Contrasting emotional labor and burnout in civilian and sworn law enforcement personnel

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Received 18 June 2019
Revised 9 November 2019
29 November 2019
Accepted 2 December 2019

Abstract

Purpose – This study introduces emotional labor into an analysis of multiple dimensions of burnout in sworn and civilian employees across three law enforcement agencies.

Design/methodology/approach – Using data from a survey of law enforcement employees in a metropolitan police department, a full-service sheriff's department, and a state corrections agency located in the western United States ($n = 1{,}921$), we test the explanatory power of an emotional labor-based model of burnout.

Findings – Results partially confirm the lone prior study to examine civilian and sworn personnel. Sworn and civilian employees experience variant levels of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, though the underlying emotional labor correlates are significantly related to burnout for both groups. Further, we extend prior results by capturing multiple facets of burnout as well as contributing an emotional labor explanation for burnout, while controlling for individual demographic characteristics and agency type.

Research limitations/implications – Law enforcement agencies rely upon non-sworn employees to support their missions. The experience of non-sworn law enforcement personnel is under-researched in both the emotional labor and law enforcement organizational literature. Burnout is a phenomenon that has high costs for both employees and organizations, particularly in the law enforcement context. Investigating the emotional labor experience of employees is critical for practitioners who are tasked with effectively managing both groups.

Originality/value – One previous study has investigated the emotional labor of civilians in law enforcement and used community-level predictions for burnout. This study builds on those findings by capturing two facets of burnout rather than the lone gauge of burnout used in the previous study. Furthermore, we use an emotional labor model to investigate emotional exhaustion and depersonalization reported by sworn and civilian personnel.

Keywords Burnout, Emotional labour, Depersonalization, Emotional exhaustion, Civilian, Law enforcement

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

The civilianization of US law enforcement has been pronounced, though little academic energy has been devoted to understanding how civilian employees shape, and are shaped by, the police agencies that employ them. Beginning in the late 1960s and continuing into the 1970s, police agencies in the United States were called upon to increase their numbers of civilians. The percentage of the total law enforcement workforce in non-sworn civilian positions varies by data source and type of agency. However, at present, civilians represent between 22.8 percent and 32.5 percent of the total law enforcement workforce, but this number can vary significantly depending on the agency. For example, civilians represent up to 48.2 percent of workforces in sheriffs' offices nationwide (Banks *et al.*, 2016; Reaves, 2011). In public corrections agencies, the estimate is that civilians compose 33.3 percent of the total workforce, but again this number can vary due to challenges in data consistency and reporting (Stephan, 2008). Regardless, it is safe to conclude that civilians compose a significant part of the public safety workforce.

Despite extensive research on the burnout of sworn officers, only one study has compared the civilian employee experience (McCarty and Skogan, 2013). The absence of research on civilians in law enforcement is not unique to burnout studies. Institutionally, law enforcement has long been a place where "sworn officers may be treated as *members* of the organization,

Policing: An International Journal

1363-951X
DOI 10.1108/PIJPSM-06-2019-0094

while civilians may be treated as *employees*" (McCarty and Skogan, 2013, p. 70). Reflecting and reinforcing that bias, policing research has often left civilians unmentioned and unexamined. The limited work that expands beyond officers and dispatchers has often lacked substance, consisting of only "descriptions of their numeric representations and discussions of the presumed advantages of hiring them in larger numbers" (Alderden and Skogan, 2014, p. 260).

This study reports the results of a dual test on the subscales of burnout – emotional exhaustion and depersonalization – for civilian and sworn employees across three agencies in a single metropolitan area. The lone previous study to compare burnout in civilian and sworn law enforcement employees (McCarty and Skogan, 2013) found the levels and predictors of one dimension of burnout were invariant across the two groups. Our study takes that finding as a departure, extending both its scope and findings by including multiple dimensions of burnout and suggesting important differences across types of worker and agency. These key differences provide the basis for future research. Whereas the previous study held community- and agency-level variables as the explanatory heart of burnout, we hold community constant and center our study on emotional labor concepts.

The paper is structured as follows. We begin by reviewing the link between police professionalization and civilianization, followed by a review of the core subcomponents of burnout and the emotional labor correlates tested in the study. Two hypotheses related to burnout in civilian and sworn employees and emotional labor are derived and then tested with multiple regression. Results indicate that both types of burnout are experienced by the two employee groups at different levels, but for similar reasons. A discussion of results is followed by important limitations. We conclude with a set of learning objectives to highlight the contribution of role relationships, emotional labor, and gendered institutions, as well as a call for sustained research interest to expand the scope of law enforcement studies past just the sworn law enforcers.

2. Literature review

In this study, we test two components of burnout – emotional exhaustion and depersonalization – across both civilian and sworn employees. The link between emotional labor and burnout has been well established in a variety of professions. This study seeks to highlight the civilian law enforcement employee experience, an understudied area of research, and, as such the study proposes a relatively simple model of emotional labor and burnout.

