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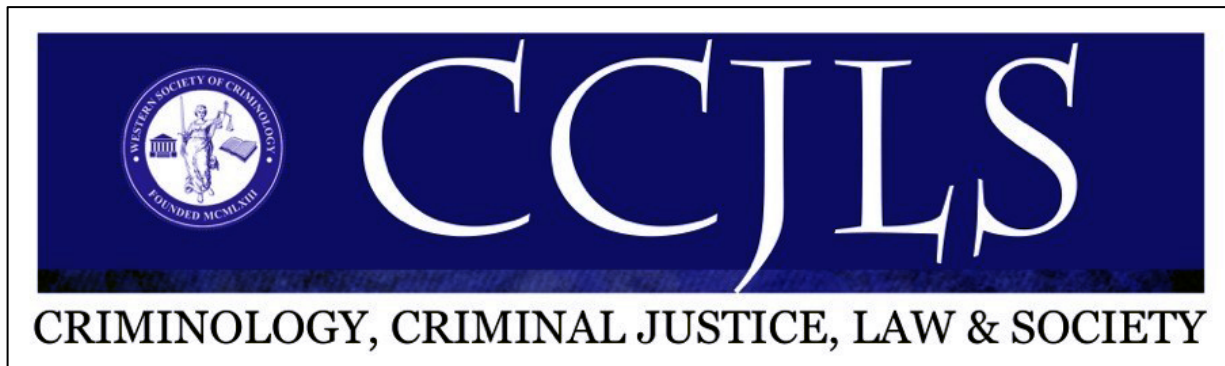
Organizational Injustice and Police Misconduct:
Predicting Organizational Defiance Among Police Officers

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A B S T R A C T   A N D   A R T I C L E   I N F O R M A T I O N

Copious research supports the association between organizational justice and employee performance. This study utilizes organizational justice as a theoretical framework to predict self-reported police misconduct. In particular, this study builds upon recent work into police officers' behavioral responses to perceived injustice by exploring the link between perceptions of overall organizational injustice and three forms of police defiance: 1) using departmental rules, policies, or laws against the administration when needed, 2) purposely undermining the administration's goals, and 3) disregarding organizational policies and procedures. Data was collected using an online self-report survey distributed to a convenience sample of sworn police officers that were members of a police officer association in a southern state. Multinomial logistical regression techniques were used for analyses, suggesting that perceived overall injustice has a positive effect on the likelihood officers would self-report engaging in all three forms of organizational defiance.
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As noted by Cropanzano, Bowen, and Gilliland (2007), copious occupational and management research in the industrial/psychological fields link perceptions of organizational justice to numerous employee work-related behaviors. This line of research supports the premise that employees not only make fairness assessments regarding their organizational work environment, but react based upon those judgements (Colquitt, Greenberg, & Zapata-Phelan, 2005). Hence, employee work-related behaviors are shaped to some extent by their perception of how they are treated beyond that of situational and individuals' characteristics and personalities (Colquitt et al., 2005). Although research supports that many emotional and motivational factors may influence employee performance, fairness has shown to be one of the strongest organizational predictors (Colquitt et al., 2005; Cropanzano et al., 2007). Meta-analyses have provided empirical support for the direct and indirect relationship between organizational justice and all three facets of employee performance: task performance (sometimes referred to as in-role behaviors), organizational citizenship behavior (sometimes discussed as extra-role behaviors), and counterproductive work behavior (Berry, Ones, & Sackett, 2007; Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001; Colquitt, Conlon, Wesson, Porter, & Ng, 2001; Colquitt et al., 2013). Of importance to this study are research findings that employees who feel mistreated or wronged by their organization may act in a manner to get even or restore a sense of equitable balance (Ambrose, Seabright, & Schminke, 2002; Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007; Skarlicki & Folger, 1997). Based upon these previous research models, organizational justice is a viable theoretical framework for exploring why and how employees respond to perceived mistreatment, along with furthering our understanding of the influence of organizational factors on employee work performance (Colquitt et al., 2005), and particularly, the link between organization injustice and counterproductive work behaviors (Hershcovis et al., 2007).

Counterproductive work behavior (here after referred to as CWB) is often used as an umbrella term that encompasses many types of common negative work-related behaviors engaged in by employees (Spector & Fox, 2005; Spector et al., 2006), which are often described as intentional acts that harm or intend to harm their organization (Spector & Fox, 2005). Consistent with earlier work by Robinson and Bennett (1995), CWBs are often characterized by a level of severity and the target against which the acts are directed. These acts include, but are not limited to, withholding effort, committing theft, refusing to cooperate, spreading rumors, or undermining organizational leadership (Bennett & Robinson, 2000; Holtz & Harold, 2013; Robinson & Bennett, 1995). Research informs us that although CWBs occur to some extent in every organization (Vardi & Weitz, 2004), the manner in which employees respond to organizational injustice and the types of acts they commit are often job specific (Robinson & Bennett, 1995; Skarlicki & Folger, 1997). Consequently, previous researchers have touted the importance of examining CWBs within the context of an employee's occupation (Bennett & Robinson, 2000; Skarlicki & Folger, 1997). Law enforcement as an occupation is no exception. While many CWBs that police officers engage in may be similar to that of other employees, some acts are distinct to police due to their role in society and the authoritative powers bestowed. For instance, while employees across the spectrum of occupations may steal, avoid work, or lie to supervisors, acts such as use of excessive force and abuse of authority are inherent to law enforcement (Barker & Carter, 1994; Bishopp, Worrall, & Piquero, 2016; Wolfe & Piquero, 2011).

