Attitudes toward peers, supervisors, and citizens: a comparison of Chinese and Taiwanese police officers

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Abstract

Purpose – This paper comparatively assesses the connections between individual demographic traits, occupational characteristics, and organizational factors and officers' attitudes toward important groups in China and Taiwan.

Design/methodology/approach – Survey data used in this study were collected from 722 police officers from mainland China and 531 officers from Taiwan. Multivariate regression analyses were conducted to assess the correlates of police attitudes toward peers, supervisors, and citizens.

Findings – The Chinese and Taiwanese officers do not differ in their trust in peers, but the Chinese officers hold significantly more positive views on the trustworthiness of supervisors and citizens compared to the Taiwanese officers. Supervisor justice and organizational identification are significant predictors of officers' attitudes toward all three groups in both countries.

Research limitations/implications – A major limitation revolves around the inability to test and explain exactly why findings from the two groups vary in their ways. Future research should include specific social, political, and cultural predictors.

Originality/value – This study represents one of the few studies that compare police attitudes toward important groups of peers, supervisors, and citizens across nations/cultures.

Keywords China, Police culture, Taiwan, Occupational attitudes, Supervisory justice

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Police officers' attitudes toward immediate workgroups, including peers, supervisors, and citizens, represent core elements of their occupational cultures (Paoline, 2004; Sun, 2002). Trustworthy relationships with coworkers build the foundation of in-group loyalty and solidarity critical for mutual support and collective conscience among rank and file (Cordner, 2017). Supportive peers are also crucial for promoting officers' fair and respectful policing on the street (Crank, 2004). Similarly, supervisory trustworthiness facilitates officers' compliance with agency policies and cooperation with supervisors (Wang *et al.*, 2020). Finally, officers' views of the citizenry are essential for fostering a strong police-citizen partnership, improving police treatment of citizens, and cultivating citizen cooperation with

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police (Mourtgos *et al.*, 2020; Sun *et al.*, 2021). Therefore, officers' trust in internal and external groups is vital for advancing democratic governance and fair policing.

Researchers have delineated the formation, content, and influences of police culture (Crank, 2004; Paoline, 2003). Earlier studies emphasized the shared values, attitudes, and sentiments among officers, hence depicting a relatively monolithic police culture based on the dangerousness and unpredictability of the occupation (Paoline, 2003). Later work noted the heterogeneity among officers, revealing varying typologies of policing styles (Cordner, 2017). What remains extremely scarce in the literature is assessing police culture, particularly officers' attitudes toward important groups, from a comparative perspective. National context may affect police attitudes and behaviors (Kääriäinen and Sirén, 2012; Sun *et al.*, 2021), as well as the manners in which occupational and organizational factors mold officers' attitudes and behaviors toward important groups. Comparative research, therefore, despite the tremendous challenges of data collection, is highly warranted.

Relying on samples of 722 police officers from mainland China and 531 officers from Taiwan, this study assessed the correlates of police attitudes toward supervisors, peers, and citizens. It examines to what extent these fundamental police occupational outlooks are linked to officer demographic traits (e.g. gender, education, experience), occupational features (e.g. feeling unsafe at work, occupational stress), and organizational characteristics, including treatment by and attachment to the organization (e.g. supervisory justice, organizational commitment). China and Taiwan represent a suitable pair for comparison. They are the two largest Chinese societies globally, sharing many cultural and policing traditions. Meanwhile, China and Taiwan are vastly different in fundamental ways, particularly concerning political regimes and levels of power distance (Hofstede *et al.*, 2010). While China has undergone rapid economic and social developments over the past four decades, it continues to be an authoritarian regime where all aspects of social life are tightly controlled by the government (Wu *et al.*, 2012). During the same period, Taiwan has evolved from authoritarianism to democracy, where political pluralism and democratic values have been established and embraced (Cao *et al.*, 2014).

This study attempts to answer two questions: (1) Are individual, occupational, and organizational factors associated with officers' views of the important groups? (2) Does nation (China v. Taiwan) condition the relationships between individual, occupational, and organizational factors and officers' attitudes toward the important groups? The findings of this study contribute to a thin yet much-needed line of research that compares police officers' job-related attitudes across nations (Bennett, 1997; Chu and Sun, 2007; Harper *et al.*, 1999; Kääriäinen and Sirén, 2012; Sun and Chu, 2008; Sun *et al.*, 2010), including those between China and Taiwan (Sun *et al.*, 2021).

Literature review

Police attitudes toward reference groups

This study focuses on officers' attitudes toward three arguably most important and frequently interacted groups at work: coworkers, supervisors, and the public. Policing literature has generally revealed strong bonds among officers, especially those who work for the same squad. As Klinger (1997, p. 283) described: "Patrol work occurs in the context of territorially based workgroups." Line officers heavily rely on each other to perform tasks and protect each other in everyday work, including in dangerous situations. The comraderies among street-level officers encourage group loyalty, social support, and even a code of silence about peer misconduct (Skolnick, 1966; Van Maanen, 1974).

