PERFORMANCE UNDER FIRE: A STUDY OF RHETORICAL
FIREFIGHTER IDENTITIES

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DEDICATION

For my family, who were patient and supportive through this endeavor. For my mom, who

is my biggest cheerleader, and my dad, who would have been so proud to see me graduate.

For my children, who always gave me lots of hugs and words of encouragement. And

especially for my husband—my partner and my best friend—who provided endless

support. I could not have completed this without him.

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ABSTRACT

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Firefighters, through the repetitive performance of their shared job, construct a collective rhetorical identity. Fire departments, like many organizations, often adopt written core values in an aim to guide employee behavior and represent the organization's beliefs, both internally and externally. From my personal experience working in a fire department that recently adopted new core values, I developed an interest in how other fire departments adopt such values and if those values contribute to the rhetorical identities of the firefighters. To investigate this question, I conducted a qualitative discourse analysis of a five-year sample of professional papers written by executive fire officers of the National Fire Academy. The purpose of this study is to examine fire department core values as rhetorical symbols of organizational rhetoric and identification strategies of constitutive rhetoric that are intended to influence the firefighter identity. In this study, I coin the phrase "entrenched group identity," which I define as a constitutive identity that has an ingrained culture inherent to the profession, and exposure to traumatic events, danger, and high levels of stress influence how this group works and acts together. I assert that firefighters have an entrenched group identity, which I analyze using a theoretical framework drawn from Kenneth Burke, Chaïm Perelman, Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca, and Judith Butler. From the study, I found that while core values assigned by the organization do not have a constitutive effect on the firefighter identity, the unspoken value

of masculinity is historically and rhetorically embedded into the job and the identity of the

firefighter.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

For 19 years, I have worked for a fire department, but I am not a firefighter. I have

learned the duties and language of firefighters. I have helped firefighters don their

protective gear in educational settings, while explaining to children the importance of not

hiding from a firefighter in the event of a fire. I have worked next to firefighters on

emergency scenes of structure fires, car fires, grass fires, and hazardous materials spills. I

have participated in disaster drills and active shooter scenarios alongside dozens of

firefighters. I supervised eight firefighters and worked hard to earn their trust and respect.

I have gained an identity associated with the fire department, but I still feel like an outsider

amongst firefighters. Firefighters have a very strong identity because they work in an

entrenched group. I define an entrenched group identity as a constitutive identity that has

an ingrained culture inherent to the profession, and exposure to traumatic events, danger,

and high levels of stress influence how this group works and acts together. Being a

"firefighter" is a core part of their identity, not just a professional identity, not unlike the

military, police, or other entrenched groups.

Like other entrenched groups, firefighters also have a very proud history of long-

standing traditions. One of those traditions is the adoption of core values. Core values are

an expression of the values that defines an organization and they function to impact the

daily actions and behaviors of the organization's members (Williams, 2002). Many

organizations adopt core values, but not many organizations have members with such a

strong identity as firefighters. My fire department adopted new core values in 2020

through a process of the fire chief meeting with firefighters, sending out email surveys, and ultimately, choosing our core values in conjunction with other chief officers. Our chosen values—respect, integrity, courage, and humility—in many ways echo those of many departments across the country.

Hoffman and Ford (2010) defined organizational rhetoric as "the strategic use of symbols by organizations to influence the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of audiences important to the operation of the organization" (p. 7). Core values act as those rhetorical symbols used by fire departments to influence the thoughts and behaviors of firefighters. Values are defined as central desires, beliefs, or conducts that guide our decisions and become a fundamental part of our way of being and acting, to the extent by which shapes our character (Argandoña, 2003). Core values are integral for strategic planning as organizations seek to determine future direction through the development of mission and vision statements, values, and guiding principles (Williams, 2002). This strategic planning not only provides outsiders with the conception of what the organization represents, but also it equips members of the organization with collective beliefs and behaviors to work towards a common goal (Fitzgerald & Desjardins, 2004; Williams, 2002). As organizations reinforce these collective beliefs and behaviors, they create communal character that forms the collective identity of the individuals in the organization, which is known as constitutive rhetoric (White, 1985). White (1985) described constitutive rhetoric as, "the making of the kind of community that enables people to say 'we' about what they do and to claim consistent meaning for it" (p. 693). I have that collective identity that aligns with the fire department. For example, when I sit in meetings representing the fire department, I refer to the fire department as "we." However, firefighters are different because they have a

2

much stronger entrenched group identity based on their specific job. This leads to my research question: what role do core values play in the rhetorical firefighter identity?

As I am a woman in the fire service, I am keenly aware there is a very low representation of women among firefighters. The fire department is considered a gendered organization, and the occupation of firefighter is gendered, since it is seen as appropriate for workers with masculine characteristics (Britton, 2000). I could not examine the firefighter identity without taking into consideration the notion of gender. I wondered, for example, if any commonly adopted core values have gendered connotations that might contribute to the masculine perception of the profession.

To better contextualize my research question, I began to explore literature connected to core values, organizational identities, and gendered professions. Existing scholarship reinforces that core values act to influence attitudes and behaviors and that it is important they represent all employees and are congruent with employees' values (Fitzgerald & Desjardins, 2004). Core values are the guiding ethos of an organization, and they give employees pride and motivate them towards a higher purpose (Barchiesi & La Bella, 2014). But if they do not match day-to-day practices of the organization, then they have no effect on daily actions of the members (Barchiesi & La Bella, 2014).

The notion of mismatch between core values and day-to-day practices correlates with experiences reported by women firefighters. Research on female firefighters reveals a dissonance in experiences from that of male firefighters (Ainsworth et al., 2014; Chetkovich, 2004; Haddock et al., 2017; Jahnke et al., 2019; Maleta, 2009; Perrott, 2016; Wright, 2008; Yoder & Aniakudo, 1996; Yoder & Berendsen, 2001). The women firefighters experienced tensions, hostility, and exclusion, though one can assume their departments

have adopted core values like respect, integrity, or compassion. These experiences led me to question if this is exclusive to the entrenched job of firefighter, or if these experiences are shared by women in other male-dominated workplaces. One related article stood out to me, stating, "Fire fighting is associated with traditional values of hegemonic masculinity, including: physical strength, technical competence, leadership, teamwork, mateship, and authority, along with heterosexuality, courage, and aggression" (Maleta, 2009, p. 296). This suggested to me that masculinity is a value, perhaps one that had more implicit influence on the firefighter identity than explicitly stated organizational core values.

In order to understand the role that these values—stated and unstated—might play in the firefighter identity, I chose to examine the research papers produced at the National Fire Academy's Executive Fire Officer (EFO) program. Having previously been a student at the National Fire Academy (NFA), I was already familiar with the EFO program. The NFA is a training center for fire department personnel in Emmitsburg, Maryland that is operated by the United States Fire Administration. The EFO program is a leadership development program offered for fire chiefs, battalion chiefs, and any other executive officers in the fire service. These executive fire officers have typically spent most of their careers in the fire service. Students of the EFO program are selected through an application process. The EFO program consists of a 2-week class annually for 4 years at the NFA. The student writes an applied research paper after each class and these EFO research papers can be found on the NFA's library website. The EFO papers cover a wide range of topics in the fire service and thus offer a peek into fire department issues and practices across the country. I chose these papers as my artifact to study for a qualitative discourse analysis to determine how core values are assigned and how they influence the rhetorical firefighter identity.

My analysis was guided by theories of organizational and constitutive rhetorics, which are employed to explain collective identities associated with the organizations to which people belong. For example, Kenneth Burke's theory of identification and consubstantiality helps us understand how through acting together, people form their individual identities through their affiliation with larger groups (Hoffman & Ford, 2010). Hoffman and Ford (2010) stated, "We define ourselves in part by the organizations to which we belong" (p. 16). Not only do our associated organizations help make up our identities, but they also provide perceptions of our identities to others. Chaïm Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969) helped explain how group attributes and the influence of behavioral expectations also contribute to the collective identity. Judith Butler's theory of performativity allows for an understanding of how socially-constructed identities are formed through repetitive performances and how people learn these identities from the world around them. Each of these theorists provide a unique perspective and contribution to the formation of rhetorical identities.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to examine core values as rhetorical symbols of organizational rhetoric and identification strategies of constitutive rhetoric that are intended to influence the firefighter identity. After my fire department adopted new core values, I was curious if these core values were truly representative of the firefighter identity. I also sought to discover how other fire departments select core values and, more generally, how core values contribute to the entrenched group identity of the firefighters. When fire departments adopt core values, each firefighter is expected to embody those values. The adoption of organizational core values is not uncommon; however, the

adoption of fire department core values is deeply embedded in the tradition of the fire

service. Many organizations adopt values they wish to represent their brand or their

business; fire departments adopt core values they believe should exist in the firefighters

who make up their membership. Just as the motivation for the adoption of core values

differs between organizations and fire departments, the organizational identities differ as

well. While many organizations maintain a collective identity that is separate from the

individual identities of their members, firefighters maintain their own collective identity

that is separate from the fire department collective identity.

Significance of Study

Organizational rhetoric has become a unique setting for conversations regarding

how organizations communicate to those inside and outside of the organization.

Organizations use language to influence thoughts and behaviors, thus creating a collective

identity. Many scholars focus on identification through language. Cheney and Thompkins

(1987) stated, "The process of identification is conducted primarily with language, and the

product of identification is expressed primarily with language" (p. 11). Fire departments'

core values are the language promulgated in an attempt to shape the firefighter identity.

With this study, I sought to answer how core values contribute to the rhetorical

identity of the firefighter; ultimately, I found that they do not. While some core values may

inherently be found in firefighters, I found instead that their identities are more attributed

to the culture of the fire department and their entrenched job where they act together to

create a sense of belonging and solidarity. That sense of belonging is what bonds

firefighters together, and since the fire service has historically been composed of male

firefighters, the firefighter identity has deep-seated roots in masculinity. I found that masculinity is the unspoken value of the rhetorical firefighter identity.

Scholars have long agreed, of course, that fire departments are considered gendered organizations and firefighting is typically viewed as a masculine profession (Acker, 1990; Britton, 2000; Cooper, 1995; Thurnell-Read & Parker, 2008). The common value of masculinity that bonds firefighters also works to exclude those who do not have that value. While adopted core values are not prevalent in the firefighter identity, the unspoken value of masculinity is ever-present. This study illuminates the tension between the masculinity that constitutes the firefighter identity and the rhetoric that fire departments use in an attempt to shape their organization.

