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The commemoration of death, organizational memory, and police culture*

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Abstract

Police scholars document that although there is fragmentation of the so-called "monolithic" police culture, historically consistent features of the occupational culture of police exist. By drawing on ethnographic observations in three U.S. police departments, I describe how one consistent feature of police culture—the preoccupation with danger and potential death—is maintained by the commemoration of officers killed in the line of duty. Through the use of commemorative cultural artifacts, officers and departments construct an organizational memory that locally reflects and reifies the salience of danger and potential death in policing. Furthermore, commemoration of fallen officers is not restricted to a department's own; the dead of other departments are commemorated by distant police organizations and their officers, maintaining broad, occupational assumptions of dangerous and deadly police work that transcend a single department and its localized organizational memory. Implications for the study of police culture, inequalities in policing, and police reform are considered.

KEYWORDS
commemoration, culture, death, ethnography, police

On July 7, 2016, Micah Xavier Jackson—an Army veteran angered by the police killings of Philando Castille and Alton Sterling—opened fire on police officers in Dallas, Texas. The resulting deaths of five officers marked it as the deadliest day for U.S. law enforcement since September 11, 2001. In the days that followed, officers from across the country traveled to Dallas to attend the funerals of the five slain officers (Eligon & McGee, 2016), gathering as a collective to mourn and to honor the sacrifice of fellow members of the police brotherhood. In remarks to a July 12 memorial service, President Obama

emphasized the danger that *all* officers face on patrol, linking the deaths of the five Dallas officers to the enduring specter of death with which police contend (2016, para. 4):

> *But your work, and the work of police officers across the country, is like no other. For the moment you put on that uniform, you have answered a call that at any moment, even in the briefest interaction, may put your life in harm's way.*

What's more, the commemorative acts inspired by the tragedy of July 7 were not circumscribed to Dallas. In memory of the murdered officers, police from departments across the country donned black mourning bands across their badges (Batchelor, 2016; Ruth & Bravo, 2016), a symbolic tribute to emphasize that, "When a police officer is killed, it's not an agency that loses an officer, it's an entire nation" (quote by Chris Cosgriff, ODMP Founder; ODMP, 2017, opening quote).

Even though the murder of police officers is a rare phenomenon (Zimring, 2017), the events in Dallas nonetheless serve as dramatic confirmations of the danger and the looming proximity of death strongly emphasized within police culture (Marenin, 2016). Such line-of-duty deaths are especially poignant given the lack of confidence and intense scrutiny of police resulting from a series of highly publicized shootings of minority men since 2014 (Weitzer, 2015). In the years after the police killing of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, some have gone so far as to argue that scrutiny and mounting pressure to reform U.S. policing is tantamount to "virulent anti-law enforcement" rhetoric that has led to increased violence against police (Mac Donald, 2014, 2016, p. 3). Despite the fact that data on felonious officer deaths do not support this narrative (Maguire, Nix, & Campbell, 2017), other researchers have found that police administrators commonly believe in the existence of a "war on cops" and that officers now face unprecedented danger on patrol (Nix, Wolfe, & Campbell, 2018).

These beliefs are implicated across a range of officer behaviors associated with the "warrior mentality" embraced by some police departments and officers. Namely, the preoccupation with danger and violence emphasized by this mentality can propagate aggressive, enforcement-centric policing practices wholly misaligned with democratic ideals and individual rights (Rahr & Rice, 2015). This warrior mentality is associated with a confrontational, even antagonistic, approach to policing in which the public is equated to potential threat. Police–public interactions that rely on dominance in lieu of cooperation or empathy are apt to devolve into dominance contests over status and respect (Sunshine & Tyler, 2003; see also Stoughton, 2016, p. 655), in turn, increasing the risk of interactions escalating to violence that damages public health and police legitimacy (Gau & Brunson, 2010; Sewell & Jefferson, 2016).

Concern regarding the causes and consequences of the warrior mentality are a contemporary manifestation of the long-standing recognition that the danger of police work is a key driver of (and justification for) detrimental police practices like secrecy, corruption, and brutality (Hunt, 1985; Kappeler, Sluder, & Alpert, 1998; Punch, 2009). Given the persistent link between danger and such highly damaging behavioral outcomes, it is crucial to understand how the deaths of police officers—even if they are statistically rare—influence the culture that in turn shapes officers' action on the street. Building on past research in which scholars conceptualized police culture as a multilevel phenomenon mediated by police organizations (Ingram, Paoline, & Terrill, 2013; Ingram, Terrill, & Paoline, 2018; Paoline, 2001, 2004), I use ethnographic observations and interviews across three urban police departments to shed light on how officers and police organizations actively reproduce a police culture that emphasizes danger and death. Leveraging concepts from the literatures on police, culture, memory, and organizations, I describe how commemorative cultural artifacts—the tangible, observable symbols that reflect the values and assumptions of a group (Schein, 2010)—are employed by individual officers and police organizations to construct an organizational memory in which dangerous police work is emphasized

in ways intimately shaped by localized context and history. I also show that commemoration is not restricted to the deaths of a department's own. Instead, commemorative artifacts stemming from temporally and geographically distant officer deaths connect disparate police departments and officers to the broader police occupation in ways that perpetuate the long-standing, occupational-level preoccupation with death and danger.

I begin with a review of research on police culture, death and danger, commemoration, and existing gaps in these interrelated bodies of scholarship. I then describe my field sites and data, as well as my results, and conclude with a discussion of the implications of my findings for understanding inequalities in U.S. policing and the future of police reform.

1 | POLICE CULTURE, OCCUPATION, AND ORGANIZATION

Two conceptions of culture predominate in discussion of the norms, values, and behaviors that comprise police culture. The first, described by scholars as a "monolithic" police culture (Paoline, 2004; Paoline & Gau, 2018), is focused on the consistency of culture stemming from the common demands of police work (Bittner, 1970; Manning, 1977; Skolnick, 1966; Van Maanen, 1974; Westley, 1970) and on the organizational environment of the police department (Drummond, 1976; Wilson, 1968). In contrast, other scholars advance a "typological" model of police culture and emphasize heterogeneity across various police officer types or styles (e.g. Brown, 1988; Muir, 1977), with officers navigating the challenges of their work in unique ways.

In an effort to reconcile the "typological" and "monolithic" models of police culture, contemporary scholars integrate macro-level features of police culture with the organizational context that shapes the street-level practice of police work. Such a model, conceptualized by Paoline (2003) as a cultural "filtering" process, allows for consistency and variation in police culture by considering occupational- and organizational-level culture. At the top level of this model sits occupational culture, the broad set of norms and values shaped by the shared demands of police work (e.g. danger and supervisory scrutiny); this occupational culture then filters down to police organizations that—based on departmental structure, local political pressures, management style, and other contextual factors—shape the subsequent behavior, or style, of officers that draw on police culture as a resource for navigating their occupational environment (see Campeau, 2015).

This multilevel "filter" model of police culture is supported by recent research findings on occupational attitudes in which evidence of both variation and consistency in police culture is found. With regard to variation, researchers have affirmed the heterogeneity in police culture and have identified distinct attitudinal groupings among officers (Cochran & Bromley, 2003; Paoline, 2004; Terrill, Paoline, & Manning, 2003). Using surveys of occupational attitudes across five police departments, Ingram et al. (2013) provided further support for this filter model and honed in on the effect of organizational structure as a mediating factor in shaping police culture. They found, for example, significant workgroup-level (i.e., shift-level) variation in perceptions of citizen cooperativeness and upper-level management. On the other hand, they found little variation in other occupational attitudes such as officers' orientation toward law enforcement, aggressive patrol tactics, and selective enforcement. Similarly, Paoline and Gau (2018) found mixed evidence for the monolithic model, echoing the findings of past work that showed an amalgamation of cultural variability and homogeneity among officers (Paoline, 2001, 2004; Paoline, Myers, & Worden, 2000).

