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# Management, bullying and the work outcomes of Australian paramilitary

Yvonne Brunetto

*Southern Cross University, yvonne.brunetto@scu.edu.au*

Matthew Xerri

*Griffith University*

Kate Shacklock

*Griffith University*

Ben Farr-Wharton

*University of Technology Sydney, ben.farr-wharton@scu.edu.au*

Rod Farr-Wharton

*University of the Sunshine Coast*

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# MANAGEMENT, BULLYING AND THE WORK OUTCOMES OF AUSTRALIAN PARA-MILITARY

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## INTRODUCTION

There is increasing public concern about the incidence of bullying in the paramilitary contexts. For example, see the work of Koeszegi, Zedlacher and Hudribusch (2014) examining the sexual abuse of women soldiers, and the work of Tuckey, Dollard, Hosking, and Winefield (2009), examining bullying in Australian police officers. Bullying is described as involving repetitive, hostile negative acts comprising multiple types of abusive behaviours involving a more powerful person(s) (the bully(ies)) against less powerful person(s) (the victim(s)) (Rayner & Cooper, 2006; Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf, & Cooper, 2011). Additionally, within the military/paramilitary, bullying also includes “hazing”, which is a type of intimidation that comprises “initiation rituals” that humiliate newcomers as a means of preparing them for the strongly hierarchical command power structure. In the case of soldiers, Østvik and Rudmin (2001) identified that young, somewhat socially-isolated soldiers are those most exposed to hazing until eventually the “victims” and “perpetrators” are united into “group solidarity” (Østvik & Rudmin, 2001, 19). Further, Evans (2013) identified that hazing was evident in the Australian Defence Force. In summary, bullying behaviour involves interpersonal violence and/or aggression over a period of time that causes negative outcomes for the victims and those around them.

The negative impacts of bullying for employees are well documented. For the victim, a higher incidence of bullying corresponds with a greater likelihood that he/she will experience high stress and reduced wellbeing (Hansen, Hogh, & Persson, 2011; Hansen, et al., 2006). Consequently, over time, there is an increased chance that he/she will experience stress-related

illnesses, in turn causing negative psychological and/or physical effects for the victim, the colleagues that witness the negative acts, and the victim's family and friends (Dick, & Rayner, 2012; Einarsen, et al., 2011; Rayner & Cooper, 2006; Salin et al, 2011). Furthermore, bullying negatively impacts upon organisational outcomes because it can result in lower productivity, decreased commitment and increased turnover intentions (Ayree, Chen, Sun, & Debrah, 2007; Dick, 2010; Hershcovis & Barling, 2009). Also, when victims of bullying leave, organisations typically have to replace them and cover the associated costs (Dick & Rayner, 2013). In summary, there appear to be no rational reasons for organisations to knowingly promote or condone bullying behaviour. However, the incidence of bullying continues, where police are the fourth highest occupation experiencing harassment/bullying in Australia (SafeWork Australia, 2012; Australian Defence Forces are not included in that report). Further, SafeWork Australia (2012) reported bullying in Australia as substantially higher than internationally, and stress/bullying costs employers \$AUD693 million per annum.

Three categories of bullying antecedents have been identified: individual factors (such as emotional intelligence), work group factors (such as the quality of workplace relationships between employees), and organisational factors (such as the quality of workplace relationships between supervisors and employees) (Salin & Hoel, 2011). We examined the impact of a third factor - perceived organisational support from management (POS) - upon bullying for two types of military/paramilitary employees – soldiers and police officers.

These two occupations share similar command rank structures, coupled with hierarchical management and both have a requirement of conformity. Such contexts create an environment that can enable institutional bullying if management do not provide adequate support for soldiers/police officers (Salin & Hoel, 2011). In particular, a strong predictor of bullying is when management relinquishes responsibility when faced with bullying claims (Aasland, Skogstad, Notelaers, Neilsen and Einarsen, 2010). This is because poor managers

rarely intervene and when they do, the negative consequences for the bully(ies) are minimal. In addition, within paramilitary/military organisations, some senior management may even promote initiation rituals, believing that “the end justifies the means” as long as the final outcome is a cohesive group (Salin, 2003). Further, abusive management thrives in a culture that permits institutional bullying (Tepper, 2007). **Importantly, support from management (or lack thereof) is linked to employee outcomes such as affective commitment and turnover intentions (Ayree, Chen, Sun, & Debrah, 2007), and notably, high POS provided a buffer against bullying (Cooper-Thomas, et al., 2013). That is, we know management support can play a key role in employee work outcomes. Hence, the support provided by management for soldiers/police officers is one parameter affecting soldiers’ and police officers’ perceptions of bullying. Other factors, such as individual and work group factors, may be also important but are not the focus of this study.**