The literature review proceeds as follows. First, we introduce and define emotional labor. We then highlight two emotional labor components as the primary independent variables of interest: Suppression display rules and surface acting. Next, we explain model controls for several correlates that have been identified in previous research as related to burnout in law enforcement. For example, there is some evidence that perceived organizational support and sleep hygiene play a mediating role in burnout in law enforcement, and we are able to control for those potential effects. Similarly, the relationship between burnout and an individual's emotional regulation capability is an active line of research. Finally, the literature endorses controlling for individual-level variables such as respondent education, race, sex, and professional experience.

2.1 Emotional labor

Emotional labor is a worker's effort to comply with occupational and organizational display rules. First brought to scholarly attention in *The Managed Heart* (Hochschild, 1983), emotional labor was theorized to cause emotional harm to the practitioner and alienate the

worker from his own emotions (Mastracci and Adams, 2018). In law enforcement, emotional labor represents a theoretical advancement on the "degradation" and "Taylorization" concerns articulated by Harring (1981, p. 29), and further validates his underlying concern that "increased manager control over the police labor process" has negative impacts for the officer. Harring warned of the ill effects of controlling the labor process but had not imagined extending control over officers' perceived expressions. As the demand for ever more regularized emotional display grows, employees are theorized to become alienated from their authentic emotional experience (Mastracci and Adams, 2018). Scholars have expanded the scope of emotional labor research to include public service workers (Guy *et al.*, 2008), and how they conform to display rules to suppress unwanted and express wanted emotions through deep acting or surface acting.

Through deep acting, workers convince themselves of the appropriateness of the display rules governing their occupations and organizations. Deep acting is an antecedent-based emotion regulation strategy (Gross, 1998). In contrast, workers conform to display rules only superficially via surface acting. Surface acting is a response-based emotion regulation strategy (Gross, 1998). Display rules are norms and values – often unwritten – that dictate behavior and demeanor and professional practice (Rafaeli and Sutton, 1991). Display rules infuse human resource management processes: From screening applicants for the right "fit," to training and performance appraisals that reward "professionalism" and penalize its absence, to promotions into higher levels of the organization where "fit" and "professionalism" take on different meanings and the process repeats and reproduces itself over and again (Mastracci and Arreola, 2016). What is "fit" if not a job candidate's compliance with expected norms of behavior?

Emotional labor is the work in which one engages to comport with the display rules of professions and organizations. To the individual worker, emotional labor feels effortful when his inner feelings run counter to display rules and feels less effortful when those feelings are consistent with display rules. Rules are found in occupations – what is "professional" and what is not – and organizations – what "we do here" and what "we" do not. Individual workers confront display rules of their occupations, their organizations, and even the broader culture.

The expectation that display rule compliance would be difficult is a Western one: Individualist cultures recognize and reify inner feelings with internal consistency and logic that Collectivist cultures ignore. In Collectivist cultures, innermost feelings are malleable and in the service of maintaining harmony with the group, much like when a person dresses up for a formal event to fit in with the rest of the attendees and serve the spirit of the occasion. Standing out – either in terms of one's demeanor or outward physical appearance – is strongly discouraged in Collectivist cultures, and this extends to emotional labor in the workplace. Emotional labor in Collectivist cultures is less effortful than in individualist cultures because sensing others' emotions or occupational expressive norms and conforming to them is a familiar part of interpersonal interactions at both work and home (Mastracci and Adams, 2018, 2019a).

Display rules in law enforcement are likewise written and unwritten codes of conduct instructing officers on how to comport their physical and emotional responses (Grandey and Melloy, 2017). The "service" in public service, including law enforcement, is emotional labor. How a citizen *feels* about a public encounter with police is as important as the material outcome of that encounter (Mastracci and Adams, 2019b). Given the public scrutiny on law enforcement, this is so perhaps more than in any other public sector function. Law enforcement "requires workers to have emotions as well as muscle and brain" (Himmelweit, 1999, p. 34), underscoring the centrality of emotional labor to law enforcement practice.

In the Weberian, quasi-militaristic bureaucracies that dominate policing, rationality, rank, and efficiency dominate: "When rationality is viewed as the norm, emotion is no more than a disruptive influence on efficiency and effective functions" (Mastracci *et al.*, 2006, p. 124). In

command-and-control functions like law enforcement, emotions are "like a toddler in a China shop, interfering with the orderly rows of stemware on the shelves" (Immordino-Yang and Damasio, 2007, p. 4). Yet, they are not. Interview participants have at once declared the inappropriateness of emotions in law enforcement and the lifesaving function of one's own "spider-sense" (Guy *et al.*, 2008). What corrections and police call "spider-sense" is what neuroscientists call embodied knowledge (Damasio, 1994, 2018). Functional MRI scans allow scientists to track decision-making processes in the brain and observe the crucial role of emotion in decision-making. Both decision-making and learning are informed by reactions from the body, memories are informed by reactions from the body, learning is based on memories and information, and noticing one thing over another – the sense that something is not quite right – is embodied knowledge. Without feedback from the body, the mind could not adjudge one situation any different from another (Immordino-Yang and Damasio, 2007).