Within police literature, many of these types of negative work behaviors are violations of organizational procedures or policies and often discussed and characterized as forms of police misconduct or under the umbrella term of police deviance (Barker & Carter, 1994; Dean, Bell, & Lauchs, 2010; Punch, 2000). Yet, limited research is focused on less severe and overt types of police misconduct that nevertheless undermine or harm police organizations (Chanin, 2015; Wolfe & Piquero, 2011). Although scholars continue to examine the association between organizational justice and police officers' performance (Donner, Maskaly, Fridell, & Jennings, 2015; Reynolds & Hicks, 2015), further inquiries into the link between police organizational work environments is warranted. Research purports that the organizational environment causes more stress and can have a stronger influence on officers' work related attitudes and behaviors than street related stress (Eitle, D'Alessio & Stolzenberg, 2014; Shane, 2013). As a whole, police related findings are consistent with the general occupational and management research. For this reason, it is reasonable to speculate that police officers would react similarly to other employees when they perceive organizational mistreatment. For example, during semi-structured interviews, officers have reported reacting to perceived injustice by engaging in several types of police misconduct, such as organizational defiance (see Reynolds, Fitzgerald, & Hicks, 2018), which provides support that

organizational justice is an essential component to minimizing police misconduct. Unfortunately, previous research suggests that many police officers perceive police departments as being unfair (Reynolds & Hicks, 2015). Therefore, it is important for academics and practitioners alike to investigate and understand what types of police misconduct actions may be linked to police officers' perceptions of organization injustice.

Given the enumerable examples of varying types of police misbehaviors chronicled by the media and social outlets (Eitle et al., 2014), police misconduct continues to be of interest to researchers and practitioners as an important line of research (Bishopp et al., 2016; Chanin, 2015). While research on more severe types of police deviance is replete (Bishopp et al., 2016; Eitle et al., 2014), retaliatory forms of police misconduct associated with perceived organizational mistreatment remain a neglected area of police research and one that is addressed in this exploratory study (Reynolds et al., 2018). Indeed, the present study seeks to gain a greater understanding of how organizational injustice may be predictive of three aspects of organizational defiance: 1) using departmental rules, policies, or laws against the administration when needed, 2) purposely undermining administration's goals, and 3) disregarding organizational policies and procedures. To address this need, data were collected from an online survey of current police officers (n=1,861) who were members of a police officer association located in a Southern state, USA. This line of research enhances our understanding of how organizational factors may influence police performance in terms of mitigating police misconduct and has the potential to make important contributions to organizational policy and supervisor training regarding the importance of fostering fair organizational policies and practices (President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing, 2015).

Literature Review

Theoretical Framework

The terms fairness and organizational justice are often used interchangeably in occupational and management literature (Colquitt et al., 2005; Colquitt et al., 2013). Organizational justice is used to describe the role of perceived fairness within the workplace (Colquitt et al., 2005; Colquitt et al., 2013) and interactions between employees and their organizations (Krischner, Penney, & Hunter, 2010). Organizational justice is most often discussed as consisting of three separate but inter-related components: distributive justice, interactional justice,

and procedural justice (Colquitt et al., 2005; Colquitt et al., 2013). Fairness in terms of equitable outcomes is distributive justice. Interactional justice refers to both the manner in which the individual is treated and how processes are communicated, whereas interactional justice refers to how the person is treated during the process. However, interactional justice is sometimes viewed as two distinct components: communication practices and interpersonal treatment. Procedural justice refers to the fairness of the process used to derive outcomes (Colquitt et al., 2005; Colquitt et al., 2013). Of the separate dimensions, procedural justice has shown to have the strongest link to employee perceptions and behaviors; particularly when outcomes are perceived unfairly (Colquitt et al., 2013; Tyler, 2010). Simply, when employees perceive outcomes are unfair (e.g., biased and subjective promotions or harsh disciplinary actions), the processes associated with the outcomes become more influential in shaping employees' reactions to the experience (Tyler, 2006, 2010).

The importance of fair procedural just processes and police legitimacy has also been a growing area of interest in policing based on earlier work that demonstrated the importance of fairness during police-citizen interaction on why people obey the law (Tyler, 1990) and cooperate (Tyler, 2010). For this reason, much of the police research has approached examining fairness from a procedural justice model framework (Donner et al., 2015). Thus, the procedural justice research is beneficial in examining how to enhance fairness perceptions regarding specific events, such as police and citizen interactions during traffic stops, as fairness is essential for fostering legitimacy (Mazerolle, Antrobus, Bennett, & Tyler, 2013; Tyler, 2006).

However, to capture an individual's overall perception of organizational justice versus specific components or a combined construct, a holistic measure of fairness may be more suited to assess the overall work environment of an organization (Ambrose & Schminke, 2009). One's perception of fairness in an organization is a complex and multi-faceted concept that is comprised of varying fairness judgements based on multiple events. For example, previous interviews with police officers support that fairness perceptions are based on multiple personal and secondary organizational experiences. Furthermore, officers differentiate fairness judgments about specific aspects of events and general overarching perceptions about the organization and individual supervisors (Reynolds & Hicks, 2015). The most prevalent acts of injustice described by officers in police organizations are negative events linked to supervisor interactions, disciplinary actions,

promotional activities or assignment selections, and citizen-compliant processes (Reynolds et al., 2018).

