Bridging the Divide: Exploring Inequities Between Sworn and Civilian Leaders in a Canadian Police Service.

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Abstract

Policing in the 21st century has rapidly become more complex, accountable, and changeable. Concern has emerged across the globe over the sustainability of public policing. Empirical research has supported that effective leadership at all levels of an organization is necessary to achieve success. Much has been said about the importance of effective leadership in policing. This paper explores an unexpected key finding from a mixed-methods, explanatory sequential design doctoral study that examined the self-efficacy beliefs and the factors that have influenced the leader effectiveness of sworn and civilian police leaders in a major Canadian police organization.

Introduction

The 21st century's rapid-paced change has provided many challenges to Canadian municipal police services. Changing community demographics, growing operational complexity, enhanced public accountability, and a global pandemic have placed significant pressure on police organizations to adapt and respond at an unprecedented pace. In Canada, policing is a provincial responsibility, and the rising cost of policing has made it one of the largest consumers of provincial and municipal tax dollars, surpassed only by health care and education. If today's police organizations are to be successful, they must engage and optimize all police leaders' knowledge, skills, and abilities to ensure organizational effectiveness. However, it has been posited there has been a deficit of effective leaders in police organizations (Haberfeld, 2006; Rowe, 2006), and the Police Sector Council (2011) reported that over half of the current police leaders in Canada would be eligible for retirement within five years. Hence, today, police services across the nation are facing a crisis in leadership.

This article discusses a key finding from my mixed-methods doctoral research study which explored the relationship between senior police leaders' self-efficacy and their conceptualizations of effective leadership within a major Canadian police organization. The conceptual framework of the study included the following themes: leadership theory (Kouzes & Posner, 2017), Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory, mentorship, organizational culture and change, and learning organization research (Senge, 2006). I found that despite being more highly educated and holding positions with equal authority, civilian leaders within this police organization experienced marginalization and inequity compared with their sworn counterparts.

We begin with an overview of the entire study and its findings. It provides a short review of the literature about favoured leadership theory in police organizations, police organizational culture, and the history of civilians in police organizations. The article concludes with a discussion about the implications of failing to address the leadership inequity and equality between senior sworn and civilians in police organizations. It offers the framework or lens of 'intersectionality' to assist police executives in identifying, understanding, and addressing hidden inequities and marginalization in their organizations.

Leadership Theory and Policing

Although there is a paucity of research that examines civilian leadership in policing, leadership theory within a policing context has been studied for decades through a variety of lenses, including traits and characteristics (Jermier & Berkes, 1979; Kuykendall & Unsinger, 1982), women in police leadership roles (Price, 1974; Roberg et al., 2002), and behavioural, contingency, and situational leadership theory (Brief et al., 1976). Until the late 1990s, no specific theory or approach was widely accepted (Dobby et al., 2004). In 1998, the release of New York City Police Chief William Bratten's book Turnaround*: How America's top cop reversed the crime epidemic* challenged police leadership to become more proactive in their crime management strategies. He posited it was not the ability of police agencies to deal with crime that defined their success; instead, it was the absence of crime. He declared a transformational approach to leadership was required to create the necessary sustained change to achieve this goal. Hence, for over two decades, the call for a transformational leadership approach in policing has dominated discussion amongst academics, policymakers, and police executives to address the increased pressure for systemic change within police organizations (Anderson, 2000; Dean & Gottschalk, 2013).

Transformational Leadership

In his seminal book, Leadership, Burns (1978) proposed two primary types of leadership, transactional and transformational, fell on a continuum where transactional leadership entailed individuals reaching out for an exchange of value, which related to motivation via rewards and punishments for work or role compliance; whereas transformational was where motivation was garnered through higher-order intrinsic needs and engagement and understanding of the importance of the task rather than using punishment and micro-management. Bass (2008) expanded upon this work, suggesting transformational leadership was a multidimensional construct composing several behaviours, including: (a) idealized influence—the arousing of definite emotions from followers which helps to generate identity with the leader; (b) inspirational motivation—communicating an appealing vision, using symbols to focus effort, and modelling the appropriate behaviour; (c) intellectual stimulation—increasing follower awareness about problems and encouraging them to resolve them in new ways; and (d) individualized consideration—providing support, coaching, and development (Bass & Avolio, 1994). These behaviours are often referred to as the four I's of transformational leadership.

