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Stress, gender and policing: the impact of perceived gender discrimination on symptoms of stress

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ABSTRACT

Police work is inherently stressful. However, the traditionally male-dominated field of policing may create increased obstacles and stressors for female officers. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine gender differences in the perception of gender discrimination and in levels of stress. The results indicate that male and female officers have conflicting attitudes about the amount and nature of gender discrimination within police work. The findings further suggest that female officers experience higher levels of stress. In addition, the results indicate a weak relationship between perceptions of gender-related jokes and stress levels for females. Interestingly, male officers who report that females are held to a higher standard experience lower levels of stress. Nevertheless, the most important stressor for both males and females is the perception of job-related problems.

INTRODUCTION

The proportion of female police officers has grown steadily over the past 30 years. Despite these advances, women are still vastly underrepresented in police work. Female officers account for 12.7 per cent of all sworn law enforcement positions in large agencies (over 100), and 8.1 per cent in small or rural agencies (National Center for Women and Policing, 2002). Gaining acceptance in a traditionally male-

dominated field has been onerous. The difficulty experienced by female officers manifests itself in the evaluation of new recruits, in management attitudes and conduct, in attitudes and behaviour of male co-workers, in citizen attitudes and in promotions or career progression (Stuart-Van Wormer & Bartollas, 2000). These problems are further exacerbated by high levels of sexual harassment and gender bias (Bartol, Bergen, Seager-Volkens, & Knoras, 1992; Harrington & Lonsway, 2004; Horne, 1999; Morris, 1996; Nichols, 1995). Consequently, the inherent gender bias that encompasses police work may increase the level of stress among female officers. Therefore, the purpose of this study is twofold: to examine gender differences in stress levels, and to determine the impact that perceived gender discrimination has on the stress level of police officers.

Police work is highly stressful (Peak, 2003; Toch, 2002). Police officers are exposed to both 'inherent' and 'organisational' stressors. Inherent stressors are events that happen routinely in police work and which have the potential to be psychologically and physically harmful to officers. Inherent stressors include boredom and inactivity, use of force, use of discretion, making critical decisions, continual exposure to citizens in pain or distress and exposure to danger, violence and possible death. Conversely, organisational stressors refer to policies and practices of the police department, which may include poor wages, excessive paperwork, bureaucracy, insufficient training, inadequate equipment, shift work, weekend duty, limited promotional opportunities, lack of administrative support, and poor relationships with supervisors or colleagues (Violanti & Aron, 1993). Numerous researchers suggest that organisational stressors are more powerful than inherent stressors (Graf, 1986; Grier, 1982; Martelli, Walters, & Martelli, 1989; Norvelle, Belles, & Hills, 1988; Reiser,

1974; Violanti, 1981; Violanti & Aron). However, the type of stressor may affect the outcome of stress. For example, inherent stressors may increase health troubles and weaken coping strategies, while organisational stressors may create alienation.

Additionally, in the Job-Strain Model of the relationship between job stress and illness, objective job factors (eg hours worked, exposure to dangerous situations) are generally more important than subjective factors (eg perceived demands, boredom) in predicting overall health outcomes. However, subjective factors are better predictors of psychological distress (Gareis & Burnett, 2002).

A review of police stress research reveals that the costs of stress include: cynicism and suspiciousness, emotional detachment from family, reduced efficiency, absenteeism and early retirement, excessive aggressiveness, alcoholism, marital or family problems (extramarital affairs, divorce or domestic violence), post-traumatic stress disorder, health problems (heart attacks, ulcers, weight gain) and suicide (Toch, 2002, p. 6).

In terms of gender, the results are mixed. Some research suggests that female officers experience higher levels of stress (Bartol et al., 1992; C.A. Martin, 1983; Pendergrass & Ostrove, 1984; Wertsch, 1998; Wexler & Logan, 1983). Conversely, other research indicates that there are few gender differences in stress outcomes (Dantzker, 1998; Pole et al., 2001; Haarr & Morash, 1999; Morash & Haarr, 1995; Patterson, 2003; Singer & Love, 1988). Interestingly, Norvelle, Hills, and Murrin (1993) find that male officers experience greater stress, emotional exhaustion and dissatisfaction than female officers. However, studies conclude that danger, threat of violence, and exposure to tragedy increase stress for female officers (Bartol et al.; Brown & Fielding, 1993). Moreover, Geick (1998) finds that female officers report less stress

but report increased symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder.