This study approaches fairness from a holistic perspective (Ambrose & Schminke, 2009), measuring officers' generalized perceptions of fairness in the organization toward themselves and peers versus organizational justice. For example, in lieu of asking questions oriented toward one of the three components (e.g., the organization explains expectations regarding performance evaluations), this study used a generalized framework (e.g., my performance evaluations have been fair). This is consistent with previous research examining overall fairness in police organizations (Reynolds & Helfers, 2017). While similar, this also differs from organizational justice measures combining the aspects of distributive, interactional, and procedural justice into a single construct (Wolfe & Piquero, 2011). A previous study by Ambrose and Schminke (2009) provided support that overall fairness mediates the influence of all three aspects of organizational justice. Recommending that an overall measure of fairness should be utilized when exploring the association between fairness perceptions of the organization and work related outcomes unless there is a specific reason to examine the influence of specific aspects of organizational justice. Since this study examined the link between police officers' reactions based on their overall fairness perception of the organization, a holistic measure of organizational justice was used.

Organizational Justice and Police Officers' Behaviors

While interest in organizational justice continues to grow, previous studies relating to the organizational influence of organizational justice or the procedural justice model on police performance parallels findings in the management literature (Donner et al., 2015). Prior studies support that increased perceived fairness enhances officer's compliance (Bradford, Quinton, Myhill, & Porter, 2014; Hass, Van Crean, Skogan, & Fleitas, 2015; Tyler, 2010; Tyler, Callahan, & Frost, 2007), in-role (task performance) and extra-role (organizational citizenship behavior; Tyler, 2010), enhances trust in community (Carr & Maxwell, 2017), reduces officers' decisions to use force to gain compliance (Tankebe & Meško, 2015), lessens uncertainty regarding leadership (Wolfe, Rojeck, Manjarrez, & Rojek, 2018), and may decrease potential depolicing activities (Oliver, 2017). Conversely, perceptions of injustice are associated with behaviors in the form of varying types of police misconduct (Eitle et al., 2014; Kaariainen, Lintonen, Laitenen, & Pollock, 2008; Wolfe & Piquero, 2011; Reynolds et al., 2018).

Kaariainen and colleagues' (2008) study found that officers who perceived their administration as unfair had a higher mean average of self-reported and peer acts of police deviance than officers who viewed their organization as fair. Self-reported acts included disrespecting citizens, corruption, dishonesty with supervisors, drug/alcohol abuse, excessive force, and theft. Likewise, Wolfe and Piquero's (2011) study used and combined an index of three aspects of organizational justice including distributive, procedural, and interactional to examine how perceptions of organizational treatment influence police misconduct in the form of formal complaints by citizens, investigations by internal affairs division, and being charged with violating the department's disciplinary code. Findings support that increased perceptions of organizational justice was related to decreases in all three forms of misconduct. More recently, Reynolds and colleagues (2018) conducted a qualitative study on police officers' responses to perceived mistreatment using semi-structured interviews. Based on officers' self-reported responses, officers reported engaging in three different direct organizational responses in varying frequency: self-protective behaviors, production deviance, and undermining the organization or its leadership. *Self-protective behaviors* were proactive steps to safeguard officers and minimize potential risk. However, Reynolds and colleagues (2018) described the primary motive of self-protective behaviors was not to enhance the quality of their work performance through increased compliance, but to negate potential internal sanctions or complaints.. *Production devianc*e was expressed in terms of officers utilizing their discretion to decrease proactivity. The third type of response, *organizational defiance,* was the least frequent response and referred to officers purposely trying to undermine their organization's goals or authority in an attempt to seek revenge or make the organizational leadership look incompetent.

Organizational Unintended Consequences and Police Misconduct

Police executives have been focusing on reducing police malfeasance and enhancing police performance in the US since the early 20th century when August Vollmer began promoting police professionalism and accountability. Similar sentiments are still being promulgated today (President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing, 2015). Recently, there has been growing concern among citizens resulting from several highly publicized and controversial events regarding abuse of authority and excessive force, particularly between White officers and minorities (Nix & Wolfe, 2016;

Wolfe & Nix, 2016). These events have sparked renewed calls for enhanced accountability of police officers (President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing, 2015). However, one of the most challenging obstacles for decreasing police misconduct is the occupational environment in which police officers work (Donner et al., 2015; Eitle et al., 2014; Mastrofski, 2004). Police work is highly discretionary and often performed with minimal direct supervision (Mastrofski, 2004). Furthermore, police officers differ not only in the degree to which they are willing to follow rules, but also their reasons for compliance and deference (Tyler et al., 2007; Tyler, 2010). Historically, police leadership has focused on instrumental means (e.g., sanctions and disciplinary practices) to sustain compliance and curb police malfeasance and misconduct (Frydl & Skogan, 2004; Harris, Chierus, & Edson, 2015; President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing, 2015; Shane, 2012). Yet, previous scholars have noted that increased scrutiny of officers by their administration or wanton and subjective disciplinary policies may create a work environment perceived as unjust by line-officers, creating unforeseen consequences (Harris & Worden, 2014; Hoath, Schneider, & Starr, 1998; Reynolds & Hicks, 2015; Shane, 2012) such as increased negative work-related attitudes and behaviors (Reynolds et al., 2017; Wolfe & Piquero, 2011). Therefore, the evolution of supervisory and administrative professional development should embrace organizational justice principles (President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing, 2015). Police officers work in a dynamic environment where officers must make decisions with incomplete and imperfect information (Wolfe et al., 2018). This can, and does, result in less than optimal decisions. Those decisions then lead to supervisory counseling and/or disciplinary actions. However, when officers perceive that their supervisors and agency leadership supports them, they are less likely to engage in negative behaviors (Helfers, Reynolds, & Maskály, 2018).