Supervisor trustworthiness appears to be a more multi-faceted story. The police work is largely decentralized, and patrol officers conduct daily work without much direct supervision (Lipsky, 1980). Nonetheless, patrol sergeants remain the most important intermediary in

officers' working environment (Muir, 1977; Van Maanen, 1975). Compared to peers, officers often have lower trust toward supervisors, partially due to the innate tension between the exercise of discretion by officers and the administrative control of discretion through supervisors (Engel and Worden, 2003). Officers often complain about the authoritarian control style of their supervisors (Bittner, 1983) and the uncertainty and ambiguity regarding supervisory expectations (Paoline, 2004). Distrust of management cops is viewed as one of the main reasons for the solidarity and secrecy among street cops (Reuss-Ianni and Ianni, 1983) and a key element of police culture (Cordner, 2017).

The police customarily do not hold high levels of trust in average citizens. While a great deal of quantitative research has been conducted on citizen perception of the police (see Brown and Benedict, 2002 and Peck, 2015 for reviews), quantitative evidence on police perception of the public is very limited (Mourtgos *et al.*, 2020). Early, classic, ethnographic studies show that due to the nature of policing environment, many officers are quite suspicious of the public (Skolnick, 1966; Westley, 1953). They expect to meet hostile citizens and believe that the public is only mildly sympathetic to them (Sun, 2002). Isolation from and suspicion toward the citizenry thus represent some key features of police culture. This "us vs them" mentality undermines police-citizen collaboration and hinders proactive police work (Mourtgos *et al.*, 2020).

The correlates of police occupational attitudes

Three complementary perspectives have been proposed to explain police occupational (work-related) attitudes. The first perspective, the "predisposition theory," suggests that officers' occupational attitudes reflect their background characteristics, such as gender, race, education, marital status, and prior experience (Sun *et al.*, 2009). For example, compared to male officers, female officers were found to be less oriented toward using force (Brooks *et al.*, 1993), have a broader role orientation (Sun, 2003), and report more favorable global attitudes toward community policing (Schafer, 2002). Some studies found that college-educated officers, relative to their less-educated counterparts, hold more positive attitudes toward peer groups, supervisors, and top managers (Sun, 2002; Wang *et al.*, 2020) and are supportive of community policing (Winfree *et al.*, 1996) or procedural justice on the street (Sun *et al.*, 2019). A study of Chinese officers revealed that those with military service experience expressed stronger support for fair and respectful treatment of citizens than those without such experience (Sun *et al.*, 2019). Nonetheless, many studies found no significant or mixed findings between officers' background characteristics and work-related attitudes.

The second perspective focuses on police occupation, arguing that police culture grows out of the police working environment and serves as a coping mechanism against the strain from the occupation (Paoline, 2003). Patrol officers gradually undergo a powerful socialization experience. They identify with fellow officers, learn about informal work rules and norms, mimic each other's perspectives and outlooks, and form a police culture (Skolnick, 1966; Van Maanen, 1974). During this process, factors such as officers' perceptions of unsafety at work and related stress are likely to shape their views on important groups, with those who perceive greater danger and suffer more stress more favorable of peers and less trustful of citizens, and perhaps to a lesser extent, less trustful of supervisors. Similarly, job assignments may influence officers' worldviews. Wang *et al.* (2020) found, among a sample of Taiwanese police, that officers who work on the street as opposed to in management positions and officers who work in the field as opposed to at a desk job report lower trust in supervisors.

The third perspective emphasizes police organization, positing that officers go through differential socialization experiences (Roberg *et al.*, 2000) fashioned by differential organizational contexts. For example, factors such as transformational and proactive leadership, equal and equitable work appraisal and promotional rules and procedures, fair

and respectful supervisory treatment, and effective communications between supervisors and subordinates can all contribute to officers' positive work orientations and behaviors (Brunetto and Farr-Wharton, 2003; Wu *et al.*, 2017). Particularly, attitudes toward supervisors can be greatly influenced by supervision styles. Supervisors who have effective leadership skills and knowledge and initiate more active contact with subordinates are more likely to gain trust from the subordinates (Wang *et al.*, 2020), maintain positive working relationships with the subordinates (Sun, 2002), and influence subordinates' behaviors and performance positively (Engel and Worden, 2003). Additionally, in well-led and well-managed organizations, officers' organizational commitment and identification tend to be higher, leading to their active pursuit of organizational goals and greater trust in important groups (Brunetto and Farr-Wharton, 2003).

These three perspectives emphasizing individual traits, occupational features, and organizational characteristics should be viewed holistically to understand their impact on officers. Moreover, individuals, groups, and organizations do not exist in a vacuum. The larger societal, political, cultural, and institutional context that the police work in can potentially shape police culture.

The social context of policing: China v. Taiwan

China and Taiwan have been separated and developing independently since 1949. People in the two countries share the official language (despite differences in written characters) and many cultural norms and values. Both societies have the heritage of Confucianism which values collective interest, harmonious interpersonal relationships, and respect for authority (Shi, 2001). Both have undergone significant, large-scale social and economic development and transformations in the past several decades.