Kouzes and Posner (2017) further refined and expanded transformational leadership to explore the relational aspects of leadership to create positive change to employees' behaviours. They asserted that transformational leadership is learnable and could be practiced. This prescriptive approach has gained popularity in leadership development and organizational training practices in a wide variety of organizations. For example, the current and previous chiefs of the PO in this study have consistently referenced the importance of taking a transformational approach to all leadership initiatives. Additionally, behaviours associated with transformational leadership were embedded in this organization's leadership competencies and performance evaluations, and transformational leadership has become the cornerstone to ongoing leadership development initiatives. Even so, although two decades have passed since the call to action by Bratten (1998), there remains little evidence that transformational leadership has produced any significant systemic change in police organizations.

The ongoing preoccupation with applying transformational leadership in policing has faced criticism. Neyroud (2011) proposed that transformational leadership theory did not go far enough to address the challenges facing police organizations and highlighted the need for a moral and ethics-based leadership theory. Cockcroft (2014) posited that the binary argument used to contrast virtues of transactional leadership and transformational leadership failed to consider the complexities of the 21st century police organization.

Organizational design and leadership approaches play a role in an organization's ability to create and sustain change. Police organizations remain hierarchical organizations with an entrenched, para-military rank structure. An established chain of command, extensive bureaucratic processes, and top-down decision-making creates significant barriers to any change initiative, let alone large-scale transformational change. This presents a problem for many police organizations. Those who are successful at working within rigid bureaucracies often embrace the hierarchal structure and top-down decision-making. As such, the status quo is perpetuated and reinforced through the ongoing promotion and integration of leaders at all organizational levels who are resistant to transformational change and who actively discourage others from challenging current practices (Tan & Heracleous, 2001).

Recently, there has been a call for more contemporary models of leadership to be embraced in policing. Collaborative, participatory, and coalition approaches to leadership have proven

effective for not-for-profit organizations, government agencies, and philanthropic entities that require collaboration within and across organizations and sectors (Kim et al., 2017). It could be argued that while Canadian police organizations have successfully engaged in collaborative leadership partnerships with external social agencies to respond to addiction, homelessness, and mental health concerns, bringing a collaborative and participatory approach to the internal police leadership structure remains a significant challenge for senior police leaders.

Although the organizational structure of police organizations is a significant barrier to transformational change, it is not the only one. Ongoing systemic resistance to transformational change has also been attributed to the presence of a robust occupational police culture (Van Craen & Skogan, 2017).

A Little About Police Occupational Culture

Police work itself has distinctive qualities. Things such as danger, authority, high autonomy, high risk, shift work, long hours, and conflict continuously contribute to an uncertain, stressful, and often hostile work environment for sworn members. This uncertainty and risk have created a reactionary and protective occupational culture.

Most democratic police organizations evolved from historical military origins. To respond to emergencies in a safe, coordinated, and timely fashion, police organizations are organized as strict bureaucracies. Today's police organization's responsibilities to the public have grown significantly. They must deliver a broad range of public safety initiatives in addition to the traditional law enforcement activity of years past. However, most modern police organizations do not look dissimilar to those that existed several decades ago. Although a few police organizations have embraced newer theories of organizational structuring, most remain highly centralized and hierarchical.

Police culture has been studied extensively for several decades. Most focused on police culture from the occupational perspective. Early conclusions were that all police officers shared the same values regardless of where they worked, resulting in a monolithic culture in police organizations (Loftus, 2010). Early work by Wilson (1978) studied how culture was influenced by the leadership styles of executive police leaders and how interactions with their communities influenced the culture within their respective police organizations. Later, research conducted by Reuss-Ianni and Ianni (1983) concluded there were two existing police cultures in police