Subsequently, it is imperative that police administrators find ways to promote positive work behaviors such as promoting justice throughout police organizations other than instrumental means (i.e., sanctions; Hass et al., 2015; Tyler, 2006, 2010). For example, several studies have linked fairness to officer compliance (Hass et al., 2015; Tyler et al., 2007; Tyler, 2010) and other beneficial work behaviors (Donner et al., 2015). Although not the focus of this particular study, emerging research shows that organizational treatment transcends into police officers' attitudes and behaviors toward the community (Myhill & Bradford, 2013; Wolfe & Nix, 2016) and can also act as a safeguard against criticism and negative sentiment from the community

increasing officers' perception of self-legitimacy (Nix & Wolfe, 2016) and enhance officers' support for democratic policing (Bradford & Quinton, 2014; Trinkner, Tyler, & Goff, 2016).

The Current Study

While research exploring police misconduct among unethical acts or misbehaviors continues to grow, there still exists a need for theoretically driven studies of police deviance (Bishopp et al., 2016; Chappell & Piquero, 2004; Donner & Jennings, 2014; Swatt, Gibson, & Piquero, 2007). Though many casual factors (e.g., environmental, individual) or theoretical explanations could be used to examine police misconduct, this study utilizes an organizational justice theoretical framework. From an organizational justice paradigm, officers who perceive their department as unjust are more likely to retaliate against the organization or more likely to engage in varying types of police misconduct (Kaariainen et al., 2008; Reynolds et al., 2018; Wolfe & Piquero, 2011). Yet, most police misconduct studies focus on more severe and egregious types of police negative work-related behaviors, such as abuse of authority and power, corruption, and sexual misconduct (Bishopp et al., 2016; Eitle et al., 2014; Wolfe & Piquero, 2011).

Recently, Reynolds and colleagues (2018) identified police defiance as a possible behavior response based on semi-structured interviews of officers' reactions to organizational injustice. Yet, to date, no study to the authors' knowledge has attempted to examine this potential relationship empirically. Building on earlier work of police misconduct by Wolfe and Piquero (2011), this study focuses on less severe and covert forms of police misconduct using self-reported data as opposed to secondary data provided by the administration. This study adds to the police literature (Bradford & Quinton, 2014; Bradford et al., 2014; Donner et al., 2015; Hass et al., 2015; Myhill & Bradford, 2013; Nix & Wolfe, 2016; Trinkner et al., 2016; Tyler et al., 2007; Tyler, 2010) through exploring the link between organizational justice and police performance.

In particular, the primary purpose of this study is to examine the extent that overall organizational injustice is linked to police officers' engagement in three forms of police organizational defiance while controlling for several organizational job-related factors consistent with previous organizational justice research on police. The three hypotheses for this study are 1) Officers who perceive their organization as unjust are more likely to use departmental rules, policies, or laws against the administration when needed, 2) Officers who perceive their organization

as unjust are more likely to purposely undermine the administration's goals, and 3) Officers who perceive their organization as unjust are more likely to intentionally disregard organizational policies and procedures.

Method

The data for this study were obtained from an online survey of police officers employed in rural, suburban, and urban police agencies in a southern state who were members of a statewide police officer association (i.e., union). As commonly known among police researchers, gaining access to officers is often difficult due to the skepticism officers have toward researchers and administrators (Gordon, 2010). Therefore, access for this study was granted through a partnership with the association's executive board. The survey was emailed to approximately 6,000 members who matched the research criteria. The survey was accompanied by a letter from the researchers that explained the purpose of the survey and also assured the respondents that their identity would remain anonymous and their agency affiliation would not be known to the researchers, and thus to no one else. The survey also contained a statement of endorsement from the president of the association encouraging officers to participate. Three weeks after the initial survey was distributed, a follow-up email was sent to the officers encouraging participation. There were 1,861 officers who responded to the survey, which equated to a 31% response rate. In an effort to enhance the response rate, the researchers requested an additional request be approved for officers to participate in the research. However, the association president denied the request stating the purpose of the association was to protect the rights and privacy of the members. Even though the researchers desired a higher response rate, the return was acceptable for online research (Tourangeau, Conrad, & Cooper, 2013; see also Nix, Pickett, Baek, & Alpert, 2017). The sample for this study was unique because it enabled the researchers to survey a variety of officers across disparate size and type of police departments, particularly the smaller sized departments that included rural and suburban agencies that are generally understudied (Falcone, Wells, & Weisheit, 2002). For the purposes of this study (n=1,080), the sample did not include supervisory officers, only line-level officers. The descriptive statistics of the sample are located in table 1.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	SD	Range
Dependent Variable			
Use department rules, policies, and laws against the administration	2.83	1.62	1-6
Try to undermine the administrations goals	1.39	0.84	1-6
Disregard organizational policies and procedures	1.50	0.92	1-6
Independent Variable			
Fairness			22.39
Control Variables	%		
Male	87.6	0.33	0-1
White	90.0	0.30	0-1
Hispanic	17.1	0.38	0-1
Patrol	69.1	0.46	0-1
Tenure	13.28years	8.88	
Department Size	%		
Very Small	21.1	0.41	
Small	20.1	0.40	
Medium	11.3	0.30	
Large	42.2	0.49	
Extra Large	5.3	0.22	

Dependent Variables

The focus of this research was to explore police officers' engagement in organizational defiance type behaviors. The identification of these behaviors and the construction of the questions in the survey were developed from statements describing retaliatory activities that were self-reported during semi-structured interviews with police officers in two southern states. These interviews inquired about their on-duty behaviors and their perceptions of agency leadership (Reynolds & Hicks, 2018). The dependent variables were operationalized by three questions contained in the survey that inquired about officers' engagement in organizational defiance behaviors. The questions that were used as the dependent variable for the models were (1) I use departmental rules and/or policies (and/or laws) against the administration when needed, (2) I purposely try undermining the administration's goals when the opportunity arises, and (3) I purposely disregard organizational policies or procedures when the opportunity arises. Each of the questions was answered on a Likert-type scale of never (1), rarely (2), seldom (3), sometimes (4), often (5), most of the time (6).[1] Higher numbers reflected the higher the frequency for officers self-reporting their engagement in each of the three defiant acts.