Furthermore, the relationship between workplace stress and family life is inherently complex. As Gareis and Burnett (2002) show, there is a need to account for the quality of family relationships in assessing the link between work and stress. In particular, they show that positive parent–child relationships mitigate the effects of workplace stressors on psychological distress among women. However, they also point out that the causal direction of these relationships is unclear. It may be that having positive parent–child relationships reduces the influence of workplace stressors on psychological distress, or that high levels of distress prevent the formation of positive parent–child relationships. These relationships also need to be investigated among men.

Finally, Haarr and Morash (1999) find that females have slightly higher levels of stress. However, this only reflects racial differences; white females have no difference in stress levels, while African American female officers experience higher stress.

GENDER HARASSMENT

Nevertheless, gender harassment and bias is a serious and disturbing element of police work and subculture. Police work has been traditionally defined as male work and the culture of policing remains highly masculine or macho (Harrington and Lonsway, 2004). Female officers are exposed to the additional stress that is created and maintained in a male-dominated and male-centred environment. Women in policing encounter significant resentment and resistance by male co-workers, supervisors and administrators (Balkin, 1988; Bartol et al., 1992; Belknap & Kastens-Shelley, 1993; Gratch, 1995; Heidenshohn, 1992; Jacobs, 1988; C.A. Martin, 1983; S.E. Martin, 1980, 1990; Morash & Haarr, 1995;

Remmington, 1983; Segrave, 1995; Timmins & Hainsworth, 1989; Wexler & Logan, 1983). Some male officers have grave reservations about women as competent police officers (Lord, 1986), which is often based in stereotypes about femininity. Consequently, harassment is often related to male officers' opposition to women colleagues (Brown, 1998). Therefore, it is not surprising that the most significant problem reported by female officers is the negative attitudes and behaviours of male colleagues (Harrington & Lonsway, 2004).

One particularly virulent type of gender bias is sexual harassment. Various forms of sexual harassment are widespread in policing (Bartol et al., 1992; Horne, 1999; Morris, 1996; Nichols, 1995). Horne (1999) found that the majority of female officers encountered both harassment and sex discrimination in police employment. A Florida study reveals that 61 per cent of female respondents experienced sexual harassment, while 40 per cent reported that sexually oriented jokes and material are daily phenomena (Harrington & Lonsway, 2004). Yet another study indicates that 68 per cent of female police officers had been sexually harassed (Nichols).

In addition, interviews reveal that female officers believe that male domination and discrimination impedes career advancement and satisfaction (Price, 1996). Further studies suggest that female officers perceive higher rates of negative social interaction such as gender bias, prejudice and criticism (Brown, 1998; Brown & Fielding, 1993; Morris, 1996). As a result, gender harassment and bias may contribute to increased levels of stress and job dissatisfaction. For instance, a number of studies confirm that gender harassment and bias are related to stress (Bannerman, 1996; Morash & Haarr, 1995; Parker & Griffin, 200; Wexler & Logan, 19832). Morash and Haarr find that

sexist jokes and language are linked to work-related stress. Similarly, female officers report that hostility and negative attitudes toward women by male co-workers are an important stressor (Bannerman; Wexler & Logan). Finally, Parker and Griffin find that gender harassment results in over-performance demands, which leads to psychological distress. Essentially, hostility created by male co-workers may increase stress, yet it may also be credited to the steady pressure to prove competence (C.A. Martin, 1983; Timmins & Hainsworth, 1989; Wertsch, 1998; Wexler & Logan).

What is ironic about male opposition to females in policing is that there is a long history of women in policing, dating back to the nineteenth century. Yet having women as police officers is constructed as a 'new' phenomenon, with lots of hand-wringing about the levels of competence (Miller, 1999). Moreover, a further irony is that the traits most closely associated with female police officers of the nineteenth and early twentieth century—empathy, communication skills and a focus on crime prevention—have 'been resurrected and elevated to the pinnacle of community policing agendas and practices' (Miller, p. 65). Indeed, as Miller argues, community policing does not become entirely legitimate until these traits can be thoroughly masculinised.

As a result, it is essential to determine the impact that gender discrimination has on stress levels of police officers. Therefore, this study seeks to address three questions.