organizations. The first was the 'street cop' culture wherein officers coveted the days when police were respected and admired by the public, fellow officers, and their bosses were part of the police family. This culture reflects the characteristics of the monolithic culture once prevalent in police organizations. While officers felt a sense of belonging and camaraderie, it created and promoted an 'us versus them' mentality. The second culture was a 'management cop culture'. In this culture, officers were focused on professionalizing the occupation to make police organizations more productive, efficient, and responsive to community needs. Paoline (2004) and Chan (1997) built upon the work of Reuss-Ianni and Ianni (1983) and later concluded there was enough evidence to posit that police officers could not be grouped into specific subgroups and did not represent a single traditional characterization of police culture. This evolution away from the traditional monolithic culture was often attributed to introducing female police officers, racial minorities, university-educated officers, and civilian members (Chan, 1997; Paoline, 2004).

Despite studies differing around the description of police occupational culture, Murphy and McKenna (2007) found agreement in the literature around seven core values and qualities of police culture:

1. *Solidarity*: Emphasis on shared responsibility and loyalty to other police officers above all others;

2. *Authoritarianism*: Belief in and willingness to exercise power over others, believed to be either a job function or personality type;

3. *Suspicion*: Mistrust of people gained from limited and often negative contact with the public; a protective response from the uncertainty of the operational environment;

4. *Conservative*: Political and social outlook either caused by the moralistic and negative nature of police work or those who are attracted to police work;

5. *Prejudicial*: Tendency to prejudge others based on values, behaviour, and work experience. This stereotyping gets the job done but can lead to negative consequences such as racism and sexism;

6. *Cynicism*: Tendency to regard all non-police as potentially unreliable, unsympathetic, and critical of police; and

7. *Blue-collar*: Describes the class background and values of most police officers as blue-collar or working-class and suggests that police cultural values reflect many of the general values and attitudes of working-class white males.

Murphy and McKenna (2007) further argued these values and characteristics, although understandable in police culture, were also perceived as linked to longstanding systemic problems associated with policing. As stated earlier, the study of police culture, like that of police leadership, has focused almost exclusively on the experiences of sworn officers. It is difficult to discern the impact of police culture on civilian leaders in police organizations, as even those who might share the dominant groups' traits (cis-gendered white male) could still be perceived as outsiders and potential threats to the status quo. Within this context, it is not unreasonable to assume the cultural values of police organizations could contribute to organizational blindness around the experiences of individuals who do not fit the dominant cultural norms.

History and Evolution of Civilian Members in Police Organizations

The addition of civilian members to police organizations is not a new phenomenon. The first record of civilians employed in police organizations is attributed to the United Kingdom's Metropolitan Police of London in 1829, when four civilian clerical jobs were created. While considered novel and a little controversial at the time, by the 1920s, civilian administrative hires were commonplace in the United Kingdom. Several factors led to the increase of civilians in policing in North America. First, the rapid growth of American and Canadian cities following World War II resulted in increased crime and disorder (Schwartz et al., 1975). In addition, the emergence of the Professional Era of Policing (1930–1980) occurred in the United States. Police experts at the time began advocating for the hiring of civilians for specialized roles that included finance, human resources, and data processing (Forst, 2000; Wilson & McLaren, 1972). Increasing civilian membership was also associated with improving efficiencies, addressing areas of specialization, and reducing overall operational costs (Dick & Metcalf, 2001). In a similar effort to achieve better value for money spent in policing, the United Kingdom's Home Office began offering financial incentives to those police services recruiting civilian staff in the 1980s (Jones & Newburg, 2002; Loveday, 2006).

Data collection about civilians in police organizations in Canada did not begin until 1962. At that time, the ratio between sworn and civilian personnel was 4.6:1 sworn to civilian, respectively. This ratio declined to 2.8:1 in the early 1980s until 2014, when it fell to 2.4:1 (Public Safety Canada, 2017). In May of 2014, the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics reported that

civilians comprised 29% of police personnel. This was up three percent from the previous decade, and since 2003, the number of civilian employees has grown twice as quickly as that of sworn officers. The report also noted over half (57%) of civilian positions were occupied by women, which supports Alderden and Skogan's (2012) assertion that hiring civilians provided a quick way to alter organizational demographics and respond to the increased political pressures around diversity within police organizations.

