Preoperative transgender motivations for entering policing occupations

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the motivations for American, English, and Welsh transgender motivations for entering policing. Historically and empirically, policing has been documented as a social environment where binary gendered ideologies are strictly enforced and upheld. Further, scant research on transgender perceptions of the police have highlighted fear of sexual assault, fear of arrest, heightened levels of police violence, and general uncomfortableness with interactions with the police. This article argues that instead of avoiding a perceived volatile binary gendered environment, pre-transition transgender identities seek out policing due to hyper masculine expectations of the job itself. I argue that MtF (maletofemale) and FtM (femaletomale) pre-transition transgender identities seek refuge within the hyper masculine environment of policing to ease internal conflicts as a result of gender dysphoria (i.e. pre-transition distress) prior to transition. In this study, 13 transgender police officers from America, England, and Wales were interviewed about their motivations for entering policing. This study found that a majority of maletofemale (MTF) and femaletomale (FTM) transgender identities chose to enter policing due to gender distress pre-transition. This research found that pre-transition people with MtF trasngender idenies chose to enter policing to combat their gender dysphoria by proving their "masculinity," and people with FtM transgender identities enter policing to foster and embrace their "masculinity."

Introduction

Historically, police interactions and social relationships with members of LGBTC (i.e., lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and other sexuality/gender variants) communities have been strained and plagued with accusations of negative conduct and/or LGBTC bias. Research (Dworkin and Yi, 2003; Herek, 2002; Herek et al., 1999) has previously suggested that sexual minorities are subject to enacted stigma in the form of prejudice and harassment, are stereotyped as deviants, and are targets of victimization and discrimination because of their perceived nonconformity with binary gender systems (Grossman & D'Augelli, 2006; Leppel, 2016; Thomas, Amburgey, & Ellis, 2016). Yet there is empirical neglect of those who represent the antithesis of social binary gender conformity—those who identify as transgender within police cultures.

Drawing upon theoretical perspectives from criminology, sociology, and social psychology, this research examines preoperative transgender motivations for entering policing. The first portion of this article examines empirical and theoretical arguments that underpin the perceived (un)acceptance of transgender identities within both American and British policing cultures. During this examination, previous research on transgender perspectives of treatment by the police and perceptions held toward the police will be presented. Further, the structural constraints of heteronormative binary gender ideologies will also be examined to better understand the occupational environment that pre-transition transgender identities face within policing. Notably, the intersection of gender performance and masculinity/femininity within police cultures will be analyzed. The second portion of this research will examine the empirical contributions of this study. During this process, how the study was carried out, who was interviewed, and the presentation of the findings will be examined.

Literature review

In an occupation whose members historically have been homophobic (Bernstein & Kostelac, 2002; Burke, 1993, 1994a, 1994b; Colvin, 2009, 2012; Jones & Williams, 2013; Leinen, 1993; Miller, Forest, & Jurik, 2003), sexist (Brown & Heidensohn, 2000; RabeHemp, 2008; Westmarland, 2001), and transphobic (Grant et al., 2011; MilesJohnson, 2015a, 2015b), questions remain regarding why any individual who is gender dysphoric would enter a profession with a documented history of intolerance toward LGBTC identities. Previous research from America and the United Kingdom has documented different forms of discrimination, prejudice, bias, and violence against transgender individuals (see ClementsNolle, Marx, & Katz, 2006; Gagne, Tewksbury, & McGaughey, 1997; Grant et al., 2011; Grossman & D'Augelli, 2006; Hill, 2002; Leppel, 2016; McNeil, Bailey, Ellis, Morton, & Regan, 2012; Tee & Hegarty, 2006; Whittle, Turner, AlAlami, Rundall, & Thom, 2007; Witten & Eyler, 1999).

A comprehensive review of literature that specifically examines transgender identities within policing is limited to very few peerreviewed papers (see Panter, 2016; Sears, Hasenbush, & Mallory, 2013). Sears et al. (2013) examined transgender identities within law enforcement that was a very brief collective report of LGBTC identities within policing. Notably, this study examined all types of personnel within law enforcement, which included correction officers, federal agents, local policing, federal policing, and probation officers. Sears et al. (2013) found that out of 60 transgender lawenforcement personnel, 90% reported negative experiences within their departments. Of those who reported negative experiences, 15% reported that they

were terminated, 37% reported being threatened with termination, 68% reported homophobic and transphobic verbal attacks, 18% reported physical attacks from colleagues, and 53% felt that their safety was jeopardized due to social isolation from their peers within policing (Sears et al., 2013). Sears et al. (2013) theorized that because transgender identities are underrepresented within law enforcement, reports of discrimination are more frequent.