Most recently, Ingram et al. (2018) extended this filter model to investigate the effect of police culture and "cultural strength" on officer behavior in the same five departments. In line with some past research findings (McCluskey, Terrill, & Paoline, III, 2005; cf. Terrill et al., 2003), they found

that workgroup-level support for aggressive patrol tactics predicted small but statistically significant increases in uses of force and citizen complaints. Similarly, officers in workgroups that viewed upper-level police management as punitive received statistically fewer complaints. Interestingly, the presence of cultural strength or "sharedness"—the level of workgroup attitudinal agreement about aggressive patrol tactics, punitive management, and citizen distrust—predicted neither force nor complaints.

All told, available evidence strongly indicates that police culture is neither entirely monolithic nor infinitely fragmented, the police organization filters culture from the occupational to the individual level, and culture affects the behavior of police officers on the street. The significant contributions of this work to our understanding of the micro- and macro-nature of police culture notwithstanding, the existing top-down model of police culture comes with limitations. Conceptually, one drawback of this top-down view is that it is unidirectional: Individual officers are acted *upon* by the police organization that filters occupational culture, ultimately relegating officers to passive by-products of a culture and organization that exist independent of them and outside of their control. In such a model, officers' creative role is excised in constructing police culture and the agential decision-making of officers who are shaped by both formal and informal rules, norms, and training is washed away (Chan, 1996; Fielding, 1988; Shearing & Ericson, 1991).

As a result of inattention to officers' creative role in the reproduction of police culture, scholars employing a top-down, filter model in their studies have largely ignored how "powerful human emotions are harnessed to cultural values" that in turn shape officer behavior (Crank, 2004, p. 2). This oversight is problematic given emotion's important role in social processes like group formation and cohesion (Durkheim, 1995; Lawler & Thye, 1999), cooperation through social exchange (Lawler, Thye, & Yoon, 2000, 2008), and violence (Collins, 2007; Katz, 1988)—all processes decidedly germane to policing.[1] Given the salience of fear, anger, compassion, grief, and pride in policing behaviors ranging from the heroic to the criminal (Cooper, 2008; Ilan, 2018; Muir, 1977), clearly, the lived, emotional experience of police officers needs to be incorporated into the study of police culture and its reproduction.

Finally, though attitudinal measures provide analytic consistency across studies (Engel & Worden, 2003; Ingram et al., 2013, 2018; Paoline, 2001; Paoline & Terrill, 2005; Terrill et al., 2003), such survey research is also constrained by practical limitations of survey methodology. In particular, the high resource cost of surveys prevents an exhaustive battery of items to capture the full gamut of occupational features that affect police culture (Ingram et al., 2013, p. 377). One feature of the police environment that is frequently absent in this line of research is the long-standing cultural preoccupation with danger and death. When scholars do operationalize danger in their survey instruments (Paoline & Gau, 2018), such measures are used to assess the degree to which officers perceive their jobs as dangerous and are treated as environmental antecedents to police culture. As a consequence of this operationalization, these measures do not capture the micro-level processes that give rise to shared understandings of dangerous police work in the first place. In combination, the various limitations of existing research on danger and police culture indicate the need for further exploration into how danger and death become engrained in the constructed—but no less lived—experience of policing.

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[1]Classic and contemporary scholars have pointed to the foundational role of emotion in the development of human society (Massey, 2002; Turner, 2000) and in facets of social life spanning organizations, work, gender, social movements, and more (Bericat, 2016). Criminological inquiry has also benefited from consideration of emotion in crime, punishment, and social control (De Haan & Loader, 2002); the interpretation and practice of law (Grossi, 2015); and the systemic shift toward "emotionally intelligent justice" in which emotion is incorporated into prevention, rehabilitation, and restorative justice efforts (Sherman, 2003).
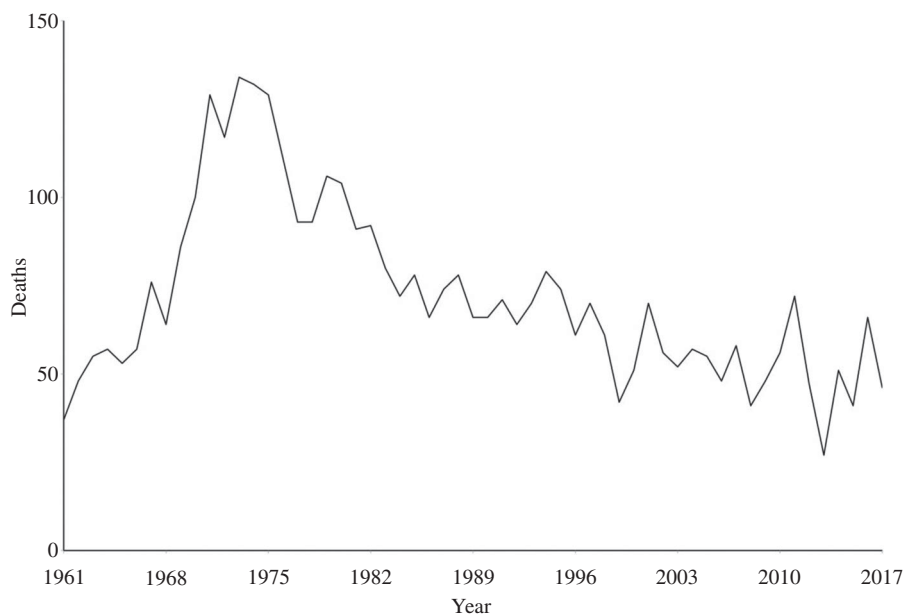
FIGURE 1 Felonious police deaths, 1961–2017
Source: FBI

2 | DANGER, DEATH, AND COMMEMORATION

Despite significant changes in the technology and implementation of policing over time (Alpert, Dunham, & Stroshine, 2014; Manning, 2010), police work and police culture also have remarkable longitudinal consistencies. One historically robust feature of police culture—the preoccupation with danger and possible death—has been documented by police scholars for more than 50 years (Marenin, 2016; Sierra-Arévalo, 2016; Skolnick, 1966) and continues to hold a "prominent position within [the] occupational consciousness" of police (Loftus, 2010, p. 13). This remains true even though official statistics and officers themselves have long noted the rarity of deadly violence while on patrol (Cullen, Link, Travis, & Lemming, 1983; Zimring, 2017). Figure 1 displays the FBI's LEOKA (Law Enforcement Officers Killed and Assaulted) data on felonious officer deaths (i.e., nonaccidental deaths) and shows that, even with a recent 2016 spike, the trend over the past half-century is one of decreasing violent mortality among police. Indeed, total felonious officer deaths dropped by 30 percent in 2017 to 46, a figure 35 percent lower than the average frequency (71) of felonious deaths between 1961 and 2017, and 30 percent lower than the median frequency (66) over the same period.

The statistical rarity of death in policing does not negate that officers do die in the line of duty. Knowing that death is a rare but nonetheless real possibility, officers are socialized into the shared understanding of dangerous police work in various ways. Informally, officers learn the danger of their work by listening to older officers' "war stories" that highlight victories over dangerous criminals (Van Maanen, 1978, pp. 297–298; see also Waddington, 1999). Formally, academy training teaches officers the deadly costs of not protecting themselves from violence that may strike anywhere at any time (Sierra-Arévalo, 2016; Stoughton, 2014b). In either case, officers' socialization into the police department encourages a view of police work in life-or-death terms and demands that every officer take the necessary steps to ensure that they and their fellow officers survive their shift.

Despite their tools and training, some officers do not return home. In the wake of these tragedies, the police funeral shines as the most public display of the importance of danger and death to police both in the United States and in international contexts (Jauregui, 2016; Perkins, 2018). In general, the funeral is an example of a "piacular" ritual—a set of collective rites performed "under conditions of uncertainty or sadness" (Durkheim, 1995, p. 463). In response to the loss of one of their own, group members engage in collective mourning that "induc[es] in them the same state of soul" (475), amplifying their shared emotional condition and group identity. The funeral ritual thus serves as a "social shock absorber" that mends the "rent in the social fabric caused by death" and publicly refortifies the strength and viability of the group (Kearl, 1989, pp. 95–97).