1. Do female police officers report more gender-related discrimination or bias?
2. Do female officers experience more stress than male officers?
3. Does the perception of gender-related discrimination or bias impact levels of stress for male or female officers?

METHODS

Data are taken from Project SHIELDS, which gathered information on the relationship between police stress and domestic violence in police families among officers in Baltimore, Maryland (Gershon, 2000). The project's purpose is to identify plans to reduce police stress and improve a police stress assessment tool. The great benefit of this dataset is that it allows for an in-depth examination of gender discrimination and police stress dynamics. However, one disadvantage of the project is that sampling techniques could have been more highly randomised. In the research design, nine precincts were selected randomly, as were the one or two roll calls in each shift during the study duration. However, officers were simply asked to volunteer to complete the questionnaire rather than being asked at random to do so. The resulting sample comprised 1,104 police officers, with an overall response rate of 68 per cent.

MEASURES

Independent variable

Three questions are employed to examine perception of gender-related discrimination or bias. Respondents are asked if they strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, or strongly disagree with the following statements:

1. Within the department, gender-related jokes are often made in my presence.
2. The department tends to be more lenient in enforcing rules and regulations for female officers.
3. Female officers are held to a higher standard than male officers.

Dependent variable

Stress is measured with a 30-item scale that measures psychological and physiological symptoms of stress (see Gershon, 2000 for a

complete description of the survey and the variables). The score ranges from 30 (low symptoms of stress) to 150 (high symptoms of stress). The average stress score is 45.02. The scale is highly reliable with an alpha of 0.94.

Control variables

Several control variables are employed which comprise demographic, work-related and social support variables. Demographic variables include race, education, age, marital status and military background. Work-related control variables include current rank, number of years on the police force, contact with suspects, physical encounter with a suspect(s), perception of work-related problems and emotional response to a work stressor. Perception of work problems is a construct that includes 15 items. The score ranges from 15 (low perception of work problems) to 125 (high perception of work problems). The average score is 40.18, with the alpha at 0.78. Emotional response to a work stressor is scaled through three questions. Respondents are asked if any extremely stressful (work) event in the past brought about distressing thoughts, feelings of avoidance and/or detachment from people or activities. The scores range from 0 (low emotional response) to 3 (high emotional response). The alpha level is 0.78, which indicates that this scale is consistent. Finally, social support variables include availability of stress debriefing, social support from friends and/or family, and religiosity. Religiosity is measured with a three-item scale with an alpha of 0.88.

RESULTS

Table 1 presents differences between male and female respondents.

In this sample, female officers are younger, have a lower rank, are more religious and are more likely to be African American. Male officers have a military background, report regular contact with suspects and have more experience on the police force. Predictably, female officers are more likely to report that gender-related jokes are made frequently, while male officers believe otherwise ($\chi^2 = 17.42$; $p < 0.01$). Similarly, female officers believe that female officers are held to a higher standard, while male officers disagree ($\chi^2 = 143.90$; $p < 0.01$). Conversely, male officers report that the police department is lenient toward enforcing the rules for female officers, whereas female officers oppose this view ($\chi^2 = 231.86$; $p < 0.01$). Finally, female officers report higher levels of stress, while male officers report lower stress levels ($t = -2.11$; $p < 0.05$).

Table 2 presents bivariate relationship and a multivariate model for stress levels.

Bivariate analyses reveal that two of the gender discrimination variables are significantly related to stress levels. First, respondents who report that gender-related jokes occur frequently are more likely to have higher stress levels ($r = 0.20$). Second, respondents who believe that the police department is lenient towards female officers have higher reported stress levels.

In addition, perception of work-related problems ($r = 0.55$), emotional response to work stressor ($r = 0.44$), contact with suspects ($r = 0.15$), physical contact experience ($r = 0.13$), current rank ($r = 0.11$), age ($r = 0.09$), years of the force ($r = 0.07$), and gender ($r = 0.06$) are positively related to stress. Conversely, perception of stress debriefing ($r = -0.26$), social support availability ($r = -0.25$), race ($r = -0.11$) and religiosity ($r = -0.06$) are negatively related to stress levels.

