Covered in Blue: Police Culture and LGBT Police Officers

in the Province of Ontario

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Abstract

This study examines the basic beliefs, values, and assumptions of police culture, which in the Western world has been dominated by white, working class, heterosexual males. It further considers how the culture is perceived by and impacts the workplace and career experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) police officers in the Province of Ontario. Framed by Schein's Cultural Approach to Organizations Theory, a content analysis of open-ended interviews with 21 LGBT police officers showed that most officers believe their status and relationships in their workplaces are more positive today compared to other eras. However, it also found that these officers also believed that police culture fundamentally retains a hypermasculine and heterosexual orientation. These finding are supported by a content analysis of key artefacts from selected police services, which also indicated that that police services retain traditional and conservative values.

Key words: policing, police culture, LGBT, diversity, organizational communications

Acknowledgements

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Introduction

Policing in the Western world is based on a police culture that is distinct and unique from other workplace cultures. This culture is applicable to all police organizations, slow to change in its fundamental assumptions, and strongly defined by values and beliefs that are continuously reinforced to its members (Skolnick, 2008, p. 35). Franklin (2007) described the culture as heterosexual and hypermasculine in character (p. 10). It has produced organizations that have traditionally been "white, working class, male enclaves" (Miller, Forest, & Jurik, 2003, p. 358).

New Haven Chief of Police James Ahern described police culture thus: "The day a new recruit walks through the door of the police academy, he leaves society behind to enter a profession that does more than give him a job, it defines who he is. He will always be a cop" (Ahern, 1972, p. 168). This indicates that police culture places significant demands on its members to adhere to its basic beliefs and values, which are passed onto new members. It accomplishes this by reinforcing "complex ensembles of values, attitudes, symbols, rites, recipes, and practices" that are unique to the law enforcement profession (Reiner, 2010, p. 116).

Police officers that do not belong to the normative white, heterosexual male definition of the prototypical "cop" must negotiate their status within their organizations, their perceptions about their workplace environment, and relationships with internal groups (Burke, 1994, p. 193). Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) police officers constitute a group that has traditionally not been accepted within policing. Such officers must deal with fact that they are part of a profession that has often been an instrument of oppression when it comes to their own community. LGBT police officers are part of a community that as recently as the 1980s was still subjected to police harassment and raids on gay establishments such as bars and bathhouses.

This study examines the basic beliefs, values, and assumptions of police culture and how

this culture impacts the workplace and career experiences of LGBT police officers in the

Province of Ontario. LGBT officers were provided with an opportunity through private, one-on-

one interviews with me to express how they perceived police culture and whether they felt a

sense of belonging within a culture that traditionally has not been receptive to same-sex

individuals. The study also considers whether a "condemnatory potential", where police are

susceptible to corruption, abuse of authority, and resistance to organizational change because of

the culture's insistence on solidarity and secrecy among its members, exists in today's police

culture (Waddington, 1999, p. 293). Such a condemnatory potential has the capacity to

undermine organizational or policy efforts to promote inclusiveness.

Policing and LGBT Communities

The relationship between police services and members of LGBT communities in North

America has been marked by discrimination, prejudice, and harassment (Kirkup, 2013, p. 6). The

modern gay rights movement in North American has roots in the 1969 police raid of the

Stonewall Inn in New York City. It is not coincidental that the Stonewall Riot was sparked by

police action. Armstrong and Carge (2006) noted that most anti-gay activity in the 1950s and

1960s was in response to police repression and centred on bars, which served as "the primary

social institution" of homosexual life after World War II (p. 728). Police oppression of LGBT

communities were commonplace pre-Stonewall and reflected the hypermasculine and

heterosexual orientation of policing at the time.

Conflict between police and LGBT communities generally reflected Canadian society's

heteronormative bias. For example, the Government of Ontario appointed a commission in the

1950s to examine "delinquents" in provincial reform institutions. One of the commission's

focuses was on "sexual deviants", including homosexuals (Warner, 2002, p. 24). Historical

events such as the 1981 Toronto Bathhouse Raids (Kirkup, 2013, p. 6) and the Ottawa Police

Service's 2010 Steven Boone HIV non-disclosure press release (HIV & AIDS Legal Clinic

Ontario, 2013, p. 2) are examples of events that have resulted in tensions between police services

and LGBT communities.

Research Question

There is little research data about Canadian LGBT police officers and their experiences in

relation to police culture compared to the body of work in the United States (Armacost, 2004;

Charles & Rouse-Arndt, 2004; Chung, 2001; Colvin 2008; Colvin, 2012; Hassell & Brandt,

2009; Miller et. al, 2003; Myers, Forest & Miller, 2008; Sklansky, 2006; Skolnick, 2008) and

Europe (Burke, 1993; Burke, 1994; Burke, 1995; Jones & Williams, 2013; Rumen &

Broomfield, 2012; Terpstra & Schaap, 2013).

Using Schein's Model of Organizational Culture, this study examines the basic beliefs,

values, and assumptions of the police culture in Ontario. It then considers how this culture

impacts the workplace and career experiences of LGBT police officers. According to Schein

(2010), organizational culture is derived from the beliefs, values, and assumptions of

organizational founders, the learning experiences of group members as their organizations

evolve, and the new beliefs, values, and assumptions brought into an organization by new

members and leaders (p. 219). Schein's Model provides a useful framework for considering how

police culture is communicated to and perceived by LGBT police officers because it allows for

consideration of the fundamental ethos that underpins the culture within the police workplace

environment.

Using my contacts within Ontario police organizations, I issued a general invitation for any

LGBT police officer in the Province of Ontario to contact me in order to participate in this study.

This resulted in 21 LGBT police officers having the opportunity (through private, one-on-one interviews) to reflect on the basic beliefs, values, and assumptions of their organizations and their experiences within police culture. This study also offered these officers an opportunity to examine how they view their workplaces, their relationships with their fellow officers, and their careers. As noted by Schein (2010), basic beliefs, values, and assumptions drive an organization's culture. How members of an organization negotiate their place within the dominant culture significantly impacts their workplace experience and career development.

Literature Review

According to Sklansky (2007), a distinct police culture has become an "unquestioned orthodoxy" among law enforcement scholars in the Western world (p. 20). Modern research on police culture can be traced to Westley's (1970) foundational study of police in Gary, Indiana. Its depiction of police culture as isolated from the rest of society, self-protecting, shrouded in secrecy, and promoting internal solidarity continues to constitute common themes in research into police culture. As police organizations have started to better reflect the diversity of their communities, a culture clash has occurred. What Miller et al. (2003) defined as the traditional "white, working class, male enclaves" of police culture has come up against greater diversity in gender, racial, ethnic, and sexual orientations within modern police organizations (p. 358). In this environment, LGBT officers negotiate their sexual identity within a heterosexual, hypermasculine culture, which has traditionally regarded homosexuality as a part of a "societal disorder that the police officer has dedicated his or her life to eradicating" (Burke, 1994, p. 193). Colvin (2008) further posited that LGBT police officers must deal with prevailing stereotypes and the costs associated in coming out at work in a strongly hypermasculine, heterosexual culture (pp. 88-89).

   To date, academic research into police culture has been centred on two distinct schools of

thought. Paoline (2004) identified these two schools as (1) viewing police culture as a hegemonic

monolith that encompasses all police officers, and (2) considering police culture as a series of

sub-cultures (p. 205). Research on specific groups or subcultures within policing is increasingly

common today (Colvin, 2012; Hassell & Brandl, 2009).

Organizational Values

   The monolithic approach holds that police culture shares a set of common beliefs and

behaviours expected of all officers regardless of their personal backgrounds, individual

characteristics, and personal values. This is accomplished through two concepts: (1)

socialization, where officers are initiated into a police "brotherhood" as part of their training,

socialize with one another, and tend to exclude non-police from their interaction, and (2)

solidarity, where officers develop a sense of "brotherhood", the "blue line", and "having one

another's back" (Skolnick, 1994, pp. 48, 52). Research in this area portrays police officers in a

negative light, as a "cynical, authoritative, and isolated group of people who have low self-

esteem and feel they receive little respect" (Carter & Radlet, 1999, p. 166). In this context,

resistance to groups that challenge the traditional status quo through gender, racial, ethnic, and

sexual diversity can be significant.