For police, the funeral after a line-of-duty death also functions as a mechanism for the collective and "mutual identification with the corporate body of policemen" (Manning, 1977, p. 4). Along with ritualized action, the funeral is a site for the display and use of tangible symbols (e.g., 21-gun salute, white gloves, and bagpipers) that reflect and reproduce the cultural relevance of danger and death among police. As encapsulated by Manning (1977, p. 8):

> *To police officers, the death and funeral of an officer have occupationally derived meanings. They are evoked by the imagery of the ceremony, the collective acting out of the occupation's mission, and the display of many of their most sacred symbols … When an officer is killed in the line of duty it affirms the danger of the public …*

These symbols and the funeral ritual itself are examples of what Schein (2010, p. 24) termed "cultural artifacts," the visible manifestations of the assumptions, values, and perceptual strategies that comprise the culture of an organization. Through the performance of the funeral ritual and the display of symbols, police reify the meaning of these cultural artifacts, the shared cultural values they represent, and their common occupational identity as police tasked with dangerous work.

As important as the funeral and its associated artifacts are within policing, existing focus on this particular ritualistic setting should give scholars pause for several reasons. First, although attention to funerals is understandable given their gravity and their accessibility to researchers often rebuffed by insular police departments, sole focus on the funeral would likely cause them to miss other forms of police commemoration. Indeed, examples of nonfuneral commemoration are plentiful: Permanent memorials exist at the national, state, and city levels (Newman, 2013), online memorials are operated by nonprofit organizations like the National Law Enforcement Memorial Fund (NLEOMF) or the Officer Down Memorial Page (ODMP), and yearly memorial ceremonies and commemorative fundraisers are common across the United States (e.g., SRA, 2017). This further suggests that much remains to be learned about less public acts and artifacts of commemoration that are difficult to see from anywhere but within the police department.

Second, because existing research on police commemoration has been focused on individual funerals, the cultural relevance of an officer's death is constrained to a discrete moment in time. As such, little can currently be said about how death and its commemoration within policing become a part of "collective memory" that supports a group's shared identity and culture over time (Assmann, 1995; Halbwachs, 1992). Within an organization like the police department, such collective memory takes the form of "organizational memory"—the collectively stored information of an organization's unique history—that influences individuals' perception, decision-making, and the organization's culture (Walsh & Ungson, 1991, p. 61; see also Cutcher, Dale, & Tyler, 2017). This organizational memory is stored within and shared among individuals that, in turn, deploy symbols, logics, and stories that reproduce the organization's collective memory and culture. Without consideration of organizational memory, existing research on police culture is left with a dually decontextualized and ahistorical view of police culture

that is constructed by officers drawing on the shared history of the police department (Shearing & Ericson, 1991; Waddington, 1999).[2]

Finally, scholars have paid scant attention to how individual officers partake in and experience the commemoration of death within the police organization. In New York City, for example, officers sometimes leave mourning bands on their shields in memory of their fallen comrades well past the departmentally approved time period; they also attach unauthorized "in memory of" plaques above their personal commendation pins to commemorate officers to whom they were particularly close (Henry, 2004, p. 36). This oversight is symptomatic of the broader inattention to the agency of individual officers in contemporary approaches to the study of police culture. As a result, analytic focus on the collective funeral to the exclusion of such individual-level phenomena neglects the effect of officers' lived experiences and their creative role in the reproduction of police culture.

3 | THE PRESENT STUDY

In this study, I address the aforementioned limitations of past scholarship on police culture, danger, and commemoration by considering how the police organization and individual officers contribute to the organizational memory of police departments and police culture more broadly. To accomplish this, I answer calls to use qualitative methods to delineate the mechanisms through which police culture comes to be (Ingram et al., 2013, 2018; Manning, 2005; Paoline, 2003). Drawing on ethnographic observations and interviews in three urban police departments, I combine depth and breadth to describe the cultural artifacts used to commemorate death, their place in the construction of organizational memory tied to localized history, and how the commemoration of death links distinct police organizations and officers to common cultural understandings of police work that emphasizes death and danger.

4 | FIELD SITES, METHODOLOGY, AND DATA

Ethnographic observations and interviews were gathered in three U.S. cities: Elmont, West River, and Sunshine.[3] The three cities are located in geographically distinct regions of the country: Elmont on the East Coast, West River on the West Coast, and Sunshine in the Southwest. As shown in table 1, Elmont, West River, and Sunshine are also demographically distinct: West River and Elmont's populations are similar besides West River's larger Asian population, and Sunshine stands out with the largest Latino population and very small Black and Asian populations.

Like the cities in which they are located, the Elmont Police Department (EPD), West River Police Department (WPD), and Sunshine Police Department (SPD) are demographically distinct (see table 2). Although they differ in terms of overall size, all three departments are within the top 1 percent of local U.S. departments in terms of the number of sworn officers they employ. Of the three departments, Sunshine is the largest and the least racially diverse. West River is the most racially diverse of the

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[2]Van Maanen (1974) provided a notable exception to this pattern in attitudinal research on police culture by tracking officers' occupational attitudes from the police academy through their first 2.5 years as police officers.

[3]In keeping with institutional review board–approved procedures and my agreement with the departments and officers I observed, I use pseudonyms for the city, the department, and the officers that I spoke with or who were mentioned by other officers. For the same reason, I use approximate city populations to prevent easy identification of my field sites; this is why city and department demographics do not add to 100 percent. I also change or omit specific details of rare events (e.g., date, number of victims, or type of call preceding an officer's death) that would aid in identification of field sites, departments, and individual officers.

T A B L E   1   City demographics

City	% White	% Black	% Latino	% Asian
Elmont	30	35	25	5
West River	25	30	25	15
Sunshine	45	5	40	3

T A B L E   2   Demographics of sworn officers by department

Department	% White	% Black	% Latino	% Asian	% Female	Sworn Officers
Elmont	50	25	20	.5	15	500
West River	40	15	25	15	12	700
Sunshine	70	2	25	2	15	900

three departments observed, although it is worth noting that White officers are still overrepresented in the department given that West River is itself only 25 percent White. All three departments are overwhelmingly male; the representation of female officers ranges from the U.S. average of 12 percent in the EPD up to 15 percent in the WPD and SPD (FBI, 2017).

A collection of field observations and interviews took place between 2014 and 2018, although initial contact with the EPD began as early as 2012. Table 3 shows the number of observation hours and interviews gathered in each site. Data were primarily gathered during ride-alongs with patrol officers responding to calls for service; I also observed and interviewed line-level supervisors (i.e., sergeants and lieutenants), command-level leadership (i.e., captains, assistant chiefs, and chiefs), SWAT (Special Weapons and Tactics) and gang unit officers, and officers with experience as field training officers or police academy trainers. Even though my data speak to a wide range of police experience, others— such as that of officers in the detective bureau, internal affairs, or the records division—are much less represented in both observational and interview data.

Ride-alongs took place across all geographic areas and patrol shifts in each city. Ride-alongs in Elmont oversampled on high call-volume shifts and areas to account for the 4-hour limit placed on civilian ride-alongs. Despite this official limit, I sometimes stayed for full 8-hour shifts when a shift was very slow or when the exigencies of a given call prevented an officer from dropping me back at police headquarters. Ride-alongs in West River and Sunshine covered full shifts (ranging from 10 to 12 hours) and took place during intensive 2-month periods in the summer of 2015 and 2016, respectively. Additional data collection in West River took place during a revisit in summer 2017, and follow-up phone calls, text messages, and e-mails with officers at each field site took place throughout the study period. Ride-alongs would begin with lineup or roll call, wherein officers gathered to be accounted for and to receive their assignments. Lineup was often an opportunity for me to introduce myself to officers and to explain my presence as a researcher, describe my interest in learning from officers about their work,

T A B L E   3   Ethnographic observations and interviews across three police departments

Department	Observation Hours	Interviews
EPD	315	29
WPD	380	36
SPD	325	43
Total	1,020	108

and to assure them that neither they nor the department for which they worked would be named in my research.

After lineup, I accompanied officers on patrol and observed them engage in the myriad activities that comprise contemporary police work. A sampling of such activities includes taking a report of stolen property, investigatory car and walking stops, providing emergency medical care to a gunshot victim, transporting an intoxicated man to a treatment center, looking for shell casings after a shooting, and many more. In addition to observations within the walls of the police department and on patrol with officers, observations were gathered during firearms instruction, driving training, protests, a police award ceremony, a memorial service, as well as off-duty interactions with officers. Field notes were recorded via jottings in a notepad or in a text editor on a smartphone and then expanded into more detailed field narratives as soon as possible after each observation period.