The significance of this study lies in its pioneering spirit to explore a relatively un-researched area of the fire service. This research contributes to the fields of organizational rhetoric and constitutive rhetoric by providing an in-depth look at how organizational identities are constructed and what that implies for group identities. This study suggests that the actions and behaviors of firefighters that reinforce masculinity are more constitutive of the firefighter identity than the language the fire department uses to promote core values. That is not to say however, that firefighters do not identify at all with symbolic language: firefighters do symbolically identify with the language associated with "brotherhood." This study suggests that promoting core values will remain an empty exercise for fire departments unless the process clearly contributes to the way that firefighters *act* and *belong* together (Burke, 1950).

Personal Background

I began working for the Denton Fire Department (DFD) in August 2003. The DFD is a career fire department, which means all firefighters earn an annual salary and the fire department does not employ volunteer firefighters. The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) estimated there are 29,705 fire departments in the United States, of which 3,009 are career, 19,122 are volunteer, and 7,574 are combination departments (employing both career and volunteer firefighters; Evarts & Stein, 2020). As of 2018, there were an estimated 370,000 career firefighters in the United States, of which 15,200, or 4%, were female (Evarts & Stein, 2020). My fire department employs approximately 202 career firefighters, of which six firefighters, or 3%, are female.

The DFD contains three divisions: administration, operations, and support services. The administration division houses administrative chiefs and captains, who provide support and training to the operations division, as well as the administration support positions, which are all civilian positions. The operations division is the largest division, which is composed of all the shift firefighters and officers who are responsible for fire suppression and emergency response in the event of a fire or medical emergency. The support services division houses the emergency medical services section, health and safety section, and prevention section. The prevention section includes the fire marshal, assistant fire marshal, and deputy fire marshals, who conduct fire inspections, investigations, and plan review.

I was hired as a civilian and worked as the department's public education officer in the prevention division for the first 10 years of my career. During that time, the DFD transitioned to a full civil service fire department in accordance with Texas Local

8

Government Code Chapter 143, and the prevention civilian positions were "grandfathered" into civil service positions. Civil service fire departments are structured by the rules of local government codes and are systematic in the hiring and promoting of department members. Typically, civil service departments hire firefighters through an entry-level examination. Then to promote to each ensuing rank, the firefighter must pass a promotional exam. The eligibility list for promotions to each rank is compiled of firefighters who passed the exam in order of score, with additional points added for seniority. The entry-level position is firefighter, and then the next rank is fire driver (or engineer in some departments), then some departments have the rank of lieutenant, then captain, then battalion chief, which is usually the highest tested position. The next rank is an appointed position, assistant chief, and finally the appointed position of fire chief, who is the director, or head of the department. I was promoted to the position of fire protection specialist in the prevention division, at the equivalent rank of a captain, in 2013. I served in that position, supervising six firefighters and two fire drivers, until 2021.

My path with the fire department circumvented an entry-level examination and the promotional exam for driver- and captain-level ranks. Through the DFD's meet and confer contract (the collective bargaining contract between the Denton Firefighters' Association and City of Denton), I was eligible to take the civil service promotional exam for battalion chief starting in 2017. In March 2021, I took the promotional exam, and due to the retirement of a battalion chief in June 2021, I was promoted to battalion chief/assistant fire marshal. While I am the first woman in the history of the DFD to hold the position of battalion chief (the highest rank of civil service that is a tested position), previously a civilian woman who was also not a firefighter held the appointed position of fire marshal,

which was equivalent to the rank of assistant chief. After she was appointed, the firefighters union brought a lawsuit against the City, arguing she was not qualified to hold the position. This anecdote raises important questions related to my study, as we might wonder if she was unqualified because she was not able to claim the rhetorical identity of firefighter, or more specifically, because she was a woman unable to claim that identity. When she vacated the position, the previous fire chief rewrote the job description and reclassified it as assistant fire chief/fire marshal, which changed the requirements so that only a firefighter would be eligible to occupy that position.

As a battalion chief, I am part of the DFD's command staff. The command staff is a group of chief officers and a civilian budget manager. The chief officers on the command staff include: the fire chief, two assistant chiefs, and 10 battalion chiefs (one in prevention, six in operations, and three in administration). The command staff assisted in the creation of the department's current strategic plan and will be instrumental in the department's upcoming accreditation process.

Fire department accreditation, through the Center for Public Safety Excellence (2021), is a quality improvement model based on risk analysis and self-assessment that promotes established community-adopted performance targets for fire and emergency service agencies. It is designed to keep fire departments focused on program improvement and to ensure the needs of the community are met. Of the 29,705 fire departments in the United States, only 288 departments are accredited (Center for Public Safety Excellence, 2021). The benefit for a fire department to become accredited is identification of strengths and weaknesses; data supported decision-making; ensured definition of mission, vision, and values; and development of procedural documents (Center for Public Safety Excellence,

2021). For the accreditation process, which takes about 3 years, the DFD was tasked with updating its mission, vision, and core values in 2020. This is a common process among fire departments across the country, even amongst those that are not accredited. The adoption of new core values led me to my research question and this study.

Assumptions and Limitations

The purpose of this study is to examine how core values are assigned and how they influence the rhetorical firefighter identity. I assumed that the NFA's EFO papers were an effective artifact from which to glean a national picture of how core values are systematically adopted in fire departments. I also assumed that the language used in the EFO papers by chief officers would be impartial and standardized. I assumed there would be an adequate regional sampling across the United States. I also assumed that I would find inherent power structures in the EFO papers since they were written by chief officers and since traditionally chief officers select core values for their fire departments.

Limitations of the study included the review of only the last 5 years of EFO papers, as opposed to reviewing a larger sample of papers. It seemed the sample of EFO papers for the last 5 years would be the most relevant and most utilized by any fire department officers who were seeking to create new core values for their own departments. I have limited this dissertation to the discussion of gender as it relates to core values and as it pertains to the findings in the EFO papers. There is much more research to be conducted in the area of gender and masculinity in the fire service.

Definitions

The following definitions are used throughout this dissertation. I have included these definitions to provide a common understanding for the reader.

Culture

A pattern of beliefs and expectations shared by the organization's members, which produce norms that shape the behaviors of individuals and groups in the organization (Schwartz & Davis, 1981).

Entrenched Group Identity

A constitutive identity that has an ingrained culture inherent to the profession, and exposure to traumatic events, danger, and high levels of stress influence how this group works and acts together.

Gendered Organization

The process through which occupations come to be seen as appropriate for workers with masculine or feminine characteristics (Britton, 2000).

Hegemonic Masculinity

A complex gender hierarchy, with a specific treatment of embodiment in contexts of privilege and power, designed to oppress women through subordination (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005).

Organization

A group of people with coordinated actions who are trying to achieve certain results, and who have the same interest but not necessarily for the same reasons (Argandoña, 2003).

Organizational Core Values

Collected beliefs that an organization stands for, takes pride in, and holds of intrinsic worth (Fitzgerald & Desjardins, 2004).

Values

Central desires, beliefs, or conducts that guide our decisions and become a

fundamental part of our way of being and acting, to the extent by which shapes our

character (Argandoña, 2003).

Summary

From my personal experience working in a fire department that recently adopted

new core values, I developed an interest in how fire departments adopt core values and if

those values contribute to the rhetorical identities of the firefighters. I conducted a

qualitative research study that examined core values in the fire service. Through the review

of a 5-year sample of professional papers written by executive fire officers, I sought to

determine what role core values play in organizational rhetoric and the collective identity

of the firefighter. I found that while assigned core values are not part of the firefighter

identity, the unspoken value of masculinity is historically and rhetorically embedded into

the job and the constitutive identity of the firefighter.

In this chapter, I provided motivation for using organizational rhetoric as a

framework to explore how adopted core values influence the rhetorical firefighter identity.

I also provided the purpose and significance of the study, the background of the study,

assumptions and limitations, and pertinent definitions. In Chapter 2, I explore academic

conversations surrounding core values and organizational identities in order to explain the

function of core values and the characteristics of rhetorical identities. In Chapter 3, I

further discuss the theoretical framework for the analysis of my findings, which

synthesizes theory from philosophers Kenneth Burke, Chaïm Perelman and Lucie

Olbrechts-Tyteca, and Judith Butler. In Chapter 4, I outline the process for reviewing data

and reveal the findings of the qualitative research study of professional papers written by executive fire officers. The findings indicated a value misalignment between management and firefighters, a general disconnection of firefighters from adopted core values, and the presence of significant gender and diversity issues in the fire service. Chapter 5 provides the results, discussion, and analysis of the findings; limitations and biases; recommendations for future research; and the conclusion.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter explores academic conversations surrounding core values and firefighters, and it functions to provide an environment for the development of the firefighter identity. It also highlights the importance of core values for organizations and the difficulties in operationalizing those values. There is very little published research on firefighter rhetoric, even less with an eye to core values. In this chapter, I first set out to review existing research and literature on organizational core values and firefighter studies. Based on the implications of the literature, it was imperative to include academic conversations in the areas of women firefighters and women in male-dominated workplaces in order to establish the collective experiences of women. I also included conversations surrounding workplace masculinity since it is the unspoken value of firefighters.

In order to approach my research question and find any current conversations revolving around firefighter rhetoric and core values, I first widened the scope of research to explore identities in organizational rhetoric. Walsh and Gordon (2008) found that an individual's workplace identity is composed of organizational, occupational, and other identities, which affects their behaviors at work. Further, Walsh and Gordon (2008) found that some workers have "callings work-orientation" that would "view their work and life as inseparable" (p. 54). This lack of separation between work and life identities is congruent with entrenched group identities, as firefighters maintain their group identity at any time, whether they are at work or not. While identities in the workplace have been studied, few studies exist that view identities through a rhetorical lens. The study of constitutive

rhetoric helps us understand how collective identities are created, how they function to help us identify with our coworkers, and the nuances that drive us apart.