Embodied knowledge incorporates both cognition and emotion. Emotions are essential to professional practice because "knowledge and reasoning divorced from emotional implications and learning lack meaning and motivation and are of little use in the real world" (Immordino-Yang and Damasio, 2007, p. 9). A person knows something because he feels it, not in spite of his feelings. Reason is applied to decisions made with emotional reasoning; we decide *and then* reason, not the other way around (Damasio, 2018). The very conception of a clean break between rationality and emotion is flawed (Damasio, 2001), and the privileging of rationality over emotion ignores the consistent, deep biases which define human judgment. Accounting for the emotional labor of public servants is crucial to understanding the experience of public service.

Display rules tell workers to *suppress* unwanted emotions and *express* desired emotions. In law enforcement, suppression display rules are used to control often negatively construed emotional responses, such as anger, disgust, pity, and inappropriate humor. Express display rules instruct the employee on how to express an unfelt emotion, such as smiling when unhappy or projecting calm when upset. Policing demands both, but suppression is better understood than expression display rules, and the effects of emotional labor over time are understood even less (Daus and Brown, 2012, p. 308):

> The work environment of a police officer asks for suppression of emotions to deal adequately with everyday work scenarios such as conflict situations, manipulation, and aggression. At the same time, however, police officers are asked to show compassion and understanding toward victims of crime. Over time, this rollercoaster of emotions and constant control without emotional release may be debilitating and very unhealthy.

Crucially, the expression of *negative* emotions is undertheorized and poorly understood. Emotional labor research has focused on the suppression of negative emotions and the expression of positive emotions. Given its unique responsibility to use coercive force (Schaible, 2018), law enforcement requires the expression of negative emotions. But emotional labor research has tended to focus on customer-service roles in the private sector and care work in the public sector – Hochschild's (1983) "nicer than nice" functions – leaving "tougher than tough" largely unexamined and misunderstood (Rafaeli and Sutton, 1991). Likewise, deep acting is problematic in policing. Between the two approaches to complying with occupational display rules – surface acting and deep acting – Schaible and Six explain why police officers tend to choose superficial response-based emotion regulation (2016, p. 12):

> Surface acting has the benefit of allowing officers to distance themselves from recipients of police services, thereby averting having to deeply feel the powerful emotions often experienced or required in police encounters with tragic human circumstances. Moreover, surface acting allows for greater versatility and less investment in the selection of emotional displays, allowing officers to rapidly switch emotional modes as circumstances necessitate . . . this is contradictory to the experience of emotional labor in most other service roles.

The responsibility to use force and requirements to display a wide range of emotions pose demands unique to policing. These "greater demands and scrutiny increase the likelihood that officers experience job-related burnout" (McCarty *et al.*, 2019, p. 279). For reasons unique to policing, we include Surface Acting and Suppression in the model and exclude Deep Acting and Expression.

Suppression display rules and the resulting surface acting are linked to burnout. This path forms part of the well-established sequence of relationships that guides emotional labor research: From emotional dissonance to surface acting to burnout (see Grandey and Melloy, 2017, Figure 1, p. 409). From McCarty and Skogan (2013), we expect this to be the case for both sworn and civilian employees. Despite their role differences, both civilian and sworn inhabit and enable the organizations they work within to operate. There is no modern "policing" without civilian law enforcement employees. Given their value to the institutions, civilians are an important population to study if the academic community is to gain a vision of the whole. Our contribution is to test whether this holds for both emotional exhaustion and depersonalization and across three types of law enforcement agencies.

In addition to emotional labor variables, we consider the role of perceived organizational support (POS), a perception by employees that the employer values their contributions and cares about their well-being as a control variable (Eisenberger *et al.*, 1986). The POS literature is robust, and its measurement scale is well-validated by meta-analysis (Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002). In the law enforcement context, a marked distrust exists between front-line personnel and management (Crank, 2014), and studies have verified the negative relationship between POS and burnout (Adams and Mastracci, 2019; Jawahar *et al.*, 2007). Employees with varying levels of perceived support will experience variability in burnout. Similarly, reviews of several decades of scholarship suggest that controlling for variation in individual-level emotional regulation is important in emotional labor research (Grandey and Melloy, 2017).

Emotional labor is experienced more intensely in policing roles compared to other public service roles (Mastracci *et al.*, 2012). Excessive reliance on emotional strategies such as surface acting is associated with increased "absenteeism, work disability, and turnover" (Jeung *et al.*, 2018, p. 189). Little is known, however, about how civilian employees in law enforcement experience the emotional labor path to burnout, as almost all relevant studies focus on sworn officers. Following McCarty and Skogan (2013) we assume both types of burnout, emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, have similar deleterious effects on civilians.