Both China and Taiwan have relatively low crime rates, especially violent crimes, compared to the U.S. They have strict gun control policies, and the police use firearms much less frequently than their American counterparts. Despite having nationalized police forces, local governments exercise great control over the police in their jurisdictions by providing budgets and setting priorities. The philosophy and practices of community policing are highly valued in these societies, with the governments emphasizing public participation in crime prevention activities through the outreach of grassroots-level field stations (*paichusuo*). Like their Western counterparts, police organizations feature command and control systems, even though local autonomy and diversity for crime-fighting strategies and practices have been increasingly observed (Sun and Chu, 2006; Sun and Wu, 2010).

China and Taiwan, meanwhile, are fundamentally different in many areas, following quite distinct paths of political and economic development since their separation. The economic system in Taiwan is much more open and capitalist than that of China. Although China is still under authoritarian control, Taiwan has transited to democracy during the past three decades. China and Taiwan also have some different cultural aspects. China can be characterized as a high-power distance country (Hofstede *et al.*, 2010), where inequality is much more outstanding and perceived as normal. Chinese police attitudes toward peers may not be that distinct from those in Taiwan as the police working environment in both societies share similarities in being dangerous and unpredictable and promoting bonds and royalty among peers. The high power-distance nature of China, however, may lead to differential features of both supervisor-subordinate and police-citizen relationships from those in Taiwan.

First, police trust in supervisors may be higher in China than in Taiwan due to two considerations. Reflecting the authoritarian nature of the regime, the structure of the police bureaucracy in China provides frontline officers with few opportunities to voice their opinion, participate in policymaking, or exercise discretion in individual cases (Scoggins and O'Brien, 2016). The Taiwanese rank and file, meanwhile, act like street-corner politicians (Muir, 1977),

having more discretionary power on the street and more input in the organizational policymaking process. While this contrast may intuitively suggest that Chinese police supervisors should receive lower trust from their subordinates than the Taiwanese supervisors, evidence from organizational and political research demonstrates the opposite. For example, organizational research shows that employees in a high power-distance context are more content with their managers making decisions and following these decisions and instructions more submissively and unquestioningly (Khatri, 2009). Similarly, political research reveals that in low power-distance, democratic countries (e.g. Taiwan), many critical citizens are less trustful and deferential to authorities (Norris, 1999). It is thus not unreasonable to expect that Chinese officers hold more trustful attitudes toward their supervisors than do Taiwanese officers.

When it comes to police trust in citizens, the Chinese police are also hypothesized to hold more trustful attitudes than the Taiwanese police. In high power-distance China, the public expects legal authorities to exercise decisions with little input from citizens. In such a society, police-community relations are largely autocratic and paternalistic in the public's eyes, with the police being the superiors and citizens the subordinates. Meanwhile, the government depicts police-community relations as "the police are fishes and the masses are water," highlighting the ideologies of citizen involvement in public safety and police reliance on public support for survival (Sun and Wu, 2010). In this political and cultural context, police authority over the citizenry is widely accepted by citizens, and Chinese officers tend to believe that the public are law-abiding and appreciate police work (Wu *et al.*, 2016). As such, the police and the public are likely to have trustful attitudes toward each other. In low power-distance Taiwan, police-citizen relations are equal and consultative, with higher police accountability and transparency (Cao *et al.*, 2014). However, like their counterparts in Western democracies, Taiwanese officers are likely more suspicious about the public as the latter are more ready to, and capable of, questioning police exercise of authority. Indeed, a few studies found that people in Taiwan consistently display lower confidence or trust in the police than their counterparts in China (Lai *et al.*, 2010; Wu *et al.*, 2012). Reciprocally, the Chinese police are speculated to have higher levels of trust in citizens than do the Taiwanese police.

Methods

Data

Data used for this study are part of an international project that aims to examine police views of internal and external procedural justice across countries (see Van Craen and Skogan, 2017). A survey questionnaire in both simplified Chinese (for mainland China) and traditional Chinese (for Taiwan) was developed by two US-based scholars, following closely a survey questionnaire in English previously designed by other researchers in this international project. The Chinese survey was then translated back into English by a bilingual policing scholar, and the translated English version was compared to the original English version to assess the accuracy of the Chinese translation. The simplified and traditional Chinese instruments are identical, with only a few minor places where different phrases or words with the same meanings were used to reflect their common usages in the two countries.

The Chinese data were collected from a municipal police college located in southwest China based on the researchers' connections with school officials. As a higher education institution providing regular undergraduate education to police cadets, the college also offers in-service, short-term training courses or programs to rank-and-file. Survey data were collected between fall 2015 and spring 2016 (four months in total) from police officers attending mandatory on-the-job training courses/programs in the college. Paper surveys were distributed and collected by an instructor of the college, who informed the officers enrolled in various training courses about the opportunity to participate in this research. On

the days of survey distribution, the instructor explained in more detail the purpose of the study, the potential costs and benefits of participation, and the voluntary and anonymous nature of participation. All surveys were completed in the classrooms. A total of 850 surveys were distributed, and 768 surveys were returned, resulting in a response rate of 90.4%.

The Taiwanese data were gathered from the New Taipei City Police Department (NTCPD) in northern Taiwan by a team of researchers from the Central Police University in Taiwan. Seven out of the 16 police districts within the NTCPD were selected as sampling units mainly because of the researchers' familiarity with these stations and the approval obtained from the district commanding officers. Survey data were gathered between April and October 2015 when the research team visited the district stations on scheduled days and distributed the questionnaire to front-line officers after their mandatory monthly joint training seminars or seasonal police knowledge training seminars. District commanders were asked to leave the meeting room during survey administration. The researchers thoroughly explained the purpose of the study, the costs and benefits associated with participation, and the voluntary and anonymous nature of participation to interested officers. A total of 608 surveys were passed out to officers, with 590 returned, resulting in a response rate of 97%.