Unstructured interviews were recorded primarily during ride-alongs in an officer's patrol car, though interviews also took place with officers at local restaurants or in departmental areas such as a break-room, the lineup room, or empty office space. Interviews were recorded via a smartphone application with officers' verbal consent and subsequently transcribed. Unlike formal or semistructured interviews that follow a predetermined interview protocol, unstructured interviews are more akin to what Spradley termed "ethnographic interviews": informal conversations guided by the researcher and punctuated with "ethnographic elements" to help "discover[] the cultural knowledge of the informant" (2016, pp. 58–57; see also Hureau & Braga, 2018, p. 520). The fluidity of this interview approach allows for the in situ development of questions informed by the unique positionality of the research partici-pant, the immediate context in which the researcher and participant are located, and insights provided by emergent data (Small, 2009).

The "up-close, on-the-ground observation of people and institutions" (Wacquant, 2003, p. 5; see also Stuart, 2016a) employed in this study follows in the tradition of classic (Brown, 1988; Manning, 1977; Muir, 1977; Skolnick, 1966; Westley, 1970) and contemporary studies of U.S. policing (Armenta, 2017; Brayne, 2017; Moskos, 2009; Stuart, 2016b). Compared with survey methods or the use of adminis-trative police records, ethnographic observations and interviews are well suited for investigating the manifestations of culture that might otherwise go unseen without repeated observation and access to the daily operations of the police department. These data enable the development of grounded the-ory through an iterative, abductive process of observation, theorization, and reformulation of theory as new phenomena emerge in the course of fieldwork (Timmermans & Tavory, 2012). Additionally, this study's multisite design is an improvement on past, single-site ethnographies because it allows for a view into cultural processes that, although similar across distinct organizations, also manifest in site-specific forms influenced by each department's unique history. Data from multiple departments can thus shed light on how discrete organizations are linked to a broader occupational culture through processes shaped by local context. Finally, I follow the example of past research and use *italics* to dif-ferentiate conversations reconstructed from field notes and memory from my direct observations and interview transcripts that are presented in plain text (Contreras, 2012; Sierra-Arévalo, 2016; 2019).

5 | ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

5.1 | Local commemoration and organizational memory

5.1.1 | Organizational artifacts

Passing through the double doors of the Elmont Police Department headquarters, death is immediately on display. On the far right wall, flanking the bulletproof glass that physically demarcates the boundary

between police and public, black-and-white pictures of slain Elmont officers hang below the words, "Above and Beyond the Call of Duty: Dedicated to the courage and sacrifice of the officers who gave their lives in service to the community of Elmont." Beneath each photo, a burnished plaque describes the events leading to each officer's death, sometimes quite graphically. Officer Riccardo, for example, was shot in the face: The bullet entered through his cheek, passed through his esophagus, and shattered his top vertebra. Other plaques pinpoint the location of where officers died; street names like "Chandler" and "Grant" resonate in the present as officers answer calls for service on the same streets where their predecessors perished.

The memorial wall is an organizational artifact constructed and maintained by the EPD as a conspicuous, visual commemoration of line-of-duty deaths that span more than a century. Its utility is not, however, restricted solely to remembrance. Assistant Chief Altidore explained that the wall is both a means to evoke the sacrifice made by the fallen and a mechanism to remind modern-day officers of the need to consider the life-or-death stakes of their work:

> *I think in a lot of ways, it stands there to remind you … that your job is a dangerous job and that the end result can be the ultimate sacrifice, the sacrifice of your own life … It serves as a reminder. Not just to remember them, but to also remember the job and the dangers and how to carry yourself as a police officer, how to make sure that you're safe and that your partners are safe and that you end up going home at night and not end up in a casket.*

Deaths from the recent past loom large in the organizational memory of the present-day police department, especially when officers personally knew those who died in the line of duty. Detective Fonseca, an officer born and raised in Elmont whom I met years before his promotion out of the patrol division, explained to me that the memorial wall holds personal and professional meaning for him:

> *[The wall] just means that officers have passed away. I mean, I actually knew one of the officers there that passed away. I grew up with his sons. I'm best friends with one of his sons. So, I knew he passed away, I knew when he passed away, I knew the whole thing. So, it just reminds me that at any moment you could potentially be hurt or die.*

As a permanent and physical feature of the EPD, the wall links Fonseca's personal history with the danger of his current role as a police officer and the organizational memory of the EPD. Today, the wall he has walked past innumerable times in his years as an officer is simultaneously a commemoration of his best friend's father, the death of an Elmont police officer, and a tangible reflection of an organizational memory marked by death.

Nearly 3,000 miles away, the WPD's memorial wall—a stark slab of black marble etched in white with the names and "end of watch" date of fallen officers—also stands in the lobby of police headquarters. Periodically, small flowers left by friends and family of those named on the wall break the black expanse with a splash of color. As in the EPD, the deaths listed on the WPD's memorial wall are a tribute to the fallen and a grim warning to officers in the present. The line-of-duty deaths built into the organizational memory of the WPD via the memorial wall are also transmitted to new recruits through formal departmental training. Lieutenant McWilliams, an academy instructor well versed in police tactics and officer safety, explained how he uses the wall and the fallen officers it commemorates in the context of academy training:

> *The purpose is really to kind of pay homage to those that made that type of sacrifice. It's respecting so that they're not forgotten. And it's not just for the fellow officers or the people that knew them. There is a historical perspective. It's one of the things we talk to our academy classes about. "As you're getting your head wrapped [around] doing this job, you need to realize that it's not going to be all sunshine and daisies. Take a look at that wall. Those were all good folks that started off sitting in a chair just like you did."*

Furthermore, the specifics of past deaths are part of contemporary academy curricula designed to keep officers alive. During "Patrol Procedures" training, for example, McWilliams discusses the importance of not leaving a stopped vehicle and its occupants unattended, driving home the importance of this lesson with a description of two WPD officers who were killed after making this tactical error years ago. Similar lessons are drawn from the murder of two other WPD officers—close friends of McWilliams— who were killed while entering an apartment to apprehend an armed suspect. As McWilliams explained to me, the mobilization of his friends' deaths and their place in the organizational memory of the WPD serves a practical, instrumental purpose as well as a personal, emotional one.

> *[You find a] silver lining in the tragedy. You try to assign some meaning to their deaths, because the short version is the entire thing could have been prevented … I wanted to assign some value to their deaths … Here is the sacrifice they made and here is what we can do to try to honor that with the idea that it won't happen again, or at least we can try and mitigate the odds of it happening if people listen to this debrief. Then, the unintended [effect] was forcing me to talk about it … I can look at where I started in this whole journey, talking about this incident, and where I'm at now, and then being able to talk about a lot more that I did not talk about early on because it was still a little too raw.*

In Sunshine, the death of Office Harold Patterson is also mentioned in academy training. Today, recruits today are taught by officers who knew Patterson how he lost sight of a suspect during a foot chase and was then ambushed and killed. In addition to changes in SPD training and foot pursuit policy inspired by his murder, the commemoration of Patterson's death is tied to the particular history of the SPD and contextual circumstance. Namely, Patterson's death was the first SPD line-of-duty death in nearly two decades. Unsurprisingly, the department was deeply shaken. Detective Alonzo, who began his career around the same time Patterson retired from the military and joined the SPD, recounted that Patterson's death was "something that had not happened in a long time, and so I think everybody took it pretty rough." Patterson's death happened to coincide with the construction of a new substation that, with the support of SPD leadership, was subsequently named in his honor.

In addition to his name on the substation's exterior, the SPD constructed displays for various artifacts in the waiting area, including a pencil rubbing of Patterson's name from the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial and a large photograph of Patterson. Beneath the picture, a plaque reads, "It Is Not How This Man Died That Made Him A Hero, It is How He Lived His Life." Most striking is a hallway lined with framed newspapers that cover Patterson's murder and its aftermath. From the initial reports and images of shocked SPD officers to coverage of statements by officers who knew and worked with him, these commemorative artifacts color the organizational memory of the SPD with the death of not only an officer but also a father, husband, and friend—a man who some officers I spoke to continue to simply call "Harry."