2.2 Components of burnout

Efforts to measure burnout and construction of an accepted scale were led by Christina Maslach and colleagues (Maslach and Jackson, 1981). Early burnout research centered on public service workers, including police officers (Burke and Deszca, 1986), and is defined as "a syndrome of emotional exhaustion and cynicism that frequently occurs among individuals who do 'people work' of some kind" (Maslach and Jackson, 1981, p. 99). Burnout is officially recognized by the World Health Organization (2019) as a medical diagnosis, bringing renewed attention to the syndrome. Burnout does not occur in a vacuum, and researchers have established the role of emotional labor in burnout, particularly in people-service professions (Guy *et al.*, 2008). The Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) identified three subcomponents of burnout: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment.

A meta-analysis of burnout research reveals that emotional exhaustion and depersonalization are the consistent heart of burnout (Lee and Ashforth, 1996). Burnout is "one of the most frequently-studied phenomena" in organizational research (Swider and Zimmerman, 2010, p. 487), and ample research links burnout to adverse organizational,

professional, emotional, and physical health outcomes (Jeung *et al.*, 2018). Police-focused studies confirm that law enforcement employees experience some of the highest levels of burnout (Adams and Mastracci, 2019; Kop *et al.*, 1999; Schaible and Six, 2016). However, these studies all focus on sworn officers in law enforcement.

McCarty and Skogan (2013) operationalize "burnout" as emotional exhaustion only, omitting depersonalization as a unique vector of burnout outcomes. Omitting depersonalization creates an incomplete picture of burnout in policing because "Constant confrontation with the human face of our country's most severe social problems almost inevitably engenders in some officers such a dim view of the public they are supposed to serve" (Daus and Brown, 2012, p. 306). Furthermore, because women experience higher rates of emotional exhaustion and men report higher levels of depersonalization (Purvanova and Muros, 2010), the gendered nature of sworn and civilian jobs – the former male-dominated and the latter female-dominated – may explain differences in self-reported burnout as well.

Depersonalization is the cynicism initially identified and defined by Maslach and Jackson (1981). Depersonalization is a phenomenon wherein the individual becomes more callous, leading him to see colleagues and clients as problems, numbers, or otherwise less than fully human. Moreover, depersonalization and emotional exhaustion can have different outcomes, particularly in law enforcement. For example, Ellrich (2016) reports that in her study of German officers ($n = 1{,}742$), higher levels of depersonalization were linked to higher rates of being victimized while working. Taken together with the close links between emotional labor, burnout, and workplace violence (Jeung *et al.*, 2018), depersonalization plays an important, and perhaps gender-differentiated, role in overall burnout.

2.3 Civilians in public safety employment

The growth of professional policing in the United States has been accompanied by a large and increasing group of civilian employees. Beginning in the 1950s, and with increased energy in the 1970s, police agencies began hiring ever-larger numbers of non-sworn employees. In 1965, there were 8.3 sworn officers per civilian employee, but by 1995, that ratio had dropped to 2.6 sworn per civilian employee (Forst, 2000, p. 24). Much of the civilianization of policing can be traced to increasing professionalization: The 1967 Presidential Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice "held that many tasks in a law enforcement agency could be performed better by civilians with specialized training than by sworn officers" (McCarty and Skogan, 2013, p. 67). "Civilianization" is defined as the process in which "a law enforcement agency's hiring of nonsworn personnel to replace or augment its corps of sworn officers, typically with the aims of reducing costs and improving service" (Forst, 2000). Civilianization was a necessary aspect of the goals of professionalization. The organizational structures of policing evolved as departments aimed to serve their communities flexibly and responsively.

It is difficult to pin down exact statistics, but a variety of reports puts the percentage of civilian employees in non-federal policing between 22.8 and 33.3 percent (Banks *et al.*, 2016). Expanding the scope to include public safety more generally, the percentage increases. For example, civilians comprise 33.3 percent of state public corrections agencies (Stephan, 2008), and 48.2 percent of sheriffs' office employees (Banks *et al.*, 2016). Clearly, civilians represent a substantial portion of the overall public safety workplace, and further, that percentage appears to increase when the agency has correctional supervision duties, such as the case for full-service sheriff's departments.

Relatively few scholars have investigated work-related stress among civilian employees in law enforcement. Harring (1981) interviewed a small number of civilians working in the New York Police Department and found generally low morale. Doerner (1987) found that the thirty-one dispatchers in his study were not pathologically stressed, although they expressed elevated levels of stress compared to sworn officers. Kirmeyer and Dougherty (1988) used

hierarchal regression to reveal that supervisor support moderates the effects of both objective and subjective workloads among sixty dispatchers. Shernock (1988) compared sworn dispatchers ($n = 36$) to civilian dispatchers ($n = 42$) and found civilian dispatchers expressed greater job satisfaction, enjoyment of the work, and job security than did their sworn counterparts, who were "considerably more alienated and dissatisfied with the work they performed" (p. 288).