As the number of civilians within police organizations has grown, so have the roles and functions they fulfill. Public Safety Canada (2017) stated civilian positions in police organizations can be classified into four operational categories: administration, special uniformed services, investigative support, and areas involving highly specialized knowledge, often of a technical or technological nature. Regardless of their role, civilians contribute significantly to the effectiveness of police organizations, yet despite these contributions, civilian personnel's experiences are seldom reflected in police research studies. Those who do speak to civilians focus on what positions would be best suited for them, where integration into traditional policing roles could occur, and what economic benefits could be leveraged by doing so.

Civilian roles in police organizations have evolved significantly since the 1940s. Like the United Kingdom, sizeable municipal police services in Canada hire executive-level civilians to lead critical organization components such as finance, technology, legal, public relations, and human resources. To address the highly specialized and complex work areas, senior civilian police leaders are usually highly educated, have extensive experience working in other sectors, and often have worked in collaborative, participatory, and coalition leadership environments. While little research reflects the experience of civilians in police organizations, given the occupational culture within which they operate, their ascent into more senior leadership positions could not have been easy. Alderden and Skogan (2012) reported civilians often found themselves marginalized by the sworn members of their police organization. Civilians are generally paid a lower salary than their sworn peers, have limited opportunities for promotion or advancement, and are 'politically' easier to lay off than sworn members during an economic recession. These factors make hiring and retaining highly skilled civilians in today's market difficult. Those who join and stay on have historically reported having their contributions unappreciated and, at times, disrespected by their sworn peers. Historically, these challenges were attributed to disinterested senior police executives who were more concerned with maintaining the traditional policing model than creating an

equitable workplace (Chess, 1960). All these factors support the notion that civilian members in POs work within an inequality regime.

Inequality regime refers to the interrelated practices, processes, and actions resulting in and maintaining class, gender, and racial inequalities within organizations. Inequality regimes are present in all organizations and represent the systemic disparities between those who have the power to make decisions, access resources, and maintain employment security (Acker, 2006). In addition to the sworn/civilian dichotomy in policing, there are several other areas where inequality regimes are potentially thriving in police organizations. These would include inequality regimes that focus on gender, race, and sexuality. Most organizations wanting to address these tend to focus on one type of oppression (Breslin et al., 2017). This can create a false sense that everyone within that dimension shares the same experience. Often, there is more than one inequality regime present. For example, in examining the inequities between sworn and civilian police leaders, the barriers, challenges, and opportunities for a civilian, cis-gendered, white male might look entirely different than those of a lesbian of colour who occupies the same leadership position. When classism, racism, sexism, ageism, and ableism combine, it can amplify the experience of oppression.

Police organizations are not immune to the increased societal pressure to ensure a diverse and inclusive workplace for their members. Most have focused on expanding the presence of visible minorities through proactive recruitment strategies within the communities they are responsible for policing, rather than exploring the internal systemic barriers that may prevent diverse hires from reaching their full potential once hired. As inequity regimes can remain hidden from the 'dominant culture'-leaders, police organizations might benefit from applying a lens of intersectionality to their internal processes and systems.

Research Design & Analysis

The Context

This research study was conducted in a large urban police service in a vibrant, multicultural city in Western Canada. At the time of the study, which was pre-pandemic, the police organization (PO) was the third-largest municipal police service in Canada. It employed 2,720 people, which comprised 2,006 sworn police officers and 714 civilian employees (T. Duke, personal communication, April 14, 2014). The PO, like all police services in North America, has a

hierarchical rank structure that defines authority for its organizational structure. The scope of this research was limited to senior leaders within one PO to ensure results and subsequent recommendations were relevant and actionable within the organization. However, outside of a few contextual nuances between the provinces, there is little change to the core business of policing across Canada, in that, all police services require their members to operate in high-risk, high-autonomy environments. The findings of this study would likely be transferable to other major Canadian city police organizations, with similar demographic features.