Organizational Core Values

The topic of organizational core values has waxed and waned, but a few foundational studies are essential to discuss. Schwartz and Davis (1981) explored how to manage an organization's success through structure, systems, people, and culture. They created a widely used definition of organizational culture, and they provided steps to capture the culture of a company. They defined culture as a pattern of beliefs and expectations shared by the organization's members, which produce norms that shape the behaviors of individuals and groups in the organization (Schwartz & Davis, 1981). This definition of culture describes how through shared beliefs and expectations, firefighter behaviors make up the individual and group firefighter identity. While assimilation to this identity can determine how well a firefighter will fit in at a fire department, other organizations resort to assessing fit at the time of hire, then reevaluating it at a later time. O'Reilly et al. (1991) aimed to determine the person-organization fit by applying an instrument they developed at the time of hire, and then assessing the job satisfaction and turnover for the next 2 years. They found the most common way that organizational culture is operationalized is through values (O'Reilly et al., 1991).

While values are often connected to organizational culture, they are also linked to strategic planning. Williams (2002) explored the reemerging link between strategic planning and organizational core values and cautioned that there must be meaningful linkage between the two for successful institutionalization of core values. She emphasized the importance of organizational values to represent all employees since the impact of the

values is in the actions and behaviors that they encourage (Williams, 2002). Williams (2002) posited, "organizational values in action are believed to shape every move and decision made by employees at all levels regarding daily practices and personal interactions" (p. 221). While some scholars commented on the function of values, others determined how to situate those values in the organization's culture. Argandoña (2003) formed a foundational conception of values, which provided a basis for organization theory. He identified a six-stage procedure to guide the definition and implementation of organizational values and he outlined approaches to overcome common obstacles (Argandoña, 2003).

The most common theme surrounding organizational values was the importance of demonstrating those values in daily actions and decisions. Fitzgerald and Desjardins (2004) found that when organizational values and employee values are congruent, employees are more satisfied, committed, and produce better performance outcomes. They commented that the culture of an organization influences all aspects of organizational life and can potentially give a very strong sense, belief, or understanding that guides employee actions (Fitzgerald & Desjardins, 2004). They found that employees must be constantly reminded that values are more than just words and they suggest organizations should promote their values continuously (Fitzgerald & Desjardins, 2004). Fitzgerald and Desjardins (2004) claimed that "the impact of values lies not in and of the values themselves, but in the coordinated behaviors they should encourage and foster" (p. 135).

Organizational values can vary between different types of organizations. Fire department core values tend to drastically differ from corporate values because they are rooted in the performance of the job of firefighter; corporate values typically represent

business practices. Van der Wal and Huberts (2008) surveyed 382 managers from public and private sector organizations to identify common core values and then compared public sector values to private sector values. They found public sector values centered around transparency and honesty, while private sector values centered around innovation (Van der Wal & Huberts, 2008). Barchiesi and La Bella (2014) studied the values statements of 50 top companies internationally, as identified by *Fortune* magazine. They believe that the core values should provide the guiding ethos of an organization and should give employees a sense of pride and motivate them towards a higher purpose (Barchiesi & La Bella, 2014). However, they found that after defining core values, many organizations did not match them with the day-to-day business practices (Barchiesi & La Bella, 2014). In this sense, assigning organizational core values seems to be a meaningless exercise of organizational rhetoric with no effect on daily actions. Byrtek and Dickerson (2013) studied an eight-step prescriptive model that organizations commonly use to institutionalize core values, and they determined the efficacy of the theoretical model in representing how values are actually embedded in organizations. The researchers found that embedding values is not best carried out by following a model but, instead, leaders in the organization must constantly and consistently reinforce the values (Byrtek & Dickerson, 2013). Although, Zwetsloot et al. (2013) found that when core values came from only managers, employees could not as easily internalize them as their own. Employees must be part of the process for determining values and further, they must recognize those values in their leaders.

Firefighter Studies

Most scholarly articles on firefighters address health issues, such as cancer, diet, sleep, and the effects of stress. Other studies have shown causal links between firefighting

18

and cancer, noting that mortality risks increase with increased firefighter exposures (Daniels et al., 2015). There have been several studies on testosterone in male firefighters. One study determined that a higher level of testosterone could correlate with earlier burnout in professional efficacy (Vinnikov et al., 2021). Another study on testosterone in firefighters found that while it did not necessarily affect job performance, it did interact with the firefighter's personality and fearlessness in a way that helped predict the performance of firefighting (Fannin & Dabbs, 2003). Due to the long shifts that firefighters typically work, some studies have centered around firefighters' sleeping and eating habits. Kniffin et al. (2015) researched how Boston fire crews functioned as a family by cooking, cleaning, and eating their meals together. Another study found occupations, such as firefighter, that deal with death routinely can use humor as an effective coping mechanism (Sliter et al., 2014). While these studies do not contribute to the scholarly conversation on core values, they do demonstrate the long hours firefighters work and the familial relationships they develop due to the nature and environment of their job. These conditions contribute to the entrenched group identity, as they are based on acting together and the entrenched job of firefighter.

Firefighter studies have also addressed heroism, which is associated with the entrenched group identity. Hopkins (2021) discussed how in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, healthcare workers were deemed heroes when they were merely doing what their jobs required; while firefighters, police officers, and military veterans are considered heroic because those jobs inherently include risking one's life to save another. Hopkins (2021) went on to claim that the identity of heroism comes with a profession that puts you in harm's way. Heroism could be attributed to the entrenched group identity as it

contributes to the ingrained culture inherent to the firefighter profession. Eagly and Becker (2005) attempted to shift heroism from a masculine idea to a more androgynous idea so that both sexes can be acknowledged as heroes. They claimed that female heroism is culturally underweighted due to the confined subset of social roles under which heroism occurs, and in these roles, it is not likely to be widely observed (Eagly & Becker, 2005). Heroism in firefighting has long been associated with bravery, youthfulness, ableism, and muscularity, which Perrott (2019) referred to as the "hero narrative which underpins contemporary conceptualizations of its ideal worker" (p. 1399). Perrott (2019) studied male Australian firefighters through qualitative work and interviews. She found that being valued in firehouses requires adherence to masculinities involving physicalities and an acceptance of politics of pollution, which Perrott (2019) also referred to as "occupational taint" (p. 1401). Although most firefighter studies are focused on health-related issues, the studies that demonstrate the ability and willingness of firefighters to act together also point to the symbiotic relationship between the individual and group identity.

The few studies that examine fire departments from an organizational perspective do not directly touch on the role of core values in the formation of either the collective identity of the departments or the individual firefighter. Hinds-Aldrich (2012) employed a philosophical framework to argue that firefighter culture is an "imagined moral community" based on shared judgements and practices that define "us" (firefighters) and "them" (those outside the profession) but does not examine the practice of adopting organizational values directly. In an investigation of fire departments' reluctance to adopt crew resource management as a risk management strategy, Kerwood (2008) explored firefighter culture and traditionalism, but does not identify core values as a part of either

20

such aspect of the firefighter or fire department organization identity. Scott and Myers (2005), two of the few scholars to focus on the relationship between language and member identity in fire departments, focused only on the discursive construction of risk and safety and their role in a firefighter's self-construction.

Women Firefighters

Scholars overwhelmingly agree that the occupation of firefighters is gendered, and women firefighters appear to have different experiences than men. Perrott (2016) researched Australian women firefighters and how they negotiate their gender in male-dominated workplaces. Perrott (2016) labeled the women firefighters as 'token' firefighters, borrowing from Kanter's (1977) landmark study of women salespersons in the formerly all-male sales force of a Fortune 500 company in the United States. Perrott (2016) stated that token women firefighters are "positioned as 'others' as a result of their minority status" (p. 55). Gouliquer et al. (2020) also discussed the 'othering' of women firefighters in Canada. They claimed that dominant in-groups hold power positions and maintain the ability to discriminate against, create rules for, and impose identities on the oppressed and 'othered' out-groups (Gouliquer et al., 2020). In the fire service, White men are typically the in-group and women and minorities are the out-groups (Gouliquer et al., 2020). Gouliquer et al. (2020) found that 'othering' leads to discrimination, hostile work conditions, self-doubt, and a weakened firefighter identity.

Perrott (2016) also explored the paradox of women firefighters and found that in discrepancies among women's narratives is, "resistance to policies by some women that may benefit like-situated women, such as affirmative action" (p. 51). Perrott (2016) determined that policies such as affirmative action could lessen the agency of women

firefighters within their fire departments and perpetuate preexisting notions of tokenism. Chetkovich (2004) explored similar issues of discordance among women in the fire service and found that some women may agree with social injustices brought up by others. But Chetkovich (2004) claimed that when women try to combat social injustices, they must have the support of the community they seek to help.

Ainsworth et al. (2014) studied volunteer women firefighters in Canada and found that upon their introduction into male-dominated environments, they experienced "heightened displays of masculinity...accompanied by a repudiation of any 'feminine' characteristics or qualities" (p. 46). Ainsworth et al. (2014) also found that masculinity was not only prevalent in language and interactions, but also in clothing and uniforms. While many masculinity studies focus on men, by studying female firefighters researchers are better able to see the complexities in the multiple constructions of masculinity and femininity (Ainsworth et al., 2014). During a study of six lesbian and six heterosexual women firefighters in the United Kingdom, Wright (2008) found that lesbian firefighters felt they were better situated to fit in with the male firefighters as 'one of the guys.' The heterosexual female firefighters felt more tension due to their sexuality, but both groups felt that male firefighters crossed boundaries from acceptable banter to harassment (Wright, 2008). Despite proving their abilities, another study of women firefighters in Australia found that women struggled with gender differentiation, marginalization, and exclusion (Maleta, 2009). Studies also found that women firefighters who experience discrimination and harassment endure poor health outcomes and experience issues with alcohol consumption (Haddock et al., 2017; Jahnke et al., 2019).

Yoder and Aniakudo (1997) surveyed Black women firefighters in the United States and found that they experienced hostility, silence, lack of support, and exclusion. They also found that fire house pranks on the women firefighters often bordered on gender harassment (Yoder & Aniakudo, 1996). Yoder and Berendsen (2001) compared the experiences of Black women firefighters to White women firefighters and found that they share marginalized experiences within the fire service. Both groups experienced instances of insufficient instruction, silence, close supervision, lack of support, hostility, and stereotyping (Yoder & Berendsen, 2001). Yoder and Berendsen (2001) also found differences between the Black and White women firefighters in "power with subordination tied to being Black, with privilege tied to being White, and with each linked to the subordination of being female" (p. 35).