These early studies suffered from small samples, limiting the generalizability of the findings, which are mixed regardless. Addressing that weakness, McCarty and Skogan (2013) use a national sample from twelve agencies to consider what precipitates burnout in sworn ($n = 2{,}078$) and civilian ($n = 486$) employees. The authors report the two groups experience burnout identically because "the burnout process is a universal one, driven by virtually the same factors among both civilian and sworn officers" (McCarty and Skogan, 2013, p. 66). They also include community- and agency-level variables to explain burnout. This is a valid, though incomplete, explanatory base of burnout. Individual-level characteristics, including emotional labor predicates and perceived organizational support, have been demonstrated to have significant effects on both emotional exhaustion and depersonalization (Guy *et al.*, 2008). Despite these limitations, which are more closely related to study scope than shortcomings, the McCarty and Skogan (2013) study is the most extensive effort to investigate the role of burnout in civilian law enforcement employees. Our study expands this area of research by examining both emotional exhaustion and depersonalization among sworn and nonsworn personnel in multiple agency contexts.

2.4 Hypotheses

Guided by this literature, we posit two hypotheses. The first proposes a generalized test of differences in levels of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization between civilian and sworn employees. The second hypothesis addresses the explanatory power of emotional labor:

H1. Civilian and sworn employees experience invariant levels of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization.

H2. Suppression display rules and surface acting are positively related to depersonalization and emotional exhaustion in sworn and civilian employees.

3. Methods

3.1 Procedure

As part of a broader study of employee wellness in law enforcement, the participating agencies were contacted in late Spring 2018. Following administrative approval, we worked with agency representatives to develop supplemental questions specific to each agency's interests. The survey was distributed simultaneously to all employees of all three agencies. After removing non-valid emails, a total of 4,451 anonymous URL links were emailed to employees in July 2018 and remained open for thirty days. A total of 1,969 valid responses were received, resulting in a 44.24 percent response rate. Forty-eight responses were dropped due to excessive non-response, leaving 1,921 respondents (1,336 sworn, 585 civilian) in the final sample.

3.2 Sample characteristics

The study agencies are, first, a municipal police department serving a metropolitan area with a population greater than 1.2 million people; second, a full-service sheriff's office servicing contract and unincorporated municipalities, as well as operating the sole jail facility in the

county; and third, a state-level Department of Corrections. All three agencies are located in the Rocky Mountain region of the United States and serve contiguous jurisdictions. All three are large, modern agencies, and employees work across a range of environments.

The municipal policing agency (Agency 1) serves a major metropolitan jurisdiction, which is comprised of primarily urban and suburban areas. This is a modern agency, with approximately 600 sworn officers and the typical services available to agencies of that size, including fully staffed patrol, investigative, and special functions bureaus. The sheriff's office (Agency 2) is located in the same county, and services primarily the suburban and semi-rural areas of the county. Corrections (Agency 3) operates the state prisons, as well as several halfway houses and many probation and parole offices located throughout the state. The main prison, which is also the primary location of employees, is located in the same county as the other two study agencies. The employees of Agency 3 supervise and care for thousands of inmates, parolees, and probationers. Sworn employees include correctional officers who work behind prison walls, and parole agents with full law enforcement authority whose work can be indistinguishable from investigators in more traditional policing agencies. Civilian employees tasked with providing medical, dental, and psychiatric services work alongside locksmiths, furniture construction managers, and drug rehabilitation specialists. To the degree that a correctional facility is a city, civilian employees work alongside sworn officers to manage the city and its residents. Though their work activities, environments, and stressors may appear differentiated, civilian and sworn employees generally inhabit the same environment.

Because we investigate differences between civilian and sworn employees, it is useful to understand how the two groups differ along demographic lines. Descriptive statistics for the complete sample are found in Table I, while Appendix Tables report descriptive statistics for the civilian and sworn respondents separately. The starkest difference is sex, with women comprising 67.22 percent of the civilian group, while fully 86.53 percent of sworn employees are men. In all three agencies, the civilian and sworn "sides of the house" are sex-segregated, with far more women on the civilian side, and far more men with sworn status. Summary statistics for each agency are provided in Appendix Table 1.