Methodology

The methodology in this research was mixed methods and aligned with the pragmatic paradigm, as a critical aim of this research was to inform leadership development programming within the police organization (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). There were two phases as part of Creswell's (2012) explanatory sequential strategy: phase 1 (P1), the collection of quantitative data and analysis, followed by phase 2 (P2) qualitative data collection and analysis, which elaborated and provided context and explanations of the quantitative results and ended with the interpretation of the entire analysis. In P1, two quantitative instruments were administered: Hannah and Avolio's (2013) Leader Efficacy Questionnaire (LEQ) and Posner and Kouzes's (1988) Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI). The LEQ (Hannah & Avolio, 2013) was a relatively newer instrument in leader efficacy research. It was selected because it is one of a few instruments that solely measured leadership self-efficacy in an organizational environment. The LEQ has been validated across seven diverse sample groups and has predicted outcomes related to highly effective leadership styles, leader performance, and enhanced motivation to lead others (Hannah & Avolio, 2013). The second instrument (LPI) was selected due to its two decades track record in numerous studies and was found to be reliable and valid in identifying transformational leadership practices (Pozner & Kouzes, 1988). Transformational leadership was an essential theory, as this theory tends to prevail in many leadership development programs and strategic directions within policing.

Following the administration of the questionnaires in P1, participants were invited to participate in P2 semi-structured personal interviews of approximately one-hour duration. The eight interview questions focused on the participant's leadership journey and their conceptualizations of effective police leadership. In addition to describing how they became

effective senior police leaders, participants were asked to identify and reflect on the behaviours they associated with effective and non-effective police leadership.

Sample

This study used purposeful sampling of only sworn officers, at the rank of inspector or higher ranks (considered senior officers in this PO), and civilian members, with equal positional authority, within the police organization. This limited the study to a total population of 55 potential participants. For the quantitative component of this study, all 55 prospective participants were invited to participate via email; 36 submitted the questionnaires/inventories (65% response rate), and 34 were interviewed (62% response rate). Two civilian participants were unavailable for interviews. Of the 36 participants: 26 identified as male and 10 as female. There were 11 civilian managers and 25 sworn participants who varied in rank from inspector to deputy chief. In total, 34 participants completed all study components, yielding a 62% response rate. Table 1 depicts the relationship between the sample and target population for this study and identifies the numbers and types of officers who participated.

Table 1

Population and Target Population

Participants	Questionnaires (P1) (n)		Interview (P2) (n)		Total (N)		Response Percentage of P1 and P2 (%)		
	Sworn	Civilian	Sworn	Civilian	P1	P2	Sworn	Civilian	All
Sample frame: senior officers & civilian equivalent	43	12	43	12	55	55	100	100	100
Participants in this study	25	11	25	9	36	34	58	75	62

Note. Questionnaires were LEQ and LPI.

The average age of all participants was 50 years old, with an average of 22 years of employment with the police service. Participants' educational backgrounds were clustered into five categories outlined in Table 2.

Table 2

Participants' Attained Educational Level

Education level attained	Sworn participants f	Civilian participants f	Percentage (%) of sworn participants	Percentage (%) of civilian participants
High school	2	0	12.5	0
Trade technical	8	0	32	0
Associate degree	2	0	8	0
Bachelor's degree	10	4	25	33.33
Master's degree	3	6	12	50
Professional degree	0	1	0	8.3
Doctorate	0	1	0	8.3

Analysis

The quantitative data collected in P1 were aggregated into two comparison groupings (male/female and sworn/civilian). Both instrument scores and participants' demographic information were entered into SPSS for further analysis. Two independent sample t-tests and a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) test with education being the independent variable were completed. The qualitative data collected from the interviews were transcribed and analyzed using iterative thematic coding and compared against the research questions and the conceptual framework of the study, which included leadership theory, organizational change theory, social cognitive theory, mentorship, learning organizations, and culture. Coding frequencies were analyzed and placed into MS Excel spreadsheets to "quantitize" the qualitative data as a dimension of the legitimation approach advised by Onwuegbuzie et al. (2011, p. 1263). The coding was subsequently examined for patterns or anomalies. Inter-rater reliability, where comparisons were made between my coding regime and those of two doctoral peers, who had each coded one interview to assess alignment between my coding schema and theirs, was used to interrogate and validate the legitimacy of my codes. A final phase of data interpretation occurred when the quantitative findings were compared and integrated with the qualitative results. In this chapter, findings came primarily from the qualitative phase of research.