Panter (2016), in the first comparative piece that specifically examined transgender occupational experiences in American, English, and Welsh policing found that transgender police faced varied amounts of gender and sexuality bias. Often this perceived bias was based on gender ideology perceptions and how adaptive transgender police were able to conform to masculine or feminine ideals within police cultures. Panter (2016) also examined the occupational and administrative challenges that transgender police faced when transitioning on the job alongside the perceptions of a lack of transgender repressiveness within policing.

Panter (2016) found during a brief analysis of membership patterns of the USbased organization TCOPS (Transgender Community of Police and Sheriffs) that less than 1% (an estimated 0.18%) of American police officers openly identify as transgender (equating to 1,300 out of 698,460 officers). Comparatively, an analysis of membership of the UKbased NTPA (National Trans Police Association) indicates that an estimated 0.084% of British police constables freely disclose that they are transgender (equating to 110 out of 129,584 constables) (Panter, 2016). Moreover, spanning from 2012 to 2015, both TCOPS and NTPA reported an increase in membership patterns of 10%, which arguably indicates two possibilities: a willingness to disclose transgender identities within policing over time, or an increase in actual transgender repressiveness within policing itself (Panter, 2016). It should be noted that statistics covering the prevalence of transsexuality and other forms of gender variance within policing are difficult to accurately measure. Regardless, empirical examinations of transgender identities and their motivations for entering a perceived hostile social environment should be further explored.

When examining current trends in police recruitment of transgender identities and what police forces are doing to build relationships with transgender individuals, some agencies are notably progressing. For example, English and Welsh governments have released transgender guidance that specifically addresses the recruitment and retention of transgender identities that over 19 out of 43 police forces have currently implemented (Panter, 2016). In America, several police departments (e.g., Atlanta, New York, San Francisco, San Jose) have recruited members of the transgender community and have appointed transgender officers to act in liaison positions. Panter (2016) points out that some American and British police forces are actively recruiting from transgender communities, while others have implemented work policies that protect transgender identities during transition. Yet, as Panter (2016) states, there exists no continuity between recruitment measures and work policies across the 43 English and Welsh police forces and/or the 17,985 police departments in the United States. Therefore, while one force/department has a transition policy in place alongside active recruitment efforts directed toward transgender communities, neighboring jurisdictions may not.

Previous research on non-police transgender perceptions of the police

Researchers have stated that transgender individuals are one of the most victimized groups within society and are likely to face more abuse by the police than other stigmatized groups (see Berman & Robinson, 2010; Edelman, 2014; MilesJohnson, 2013a, 2013b; Redfern, 2014).

A study conducted for the National Center for Transgender Equality by Grant et al. (2011) researched 6,450 individuals who identified as being transgender. One of the key findings of this large body of research conducted in the United States was that onefifth (22%) of respondents who had interacted with the police reported harassment by police due to bias, with 6% reporting physical assault and 2% reporting sexual assault by police officers because they were transgender or gender nonconforming (Grant et al., 2011). Further, Grant et al. (2011) found that police harassment and assault had an apparent deterrent effect on respondents' willingness to ask for help from law enforcement, with 46% reporting that they were uncomfortable seeking help from the police. Like, Grant et al. (2011), Nemoto et al. (2011) found that out of 573 MtF participants, more than twothirds reported that they have been ridiculed or embarrassed by American police because of their transgender identity or expression.

Another American study which analyzed data from over 6,456 transgender individuals found that 27% of the sample reported being harassed by the police due to antitransgender bias, with 16% specifically claiming that their interactions included negative experiences while being put in jail or prison (HarrisonQuintana & Herman, 2012). Stotzer (2013), in a Hawaiian study, found that transgender women and transgender men reported higher percentages of being arrested (39% and 47%, respectively) than cisgender lesbian/bisexual women (14%), cisgender gay/bisexual men (19%), gender nonconforming gay/bisexual men (27%), and gender nonconforming lesbian/bisexual women (17%). Sousa (2001) found that higher percentages of transgender women (45.5%) than trans men (18.2%) reported harassment or verbal abuse. Green (2012) found that Alaskan transgender people (12%) have a higher percentage of being verbally harassed or abused by the police than 11% of gay/bisexual cisgender men and 4.7% of lesbian/bisexual cisgender women. Looking at American studies, data suggests that transgender people face more victimization at the hands of the police (Grant et al., 2011), more arrests than LGB cisgender individuals (Stotzer, 2013), more reports of police harassment (Grant et al., 2011), and more bias incidents at work than cisgender LGB individuals (HarrisonQuintana & Herman, 2013).