Measures

The three outcome variables, representing perceptions of peers, supervisors, and citizens, are summative scales based on Likert-type Scale items with values ranging from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 6 ("strongly agree"). As shown in Table 1, attitudes toward peers, supervisors, and citizens were constructed as two-, five-, and four-item scales, with acceptable internal consistency. Higher values represent greater trust in coworkers, supervisors, and the citizenry.

For the independent variables, a dummy variable was created to represent country affiliation (Taiwan = 0; China = 1). The remaining independent variables are classified into three groups, indicating occupational, organizational, and individual characteristics. Occupational factors include stress, feeling unsafe, years of police experience, and working in a field station. Occupational stress and feeling unsafe are multiple-item scales (see Table 1), with higher values reflecting great stress and unsafe feeling. Length of police experience was measured in years. Working in a field station was coded as a dummy variable (0 = no; 1 = yes).

Organizational factors capture officers' evaluations of their organizational environment. As displayed in Table 1, three composites reflecting officers' assessments of supervisory justice, organizational commitment, and organizational identification were constructed. The responses to the questions inquiring about organizational commitment were reverse coded so that higher values suggest higher levels of organizational commitment.

Individual traits consist of sex, educational attainment, marital status, and military experience. Sex, marital status, and military experience are dummy variables with 1 representing officers who are male, married, and have previous experience of serving in the military, respectively. Education attainment is an ordinal variable (1 = high-school degree or equivalent, 6 = Master's Degree or higher).

Statistical analysis

Measures of central tendency and dispersion are generated to describe the variables of this study. Bivariate analyses (i.e. crosstabulation for categorical variables and independent sample *t*-test for continuous variables) are conducted to compare the Chinese and Taiwanese officers on all variables. Principal component analysis and reliability test are performed to evaluate the dimensionality and reliability of the additive scales. Finally, multivariate analyses (i.e. ordinary least squares regression) are performed to evaluate the effects of all

Scales and items	Whole Factor loading	α	China Factor loading	α	Taiwan Factor loading	α
Peer trustworthiness (1 = strongly disagree; 6 = strongly agree)		0.73		0.72		0.74
I feel that my colleagues listen to me with interest when I have something to tell them	0.89		0.88		0.89	
My colleagues are as helpful and comradely to me as they are to other colleagues	0.89		0.88		0.89	
Supervisor trustworthiness (1 = strongly disagree; 6 = strongly agree)		0.89		0.88		0.90
I have confidence in the good intentions of my supervisors	0.82		0.80		0.84	
I'm convinced that my supervisors feel sympathy for me	0.81		0.79		0.82	
My supervisors mean well	0.88		0.87		0.87	
My supervisors have good intentions	0.85		0.83		0.85	
My supervisors can be trusted to make the right decisions	0.82		0.81		0.83	
Citizen trustworthiness (1 = strongly disagree; 6 = strongly agree)		0.83		0.81		0.83
I trust that most citizens will behave correctly	0.89		0.88		0.90	
Most citizens have good intentions	0.89		0.87		0.91	
Citizens mostly can be trusted to do the right thing	0.79		0.79		0.79	
Most citizens mean well	0.66		0.65		0.63	
Occupational stress (1 = never; 6 = very often)		0.85		0.83		0.90
Does it happen that you feel stressed at work	0.81		0.79		0.85	
Does it happen that events at work cause you to feel frustrated	0.83		0.82		0.86	
Does it happen in your job that you are unable to attain your own goals	0.78		0.77		0.82	
Does it happen that you are nervous at work	0.77		0.73		0.84	
Does it happen that you feel tense at work	0.77		0.75		0.87	
Feeling unsafe (1 = never; 6 = very often)		0.68		0.67		0.69
Do situations occur in your job in which you feel that your safety is at risk	0.87		0.87		0.87	
In carrying out your job, are there moments when you are afraid of physical aggression	0.87		0.87		0.87	
Supervisory justice (1 = strongly disagree; 6 = strongly agree)		0.85		0.83		0.88
My supervisors show an interest in what their people have to say	0.66		0.59		0.75	
My supervisors are open to proposals and suggestions from their people	0.77		0.74		0.81	
When making policy choices, my supervisors sufficiently explain why these choices are being made	0.83		0.83		0.85	
When implementing changes, my supervisors sufficiently explain why these changes are necessary	0.85		0.84		0.86	
My supervisors give explanations for decisions they make that affect me	0.83		0.84		0.81	
Organizational commitment (1 = strongly disagree; 6 = strongly agree) (reverse coded)		0.82		0.81		0.84

(*continued*)

Table 1. Construction of key variables through factor analysis and reliability test (N = 1,253)