Findings

Analysis revealed six overarching themes about highly effective leadership in the PO: (a) learning to lead, (b) exemplary interpersonal skills, (c) values-centric leadership, (d) leader competency, (e) leader self-awareness, and (f) creating a positive work environment. There were also four potential barriers to effective leadership identified: (1) strong personal relationships, (2) promotional and transfer processes, (3) organizational structure, and (4) organizational culture. The six themes of highly effective leadership and four barriers, the conceptual framework, and academic literature were analyzed in relation to each other, which led to the identification of five key findings:

1. *Effective police leadership was learned*. Leaders in the PO developed their effectiveness by combining various learning experiences garnered over a lifetime. Observational and experiential learning were central to all participants' perception of efficacy and played a critical role in their leadership journey;

2. *Civilian leaders perceived marginalization and inequity in relation to sworn leaders*;

3. *Effective police leaders articulated a pluralistic approach to leadership practice*;

4. *Psychological safety in the PO was a concern for leaders*; and

5. *Evolving organizational culture, systems, and processes have created uncertainty* for leaders.

This chapter focuses on the second major finding: civilian *leaders perceive marginalization and inequity in relation to sworn leaders* although there may be some linkages and overlap with other themes.

Equity and Equality

Most civilian leaders in this study emphasized the need for effective police leaders to treat all members (sworn and civilian) equally and equitably. "Equality" was defined as being treated the same as their same-similar ranked sworn counterparts; while "equity" was framed as receiving consideration due to a particular expertise or specialization that others did not have. Civilian leaders expressed a sentiment of unfairness, particularly regarding having access and influence with the senior executive team (i.e., the chief *and* deputies). In contrast, only one sworn participant identified this as a concern. This finding suggested that civilian leaders are not maximizing their leadership potential within POs, and their sworn peers were unaware of their challenges.

Despite leading large divisions and having specialized expertise in their fields, civilian leaders' contributions were not *perceived* as valued as those of sworn officers. One participant expressed frustration at how wearing the uniform granted more accessible access to the sworn senior executive decision-makers. The "easier access" was perceived as providing sworn leaders more opportunity to influence organizational decisions, often resulting in civilian leaders being left out of or late to the discussion.

Inequity *and* inequality were the most significant findings that differentiated civilian leader participants from sworn:

> *It's that sworn versus civilian piece. Maybe we are not as supported as the sworn are, just because this is a dominantly sworn organization, and we are the support people, I totally get that. But without us, you can't do your job. We are support, but we still do a vital piece.*

Civilian participants also pointed out how they were denied access to senior executive leaders because of the existing inequality and strong personal relationships between sworn leaders:

> *I still see that senior officer's rank as kind of an old boys' club. And it is. And I know even the women in there don't always feel totally comfortable. But it's so unavailable to civilians. And maybe it's gender, maybe it's rank, maybe it's a sworn/civilian thing. I don't know. But those informal networks are there—and the reality is, we know that those informal networks are where people make decisions, where business is discussed, where strategy is—as civilian managers, we just don't have access to that.*

Others articulated how the inequity resulted in civilians leaving the organization: "They [civilian employees who left the CPS] were never in the mainstream. … They weren't equal." Another participant said:

> *Some of the people I have known that have left here; part of my perception of what wasn't working for them was that they always felt as a civilian they were never in the mainstream. Whether you were promoted as a civilian or not, I don't think they ever felt it was the same. It wasn't equal.*

Although less than one percent of sworn participants specifically identified the need for police leaders to be inclusive of civilian employees, there was an acknowledgement of the inequity:

> *I don't think sometimes we recognize and value what the strengths in our civilian staff are. … . We have some exceptionally talented civilians who make this organization what it is and bring exceptional strength to the organization. And sometimes I don't think they get the same recognition or value placed on their efforts as, perhaps, some other individual who holds the rank of "X."*

Hence, in the consideration of equity and equality, civilians perceived themselves as secondary within the organization due to their deficit in holding sworn status which trumped their greater expertise or voice at the decision making table.