Memorial walls and other visible, physical features of the police department that commemorate fallen officers construct a curated and localized organizational memory that highlights danger and death. By commemorating the deaths of officers through the decades, the police organization portrays

a vision of itself and of police work that emphasizes mortal peril. That death in policing is statically rare does not change the reality of work that always *could* turn violent; any that doubt the life-or-death stakes of police work need only study the names and faces that adorn the walls of the police department.

5.1.2 | Individual artifacts

Complementing organizational artifacts like memorial walls that are part of the physical structure of the police department and maintained by the police organization itself, individual officers also commemorate death in ways intimately tied to their unique experience and history of their department. Unlike the formal organizational commemorations that are static and erected in places visible to police and the public alike, these commemorations are more informal, chosen and displayed by officers in ways that are difficult to see or understand from outside the police department.

In a hallway deep in the central Elmont police station, a sign in honor of two fallen officers is displayed outside Lieutenant Karlson's office. The sign is simple: a white board with blue text spelling out the officers' names and, in large block letters, "NEVER FORGET". The sign was saved by Karlson after a memorial fundraiser or "Signal 4," a reference to the EPD's radio code for "officer needs assistance." This dual commemoration is notable given that the deaths of these officers occurred in unrelated incidents: One officer was struck by a vehicle while directing traffic, and the other died from cardiac complications resulting from a gunshot wound years prior. Both deaths occurred more than a decade ago. Nonetheless, this commemorative artifact links the deaths of these officers across time and ties those commemorating them in the present to the EPD's organizational memory of death in the line of duty.

In addition to the sign outside his office, Karlson also wears a simple black-and-blue bracelet in commemoration of fallen officers. Every year or so, he takes it upon himself to order dozens of these same bracelets from the National Law Enforcement Memorial in Washington, D.C., and he passes them out freely to other EPD officers. Similar to the sign outside his office, he explained, bracelets commemorate the officers who have died while reminding officers of the danger they face on patrol today. He stated, "Guys like 'em. You know? As a kind of remember—you know, reminder [of] people that have died, the dangers of this profession."

Importantly, such artifacts are not restricted to "guys" in the department. Assistant Chief Raynes, currently the only female member of the EPD command staff and a 21-year veteran, also wears a commemorative bracelet. The simple metal cuff, she explained, allows her to honor the sacrifice of the dozens of EPD officers killed throughout history. What's more, the bracelet (unlike the memorial wall built into the physical structure of the EPD) is a reminder to her of the fallen when she is outside the bounds of the police department:

> *I don't honor any one particular officer. I think we're up to 25 officers who have been killed in the line of duty here in Elmont. So, my bracelet honors every single Elmont police officer who gave their life in the line of duty. And for me, it's a way to remember them, honor them, and kind of, you know, when I'm not here and I don't see that wall, it's a way to, I don't know, bring them with me.*[4]

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[4]That these bracelets are worn to commemorate danger and death instead of compassion or empathy reflects a masculine conception of policing in which bravery is valorized and police work is equated to "men's work" (Martin, 1999). The use of such artifacts by female officers like Raynes indicates an alignment with a traditionally masculine police culture that can, in turn, reproduce assumptions of female inferiority in policing (Rabe-Hemp, 2009). Nonetheless, the display of commemorative artifacts like bracelets connects male and female officers to a shared organizational memory and culture that emphasizes danger and death in policing.

In West River, the murder of officers Emmanuel Randolph and Timothy Daiyo during a SWAT operation also inspires individual commemorations of various kinds. For example, WPD officers save and display the programs from Randolph and Daiyo's funerals, the covers of the program featuring the names and faces of the murdered officers. At several desks, a commemorative postcard shows both officers flanked by a poem titled "The Wall" (Author Unknown), a reference to the wall in police headquarters where their names are engraved alongside those killed since the founding of the WPD:

> On this Wall are the names of heroic men
> A sacrifice like no other, they fought until the bitter end
>
> They are all heroes some were sons, some were fathers, husbands too
> We won't forget what they did, they gave their lives for me and you
>
> Everyday they go out to make it safe for you and me
> And they know that today, might be the day they don't foresee
>
> They all are heroes some were sons, some were fathers, husbands too
> We won't forget what they did, they gave their lives for me and you
>
> God bless the cops in uniform. God bless them every single day
> May no more names go on this Wall is what we pray for on this day
>
> No more heroes, no more sons, no more fathers, husbands too
> We won't forget what they did, they gave their lives for me and you[5]

Other commemorative artifacts are handcrafted by officers themselves. At their desk, a WPD sergeant displays a small memorial created from newspaper clippings and images of the murdered officers. Topping the memorial is a headline clipped from a local newspaper that reads, "Duty, Honor"; the bottom of the memorial is anchored by the memorial maker's own words, "Gone but never forgotten. Rest In Peace Brothers." In a small nook of her home, Officer Summers displays a variety of artifacts she has collected in memory of her fallen friends. These artifacts include one of the postcards displayed by officers at the WPD—hers sits in a frame adorned with "the boys!" in silver lettering. Next to a pamphlet from Daiyo's funeral, she displays a memorial wristband and a metal coin engraved with the officers' badge numbers, both acquired through fundraisers to benefit the fallen officers' families.[6] Summers recounted that these commemorative artifacts were a part of the "very emotional" process of coping with her friends' murders and remembering their place in the WPD's organizational memory of death. Additionally, Summers views this collection of artifacts as a reminder of the dangers that she and her "family" of fellow officers all confront on patrol:

> Remember: Don't get complacent in this job. Remember to appreciate your friends and family because this could be the last day. You don't know. And for me, like, I'll never forget them. You know, I'll never forget that day, I'll never forget them … And it's all of us. We all dealt with it. We felt like family … But I think other memories are important … Every

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[5] Poetry by officers, their family and friends, and the public abounds (see Sheeler, 2003). Poetry is commonly read at police funerals (Greene, 1988), and many examples can be found online (e.g., https://www.policeone.com/police-heroes/ and http://www.policepoems.com). Poetry also features in commemorative paraphernalia sold by both nonprofits (e.g., Concerns of Police Survivors) and for-profit businesses (e.g., www.thinbluelineshop.com and www.policetees.com).

[6] Similar to the wristbands worn by officers in the EPD, coins, sweatshirts, t-shirts, hats, and other products are frequently ordered online from nonprofit or for-profit sources after a line-of-duty death. They are then sold as part of local fundraisers spearheaded by individual officers or affiliated groups like the WPD's Police Officers Association (POA).

once in a while, like, you just kind of glance over at it and it's, like, it makes me happy now. It doesn't make me sad anymore to look at it. So, it just, you know, kind of reminded me of them in a good way.

Other officers go beyond the gathering and display of externalized symbols and choose to embody the memory of fallen officers through tattoos. Sergeant Belano, a former squad mate of Randolph and Daiyo, has a large backpiece in memory of his friends. Belano explained that the tattoo includes imagery that is both of a general symbolism—an eagle for bravery and patriotism, a set of scales for justice—as well as highly specific to the deaths of Daiyo and Randolph—arrows like those in the WPD's SWAT crest, the date of Randolph and Daiyo's deaths, and a rose for each officer. Belano explained how his tattoo, as well as a metal bracelet he's worn every day for a decade, help him remember his friends and to heal after their deaths:

They're just reminders. Whenever I see them—not that I would forget—but I want to remember as many details as I can … But the bracelet and the back piece helps me do that. I wanted it in my face. I wanted to – I needed the constant reminder … Just for me personally, it helps me get past it a little better instead of just hide it away or bury it some-where. So, after my grieving process, then it was more of remembering who they were and all the good things they did. That helped transform that grieving process into more of a way to deal with it, just remembering who they were.

Lieutenant Milton is also tattooed, but the name and shield tattooed on his body commemorate his best friend Jimmy, a WPD officer killed nearly 20 years ago on a dark West River street. Although Milton's son, James, was a child when Jimmy was killed, James fondly remembers trips to Walmart with Jimmy and his frequent presence at home. At 19, James was tattooed with Jimmy's name and badge number, and today, he is a sworn officer that patrols the same streets his father and Jimmy once did. That James never patrolled alongside Jimmy is immaterial; as the son of an officer who lost his best friend and now as an officer himself, James's personal history is married to the organizational memory of the police department. Today, his embodied commemoration of Jimmy—a man who is simultaneously a brother who wore the WPD shield and a man that James remembers as an "Uncle," "God Father," and "hero"—physically and permanently links him to an organizational memory of danger and death.