Social Exchange Theory (SET) is often used as a lens for examining how workplace relationships impact work outcomes. The theory argues that when management provides adequate resources to meet demands and recognises/rewards employees for their effort, then over time, an intangible resource emerges from employees’ socio-emotional needs that results in them “giving back” greater service and loyalty to the organisation (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). However, if employees are ill-equipped with resources, information and support to undertake their work tasks, the outcome is likely to be lower levels of wellbeing, in turn reducing organisational commitment and increasing turnover intentions (Brunetto, et al., 2012; 2014). **Past research has identified supervisor/manager support as a precursor of POS, (Dawley, Houghton & Bucklew, 2010) and using SET, under ideal conditions, high POS would ensure ‘reciprocal’ environments where employees are provided with sufficient resources to meet demands and adequately recognised and rewarded for their efforts.** It is therefore important to compare, for soldiers and police officers, how POS from management, impacts bullying and

work outcomes. Therefore, we undertook such a study in Australia. **While there is research on bullying, the comparative case for police officers and soldiers in Australia remains under-researched.** The paper also provides new information about the comparative role of management within similar para-military/military contexts. The research questions are:

*RQ1: For police officers and soldiers, what is the impact of POS upon bullying and certain work outcomes (wellbeing, affective commitment and turnover intentions)?*

*RQ2: For police officers and soldiers, what are the similarities and differences in the impact of POS upon bullying and certain work outcomes (wellbeing, affective commitment and turnover intentions)?*

The contribution of the research is that it provides new information about the impact of management support upon both soldiers' and police officers' work outcomes.

## **BACKGROUND**

### **Social Exchange Theory (SET)**

There is increasing agreement across academics that SET explains much of the behaviour and outcomes of employees and consequently it is argued to be one of the most important theoretical lenses used by researchers to explain employees' workplace outcomes (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). The theory is based on mutual reciprocity, arguing that the treatment given to employees by management sets up a pattern that obliges employees to reciprocate similarly towards management over time, in turn increasing organisational effectiveness (Blau, 1964). In practice, this means that when trust-building positive interactions occur between employees and management, then employees respond by giving more back to the organisation in the form of increased commitment and performance, creating a "self-reinforcing cycle" (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005, p. 876). In contrast, if management is destructive, abusive or simply incompetent, this is likely to negatively impact on employees' wellbeing, in time adversely

affecting how committed employees are to the organisation and potentially increasing turnover intentions. We therefore used this theoretical lens (SET) to examine, for soldiers and police officers, the impact of POS upon bullying, wellbeing, affective commitment and turnover intentions.

### **Perceived Organisational Support**

POS emerged from Organisational Support Theory (OST) (Eisenberger, Huntington & Sowa, 1986) and assumes that under ideal conditions, the way organisations treat employees builds a belief that it cares about them, which in turn fosters employees' perceptions of wellbeing (Eisenberger, Aselage, Sucharski & Jones, 2004). Eisenberger et al. (1986, p. 501) argued that POS is a reflection of "the extent to which employees believe that their organisation values their contribution and cares about their well-being". **The assumptions underlying the POS concept is that if the organisation treats employees well (access to resources, respect), then employees respond by returning increased effort to the organisation.** Employees' perceptions of POS increase with positive work interactions, good work assignments, effective work conditions and frequent and high-quality organisational rewards (Eisenberger, et al., 2004). Hence, soldiers and police officers form perceptions of management based on these factors, plus other factors specifically related to public sector management practices, such as the adequacy of the resources they are given to undertake their tasks, the quality of training provided to equip them with undertaking their tasks, and the quality of support during and after undertaking tasks (Brunetto et al, 2014). In the para-military and military contexts, under-resourcing is a common theme, meaning that there is constantly an expectation that employees will have to do more with less (Brunetto, et al., 2012; 2014;Hogue, et al., 2004).

Senior management makes decisions about strategic goals and budgets, which determine resources and workloads for each department. Hence, police and soldiers receive

non-verbal messages from management about their value and worth based on workloads, resources, expectations and support, and especially any acceptance/tolerance of bullying. Thus, management provides the enabling structures and processes (the structure, reward systems and job design) to allow bullying (Salin & Hoel, 2011). In particular, it is management that decides whether bullying will be encouraged or thwarted by ensuring the quality of consequences for the bully(ies) (Aasland, et al., 2010; Parzefall & Salin, 2010).