To enhance the analysis, multivariate analysis is performed. The findings reveal that officers who believe that females are held to a higher standard are more likely to have lower stress levels ($\beta = -0.07$, $p < 0.01$). In addition, officers who have

Table 1: Descriptive characteristics of the sample

Characteristic	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total (%)
Race**			
African American	71.3	28.7	67.7
Non-African American	92.6	7.4	32.3
Married or cohabitating	70.7	49.7	67.7
Military background**	38.6	14.0	35.1
Education			
High School	15.4	13.5	15.1
Some college	54.9	55.8	55.0
College	25.7	28.2	26.1
Graduate School	4.0	2.6	3.8
Physical contact with suspect	77.1	75.2	76.8
Regular contact with suspects**	73.5	55.4	70.9
Current rank**			
Officer trainee	8.3	8.3	8.3
Officer	55.2	51.3	54.6
Agent	5.6	5.8	5.6
Detective	11.4	23.1	13.0
Sergeant	13.7	9.0	13.0
Lieutenant or above	5.8	2.6	5.4
Debriefing available			
Strongly agree	9.9	13.5	10.5
Agree	43.8	49.0	44.5
Neutral	24.9	15.5	23.6
Disagree	15.6	18.1	15.9
Strongly disagree	5.9	3.9	5.6
Social support from friends or family			
Strongly agree	1.3	44.9	41.2
Agree	4.8	38.5	44.4
Neutra	17.9	9.0	8.1
Disagree	45.4	6.4	5.0
Strongly disagree	40.6	1.3	1.3
Gender-related jokes are made often**			
Strongly disagree	11.7	8.4	11.3
Disagree	36.7	29.9	35.8
Neutral	25.0	18.8	24.1
Agree	21.8	35.7	23.8
Strongly agree	4.7	7.1	5.1
Female officers held to a higher standard**			
Strongly disagree	24.6	10.9	22.7
Disagree	44.4	28.2	42.1
Neutral	24.3	21.8	23.9
Agree	4.7	27.6	8.0
Strongly agree	1.9	11.5	3.3
Department lenient in enforcing rules for females**			
Strongly disagree	4.1	30.2	7.9
Disagree	17.2	44.2	21.1
Neutral	30.8	20.5	29.3
Agree	31.2	3.8	27.3
Strongly agree	16.8	0.6	14.5
	Mean	Mean	Mean
Age of respondent**	37.33	35.23	37.04
Number of years on the force**	11.9	59.50	11.60
Religiousness**	4.53	5.87	4.71
Emotional responses to specific work events	0.79	0.77	0.79
Perception job-related problems	40.31	39.44	40.17
Stress*	44.74	46.68	45.02

* $p < 0.05$
** $p < 0.01$

Table 2: Correlation coefficients and standardised beta coefficients for model predicting level of stress of police officers

	Bivariate relationships r	Multivariate model β
Female respondents	0.06*	0.13**
Gender discrimination issues		
Gender-related jokes made often	0.20**	0.04
Females held to a higher standard	−0.02	−0.07**
Department is lenient towards female	0.17*	0.00
Demographic Variables		
African American	−0.11**	−0.12**
Education	0.01	−0.04
Age	0.09**	0.01
Married	0.03	0.01
Military background	0.01	−0.02
Work-related variables		
Number of years	0.07*	−0.00
Current rank	0.11**	0.04
Experienced physical contact with suspect	0.13**	0.03
Routine contact with suspects	0.15**	0.04
Perception job-related problems	0.55**	0.40**
Emotional responses to specific work events	0.44**	0.32**
Support issues		
Social support from friends/family	−0.25**	−0.05*
Religiousness	−0.06*	0.03
Perception stress debriefing is available	−0.26**	−0.08**
R^2	—	0.45
Adjusted R^2	—	0.44
N	1104	1053

* $p < 0.05$
** $p < 0.01$

higher perception of work problems, and increased emotional response to work stressors are more likely to have higher stress levels. Officers who report available social support and stress debriefing have lower stress levels, while females report increased stress. Finally, African American officers report lower stress.

Table 3 presents multivariate analysis for male and female respondents.

Female respondents are reported in model 1. The findings reveal that perception of gender-related jokes is significantly related to stress level (β = 0.13, $p < 0.10$).