Independent Variable

As aforementioned, the primary purpose of this research was to explore the relationship that officers' perceptions of overall organizational fairness have on their level of engagement, or non-engagement, in organizational defiance. Specifically, this study used officers' generalized perceptions of how they and fellow officers are treated within their organization as the independent variable (Reynolds & Helfers, 2017). Thus, this study used a holistic generalized construct (Ambrose & Schminke, 2009) versus focusing on the influence of separate organizational justice components or a combined index (see Wolfe & Piquero, 2011). The following questions related to perceptions of overall fairness were included in the survey: (1) Overall, my performance evaluations have been fair; (2) Overall, my disciplinary actions have been fair; (3) Overall, opportunities to advance my career have been fair; (4) Overall, I have been treated fairly at this department; (5) Overall, disciplinary actions at this department are fair; and (6) Overall, officers' evaluations are fair at this department. Cronbach's alpha for these items was 0.91, which was excellent (DeVellis, 2017). The available options for officers to respond to the questions were strongly disagree (1), disagree (2),

disagree somewhat (3), agree somewhat (4), agree (5), and strongly agree (6). The authors weighed the strengths and weaknesses of whether to include a neutral option (Bradburn, Sudman, & Wansink, 2004) and decided not to offer that option because the authors, as former practitioners with over 30 years of combined police experience, believe the fairness concept evokes a perception. Additionally, these questions have been used as the basis for evaluating police officer perceptions of fairness in previous research (Reynolds & Helfers, 2017). The fairness variable was operationalized as a scale from the above aforementioned items. The authors verified the scale was valid through the use of principle component factor analysis (DeVellis, 2017). The results returned a one factor solution with an eigenvalue above 3.0 and loadings ranging from 0.74 to 0.83.

Control Variables

Consistent with previous police research, individual officer and organizational control variables were included in the analysis (Kaariainen et al., 2008; Wolfe & Piquero, 2011). The individual variables were gender, ethnicity, and race (which were all operationalized as dichotomous variables) and were consistent with contemporary police research (Nix, Wolfe, Rojek, & Kaminski, 2015; Reynolds & Helfers, 2017; Wolfe & Nix, 2017). Gender was operationalized as male=1, female=0; ethnicity as Hispanic=1, other=0; and race as White=1, non-White=0.

Organizational variables included controls for an officer's assignment, tenure, and the size of the department. Officer's assignment was dichotomous and operationalized as officers assigned to patrol=1 and all other assignments=0. The tenure variable was operationalized as a continuous variable and measured as years of service. Department size was operationalized according to previous research (Klockars, Ivkovic, Harver, & Haberfield, 2000) as extra small (1-24 sworn officers), small (25-50 sworn officers), medium (51-99 sworn officers), large (100-500 sworn officers), and extra-large (501 or more sworn officers).

Analysis Plan

The nature of the dependent variables, using a survey with a likert scale, makes the variables ordinal in nature. Thus, the researchers first considered an ordinal regression model. However, the parallel regression assumption was not satisfied, which directed the analysis toward a multinomial logistic regression method (Long & Freese, 2006). The assumption of independence of irrelevant alternatives

was examined by the Hausman test with the test statistics failing to reject the null, but the statistics were negative suggesting the independence of irrelevant assumption had not been violated (Hausman & McFadden, 1984). The correlations among the dependent variables ranged from 0.28 to 0.49.

Results

The first organizational defiance behavioral model examined was the level of engagement officers have in regard to using departmental rules and/or policies, and/or laws against their supervisors/administrators when needed ($\chi^2(50)=215.33$, $p<0.001$). The authors were interested in exploring the differences between whether officers engage in this behavior compared to never engaging in the behavior. Thus, the results are interpreted compared to those who never engage in the behavior. The authors found that for officers who have a negative perceptive of organizational fairness, the odds of seldom, sometimes, often, and most of the time engaging in the use of policies, procedures, and/or laws against their supervisors and administrators increased, holding all other variables constant. Specifically, the odds of seldom engaging in the behavior increased by a factor of 0.95, while the odds of sometimes engaging in the behavior increased by a factor of 0.92, often by a factor of 0.88, and most of the time by a factor of 0.86. Seldom engaging also appears to be the norm for officers' demographic factors, except for being Hispanic, where engagement in this behavior, at any level, was not significant compared to never engaging in the behavior. Interestingly, the findings indicated the odds for females engaging in this behavior at the seldom compared to never level had an increase. And, the odds for White officers who seldom engaged in this behavior increased by a factor of 2.51, holding all other variables constant.