3.3 Measures

Emotional labor research has established a "robust sequence from surface acting to burnout" (Allen *et al.*, 2014, p. 21), and the inclusion of surface acting in burnout studies is particularly salient for US-based samples. Emotional labor research was developed within the US context,

Table I.
Summary statistics, full sample (n = 1,921)

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Years of experience	13.50	9.12	0	47
Perceived org support	3.76	1.60	1	7
Suppress (Display rule)	5.12	1.20	1	7
Surface acting	4.37	1.36	1	7
Emotional exhaustion	4.16	1.48	1	7
Depersonalization	4.82	1.45	1	7
Sleep: 7+ hours/day	1.33	0.47	1	2
Law enforcement certification	1.70	0.46	1	2
Emotional regulation	5.65	0.93	1.75	7
Any college	1.52	0.50	1	2
Female	1.32	0.47	1	2
White	1.11	0.32	1	2
Agency	2.33	0.74	1	3

and our sample is drawn from employees in the US. This "robust sequence" may be subject to measurement variance when used across cultural boundaries (Mastracci and Adams, 2018, 2019a), but is generally accepted within Western and Individualistic cultures (Minkov and Hofstede, 2011). Seven-point Likert scales are used to build latent constructs of emotional exhaustion (α = 0.8481), depersonalization (α = 0.7494), surface acting (α = 0.7870), suppression display rules (α = 0.8864), emotional regulation (α = 0.8885), and perceived organizational support (α = 0.9576). Cronbach's alpha scores for all constructs are above the accepted cutoff of 0.70. Full operationalization of latent variables is reported in Appendix Table 2.

In addition to the latent variables, we model several demographic controls, including years of service and respondent race/ethnicity, sex, and education level. Mastracci *et al.* (2012) find that both new and tenured public employees engage in emotional labor, and suggest that as employees gain consistent experience engaging in emotional labor, they increase capacity. However, other research finds that length of service predicts higher levels of burnout and lower levels of POS (Adams and Mastracci, 2019). A meta-analysis of age and years-of-service studies (Brewer and Shapard, 2004) found no conclusive effects across all professions, though differences in occupations are likely confounders of overall effects. Because the majority of police-specific burnout literature uses years-of-service as an essential predictor of burnout, it is included as a control variable.

Sleep deprivation and fatigue are recent concerns in burnout research. Police and other first responders are known to suffer from sleep disorders at higher rates than other professions. Sleep deprivation is related to increased burnout and work error, poorer physical health, and decreased job satisfaction in police-specific studies (Basinska and Wiciak, 2012; Rajaratnam *et al.*, 2011). We operationalize sleep with a dichotomous variable to represent respondents who normally get at least seven hours of sleep during a typical sleep cycle. The literature is clear that both sexes engage in emotional labor. Particularly relevant for this study is the meta-analysis by Purvanova and Muros (2010), which finds that women tend to experience more emotional exhaustion, while men tend to experience higher levels of depersonalization. This is important to our study of differences between a male-dominated group (sworn officers) and a group comprised mostly of women (civilian employees).

4. Results

Our results partially confirm, and then extend, McCarty and Skogan's (2013) original study, which found sworn and civilian groups experienced the same levels of burnout for the same reasons. Our topline finding is that the two groups experience differing levels of two types of burnout, but that the motivating correlates are similar across the two groups.

Our analysis rejects the first hypothesis, which supposes that both sworn and civilian employees experience invariant levels of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. The Welch Two Sample *t*-test suggests that the difference of emotional exhaustion by sworn status (mean civilian = 3.96, mean sworn = 4.24, difference = −0.28) is significant (t (1048.23) = −3.73, 95 percent CI [−0.43, −0.13], $p < 0.001$). The Welch Two Sample *t*-test suggests that the difference of depersonalization by sworn status (mean civilian = 4.24, mean sworn = 5.08, difference = −0.84) is significant (t (936.92) = −11.20, 95 percent CI [−0.99, −0.69], $p < 0.001$). Note these results partially contradict gendered expectations of burnout (Purvanova and Muros, 2010), with the predominantly male group of sworn employees reporting higher levels of both depersonalization and emotional exhaustion. This and other results warrant further research, a theme we return to in the discussion below.

Table II reports the regression results, which supports our second hypothesis. For each of the four models, we regressed either Emotional Exhaustion or Depersonalization against Surface Acting, Suppress (display rule), Perceived Organizational Support, Emotional

Regulation, Female, White, Any College, Years of Experience, Sleep (7 or more hours per day) and Agency. For all models, we interpret effect size according to the interpretation grid originally provided by Cohen (1988). These are arbitrary cutoffs, though still commonly used, and Cohen retreated from these "rules of thumb" in later work. While recognizing that there are differing constructions, we report using Cohen's suggested rules because they are still commonly used across social science generally, and in emotional labor research specifically.

Consistent with McCarty and Skogan (2013), we find civilian and sworn employees experience emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, and that emotional labor correlates are associated with burnout in both groups. The variables of interest in this study, Surface Acting and Suppress display rules, have a statistically significant, positive relationship to both gauges of burnout, and that relationship is found in both sworn and civilian groups. This supports the view of McCarty and Skogan (2013, p. 66) that burnout is "driven by virtually the same factors among both civilian and sworn officers." Full results can be found in Table II, and we report detailed regression results for each of the four models at the front of the Appendix Materials, which can be found in the online version of this article.