Additionally, the relationship between American law enforcement and transgender individuals appears very precarious when examining crime reporting rates. As previously stated, Grant et al. (2011) found that 46% of trans individuals were uncomfortable seeking help from the police. Xavier and Bradford (2007) found that Virginians who participated in a transgender health study reported that 83% had been victims of sexual assault but did not disclose the incidents to police, with 70% of physicalassault victims not reporting the incidents to the police. Wilchins et al. (1997) found that 41.3% of transgender participants never reported violent criminal incidents to the police. Sousa (2001) found that among criminal victimization, only 25% of transgender participants disclosed that they reported the incidents to police.

Besides the fear of harassment, fear of physical assault, fear of sexual assault, and fear of arrest, transgender identities often disclose a general uncomfortableness when interacting with police (see Carson, 2008; Grant et al., 2011). Witten (2008) found that transgender identities avoided interacting with the police due to fear of abuse by the legal and medical systems, with over half of participants disclosing a fear of ridicule, fear that their report would not be taken seriously, or previous negative experiences that dissuaded them from reporting another criminal incident (Galvin & Bazargin, 2012). Further, Galvan and Bazargan (2012) found that 71% of transgender Latinos from Los Angeles reported negative police interactions overall.

In comparison, there is minimal research that examines police harassment and discrimination against transgender and gendernonconforming individuals in England and Wales. One notable body of European research that offers some evidence of the extent of officer interactions with transgender individuals was conducted by the Scottish Transgender Alliance. McNeil et al. (2012) surveyed 889 Scottish transgenderidentified individuals for the Trans Mental Health Study (the largest trans survey in Europe) and discovered that out of 665 respondents, 14% had reported some form of police harassment for being transgender, with 34% worried about potential future police harassment (McNeil et al., 2012).

From an international research perspective, MilesJohnson (2013a, 2013b, 2015a, 2015b, 2015c, 2016) has examined transgender identities within Australia. MilesJohnson (2015a) found that the damaging effects of police hostility and discrimination toward the transgender community have stemmed from the aggression directed toward transgender identities in general. As such, this hostility has led to a lack of trust and confidence that the transgender community has toward the police (Moran & Sharpe, 2004). MilesJohnson (2015a) found that the Australian transgender community commonly reported negative experiences with the police, and that during their interaction with the police, officers did not accept their gender identity. Participants of MilesJohnson's (2015a) study disclosed that police officers were disrespectful and displayed "unprofessional and harassing behaviours" (p. 184) toward the transgender community.

Structural constraints: Masculinity and "police culture"

Reiner (2010) does not emphasize that "cop culture" is puritanical; instead he argues that "cop culture" is dominated by "machismo" (exaggerated masculinity; p. 129). Notably, masculinity has always been an issue in research within policing, either explicitly or implied. At a basic level, masculinity is simultaneously a place in gender relations that is practiced through the way men and women engage that place in gender, and the effects of these practices in bodily experience, personality, and culture (Connell, 1995). Policing, as a masculine profession, reflects "socially gendered perceptual, interactional, and micropolitical activities that cast particular pursuits as expressions of masculine and feminine 'natures'" (West & Zimmerman, 1987, p. 126). This creates a binary gendered division between the expectations of those who wear the uniform and police performance abilities. These entrenched binary genderrole stereotypes and assumptions of masculine and feminine have been used to exclude women and those who associate with "femininity" from job assignments to upper management positions. Some researchers even state that the mere presence of women (i.e., femininity) can symbolically undermine the traditional masculine ethos of policing and be perceived as a threat to masculinity itself (see Fielding & Fielding, 1992). With the police ethos of masculinity, danger and authority are interdependent elements in policing where individuals must conform to the adoptive culture. Martin (1980) found that women adapt to policing by either emphasizing their femininity or by portraying themselves as weak and passive in the presence of male officers, or they may emphasize masculinity. This ethos of masculinity creates a dichotomous relationship between men and women within policing (Fielding, 1994; Garcia, 2003); therefore, it is essential for this research to explore gender construction and masculinity, specifically, rather than pointing out the hierarchical relationship by which binary differences between men and women are only reinforced.

The job of policing itself is regarded as one of the few remaining nonmilitary occupations where there is a requirement for physical violence, bodily power, and the possibility of mortal danger. Hobbs (1995) suggested that "violence is an enduring, emphatically masculine resource" (p. 29), which may draw individuals who wish to assert their masculinity into an environment in which violence is acceptable and even, to a lesser extent, encouraged. In reference to the usage of acceptable physical violence in policing, police ideologies and the profession itself requires officers to handle themselves (examples: Fielding, 1988; Heidensohn, 1994; Uildriks & Mastrigt, 1991), and they must be able to be perceived as having the physical ability to do so. Chan, Devery, & Doran (2003) argued that traditional policing takes the crime fighting and coercive nature of police work for granted and equates policing with masculinity. This in turn leads to stereotypical assumptions that policing is more fitted to a male existence (Appier, 1998; Heidensohn, 1992; Crank, 1998).