These studies paint a clear picture of how women, positioned as other and as the out-group, experience instances of discrimination and harassment within fire departments. These instances work to prevent women from acting together to create a belonging with their fellow firefighters, a critical process for constituting the rhetorical firefighter identity. This research suggests that learning to construct masculinity may help women identify with other firefighters in the department, and vice-versa; this supports the idea that, as a group, firefighters overwhelmingly value masculinity over any organizational core values like respect, integrity, compassion, etc.

Women in Male-Dominated Workplaces

Organizational rhetoric provides the opportunity to view work identities as we define them by the organization to which we belong (Hoffman & Ford, 2010). As previously mentioned, firefighters are predominantly male, so female firefighters must form

organizational identities that may contrast with their individual identities. Research on gender in the workplace tends to focus on identifying and addressing barriers for women and offering suggestions for how to break the 'glass ceiling.' Germain et al. (2012) studied 296 female pilots-in-training and found that these women in this male-dominated environment encountered lack of acceptance, self-efficacy, lack of social support from organizations, flight instructors and family, and stereotyping, which often led them to quit. Germain et al. (2012) concluded that women in male-dominated professions should network with other women and work to improve their confidence. Crawford (2021) stated that women in male-dominated professions are a marginalized group that is most susceptible to imposter syndrome, or one's feelings of unworthiness of praise at work because it is not the result of one's own competence.

Martin and Barnard (2013) studied South African female workers in male-dominated fields and found that women are subject to discrimination through ingrained gender-biases in organizational cultures. They suggested that organizations must work toward retaining women in male-dominated work settings by providing support, opportunities for promotions, and challenges to motivate them (Martin & Barnard, 2013). In order to reduce gender obstacles in nonprofit organizations, Kaufman and Grace (2011) suggested that top leaders model a culture of fairness, promote norms of inclusion and trust, and develop avenues for women to be successful leaders.

Kvande (1999) studied women in graduate engineering, which she deemed an archetypal masculine profession. She claimed by participating in male-dominated professions, women engineers can negotiate the meaning of gender and renegotiate social identities (Kvande, 1999). Using an embodied sociological perspective, Monaghan (2002)

studied British nightclub and security workers and found that in this cohesive and often

White, masculine occupation, ethnicity and gender were pervasive social divisions. Garcia-

Retamero and López-Zafra (2006) studied the perceptions of female leaders in automotive

manufacturing jobs and whether they were congruent or incongruent with the leader's

gender role. They found that generally, participants were more likely to show prejudice

against a female leader in a job that was incongruent with her gender role (Garcia-

Retamero & López-Zafra, 2006). They also found that other women and older participants

were more likely to show prejudice against the female leaders than younger men (Garcia-

Retamero & López-Zafra, 2006).

Studies of police agencies have found historical discrimination and othering of

women police officers. After women fought to be hired by the New York Police Department,

they still found themselves highly criticized by their male counterparts (Darien, 2002).

Rabe-Hemp (2008) studied the differences in male and female officer behaviors,

particularly during arrest and use of force decisions. She found that female officers are less

likely to use extreme threats, restraints, or arrests, referred to as "extreme masculine

behaviors" (Rabe-Hemp, 2008). However, she also found that female officers are no more

likely than male officers to use comforting behaviors, or "extreme feminine behaviors"

(Rabe-Hemp, 2008). Martin (1994) closely examined the disposition of female Black police

officers and how race and gender interact to affect Black women's perspectives and

behaviors. She discussed Kanter's (1977) structural approach that identifies power,

opportunity, and group representation as factors in identifying behavior and contingencies

in work organizations (Martin, 1994). Veldman et al. (2017) studied 657 employees

working in 85 teams on a police force to see if gender identities conflicted with work

identities. They found that gender differences between women and their team members triggered conflicts between gender and work identities (Veldman et al., 2017). These perceptions of conflicting identities negatively impacted the employees' individual identification with the team, as well as their work outcomes (Veldman et al., 2017). Prokos and Padavic (2002) also documented the female experience in the police academy and multiple instances of exclusion and denigration.

While women routinely suffer discrimination when they enter male-dominate occupations, contrarily men do not suffer the same discrimination when they enter female-dominated occupations. Researchers have studied men in female-dominated occupations and found that men distance themselves from the feminized aspects of their jobs (Hall et al., 2007; Henson & Rogers, 2001; Simpson, 2004). These studies also found that men were able to reframe their duties and titles and were often viewed as leaders in the workplace due to their masculinity (Hall et al., 2007; Henson & Rogers, 2001; Simpson, 2004). Koenig et al. (2011) also found leadership to be associated with masculinity and that women, who may possess exceptional qualifications, would be overlooked for leadership positions because they were viewed as not as equipped to lead as men.

Women in male-dominated workplaces have long been subjected to harassment and social division. They are often not viewed as leaders and not respected in leadership positions. Whereas, men in female-dominated workplaces do not suffer the same discrimination. This research suggests that leadership is associated with masculinity. As masculinity is significant in the firefighter identity, and the fire department is a male-dominated workplace, women will struggle to be viewed as leaders in the fire department unless they have constructions of masculinity in their identity. Women in male-dominated

workplaces will also struggle with their organizational identity as it may be at odds with their individual identity. These struggles can also prevent women from acting together to create a belonging with other firefighters.

Workplace Masculinity

Several foundational studies on masculinity were often cited throughout the articles reviewed on workplace masculinity. Acker (1990) found that gendering of organizational processes is posited on the prior exclusion of women. Although this article is a little outdated, it is still widely cited as many workplaces are still not considered gender neutral. Britton (2000) also discussed the meaning of gendered organizations, and she defined gender typing as, "the process through which occupations come to be seen as appropriate for workers with masculine or feminine characteristics, that is, occupations could be said to be feminized, masculinized, or, more generically, gendered" (p. 424). The fire service is a gendered organization as firefighting is commonly considered to be a masculine profession.

Barrett's (1996) study of 27 male Navy officers has also been widely cited. Barrett (1996) found gender as an institution that structured social relationships and upheld and reproduced rules and patterns of expectation (p. 130). He claimed that while many people learn to comply with these rules and expectations, the structures have no validity (Barrett, 1996). Barrett (1996) attributed hegemonic masculinity in the naval officers to acts of risk taking; discipline; excitement associated with operation of powerful technology; tolerance of degradation; stoic endurance of hardship; tenacity and perseverance in the face of difficult trials; rational calculation; absence of emotion; and technological mastery. Bird (1996) also studied hegemonic masculinity, and how it devalues femininity and

perpetuates gender inequality. She advocated deconstructing the valuation and devaluation of masculine and feminine meanings, such as how masculine men are emotionally detached, competitive, and they sexually objectify women (Bird, 1996). Courtenay (2000) also found hegemonic masculinity to be the socially dominant gender construction, which represents power and authority, and is found in heterosexual, highly educated, European American men of upper-class economic status. He explored the factors men use to construct masculinity (such as ethnicity, economic status, education level, sexual orientation, and social context) and how it affects their health and well-being (Courtenay, 2000). Courtenay (2000) also found that the highly agreed upon characteristics of masculinity and femininity create a dichotomous meaning of gender. Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) sought to reformulate the concept of hegemonic masculinity to include a more complex gender hierarchy, recognition of the geography of masculinities, and specific treatment of embodiment (in contexts of privilege and power). Hegemonic masculinity at first only seems prevalent in extreme displays of masculinity in the fire service, such as in acts of harassment. However, Maleta (2009) claimed, "Fire fighting is associated with traditional values of hegemonic masculinity, including: physical strength, technical competence, leadership, teamwork, mateship, and authority, along with heterosexuality, courage, and aggression" (p. 296).

Thurnell-Read and Parker (2008) also found masculine identities of firefighters included notions of emotional strength, physical and technical competence, collective understandings of risk and responsibility, and a commitment to group solidarity. Bel-Latour and Granié (2022) found that firefighters with a strongly masculine perception of the firefighter profession led to a higher frequency in risky behaviors. They claim that the

number of firefighter work-related accidents could be attributed to, "a willingness to demonstrate through their behavior their conformity to their masculine perception of their occupation" (Bel-Latour & Granié, 2022, p. 7). Cooper (1995) discussed the implications of masculine firefighters and noted how masculinity "asserted the virtues of bodily strength, fitness and vigour" and also "connotes physical strength and agility and the privileging of action over thought" (147). Cooper (1995) noted that "masculinity" is a more aggressive term than "manliness" and the masculine activity of firefighting incorporates the three components of the ideal manhood: manliness, chivalry, and heroism (p. 147). Yarnal et al. (2004) suggested diffusing and countering the heroic image of the firefighter and they noted that the strength of bond and caring that firefighters have for each other is often missing from the definition of firefighter masculinity.

Yarnal et al. (2004) also identified a concept that is critical for the rhetorical construction of the firefighter identity, that of "brotherhood." This bond, or familial relationship, that firefighters have extends beyond the fire station to encompass all firefighters in the fire service. While the fire service is commonly known internally and externally as such a brotherhood—a male-dominated, tight-knit, and familial culture—scarce amounts of scholarly literature and only a few articles written for fire service magazines directly address it. In an article for *Fire Engineering*, firefighter Justin Capaul (2009) claimed that the word "brother" refers to brother and sister firefighters and he describes the "brotherhood" as caring for and helping each other outside of work. Capaul (2009) depicted examples of brotherhood as tending to other firefighters outside of work, while citing that there are no exact words to encompass brotherhood in the fire service. In an article for *Firehouse*, retired firefighter Harry Carter (2021) declared, "You either are a

part of the brotherhood, or you are an imposter who dresses in firefighting garb" (p. 56).

He went on to state that brotherhood is not an "all-boys club," but instead, it "must be a

sex-neutral term that refers to the bonding of people who have similar interests" (Carter,

2021, p. 56). When he began his career in the fire service, fire chief Fred Crosby (2007) saw

brotherhood as a personal accountability. He stated, "I was required to embrace and live

specific values and ethics if I was to have the honor of being a brother" (Crosby, 2007, p.

107). Crosby (2007) now describes brotherhood as a social construct of the fire service

that is defined by a common mission to serve, togetherness, language, rights and rituals,

loyalty to the group, and a strong system of ethics and values.

