Supplemental Materials for

Police culture, discourse, and the construction of Canadian police officers' identity

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Listing of Supplemental Material(s):

· Detailed Methodology and Methods

Detailed Methodology and Methods

Research Design

The design for this research project was based on 30 semi-structured, one-on-one interviews with police officers in four Canadian police services differing in organizational size, geographic location, policing challenges, etc. (Figure 1). The four services consisted of a mid-sized service in Western Canada, a mid-sized service in Central Canada, a large, urban, regional service in central Canada, and a mid-sized service in Atlantic Canada. In choosing these four services, a number of factors were considered. Canada's policing system must deal with the country's complexity and geographic asymmetry (Council of Canadian Academies, 2014) and three levels of government (local, provincial, and federal), leading to significant differences in the type of policing services delivered. This necessitated the limiting of participants to similar services; in this case, standalone municipal police services whose members would have similar policing experiences.

Figure 1: Police Organizations

Police Service	Police Service Characteristics
Victoria Police Department	Mid-sized service in Western Canada. Policing type: Urban policing in a large, metropolitan setting.
Thunder Bay Police Service	Mid-sized service in Northern Ontario. Policing type: urban policing with significant indigenous policing challenges.
Peel Regional Police	Large, regional service in Southern Ontario. Policing type: urban and sub-urban policing with a population that is more than 50% racialized citizens.
Halifax Regional Police	Mid-sized service in Atlantic Canada. Policing type: urban policing with shared service delivery with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

It should also be noted that, the Chief of Police/Chief Constable in these services expressed prior interest in the research and provided access to potential participants through an official invitation to their service members to volunteer for the interviews. Additionally, participants from the four services worked in different community contexts but generally operated within mid- to large organizations. While the services differ in terms of the community characteristics, officers shared fairly similar experiences of policing at an urban, municipal level (as opposed to a national [RCMP] or a provincial [e.g., Ontario Provincial Police]) levels within fairly contained geographical areas.

Finally, these services reflect the realities of Canadian policing insofar as their geographic jurisdictions, organizational structures, communities served, etc. are distinct. Yet, the service delivery and expectations from the communities served by the four organizations are shared ones regardless of the police organization (e.g., public trust and confidence, issues faced by officers, common police culture, public pressure on officers, resource and budget challenges, approaches to policing such as use-of-force, police tactics, crime prevention, etc.).

The majority of participants (18) had been police officers for 20 years or less, with a further 10 being officers for up to 30 years. Two (2) participants had 30-plus years of experience. Most participants (28) indicated that they spent all of their policing career with their current service, with one participant transferring from a provincial service to a municipal service and one from a municipal service to another municipal service.

The interviews produced data that helped the researcher understand what the data signaled in terms of the discourse produced and relations of power (e.g., institutional, organizational, etc.) vis-à-vis officer identity construction.

Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis generally seeks to analyze content, sociopolitical significance, and interactional effects of semiotic practices to show how such how they shape social processes (Worthand and Reyes, 2015). The participation of 30 individuals is typical of discourse analytic studies that seek not to establish generalizability, but "examine different versions of worlds constructed" (Dick, 2005, p. 1376). In other words, in collecting text for discourse analysis via interviews, a relatively small number of interviews produces sampling that can be analyzed qualitatively for themes without having to meet reliability and validity criteria more suited to quantitative work (Dick, 2004; Harper, 2006).

The research treats the interviews as cases or exemplars from which to both extract data for analysis and comparison and as the bases on which to conduct future research. It should be noted that the demographic characteristics of participants was not the focus of this research.

To extract themes from the data based on such factors such as gender, race, sexual orientation, etc. was not the prime focus of this research. Instead, it focuses on the broader implications of police culture on officers. Studies of how Canadian police officers from specific demographic groups construct their identifies deserves their own dedicated research and offers potential future research opportunities to build on studies such as my own past research (Couto, 2014; 2018).

The analysis focuses on interviews of officers' experiences in law enforcement and how discourses shaped their identities. Participants in this research project volunteered after receiving an email invitation from the Chief of Police's office. The invitation was sent to all police officers within the four services, who were invited to contact me anonymously if they wished to participate in one-on-one interviews.

Most participants (28) indicated that they spent all of their policing career with their current service, with one participant transferring from a provincial police service to a municipal police service and one from a municipal police service to another municipal police service. Participants were also invited to provide one artifact related to their job as a police officer that held significance for them as police officers in order to draw out its significance to the officer's identity-building.

Participants and Interviews

Interviews were conducted with police officers between January and June 2021 via a secure Zoom videoconferencing platform. Participation in the research was completely anonymous and voluntary. Interviews were based on open-ended, semi-structured questions and generally took approximately 45 to 90 minutes per interview.

Data Collection

According to Wodak and Meyer (2009), "most of the approaches to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) do not explicitly explain or recommend date-gathering procedures" (p. 28). For this research project, I chose the following procedures for data-gathering:

Semi-Structured Interviews Evidence

In qualitative research, interviews have as their goal the seeing of the research topic from the perspective of the participants and how and why they come to their particular perspectives (King, 2004). Thus, the interviews become texts which can yield insights into the research project's main research question: how and why police officers construct and maintain their identities as sworn law enforcement professionals.