Miller et al. (2003) contended that because policing entails homosociality—which is gendered social interactions between males in police culture—any display of "feminine" characteristics is perceived as threatening masculinity. This threat toward masculinity causes male officers to conform to macho models to compensate for any questions about their sexuality or gender presentation (Miller et al., 2003). These threats can be validated through the subordination of women, homophobia, transphobia, authority, control, competitive individualism, independence, aggressiveness and the capacity for violence (Connell, 1995; Messerschmidt, 1996), as illustrated by the historical lack of social acceptance of trans feminine, effeminate gay, male identities and femininity in general (see Blumfield, 1992; Burke, 1993; Martin, 1980; Pharr, 1988; Schneider, 1989; Zimmer, 1987).

Policing and hyper-masculinity

Within social environments, cultural factors that impact perceptions of heteronormativity are important when examining hyper-masculinity. Hyper-masculinity is related to hegemonic masculinity in how "maleness" is situated as a dominant social position of acceptance. In other words, hegemonic masculinity reinforces the notion that maleness is a dominant social position compared to "femaleness" (Connell, 1995; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; RabeHemp, 2008). As such, masculinity itself is not a unitary construct, since the lines separating mature masculinity and hyper-masculinity can be drawn in different places on a malegenderrole continuum depending on cultural context (Brown, 1988). Hyper-masculinity can typically be adopted with male (or rarely female) constructs as a reaction to repudiation of feminine aspects of one's self, defense against anxiety for being gay, and socialized parental influences (Brown, 1988; Glass, 1984; Ovesey, 1969; Mosher & Sirkin, 1984). In respect to this research, the first construct of hyper-masculinity is especially important.

Most of the comprehensive masculinity research on transgender individuals has been conducted in the context of the integration of trans identities into the military (Dietert & Dentice, 2015; Elders et al., 2015; Gates & Herman, 2014; Kerrigan, 2012; McDuffie & Brown, 2010; Yerke & Mitchell, 2013). Although culturally the military is not a perfect comparison to policing, they are both highly cohesive, formally segregated, and prominently occupied by men (Belkin & McNichol, 2002; Koegel, 1996). Theoretically the military does offer a good perspective on the incorporation of transgender identities within a masculine environment similar, in some aspects, to policing. Policing studies from its origins, have primarily focused on the features of the social environment of police culture, as Reiner (2010)

stated, "The police world is one of "old fashioned machismo" (p. 124). Skolnick (1966), when describing a "working personality" stated, "The combination of danger and authority plus the need to produce results are critical" (p. 44) within policing. Fielding (1994) stated that the values that comprise policing culture are "an almost pure form of hegemonic masculinity" (p. 47).

Notably, masculinity itself is not a unitary construct and the division between separating masculinity from hyper-masculinity can become more transparent in different social environments based on a continuum of male gender roles (Brown, 1998). When examining the theoretical constructs of hyper masculinity in social environments, typically it is perceived that this phenomenon occurs by psychological repudiation of feminine aspects, defense against LGBTC anxiety, and previous socialized experiences (Mosher & Sirkin, 1984). Most relevant to this study and to Brown's (1988) study are the theoretical constructs concerning psychological repudiation of feminine aspects for MtF pre-transition transgender identities. Policing and hegemonic masculinity have multiple facets that intersect with sexual and gender implications and have developed to assess its features (Mosher & Sirkin, 1984).

Therefore, argumentative component elements to this research would be contentious without exploring Brown's seminal work, *Transsexuals in the Military: Flight Into Hyper-masculinity* (1988). Notably, Brown's (1988) theory borrowed and mirrored Steiner, Satterberg, & Muir's (1978) concept of a "flight into femininity" as a possible adult phase in development based on studies of applicants for sex reassignment surgery. Prior to adulthood, adolescents are faced with a social atmosphere that stresses conformity. Conformity, which is commonly known as "fitting in," is often described as a selfregulated compliance to binary gender ideologies. Fitting in in adolescence can entail wearing certain clothing and hairstyles that are associated with gendered binaries. This can also include elements of speech and body language (Bergvall, 2014; Hall & Bucholtz, 2012; Talbot, 2010). By an adolescent or even an early adult conforming to social norms, traditionally they are securing psychological provisions and bolstering any flagging selfesteem (Brown, 1988). During this time, adolescents are readily rejected by their peers for minor deviations and aberrations in behavior and appearance. Reactions to this peer rejection may include deviating further from socialized norms or adopting a hyper-masculine persona (Brown, 1988). For preoperative transgender identities, androgyny or social conformity in the form of integration is not rejected; they are merely perceived as unobtainable choices (Brown, 1988).