   In contrast to the monolithic view, the subculture approach to police culture research was

developed in the 1970s. Researchers considered police culture not as a monolith, but as made up

of subcultures with greater diversity and social variability than previously thought (Nickels &

Verma, 2007, p. 187). Paoline (2004) argued that the traditional "cop" was one of many

subcultures or groups within modern police organizations (p. 205). According to Nickels &

Verma (2007), these subcultures were impacted by management styles, policing philosophies,

organizational traditions, shifting social-economic changes in society, and new demographics,

including greater numbers of women, racial and ethnic minorities and gays and lesbians within

police organizations (p. 188). The subcultures approach to police culture scholarship is related to

the emergence of "community policing" in which organizations attempt to work with all their

communities to set organizational priorities, maintain public order, and solve crimes (Colvin,

2012, p. 17). This approach is more inclusive and open to valuing the diversity of officers who

do not fit within the traditional white, heterosexual male framing of police culture. Studies that

focus on subcultures based on gender, race, or sexual orientation have increasingly provided

insight into the lived experiences of police officers from outside of the "white, working class,

male enclaves" from which police officers have traditionally been derived from in the Western

world (Miller, Forest, & Jurik, 2003, p. 358).

Culture and Organizations

Whether police culture is seen as monolithic or made up of subcultures, culture drives the

character of an organization. It guides employees on what they are expected to believe and act

and promotes communication and mutual understanding (George & Jayan, 2012, p. 119).

Skolnick (2008) posited that occupational groups develop understanding about how to interpret

conduct, retain loyalties, express opinions, and use authority largely from organizational

structures (p. 35). Police officers are part of a culture that has both formal and informal rules,

values, and beliefs that powerfully affect judgment and conduct.

In many cases, police culture rules are unwritten and a part of a "code". The code guides

how police officers are to think and act both in relation to each other and the external community

(Skolnick, 2008, p. 37). Police culture also promotes what Skolnick (2008) called a "working

personality" in police officers. A working personality is derived from three prominent features of

police work: the exercise of authority, the exposure to danger, and the pressure to produce. This can be especially challenging for officers from groups that have traditionally been subject to harassment and abuse at the hands of police such as racial minorities and gays and lesbians. Under pressure from their dominant workplace culture, such officers must decide whether to become prototypical "cops", mimicking the traditional attributes of police officers (exercising of coercive power, striving to prove themselves in their police work, intolerance of law beakers) (p. 36). They must also determine how to negotiate potential workplace discrimination based on their race or their sexual orientation. This is particularly apparent in the ways that LGBT police officers deal with potential discrimination in their work environment. This type of discrimination can significantly impact the career advancement and satisfaction of LGBT officers at work.

Inclusivity, Career Advancement, and Job Satisfaction

According to King & Cortina (2010), unequal treatment of individuals or groups based on sexual orientation or gender identity has roots in a dominant heteronormative culture and its negative beliefs, prejudices, and stereotypes about gays and lesbians (p. 69). This "heterosexism" is an ideological system that denies, denigrates, and stigmatizes any non-heterosexual form of behaviour, identity, relationship, or community (Herek, 1990, p. 316). Research on gender identity and sexual orientation has generally found that workers who deviate from cultural "norms" are subject to intense scrutiny, must excel to be deemed competent, and are excluded or reminded of their differences or stereotyped (Miller et al., 2003, p. 357). While workplace discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity is illegal in Ontario (Ontario Human Rights Code, 2012; Toby's Act, 2012), police officers whose same-sex orientation or gender identity runs counter to the traditional heterosexual, hypermasculine orientation of police culture face particular challenges. The presence of openly LGBT officers challenges what

Sklansky (2006) termed the, "easy, taken-for-granted homophobia" that has traditionally fostered

a policing workplace where non-heterosexual orientations are not acknowledged and where a

hypermasculine ethos is embraced (p. 1234).

Colvin (2012) posited that LGBT police officers consistently face actual or perceived

discrimination based on sexual orientation, which negatively affects hiring, firing, or promotions

(p. 12). Studies have estimated that between 25 and 66 percent of gay men, lesbians, and

bisexuals experience discrimination in their workplace (Alderson, 2003). Such studies take into

consideration a multiplier effect, which holds that witnessed reporting is higher than individual

reporting because of a person/group discrepancy: when several witnesses report a single act of

discrimination, they may all report the same act, but an act of discrimination witnessed by one

person but not witnessed by others will only be reported by the person reporting the

discrimination (Colvin, 2012, p. 12). Other studies on organizations with strong, traditional

cultures have found negative impacts on wages, benefits, and other work-related issues (Chung,

2001, p. 34).

The organizational culture of police services can impact whether LGBT police officers feel

included within their workplaces. It can also affect their workplace experiences. In this context,

discourse plays a key role. Foucault (1990) posited that discourse involves not just what is said

or communicated (e.g., the words used), but who communicates, by what authority they

communicate, how they communicate, in what context they communicate, and why they

communicate (p. 100). Discourses encompass "systems of thoughts" made up of ideas, attitudes,

courses of action, beliefs, and practices that construct the subjects that discourses refer to (Lessa,

2006, p. 285). The language used and the knowledge conveyed is closely linked to power. In a

policing context, whoever determines what is communicated about policing also determines what

is made known about it. Whoever determines what is made known has enormous power to shape

how policing or police organizations are thought of and what constitutes a "police officer".

Through the discourse contained in the language and words both spoken and unspoken of

police artefacts (policies, procedures, external communications), acceptable ways of "being" are

created. Clearly identifying LGBT officers in organizational reports could signal acceptance of

such officers or signal to them that they "belong". For example, the Niagara Regional Police

Service's *Diversity Strategic Plan* report clearly focuses on both internal members and external

LGBT community audiences. Participants who helped develop that Plan noted that this made

them feel more included in the organization's messaging on the service's priorities (Niagara

Regional Police, 2013). On the other hand, excluding such officers marginalizes them and can

communicate that LGBT police officers are outside the organizational "norm". Words that are

repeated or reinforced in and across multiple artefacts create an "identity" about the police

organization and its members. For example, repeatedly emphasizing concepts such as "respect

for authority", "law and order", and "public good" leaves little room for the questioning of

authority, even when the "authority" may be police supervisors or other personnel who engage in

discriminatory behaviour (Appendix B). Thus, the words, language, and concepts that police

organizations use to communicate with LGBT officers through police artefacts convey important

messages about the inclusion of these officers in their law enforcement organizations. The

words, language, and concepts used by police can also signal the types of relationships law

enforcement organizations develop in relation to the broader LGBT community.

Discrimination or stereotyping can be embedded or reinforced through discourses often

found in various areas of policing. This can include the language used to convey beliefs or values

through formal, written policies or statements or implied through exclusion (e.g., excluding non-

normative groups from artefacts that communicate values and beliefs). According to Schein (2010), culture is constructed and defined by an organization's common artefacts and behaviours, espoused values, and assumptions (p. 27). Organizational artefacts are instruments that enable and facilitate actions on the part of those that access them and can provide insight as to the basic values, believe, and assumptions of organizations (Pols, 2012, p. 575).

Discourse can also consist of interaction in the workplace between individuals or groups. For example, Miller et al. (2003) identified specific tactics used to exclude or devalue members of a strong organizational or professional culture, such as questioning of a co-worker's gender presentation that does conform to popular masculine models, the labelling of such workers as "homosexual" if they support inclusion of female officers, and pressure to engage in conversational banter with co-workers about heterosexual conquests to avoid being ostracized or labeled sexually suspect (p. 360). This dual subjectivity brought about by discursive means can strongly communicate heteronormativitiy within the police environment. In such an environment, LGBT officers may feel pressured not to express themselves at work, causing them to question their sense of personal or professional worth, contribution to organizational goals, and workplace accomplishments, and fostering personal and organizational stresses.