Scales and items	Whole Factor loading	α	China Factor loading	α	Taiwan Factor loading	α
Are there times when you consider leaving your department	0.82		0.83		0.81	
Does it happen that you cannot identify yourself with the targets that your department wishes to achieve	0.81		0.79		0.83	
Are there days when your commitment to the force is less than 100%	0.76		0.72		0.82	
Are there times when you feel that you would rather work for a different organization	0.83		0.84		0.83	
Organizational identification (1 = strongly disagree; 6 = strongly agree)		0.83		0.83		0.81
When someone praises my department, I also consider this a compliment for myself	0.77		0.78		0.73	
When news media report negatively on my department, I take this personally	0.83		0.84		0.81	
When I mention the my department, I usually say "we" instead of "they"	0.79		0.77		0.80	
When someone criticizes my department, I feel criticized as a person	0.86		0.86		0.85	

Table 1.

independent variables on the dependent variables. Separate sample regression analysis, along with *t*-tests for equality of regression coefficient, has also been conducted to attest whether the correlates of the dependent variables are the same or different between the Chinese and Taiwanese officers.

Results

Comparing levels of trust across countries

Mean comparisons displayed in Table 2 reveal that the Taiwanese and Chinese officers do not differ in their perceptions of peer support, but the Chinese respondents report significantly more positive assessments of both supervisors and citizens. Table 3 presents the results of OLS analyses on the relationships between officers' country affiliation and their trust in peers, supervisors, and citizens. Consistent with the bivariate analysis results, the multivariate analyses show that the two groups of officers are different in their perceptions of supervisor and citizen trustworthiness but not in their perceptions of coworkers. Compared to the Taiwanese officers, the Chinese officers hold significantly more positive views on the trustworthiness of supervisors and citizens. The predictor variables together explain officers' trust in supervisors the best ($R^2 = 0.64$), followed by views of coworkers ($R^2 = 0.21$) and trust in citizens ($R^2 = 0.16$).

Comparing the correlates of trust across countries

Table 4 reports the separate sample analysis results between the Chinese and Taiwanese officers. Regarding attitudes toward peers, perceptions of supervisory justice and organizational identification are significant predictors for both Chinese and Taiwanese respondents. Two variables, occupational stress and supervisory justice, exert significantly differential connections to perceptions of coworkers between the two groups according to the *t*-tests for equality of regression coefficients. While occupational stress is not related to trust

Variables	Whole (N = 1,253) Mean	SD	Range	China (N = 722) Mean	SD	Range	Taiwan (N = 531) Mean	SD	Range	t-value or χ^2
Dependent Variables										
Peer trustworthiness	8.53	1.84	2–12	8.65	1.84	2–12	8.36	1.83	2–12	2.71
Supervisor trustworthiness	18.86	5.01	5–30	19.62	4.93	5–30	17.82	4.93	5–30	6.39*
Citizen trustworthiness	16.86	3.58	4–24	17.55	3.34	4–24	15.91	3.69	4–24	8.19*
Independent Variables										
China	0.58	0.49	0–1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Occupational										
Occupational stress	18.41	5.24	5–30	18.25	5.31	5–30	18.63	5.13	5–30	−1.26
Feeling unsafe	6.03	2.25	2–12	5.95	2.30	2–12	6.14	2.18	2–12	−1.49
Year of police experience	10.91	8.09	1–36	10.56	6.23	1–28	11.38	10.08	1–36	−1.79
Working in field station	0.47	0.50	0–1	0.25	0.44	0–1	0.76	0.43	0–1	318.60***
Organizational										
Supervisory justice	18.45	4.56	5–30	18.81	4.49	5–30	17.96	4.61	5–30	3.29*
Organizational commitment	15.59	4.36	4–24	15.82	4.29	4–24	15.27	4.44	4–24	2.21*
Organizational identification	16.69	4.22	4–24	17.23	4.26	4–24	15.95	4.05	4–24	5.35*
Individual										
Male	0.88	0.32	0–1	0.83	0.38	0–1	0.94	0.23	0–1	37.00***
Educational attainment	3.60	1.07	1–6	4.02	0.95	1–6	3.03	0.95	1–6	18.30*
Married	0.63	0.48	0–1	0.77	0.42	0–1	0.44	0.49	0–1	141.01***
Military experience	0.24	0.42	0–1	0.12	0.32	0–1	0.40	0.49	0–1	135.72***

Note(s): *$p < 0.05$, ***$p < 0.001$

Table 2. Descriptive statistics for variables in analysis

in coworkers among the Chinese officers, it is negatively linked to Taiwanese officers' trust in coworkers. Those who report higher occupational stress hold lower trust in their coworkers. Meanwhile, although supervisory justice is significantly associated with attitudes toward coworkers in both countries, this relationship is stronger among the Chinese officers than the Taiwanese officers. The explanatory variables have a weak-to-moderate predictive power on attitudes toward peers ($R^2 = 0.20$ for China and $R^2 = 0.24$ for Taiwan).

For perceived supervisor trustworthiness, three variables are significant predictors for both Chinese and Taiwanese officers: supervisory justice, organizational commitment, and organizational identification. Officers who report higher levels of supervisory justice and organizational commitment and identification have a greater sense of supervisor trustworthiness. Four variables exert significantly different connections to trust in supervisors across the two samples based on the t-tests for equality of regression coefficients: occupational stress, year of experience, supervisory justice, and organizational identification. Whereas occupational stress is not connected to Chinese officers' trust in supervisors, it is correlated with lower trust in supervisors among Taiwanese officers.