Artefacts Evidence

When it comes to identity construction, certain artefacts can carry with them deep personal and professional meaning (McMaster et al., 2012; Filstad & Karp, 2021). In its widest interpretation, an artifact can be seen as an object that any individual can create, including, "symbols, machines, industrial processes, social organizations, social movements" (Bunge, 1999, p. 23). In relation to organizational culture, Schein & Schein (2017) describe artefacts as, "the phenomena that you would see, hear, and feel when you encounter a new group with an unfamiliar culture." Further, artefacts include the "visible products of the group", language, technology and products, and artistic creations (p. 17). This is particularly important for policing, where visible artefacts artifacts or "paraphernalia of practice" (Scholar, 2017) play a significant role in conveying meaning to police members as well as members of the public about police culture and traditions through things such as the police uniform as well as rituals like police funerals, graduations, parades, and drills and military-style marching (Crank, 2004; Blaskovits et al., 2022).

Artefacts thus perpetuate traditional power dynamics within the profession (e.g., police hierarchal structures, paramilitary command-and-control, adherence to rules and regulations, etc.) and give expression to certain values (e.g., pride in the profession; solidarity among police officers; the adherence to a unique and separate police subculture which sets its members apart from the rest of society, etc.). The discourse associated with artefacts reinforces policing as not just a unique profession, but a distinct culture to which the concept of solidarity to the group is vital in building individual identity or "blue brotherhood" (Click, 2002; Weitzer, 2015).

In this research project, artefacts that research project participants identified during their interviews become data that were analyzed for their meaning in terms of identity development, relation to reinforcement of power status within the police institution. They indicated a sense of

professional pride for these police professionals regardless of whether they held positive or negative views of their job, the relationship between management and frontline officers, or their perception of policing today. This sense of pride in their profession cuts across other divides (e.g., management-frontline conflicts) and reinforces the concept of "solidarity" among police members regardless of their rank.

The discourse was analyzed using Fairclough's (1995) three analytical focuses: texts (e.g., training materials, organizational rules, and regulations, etc.); discourse practices (e.g., police training and educational programs); and sociocultural practices (organizational practices, political realities, organizational values, police socialization, etc.). Fairclough further developed three corresponding descriptions of these dimensions: description (which is concerned with the formal properties of a text); interpretation (focused on the relationship between text and interaction – the processes of production and interpretation); and explanation, which touches on the relationship between interaction and social context (Fairclough, 1989, p. 26).

Data Analysis – Coding

The coding of the 30 interviews sought to discover what Richardson (2006) and Carvalho (2008) both defined as "critical discourse moments". These "moments" involve specific "happenings" that may often challenge "established" discourse assumed of an institution or profession. For example, some of the participants may challenge police culture's traditional emphasis on the "working personality" that scholars often argued represented a distinct feature of a police officer's work (e.g., policing work as dangerous, the assumed authority inherent in the police officer's role, a cynical worldview, machismo, and racist attitudes, solidarity, and a generally conservative political outlook (Skolnick, 1966; Reiner, 2010).

Coding thus became a process used to thematically analyze textual data (Reynolds, 2018) where a code symbolically assigns an "essence-capturing" status to what is shared by participants (Saldana, 2015, p. 3).

The coding method chosen was based on a Constant Comparative Analysis (CCA) approach to data coding, whose principles generally involve beginning with the data and developing "codes", which then are categorized into "themes" that are further refined into "concepts" (Glaser, 1965). A modified coding approach suggested by Saldana was utilized, which begins with open coding, develops categories from the codes, further refines the categories into themes, and eventually sees the "theory" emerge from the data after considering the relationship between codes, categories, and themes (where Fairclough's CDA framework for discourse analysis is applied). The data was coded involving a two-cycle process:

First-cycle coding

- Attribute coding (basic descriptive info)
- Holistic coding (ID a # of themes)
- Descriptive coding (ID subject of discourses – "what is talked about")
- Values coding (bias, ideology, etc.)
- Versus coding (conflicts)

Second-cycle coding

- Code synthesis – refine first stage coding into dominant themes or meanings
- Pattern coding – meaning within and across data that cohere into metalevel patterns

In the first-stage cycle, coding was worked progressively from a general, basic coding of attributes toward more specific discourse based on values (e.g., what things were talked about, the ideology that underpin the discourse matter). Fairclough's dialectical approach was applied

during the second-cycle coding, where patterns were refined from the first stage specifically related to the relations of power that are established and reproduced through language use, especially in relation to the biases, values, and assumptions which emerge in discernible patterns, etc. This sheds light on discourse that frames how officers use power and knowledge to construct their perceptions of police identity.

It should be noted that Saldana (2015) also identifies longitudinal coding as part of his coding method. However, this type of coding is not applicable to this research project since the data is not captured over distinct time periods for comparison.

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