: Continuing the Culture Conversation: Research on "Innovation in Policing"

In a 2014 report, titled "Policing Canada in the 21st Century: New Policing for New Challenges", by The Council of Canadian Academies, two key findings are particularly noteworthy. The report explains that police costs have increased at a much faster rate on average

than total public expenditures and gross domestic product (GDP) – and perhaps even more problematically, these mounting costs are not necessarily met by tangible improvements in the quality of public police service. The report also suggests that public confidence in policing has been declining. And so, sustainability and legitimacy of public policing are increasingly being referred to as the current "crisis" in law enforcement in that they relate to policing problems currently shared by cities all across North America. This crisis has also led to moves toward what is called "evidence-based policing". My research suggests that studies of police culture have a role to play here as well. If what police officials and policy makers are after is "innovation" in policing during these unsettled times – or new strategies for action moving forward – then we must stop thinking of "police culture" as the blockade to transformative change. Research like that which is presented in this dissertation reveals the complexities of organizational culture in policing – that it is neither a monolith, nor is it static – and these lessons can be seized to further explore innovation.

For example, my study demonstrates that new accountability measures lead to weakened sense of officer solidarity and unwillingness to take on risky work. How, then, do cultural scripts about risk-aversion interact with perceptions of innovation? I also find that a new generation of diverse, often young, more educated officers do not attach great importance to "old-school" ideas about paramilitary-like deference. This invites questions about which cultural resources are compatible with the new economy of innovation and who is most likely to wield them.

Therefore, in closing, I suggest the path forward is for future ventures of police researchers and reformers of criminal justice to work *with* – not against – the cultural resources police officers deploy to advance our knowledge of the shifting policing landscape, as well as the challenges and opportunities that change presents.

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Appendix A

Interview Guide

Tell me about yourself and your specific position at WPS (*note officer rank, division, years/units served and other demographic/biographical details*).

How do you, personally, define the role of a police officer?

In your opinion, what makes a good police officer?

How did you become a police officer *(inquire about reasons for getting into law enforcement, educational background, what parents did for a living)*?

What do you think is the biggest challenge in your job as a police officer?

What do you enjoy doing outside of your work?

Does this job reflect your expectations coming into it? Are there things you absolutely did not expect?

(Mainly for officers with 15-20+ years):

Now we're going to talk about how you think policing has changed in your time with the department. But before I ask about specific factors, I want to ask you to identify what you feel has been the biggest change on the job in your time as a police officer. And, why?

Other factors (ask about each individually):

1) recruit demographics [who gets hired] 2) training strategies 3) community policing initiatives 4) police-media relationship 5) oversight mechanisms

> *Probing question*: How has that change influenced your routines/ relationships/performance, etc. (whichever is relevant to the question) on the job?

Do you think there is anything unique to policing in your city in comparison to other cities? If so, what?

What is your favorite part of the job? What is your least favorite part of the job?

How do you think the general public views your service? Has this changed overtime? What do you think influences their perceptions of the police department?

Tell me a story ... *(Leave subject matter up to the officers; this will vary according to the officer's sector)*

Is there anything you wish people understood about your occupation? If there was anything you could communicate to the public, what would it be?

Has becoming a police officer impacted your relationships in any way (family, friends, others)? How so?

> *Probing question:* Do you think these impacts stem from you having changed as a person since becoming a police officer?

APPENDIX B

Recruit Questionnaire

BEFORE POLICE COLLEGE

1. What were you doing prior to applying for work with the police department? (i.e. student, employed, etc.)

2. How did you get to this point? What steered you toward policing?
   Probe → so then you always wanted to police...?
   Probe → so policing wasn't the original plan...?

3. What was your application and hiring process like?

4. Certainly, this is a competitive process. Why do you think you were chosen for a position with this police department over other applicants?