However, some reject the notion of "brotherhood" as a neutral term. Susan

McWilliams (2006) wrote about brotherhood as fraternity, which she states is a "sole

province of men" (p. 210). She related the inability of men to birth children as a historical

purpose driving them toward the need for fraternity, or the birthing of new friendships

(McWilliams, 2006). McWilliams (2006) concluded that "at its best, fraternity pulls men

away from sexist convictions that caring for others and being cared for are women's roles,

and that those roles are undesirable" (p. 212). While many firefighters debate whether the

use of the term "brotherhood" works to exclude women in the fire service, the mere root of

the word conjures historical connotations that the brotherhood was founded upon a

fraternal bond of men. Conscious of that connotation, many firefighters refer to their

universal bond as the "brotherhood and sisterhood." However, the effort to refer to women

firefighters as the "sisterhood" does not create a sentiment of inclusion. In fact, it calls

attention to the fact that they are not part of the brotherhood and creates a further division.

Summary

This chapter summarized existing research and literature on organizational core values, firefighter studies, women firefighters, women in male-dominated workplaces, and workplace masculinity. Most importantly, this review demonstrated that fire departments adopt core values to provide a deeper meaning and understanding to the job of firefighter; however, there is little scholarly research on fire department core values (Appleby, 2006). A number of dissertations examine the role of culture, tradition, and language in fire departments, but none directly examine core values. Scholarly articles on firefighters are mostly related to health issues, though one notable exception is the body of work on women firefighters. Studies that examine women in the fire service found that women are often discriminated against and harassed. In fact, much of the research regarding women in male-dominated workplaces has similar findings whereas men in female-dominated workplaces did not suffer the same circumstances (Hall et al., 2007; Henson & Rogers, 2001; Simpson, 2004).

Research on masculinity revealed that organizations that are either masculinized or feminized are considered gendered, with hegemonic masculinity as the dominant construction (Acker, 1990; Britton, 2000). Masculinity in organizations is reproduced through rules and patterns of expectations (Barrett, 1996; Bird, 1996; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Courtenay, 2000). Within the fire service specifically, masculinity is associated with courage, strength, competence, pride, responsibility, honor, duty, leadership, teamwork, and group solidarity (Barrett, 1996; Bird, 1996; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Cooper, 1995; Courtenay, 2000; Koenig et al., 2011; Maleta, 2009; Thurnell-Read & Parker, 2008; Yarnal et al., 2004). Given this emphasis on masculinity, it is

31

no surprise that group solidarity in the fire service is often referred to as the "brotherhood." While fire service leadership may attempt to reframe brotherhood as a gender-neutral term, it is inherently and historically exclusive to men.

The existing literature helps to form an understanding of the complexities of organizational values and collective identities, particularly in male-dominated workplaces. It also reveals gaps in the research regarding rhetorical identities and fire department core values. Within this context, in the next chapter, I apply theoretical frameworks to the rhetorical firefighter identity.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, I introduce the methodology used to describe and analyze the rhetorical firefighter identity. The primary focus of this qualitative research study was to determine how core values are adopted by fire departments and determine how they influence the rhetorical construction of the firefighter. I found that core values do not influence the rhetorical firefighter identity; however, the firefighter identity is significantly influenced by masculinity.

I discuss the theoretical framework for the analysis of my findings, which employs rhetorical theory from philosophers Kenneth Burke, Chaïm Perelman, and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca. Since my research and findings indicate that masculinity has a significant influence on the firefighter identity, I draw from gender theorist Judith Butler to provide a framework for the social constructions of masculinity and the performance of the firefighter identity.

Background and Rationale

My fire department went through the process of creating a new 5-year strategic plan in 2020 to prepare for accreditation. First, the fire chief scheduled strategic planning sessions and invited all department members to attend one of the sessions. During the sessions, he discussed the need for a new mission statement, vision statement, and development of new core values. Next, he sent out a survey to the fire department asking department members to complete an online survey to assess strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to the organization for the strategic plan. Approximately 65 of 200 fire department members completed the survey. He sent out a follow-up survey asking

33

for suggestions on mission and vision statements, and core values. Approximately 84 of 200 fire department members completed this survey. Then, a follow-up strategic planning session was scheduled. Approximately a year later, the new strategic plan was printed and presented to each fire station crew. The new core values, along with the new mission and vision statements, were printed on business cards and the new core values were printed on challenge coins. All fire officers were asked to include the core values in their email signatures.

This process of employing organizational rhetoric by identifying and assigning core values led me to question the importance of shared values in the rhetorical identity of firefighters. I was curious how other fire departments across the United States determine their core values and if firefighters adopt those values into their own identities. Fire departments generally conduct strategic planning and adopt a set of core values, and not exclusively for the accreditation process.

Artifacts and Procedure

This qualitative research sought data from the NFA's EFO program's applied research papers. An applied research paper is written after each EFO class and these papers can be found on the NFA's library website. The EFO papers aim to investigate issues identified by the executive fire officers in their fire departments.

In order to determine how the identified core values of a fire department contribute to the rhetorical construction of the firefighter identity, I examined all EFO papers with the keyword "values" that have been published in the NFA library from 2015-2019. Since adopted core values are meant to be representative of all firefighters in a fire department, and fire departments are gendered organizations (Britton, 2000), I also wondered if any

core values were gendered. Therefore, I also searched for and reviewed the 11 EFO papers

containing the keyword "gender." The year 2020 was not included since the NFA was

closed for most of the year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The past 5 years of these EFO

papers provide a clear representation of how core values are determined and what core

values have been prevalent among fire departments across the United States. These papers

are written by fire officers for the betterment of the fire service and they are widely

revered by fire service personnel as a research resource.

Theoretical Framework

Most organizations function as a social group and share a culture (O'Reilly et al.,

1991; Schwartz & Davis, 1981). Workplace social groups spend approximately 40 hours

every week together. They often build familial relationships with their coworkers, with

whom they are spending almost a fourth of their lives. Their jobs, and the organizations to

which people dedicate a fourth of their lives, become part of their identity. The job of

firefighter carries a particularly strong identity. However, to a firefighter, it is much more of

an identity than a job; in fact, being a firefighter is a way of life. Like other workplace social

groups, firefighters share a job, but they also share a culture. Schwartz & Davis (1981)

defined culture as a pattern of beliefs and expectations shared by the organization's

members, which produce norms that shape the behaviors of individuals and groups in the

organization. Firefighters share common beliefs and expectations that shape their

behaviors. Firefighters share a group identity because they have an ingrained culture that

is inherent to their profession. Firefighters are an entrenched group due to the often

traumatic, emergent, and high-stress situations they regularly encounter. They work as a

team, and even while performing individual duties, they work as one unit. Being a

firefighter consumes their identity, not unlike the military, police, or other entrenched group identities. Career (full-time and paid) firefighters work long shifts. For example, two common shifts for full-time firefighters in the fire service are 1) 24 hours working and 48 hours off and 2) 48 hours working and then 96 hours off. Instead of spending a fourth of their lives together, they are spending closer to a third of their lives together. Since they are at the fire station for 24 or 48 hours, and the nature of their work requires them to stay together, they typically eat every meal together, they respond to emergency calls together, and they attend training together, and they sleep in shared quarters together (Kniffin et al., 2015). For those 24 or 48 hours, they are always together. The fire station never closes, so the firefighters also spend holidays together. This togetherness helps create the rhetorical identity of the firefighter; therefore, philosopher Kenneth Burke's concept of identification is a highly effective methodology by which to understand the rhetorical firefighter identity.

Theory of Identification

In this section, I discuss how Kenneth Burke explains how identity is constructed rhetorically through identification and consubstantiality. Burke also provides insight into the ways concepts such as alienation, autonomy, and paradox of substance contribute to social identity formation. These ideas, as applied to firefighters, help us understand the formation of the rhetorical firefighter identity through acting together to create belonging. Burke also helps to examine the issues with the rhetorical firefighter identity when it is disrupted.

Early in his career, Burke (1937) said, "in America, it is *natural* for a man to identify himself with the business corporation he serves" (p. 264). George Cheney (1983) extended this beyond professions, saying, "identities may be manifested by labels or 'names' . . . Thus,

a person may describe himself or herself by saying: 'I'm a New Yorker' or 'I work for Exxon'" (p. 145). These labels not only allow people to identify themselves, but they also help people identify with others.

Identification

In *A Rhetoric of Motives*, Burke defines rhetoric as the use of language to form attitudes and influence action. One of Burke's great contributions to the field of rhetoric is his notion of identification and its connection to persuasion. Branaman (1994) explained how "Burke developed his conception of identity as a critical instrument in response to the social fragmentation and moral poverty of his own time" (p. 445). Burke (1950) described identification between two individuals in the following scenario:

> A is not identical with his colleague, B. But insofar as their interests are joined, A is *identified* with B. Or he may *identify himself* with B even when their interests are not joined, if he assumes that they are, or is persuaded to believe so. (p. 20)

Burke (1950) went on to discuss how a speaker can identify with an audience:

> [W]e might well keep in mind that a speaker persuades an audience by the use of stylistic identifications; his act of persuasion may be for the purpose of causing the audience to identify itself with the speaker's interest; and the speaker draws on identification of interests to establish rapport between himself and his audience. So, there is no chance of our keeping apart the meanings of persuasion, identification ("consubstantiality") and communication (the nature of rhetoric as "addressed"). (p. 46)

Burke believed that one could not have persuasion without identification and by persuading an audience to identify with the speaker's issue, one builds a relationship with that audience.

Consubstantiality

Burke also believed that identification could lead to consubstantiality. Cheney (1983) explained consubstantiality as representative of "an area of 'overlap'—either real or perceived—between two individuals or between an individual and a group; it is a basis for common motives and for 'acting-together'" (p. 146). According to Burke (1950), "a way of life is an *acting-together;* and in acting together, men have common sensations, concepts, images, ideas, attitudes that make them *consubstantial*" (p. 21). Through consubstantiality—the shared ideas, attitudes, and experiences—a culture can be created.

Identification and Consubstantiality of Firefighters

As an entrenched group, when firefighters are on duty, they spend 24 or 48 hours on shift together. They become acquainted on a very personal level and they understand each other's values. They train together so that when fighting a fire or responding to medical emergencies, they will anticipate each other's actions and can predict each other's behaviors. They take an interest in each other's lives because, at times, their own lives can depend on their fellow firefighters. Burke's tenets applied to firefighters help to understand not only how firefighters identify with each other, but also the ways in which they are able to create identification through their shared job.