A practicing military psychologist, Brown (1988) conducted case studies over a 3year period of 11 biological male genderdysphoric patients who met the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) III1 criteria for transsexualism. Brown (1988) argued that hyper-masculinity is the selfimposed conflict between core gender identity and gender role—a conflict that can occur across childhood into adulthood. Brown (1988) additionally argued that males pursue hyper-masculinity in a quintessential hyper-masculine environment to purge their crossgender identifications. In other words, the more masculine an individual acts, the less their femininity is observed, making gender presentation less problematic for some preop MtF transgender identities. By enlisting in a hyper-masculine profession, MtFs can immerse themselves in an environment that is dichotomous and intolerant of any challenges to gender binaries (McDuffie & Brown, 2010). Therefore, by enlisting in an organization that rewards and encourages masculine behaviors, like risk taking, stoicism, controlled violence, heterosexuality, and contempt for physical/emotional weakness, they are able to purge their

desire to be feminine (McDuffie & Brown, 2010). McDuffie and Brown (2010) suggested that the flight into hyper-masculinity may not be restricted to the US military and proposed that potentially this phenomenon could occur in nonmilitary hyper-masculine environments, like "motorcycle racing, police/security work, firefighting duties, and contact sports" (p. 23).

As such, it makes sense that pre-transitioned FtMs and, to a lesser extent, posttransition MtFs would be drawn to the field of policing. Notably, a pre-transitioned MtF who is gender dysphoric may consciously choose to enter policing as a path of least resistance to assert their "maleness." He sees a chance to maximize his masculine self while purging his feminine self through adaptation and accommodation (Brown, 1988) within a socially perceived "male" occupation—that is, policing (Brown & Heidensohn, 2000; Westmarland, 2001). Comparatively, pre-transitioned FtMs could also be drawn to an environment that not only embraces masculinity but encourages hyper-masculinity.

Methods

Obviously when conducting comparative research between the United States, England, and Wales there are political and cultural contrasts the researcher should take into account (Heidensohn, 1992). These contrasts can become more apparent or less obvious based on the narrowed focus of the subject area that is explored comparatively. For example, if I were to examine officer attitudes toward firearms there could be a discrepancy between US and UK responses owing to the fact that all American officers are required to carry a firearm. Policing styles are also somewhat different, from variations of zero tolerance in portions of the United States to "policing by consent" in the United Kingdom. Further, there exist innumerable complexities of social, political, and cultural patterns that are unique to the United States and the United Kingdom, specifically. Herein lie the issues with comparative research: The unit of comparative analysis is influenced by multifaceted dimensions within national borders, region, or locale that on their own may require a comparative approach. If anything, the researcher, in particular when undertaking critical criminological inquiries, always compares, whether internationally, culturally, or at the micro level (Hudson, 2008; Friedrichs, 2011; Van Swaaningen, 2007). Yet, where there are well established similarities (i.e., masculinity within police, LGBTC equality), differences may become less prominent. For example, all three countries have faced concurrent timelines in respect to LGBTC equality and LGBTC political movements (Colvin, 2012). Additionally, LGBTC police associations emerged in all three countries at nearly the same time, with similar goals and agendas (Colvin, 2012). Further, all three countries serve as representative examples of how policing is conducted in modern Western societies (Colvin, 2012). Often, English and Welsh policing mirrors American political, social, and cultural patterns (i.e., "broken windows," evidence-based policing, militarization of police, "zero tolerance" policing) and vice versa. When examining policing as a performance, and organizational issues specifically, McKenzie and Gallagher (1989) stated, "Superficially all police departments are the same. They have identical … organizational philosophies; usually expressed in the form of an aim to prevent crime and preserve public tranquility" (p. 3).

In other words, the "nature of police work" (Heidensohn, 1992, p. 200) is arguably similar. Monolithically, the performance of policing is deemed dangerous and difficult and requires some amount of authority to be carried out (Heidensohn, 1992). As such, there are similar social and political influences on what and who would possess a policing ethos or "working

personality." Heidenshohn (1992) refers to this concept: The nature of police is "a myth or an ideology, which does not derive from the reality of policing but from beliefs, or perhaps wishes about it" (p. 202). Taking comparative research issues into consideration, in the preliminary stages of this research it was discovered that officers seemed to share more similarities regarding who and how a working personality is perceived than their respective geographical differences would indicate. In other words, police officers themselves subscribe to a concept of a policing ethos.