Previous research on police officers found that support from management and colleagues was associated with lower bullying and **perceptions that job support exceeds job demands** (Tuckey, Dollard, Hosking, & Winefield, 2009). Moreover, Parzefall and Salin (2010) found that POS works as a buffer for victims of bullying, helping them to cope. Also, an employee's perception of POS is associated with high affective commitment because it "feeds on" socio-emotional needs by creating a belief that the employee should care about the organisation (Eisenberger, et al., 2004). If however, soldiers and police officers have low POS because the work environment is negative or unsafe, it is likely that psychological wellbeing and affective commitment will be similarly low (Brunetto, et al., 2014). **We expect the same relationships for soldiers and police officers in this study.**

## **Bullying**

**There is no single agreed definition of bullying, and research has identified a variety of descriptions and meanings. For example,** bullying can mean *covert indirect bullying* (such as not interacting with a person even when it is a requirement of the job), *sabotage bullying* (in the public sector, this can involve limiting vital resources and/or information required to complete work tasks), and *direct bullying* (such as name calling, hazing or physical assaults) (Crothers et al. 2009). Dick (2010) adds a further category aimed at '*bullying directed at task completion*' (work harassment). Research suggests that police officers operate in hierarchical

command structures that are resource-deficit, have high work performance expectations, and an acceptance of sanctioned organisational oppressive procedures/processes (Vickers & Kouzmin, 2001). Such work contexts are considered “ripe” for providing the enabling structures and processes to permit bullying (Hoque et al., 2004; Salin, 2003). Similarly, Ostvik and Rudmin (2001, p. 19) found a high incidence of bullying in the barracks and that hazing was commonly used “as a means of socializing newcomers and enhancing collective morale”. Further, Evans (2013) argued that the Australian Defence Force (ADF) has an informal culture that uses hazing to produce group solidarity, to communicate domination, and to handpick the committed soldiers. Additionally, in 2013, an Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC) television program reported that HMAS Ballarat sailors (also part of ADF) were suspended/removed while claims of hazing sexual assault were investigated. Further, Tuckey, et al. (2009) found that the incidence of bullying of police officers was highest when job control and support resources were lowest. Hence, without strong management support actively providing support to thwart bullying, a para-military/military environment is conducive to bullying (Parzefall & Salin, 2010).

Bullying is also associated with decreased commitment and increased turnover intentions (Ayree, et al., 2007; Dick, 2010; Hershcovis & Barling, 2009). Additionally, Cooper-Thomas, et al. (2013) found that high POS provided a buffer against bullying, and when the organisation had initiatives in place to actively thwart bullying, it provided a barrier for healthcare workers from the negative effects of bullying on wellbeing and organisational commitment. We therefore expect to replicate the same relationships for soldiers and police.

### **Psychological Wellbeing**

Psychological wellbeing captures how employees feel about the organisational processes and practices in the workplace (Grant, Christianson & Price, 2007). However, Diener (2000)



differentiates it from job satisfaction, arguing that wellbeing captures more than satisfaction with the job, by including both the tangible and intangible aspects of the work context. The antecedents of psychological capital include a range of individual factors such as personality and psychological capital (see Warr, 2003; Luthans, et al., 2006) and organisational factors such as the quality of management and empowerment (see Brunetto et al., 2011; 2014).

Within organisations, Brunetto, et al. (2011; 2014) argued that when the conditions are positive in a workplace, employees build a psycho-emotive resource that enhances their enthusiasm to undertake work tasks because they feel comfortable in the workplace. That is why high wellbeing is associated with other desirable employee outcomes such as high affective commitment and engagement (Brunetto, et al., 2011; 2014; Illies et al, 2010). Hence, we expect to find that high psychological wellbeing is associated with high affective commitment for police and soldiers. In contrast, the factors that compromise an employee's wellbeing include aggression and bullying in the workplace, high workloads and poor management (Cooper-Thomas, et al, 2013; Scott-Ladd, Travaglione, Perryer & Pick, 2010). The value of psychological wellbeing is not just in capturing employees' mental states associated with their jobs, but also because it provides a platform from which numerous positive or negative work outcomes develop. Wellbeing acts like a barometer of potential employee outcomes likely to impact organisational effectiveness and **therefore, for those managing such employees, wellbeing is a key indicator of psychological health** in potentially emotionally-difficult occupations – such as police, soldiers or nurses (Brunetto, et al., 2011; 2014). We consequently expect an inverse relationship between bullying and psychological wellbeing for soldiers and police officers.

### **Affective Commitment and Turnover Intentions**

Affective commitment refers to employees' perceptions of loyalty to the organisation (Meyer and Allen, 1990). Importantly, high affective commitment is associated with low turnover intentions (Meyer & Allen, 1997; Meyer et al, 2002; Hartmann & Bambaca, 2000). However, while there has been some research about the antecedents of the affective commitment of police officers, Dick, (2011) argues for more research because he found that management support was the key predictor in the case of English police officers and Noblet et al. (2009) found that demand and control predicted the affective commitment of Australian police officers. Further, POS and relationships with management predict affective commitment for police officers (Brunetto et al, 2011; 2014; Dick, 2011). We examine whether POS, bullying and psychological wellbeing are antecedents of affective commitment for both soldiers and police officers.