5.2 | Extralocal commemoration and occupational culture

Commemoration of fallen officers within the police department is not restricted to a department's own; it also includes commemoration of officers from other departments that have been killed in the line of duty. Although the form that these commemorative artifacts take is similar to those used by the police department and its officers to commemorate their own, these artifacts are unique in that the officers being commemorated have no direct connection to the police department nor any individual officer prior to their death. Instead, artifacts used to commemorate distant police deaths connect local departments and officers to the broader police occupation and reproduce the cultural importance of danger and death in ways that transcend any one department, its officers, and their local context.

5.2.1 | Extralocal commemoration across space

In 2016, I arrived at the SPD's southern substation for a meeting with Lieutenant Pinelli, a female officer who began her career on the south side of the city, worked her way through the ranks, and had recently returned to the south side as a watch commander. On my way into a single-story substation

landscaped with mulch and hearty southwestern shrubbery, I noticed that the state and U.S. flags were both flying at half-mast. During our meeting, I saw that Lt. Pinelli's shield was crossed by a black mourning band split by a narrow blue stripe, a symbol used to commemorate a fallen officer and a representation of the "thin blue line" that NYPD Commissioner Bratton once stated is all that stands "between us and anarchy" (Berlinger, Sanchez, & Prokupecz, 2014).

Pinelli explained that the half-mast flags and the mourning band were for Officer Gary Daniel-son, a veteran officer killed while responding to a call of a burglary in progress. Importantly, Officer Danielson was not killed in Sunshine but in Harrison, a city more than 125 miles away. The geo-graphic distance between Danielson's death and Sunshine does not change that his murder is a loss of a member of the police occupation. Despite having no direct relationship with the fallen of other depart-ments, mourning bands for distant deaths are used in ways similar to artifacts displayed by officers to commemorate deaths in their own department. As Pinelli explained, mourning bands are reminders to officers of the danger of their work and the sacrifices of those killed in the line of duty, no matter where they died:

> *I think [mourning bands are] to remember. I think it's to honor the officers that gave the ultimate sacrifice. And I think it's – I also think it's a reminder for all of us, every day, right, don't get complacent and go home safe to your family at the end of every day … If any of us, I think, gave the ultimate sacrifice for our community, that we would want that community to remember us and remember that we gave our life so that they could continue living.*

In addition to half-mast flags and mourning bands, the SPD also sent officer representatives to Daniel-son's memorial service. The sending of departmental emissaries to the funerals of officers in other municipalities is common and is not restricted to proximate locations or large metro areas: Officers from around the country attended the funerals of Detective Misotis Familia in New York City and Detective Benjamin Marconi in San Antonio, Texas (Caruba & Foster-Frau, 2016; Mueller, 2017), as well as that of Officer Gary Michaels in Clinton, Missouri, a town of 9,000 (Robertson, 2017). A few months after Danielson's death, the SPD (as well as the WPD) sent officers to attend the funerals of the officers slain in Dallas.

Along with SPD officers, I learned of the tragedy in Dallas as events unfolded between the night of July 7 and the morning of July 8, 2017. I arrived at Sunshine's eastern substation at approximately 20:45 on the 7th, that night's graveyard shift lineup slated for 21:00. After texting the sergeant to let him know I was outside, I scrolled through Twitter to pass the time. Just before the sergeant opened the door to let me into the substation, my feed showed reports of shots fired at a Black Lives Matter protest in Dallas.

I followed the sergeant to the lineup room and sat down, checking my phone to see what was hap-pening in my home state. Swiping through his own phone, the sergeant asked the room, "*You guys see about Dallas? Three dead.*" A patrol officer on that night's shift responded, "*I got a message about it on the GroupMe* [a group messaging app]." Several hours later, just before midnight, a red-bearded man coming out of the gas station that an officer and I were entering remarked to the officer, "*What the fuck is going on in Dallas, bro? Shit is crazy! 11 shot, 4 dead.*" By the end of the graveyard shift, the death count would rise to five.

After 2 weeks during which SPD officers and officers across the country placed black mourning bands across their shields, I returned to the eastern substation to conduct an interview. While I waited, I noticed funeral programs similar to those I had seen in West River. Upon closer inspection, I saw they were from the funerals of three Dallas officers: Officer Brent Allan Thompson, Officer Michael Leslie

Krol, and Officer Patricio E. Zamarripa. A neighboring desk had a Dallas Police Department badge on display, and another DPD badge was propped against a framed U.S. flag. Despite geographic and social distance, the deaths of five officers in Dallas—murdered *because* they were police (Zapotosky, Goldman, & Higham, 2016)—are commemorated by officers who share membership in an occupation that emphasizes danger and the possibility of death.

Officer Garner (WPD), who has saved pamphlets from every funeral she has attended in her career, explained the powerful symbolic value of these commemorative artifacts:

> *The reason I keep them is because it's this reminder to me that law enforcement is a dangerous job. But there's all this amazing honor in it as well despite what the current narrative has out there. Like there's all this amazing honor and dignity in even death when you are a police officer … The biggest piece is that. Another piece is the reminder of "don't end up on one of these programs."*

Similar to commemorative artifacts used to remember officers' fallen friends and co-workers, funeral pamphlets are a tangible reminder of the danger with which all police contend. Furthermore, the pamphlets Garner has saved, in contrast to the critical "narrative" she perceives characterizes the sociopolitical climate around police, are evidence of the valorous, even sacred features of police work (see Manning, 1977). Together, artifacts like mourning bands and funeral pamphlets that are meant to commemorate distant deaths link distinct police departments and their officers to a common, occupational-level understanding of dangerous, deadly policing.

5.2.2 | Extralocal commemoration across time

In addition to extralocal commemorative artifacts that amplify the salience of death and danger across space, other extralocal commemorations also connect the police department to deaths across time. Commemorative artifacts like these are on display in the lobby of the same SPD substation where I first saw flags at half-mast. Diagonal from the wall displaying the names and faces of SPD officers killed since the founding of the department, two commemorations of police killed in the September 11 attack in New York City hang on the wall (figure 2). The first artifact shows the faces of the 23 NYPD officers killed in the attack. The faces are topped by the words "OUR NYPD HEROES," and underneath it reads, "FIDELIS AD MORTEM"—the NYPD motto that translates to "Faithful Unto Death." The second artifact centers on two images under the words, "WE WILL PREVAIL." The first picture, dated Wednesday September 12, 2001, shows two NYPD officers standing in the debris-littered plaza of the NYPD's memorial in Battery Park. The officers are wearing protective masks as they gaze at the dust-covered memorial wall. The second picture, dated Sunday September 16, 2001, shows a makeshift sign spray-painted with "N.Y.P.D. MEMORIAL" and two workers cleaning the memorial wall with a water hose.