Dual Lives, Microaggressions, and Being Out

Research on the lived experiences of LGBT police officers has suggested that they often live dual lives: the personal based on their sexual orientation and gender identity and the professional/public of being a police officer (Burke, 1994; Miller, Forest, and Jurik, 2003). Burke (1993) argued that an LGBT police officer's ability to function openly within a police structure that is based on heterosexuality as the norm produced double as opposed to integrated lives. He further contended that the identity of LGBT officers is dominated in equal numbers by

the occupation and the sexual. This duality is driven by the sense that being LGBT in policing, "is not acceptable in the eyes of the majority of our law enforcers and the further up the police sub-culture you go, the more scathing and brutal the condemnation becomes" (vii).

Jones (2014) found that officers reported being subjected to derogatory insults, professional humiliation, physical violence, and refusal from some heterosexual officers to work in close proximity with LGBT officers. Discrimination also included challenges and resistance within the recruitment process and during training, inequitable allocation of duties, and barriers to promotion and development (p. 150).

Despite the findings of continued LGBT discrimination within the police culture, research has found that LGBT officers are attracted to the profession for many of the same reasons as other groups. Charles & Rouse (2013) interviewed 14 current or former sworn law enforcement officers who self-identified as gay or lesbian. They used a Life/History Questionnaire and semi-structured interviews and found that these officers were attracted to a law enforcement career for the following reasons: to help others, to be financially secure, and/or to follow in the footsteps of role models. However, LGBT officers reported that being exposed to "microaggressions" hampered their satisfaction (p. 1182). Sue et al. (2007) defined microaggressions as brief and common daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities that convey hostile, derogatory, or negative slights and insults to an identifiable group (p. 271). Charles & Rouse (2013) concluded that the decision to be "out" at work was influenced by the level of microaggressions present and institutional support in creating a culture of acceptance. A key finding from their study was the adherence of gay and lesbian officers to a "blue identity", with their identity as law enforcement officers taking precedence in the workplace (p. 1182). LGBT police officers are thus encouraged to be more "cop" and less their same-sex oriented selves while in the workplace

environment because of their "blue identity". This identity is at least partly created discursively

through accepted cultural verbal and non-verbal cues. It significantly impacts on the levels of

acceptance of LGBT police officers within police organizations. Research into the inclusion or

exclusion of officers who are not female, white, and/or heterosexual also shows that LGBT as a

police subgroup are the most disliked by those police officers within the traditional white, male,

heterosexual police culture (Miller et al., 2003, p. 360). However, research also shows that

LGBT police officers overwhelming have no disagreement about the general policing goals of

their profession such as enforcement of laws and crime suppression (p. 370).

Methods and Analytical Approach

Data Sources

Initial data for this study was derived from 21 open-ended interviews with LGBT police

officers from Ontario police services. In order to recruit LGBT police officers currently serving

with police organizations in the Province of Ontario, I reached out to three policing groups:

Chiefs of Police in the Province of Ontario, members of the Diversity Committee of the Ontario

Association of Chiefs of Police (OACP), and Serving With Pride, a group representing LGBT

professionals working in policing, emergency, and criminal justice sectors. These groups were

chosen because they all possessed a network through which an invitation to participate in this

study could be communicated to LGBT police officers.

Through the OACP, which represents senior police leaders in Ontario, a letter was sent to

all Chiefs of Police, the Commissioner of the Ontario Provincial Police, and the Assistant

Commissioner of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police's O Division inviting them in turn to issue

a general invitation to LGBT police officers in their respective organizations to confidently

contact me about participation in this study. A similar invitation was distributed to members of

the OACP's Diversity Committee and Serving With Pride. The assistance of these organizations

succeeded in building awareness about the opportunity to participate in this study for LGBT

police officers. Combined with outreach to contacts in police services, this approach resulted in

28 expressions of interest. A total of 21 LGBT police officers participated in one-on-one, private

interviews.

I interviewed five senior officers, eight supervisory officers, and eight front-line officers

serving with provincial, large urban municipal, large regional municipal, medium size municipal,

and small municipal police services. These 21 police officers were asked to self identify with

regard to their sexual orientation. Seven female officers identified as "lesbian", two female

officers identified as both "lesbian" and "gay", six male officers identified as "gay", two female

officers identified as "bisexual", one officer identified as "lesbian/transsexual" while another

identified as "transsexual male". All participants were "out" except one female bisexual officer.

Ten officers served with large municipal services, five with large regional services, three with

the Ontario Provincial Police, two with small services (under 200 personnel), and one with a

medium size municipal service (200-500 personnel).

The use of interviews has been used by Burke (1994) and Rumen and Broomfield (2012) to

explore why LGBT officers choose a law enforcement career and their workplace and explore

their career experiences. Unlike studies that use surveys and questionnaires to produce

quantitative data on the perceptions and experiences of LGBT police officers (Miller, Kay, &

Jurik, 2003; Nickels & Verma, 2007; Myers, Forest, & Miller, 2008; Corbin, 2008; Hassell &

Brandl, 2009; Terpstra & Schaap, 2013; Jones & Williams, 2013), I chose one-on-one interviews

to obtain contextual cues such as commonly used words or phrases or common experiences that

may provide insight into the perceptions of such officers.

The conducting of one-on-one, private interviews afforded the participants an opportunity

to discuss their experiences, how they assessed police culture, how their personal values aligned

with the espoused values of their organizations, the impact of the dominant police culture on

their careers, training, and promotional opportunities, and their workplace and social

relationships. The results reveal how these police officers negotiate their lives as LGBT

individuals and police officers.

In order to provide further insight into the qualitative data derived from the interviews, and

illuminate the role that discourse plays in reinforcing police culture, I also analyzed seven types

of artefacts from 16 police organizations: police service mottos, business plans, strategic plans,

mission/vision statements, policies, uniforms, and polices related to physical structures of police

facilities (Appendix B). The seven artefacts were chosen because they are common to all Ontario

police organizations and used to communicate the expected behaviours, espoused values, and

assumptions of police organizations to both external publics and internal police personnel. The

16 police services were demographically representative (organizational size/communities

services – urban-rural, small, medium, and large services) and structurally representative

(provincial, regional, municipal, and First Nations police services) of police services in Ontario

(Appendix A) of policing in Ontario.

Analytical Approach

I employed a mixed methods approach using content and discourse analysis to understand

the artefacts and interviews. Content analysis allowed for a consideration of "message

characteristics" within the texts (interviews) (Neurendorf, 2002, p. 1). Discourse analysis

illuminated the ways that language use conveyed certain consistent themes (Neurendorf, 2002, p.

5). The language used by participants and cultural artefacts and the common themes that

emerged from the interviews provided insight into the experiences and perspectives of LGBT

police officers.

Sampling employed a snowball technique similar to that used by Rumens & Broomfield

(2012). This involved utilizing personal contacts in police services regarding the opportunity for

LGBT police officers to volunteer for participation in this study. These contacts, in turn, reached

out to LGBT police officers that might be candidates for participation. Rumens & Broomfield

(2012) note that the snowball technique is particularly useful with groups who might be reluctant

to participant in a study because the subject matter may be sensitive and of a private nature (p.

288). In order to provide further opportunities for LGBT police officers to volunteer for this

study, I used my contacts with senior police leaders to have internal messages from Chiefs of

Police, the OPP Commissioner, and Assistant Commissioner of the RCMP's O Division

distributed within police services through electronic e-mail messages, organizational bulletins,

etc. inviting interested LGBT police officers to contact me in confidence.

I was able to access and obtain the assistance of senior police leaders in Ontario police

services because of my role as Director of Government Relations and Communications with the

OACP. My role with the OACP provides me with opportunities to interact regularly with senior

police leaders throughout Ontario and work with the association's Diversity Committee, whose

mandate includes encouraging positive relationships between police organizations and "diverse

communities" (including LGBT groups). My position with the OACP was communicated to all

participants. In order to encourage participants to be frank during interviews and feel

comfortable speaking to me, I emphasized that this study was an academic exercise in no way

directed by the OACP. I further stressed that participation was strictly voluntary and confidential

and no information that could identify participants would be shared with either other participants

or any member of the OACP. Despite these efforts, I acknowledge that my role with the OACP

could have potentially influenced participants' responses for reasons beyond my control.