Additionally, while affective commitment is an antecedent of turnover intentions for police officers (Brunetto, et al., 2012; 2014; Lynch & Tuckey,2008), the case for soldiers is under-researched. Djurkovic, et al. (2008) identified that POS was inversely related to bullying and also moderated the relationship between bullying and intentions to leave. We expect the same outcomes for our samples. That is, we expect high POS, and high wellbeing will be associated with high affective commitment, and high levels of bullying will be associated with low affective commitment and high turnover intentions.

### **The similarities and differences between soldiers and police officers**

Soldiers and police officers are both examples of emotional labour occupations (Hochschild, 1983), which means they are expected to regulate their feelings and expressions, irrespective of the encounter they are having (such as attending a fatal accident or engaging in battle). Both occupations undertake everyday operational activities that are stressful and sometimes horrific; however they are expected to display behaviours different from those they are feeling, which

make the experience even more stressful (Bakker & Heuven, 2006). **Instead, both occupations must treat the situation according to their occupational rules.**

**Another example of similarities between police officers and soldiers is that they are both public sector occupations that have been subject to significant changes in work practices.**

The biggest changes for public sector employees have been the increased discretionary power of managers and the reducing of per capita funding for social services, leading to each public sector actor being expected to “do more with less” because of increased accountability and less resources (Brunetto, et al., 2011; 2012; 2014). Therefore, we consider that soldiers and police officers will work in **somewhat** similar work contexts. Hence, we expect they will perceive similar levels of management support, bullying, psychological wellbeing, affective commitment and turnover intentions.

The following hypotheses emerge from our review of the literature for soldiers and police officers in Australia.

### **Hypotheses**

H1: Affective commitment is inversely related to turnover intentions

H2: Bullying is positively related to turnover intentions

H3: Psychological wellbeing is positively related to affective commitment

H4: Bullying is inversely related to affective commitment

H5: POS is inversely related to affective commitment

H6: Bullying is inversely related to psychological wellbeing

H7: POS is positively related to wellbeing

H8: POS is inversely related to bullying

H9: Bullying mediates the relationship between POS and affective commitment

H10: Affective commitment mediates the relationship between bullying and turnover

H11: Police and soldiers report similar support from management, bullying, psychological wellbeing, affective commitment and turnover intentions.

## METHODS

### Samples

The samples included army personnel and police officers stationed in Queensland, Australia to whom self-report surveys were distributed. Useable surveys were received from 99 army personnel (34% response rate) and 193 police officers (response rate of 26%). Army research participants were stationed at an Army barracks in Queensland, Australia. Of the 99 army personnel, 93 (93.9%) were male, six (6%) were female, 90 were aged less than 31 years (90.9%), eight (8%) were 32 to 46 years, and one (1%) was over 46 years. Over a period of four months, police officers attending a range of training courses at their training venue were surveyed. Of the 193 police officers, 132 (68.4%) were male, 61 (31.6%) were female, 33 (17.1%) were aged less than 31 years, 130 (67.4%) were 32 to 46, and 30 (15.5%) were over 46 years.

### Measures

Previously validated, reflective scales were used in this study, and were measured on a six-point Likert-type scale, ranging from '1'=strongly disagree to '6'=strongly agree, where 3 = somewhat disagree and 4 = somewhat agree. POS was developed by Eisenberger, Cummings, Armeli, and Lynch (1997). A sample item was 'My organisation really cares about my wellbeing'. Internal consistency was high with a composite reliability (CR) of 0.87, and an average variance extracted (AVE) of 0.54. Bullying and harassment was captured using a 14-item scale from Dick (2008) examining task attack, personal attack and intimidation. One item was, 'At work, I receive persistent criticism'. The CR for bullying was 0.92 and AVE equalled 0.86. Psychological wellbeing was measured using a four-item scale developed by Brunetto,

Farr-Wharton, and Shacklock (2011); CR was 0.82 and AVE equalled 0.55. A sample item is ‘Overall, I am reasonably happy with my work life’. Affective Commitment was measured using six-items from Allen and Meyer (1990); we measured police officers and army personnel commitment to their organisations. One item was, ‘I feel a strong sense of belonging to my organisation’. CR for affective commitment was 0.83 and AVE equalled 0.56. Turnover Intention was measured using a three-item scale adopted from Meyer, Allen and Smith (1993) to operationalize turnover intention. One example item was, ‘I frequently think about leaving my current employer’. CR for turnover intention was 0.88 and AVE equalled 0.71. Controls variables include a number of factors that may influence employees’ turnover intentions; including age (Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, & Topolnytsky, 2002) and the sample (e.g. Army or Police).