Variables	Peers	Supervisors	Citizens
China	−0.01 (0.13)	0.05* (0.24)	0.18*** (0.26)
Occupational			
Occupational stress	−0.10*** (0.01)	−0.02 (0.02)	−0.01 (0.02)
Feeling unsafe	−0.07* (0.02)	−0.09*** (0.05)	−0.12*** (0.05)
Year of experience	−0.08* (0.01)	−0.02 (0.01)	0.03 (0.01)
Field station	0.02 (0.11)	−0.05* (0.21)	0.00 (0.23)
Organizational			
Supervisory justice	0.24*** (0.01)	0.62*** (0.02)	0.11*** (0.02)
Organizational commitment	0.10** (0.01)	0.11*** (0.03)	0.02 (0.03)
Organizational identification	0.14*** (0.01)	0.15*** (0.02)	0.18*** (0.02)
Individual			
Male	0.00 (0.15)	−0.01 (0.27)	−03 (0.29)
Educational attainment	0.04 (0.05)	0.03 (0.09)	−0.00 (0.10)
Married	0.03 (0.13)	0.01 (0.23)	0.05 (0.25)
Military experience	−0.02 (0.12)	0.03 (0.21)	0.03 (0.24)
R^2	0.21	0.64	0.16

Note(s): a. Entries are standardized coefficients from OLS regression with standard errors in parentheses
*$p < 0.05$, **$p < 0.01$, ***$p < 0.001$

Table 3.
Multiple regression of trust in important groups[a] ($N = 1,253$)

Meanwhile, year of experience is only related to Chinese officers' trust in supervisors, with seasoned officers reporting lower levels of trust. In addition, although supervisory justice shapes both Chinese and Taiwanese officers' perceptions of the supervisors positively, its association is stronger among the Taiwanese police. Lastly, while organizational identification is positively linked to trust in supervisors among both groups of officers, its relationship is stronger for the Chinese police. The explanatory model has a large power for explaining supervisory trustworthiness ($R^2 = 0.63$ for China and $R^2 = 0.66$ for Taiwan).

In terms of trust in citizens, perceived supervisory justice and reported organizational identification are again positively associated with officers' views similarly among the Chinese and Taiwanese respondents. Besides, feeling unsafe at work is negatively linked to Chinese and Taiwanese respondents' trust in citizens. Organizational commitment, however, exerts a differential relationship to citizen trustworthiness – it promotes Chinese officers' trust in citizens, yet not Taiwanese officers'. The predictors together only have a weak explanatory power on perceived citizen trustworthiness ($R^2 = 0.13$ for China and $R^2 = 0.12$ for Taiwan).

Discussion

This study, relying on a rare, combined sample of Chinese and Taiwanese police officers, tests the connections between individual, occupational, and organizational factors and police attitudes toward peers, supervisors, and citizens. Several findings deserve discussion in this section. First, the Chinese and Taiwanese officers do not differ in their trust in peers, but the Chinese officers hold significantly more positive views on the trustworthiness of supervisors and citizens compared to the Taiwanese officers. The Chinese officers may be socialized to trust their supervisors more obediently. In a high power-distance society, police supervisors have relatively unconstrained power, and officers have a stronger need, relative to their counterparts in a lower power-distance society, to maintain a paternalistic relationship with their supervisors. Further, frontline officers in China are less expected, or accustomed, to voice their concerns and opinions to supervisors or participate in the decision-making process within organizations (Scoggins and O'Brien, 2016), which can promote their absolute and

Variables	Peers		Supervisors		Citizens	
	China	Taiwan	China	Taiwan	China	Taiwan
Occupational						
Occupational stress	–0.04	–0.19***	0.01	–0.08*	0.05	–0.09
	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.04)
Feeling unsafe	–0.06	–0.06	–0.11***	–0.06	–0.10*	–0.14**
	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.06)	(0.07)	(0.06)	(0.09)
Year of experience	–0.01	–0.15*	–0.06*	0.02	0.01	0.04
	(0.01)	(01)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Field station	0.02	0.02	–0.03	–07*	–0.01	0.02
	(0.15)	(0.18)	(0.27)	(0.33)	(0.28)	(0.40)
Organizational						
Supervisory justice	0.29***	0.17***	0.58***	0.68***	0.12**	0.11*
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.04)
Organizational commitment	0.04	0.17***	0.12***	0.08*	0.10*	–0.09
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.04)
Organizational identification	0.17***	0.10*	0.19***	0.07*	0.19***	0.17***
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.04)
Individual						
Male	0.01	–0.01	–0.03	–0.01	–05	–0.00
	(0.17)	(0.31)	(0.31)	(0.56)	(0.32)	(0.68)
Educational attainment	0.01	0.07	0.02	0.04	0.01	0.01
	(0.07)	(0.08)	(0.13)	(0.14)	(0.13)	(0.17)
Married	0.01	0.09	–0.01	0.03	0.00	0.12
	(0.17)	(0.19)	(0.31)	(0.34)	(0.32)	(0.42)
Military experience	–0.01	–0.03	0.02	0.05	0.02	0.03
	(0.19)	(0.15)	(0.36)	(0.27)	(0.37)	(0.33)
R^2	0.20	0.24	0.63	0.66	0.13	0.12