Although weakly related, female respondents who report that gender-related jokes occur frequently are more likely to report higher levels of stress. In addition, perception of work problems (β = 0.36, $p < 0.01$), emotional response to work stressor (β = 0.26, $p < 0.01$), and perception of stress debriefing (β = −0.15, $p < 0.10$) are significantly related to stress levels. Female officers who report high levels of work-related problems are more likely to have increased stress levels. Similarly, female officers who report an emotional response to stressful work events are more likely to

Table 3: Standardised beta coefficients for models predicting level of stress for female and male police officers

	Model 1 Female respondents β	Model 2 Male respondents β
Gender-related jokes made often	0.13*	0.02
Females held to a higher standard	0.01	−0.09***
Department is lenient towards female	−0.01	0.01
Demographic variables		
African American	−0.09	−0.11***
Education	0.05	−0.06**
Age	0.07	−0.01
Married	0.05	0.01
Military background	−0.07	−0.01
Work-related variables		
Number of years	−0.02	0.01
Current rank	−0.08	0.06*
Experienced physical contact with suspect	0.06	0.03
Routine contact with suspects	0.04	0.03
Perception job-related problems	0.36***	0.40***
Emotional responses to specific work events	0.26***	0.32***
Support issues		
Social support from friends/family	−0.03	−0.06**
Religiousness	0.01	0.03
Perception stress debriefing is available	−0.15*	−0.07***
R^2	0.44	0.45
Adjusted R^2	0.37	0.45
N	148	906

* $p < 0.10$
** $p < 0.05$
*** $p < 0.01$

have higher levels of stress. Finally, female officers who believe that stress debriefing is available are more likely to have lower levels of stress.

Model 2 presents male police officers. The results indicate that male officers who believe that female police officers are held to a higher standard are more likely to have lower stress levels ($\beta = -0.09$, $p < 0.01$). In addition, perception of work problems ($\beta = 0.40$, $p < 0.01$), emotional response to work stressor ($\beta = -0.32$, $p < 0.01$), race ($\beta = -0.11$, $p < 0.01$), perception of stress debriefing ($\beta = -0.07$, $p < 0.01$), social

support from friends/family ($\beta = -0.06$, $p < 0.05$), education ($\beta = -0.06$, $p < 0.05$) and current rank ($\beta = -0.06$, $p < 0.10$) are also related to lower stress levels.

Male officers who report higher work problems and an emotional response to work stressors are more likely to have higher levels of stress. Moreover, African American officers have lower stress levels. Male officers who believe that stress debriefing is available and who report social support from friends or family have lower stress levels. Finally, male officers with higher education levels are less stressed,

while male officers within the higher ranks report more stress.

A comparison of the models reveals several similarities. First, perception of work-related problems is strongly related to stress levels for both male and female officers. It appears that work-related troubles impact police officers, regardless of gender. Second, emotional response to a work stressor is strongly associated with higher stress levels for both male and female officers. Finally, the belief in available debriefing is linked to lower stress levels for both genders.

In addition, there are several differences between the models. The relationship between gender-related jokes and stress levels is only true for female officers. The relationship between the perception that females are held to a higher standard and stress levels is only true for male officers. Finally it appears that only male officers are impacted by physical contact by suspect, race, education and perceived social support.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The intention of this research is to address three questions. First, is there a difference in perceptions of gender discrimination for male and female officers? Second, do female officers experience more stress than males? Third, does the perception of gender-related discrimination impact levels of stress? In regard to the perception of gender discrimination in policing, there appear to be two realities, one female and one male. Male and female officers have unique sensitivities about the nature and level of gender discrimination in policing. Male officers believe that the administration treats women more leniently, while females disagree. Conversely, female officers consider themselves to be held to higher standards, while male officers disagree. Finally, female officers report that gender-related jokes are made often, while male officers disagree. It is apparent that males and females have varying expectations and experiences toward the level and nature of gender discrimination in policing.

The second question addresses stress levels for male and female officers. As previously discussed, the relationship between gender and stress levels of police officers is ambiguous. Some research reveals that female officers experience more stress than male officers (Bartol et al., 1992; C.A. Martin, 1983; Pendergrass & Ostrove, 1984; Wertsch, 1998; Wexler & Logan, 1983). Conversely, other studies suggest that female officers are better at handling stress and report less stress than male officers (Dantzker, 1998; Haarr & Morash, 1999; Pole et al., 2001; Morash & Haarr, 1995; Patterson, 2003; Singer & Love, 1988). Interestingly, in this sample, female officers reported higher symptoms of stress than male officers, despite the fact that male and female police officers experience many universal stressors. It appears that male officers benefit from higher education and perceived social support from friends and family. Essentially, male officers with higher education and increased levels of perceived social support report lower levels of stress, while there is no significance for female officers. The social support relationship among male officers, and its absence among female police officers is particularly interesting in light of Gareis and Burnett's (2002) evidence that positive parent–child relationships are associated with lower stress level among female officers. One explanation for this discrepancy could be the small number of women in this study. A second possibility is that conflating family networks and friendship networks mitigates the effects of family relationships for women, but heightens the effects of friendship networks (and perhaps police-based friendship networks in particular) for men.