### **Data analysis and model estimation**

Data analysis used the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) v.22 and Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS) v.22 software. To operationalize the structural equation model, latent variable SEM was undertaken and the two step approach by Anderson and Gerbing (1988) was applied. To test for mediation, bootstrapping was used (MacKinnon, Lockwood, Hoffman, West, & Sheets, 2002; MacKinnon, Lockwood, & Williams, 2004). Model fit was estimated using the following rules: normed chi-square between 1 and 3, CFI and TLI between  $\geq .90$  for an adequate fit and  $\geq .95$  for a superior fit (Byrne, 2010), and RMSEA below .08 for an adequate fit and below .05 for a good fit (Browne & Cudeck, 1993). Skewness and kurtosis for each construct fell below 1.96, and Mardia’s (1970, 1974) normalized estimate of multivariate kurtosis was 4.51, which is below the cut-off value of 5 (Bentler, 2005).

The majority of standardized factor loadings exceeded 0.7. Convergent validity is supported with AVEs and composite reliabilities greater than 0.5 and 0.7 respectively (Kline,

2011). There is also support for discriminant validity (see Table 1) with the square root of the AVE for each construct being greater than any other correlation (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010).

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Insert Table 1 about here

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Results from a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) depict few significant differences between police and army personnel (see Table 2). The data are predominantly considered normally distributed and homogeneity of variance was not violated. Sample specific differences were found between the two samples for POS. Considering the difference for one construct, there is support for the combination of the police and army samples. However, **due to the sample specific differences in perceptions of POS, the two samples (police and army) have been controlled for in the structural model.**

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Insert Table 2 about here

### **Factor Analysis**

An exploratory factor analysis with a maximum likelihood and promax rotation was undertaken (see Table 3) using each construct proposed ( $\chi^2/df = 2.00$ ). Correlations mostly exceeded 0.3, so the data were suitable for factoring. Kaiser-Meyer Olkin of sampling adequacy was 0.901, and Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant ( $\chi^2 = 4890.542, p < .001, df = 351$ ). The task attack (work harassment) items and two-items from personal attack did not load adequately onto the bullying and harassment scale. **One possible reason for the task attack item loading results may be the nature of the questions. Task attack questions refer to bullying from the organisation directed at employees generally, which Dick (2010) refers to as 'bullying directed**

at task completion'. However, personal attack and intimidation refer to bullying that is directed at specific employees. In our study, there appears to be a distinction between bullying directed at general employee task completion (e.g., My organisation sets unrealistic work targets) and bullying directed at specific employees (e.g., I am intimidated at work regularly). Consequently, work harassment was removed and we conceptualized the remaining items as bullying (a higher order factor including personal attack and intimidation).

In addition, two affective commitment items and two POS items were removed because they failed to load onto their respective constructs. The two POS items that failed to load (see Table 3) were negatively worded. While negatively worded questions are commonly included to control for respondent bias (Nunnally, Bernstein, & Berge, 1967), Roszkowski and Soven (2010) recommend against including negative questions in a positively stated questionnaire, arguing that the negative questions lead to ambiguity of results instead of controlling for bias. Given that other negatively worded questions have loaded adequately onto their respective construct (see Table 3), we argue that the negatively worded questions in the POS scale may have confused the respondents (Johnson, Bristow, & Schneider, 2010), and are not the result of respondent bias.

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Insert Table 3 about here  
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The hypothesized measurement model provided a reasonably good fit to the data (see Table 4) (CMIN/DF = 1.941, RMSEA = 0.057, CFI = 0.936 and TLI = 0.928). Considering the acceptable model fit, no modifications were made in the CFA. A common latent factor was added to the measurement model to test for common method variance. The common latent factor model provides an adequate fit to the data, the common variance was 2.89 percent, which indicates that common method variance is of little concern in this study. Three structural models were tested, a confirmatory factor analysis and chi-square difference test provide

support that model 3 (see Table 4) provides a better model fit and is statistically distinct from models 1 ( $\Delta\chi^2 = 35.882$ ,  $\Delta df = 1$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and 2 ( $\Delta\chi^2 = 26.784$ ,  $\Delta df = 1$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

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Insert Table 4 about here  
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### Testing the hypotheses

SEM analyses depicted that none of the control variables were significantly related to turnover intentions, so the controls were removed from **Figure 1**. The results (see Figure 1) depict that bullying and affective commitment predicted 52.9 percent of the variance of turnover intentions; while bullying, POS and psychological wellbeing predicted 68.1 percent of the variance of affective commitment. Also, bullying and POS predicted 28.4 percent of the variance of wellbeing, while POS predicted 5.8 percent of the variance of bullying.