Since this is the first research piece to examine transgender police experiences, before and after surgical transition, there exist no comparative empirical data. As such, I am aware of the limitations of a comparative analysis of policing. Second, there are always underlining individual, cultural, and national political influences that could impact social interactions within police cultures and vice versa. While Jones and Newburn (2006) stated that comparative research can shed light on how a "policing landscape" (p. 3) came to the way it is through political analysis, this research aims for the opposite. This research is not seeking an understanding of how the "policing landscape" (p. 3) might have changed. Instead I seek a better understanding of what already exists and what can be learned from comparative analysis; I am aiming to discover how the policing landscape itself regarding transgender emancipation has been impacted.

For this research, I had five American transgender police officers and eight English/Welsh constables. The participants of this research were sworn police officers and British constables who are employed fulltime within their respective departments/constabularies. All American participants were state certified as police officers in their respective states; English and Welsh participants were comparatively fulltime constables. As there exist scant American police positions equivalent to the roles that PCSOs (Police Community Support Officers) or Special Constables (voluntary part-time constables), these positions were excluded from this study. Further, PCSOs and Special Constables were excluded because this study was more concerned with experiences and perceptions of those fully ingrained and integrated within police cultures. Participant demographics are examined in the next section (see Tables 1 and 2).

Procedure

Table 1. American transgender officer participants.

Pseudonym	Policing tenure	Trans ID
Dave	18 years	FtM
Holly	35 years	MtF
Jessie	33 years	MtF
Liv	19 years	MtF
Josie	27 years	MtF

Due to the sensitivity of the transgender police community, it was essential that all data were dealt with in an anonymous and confidential manner. Informed consent, maintaining the anonymity and confidentiality of the subjects, and protecting my interviewees from harm and deception were obligatory (Lewis, 2003; Bryman, 2004). Written informed consent was obtained by all parties involved, and the research abided by the code of ethics laid down by the British Society of Criminology (BSC), the Data Protection Act 1998, the Freedom of Information Act 2000, and Cardiff University's research ethics committee. Further, all participants were assured that their details would be kept private and their identity would remain anonymous. All research data presented in this research were anonymized using researcher created pseudonyms, and all participants were made fully aware of the intent of this research and were allowed the opportunity to withdraw at any point during the process.

Qualitative research typically uses nonprobability (i.e., criterion-based or purposive) samples (Ritchie, Lewis and Elam, 2003; Silverman, 2010). The sampling I used for this research was purposive. I examined similar themes within each interview and reflected upon the specific features of each theme that were significant to this study. Therefore, statistical representativeness was irrelevant, and the interviewees' subjective and individualized experiences were emphasized. Silverman (2010) states that using purposive sampling allows those with the best knowledge and experiences to be involved. As such, it was logical to apply this sampling technique to this research.

Table 2. English and Welsh transgender constable participants.

Pseudonym	Policing tenure	Trans ID
Erin	15 years	Genderqueer
Tom	30 years	FtM
Sarah	2 years	MtF
Amber	7 years	MtF
Addison	15 years	Genderqueer
Elizabeth	8 years	MtF
Clair	17 years	MtF
Ellie	35 years	MtF

Initially, I began seeking my first research participants by emailing 65 officers from a federal bombing training program that I had attended with officers from across the United States (I am a retired American detective). For the additional American participants, I sent out emails directly to US police organizations. I received very minimal participation during this process. Therefore, I started emailing major police departments from all 50 states, using contact emails located on their respective agency websites. Undaunted by a year of gaining very minimal

American participation, I then started reaching out to American police blogging sites, police forums, chat rooms, and LGBTC police organizations. I did not have any American transgender participants until I contacted the Transgender Community of Police and Sheriffs (TCOPS) and officers I had seen on limited American news outlets.

For my English and Welsh participants, I began seeking research participants by sending out emails to the public affairs officers at the 43 constabularies in England and Wales, requesting access to their officers for research purposes. Additionally, I emailed the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) and asked for research assistance. A representative from ACPO forwarded information to LGBTC liaison officers and other officers who would be able to assist me. I also emailed various police associations in an effort to seek more participants.

Despite my attempts to obtain transgender participants who identified as BME (Black or minority ethic), all participants who contributed to this research identified as "White." During one point of the research process I purposely attempted to recruit Black and minority transgender identities through online forums, chat rooms, police public affairs offices, police agency websites, Black and minority police social groups, and via my snowballing method. Unfortunately, I was unable to gain any participants who identified as Black and transgender, Native American and transgender, or Asian and transgender, and so forth. Therefore, I was not able to explore the intersectional arguments of gender ideologies, masculinity, femininity, and race.