The organizational level (department size) variable also indicated a difference in officers' engagement in using rules, policies, and laws against their supervisors. The odds of engaging in this behavior for officers working in extra-large departments revealed increases by a factor ranging from 3.08 (rarely vs. never) to 5.84 (most of the time vs. never) when compared to extra-small departments, holding all other variables constant. However, there was not a statistically significant difference for an officer's tenure or duty assignment, suggesting that experience as a police officer nor assignment affect an officer who engages or does not engage in this behavior across varying levels.

Table 2: Multinomial Logistic Regression Model with Factor Change in the Odds

I use departmental rules, policies, or laws against the administration when needed	B (SE)	Exp (β)
Fairness		
seldom v never	-0. 05** (0.02)	0.95
sometimes v never	-0.09*** (0.01)	0.92
often v never	-0.12*** (0.02)	0.88
most of the time v never	-0.15*** (0.02)	0.86
Male		
seldom v never	-0. 81** (0.32)	0.45
White		
seldom v never	0.92* (0.45)	2.51
Hispanic		
Patrol		
Tenure		
Department Size		
Small Department		
rarely v never	0.63*** (0.27)	1. 87
Medium Department		
Large Department		
seldom v never	0. 66* (0.30)	1. 93
Often v never	0.72* (0.34)	2.05
Extra Large Department		
rarely v never	1. 13** (0.48)	3.08
often v never	1. 76*** (0. 57)	5.84
most of the time v never	1. 14* (0.56)	3.12
R^2		
Cox and Snell	0.191	
Nagelkerke	0.197	
Model X^2(50)=215.33, $p<0.001$		

***$p<0.001$, **$p<0.01$, *$p<0.05$

The second model explored police officers' behavior relative to purposely undermining the administration's goals when the opportunity arises (χ^2(50)=212.30, $p<0.001$). The results indicated that officers who have negative perceptions of organizational fairness are more likely to engage in the behavior across all categories. The odds of engaging in undermining the administration's goals increased by a factor ranging from 0.71 (often vs. never) to 0.94 (rarely vs. never), holding all variables constant. Additionally, male officers compared to female officers rarely versus never engage in this behavior by a factor of 2.16 and seldom versus never

by a factor of 8.57, holding all other variables constant. However, there was no difference in engaging in this behavior or refraining from it by race and ethnicity.

Organizationally, the odds of patrol officers engaging in undermining the administration's goals increase by a factor of 0.28 (rarely vs. never), holding all other variables constant. Moreover, regarding tenure, there was an increase in the category rarely versus never and most of the time versus never for each additional year of experience, holding all other variables constant. Furthermore, department size only revealed officers would seldom engage in the

behavior versus never for medium department sizes by a factor of 3.61 compared to extra-small departments. Yet, for large departments, the difference was in the often versus never category by a factor of 3.86, and extra-large department in the rarely versus never category by a factor of 2.24, holding all other variables constant.

Table 3: Multinomial logistic regression model with factor change in the odds.

I purposely try undermining the administration's goals when opportunity arises.	B	Exp (β)
Fairness		
rarely v never	-0. 06*** (0.01)	0.94
seldom v never	-0.11*** (0.02)	0.90
sometimes v never	-0.14*** (0.03)	0.87
often v never	-0.34*** (0.08)	0.71
most of the time v never	-0.21*** (0.06)	0.81
Male		
rarely v never	0.77** (0.28)	2.16
seldom v never	2.15* (1.03)	8.57
White		
Hispanic		
Patrol		
rarely v never	1.27* (0.44)	0.28
Tenure Phase		
rarely v never	-0.03** (0.01)	0.97
Department Size		
Small Department		
Medium Department		
seldom v never	1. 28* (0.60)	3.61
Large Department		
often v never	1. 35* (0.64)	3.86
Extra Large Department		
rarely v never	0.81** (0.37)	2.24
R^2		
Cox and Snell	0.188	
Nagelkerke	0.233	
Model X2(50)=212.30, p<0.001		

***$p<0.001$, **$p<0.01$, *$p<0.05$

The third model explored police officers engaging in organizational defiance by purposely disregarding organizational policies and procedures when the opportunity arises ($\chi^2(50)=182.02$, $p<0.001$). Officers who have negative perceptions of organizational fairness exhibit differences across all categories ranging from a factor of 0.82 for often versus never to a factor of 0.97 for rarely versus never, holding all other variables constant. Regarding gender, the odds of males seldom engaging in the behavior increased by a factor of 9.05, holding all other variables constant, but there was no difference for the other categories. Again, race and ethnicity did not suggest a difference in the behavior across levels.

This model had the fewest differences among the organizational variables. There was no difference in officers assigned to patrol and officers in small and medium departments compared to extra small departments. However, in large departments, the odds of disregarding organizational policies and procedures increased by a factor of 8.44 in the category often versus never, holding all other variables constant. While in extra-large departments compared to extra-small departments, the odds increased by a factor of 4.72 (seldom vs. never) and a factor of 12.07 (often vs. never), holding all other variables constant.