Such artifacts speak to officers' membership in a supra-organizational group that extends beyond an officer's home department. Sergeant Veloso (SPD) described this larger group as "a second family […] [a] law enforcement family […] that extends beyond just, you know, actually having physically met them and having personal, you know, contact to draw from." Lt. Pinelli echoed this familial language and linked the SPD to a "public safety" identity shared by officers across time and space:

> *It's that public safety family. You get NYPD officers and FDNY [New York Fire Department] who were all killed in 9/11—probably, I mean, in the largest terrorist attack in United States history. It affected everybody. And so, it goes to that "We will never*
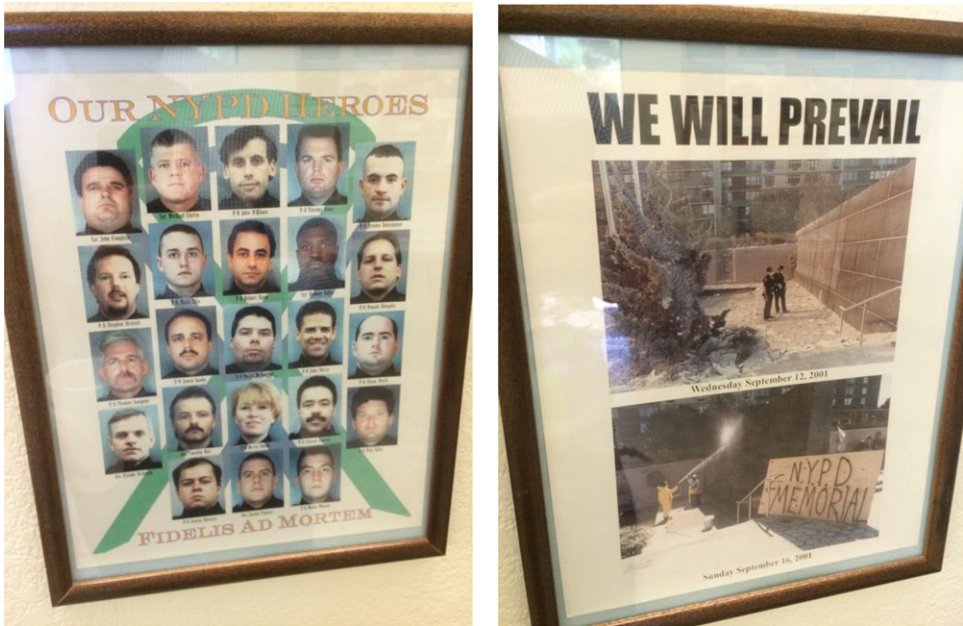
FIGURE 2   9/11-Related commemorative artifacts [Color figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

> *forget." We honor their sacrifice … When you become a member of the law enforcement community, you become the part of a larger family and you bleed blue. So, when you lose somebody—whether or not they're in Dallas or Baton Rouge or New York—your heart breaks because they're a member of your family. They're a member of the law enforcement family.*

These artifacts commemorate the deaths of officers that took place more than 2,000 miles away and nearly 20 years ago, forging a concrete connection between the SPD and the NYPD that stretches across the country and back in time. That Pinelli links police deaths from September 11, 2001 to the 2016 murders of officers in Baton Rouge and Dallas further emphasizes that commemoration of the spatially and temporally distant dead reinforces policing's enduring preoccupation with death and danger.

Finally, some commemorative artifacts within the police department do not specifically reference a particular death, be it recent, local, long past, or in a far-off place. These artifacts commemorate the omnipresent, timeless specter of death that all officers must confront, and that may claim the life of an officer on any given call. One such artifact is displayed in the Elmont Police Union office, down the hall from the lineup room where officers gather before heading out on patrol. As shown in figure 3, the framed black-and-white artwork depicts an officer on one knee, his right hand cradling a folded American flag into the crook of his arm while his left hand covers his eyes.

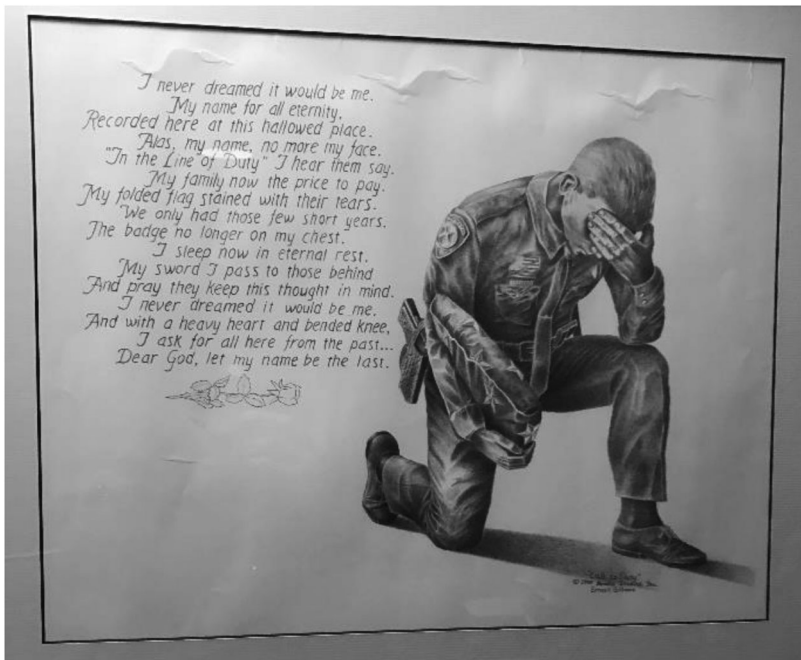To left of the officer, an untitled and unattributed poem underscored by the image of a rose reads as follows:

FIGURE 3 Poem and drawing commemorating police death

I never dreamed it would be me.

My name for all eternity,

Recorded here at this hallowed place.

Alas, my name, no more my face.

"In the line of duty" I hear them say.

My family now the price will pay.

My folded flag stained with their tears.

We only had those few short years.

The badge no longer on my chest.

I sleep now in eternal rest.

My sword I pass to those behind

And pray they keep this thought in mind.

I never dreamed it would be me.

And with heavy heart and bended knee,

I ask for all here from the past …

Dear God, let my name be the last.[7]

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[7] Although not listed in the artwork shown in figure 3, this poem is titled "The Monument" and was authored by the late LAPD Detective Sergeant George Hahn, Jr. This poem is permanently displayed as part of the California Peace Officers Memorial in Sacramento, CA.

The pictured officer is faceless; neither his name badge nor the patch on his shoulder betrays details of who he is or where he patrols. Similarly, the officer whose perspective the poem takes gives no particulars of what led to their death, where they were, or when they fell. That this drawing and poem are devoid of specific context does not render them meaningless; these artifacts commemorate death that could have happened yesterday or centuries ago, to officers in Elmont, West River, Sunshine, or any town in between. The commemoration of this generalized death reflects and perpetuates the cultural assumption of dangerous police work and describes an officer's death that could apply to any department in the past, present, or future. By commemorating the tragedy of officer death instead of *an* officer's death, this artifact connects the EPD and its officers to the broader police occupation and invigorates the occupational-level understanding that policing was, is, and will continue to be, one marked by danger and death.

6 | DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Contemporary researchers have noted that although there is variation in police culture (Ingram et al., 2013; Paoline, 2004), other features of this culture—such as the emphasis on danger and potential death on patrol—remain consistent (Loftus, 2010; Marenin, 2016). Drawing on ethnographic observations and interviews across three urban police departments between 2014 and 2018, in this analysis, I employed the concepts of cultural artifacts and organizational memory to describe how the centrality of danger and death in police culture is maintained through commemoration of officers killed in the line of duty. As the results of my analysis show, the use of organizational and individual artifacts reflects and reconstructs localized organizational memories that highlight the past and present reality of dangerous, deadly policing. Additionally, the commemoration of dead officers that are temporally and geographically distant ties departments and their officers to the wider occupation of policing, connecting local departments and officers to the broader occupational culture of police and its long-standing emphasis on danger and death.

These findings advance research on police and police culture in various ways. First, this article's focus on death's commemoration within police departments bolsters past research which documents the importance of danger and death in policing and captures a feature of police culture often unrepresented in survey-based research on officers' occupational attitudes (Engel & Worden, 2003; Ingram et al., 2013; Paoline, 2004; Paoline & Terrill, 2005; Terrill et al., 2003). More specifically, ethnographic observations provide evidence of mechanisms that maintain the occupational salience of danger and death within and beyond the bounds of individual departments.

Second, the findings from this analysis can be used to reorient the conception of officers from passive conduits of culture to one in which recognizes officers' agency and their active role in the practice and perpetuation of police culture is recognized. As opposed to a priori police culture in which autonomous influence is exerted over departments and officers, in this article, I treat police culture as emergent and constructed by the actions of individuals situated in localized organizational contexts (see also Chan, 1996; Shearing & Ericson, 1991). Cultural stability, then, instead of being the mechanical product of consistent pressures in the working environment of police (Loftus, 2010), is likely also influenced by the actions of police themselves. Thus, although the findings of this research show support for the results of past work in which officer-level culture results from the mediation of occupational culture through the police organization and the pressures of police work (Ingram et al., 2013, 2018; Paoline, 2003; Paoline & Gau, 2018), it also challenges a strictly top-down, "filter" model of police culture. Not only does culture filter down to be reflected by organizations and individuals in context-specific ways, but individual and organizational behaviors reproduce the occupational culture

in which they are embedded. To be sure, commemoration is but one mechanism for maintenance of a police culture that emphasizes danger and death. Further research is needed to understand the mechanisms operating specifically within workgroups (e.g., shifts and precincts) that structure police attitudes and behaviors (Ingram et al., 2013; Klinger, 1997; Paoline, 2001; Sobol, 2010; Sun, 2002), as well as within workgroups like SWAT and other specialized units that select on especially dangerous work (Moskos, 2009, p. 137).