Note(s): Entries are standardized coefficients from OLS regression with standard errors in parentheses
Highlights in grey denote significant differences between the coefficients calculated using the following equation: $t = b_1 - b_2 / \sqrt{SEb_1^2 + SEb_2^2}$
*$p < 0.05$, **$p < 0.01$, ***$p < 0.001$

Table 4.
Multiple regression of trust in important groups by country

voluntary deference to their supervisors. In Taiwan, while Confucian paternalism still exists to a certain degree in the supervisor-subordinate relationships (Fuller and Peterson, 1992), including within police organizations, the influence of Western equalitarian culture is quite pervasive. The Taiwanese officers have more work autonomy and are in a more equal position to their supervisors in terms of providing input to decision-making (Sun *et al.*, 2021), lessening the absolute reverence for authority among Taiwanese officers. Evidence from organizational research (e.g. Bu *et al.*, 2001) reveals that Taiwanese subordinates are much more inclined to resist supervisory authority than Chinese subordinates. Conscious paternalistic relationship with and voluntary deference to supervisors can lead to trustful attitudes toward supervisors in China. Ultimately, it is the high power of supervisors and the high tolerance of officers for supervisory power that may contribute to Chinese officers' higher levels of reported trust in their supervisors than Taiwanese officers.

Two possible explanations may account for the higher levels of trust in citizens among the Chinese officers. One is that trust is often reciprocal, and as Chinese citizens often report higher levels of trust in their police than do Taiwanese citizens, it does not come as a total surprise that the Chinese police also hold a higher level of trust in citizens than do the Taiwanese police. Such higher trust may come from the ideologies of mass-line policing and governmental propaganda that citizens should comply and cooperate with the police uncritically. Correspondingly, the police are inclined to believe that citizens will comply, do the right thing, and behave respectfully. In comparison, the Taiwanese citizens have lower trustful attitudes toward their police. This is expected from a political-cultural perspective because democratic governance and culture require and cultivate citizens who hold a certain amount of distrust toward authorities (Norris, 1999; Shi, 2001). The differential trust in citizens from the two groups, thus, may result from the public's differential trust in the police

which by itself is rooted in the differential levels of power distance in the two societies. The second possibility relates to the social desirability bias common in survey research. Such bias may especially be an issue in authoritarian China, where social and political control over individuals and public sharing of information is stringent. The Chinese officers may report more favorable attitudes toward citizens (and supervisors) because they consider such responses more desirable, reflecting the country's long-term policies and values.

Second, occupational experience and perceptions are significant correlates of police attitudes toward important groups. In the combined sample analysis, feeling unsafe at work is a negative correlate of all three outcomes, meaning that the more officers feel unsafe at work, the less favorable attitudes they hold toward peers, supervisors, and citizens. Relatedly, when officers report greater occupational stress, they also perceive more negative relationships with peers. These results echo decades-long police culture research showing that high levels of perceived dangerousness in the working environment and the related stress generate officer cynicism, and such cynicism can be directed toward all important groups of peers, supervisors, and citizens (Pauline, 2003).

Third, organizational factors are among the most influential predictors of officer attitudes, even after controlling for individual demographic and occupational characteristics. Outstandingly, supervisory justice demonstrates to be the strongest correlate of officer attitudes toward supervisors and peers, and the second strongest correlate of officer attitudes toward citizens. These results support a recent line of research that highlights the tremendous values of enhancing supervisory procedural justice in promoting positive organizational outcomes, such as officer commitment to the organization, job satisfaction, compliance with agency rules, and procedural justice on the street (Rosenbaum and McCarty, 2017; Wu *et al.*, 2017). Particularly, the results reconfirm previous evidence that supervisory justice is instrumental in increasing officer trust in supervisors (Wang *et al.*, 2020) and citizens (Peacock *et al.*, 2021), and bring new evidence that supervisory justice benefits officers' peer relationship as well. When supervisors are open to officers' opinions and input and treat officers with respect and openness, officers also report more caring, helpful, and supportive colleagues. This connection between supervisory and peer behaviors suggests that supervisors could have a modeling effect on officers when practicing procedural justice (e.g. voice and accountability) at work.

Two organizational-related psychological states are linked to officer attitudes as well. Both organizational commitment and identification positively shape officers' attitudes toward peers and supervisors, and organizational identification additionally influences officers' attitudes toward citizens. It is well established that organizational commitment and identification generate effectual work performance and contribute to organizational performance (Balfour and Wechsler, 1996; Lee *et al.*, 2015), this study illustrates that the benefits of these psychological states further extend to policing, creating not only constructive working relationships within police organizations but also productive attitudes toward individuals outside police departments, who are often otherwise considered as suspicious outgroups.