Table 4: Multinomial Logistic Regression Model with Factor Change in the Odds

I purposely disregard organizational policies or procedures when opportunity arises.	B		Exp (β)
Fairness			
rarely v never	-0.03**	(0.01)	0.97
seldom v never	-0.06*	(0.02)	0.94
sometimes v never	-0.17***	(0.04)	0.84
often v never	-0.19***	(0.04)	0.82
most of the time v never	-0.15**	(0.24)	1.88
Male			
seldom v never	2.20*	(1.02)	9.05
White			
Hispanic			
Patrol			
Tenure			
often v never	-0.14**	(0.05)	0.87
Department Size			
Small Department			
Medium Department			
Large Department			
often v never	2. 13*	(1.07)	8.44
Extra Large Department			
seldom v never	1. 55**	(0.69)	4.72
often v never	2. 49*	(1.22)	12.07
R^2			
Cox and Snell	0.164		
Nagelkerke	0.193		
Model $X^2(50)=182.02$, $p<0.001$			

***$p<0.001$, **$p<0.01$, *$p<0.05$

Discussion

This is a salient study because it advances our knowledge regarding the relationship between police officers' perceptions of fairness, job related characteristics, and engagement of organizational defiant type behaviors. These behaviors are the type that can be detrimental toward accomplishing the mission of a police organization and are difficult to observe because not only are they hidden from public view, but often hidden within organizations. Also, these behaviors generally do not elevate to the level of disciplinary action. However, when these behaviors are left unaddressed, they can result in

more significant subsequent misconduct. For the reader to better understand the concepts examined, the following examples are provided: for example, using departmental rules, policies, or laws against the administration when needed can occur when officers deflect attention from themselves during a compliant from a community member by placing the blame on others in the administration (e.g., complaint for speeding and the officer provides instances of administrative leaders doing the same without repercussion). Or, how the "rules" only apply to line officers but not administrators (e.g., the personal use of department equipment is prohibited, but administrators use department vehicles even though they are provided an automobile allowance). A further example would be if the department had a policy that required officers to notify a supervisor to come to a scene if requested by a citizen. Thus, a line officer may simply ask each person they come in contact with if they would like to speak to a supervisor, thereby forcing their supervisor to continually to respond to calls. Reuss-Ianni (1993) described similar behavior where disgruntled officers would continuously request supervisor assistance forcing the supervisor to go back and forth across his or her district (i.e., leap-frogging). The second concept, undermining goals of the administration, may involve officers having their own vision of policing (e.g., "getting into police work to catch criminals, not write tickets," even though the department priority is traffic enforcement, or being forthright with community members through mentioning there is a "gang problem," but the administration does not acknowledge it because it detracts from department goals as having a peaceful community where gangs are not present). Lastly, purposely disregarding organizational policies and procedures may include not agreeing with department policies when there is a personal benefit (e.g., accepting a free cup of coffee even though it violates department policy and the Law Enforcement Code of Ethics, or engaging in personal business while on duty—talking on the phone, excessive breaks, picking up dry cleaning, etc.).

Currently, the concept of fairness and organizational justice is at the forefront of efforts to improve policing internally in organizations and externally with improved community relations (President's Task Force on 21st Century, 2015). This study is important because it is a first attempt at gaining a better understanding of the relationship between officers' perceptions of organizational fairness and organizational defiance.

This research supports previous research that suggested fairness matters in regard to police misconduct (Kaariainen et al., 2008; Wolfe &

Piquero, 2011) and coincided with prior research on police compliance and voluntary deference (Hass et al., 2015; Tyler et al., 2007; Tyler, 2010) and other beneficial behaviors (Boateng, 2015; Crow, Lee, & Joo, 2012; Donner et al., 2015). Regardless of the type of defiant behavior officers engage in, the relationship with fairness indicates that when officers perceive they are not treated fairly, they are more likely to engage in defiant-like behaviors, thus confirming the three hypotheses for this study. The positive outcome is that the factor change in the odds was less than one across most categories indicating that fairness matters, but the resulting behavior is not substantial. The behavior occurs, and that should be a concern for administrators because the efficacy of the organization can be disrupted. Thus, police leadership must practice effective administrative and ethical principles to improve officers' perceptions of fairness. The findings support the authors' anecdotal views from their police experience that officers use organizational structure against the administration when it benefits them. Officers are expected to know the rules, policies, and laws, and administrators should use organizational justice principles equitably throughout the organization to enhance perceptions of fairness to inhibit officers from engaging in defiant behaviors. The design of policy and procedure manuals may be to guide officers (Carpenter, 2000), but officers will use those manuals to their benefit to protect themselves from administrative oversight and scrutiny. All of the behaviors examined in this study were related to officer behaviors that may undermine their administration. This deviates from the ideal employee. Geuras and Garofalo (2011) argue that employees who seek professions in public service are ethical and value the public good over their self-interests. Thus, enhancing perceptions of employee fairness is important to ensuring the idealistic notion that serving the public will not be compromised through unfair treatment. Police administrators recognize the high ethical standards of their officers because employment in the profession requires personnel with ethical and moral standards higher than the general public (Delattre, 2011; Stephens, 2006). Therefore, the concept that officers engage in behaviors as a means of protecting themselves from treatment that impinges upon their idea of serving the public is counterintuitive, but it is incumbent on administrators to treat officers consistent with the ethical aptitude for which they were hired. Additionally, the results of this study are promising for police administrators because even though officers may not be satisfied with the manner in which they are treated within an organization, the officers will not overtly engage in behaviors that could damage the image of the organization, and the

image of the organization is salient to develop confidence and trust in the police as a legitimate social control institution (Lee & McGovern, 2013; Mazerolle et al., 2013).

Administrators and community members perceive that their police organizations are ethical and that officers generally behave in accordance with policy and within laws (Maher, 2008; Mazerolle et al., 2013). But, this research suggests that there may be certain organizational characteristics that administrators should be cognizant about, if nothing else, but to heighten their awareness. The results from this study suggest that, overall, individual officer demographic characteristics do not matter. However, organizational characteristics suggest areas of awareness for administrators. Previous research has suggested that administrators should direct attention toward patrol officers because they are the least supervised and the assignment contains most of the least experienced officers (Skolnick, 2002; Wilson, 2000). However, this study suggests that assignment to patrol does not matter as there was no statistically significant differences, overall, for officers involved in defiant acts based on their assignment.