The fundamental element in Burke's identification is joining of interests between individuals, or at least the perception or persuasion of joined interests. Extrinsically, firefighters' interests are joined through their shared job. Firefighters have a vested

interest in thoroughly learning the technical aspects of their jobs. Their interests are aligned in this regard for job security, job safety, and in most states, firefighter certification requirements. When they are on duty, if they are performing consistently, abiding by the same sets of standard operating procedures (SOPs), and working from the same nationally-set standards, then they will have job security. If they have a thorough knowledge of their job and how to mitigate its hazards, they will have the comfort of knowing they will go home safely after their shift is over.

While having aligned interests may allow firefighters to identify with each other, it does not always instinctively lead to consubstantiality. If identification is the vehicle, then consubstantiality is the destination. Firefighters reach consubstantiality by repeatedly acting together. They may share the same technical skills, but it is working together in such close proximity for long periods of time that enables them to function as a crew, or further, a family. Burke (1945) claimed, "the concept of family is usually 'spiritualized,' so that it includes merely social groups, comprising persons of the same nationality or beliefs" (p. 29). A crew of firefighters acts together as a family through their shared beliefs and expectations. They stay together throughout their shift; they are assigned to the same crew at the same fire station each shift. As a crew, they work in their specific roles (firefighter, engineer, lieutenant, captain, battalion chief), but they are working and acting together as a cohesive unit to fight fires, respond to medical and other emergencies, conduct public education activities, and continuously train. A family of firefighters acts together—even when they are not required to do so. As a family, the firefighters eat meals together at the kitchen table in the fire station and they work out together (Kniffin et al., 2015). If they have a moment of time to spare, they watch television together or play games together.

They are inherently drawn to each other because they understand the parameters of being firefighters that often extend far beyond the technical aspects of the job. Intrinsically, firefighter's interests are joined through motivation, values, and expectations. Firefighters act together in the performance of their jobs, but they do so because of their intrinsic motivation to belong to the group. Their acting together creates belonging, which according to Burke (1950) is rhetorical. The actions of a firefighter that are taken to create a sense of belonging, both intrinsically and extrinsically, are what create consubstantiality, and are what constitute the firefighter's rhetorical identity.

Burke's outlined identification strategies that can be applied to firefighters: common ground, identification through antithesis, and the assumed or transcendent "we" (Cheney, 1983, p. 148). The common ground technique is apparent in firefighters because of their shared emotions and experiences, as described in the previous example. Firefighters share values in their dedication to aspects of their job, such as helping people and saving lives. They place the lives of others before their own. Firefighters can identify through antithesis by sharing a common enemy, which could be administrative chiefs, city council members, or anyone who could work against their perceived best interests of the firefighters. Their common enemy could also be something abstract, like injuries, illnesses, or death. Firefighters identify through the transcendent "we" almost as soon as they are hired. They become a part of a familial discourse community by using the language of brotherhood and sisterhood, the "we." Then "they" becomes anyone outside of the firefighters. Using the term "we" indicates unity amongst the group.

Issues with Identification

Though most firefighters are committed to the lifelong career of firefighting (affectionately referred to as "womb-to-tomb"), outliers always exist and, for the typically short period of time they are firefighters, they disrupt the equanimity of their crew. When a firefighter does not identify with other firefighters or with the job, Burke would attribute these instances to alienation, paradox of substance, or issues with autonomy.

Alienation. Burke (1937) described alienation as "the state of affairs wherein a man no longer 'owns' his world because, for one reason or another, it seems basically unreasonable" (p. 216). If a firefighter is not fitting in or acclimating to the job—for whatever reason—that person may feel alienated. The firefighter will then continue to withdraw from the group and lose the other firefighters' trust and confidence. Inevitably, the firefighter may leave the job. The lack of diversity in fire departments across the country would indicate that alienation may commonly occur in any firefighter who belongs to a marginalized group, particularly women and minority firefighters (Evarts & Stein, 2020). When male firefighters are acting together and their interests are joined, and a woman firefighter is introduced into that group, she may feel alienated if she does not identify with the other firefighters. As explored later in this dissertation, she may feel alienated not just by the other firefighters, but by the institution of the fire service and how it contends with (or refuses to contend with) her body. While most firefighters share values and expectations, and the values may not be exclusive, the expectations of firefighters generally are exclusive, which leads to a paradox of substance.

Paradox of Substance. Though not as common as alienation, Burke's paradox of substance could affect firefighters' ability to identify. Paradox of substance refers to Burke's

41

realization that we must define words like "substance" in terms of what they are not. Burke (1945) stated:

> [W]e might point up the pattern as sharply as possible by observing that the word "substance," used to designate what a thing *is*, derives from a word designating something that a thing *is not*. That is, though used to designate something *within* the thing, *intrinsic* to it, the word etymologically refers to something *outside* the thing, *extrinsic* to it. Or otherwise put: the word in its etymological origins would refer to an attribute of the thing's *context*, since that which supports or underlies a thing would be a part of the thing's context. And a thing's context, being outside or beyond a thing, would be something that the thing is *not.* (p. 23)

Burke's focus is on the ambiguity of words and meaning assigned to them. This ambiguity translates to the firefighter rhetorical identity through an examination of the meaning of "firefighter." We can see that extrinsically, the firefighter is, at its simplest form, someone or something that fights fire. This meaning of firefighter does not impose any expectations or implications of gender or physical attributes. Intrinsically, the firefighter embodies a culture that actually has little to do with fighting fire and much to do with behaviors and social expectations. The paradox of the firefighter is that the values and beliefs associated with the identity of "firefighter" do not necessarily align with the expectations of firefighters.

Issues with Autonomy. According to Clark and Halloran (1993), "Burke observes that the problem with any such specialized culture is that it tends to treat its activities as 'autonomous,' as unconnected to those of the larger community in which it is situated" (p. 6). Firefighters are at times unable to connect with larger communities due to the

specialized activities associated with being firefighters. For example, wildland firefighters

that are part of an Interagency Hotshot Crew specialize in fighting the hottest portions of

wildfires. They are considered an elite group of firefighters, which may disrupt their

identification to the larger community of structural firefighters. To apply autonomy

towards a more profound lack of identification among firefighters, Burke might suggest

examining the intrinsic identity of the firefighter. Burke (1950) discussed how students of a

specialized activity may identify with the subject differently at first, but the most important

identifications will be established "later in life, when the specialty has become integrally

interwoven with the particulars of one's livelihood" (p. 27). Since these identifications

stemming from a shared specialized activity may occur shortly after becoming a firefighter,

or they may occur later in life, there is a period of time where a firefighter may not identify

with other firefighters or with the job. As new firefighters integrate with older firefighters,

they may find identification more difficult to achieve. Whereas older firefighters, who have

more years of service, would likely have a deeply ingrained identification with the job and

with other firefighters, but they may also have more autonomy that would preclude them

from accepting new firefighters who are different from them.

Burke (1950) recognized that the activities of a specialized culture "can be

considered irrespective of such identifications" (p. 27). Firefighters are a specialized

culture, and their activities are specific to their jobs, but that should not inhibit them from

connecting with their firefighter community as well as other communities. While two

firefighters may share a job, and the activities associated with that job, they can function in

their respective communities as individuals. For example, one firefighter may have a

spouse and children, and may be an active member at church, and then that firefighter

would have connections and identifications not associated with the fire department. Meanwhile, another firefighter may be single, with no children, pursuing a college degree and, therefore, would have connections and identifications with friends, classmates, and professors. These firefighters share a common job and culture while they are at work; however, they are not excluded from larger communities in which they operate when they are not at work. Burke (1950) commented:

> [I]n being identified with B, A is 'substantially one' with a person other than himself. Yet at the same time he remains unique, an individual locus of motives. Thus he is both joined and separate, at once a distinct substance and consubstantial with another. (p. 21)

Firefighters will always be included in the firefighter culture, but that does not prohibit them from being unique individuals, or from having other interests outside of work. Returning to identification, those other interests may help firefighters identify with other firefighters who have the same interests. Firefighters share a highly specialized profession and through the time they spend together and the nature of their work, they also share a culture. The culture of firefighters is apparent in their day-to-day activities and through their shared values, beliefs, and expectations. It is through this culture that the rhetorical firefighter identity is created.

Groups and Values

Philosophers Chaïm Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca help explain the spread of ideas and attitudes through groups, which contribute to the group members' rhetorical identities. In *The New Rhetoric*, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969) found that shared language and values create community, as defined "by the practice of a common discipline

or technique" (p. 513). Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969) further explained this definition, "The terms used, their meaning, their definition, can only be understood in the context of the habits, ways of thought, methods, external circumstances, and traditions known to the users of those terms" (p. 513). In this sense, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's (1969) definition of community is no different than the community of firefighters, as they practice a common discipline and share language and values. Firefighters then exist and operate in their own community, or social group. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969) described the attributes of a social group through the group members' behaviors, attitudes, perceptions, expectations.

Group Attributes

Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969) claimed that members of a social group sometimes act based on their expectations of that group. They stated, "Certain ways of behaving conform to the idea a person has of the members of a group...The behavior is often described by the name of the group, and it reacts on the image that is formed of the group" (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1969, p. 324). To add on to Burke's idea that acting together creates identification and consubstantiality, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969) implied that group members may act together because they are acting in a way they expect the group members to act. When firefighters take on behaviors of their social group, they are doing so not only for a sense of belonging, but also because they are acting out their expectations of the group.

Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969) also stated, "Individuals influence our impression of the group to which they belong, and, conversely, what we think of the group predisposes us to a particular impression of those who form it" (p. 322). So, just as

members of a group behave in a way they feel conforms to the group, our impression of the group is based on those behaviors of the individual. When we study the rhetorical identity of the firefighter, the behaviors of the firefighter tend to represent the social group of firefighters; and conversely, our general perceptions and behavioral expectations of firefighters are applied to each group member. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969) also claimed, "Although the reality of a group may depend on the attitude of its members, it depends as much and even more on the attitude of outsiders" (p. 323). Therefore, the reality of the firefighter identity is rooted in the perception and behavioral expectations of the group members, but even more so of outsiders.