There was support for all the hypotheses, except 4 and 10. Hypothesis 1 was supported with affective commitment being negatively related to turnover intentions ( $\beta = -.612$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Hypothesis 2 was supported with bullying being positively related to turnover intentions ( $\beta = .276$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Hypotheses 3 and 5 were supported because psychological wellbeing ( $\beta = .636$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and POS ( $\beta = .325$ ,  $p < .001$ ) had significant positive effects on affective commitment. However, there was no support for hypothesis 4, with bullying not significantly influencing affective commitment. There was support for hypotheses 6 and 7 in that bullying was negatively related ( $\beta = -.227$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and POS was positively related ( $\beta = .431$ ,  $p < .001$ ) to psychological wellbeing. Hypothesis 8 was supported, with POS having a significant negative effect on bullying ( $\beta = -.240$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

Before the model could be tested, and to address RQ2, it was important to establish whether there were differences between police officers and soldiers that would prevent combining the data. **The only significant difference between them was POS, providing some support for combining the two samples. However, because of the different perceptions of POS,**



we controlled for the sample-specific differences using a dummy control variable. The control variable did not significantly influence any exogenous variables.

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Insert Figure 1 about here  
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The mediation results are presented in Table 5. There was support for hypothesis 9 in that bullying partially mediated the influence of POS onto affective commitment, with an indirect effect of  $\beta = .302$ ,  $p < .01$ . This mediation result portrays that para-military personnel are emotionally attached to their organisations regardless of bullying in the workplace, and their POS significantly works towards reducing bullying and fostering emotional attachments to their organisations. Hypothesis 10 was not supported because affective commitment did not mediate the relationship between bullying and turnover intentions.

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Insert Table 5 about here  
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## DISCUSSION

This paper had two aims. The first aim was to examine the impact, for soldiers and police officers, of POS from management upon bullying and work outcomes of wellbeing, affective commitment and turnover intentions. Using SEM, Table 4 (model 3) shows the measurement model provides a good fit for the data. The results show that organisational support from management (or lack of it) explained 6 percent of bullying (defined by intimidation and personal attacks), and together: (a) POS and bullying explained almost a third (28%) of psychological wellbeing, (b) POS, bullying and psychological wellbeing explained two-thirds (68%) of organisational commitment, and (c) bullying and affective commitment explained over half (52.9%) of turnover intentions (see Figure 1). Additionally, most hypotheses were supported. In relation to the potential effect of mediation, bullying was found to mediate the

relationship between POS and affective commitment. Also, while increased bullying resulted in increased turnover intentions, bullying had a minimal effect on affective commitment. **One explanation could be the 'love' of policing as a job/vocation, over and above any day-to-day treatment. Further research is needed to examine this latter possibility.** Also, affective commitment did not appear to significantly reduce the impact of bullying upon turnover intentions.

Police officers and soldiers were selected for examination because they are both examples of emotional labour occupations and operate in similar command rank structures known for their hierarchical management structure and expectations of conformity -factors that Salin (2003) and Salin and Hoel (2011) argued make it ideal for enabling institutional bullying if management do not provide adequate support for employees. **The means for POS indicate that, on average, police officers *somewhat disagreed* they had support from management, confirming Tuckey, et al. (2009) concerning police officers and arguably providing ideal conditions for promoting bullying (Aasland, et al., 2010). The soldiers reported, on average, neither good nor bad management support. Nevertheless, both groups experienced low levels of bullying, according to the means for bullying. That is, systemic bullying was not reported by either the soldiers or police officers, even though conditions were arguably 'ripe' for such behaviour.** Hence, while the path from POS to bullying is significant, there is no evidence that management has permitted systemic bullying. **Within the broad parameter of bullying, the findings indicate that while some police and soldiers may experience some elements of bullying, it is not widespread,** suggesting that there is not a critical number of senior management condoning initiation rituals, as suggested by Salin (2003). **However, it seems there could be poor management support in place, especially of police officers.**

The second aim was to examine similarities and differences for police officers and soldiers. **No significant differences between soldiers and police officers were found for**

bullying, psychological wellbeing, affective commitment or turnover intentions. The only significant difference was in relation to POS where soldiers reported higher POS than police officers. However, neither cohort had high perceptions of support from management. Using SET, the findings suggest that soldiers and police officers perceived that management could provide more support/resources for them to do their job, which is an indicator that both the military and para-military should find ways of improving management practices, confirming research about Australian police officers (Brunetto, et al., 2011; 2014).