4.2 Control variables

Interesting results are found among the control variables as well. In line with previous studies, POS and Emotional Regulation are both revealed to have a negative, statistically significant relationship to the emotional exhaustion and depersonalization across all four models. While formal education (Any College) has no significant relationship in any model, the other control variables show mixed effects. Gender only appears statistically significant in sworn officer depersonalization, though effect of Female (1) is negative and very small. Race has a statistically significant negative relationship in both civilian and sworn groups, with white respondents reporting less depersonalization, though the effect is not found for emotional exhaustion. A similar pattern is found for job experience, with a very small, statistically-significant positive relationship found in both groups reported depersonalization. Sleeping over seven hours per night was significantly related to less emotional exhaustion, but only for sworn employees. Agency level effects are mixed, with no effect in civilian employees. However,

Table II.
Ordinary least-squares regression models

	SWORN EE	CIV EE	SWORN DP	CIV DP
Surface acting	0.30*** (0.03)	0.36*** (0.04)	0.23*** (0.03)	0.36*** (0.04)
Suppress display rules	0.20*** (0.04)	0.20*** (0.05)	0.29*** (0.03)	0.23*** (0.05)
Perceived organizational support	−0.15*** (0.02)	−0.20*** (0.04)	−0.09*** (0.02)	−0.18*** (0.04)
Emotional regulation	−0.29*** (0.04)	−0.22*** (0.06)	−0.15*** (0.03)	−0.18** (0.06)
Female	0.10 (0.09)	0.20 (0.11)	−0.18* (0.08)	0.04 (0.12)
White	−0.01 (0.10)	−0.01 (0.16)	−0.27** (0.09)	−0.44** (0.17)
Any college	−0.06 (0.07)	0.00 (0.10)	0.09 (0.06)	0.12 (0.11)
Years of experience	−0.00 (0.00)	−0.00 (0.01)	0.01*** (0.00)	0.01* (0.01)
Sleep: 7+ hours per night	−0.23** (0.07)	−0.15 (0.11)	−0.05 (0.06)	−0.11 (0.11)
Agency 2 (Sheriff)	0.31** (0.11)	−0.13 (0.14)	0.03 (0.10)	−0.04 (0.14)
Agency 3 (State corrections)	0.42*** (0.10)	−0.16 (0.14)	0.25** (0.09)	0.13 (0.14)
(Intercept)	3.88*** (0.33)	3.53*** (0.47)	3.47*** (0.30)	3.16*** (0.50)
N	1,336	585	1,336	585
R^2	0.33	0.38	0.31	0.36

Note(s): ***$p < 0.001$; **$p < 0.01$; *$p < 0.05$. Sworn = certified law enforcement employees; Civ = civilian employees; EE = emotional exhaustion; DP = depersonalization

Agency 2 (sheriff's department) is related to higher emotional exhaustion in sworn employees, while in Agency 3 (state corrections) the agency control is significantly related to higher emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, with the effect only significant in sworn employees.

5. Discussion and implications

This study investigated the impact of emotional labor correlates on both emotional exhaustion and depersonalization to compare effects across civilian and sworn employee groups. While the focus of this study was on gaps in knowledge of how sworn and civilian employees differ in their experience with burnout via emotional labor, our findings suggest that future research needs to investigate the intersection of job role and sex within the gendered institution of law enforcement. Sworn and civilian employee roles are inexorably linked to the structure of the institution as a male-dominated one. Surface Acting is a significant and consistent contributor to both subcomponents of burnout for both sworn and civilian employees. All other factors held constant, Surface Acting is the largest contributor to burnout for civilian employees.

Differences in how men and women perform emotional labor is an active area of research (Scott and Barnes, 2011). As noted, law enforcement organizations are gendered, but the consequences of having sex-segregated roles within agencies between civilian and sworn employees is an under-researched area. Men's emotional lives often include tendencies towards ideals of stoicism (Schwab *et al.*, 2016). In occupations defined by traditional masculine ideals such as law enforcement, this can pose difficulties for multiple classes of employees (Acker, 1990), including women in sworn positions, as well as both men and women in civilian positions. Stephan, i.e. Bonnes (2017, p. 824) documents how the military engages in "bureaucratic harassment" of women and posits that other hierarchal institutions such as "police departments and correctional facilities" are likely to house similar structural bias against women. We would extend that hypothesis and suggest that future research account for not only the role of sex within law enforcement but job role as well, particularly when there are clear links between occupation and sex as found here.