The most glaring finding was associated to department size. Officers in larger departments (large and extra-large) were more likely to engage in the behaviors compared to extra-small departments. Larger departments that employed 100 or more officers have unique problems compared to departments with fewer officers. These larger departments serve higher populations, which may be denser, diverse, and/or have more serious crime and disorder concerns. They may also have more levels of supervision and administrative disorganization with an increased span of control, which reduces supervisory oversight (Lee & Vaughn, 2010). The results suggest that administrators in these larger departments may have the added challenge of effectively supervising officers compared to smaller departments. This emphasizes the need for enhanced awareness of organizational justice principles to lessen perceptions of unfairness among officers. Larger departments will likely always have greater challenges with officer (mis)behavior, but enhancing organizational justice throughout the organization may minimize instances of officers engaging in defiant type behaviors.

The strength of this study was the inclusion of the often neglected type of police agencies, which are the rural and suburban agencies (Weisheit, Falcone, & Wells, 2006). The promising aspect for administrators in small and medium organizations is the presence of widespread engagement in these defiant type behaviors is basically no different

compared to extra small departments, but this does not mean they do not occur. Administrators must remain cognizant of the potential for organizational defiance behaviors and pursue initiatives to minimize their occurrence.

Given the findings of this study, it is recommended that police leadership actively promote fairness principles within their organizations. For example, leadership may consider meeting with line officers to identify and discuss areas of concern regarding departmental policies or programs that officers may perceive as unjust, given that prior research supports that disciplinary actions and citizen complaints are two major areas of concern among officers (Reynolds et al., 2018). Allowing officers to have a voice in developing organizational policies and ensuring that leadership clearly explains and articulates the reasoning and processes underlying their decisions may be essential to promoting a positive work environment. By doing so, leadership is able to demonstrate that they respect, support, and care about their officers (President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing, 2015; Reynolds & Hicks, 2015; Tyler et al., 2007; Wolfe et al., 2018). Although line officers and leadership may not always agree as each have different goals, needs, and expectations (Oliver, 2017; Paoline, 2004; Ruess-Ianni, 1993), implementing principles consistent with organizational justice should not only enhance line officers' perceptions of organizational treatment, but can increase police performance by reducing police misconduct (Wolfe & Piquero, 2011).

Limitations

As with all studies, limitations exist with the current study. First, the research design for this study was cross-sectional, which limits causal inference. Second, the data were obtained using a non-probability, online convenience sample in a southern state in the United States. The demographics of the respondent officers in the sample were consistent with the police officers as reported by the state licensing agency in the state. However, compared to officers nationally, White officers were overrepresented in this sample. Third, the authors could not examine organizational and contextual effects because the survey instrument did not allow for officers to indicate their specific agency. Fourth, the response rate (31%) was lower than what has historically been considered a sufficient response rate. However, contemporary arguments posit that online surveys have lower response rates than traditional methods, and the response rate for this study was consistent with current online research expectations (Dillman, Smyth, & Christian, 2014; Tourangeau et al., 2013). Additionally, police

researchers agree that police officers are generally reluctant to participate in research (Boateng, 2015; Gordon, 2010), but the response rate for this research was higher than the norm for contemporary police research (Nix et al., 2017). Nevertheless, selection bias is a possibility as those officers who did participate in the study may be fundamentally different than those who did not participate. Furthermore, the researchers acknowledge that there are several methodological approaches (e.g., self-reports, secondary observations by coworkers or managers' observations, secondary data) that have been used in past studies to ascertain how often employees engage in counterproductive behaviors. Given the autonomy, discretion, and limited direct supervision that are inherit in police work, the researchers believed officer self-reports would be an effective way to explore the phenomenon of organizational defiance. A primary reason is many forms of counterproductive work behaviors are not severe, discrete, and direct activities toward the organization (Spector & Fox, 2005). Furthermore, counterproductive work behaviors are not easily identified and are often performed discreetly by officers. Research supports that employee self-reports are as accurate as secondary observations used to measure employee behaviors (see Berry, Carpenter, & Barratt, 2012). Accordingly, this approach should provide a reliable method for measuring organizational defiance among police officers. Finally, as noted earlier, this research did not examine other potential influences on police misconduct. Thus, other factors may provide additional insight into the relationship between organizational justice and police misconduct such as varying organizational factors (e.g., perceived organizational support or organizational commitment) and individual officer characteristics (e.g., age and education). Future research should continue to explore these associations.

Conclusion

This is promising research for scholars and practitioners because it suggests that police officers are committed to their organizations and the profession. Deviant behavior will occur in society and within organizations. This study suggests that even though officers do engage in police misconduct in the form of organizational defiance, overall, officers are compliant with their behavior. Expecting officers to never engage in deviant behavior is not reasonable and when you compare their engagement versus never engaging in the behavior, the authors have found that the most consistent concept is how officers are treated. However, a case can be made that

the large and extra-large organizations have higher levels of organizational defiance, and this is a concern for supervision and the culture of the organization. Thus, the tenets associated with organizational justice are salient and administrators should focus on fair treatment to minimize detrimental behavior among officers (President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing, 2015; Tyler et al., 2007; Wolfe et al., 2018).

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Endnotes

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[1] The DV's were analyzed to determine if there was an underlying construct that would necessitate a scale for combining the three variables, but the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.55, which rendered a scale for these variables as unacceptable (DeVellis, 2017).