Third, the multisite design of this study provides benefits over single-site ethnographies often critiqued as ungeneralizable (Small, 2009). These three sites are in distinct geographic regions of the United States and exist in unique local and historical contexts. The observation of officers across these sites allows for a nuanced account of how commemoration of the dead manifests through locally structured cultural artifacts as well as how disparate departments link themselves in similar ways to the police occupation writ large. Of course, that this study is *more* generalizable than a single-site ethnography does not mean that these findings should be definitively extended to the thousands of law enforcement agencies spread across the United States. Although unique in some ways, all three departments observed are large, operate in urban areas, are highly professionalized, and have experienced the loss of officers in the line of duty. How death is (or is not) commemorated and to what degree the importance of death and danger varies between the observed departments and smaller agencies, rural agencies, sheriff's departments, or agencies that have not experienced line-of-duty deaths are questions that remain to be explored.

Finally, observation of the cultural artifacts used to commemorate death in policing over time provides temporality to police culture generally presented as a static phenomenon (cf. Van Maanen, 1974). Even though this study cannot provide a definitive account of commemoration before, during, and after an officer's death—I am happy to report no EPD, WPD, or SPD officers were killed during my time in the field—the commemoration of the recent and distant past, as well as of contemporary police deaths like those in Dallas, shows that current manifestations of police culture are shaped by the history of individual officers and by the collection of police departments that comprise the police occupation. That said, based on this project, I cannot conclusively delineate which police deaths are catalysts for extralocal commemorations or for how long the death of an officer within a given department is commemorated. Future research might consider employing archival methods to uncover the historical genesis of intradepartmental commemoration as well as interviews with officers of varying ages to assess the variation of commemoration and organizational memory across generations of police officers.

In addition to its contributions to the study of police culture, the findings from this research have implications for pressing issues in U.S. policing. As a mechanism for the perpetuation of police culture that emphasizes danger and death, the commemoration of fallen officers is implicated in policing strategies and officer behaviors that perpetuate inequalities in criminal justice. Namely, the cultural emphasis on deadly police work underlies enforcement-heavy strategies in line with a "warrior" mentality that frames the public as inherently threatening. The us-versus-them orientation of this policing paradigm manifests in decidedly punitive approaches, often to the exclusion of cooperative public safety strategies that stand to enhance police legitimacy and public safety (Rahr & Rice, 2015; Stoughton, 2016). Such aggressive policing converges on minority communities already distrustful of police (Carr, Napolitano, & Keating, 2007; Gaston & Brunson, 2018), further concentrating punitive state control among disadvantaged communities that feel overpoliced and underprotected.

To be clear, commemorative acts and artifacts need not be explicitly racialized to reify understandings of dangerous work that encourage punitive and ultimately inequitable policing. The commemorative artifacts I observed, for example, centered on honoring fallen officers instead of the demonization of their killers, mirroring the victim-centered focus of commemoration in other contexts (Hoskins, 2007; Mitchell, 2003). Nonetheless, commemorations that are intended to reinforce the salience of

danger and death—even without discussion of race or other assailant characteristics—operate in an environment replete with implicit biases that associate racial minorities with crime and violence (Anderson, 2012; Correll, Hudson, Guillermo, & Ma, 2014; Eberhardt, Goff, Purdie, & Davies, 2004). In turn, the emphasis on the deadly, dangerous nature of police work can encourage enforcement practices that disproportionately affect minority communities and maintain macro-level inequalities in punishment and control (Epp, Maynard-Moody, & Haider-Markel, 2014; Legewie, 2016; Sierra-Arévalo, 2016).

Outside officers' street-level behaviors, it is also important to consider the relationship between commemoration of police deaths and the broader political context in which policing takes places. For example, departmental and individual commemorations echo the attention paid by Blue Lives Matter—"America's largest law enforcement support community" (2017)—to instances of officers being attacked, killed, or triumphing over violent assailants; symbols I observed in the field, such as the "thin blue line" splitting a black background, are also present in Blue Lives Matter posts and products. Although the officers I observed and spoke with did not directly link Blue Lives Matter to their commemorative acts and artifacts, the mutual emphasis on line-of-duty deaths by officers and such third-party organizations is evocative of death's political salience in other criminal justice contexts like prisons and prison unions (Page, 2013; Reiter, 2016). Given the rise in "Blue Lives Matter laws" that seek to make the killing of police officers a federal hate crime (Craven, 2017), researchers would do well to assess how police deaths are mobilized as political capital to aid legal expansion of police powers and protections.

It is also worth considering a type of police death that is not the focus of the commemorative artifacts described in this analysis: police suicide. The omission of such deaths from commemorative artifacts like the memorial walls seen in my field sites extends to national memorials, both physical (e.g., National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial) and virtual (e.g., Officer Down Memorial Page). Despite growing recognition of the need for augmented resources to address the negative mental and physical health effects of police work (Mumford, Taylor, & Kubu, 2015), the conspicuous absence of suicide in police commemorations reflects the continuing stigmatization of mental illness and suicide among police (Violanti, 2007). Commemoration of line-of-duty deaths to the exclusion of suicides further entrenches understandings of valorous, heroic police work while obfuscating its emotional toll and engraining norms that denigrate emotion as weak and feminine (Martin, 1999). Although the commemorative artifacts described in this analysis serve a certain therapeutic function for grieving officers, data showing that police suicides outpace total line-of-duty deaths are further evidence of officer stress and mental illness that require structural solutions at the local, state, and federal levels (Blue H.E.L.P., 2018; President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing, 2015, pp. 61–68).

In closing, the findings from this study demonstrate that there is reason to be dually optimistic and cautious with regard to the recent resurgence in calls for police reform. Optimistically, that officers and police organizations have a hand in the construction of police culture indicates that they can also take an active role in changing it. Recognizing that the police organization and individual officers are both products and producers of police culture, a multilevel effort in which organizational- and individual-level change is combined is likely necessary to foment the kind of occupational transformation unlikely to be brought about by external forces alone (Benson, 2001). Such an approach to reform might look to create an organizational environment conducive to individual change, such as through expanded de-escalation training and mandatory (and rewarded) nonenforcement interactions with the public (Rahr & Rice, 2015; Stoughton, 2014a). Once in place, these tools and incentives would be conducive to officer-level behavioral change that aligns more closely with a "guardian" ethos in which empathy, inclusivity, patience, and introspection are emphasized instead of only enforcement (Stoughton, 2016).

There is, of course, good reason to temper this optimism. That death and danger continue to be highlighted within police departments to the exclusion of evidence showing an overall decrease in felonious officer deaths suggests that police culture is decidedly resistant to changes in the occupational reality of policing. Given the continuing amplification of rare line-of-duty deaths and the intransigence of the "war on cops" narrative (Nix et al., 2018), it is unclear what (if any) increase in occupational safety would be necessary to counteract the emphasis on dangerous work that is linked to police brutality, insularity, secrecy, and corruption (Kappeler et al., 1998). Although past policy reform efforts have shown positive results in some facets of police activity (Walker, 2005), it behooves us to remember the words of the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing: "Organizational culture eats policy for lunch" (2015, p. 11). This is not a call to eschew policy-based efforts to change police culture in ways that curb excessive force or enhance transparency—far from it. It is, however, a cautionary suggestion that reform-minded policies should be cognizant of the centrality of danger and death to police culture. To ignore it is to disregard the cultural bedrock on which resistance to organizational change stands (Cohen, 2017; Schein, 2010) and to follow in the footsteps of past failed reform efforts.

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