Value of Education

Civilian leaders in this study had significantly higher levels of education than their sworn counterparts. While not surprising, as the roles most civilian leaders fulfill in police organizations require discipline expertise, there were contrasting beliefs between sworn and civilian leaders concerning the role of formal education and leadership efficacy. Sworn participants indicated effective leadership required balancing formal education and on-the-job experience. One participant stated formal education was not unto itself an indicator of leadership, and a lack of it should never be a barrier to individuals becoming police leaders:

> *I find that the people with the most education are generally the ones most distanced from what is going on. I would like to see it balanced. Could I use more education—absolutely I could, but does education itself make you a good leader? No, it does not. I think if we made the educational portion of it something that determines whether you make chief or not, then I think we are making a huge mistake. It* [good leadership] *is a combination of things.*

Other sworn participants failed to connect formal education to leadership effectiveness. While speaking about a recently completed leadership course, one participant stated,

> *It* [the course] *counts for half a masters, and it's about a 14-month long thing. It was a lot of work actually, as I'm not much for fancy book learning. End of the day, I don't know the value of it, really.*

This contrast in educational importance was not evident with the civilian participants. Civilian leaders were statistically more highly educated than sworn members and credited formal learning as integral to their leadership development.

Civilian and sworn participants also differed in terms of learning leadership by making mistakes. Sworn participants (48%) specifically articulated how they learned to be good leaders by making mistakes, while few civilians (22%) mentioned this. As stated by one sworn participant, "I don't think I really knew what I was doing. You learn from your mistakes very quickly, which I think is a good thing. I think mistakes are the biggest learning tools sometimes". This difference is most likely attributed to the sworn/civilian roles within police organizations. Hired as generalists, sworn members acquire their work expertise as their career progresses. Sworn

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members also have considerable autonomy in their work. Mistakes can occur with little or no formal oversight by direct supervisors. In contrast, civilian members are generally hired as discipline (e.g., finance, IT, etc.) experts, and any mistakes are visible and potentially problematic to operational effectiveness.

Summary of Findings

The main theme that emerged from this study was the sense of inequity and inequality that civilian participants felt in relation to their sworn counterparts. The civilian participants reported feeling less supported, valued, and included by the sworn leaders and the organizational culture. They also expressed how this affected their access to decision-making, career advancement, and retention. On the other hand, the sworn participants showed limited awareness of the need for greater inclusion and recognition of their civilian counterparts. The findings suggested there is a gap between the experiences and expectations of the two groups, and this may have implications for the effectiveness and well-being of the police organization.

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Discussion

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Research into the experiences of civilians in police organizations is limited and we could not locate any police research that included or considered civilian leaders' perspectives. However, the findings of inequity and marginalization between sworn and civilians in POs are consistent with those of earlier civilian police studies (Alderden & Skogan, 2012). Despite several decades of civilian integration and increasing responsibility and authority, civilian police leaders continue to experience a systemic undertone of inequity, inequality, and marginalization in their POs.

These ongoing inequities can potentially negatively impact the leadership effectiveness in POs in several ways. First, they could impede the organization's ability to adapt to emerging change. The lack of systemic change in police organizations has been attributed to an absence of change leadership and an inertial police culture (Duxbury et al., 2018). However, the two concepts are undoubtedly interconnected. Executive and senior leaders play an important role in sustaining an organization's culture, and its readiness for change (Schein, 1999). Senior police leaders will need to shift from a siloed perspective to that of seeing the entire system. To accomplish this, police leadership must evolve to include more contemporary models of leadership that promote collaboration, innovation, and creativity. Senior civilian police leaders are uniquely placed to help facilitate that evolution. They are recruited and hired for specific discipline expertise, possess

leadership experience which often reflects and aligns with more participatory or collaborative approaches, and hold significantly higher levels of education than their sworn counterparts. More importantly, civilian leaders are often crucial participants in cross-bureau leadership teams. If organizational culture and effectiveness are to be improved in police organizations, and if they are to become more adept at innovation, then civilian leaders must be treated with greater equity and equality within them. Second, inequities between civilian and sworn leaders on executive teams are likely to contribute to team misalignment. Misalignment on senior executive teams can often result in wasted effort and increased frustration (Senge, 1990). Third, civilian leaders who continue to feel undervalued and unappreciated may choose to leave the police organization at a time when their expertise and unique perspective are needed most. Finally, failing to address unequal regimes ultimately reinforces the status quo, potentially undermining ongoing proactive leadership initiatives that are attempting to evolve the current police culture.