Finally, the finding that bullying mediated the relationship between POS and organisational commitment is important, because it means that soldiers and police officers are emotionally-attached to their organisations, regardless of bullying in the workplace. That is, their POS significantly works towards reducing bullying and fostering emotional attachments to their organisations.

### **Limitations**

Common methods bias can be a problem for studies using survey data; however, a common latent factor was added to the measurement model to test for common method variance. As mentioned, the common latent factor model provided an adequate fit to the data and the common variance was 2.89 per cent, which indicates that common method variance is of little concern in this study. However, further replications of this study of para-military and military personnel in different countries are required. Also, the relatively low 26% response rate for police officers can give rise to sampling bias if nonresponse is unequal among the participants regarding outcomes measured. Further, the relatively younger age (and therefore possibly more junior hierarchical status) of the army sample may have biased the results, and limits results generalisability. Another limitation is the development of the bullying scale using only personal attack and intimidation, which should be taken into consideration when interpreting the

findings. That is, bullying directed at task completion was not examined in this study. Further (possibly qualitative) research is needed to confirm (or not) our findings and examine which bullying behaviours are used, and whether they are perceived as a form of bullying or a form of discipline (or other possibilities) in these occupational contexts.

## **Implications**

The findings raise questions about the poor perceptions of management quality for para-military and military employees. Adequate training for public sector managers is important; however, **in the case of emotional labour occupations**, the issue is even more important because of the nature of their stressful operational activities. Without adequate support for these types of employees, it is likely that stress-related claims will rise. Soldiers and police officers already fit within a category identified as being among the highest workers compensation claims in Australia (SafeWork Australia, 2012). **If management practices, especially for police officers, ensure adequate support is provided for employees to do their jobs effectively, then based on our findings, possible consequences include higher organisational commitment and wellbeing, and lower turnover intentions, with potential flow-on effects of reduced compensation claims.** It is management's role to provide appropriate training, rewards and support for employees' wellbeing so as to build a trusting culture that motivates employees to be committed to their organisation. It is the organisation's responsibility to ensure that managers are adequately trained and performance managed so that they can deliver effective management to soldiers and police officers. Managers can be effective only when they have the required management competencies and skills. It is each organisation's responsibility to ensure they have those competencies and skills and they are appropriately appraised and performance-managed to achieve the desired organisational goals.



**Table 1: Correlation matrix**

	Mean <sup>#</sup>	S.D.	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Turnover intention	2.90	1.35	(.84)					
2. Affective commitment	3.87	1.09	-.553**	(.75)				
3. Wellbeing	4.26	.89	-.557**	.588**	(.74)			
4. Bullying	2.09	.81	.378**	-.194**	-.231**	(.92)		
5. Perceived Organisational Support	3.20	1.03	-.389**	.551**	.412**	-.243**	(.74)	
6. Age	-	-	-.106	-.078	.116	-.039	-.095	
7. Sample (army/police)	-	-	-.091	-.113	.070	.013	-.202**	.642**

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

N=292. Note: Square root of AVE in parentheses

<sup>#</sup>Scale: 1=strongly disagree, to 6=strongly agree

**Table 2: Results of ANOVA**

	Organisation type	Mean	Standard deviation	Homogeneity of variances		F	Sig.
				Levene statistic	Sig.		
Perceived Organisational Support	Army	3.49	.977	.615	.433	12.034	.001
	Police	3.06	1.032				
Wellbeing	Army	4.17	.951	1.335	.249	1.405	.237
	Police	4.30	.849				
Bullying	Army	2.08	.745	.580	.447	.051	.821
	Police	2.10	.851				
Affective commitment	Army	4.04	1.008	3.711	.056	3.677	.056
	Police	3.78	1.130				
Turnover intention	Army	3.08	1.303	.806	.370	2.361	.126
	Police	2.82	1.371				