However, I am confident that every effort was made to ensure a safe environment for participants

to be as frank as possible during interviews. Despite my professional role in policing, I feel the

interview data provides valuable insight into the perceptions of perceptions and experiences of

the LGBT police officers interviewed.

Like Burke (1994), I used interview data transcribed from 21 interviews with LGBT police

officers. This allowed me to consider the status of these officers in their organizations and how

they perceive the impact of police culture on their workplace experiences and career. However,

my analysis differs from that of Burke in that I also included transgender officers in my study but

did not include retired officers. While not intended to be a representative sample of any one

group, my analysis allowed me to gain insight into the lived experience of each individual officer

who chose to participate.

Following Rumens & Broomfield (2012), I conducted private, semi-structured interviews

that lasted between 25 and 45 minutes. This format allowed me to pose open-ended questions,

which could lead to additional insight. Participants were free to volunteer additional information

they deemed appropriate during the interviews. Like Rumens & Broomfield (2012), I developed

pre-set themes based on the literature review that encouraged participants to consider their

experiences as LGBT police officers. These included why participants chose to become police

officers, what they perceived to be the "norm" of the police culture, how such norms are

conveyed through their own organizations, what and how their organizations communicate, how

accepting their organizations are of LGBT officers, how their sexual orientation impacted their

job satisfaction, training and career opportunities, what are the values of communicated by their

organizations and how they relate to these officers' personal values, and their relationships with

heterosexual supervisors, colleagues, and subordinates. This allowed me to group the data under

consistent themes and compare language and responses by participants while providing

opportunities for them to provide further insights than would have otherwise occurred in

structured interviews or questionnaires.

In addition to the interviews, I analyzed seven groups of artefacts from the 16 police

services police service – organizational mottos, mission/value statements, business plans,

strategic plans, organizational policies pertaining to diverse groups, organizational policies

pertaining to uniforms and personal grooming and organizational policies pertaining to

accommodations. Following Gwartney, Fessenden, & Landt (2002), I analysed the seven groups

of artefacts and compiled a list of words or phrases that expressed policing culture beliefs,

values, and assumptions. By coding the artefacts in this manner, I then considered how these

organizational artefacts convey messages or meanings related to LGBT officers and how they

might provide insight into the interview data. This approach is similar to Gwartney et al. (2002),

who conducted a content analysis of business and environmental newsletters over 21 months to

show both positive and negative references to former adversaries and calls for collaboration

among business and environmental groups in Oregon. (pp. 51, 71).

Analysis

Inclusivity

Participants overwhelmingly agree with Corbin (2009) that police culture has and

somewhat continues to be "overtly masculine and sometimes authoritarian". They noted that they

perceive the culture be fundamentally "conservative", "unaccepting", and "an old boys'

network" (p. 28). For example, a lesbian senior officer noted that, "Not just LGBT people, but

people of racialized groups, gender groups, they still navigate the workplace differently because

the workplace is still and certainly policing is still male dominated, conservative" (Participant 1,

April 7, 2014). A lesbian front-line officer described the "traditional" police officer as "male, six

foot tall, White, and heterosexual". She contended that this stereotype persists and leads to a

lingering correlation between homosexuality and weakness,

> That connection's been made. So, police officer and weakness don't go together. So,
>
> when you see that connection made, you have your co-workers who say, "I don't
>
> want him backing me up at a call. I don't want him to be my partner. What if he hits
>
> on me? What if he flirts with me?" And, again, there's some police officers with that
>
> older mentality, "I just don't know what this is. I don't want any part of it." That
>
> happens with the mental health issue, so they approach it with anger and negativity.
>
> Same thing for homosexual people (Participant 9, April 23, 2014).

The perception of police culture as "conservative" and "traditional" was reflected in a

content analysis of police organizational artefacts. For example, an analysis of the 16 police

organizations mottos found four main themes: safety/protection, community, service, and values.

These themes suggest that police organizations adhere to traditional social values that support the

concept of law enforcement as a public service that "keeps the peace" (Appendix B).

Similarly, an analysis of business plans indicated that services generally base their plans on

traditional concepts of "service" and "professionalism". These concepts are often married to

modern organizational business notions of "excellence" and "service delivery". Only four out of

16 police organizational statements specifically included "diversity" in their service goals. Three

made no mention of diversity. This indicates that the specific inclusion of members of the LGBT

community or LGBT police officers remains the exception rather than the norm in organizational

plans. References to diverse groups were generic (i.e., "diverse workforce" or "cultural

members of the community") while groups that were identified tended to correspond to

operational priorities in crime prevention/suppression or recruitment. In the 16 business plans

analyzed, youth were mentioned most often (six times), followed by seniors (four), women

(four), and visible minorities (three) (Appendix B).

When organizations do not specifically include LGBT individuals in key organizational

artefacts such as business plans, they risk sending the message to their LGBT officers and the

community that "diversity" is another "deliverable" in meeting legislative or human rights code

requirements. They may also convey the message that the organization lacks real commitment to

changing the policing culture. While some officers noted said their services take harassment and

discrimination in the workplace more seriously than in the past, others stated that

"professionalism" and "duty" continued to have much greater weight than diversity issues. This

is supported by the analysis of artefacts, which consistently communicate the importance of

police officers acting with professionalism and always carrying out their duties (Appendix B).

The Evolution of Policing

Some officers expressed a belief that police culture has evolved to match society's greater

tolerance of LGBT individuals. According to a lesbian senior officer, "I think that our service is

extremely progressive now and if we're talking between the time I joined the job and now, I

can't even tell you how it's night and day compared to the mid-80s" (Participant 2, April 7,

2014). Similarly, a gay male front-line officer noted that,

> In policing, I don't feel that pressure to conform to that macho element. I actually
>
> feel that there are people who conform to that and act like that, but it's almost
>
> discouraged because you actually make fun of people like that, like the knuckle

dragger. Intelligence in policing is important and that kind of machismo, it kinda

doesn't transform well to portraying yourself as an intellectual. I feel that it wouldn't

do you any favours (Participant 10, April 14, 2014).

An analysis of organizational policies that pertain to diversity groups confirms that at least

some police services are at least "talking the talk" when it comes to inclusion. Six out of 16

services cited the Ontario Human Rights Commission's prohibitions of discrimination in

establishing their policies and procedures and specify "sexual orientation" and "same-sex

partnerships" as included in prohibited grounds for workplace harassment and discrimination.

The two First Nations police services emphasize commitment to meeting federal anti-harassment

and discrimination goals and training (Appendix B).

While participants noted that incidents of blatant harassment and abuse are rare in their

policing environments, some reported experiencing isolated incidents, mainly derogatory or

inappropriate comments, at some point in their career. These participants believed that such

behaviour is tolerated by police culture. A bisexual female supervisory officer, who is not out in

her workplace, identified the homophobic comments that do not go unchallenged by supervisors

as a major reason she has chosen not to be open about her sexuality, noting that, "I hear it, their

derogatory comments on a regular basis. I think the police culture tolerates it" (Participant 28,

April 24, 2014). A gay male front-line officer stated that, "When it comes to co-workers, I

haven't really had a lot of issues except they say stuff without thinking it through or say stuff

before they know that I am gay… People say stuff to fit in whereas they actually don't believe

what they're saying. It's stuff that they say to fit into the policing culture" (Participant 3, April 9,

2014). Some participants believed "teach, don't punish" policies that do not penalize officers

who do engage in discriminatory behaviour signal that the police culture continues to tolerate

such behaviour in the workplace. For example, York Regional Police's (2012) anti-harassment

and anti-discrimination policy is, "primarily intended to be preventative rather than punitive in

nature, however, workplace harassment and discrimination are serious matters that will not be

condoned or tolerated" (p. 2) (Appendix B).