There is a saying in operational policing that 'if it is predictable, it is preventable', meaning that if police can predict where crime will occur, proactive steps can be taken to ensure it does not happen. The complex challenges and increasing public and political pressure for police organizations to transform are predictable (Duxbury et al., 2018). The unsustainability of the current model due to rising costs is predictable (Fantino, 2011). Arguably the call for widespread reform goes beyond the predictable, it is being publicly demanded. Yet, as highlighted in this study, long-standing inequities and inequalities remain largely unnoticed, ignored, or unacknowledged in police organizations.

According to Scharmer (2018) there is a blind spot in leadership. He argued the blind spot is in the inner place from where leaders perceive, act, communicate, and think. A leader can see results (what they do), and the process they create (how they do it), but often do not see or reflect upon the 'inner place' that leaders draw from (the who). Scharmer (2018) believes the inner place is more than a person's values, beliefs or identity, but also includes how they relate to the world and the future state they wish to create. He described this as form must follow consciousness. Scharmer (2018) pointed out that for the individual leader, this manifests as mindfulness, but at the team level, the system can see itself, its assumptions, and its patterns. Police organizations need to enhance their ability to see and recognize the inequities within their systems. First, leaders must be able to see the system and develop awareness of hidden assumptions they contain. One approach

that POs could employ is to examine the experiences of their members through the lens of intersectionality.

The term intersectionality has been attributed to Crenshaw (1991), who used it to describe "the various ways race and gender interact to shape the multiple dimensions of black women's employment experiences" (p. 1244). Crenshaw (1989, 1994) used the metaphor of intersecting roads to describe and explain how racial and gender discrimination compounded each other. Over the past two decades, researchers from various disciplines have expanded the conversation surrounding intersectionality, including sociology, political geography, economics, critical psycho-therapy, and postcolonial studies (Grabham et al., 2009).

Police organizations have historically struggled with workplace equality and equity. This might be attributed to the sizeable dominant group and strong occupational cultures keeping leadership ignorant of the oppression within the systems. Civilians' presence, roles, responsibilities, and diversity of expertise within police organizations have grown in complexity and responsibility over the past several decades. In some cases, sworn officers now report directly to civilian leaders. This would indicate that some aspects of the equality between the two groups have been addressed. It is, therefore, unlikely that being a non-sworn member is the only issue facing civilian leaders in policing. As most civilian hires are female (57%), and the hiring of civilians provides a quick way for POs to alter organizational demographics in response to political demands for increased diversity (Alderden & Skogan, 2012), civilian leaders are likely dealing with several intersecting inequalities and inequities. Using intersectionality as a framework or lens to examine the day-to-day experiences of civilian leaders in POs could help identify specific areas where organizational resources and effort would be best placed to address systemic oppression. For example, an intersectional analysis of POs' policies, practices, and culture would assist in identifying how current systems reinforce barriers for marginalized organizational groups. This would allow POs to apply their resources in the areas that would provide the most benefit.

Conclusion

In conclusion, while the role and responsibilities of civilian leaders in Canadian police organizations have evolved significantly over the past few decades, there is little research into their unique experiences. The findings from this study identified how perceived inequity, inequality, and marginalization of civilian leaders might negatively impact overall leadership efficacy in police

organizations. Complicating this is that most sworn leaders in this study were unaware of their civilian peers' negative experiences or perceptions. To address the growing complexities of today's society and maintain public trust, POs must ensure that all leaders can utilize their knowledge, skills, and abilities to the fullest. We argue that police organizations must address these issues and embrace more collaborative and innovative leadership models or risk failing to adapt to the changing environment and demands. Awareness of inequity and inequality is the first step in this journey. By looking through the lens of intersectionality, police leaders can identify and surface systemic systems of oppression of which they might otherwise remain ignorant.

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