For an outsider, the job of firefighter is not an easy career to enter. It is a specialized position that requires a very specific training in firefighting, and often emergency medical services. There is a dedicated path that one must take to become a career firefighter. With this dedicated career path, and the attributes of being a firefighter, comes a high occupational prestige (Ainsworth et al., 2014). Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969) credited this prestige to the shared culture of firefighters when they stated, "the prestige of the group can promote the spread of its ideas, habits, and customs and of its products and methods" (p. 322). As prestige grows, so does the expectation of firefighters. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969) also claimed, "Membership in a given group can, in fact, raise the presumption that certain qualities will be found in its members and this presumption will gain in strength as the feeling of class or of caste is more pronounced" (p. 323). This further supports the idea that the rhetorical firefighter identity is highly dependent upon perception and behavioral expectations.

Group Values

Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969) considered that shared values of a group contribute to the group acting together in agreement. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969) explained, "The existence of values, as objects of agreement that make possible a communion with regard to particular ways of acting, is connected with the idea of multiplicity of groups" (p. 74). So in addition to the firefighter identity including perceptions and behavioral expectations, it also includes the existence of shared values that contribute to their acting together. While these values assist in group members acting together, they also can be used to persuade group members to act a certain way or justify particular acts. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969) stated, "One appeals to values in order to induce the hearer to make certain choices rather than others and, most of all, to justify those choices so that they may be accepted and approved by others" (p. 75). When applied to the fire service, one could argue that the adoption of fire department core values is an attempt to persuade firefighters to act based on those values. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969) elucidated the role of values in group decision-making through their statement:

> To the extent that [values] are precisely formulated, they are simply seen to
> conform to the aspirations of particular groups. Their role is accordingly to justify
> choices on which there is not unanimous agreement by inserting these choices in a
> sort of empty frame with respect to which a wider agreement exists. (p. 76)

Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969) laid claims that through indoctrination of values, group leaders attempt to control group members. This indoctrination occurs when fire

department leaders have different values than firefighters and they work to institutionalize those values. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969) explained:

> The more the leaders of the group seek to increase their hold over its members' thought, the more numerous will be the meetings of an educational character, and some will go so far as to use threats or compulsion to make recalcitrants expose themselves to speeches that will impregnate them with the values held by the community. (p. 55)

Upon adoption of fire department core values and through the implementation of those core values, it could be argued that fire department leaders seek to control department members. This control may not necessarily be nefarious, but instead may seek to encourage logical decision-making and actions by members. For example, outsiders usually expect firefighters to be honest and fair. If fire department leaders adopt the core value of integrity, with the intention of encouraging honest and fair thought among firefighters, they are seeking to control behaviors, but in a positive way. However, the attempt to control thoughts by fire department leaders may not be successful when firefighters' individual values outweigh the department core values. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969) purported:

> Whatever the dominant values may be in a cultural milieu, the life of the mind cannot avoid relying on abstract values as well as concrete ones. It seems that there have always been people who attach more importance to one set than to the other; perhaps they form characterial families. In any case, their distinctive trait would not be complete neglect of values of one kind, but subordination of these values to those of the other. (p. 77)

Values then exist in a hierarchy and while members will still share values, they may not place the same importance on each value (Perelman, 1982). Perelman (1982) borrowed from Louis Lavelle's definition that asserted:

> The word 'value' applies wherever we deal with a 'break with indifference or with the equality of things, wherever one thing must be put before or above another, wherever a thing is judged superior and its merit is to be preferred.' (p. 26)

Perelman (1982) argued that values among specific groups allow for a greater understanding and agreement; however, Perelman (1982) clarified that when values are specified or applied to a specific situation, then the group could experience disagreements based on their understanding of that value and their own hierarchy of values. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's (1969) explanation of group attributes, the influence of perception and behavioral expectations, and the role of values in a group helps us understand the construction of the rhetorical firefighter identity.

Theory of Performativity

Since the rhetorical firefighter identity is socially constructed through acting together, and the fire service is predominantly male, an inherent masculine attribute exists in the firefighter identity. American philosopher and gender theorist Judith Butler provides a theoretical framework to help explore how gender performance correlates with the performance of socially constructed identities. Since firefighter identities are socially constructed and performed, Butler's theory of identity, constructed through repetitive and ritualized acts, is useful for understanding how the firefighter identity is constituted. Butler affirmed that gender is socially constructed through repetitive acts. Butler (1988) stated:

Further, gender is instituted through the stylization of the body and, hence, must be

understood as the mundane way in which bodily gestures, movements, and

enactments of various kinds constitute the illusion of an abiding gendered self. (p.

519)

Butler (1988) posited that gender is comprised of a series of acts, which are not limited to

merely physical acts, that Butler called performative acts. She stated, "the acts by which

gender is constituted bear similarities to performative acts within theatrical contexts"

(Butler, 1988, p. 521). Butler (1988) further explained:

Significantly, if gender is instituted through acts which are internally discontinuous,

then the *appearance of substance* is precisely that, a constructed identity, a

performative accomplishment which the mundane social audience, including the

actors themselves, come to believe and to perform in the mode of belief. (p. 520)

Butler (1988) elucidated how genders are socially constructed and how people learn to

perform—somewhat subconsciously—their genders from the world around them. Similar

to Perelman's idea that group members' behavior conforms to the idea a person has of the

members of a group, Butler believed that those behaviors are subconsciously learned

through repetitive acts (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1969).

Socially Constructed Identities

Butler (1988) suggested, "that the body becomes its gender through a series of acts

which are renewed, revised, and consolidated through time" (p. 523). Butler's theory of

performativity for socially constructed genders can also be applied to the socially

constructed rhetorical identity of firefighters, particularly because it is so clearly bound to

masculinity. As Butler (1988) explained, "gender is what is put on, invariably, under

constraint, daily and incessantly, with anxiety and pleasure" (p. 531). While the acts create the identity, they also create the ideas and expectations that we have about the identity. The rhetorical identity of firefighters is constructed under constraint and through societal expectations of heroism, physical strength, and masculinity (Cooper, 1995).

Butler explained that genders are considered abstract since each person's acts of gender vary and no two people will necessarily act out their gender in the same way. Butler disassociated the act of gender and physical body when she stated, "Genders can be neither true nor false, neither real nor apparent, neither original nor derived" (Butler, 1990, p. 193). In this same sense, firefighter identities are abstract, and they will not necessarily be acted out the same way among all firefighters. Firefighters are still individual group members and have their own interests, but when they are performing the role of firefighter, they work to meet societal expectations of a firefighter. Then, the repetitive acts of the shared job will be the same.

Butler (1990) stated, "This repetition is at once a reenactment and reexperiencing of a set of meanings already socially established; and it is the mundane and ritualized form of their legitimation" (191). As the acts of the firefighter have been reenacted and reexperienced over the years as a male-dominated profession, a heightened masculinity is expected in the firefighter identity (Cooper, 1995; Thurnell-Read & Parker, 2008). Butler (1988) explained, "It seems fair to say that certain kinds of acts are usually interpreted as expressive of a gender core or identity, and that these acts either conform to an expected gender identity or contest that expectation in some way" (527). While men's existence in the fire service conforms to the expected firefighter identity, women's existence in the fire service seems to contest the expectations of masculinity in firefighters.

Performativity Applied to Firefighters

Butler's theory of performativity, as applied to the rhetorical firefighter identity, allows for an understanding of how both men and women create their rhetorical identities as firefighters through the performance of repetitive acts. As the profession of firefighter has been masculinized, the firefighter identity is masculinized and, regardless of gender, firefighters who successfully create their rhetorical identities will be associated with masculine traits. Butler (1988) explained that through the social construction of gender identities, "masculinity or femininity, are also constituted as part of the strategy by which the performative aspect of gender is concealed" (p. 528). Women in the fire service are then forced to conceal femininity and navigate new or alternate gender identities when entering male-dominated career fields in order to identify with their fellow coworkers. Women must renegotiate their identities in order to fit in and avoid pervasive social division (Garcia-Retamero & López-Zafra, 2006; Monaghan, 2002). By participating in this male-dominated profession, women can renegotiate the meaning of their gender identities (Kvande, 1999). Their performative acts, while still under constraint, can help them successfully navigate male-dominated workplaces and entrenched group identities.

Masculinity

Butler (1990) claimed that "the feminine gender is marked," while "the universal person and the masculine gender are conflated" (p. 13). The rhetorical firefighter identity is fused with masculinity and denied femininity (Ainsworth et al., 2014). Masculinity in the fire service is perceived to be essential to fit in with male firefighters and to do the job safely (Wright, 2008). Firefighter masculinity is associated with physical strength, agility, and heroism (Ainsworth et al., 2014; Cooper, 1995). Ainsworth et al. (2014) also pointed

out "there is a strong cultural association between firefighting and certain prevalent versions of masculinity that value rationality, physical dominance more associated with manual labor, and the control of nature and competition" (p. 40). This version of masculinity reinforces our notion of the firefighter's masculine identity.

The heroic attribute of the firefighter identity is associated with power and privilege (Boon, 2005) and could be likened to hegemonic masculinity. Hegemonic masculinity is a gender hierarchy, with embodiment of privilege and power, designed to oppress women through subordination (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Hegemonic masculinity in the fire service can be attributed to acts of risk-taking, operation of powerful tools, absence of emotion, and perseverance during difficult tasks (Barrett, 1996). Hegemonic masculinity devalues femininity and perpetuates gender inequality (Bird, 1996). Traditional values of firefighting associated with hegemonic masculinity are strength, technical competence, leadership, teamwork, courage, and aggression (Maleta, 2009). The tasks of a firefighter are typically physically laborious, which tend to be viewed as masculine. Therefore, if a firefighter is to be successful in the rhetorical construction of the firefighter identity, then that identity must contain notes of masculinity. According to Ainsworth et al. (2011), if a masculinized language and culture are symptomatic of fire services and function to marginalize and alienate women, then women must be able to construct masculinity into their firefighter identity.