A number of participants echoed the view of a lesbian senior officer, who believes that

larger, urban police services are more inclusive than services or OPP detachments in smaller

communities.

> Our culture in policing of today is very welcoming in diversity, including sexual
>
> orientations. That experience is definitely going to be different for someone serving
>
> in a small municipal service in Ontario; is going to have a very different experience
>
> in relation to that in a cosmopolitan city (Participant 2, April 7, 2014).

Police Culture and Acceptance

The analysis of the 21 interviews did not find any correlation between service size and the

types of experiences LGBT officers had. Only two participants speculated that policing in rural

or small communities might have contributed to negative experiences. This perception is

reflected in the fact that artefacts from the eight large or medium services (out of 16) all included

supportive networks (called Internal support Networks), diversity training programs, and other

programs. Most participants volunteered that police culture accepts gay females more readily

than gay male officers. This observation reflects of what Sklansky (2006) posited: that police

culture continues to exert pressure on LGBT officers to keep their sexual orientation hidden or at

least "unadvertised", with the pressure much greater for on male officers working in a

hypermasculine environment (p. 1223).

A gay front-line male officer observed that, "In the time that I've been here, there's been a

couple of officers that have been out but they are females and I find that straight males are prone

to accept lesbian females than they accept homosexual males" (Participant 14, April 22, 2014). A

lesbian senior officer stated that gay women have it easier than male officers because of the

police culture's expectation of toughness: "There is a very expected norm and it's very direct and

forthright, masculine, no weaknesses, head-on into the fight type of person" (Participant 6, April

14, 2014). Another front-line lesbian officer observed that, "It's worse for male

officers…because there's still a mentality to a degree to being this macho male, having this

macho maleness, and for some people in the service gay officers may not be that way, especially

gay men" (Participant 12, April 14, 2014).

Acceptance of transgender officers remains a largely unaddressed issue. This is reflected in

the fact that a review of the policies of the 16 services pertaining to accommodation issues, only

one addressed transgender accommodation issues. Niagara Regional Police Service's Strategic

Plan (2013) pledges to "cultivate an inclusive work environment that values and embraces

diversity: new NRPS facility should include 'family washrooms (transgender))'" (Goal 1,

Objective 4). Otherwise, LGBT issues are not included in guidelines for specific grounds-based

accommodations" such as disability, family status, and creed-religion.

Intersectionality of Gender and Sexual Orientation

Despite the strong perception among female participates that gay males continue to have a

more difficult time negotiating the police culture, all 14 participants who identified as female

overwhelmingly identified the intersectionality of their gender and sexual orientation as

presenting them with unique challenges. The concept of "intersectionality" refers to the

"interactivity of social identity structures" which can include race, class, gender, and sexual

orientation in shaping life experiences, especially in the context of privilege and oppression

(Gopadlas, 2013, p. 90). In the case of LGBT police officers, this means that they must deal with factors other than their sexual orientation such as gender and race that impact their workplace and career experiences.

One lesbian supervisory officer described an incident where a male officer told a victim she was dealing with that, "she can't do a good investigation because you're a women and she's a lesbian" (Participant 4, April 11, 2014). Another lesbian senior officer described how she was investigating a male police officer for inappropriate behaviour that resulted in his suspension. She noted that, "We had to execute a search warrant on his locker and his supervisor challenged me (by saying) the only reason I was doing it was because I didn't like men" (Participant 6, April 14, 2014). A front-line lesbian officer reported that, "males generally supersede" females in the hiring for positions in specialized units such as canine or tactical units because supervisors, "felt a male would be better for the job than myself" (Participant 12, April 14, 2014).

The analysis of artefacts found that female officers find themselves in a hierarchy of identifiable groups, which indicates that the traditional white, heterosexual orientation of policing remains a strong factor in police culture today. For example, an analysis of the 16 police service business plans found that youth were mentioned most often (six times), followed by seniors (four), women (four), and visible minorities (three) (Appendix B). This indicates that females within police culture continue to be treated as a non-normative group within the hypermasculine police culture by the discursive constructions reinforced by police artefacts.

Organizational Values

In order to ascertain common values in the study group, participants were asked why they chose a policing career. Charles & Rouse (2013) found that LGBT police officers in the United States generally offered similar reasons for choosing a law enforcement career as their

heterosexual counterparts: the opportunity to help others or the community, financial security,

and the desire to follow role models (p. 1182). While some participants mentioned being

attracted to the paramilitary nature of policing, a perceived sense of excitement associated with

the job, or the fulfillment of a childhood dream as reasons they joined the police service, all 21

participants expressed ethical reasons for joining: to "help people" or "help the community".

This indicates that LGBT police officers largely support the basic values identified in the

analysis of police mission/vision statements of 16 police services, which all contain some

variation on the themes of public good (16 out of 16 services), safety (16 out of 16 services)

service (14 out of 16 services), professionalism (11 out of 16 services), and diversity (4 out of 16

services) (Appendix B).

The altruistic mentality of officers interviewed is indicative of a set of strong values among

the participant group. When asked to identify the values most important to them as LGBT

individuals, participants most often mentioned "honesty" and "integrity" as key personal values.

For example, a gay male front-line officer noted that his strong values aligned with the police

service's organizational value and made him a good officer: "My father instilled in me to work

hard, be respectful, loyal and those are all stuff that is important for my work here in terms of

dealing with the people that I work with and the community, not (to) judge. I had good values, so

it's helped me to be stronger and be a better police officer" (Participant 18, April 24, 2014).

Another gay male front-line officer suggested that police culture promotes high standards of

beliefs and behaviour and this assists LGBT officers be accepted by their heterosexual

colleagues: "I've never done the job… in a way that is unscrupulous… I hope I brought this to

job that you did the job to best of your ability, and no one will question that" (Participant 10,

April 14, 2014).

Participants exhibited a strong adherence to a "working personality" where officers valued the ability to exercise authority, the exposure to danger, and the pressure to produce inherent in police work (Skolnick, 2008, p. 37). While participants generally supported the values expressed through the organizational statements analyzed, analysis of the organizational statements also shows that Ontario police services continue to place value on conservative concepts of "service" or "good" based on public safety and law enforcement rather than more inclusive diversity goals. The exceptions to this were the two First Nations police organizations, which both pointed to specific cultural values such as the "Seven Grandfather Teachings" (respect, bravery, honesty, humility, truth, wisdom, and love) as guides in their organizational statements (Chippewas of Rama First Nation, 2013, pp. 6-7).

The analysis of organizational statements also indicates that police services adhere to traditional concepts of "service" and "professionalism" compared to specific diversity goals. These statements also emphasize modern organizational business concepts of "excellence" and "service delivery" (Appendix B). The organizational statements analyzed do not altogether reflect the requirements of the *Police Services Act* (1990) that Ontario police services be "representative of the communities they serve" and stress "the need for sensitivity to the pluralistic, multicultural, and character of Ontario society" (Chapter 8, Section 3). In this context, organizations risk sending the message to diverse groups such as LGBT officers that "diversity" is another "deliverable" in meeting legislative requirements and that the organization lacks real commitment to change the policing culture when its comes to inclusivity. Some officers noted that in their everyday work experience, "professionalism" and "duty" have much greater weight than diversity issues. For them, organizational support for inclusion of diverse group is seen as somehow forced (through legislation or human rights codes) rather than naturally embraced.

Career Advancement, Job Satisfaction

Participants were asked to consider whether their sexual orientation had any impact on career advancement and job satisfaction. Jones (2014) identified recruitment, training, allocation of duties, and barriers to promotion as areas where an officers' sexual orientation could pose a barrier to opportunities or advancement (p. 150). Most participants suggested that "old school" attitudes posed as barriers for LGBT officers. A lesbian senior officer described how she was compelled to leave a police service because she ended her marriage to an opposite sex officer in order to be with her same-sex partner. Her decision to embrace her sexual orientation made it particularly difficult for heterosexual officers and senior leaders who knew both her and her husband to deal with her decision. The officer felt it was best for her and her former colleagues that she join another service (Participant 21, May 2, 2014). Another lesbian senior officer described how she avoided applying for positions in a unit because of an experience involving derogatory comments made by a heterosexual male officer in that unit:

> I wasn't out at that time but obviously people must have suspected to make that
>
> comment and I actually became, I wouldn't say fearful, but you have that avoidance
>
> of someone and trepidation. When positions became available in that unit…I avoided
>
> applying simply because of one silly comment someone made (Participant 6, April
>
> 14, 2014).