However, the results suggest that males and females experience stress in similar ways. For instance, the most important stressor for both males and females is a perception of work-related problems, followed by an emotional reaction to a stressful work event. Apparently, these stressors affect both males and female officers. This finding suggests that the problems of police work are not unique to gender.In addition, the results reveal that the perception of available stress debriefing reduces stress levels for both male and female officers. It seems imperative that both male and female officers have the option of stress debriefing.

If male and female officers report similar stressors, then why do females experience more stress than male officers? There are four plausible explanations for these differences. First, the traditionally male-oriented police subculture may insulate male officers from the stress of police work. Female officers may feel isolated and less valued at work. Harrington and Lonsway (2004) argue that women are systematically excluded from the 'brotherhood' of policing, in which many male officers belong and flourish. As a result, female officers may experience less support from male colleagues and possibly female colleagues as well.

Second, female officers may experience stressors related to the 'lack of family-friendly policies', including lack of childcare, family leave, pregnancy leave, elder care, and other related issues (Harrington & Lonsway, 2004). Female officers may face additional stressors such as increased household responsibilities and child-rearing. Studies consistently show that females are responsible for the majority of child-rearing and housework (Gazso-Windle & McMullin, 2003). Accordingly, female officers may be double-burdened with home and work responsibility.

Third, stress may be the result of the conflict between femininity and police work. For instance, Wexler and Quinn (1985) find that a major stressor for female officers is the balance between showing effective or successful police techniques and also maintaining their femininity. Finally, it is quite possible that female officers are more willing to report symptoms of stress. Numerous studies reveal that females are more likely to self-report health-related problems. Alternatively, males are less likely to report health-related problems (Weiss & Lonnequist, 1997). In relation to policing, female officers are more likely to recognise stressors, while male officers are unable to identify stress (Lunneborg, 1989). As a result, male officers may experience similar levels of stress, yet are unwilling to recognise them or incapable of recognising them.

In regard to the third question, which examines the impact of perceived gender-related discrimination on stress levels, the findings illustrate that the awareness of gender-related jokes is weakly related to symptoms of stress. Female officers who report that gender-related jokes are often made in their presence are more likely to report increased symptoms of stress. Even though the relationship is extremely weak, it is important to recognise that sexist language in the form of jokes can be disturbing and offensive to both male and female officers. It is essential to eliminate any form of behaviour that may be construed as sexist. Although the language may be viewed as 'harmless' by some officers, it is important to understand that sexist language can provide barriers toward an inclusive police force and provide discomfort for many officers regardless of gender.

Interestingly, male officers who believe that females are held to a higher standard report lower stress levels. This finding is difficult to explain. It could be argued that

these male officers may have tighter affiliations to the male bonding that is historically associated with police subculture. Essentially, these male officers may be insulated from stressors because of the traditionally male-dominated 'thin blue line' (Harrington & Lonsway, 2004). These male officers may recognise that their actions may be judged less harshly by superiors, or that they may be evaluated with less stringent criteria. Certainly, there is evidence to suggest that females have experienced more harsh evaluations from supervisors (Harrington & Lonsway). It is quite possible that male officers who believe this experience less stress. Nevertheless, it is puzzling as to why female officers who report that they are held to a higher standard did not report higher levels of stress. One plausible explanation is that female officers may expect gender bias to occur, therefore are not affected by its presence.

In conclusion, the results reveal that male and female officers have divergent perceptions of gender discrimination in policing. Nonetheless, in this sample, females experience higher levels of stress than male officers. However, it appears that gender discrimination has little impact on stress levels of male and female officers. Yet it is still critical that future researchers examine the relationship between perceived discrimination and stress levels. Gender diversity has increased within policing and the impact that diversity has on police subcultures requires further exploration.

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