Fourth, the broader society that the police function in conditions the effects of some predictors on officer attitudes toward key groups. For example, occupational stress undermined Taiwanese officers' trust in supervisors and peers, but not Chinese officers', and the length of experience is negatively related to Chinese officers' trust in supervisors, but not Taiwanese officers'. The nation variable moderates the occupational and organizational relationships with police attitudes the most. Although the underlying processes and mechanisms accounting for these cross-country discrepancies are untestable due to the data incapability of this study, it is possible that the varying levels of supervisory power as well as levels of subordinate's tolerance for supervisory power in the two countries account for these differences. For example, perhaps the acceptance of supervisory power can insulate Chinese

officers from the negative influence of occupational stress on their trust in supervisors. These results, although preliminary, point to the value of contextualizing police culture within its larger social environment and examining how societal characteristics may moderate occupational and organizational effects on police attitudes.

Finally, demographics, including gender, educational attainment, marital status, and military experience, do not affect officers' attitudes toward important groups in China or Taiwan, rendering no support for the predisposition thesis. These results are similar to Chen's (2016) study of police role orientations in China, showing that demographic traits rarely influence officer perceptions of the roles of crime fighting and community service. They also echo Liu and associates' (2018) finding that demographic characteristics do not predict officers' attitudes toward citizens. Given that the relationships between demographics and officers' occupational attitudes may be conditioned on officers' working organization, especially for police departments with a strong culture (Ingram *et al.*, 2014), further research should explore potential interactional effects between individual and organizational groups of correlates of attitudes.

This study has several limitations. A major limitation revolves around our inability to test and explain exactly why findings from the two groups vary in their ways. Future research should include specific social, political, and cultural predictors. For preliminary efforts, these predictors may be measured at the individual level, such as respondents' levels of interpersonal trust, fear of political persecution, and deference to authorities (Wu *et al.*, 2016). To further this line of investigation, researchers should consider comparing many countries and assessing the effects of aggregate-level predictors, such as country-level democracy, economic inequality, political mobilization, the rule of law, collectivism/individualism, and policing policies and practices. Truly general theories of police culture cannot be established without systematically theorizing and appropriately testing the influences of the larger societal context (Shi, 2001).

Second, the cross-sectional nature of the data does not allow us to determine the temporal orders of the variables; hence we only determine correlation instead of causation. For example, although it is logically sound to argue that officers' perceptions of their working environment, such as perceived safety at work, affect their occupational outlooks, such as attitudes toward coworkers and citizens, it is also sensible to argue that officers' perceptions of coworkers and citizens influence their senses of safety on duty. In addition, there may be complicated relationships among the predictor variables that this study does not investigate. For example, supervisory justice may be positively linked to officers' organizational commitment, and feelings of unsafety may lead to greater occupational stress. Both organizational commitment and occupational stress then shape officer attitudes, suggesting mediating relationships. Future research should collect longitudinal data and utilize mediation and/or moderation analysis to untangle the potentially complex relationships between the study variables.

Finally, although some individual, occupational and organizational factors are included in this study, additional predictors should be explored in future research. For example, officers' rank, training, and work and life stressors, agency size, quality and stability of leadership, and policies and regulation, and area characteristics of modernization, economic conditions, and crime and disorder deserve future inquiries. Moreover, our analysis focuses only on three main dimensions of police culture. Future research should examine if the patterns revealed in this study also translate to additional dimensions of culture, such as the aspects of conservative-male, institutional pride, team, and diligence (Gutschmidt and Vera, 2020) and the elements of cynicism, solidarity, loyalty, alienation, autonomy, and authoritarianism (Demirkol and Nalla, 2020).

Despite these limitations, the findings of this study provide useful information for policymakers and police managers to cultivate positive officer orientations toward peers, supervisors, and the public that they serve. The strongest message taken from the results is the

vital role that supervisors play in shaping officers' occupational outlooks. Indeed, supervisory justice is consistently related to all three attitudinal outcomes, for both Chinese and Taiwanese police officers. Hardin's (1993) straightforward answer to why we trust others is that we learn to trust others. In policing, learning also matters. Our results indicate that supervisors' procedurally just treatment of officers promotes officers' trust not only in supervisors but also in peers and citizens. Police leaders, thus, should prioritize organizational justice including emphasizing the exemplary roles of front-line sergeants and lieutenants and providing effective training to supervisors of all levels on accountable, participative, and transformational and transactional leadership and management styles. Relevant departmental policies and job evaluation mechanisms should signal the values of organizational justice so that supervisors practice democratic principles of supervision (e.g. voice, neutrality, respect, and accountability) in an organization that traditionally features hierarchical control.

Organizational identification is another factor that consistently links to Chinese and Taiwanese officers' attitudes toward peers, supervisors, and citizens. Who we think we are affects how we think and what we do. A great deal of research in organizational studies and psychology has documented the unique roles that organizational identification plays in influencing individual attitudes and behaviors (Lee *et al.*, 2015). This study adds to the limited literature on organizational identification in the policing context by showing that officers who integrate their organizational membership with their senses of who they are display more desirable occupational outlooks. A critical time window for officers to develop organizational identification is during their entry to the occupation and transition from outsiders to insiders (Chevalier *et al.*, 2020). Therefore, during this socialization stage, among other factors such as training and peer communication and support, supervisors should be recognized as a key force of influence from whom recruits learn cues and rules continuously and intensively (Brunetto and Farr-Wharton, 2003; Wu *et al.*, 2017).

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