One lesbian front-line officer reported that she did not apply for positions in units such as the emergency response unit or the canine unit because these units have traditionally been the domain of heterosexual males: "That doesn't mean I wouldn't be able to apply for them and get in. I just think the right opportunity hasn't come along for a women or no one has been dedicated enough or interested enough for the position" (Participant 9, April 2014). However, most

participants felt their sexual orientation did not play a significant part in their career

advancement compared to how their hard work earned them training opportunities and

promotions. In fact, a lesbian senior officer stated that gender was a greater obstacle than her

sexual orientation during her career:

> I am not ashamed of my sexual orientation or my relationships, but it's never been
>
> part of my policing per say and not part of who I am as an officer. To more of an
>
> extent, I would look to gender, which defines me more than sexual orientation. But
>
> as being gay in policing, that's never denied me a position (Participant 2, April 7,
>
> 2014).

Participants who expressed satisfaction with their jobs or career advancement typically

noted that they felt included in the life of the organization. This was especially true if LGBT

officers were part of the organization's artefacts and messaging. When LGBT officers were not

included or felt legislative or other government directives were compelling their services to

include them, participants indicated that it impacted their job and career satisfaction negatively.

A gay male officer with the Ontario Provincial Police reported that the Ontario Public Services

(OPS) issued a job satisfaction survey and included LGBT as a classification. However, he felt

the service was just doing what it was told by the Government of Ontario: "They ask for

feedback, but in my opinion, that's not the organization asking for feedback that the OPS and the

OPP just happened to fall within the OPS" (Participant 3, April 9, 2014).

Only half of the police services included in this study provided strategic plans. The eight

plans analyzed revealed that six services produced strategic plans that either did not address

diversity issues in any way (two) or focused on broad "diversity" issues, initiatives or programs

(four). Peel Regional Police's *Equality Opportunity Plan Results* (2012a) is typical plans that

attempt to include diverse groups. It emphasizes employee self-identification for four diverse

groups (aboriginals, racialized persons, persons with disabilities, and women) (p. 2) for the

purpose of collecting workplace information (Appendix B).

Two services specifically included LGBT issues in their strategic plan. Niagara Regional

Police Service's *Diversity Strategic Plan* report (Niagara Regional Police, 2013) focuses on

internal members (who are called to "handle situations involving residents of different sexual

orientations", and includes training for combating homophobia, inclusion of transgender police

personnel, and the creation of a glossary of terms for the "LGBTTQQ+" community) and

external community audiences (re-victimization during abuse complaints, recruitment and hiring

of LGBT officers). The plan is specific about LGBT issues, ensuring equity with other "diverse"

target groups (women, racialized groups). However, it does note three presentations to the LGBT

community related to identifying and reporting hate crime (p. 25). The Windsor Police Service

outlined progress in training all members on the Report Homophobic Violence Period (RHVP)

program, which seeks to reduce hate-based victimization in the LGBTQ community (Windsor

Police Service, 2013, p. 4). Those participants who reported positive experiences also tended to

state that their organizations made efforts to include LGBT officers in their artefacts, supported

participation of LGBT officers in community events such as Pride parades, or provided

diversity-related training for officers and members of the LGBT community.

Younger Officers, Better Experiences

Some officers, particularly younger officers, reported that being an LGBT officer did

provide them with opportunities within a changing police culture. A lesbian supervisory officer

noted that, "This whole culture in this service and under the command of (the Chief) has really

advanced the safety in the workplace for minorities and for LGBT officers" (Participant 11,

April 14, 2014). This is reflected in the analysis of policies and procedures of the 16 police

services. Unlike business plans and strategic plans, the police policies and procedures show a

higher level of detail in addressing and providing training to officers on harassment and bias

issues in the workplace, supporting workplace diversity groups, and detailing policies hate

crimes and "bias-free" policing (Appendix B).

Six out of 16 services specifically cited the Ontario Human Rights Commission's

prohibitions of discrimination in establishing their policies and procedures and specify "sexual

orientation" and "same-sex partnerships" as included in prohibited grounds for workplace

harassment and discrimination. The two First Nations services indicated adherence to federal

legislation and human rights codes. Four other police services specify stereotyping and four

services identify training initiatives in their policies. Two services specifically include LGBT

issues in their policies. Ottawa Police Service's (2006) policies are specific in including LGBT

people on its Project Steering Committee, which oversaw the development and implementation

of the service's Outreach Recruitment Program to, "encourage and endorse a climate that is

welcoming and supportive to visible minorities, aboriginals, women and gays, lesbians, bisexual

and trans-gendered employees" (p. 4). Barrie (2011) identified the search of transsexual and

intersexed persons as a procedural policy that the service specifically identifies as aimed at

meeting the needs of an identified group (p. 9) (Appendix B).

Human rights legislation and codes in Ontario require police services to have policies and

procedures that reflect a greater commitment to diversity and inclusion than had previously been

the norm within police organizations. Younger officers, having grown up in an era of greater

commitment by government bodies to human rights and anti-discrimination legislation, reflect a

greater acceptance of diversity in their organizations than their predecessors.

Communicating With LGBT Officers

Officers whose police organization had Internal Support Networks (ISNs), Liaison Officers (whose responsibilities include working with external diverse groups such as members of the LGBT community), or external advisory committees generally felt that their services were making a genuine effort to reach both internal LGBT members and members of the broader community. A lesbian supervisory officer noted that, "I think the messaging is positive but, I'm not part of it and I don't see anything negative and when something happens in the media, it's always a very positive message from the Chief's office" (Participant 19, April 24, 2014).

Participants whose services have ISNs noted that these Networks raised the profile of and support for LGBT officers. A lesbian supervisory officer said that,

The relationship (between police and the LGBT community) has greatly improved and now that we have the ISN, it's like a group of police officers the community sees that are LGBT officers so that we're getting a lot more men on board in terms of hiring because they see that you can be gay on this service. There's no longer that wall or roadblock. You can be who you are (Participant 11, April 14, 2014).

However, only two out of 16 services have established ISNs while two others are considering them. These four services are all large municipal services. ISNs remain the exception rather than the norm within police organizations. This may indicate a fundamental structural problem for police services in terms of communicating the importance of diversity and specifically LGBT issues. In the analysis of the artefacts, four of the services analyzed – Toronto, Peel, Ottawa, and, York – noted the presence of diversity units in their organizations. The units in York Region Police and Ottawa Police Service report directly to the Chiefs of Police while Toronto Police Service's and Peel Regional Police's units both report through supervisory

officers (Appendix B). While "layered" reporting structures may not necessarily inhibit progress in the work of these units, direct reporting to the ultimate organisational decision-maker (the Chief of Police) can signal to internal and external audiences the importance placed on diversity issues, including LGBT issues. It could also indicate what Corbin (2012) termed "structural failure" of inherently hierarchal policing organizations. He posited that organizations by their structures could cause conflict between dominant groups and non-dominant groups such as women, racial minorities, and same-sex individuals simply by how the police service is structured (p. 19).

Some participants noted that while ISNs and liaison committees have helped with positive messaging about LGBT officers, some officers still want to keep their membership in such groups a secret. A lesbian senior officer noted said, "When I started the ISN, it was all about secrecy. Some people still wanted their home e-mail address, not their work e-mail. We were there, but I would use the word 'exclusive'" (Participant 1, April 7, 2014).