Since I was aware of the sensitive nature of my research, I gave participants the choice of their preferred interview location. Interviews took place in police training institutions, on patrol during police ridealongs, at transgender and gay PRIDE events, in police offices, at my research office, and over the telephone. Through contacts provided by my interviewees, I tried to get in touch with others who might be interested in talking to me. To a certain extent, I was successful with this "snowballing" approach, and I believe this was imperative in recruiting LGBTC participants, because they represent a "hidden" and vulnerable population (Browne, 2005).

During this snowballing process, my initial respondents forwarded my contact information to other respondents. The transgender policing community, specifically, verified that I was a legitimate researcher and not a news reporter. I believe the verification through this type of snowballing method assisted me in effecting a higher participation rate of trans identified officers. Additionally, this type of snowballing technique assisted in verification of police officer status to ensure that my participants were actually serving police officers. In other words, a transgender police participant contacting me and relaying how they got my contact info helped to begin the verification process to make sure all participants were actually police officers. During the course of the interview, after initial email contact, I was able to further verify that those who spoke to me were active police officers. Interviews were conducted between September 2012 and September 2015 and ranged from 15 minutes to up to 3 hours; most were 40 minutes long.

Presentation of findings

Most transgender police stated that they were specifically drawn to the hegemonic masculine aspect of policing either before, during, or after transition. Holly, an American officer, disclosed:

MtF officers are trying to live up to masculine gender expectations, and for the FtM probably the similar kind of things … They are looking for a male-oriented job … or something that is perceived as male oriented. Policing falls into that category … It is a hyper-masculine profession.

Mirroring Holly and others, Josie disclosed:

I don't think you do the job to hide within yourself. I think you do the job, you take masculine jobs, to stray away from anyone expecting you are trans … That is why I did it, so people wouldn't suspect I was trans.

Much like Holly and Josie, Clair (a British constable) stated:

I entered policing to prove to others that I was tough … I liked the idea that I could suppress my femininity … I thought that no one would question that I was male when in reality I felt like a female.

Almost all post-transition transgender participants disclosed that they specifically entered policing to suppress or reinforce their gender before transition. MtF (male-to-female) participants disclosed that they entered policing to further assert their male gender identity via a fostered masculine social environment. Further, participants disclosed that they viewed entering the world of policing as a way to suppress their transsexuality, as Liv, an American officer, best summed up statements from other MtF participants:

I think that always goes back to the same thing I did my whole life is what you do, is you overcompensate your whole life to, I guess, overpower all of this … You do weight lifting, police work, anything you could do to make me bigger, stronger. The more manlier job you have, maybe it will just overwhelm this and make it go away.

American officers were not alone in disclosing why they are drawn to policing. English and Welsh constables pointed out that they too were drawn to the hyper-masculine profession of policing. As Tom described it, "I was able to hide behind the uniform." MtF and FtM participants disclosed that they used the hyper-masculine uniformed profession of policing to feel free to exert their male masculinity (in pre-transition FtMs) or to cover their femininity (in pre-transition MtFs). By entering the hyper-masculine social environment of policing, MtFs who were combating their pre-transition dysphoria (i.e., pre-transition distress) could socially demonstrate to outsiders and themselves that they were masculine and not feminine. This social performance of their "maleness" via social immersion into a hyper-masculine environment would remove any social doubt of their internal gender dysphoric conflict. By being "masculine" in a hyper-masculine environment a pre-transition MtF was performing within a socially perceived expectation of "maleness," which is the antithesis of "femininity" and "femaleness." As Jesse, an American officer, stated:

I wanted to prove to others that I was a man … that I was not dealing with this internal conflict that I felt like a woman. I wanted to prove to my father and my wife that I was manly and the best way to do that is to work in a macho profession. I mean, no one will question if you are trans if you are a cop in uniform. Everyone assumes that you are a man's man.

Much like Jesse, Ellie (a British constable) stated:

> Before I entered policing I entered the British military. I wanted to prove to those around me that I was tough, ya know, a man's man. Yet when I look back I realise I pursued these jobs because of my gender dysphoria. I wanted everyone to know that I was normal … when you want to fit in you do whatever it takes … even if it is difficult.

Notably, the disclosed reasons of MtFs to entering policing pre-transition were used to combat internal distress from their gender dysphoria. This is similar to Brown's (1998) flight into hyper-masculinity theory. Brown (1988) argued that hyper-masculinity is the self-imposed conflict between core gender identity and gender roles—a conflict that can occur across childhood into adulthood. Brown (1988) additionally argued that males pursue hyper-masculinity in a quintessential hyper-masculine environment to purge their cross-gender identifications. In other words, the more masculine some individual acts, the less their femininity is observed, making gender presentation less problematic for some pre-op MtF transgender identities. By enlisting in a hyper-masculine profession, MtFs can immerse themselves in an environment that is dichotomous and intolerant of any challenges to gender binaries (McDuffle & Brown, 2010).