5. What appeals to you most about being a police officer?

6. Tell me a bit about your expectations. What do you think a career in policing will be like?

7. Where do you see yourself in 5 years? In 10 years?

AFTER POLICE COLLEGE

Last we spoke, we talked about your trajectory into policing, why you wanted to become a police officer, your expectations moving forward and where you see yourself in a number of years. Now we will discuss your experiences since then and build on those previous answers.

1. Tell me about your experience over at the college...

   a. What do you think is the most important thing you took away from the instructors? Is there something that really sticks out in your mind?
   b. Tell me about something you felt you were really good at (something you felt really confident with) and something you felt a little uneasy with.
   c. How did you relate with the other recruits from the other cities?
   d. Female: What was it like being a female at the college and how do you think your experience differed from that of the males, if at all?

2. I asked you last time what appealed to you most about being a police officer. Now that you've completed OPC and have some time here with the department, I want to repose that same question. What do you feel is the best part of being a police officer?

3. How would you, personally, define the role of a police officer?

4. With the little experience you have gained thus far, what would you say is the biggest challenge you face in your job as a police officer?

5. As a newcomer to this organization and to this new career, would you say that there is a police culture? If so, what is the culture here?

APPENDIX C

Descriptive Statistics (Interview Sample)

Descriptive Statistics   (n=100)

Sex	**Male**	**80%**
	Female	**20%**
	Administration (*Deputy Chief, Superintendent, Inspector*)	**6%**
	Staff Sergeant	**8%**
Rank/Seniority	**Sergeant/Detective**	**21%**
	Constable (1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th class)	**45%**
	Recruit (*Probationary Constable*)	**5%**
	Retired (*Multiple ranks*)	**15%**
Visible Minority Status		**6%**
Education	**High School diploma**	**15%**
	Active (3 people)	
	Retired (12 people)	
	Some College	**3%**
	College diploma/certificate	**23%**
	Some University	**17%**
	University degree (Undergraduate)	**36%**
	University degree (Masters)	**2%**
	Missing	4%

APPENDIX D

Informed Consent Letter

Prospective Research Participant: Read this consent form carefully and ask as many questions as you like before you decide whether you want to participate in this research study. You are free to ask questions at any time before, during, or after your participation in this research.

Researcher: *Holly Campeau*
PhD Student, Sociology, University of Toronto
h.campeau@utoronto.ca
Phone: 416-889-1095

Purpose of the Research: You are being asked to participate in a research study (for a dissertation) designed to explore how policing has changed over the last 25 years and how officers experience their occupation. In other words, this study looks at how the police organization adapts to an ever-changing society with respect to policy, training strategies, recruitment and officers' perspectives about the job.

Procedure: You will be asked questions about policing generally, about your own experiences on the job, and how you think it has changed in your time with the organization. The interview can last anywhere from 45 minutes to 2 hours.

Risks/Benefits: There are no foreseen risks from your participation in the research. Participants may benefit from talking about their experiences as police officers and from sharing their knowledge about the occupation generally.

Voluntary Participation: Your participation in the study is *completely* voluntary and you may choose to stop participating at *any* time. Your decision not to volunteer will not influence the relationship you have with your police department.

Withdrawal from the Study: You can stop participating in the study at *any* time, for *any* reason, if you so decide. Your decision to stop participating, or to refuse to answer particular questions, will not affect your relationship with your police department. In the event you withdraw from the study, all associated data collected will be immediately destroyed when possible.

Confidentiality/Anonymity: All information you supply during the research will be held in confidence and your name will *not* appear in any report or publication of the research. Depending on your own preference, the information you provide will either be recorded by hand or digitally (audio only). Your data will be safely stored in a locked facility and only the researcher (Holly Campeau) will have access to this information. Confidentiality and anonymity will be strictly maintained.

I have read and understand this consent form, and I volunteer to participate in this research study. I understand that I will receive a copy of this form. I voluntarily choose to participate.

Any further questions you have about this study will be answered by the Principal Researcher (contact information above).

If you have questions about your rights as a participant, you can contact the Office of Research Ethics at: ethics.review@utoronto.ca or 416-946-3273.

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