A number of participants were, however, largely unaware of what their service does to communicate with LGBT police officers. A gay male front-line officer stated that he had no knowledge of what his police service did to communicate directly to LGBT members towards the public, "I don't think the OPP, other than every now and then doing a symposium, I personally don't have any knowledge about anything the OPP does, other than letting members march in Pride (parades)". This officer stated that it was a "pure fluke" that he saw a notice on an internal day board inviting members to volunteer for this study. "I just happen to catch the LGBT in capitals and that's the only reason that I even saw this" (Participant 3, April 9, 2014). Such observations reflect the analysis of the police artefacts, which found that LGBT issues were not featured as prominently as other "diversity" issues. This may reflect the fact that LGBT officers

may not have yet attained the level of acceptability of other groups outside the dominant

heteronormative culture such as women and members of racialized groups within policing.

An analysis of the 16 police service business plans found that only one police specifically

included mention of LGBT issues in their business plan (training seminars on "Lesbian, Gay,

Bisexual, and Transsexual tolerance" as part of the service's hate crime educational initiatives).

References to diverse groups were also generic (i.e. "diverse workforce" or "cultural members of

the community") while groups that were identified tended to correspond to operational priorities

in crime prevention/suppression or recruitment (Appendix B). When LGBT police officers do

not hear messages that include them as a group or feel excluded from or ranked below other

"diverse" groups in the messaging about the organization, this may lead such officers to feel a

sense of exclusion from the solidarity that has traditionally bonded officers to their distinct

organizational culture (Skolnick, 1994, p. 52).

Bisexual and Transgender Officers

While this study is limited in its ability to draw conclusions for bisexual and transgender

police officers because of the limited number of participants who identified as belonging to these

groups, it is worthwhile to note their particular experiences and views.

The two female bisexual participants presented very different views of their experiences.

One is a front-line officer with a large regional police service who has been on the job less than

six years. She has been open about her sexual orientation from the beginning of her career. She

agreed that "LGBT women are going to have it a lot easier than men" and "the culture and the

men's changing room is a factor in accepting them". This officer also believes the culture is

accepting once officers prove they can do the job with professionalism and integrity, regardless

of their sexual orientation. Her experience has been mostly positive and colleagues have

accepted her without questioning her sexual orientation. Part of this officer's negotiating

technique for dealing with questions of sexual orientation on the job is to keep her sexual self

largely separate from her professional self:

> (Sexuality and the job) are two separate things for me. I'm not ashamed or hiding it
>
> (her sexuality) at all. I don't find they don't overlap very often. I keep it more private
>
> based on my own preferences. If someone asks me a question, I don't have any
>
> problem answering it. I don't feel I have to hide it in any way. I just do not advertise
>
> it (Participant 9, April 23, 2014).

The second bisexual female officer has been on the job between 16 and 25 years and is a

supervisory officer. She embraced her bisexuality recently but is not open about her sexuality in

the workplace. The officer works in a small community and describes the culture in her

workplace as "conservative" and "unaccepting" of same-sex orientations. She felt that if she

were to be open about her sexual orientation, some officers (especially her supervisors) would be

very open about their homophobic opinions (Participant 28, April 24, 2014).

The experiences of bisexual police officers may be substantially different than gay and

lesbian officers and require further and separate study.

Like the bisexual officers, the two transgender participants (both serving with large, urban

municipal police services) also had differing views about their experiences. One officer applied

at an older age and presented herself as a transgender female. This officer reported a positive

relationship with her co-workers. She believes that her "black and white" values when it comes

to law enforcement helped other officers accept her,

> If I'm assigned to work a John sweep, I may not agree with it, but they are breaking
>
> the law and it's a legal arrest so I'm gonna do it. I may not agree with the law

personally, but that's separately, that's a justice issue, not a policing issue. I don't

get to choose (Participant 27, April 25, 2014).

This may suggest that police officers from outside the traditional heterosexual

hypermasculine dominant groups in policing may be accepted if they adopt certain values

(professionalism, honesty, integrity) strongly represented in the police culture and expressed in

police artefacts (Franklin, 2007, p. 10). The second transgender officer transitioned from female

to male after a long career as a female officer and presents as a straight male. His experience has

been positive because co-workers in his unit had a longstanding relationship with him and he

believes it's easier for officers to transition from female to male because "you're joining the boys

club". The officer noted that he didn't realize "how misogynistic it (the culture) was until I

became a boy". This officer also noted that, the notion of "trans" is completely foreign to most

heterosexual police officers. "The only dealings with trans people police officers have is with

transgender sex trade workers, which are extraordinarily disenfranchised people" (Participant 25,

May 8, 2014).

Transgender police officers must deal with certain norms in appearance and deportment

communicated by police services as binary-focused and strongly conservative. For example, the

directives on uniform and appearance of the 16 services analyzed consistently directed officers to

exhibit "professionalism", a "professional manner", be "appropriately dressed", "clean and well

groomed" and prohibited from displaying tattoos or body art "likely to bring discredit upon the

reputation of the force" (Kingston Police, 2011, p. 1).

The police workplace dress code continues to communicate uniformity and downplay

individuality. The conservative nature of police culture is further communicated in directives on

non-uniform attire (i.e., court attire). Directives generally require officers to wear "conservative

business attire" and hair and facial hair that must meet exacting requirements and be

conservative in manner.

Consistent with the conservative nature of the uniform and grooming directives, many

police services make specific references to rules applying to "male" and "female" officers,

reflecting traditional Western views of gender as binary – either male or female – and

heterosexuality as the norm (Johnson & Repta, 2012, p. 17). However, some services avoided the

gender description in their directives, opting to refer to the generic "members" instead. This may

indicate an increasing sensitivity to differing notions of gender and identity.

The experiences of transgender police officers are different than gay and lesbian officers

and require further and separate study.

Proud Cops, Growing Acceptance

Participants spoke with honesty and openness about both their challenges and changes in

police culture. Almost all expressed pride in being police officers. Participants also consistently

identified the importance of organizational and supervisory support in producing positive and

healthy workplace experiences. This echoes the findings of Charles & Rouse-Arndtl (2013) that,

"the presence of homophobic microaggressions without institutional support to address the

hostile environment significantly hampered job satisfaction and willingness to risk being *out* at

work" (p. 1182). Where supervisors reinforced inclusive organizational values, participants

reported positive experiences. Senior and supervisory officers in this study did point out that, in

their leadership positions, they may not hear about derogatory comments or harassment that

LGBT officer may experience. This confirms Colvin's (2012) observation about a multiplier

effect whereby more discrimination is likely occurring than is reported (p. 12).

A lesbian senior officer noted that, "I'm in an interesting position as would any supervisor

because we don't see the stuff" (Participant 1, April 7, 2014). Another lesbian senior officer

noted that,

> If someone did have an issue with it (sexual orientation), they wouldn't express it
>
> (because she's a senior officer). I'm sure that everyone isn't loving of the LGBT
>
> presence of officers, but no one is saying anything overtly because they are being
>
> governed by workplace harassment policies, procedures and think that people are
>
> very conscious of letting their personal views on different issues come out in the
>
> workplace. So, a) I don't think they are not saying anything because of my position
>
> here, and b) because they know that the behaviour is not tolerated here so they won't
>
> say anything" (Participant 2, April 7, 2014).

Some participants indicated that they regard their sexual orientation as a private matter and

do not "wave a flag" at work in terms of keeping photos of their partners in their workplace. But

except for one closeted participant, all felt they could keep photos of their partners at work or in

the locker room and bring them to social functions without any issues. Participants felt this

indicated an increasing acceptance of LGBT officers in the police work environment.

Findings

Interviews with 21 LGBT police officers suggest that the police culture in Ontario is

shifting from a traditional hypermasculine, heterosexual orientation to one that is become more

inclusive. While participants generally agreed that police culture is still conservative and male

dominated, most also agreed that it has evolved toward inclusivity over the past 20 years as more

women, members of racialized groups, and LGBT people are recruited and rise through the

ranks. This greater inclusivity reflects the move from police "professionalism" toward

"community policing", which attempts to better connect police organizations their communities

and require police to better reflect those communities (Sklansky, 2011, p. 2). Police artefacts

analyzed also reflected a shift in this regard. Through their artefacts, police services are including

diverse groups in their messaging and their organizational policies and procedures, although

identifying LGBT specifically in these artefacts remains the exception rather than the norm. The

shift toward greater inclusivity may be being driven more by legislative requirements (laws,

human rights codes) than by a substantial shift in the police culture ethos.