The consistently-strong role of POS in decreasing burnout has been noted in previous work (Adams and Mastracci, 2019) and confirmed here. Previous research has established POS as a mediating correlate for a host of job stressors and predictors, and intriguing differences in the US versus UK contexts have been noted (Jawahar *et al.*, 2007). Given the lack of research focused on civilians in law enforcement, this is a viable research direction for scholars interested in extending and replicating our findings. Law enforcement managers would do well to emphasize POS to support both civilian and sworn employees. Managers should acknowledge the important role of sleep hygiene to relieve overall burnout levels in sworn personnel.

5.1 Limitations, and future research

This study differs in important ways from McCarty and Skogan (2013). While investigating similar outcome variables, we focus on emotional labor antecedents of both emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, while they examine organizational-level explanations for emotional exhaustion only. One strength of our design is that we control for agency, and our three agencies are all located in nearly identical geographic, political, and cultural contexts. However, this strength parallels a weakness in comparison to that of McCarty and Skogan (2013), who were able to draw on a broader sample of American police departments. In many areas, the two studies complement one another, and together provide a robust basis for

understanding burnout in both sworn and civilian employees of US law enforcement organizations.

While the research presented here advances the empirical base, important limitations will shape future research directions. Crucially, this study locates its sample and findings in the US context, and caution in generalizing to international contexts is warranted. While extending our results to other Western/Individualistic cultures is appropriate (Mastracci and Adams, 2019b), there is a reason to doubt the appropriateness of cross-cultural extension of the full model (Allen *et al.*, 2014), particularly in Collectivist cultures. Caution is warranted, as even in similar cultural contexts such as the US and the UK, meta-analysis suggests differences exist in the gendered aspects of burnout (Purvanova and Muros, 2010). Research on the cross-cultural measurement of emotional labor reveals differences in how emotional labor manifests between cultural groups, and caution must be used before assuming measurement and outcome invariance (Guy *et al.*, 2019).

A further limitation is that this was a cross-sectional survey, preventing traditional causal inferences; we rely on the broad, multidisciplinary literature tying our emotional labor covariates to burnout outcomes (Jeung *et al.*, 2018; Kop *et al.*, 1999; Maslach, 2017). Still, the findings reported here would greatly benefit from replication and extension. A key argument threaded throughout the study is that civilian status in a law enforcement setting has been overlooked, and only sustained research interest can overcome that historical deficiency.

6. Conclusion

Our findings complicate the view of law enforcement organizations as ones built entirely of law enforcers. Roles within public bureaucracies structure the relationships between the individuals who inhabit them (Gittell and Douglass, 2012). Mary Parker Follett recognized holism as a fundamental public management ethic: "Through reciprocal interrelating, participants who work in different functions are able to see their own part in relation to the whole, providing them with a more holistic understanding of their own task and, thus, giving them a greater ability to work together as a whole" (Gittell and Douglass, 2012, pp. 710–711). In a related, perhaps apocryphal story, President Kennedy encountered a janitor during a visit to the National Aeronautical Space Administration (NASA) and asked the man what he did at NASA: "Well, Mr. President, I'm helping put a man on the moon" (Brancatelli, 2016). The NASA story's bona fides are less important than the lesson for law enforcement leadership and scholarship. Just as NASA managers know that they cannot successfully launch shuttles if the janitors do not feel part of the organization, so should law enforcement practitioners and scholars recognize that the critical work of law enforcement cannot be done without the contributions of non-sworn personnel. It seems axiomatic, then, to expand the scope of policing scholarship into the experiences of civilian personnel in law enforcement.

Although civilians are not "police," it is inaccurate to claim they are not "policing" given the organizational weight they carry and the proportion of the employee base they represent. As an institution, policing has long had structural biases against women (Rabe-Hemp, 2008). Sex-segregated roles are a key component of understanding how organizations become gendered (Acker, 1990, p. 146): "Advantage and disadvantage, exploitation and control, action and emotion, meaning and identity, are patterned through and in terms of a distinction between male and female, masculine and feminine." To better understand policing organizations, scholars need a better grasp of those patterns. The academy should be committed to elevating the voices and experiences of the most invisible and silenced policing employees, not party to their disappearance.

Women in sworn positions and men in civilian roles have contextually varying emotional labor demands and outcomes. Researchers of policing organizations have an opportunity to

surface organizational and role complexity in law enforcement, and in turn, positively impact the public servants at the heart of policing organizations. Mary Guy and Meredith Newman propose emotional labor research as an approach to reveal and overcome job structures that have reinforced sex segregation (2004, p. 296):

> There is no better time than now to look again at that which worked in the past but has outlived its usefulness. Seeing the largely invisible emotional components of job classification and compensation systems enables us to more fully comprehend the tenacity of sex segregation and pay inequity in the workplace and to fashion remedies. Making emotional labor visible is the first step; making it compensable is the next.

Law enforcement managers should recognize that emotional labor is how the "service" in public service gets done and compensate that effort. Scholars should help guide practitioners by investigating the invisible work of civilians in law enforcement.

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Appendix

Appendix data to this article can be found online at: http://iantyleradams.com/appendix-materials/

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