When examining FtM (female-to-male) pre-transition identities (2 participants), it was found that policing was an occupation draw because of its hyper-masculinity. FtM participants disclosed that the social environment within policing encourages and embraces the preferred expression of masculinity (and to a certain extent hyper-masculinity), which is why they chose to enter policing pre-transition. They viewed policing as a healthy environment that would foster their transition into "manhood." As Tom stated:

> Since it is expected for females to be a little bit tougher in policing, you can safely display your masculinity without too many repercussions pre-transition … but I know a lot of MTFs where it is the opposite: they assert their masculinity pre-transition to prove something to others.

Elizabeth, another British constable, stated:

> It's strange, both MTFs and FTMs are drawn to policing because of the masculinity. For FTMs they are allowed socially to be more masculine and more of themselves…for MTFs it is the opposite, because you can hide your femininity by asserting masculinity.

This "assertion of masculinity," as Elizabeth describes it, is connected to what my participants described as purging. When the specific term purging was mentioned within interviews, I always asked for additional clarification of what the term meant, because I was not familiar with it prior to this research. As Ellie, a British constable, stated:

> It sums up the struggle prior to transition … You do things to try to fight the urge to transition … Often you do things to purge yourself from trying to be that way…Sometimes you try to be more masculine if you are a MTF to convince others that you are not questioning your gender. This is when a lot of people get mental illnesses or alcohol problems within the trans community, because you are trying to purge your system … You are doing things and hiding who you are to conform.

This purging concept is a gender performance phenomenon in which people conform to societal expectations out of fear of some type of social rejection from others. During this purging process, individuals attempt to purge transgender thoughts or feelings by immersing

themselves in a dichotomous environment that is intolerant of any blurring of gender boundaries (McDuffie & Brown, 2010). By entering an environment that rewards and cultivates masculinity (i.e., risk-taking, stoicism, controlled violence, heterosexuality, athletic prowess, and contempt for physical and emotional weakness), pre-transition MtF individuals believe that the environment will suppress their desires to become feminine (McDuffie &Brown, 2010) and encourage expressions of masculinity. Further, FtMs are also drawn to the hyper-masculine profession of policing before transition because the social environment encourages displays of masculinity (despite gender identity) and socially fosters a more masculine social role performance. As such, distresses from gender dysphoria in FtMs are less socially pronounced in an environment where masculinity and the performance of masculinity is the desired social norm. This in turn creates a more supportive and constructive social environment when purging any undesirable expressions of "femininity" before transition.

Discussion

In an atmosphere of individualized conformity, fitting in, MtF and FtM pre-transitioned officers use their occupation to bolster a flagging self-esteem in how they present their binary gendered performances (Brown, 1988). This is not surprising when even cisgender individuals are rejected by their peers for minor aberrations in behavior and appearance. To respond to this, pre-transition MtFs may seek social environments in which there exists less condemnation or, alternatively, they may attempt to consciously select a hyper-masculine adaptation to suppress any social perceptions of non-masculine gender continuity. Therefore, androgyny is not prohibited by those trying to conform to a hyper-masculine adaptation. Instead, it has not been realized because MtFs are consumed with suppressing their transsexuality. As such, more masculinity is perceived as less femininity and less problematic (Brown, 1988). This hyper-masculine adaptation requires a pre-transitioned MtF (male-to-female) to purge and reject all aspects of the femme self (Brown, 1988).

As this is the first peer reviewed piece that specifically examined transgender motivation to entering policing, there are some limitations that should be considered. As indicated in my sample, a major limitation to this study was the low number of participants. For that reason, findings might not be generalizable to all transgender police officers. More specifically, my sample of transgender police officers is not representative of the overall transgender population relative to ethnicity and age due to the small sample size. Further, as previously stated, all participants identified as White.

Despite these limitations, this research empirically contributes to the field of psychology and to policing studies by highlighting the motivations for MtF and FtM pre-transition identities who enter into policing. This article conceptualized that MtF and FtM pre-transition identities are drawn to hyper-masculinity environments (i.e., policing) and the social impact these environments have upon gendered performances. While there is a growing body of research surrounding the transgender population's perception of police treatment, this is the first piece of empirical evidence that has contributed to the lack of studies surrounding transgender perceptions of masculinity within policing. As such, I encourage more nuanced future examinations into police culture and the experiences of transgender identities within police cultures.

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