**Table 3: Exploratory factor analysis**

		1	2	3	4	5
POS1	My organisation cares about my opinion		.839			
POS2	My organisation really cares about my well-being		.850			
POS3	My organisation strongly considers my goals and values		.918			
POS4	Help is available from my organisation when I have a problem		.570			
POS5	My organisation would forgive an honest mistake on my part		.551			
POS6	If given an opportunity, my organisation would take advantage of me		-			
POS7	My organisation shows very little concern for me		-			
POS8	My organisation is willing to help me if I need a special favour		.484			
BHB1	My organisation sets unrealistic work targets	-				
BHB2	My organisation engages in excessive work monitoring	-				
BHB3	I am given meaningless tasks at work	-				
BHB4	At work, I am ignored by others	-				
BHB5	At work, I receive persistent criticism	.647				
BHB6	At work, I am cut off from others	.632				
BHB7	At work, I get a lot of belittling remarks	.784				
BHB8	At work, there are many instances when information is withheld	-				
BHB9	I receive verbal abuse or threats at work regularly	.803				
BHB10	I am intimidated at work regularly	.785				
BHB11	I am shouted at regularly at work	.731				
BHB12	I am publicly humiliated at work regularly	.884				
BHB13	I receive physical threats at work regularly	.760				
BHB14	There are malicious rumours about me at work	.643				
PWB1	Overall, I am reasonably happy with my work life			.656		
PWB2	Overall, I fulfil an important purpose in my work life			.775		
PWB3	Most days I feel a sense of accomplishment in what I do at work			.848		
PWB4	Overall, I get enough time to reflect on what I do in the workplace			.423		
AC1	I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career in the Army/Police force				-	
AC2	The Army/Police force has a great deal of personal meaning for me				.503	
AC3	I enjoy discussing the Army/Police force with people outside it				.399	
AC4	I do not feel emotionally attached to this organisation				-	
AC5	I feel a strong sense of belonging to the Army/Police force				.907	
AC6	I feel strong ties with this workplace				.754	
ITT1	I frequently think about leaving the Army/Police force					.841
ITT2	It is likely that I would search for a job outside the Army/Police force					.876
ITT3	It is likely that I will actually leave the Army within the next year/Police force					.661

Extraction Method: Maximum Likelihood. Rotation; Method: Promax with Kaiser Normalisation.

a. Rotation converged in 5 iterations.

**Table 4: Confirmatory factor analysis - examining goodness-of-fit**

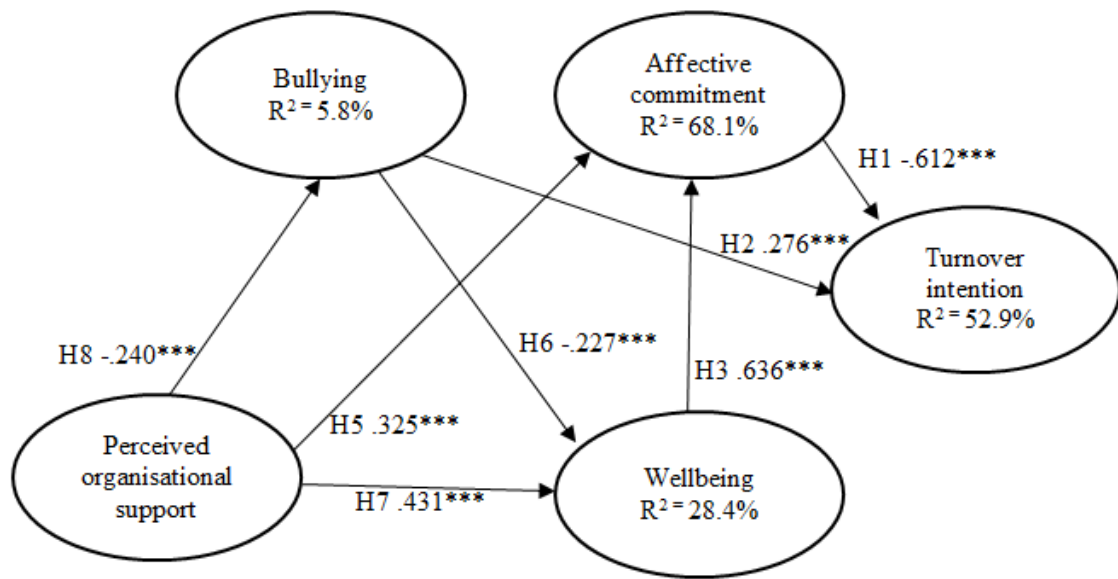
	<b>CMIN/DF</b>	<b>CFI</b>	<b>TLI</b>	<b>RMSEA</b>
Hypothesized measurement model	1.94	.936	.928	.057
Adds common latent factor to measurement model*	1.95	.936	.927	.058
Model 1: partial mediation between POS and affective commitment	2.11	.924	.914	.062
Model 2: partial mediation between bullying and turnover	2.08	.926	.917	.062
Model 3: full mediation model	1.99	.932	.923	.059

\* Common variance = 2.89%

**Table 5: Testing mediation**

<b>Relationship</b>	<b>Direct effect without mediator</b>	<b>Direct effect with mediator</b>	<b>Indirect effects</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
H9: Bullying mediates POS to affective commitment	.626 p < .001	.395 p < .001	.302 p < .01	Partial mediation
H10: affective commitment mediates bullying to turnover	.455 p < .001	.257 p < .001	P > .05	No mediation





\*\*\*  $p < .001$

**Figure 1. Significant results: standardised parameter estimates**

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