Those participants who have been in policing for more than 15 years particularly

emphasized that the greater presence of LGBT and other diverse groups in police organizations

indicates a shift away from the hypermasculine, heterosexual focus of the culture toward greater

inclusivity. As raids on bars and bathhouses serving LGBT clientele have been abandoned and

some police services aggressively recruit from LGBT communities and promote LGBT officers

into leadership positions, participants felt organizational culture is also changing, albeit in an

evolutionary rather than revolutionary manner. Some participants suggested that young,

heterosexual recruits tend to not bring a condemnatory attitude toward LGBT individuals with

them into the workplace. They suggested that organizational resistance toward inclusivity in the

organization centres primarily on middle mangers 50 years of age and older who retain more

traditional and negative attitudes toward LGBT police officers.

The perception that police organizations are moving toward greater inclusivity is subjective

and influenced by the discourse represented by the police artefacts. Artefacts such as service

mottos, organizational statements, uniform and grooming regulations and accommodation

policies still place emphasis on conservative values associated with police professionalism.

When LGBT issues or groups are included, they tend to be ranked lower than other diverse

groups (women, youth, racialized persons, etc.). Participants interviewed confirmed that while

their workplace experiences tended to indicate that the police culture is evolving toward more

inclusivity, LGBT officers still see the culture as conservative, male dominated, and

heterosexually-focused. While some LGBT police officers interviewed have experienced overt

discrimination and harassment in their careers, most report a greater presence of

"microaggressions" in the workplace.

The officers interviewed confirmed a number of findings from other studies of LGBT

officers in the Western world. These officers exhibited a "working personality" where they strive

to become "prototypical cops" (Skolnick, 2008); they tend to lead "dual lives" where their work

and their sexual selves are largely separated (Burke, 1994; Miller, Forest, and Jurik, 2003); and

female officers emphasized "shared perceptions" that incorporates their gender challenges as

well as their sexual orientation into how they negotiate their workplace and career experiences

(Colvin 2012). While participants exhibited a general acceptance of the traditional solidarity and

socialization that binds police officers in a "brotherhood" (Skolnick, 1994), the analysis of

interviews found little evidence of the sense of isolation that has been common to the policing

fraternity in the past (Carter & Radlet, 1999; Colvin 2012).

Participants did express concern for what they perceived as the disconnection between

what organizations say (often expressed through it artefacts) and how "things really are" in the

workplace. In their views, the culture's continued emphasis on solidarity and secrecy leaves

makes it vulnerable to abuse of authority and resistance to organizational change (Waddington,

1999).

Despite the challenges for LGBT police officers, this study found strong support among

participants for policing as a profession and for their organizations in particular. This confirms

previous research such as Miller et al. (2003), which found that LGBT officers express no

disagreements with policing's general goals. All 21 participants agreed with their organization's

general goals of maintaining public order and solving crimes (Colvin 2012). This indicates that

policing as a profession maintains a strong ability to bind its members to its goals of law

enforcement and crime prevention regardless of their personal characteristics.

While LGBT officers may not see themselves reflected in their organizational as often as

other diverse groups, these officers have no fundamental disagreement with the generally

conservative values, beliefs, and assumptions of these artefacts as they relate to law enforcement

and crime prevention. Instead, participants confirmed what Hassell & Brandl (2009) identified as

the most common workplace problem experienced by officers in general: the lack of

support/influence officers experienced or had in the workplace (p. 423). This is the nexus

between the artefacts and the interviews in this study. LGBT police officers that see themselves

reflected in organizational messages that convey beliefs, values, and assumptions and valued for

their work tend to be strongly committed to the organization and its goals.

Conclusion

This study confirms that LGBT police officers in the Province of Ontario continue to

experience the influence of the traditional police culture, which has been dominated by white,

male, heterosexuals, in their policing workplaces. But participants also believed that the culture

is evolving to be more reflective of the broader society's greater acceptance of LGBT people as

reflected in the artefacts analyzed. Organizationally, police services are exhibiting greater

sensitively to diverse groups. However, police services need to be more intentional in

recognizing their LGBT police officers in their artefacts and what they communicate as more

openly LGBT come into their organizations. Sklansky (2006) identified this as a major challenge

for police leaders, warning that the "easy, taken-for-granted homophobia" of law enforcement

and what it has traditionally fosters – a desexualized workplace, a hypermasculine ethos, and

acceptance of extra-legal violence – will not be accepted in the diverse, inclusive workplaces

guided by both legislative action and LGBT and other officers from diverse backgrounds" (p.

1234).

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Appendix A

Ontario Police Organizations That Provided Artefacts

Organization Type	Organization
Provincial	Ontario Provincial Police
Large Urban Municipal (500+ personnel)	Toronto Police Service, Ottawa Police Service
Large Regional Municipal (500+ personnel)	York Regional Police, Niagara Regional Police Service, Peel Regional Police
Medium-sized (200+)	Windsor Police Service, Barrie Police Service
Small-sized (under 200 personnel)	Kingston Police, Sarnia Police Service, Midland Police Service
Northern	Thunder Bay Police Service, Greater Sudbury Police Service, North Bay Police Service
First Nations	Rama Police Service, Nishnawbe-Aski Police Service

Appendix B

Key Findings – Artefacts

Mottos	Four common themes:
	1. Safety/Protection – Six out of 16 services included the concept of "safety" or "protection".
	2. Community/Togetherness/People – Seven out of 16 services incorporated being part of the community.
	3. Service/Deeds – Seven out of 16 services incorporated action-oriented concepts of "serving".
	4. Values – Five out of 16 services incorporated specific values (i.e., unity, responsibility, loyalty, honour, excellence, traditional aboriginal teachings).
Organizational Statements	Five common themes:
	1. Positive values and value for service – These statements reflect accepted normative values concerning public safety, respect for authority, and the provision of law and order services for the "public good". They leave little room for the questioning authority or non-normative concepts of behaviour: "united", "professional", "accountable", "proud", "progressive", "empathetic", "safe", "respect", "integrity", " honesty"; "effective, efficient, and sound

	economical management of human, physical, technological, and financial resources".
	2. Policing professionalism – Eleven out of 16 services included this concept.
	3. Service to community – Fourteen of the 16 services specifically included "service".
	4. Safety – All 16 services directly refer to keeping people safe as a core value.
	5. Diversity – Only four police organizational statements specifically include the concept of "diversity". The two First Nations police organizations reflect their unique cultural components as part of their mission/values, e.g. the "Guiding Principles" of the Chippewas of Rama First Nation.
Police Service Business Plans	Four out of 16 services analyzed noted the presence of diversity units in their organizations. Four of out 16 services specifically included references to diversity goals. The language is generally neutral and business-like.
Police Services Strategic Plans	Eight of the 16 services did not provide strategic plans. Six services produced plans that either did not address diversity issues in any way (two) or focused on broad "diversity" issues, initiatives, or programs (four).

	Two out of 16 services produced strategic plans that mentioned LGBT in a hierarchy of groups (aboriginals, racialized persons, people with disabilities, women).
Organizational Policies that Pertain to Diverse Groups	Six out of 16 services specifically cited the Ontario Human Rights Commission's prohibitions of discrimination in their policies and procedures, including "sexual orientation" and same-sex partnerships". Four out of 16 services specify stereotyping and four others services identify training initiatives. Only 2 out of 16 services specifically include LGBT issues in their policies.
Organizational Policies Concerning Uniforms and Personal Grooming	All 16 services require officers to exhibit "professionalism", a "professional manner", be "appropriately dressed", "clean and well groomed" and prohibited from displaying tattoos or body art "likely to bring discredit upon the reputation of the force" (Kingston, 2011).
Policies Related to Accommodations	LGBT issues are not included in guidelines for specific grounds-based accommodations such as disability, family status, and creed-religion.