Summary

Firefighters are part of an entrenched group who, by Burke's idea of acting together to create belonging, create a collective rhetorical identity. While Burke's identification and consubstantiality create the firefighter identity, issues of alienation, paradox of substance,

and autonomy repulse the identity and can veritably strengthen it. Firefighters have an entrenched group identity, and they not only share a profession, but they also share a culture. The culture of firefighters is apparent in their day-to-day activities and through the shared values, beliefs, and expectations of the group. Perelman's explanation of group attributes, the influence of perception and behavioral expectations, and the role of values in a group helps us understand the rhetorical firefighter identity. Butler's theory of performativity, as applied to the rhetorical firefighter identity, allows for an understanding of how both men and women create their rhetorical identities as firefighters through the performance of repetitive acts. As the profession of firefighter has been masculinized, the firefighter identity is also masculinized regardless of the firefighter's gender. That identity includes shared values and expectations that when they are not aligned, work to exclude women.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

This chapter reviews the findings of a qualitative research study that examines core values in the fire service. Through the review of a 5-year sample of professional papers written by executive fire officers, I sought to determine how fire departments assign core values and how those values influence the rhetorical identity of the firefighter. Through the review and analysis of these papers, I found representation from a diverse sampling of fire departments across the United States, and one from Australia. Upon examining how firefighters view fire department core values, how core values are chosen, and the language used by the firefighters in the papers, I found that adopted core values do not substantially influence the rhetorical firefighter identity. The persistent use of gender-biased language in reference to firefighters, however, suggested that a more substantial role in the firefighter identity than core values is masculinity. This led me to search and review papers containing the keyword "gender," which revealed 11 papers, including three written by women. These "gender" papers explore ways to diversify the fire service and attempt to create a culture of inclusion and acceptance, signifying that one currently does not exist. The data found in the "gender" papers, combined with the insignificance of adopted core values in the "value" papers, validates the prevailing belief the rhetorical firefighter identity is saturated with masculinity.

Artifacts

As stated in Chapter 1, the primary body of research connected to fire department core values is the database of the NFA's EFO program papers. Officers write an applied research project paper after each class and these papers can be found on the NFA's library

website. The EFO papers investigate issues that are relevant to the fire service and they are meant to equip fire officers with the tools and knowledge to address similar issues in their own departments. The executive fire officer handbook stated that an applied research project should contain original research and "must add to 'what other people have already written or said about the research topic'" (United States Fire Administration [USFA], 2018, p. 18).

I began my qualitative study by searching the NFA library's database of published EFO papers for the keywords "values" and "gender" with a focus on papers that emphasize core values. I limited my search to the most recent submissions, those that have been published from 2015-2019. I did not include 2020 because the NFA was closed for most of the year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The searches yielded 50 executive fire officer papers on values and 11 papers on gender. The past 5 years of these EFO papers provide a clear representation of research conducted by fire service personnel regarding core values and gender in fire department organizations across the United States. This sample of papers also creates a picture of how executive fire officers across the country communicate to the fire service through writing, and also orally for those papers that include transcripts of interviews. The intended audience of these papers is fire service personnel, so the papers provide a representation of how fire officers convey information within the fire service itself.

I began the review of these papers by reading through each paper, noting any patterns or themes that emerged, and recording the fire department core values that were listed. The EFO papers cover topics such as identifying the need for a fire officer development program, identifying the need for a strategic plan, institutionalizing a

department vision, working in a department with generational differences, dealing with policy deviation, supporting fire prevention efforts, managing rapid growth, formalizing a professional development program, developing and implementing core values, assessing the culture of a department, improving department communication, and encouraging a culture of safety. I focused closely on the papers relating specifically to identification and implementation of core values, but I also noted structures of hierarchy among survey and interview responses between the ranks. I did not focus on the papers that only addressed generational differences or officer development. The papers containing the keyword "gender" exclusively focused on diversity recruitment and the retention of females and minorities. The EFO papers are considered by the fire service to be "contributing to fire service literature," which most papers identified a lack thereof (USFA, 2018, p. 18). The authors often cited a scarcity of scholarly research in the fire service, particularly relating to professional development, leadership, strategic planning, succession planning, and other areas outside of health-related research.

General Observations

I begin by discussing some general observations made as I researched the papers. The EFO papers followed a very formulaic outline in structure, but often also in prose. The papers are expected to relate back to a USFA strategic goal and, in doing so, they help the USFA achieve goals in their strategic plan at a local level. In accordance with the EFO program instructions for completing the applied research project, each paper contains the following elements: title page, certification statement, abstract, table of contents, introduction, background and significance, literature review, procedures, results, discussion, recommendations, references, and appendices.

The introduction and background sections describe the authors' fire department sizes, capabilities, communities they serve, and sometimes provide histories of their fire departments. These sections also introduce the identified problem to be researched in the paper by posing typically three to five research questions. The literature review is conducted through Google searches and the NFA library, which is located on the campus in Emmitsburg, Maryland. The library contains books relating to fire, emergency response, natural disaster, civil defense, and homeland security. It also houses historical fire service journals, which are collated fire magazine articles. The most popular fire service magazines include *Firehouse*, *Fire Chief*, *Fire Engineering*, and *FireRescue*. Often, the literature review includes leadership books that are assigned readings from the EFO classes.

The procedures section of the EFO papers describes what research methodology was employed. Approximately 75% of the EFO papers I reviewed employed descriptive research to determine and report the present status of an issue or situation (USFA, 2018, p. 31). While 16% employed action research to solve an existing problem, 7% employed evaluative research to collect and evaluate data, and 2% employed historical research to study and understand past events (USFA, 2018, p. 31). Despite the type of research identified in the papers, all but one of the authors conducted internal surveys in their fire departments. Some authors surveyed state and national professional organizations, such as the International Association of Fire Chiefs. Only a few authors surveyed outside of the fire service, such as stakeholder or community groups. One author surveyed other municipal employees outside the fire department. Some authors coupled surveys with interviews or focus groups. Many surveys and interview transcripts are included as appendices in the papers.

In the results sections of the papers, the authors generally reviewed the results of the surveys and interviews and in the discussion sections, they reiterated the results. Recommendations typically advocated for more research or to move forward with whatever plan was presented in the research questions of the paper. The research often seemed self-fulfilling due to the fire officer identifying a task or project that was already planned, then posing questions to the department members to determine that the task is important or worthwhile. Then, the recommendation of the paper was to move forward with the project. This indicates that either fire officers seek to validate their projects through their own EFO papers, or the paper is merely a rhetorical exercise completed to validate the USFA's strategic goals and earn the fire officer the EFO title.

Common Patterns

As I read through each paper, I noted common patterns or themes. Once patterns and themes were identified, I highlighted connections between them. This method helped to diagram the primary topics that warranted further evaluation. Finally, I made several more passes through the papers to identify outliers to common themes. It is important to note that while the regional sampling of the papers was widespread, nearly all were written by men. Overall, the research can be characterized as existing in what we might call an echo chamber.

Authored by Men

Of the 50 papers yielded by the search for "values," all were written by men, which is not surprising since only 8% of career and volunteer firefighters in the United States are women (Evarts & Stein, 2020). But even more staggering, only 4% of career firefighters are women (Evarts & Stein, 2020). The search for the keyword "gender" yielded 11 papers

written from 2015-2019. Of those papers, three papers were written by women and they all address diversity recruitment. Due to the low number of women firefighters, there is an even lower number of women who are chief officers that would be eligible for this EFO program; hence, the low number of papers written by women directly reflects the low number of women in executive fire officer positions.

Location

The locations of the authors' fire departments range across the United States, with one author from the Country Fire Authority of Victoria in Victoria, Australia. I did not note any significant regional differences; however, some fire departments described in the papers are large and metropolitan, while others are much smaller fire departments. The fire departments represented in the EFO papers can be found in Table 1.

Table 1

Fire Departments Represented in the Executive Fire Officer Papers

Fire Department	City	State
Barberton Fire Department	Barberton	OH
Bend Fire Department	Bend	OR
Boulder Fire-Rescue Department	Boulder	CO
Branson Fire and Rescue	Branson	MO
Cedar Rapids Fire Department	Cedar Rapids	IA
Cedar Rapids Fire Department	Cedar Rapids	IA
Cheyenne Fire & Rescue	Cheyenne	WY

Fire Department	City	State
Cheyenne Fire & Rescue	Cheyenne	WY
City of Greer Fire Department	Greer	NC
City of Santa Fe Fire Department	Santa Fe	NM
Clackamas Fire District	Milwaukie	OR
Country Fire Authority of Victoria	Burwood East	Australia
Durham Fire Department	Durham	NH
Edmond Fire Department	Edmond	OK
Edwardsville Fire Department	Edwardsville	IL
Fairborn Fire Department	Fairborn	OH
Fairfax County Fire and Rescue	Fairfax	VA
Farmington Fire Department	Farmington	MN
Flint Hill Fire Department	Fort Mill	SC
Frederick County, MD Division of Fire and Rescue Services	Frederick	MD
Frisco Fire Department	Frisco	TX
Gallatin Fire Department	Gallatin	TN
Golder Ranch Fire District	Tucson	AZ
Grayslake Fire Protection District	Grayslake	IL
Hamden Fire Department	Hamden	CT
Harrisonburg Fire Department	Harrisonburg	VA
Iona McGregor Fire District	Fort Myers	FL

Fire Department	City	State
Kansas City Fire Department	Kansas City	MO
Kingsport Fire Department	Kingsport	TN
Lake Stevens Fire	Lake Stevens	WA
Lane Fire Authority	Veneta	OR
Lewisburg Fire Department	Lewisburg	PA
McFarland Fire & Rescue	McFarland	WI
Meridian Township Fire Department	Okemos	MI
Milton Fire Department	Milton	GA
Monterey Park Fire Department	Monterey Park	CA
Nampa Fire Department	Nampa	ID
Nashville Fire Department	Nashville	TN
New Hanover County Fire Rescue	Wilmington	NC
Norfolk Fire-Rescue	Norfolk	VA
North Las Vegas Fire Department	North Las Vegas	NV
North Richland Hills Fire Dept.	North Richland Hills	TX
Omaha Fire Department	Omaha	NE
Palatine Fire Department	Palatine	IL
Portsmouth Fire, Rescue, and Emergency Services	Portsmouth	VA
Poudre Fire Authority	Fort Collins	CO
Provo Fire Department	Provo	UT

Fire Department	City	State
Richland Fire and Emergency Services	Richland	WA
Safety Harbor Fire Department	Safety Harbor	FL
Santa Fe County Fire Department	Santa Fe	NM
Sioux Falls Fire Rescue	Sioux Falls	SD
Sioux Falls Fire Rescue	Sioux Falls	SD
South King Fire & Rescue	Federal Way	WA
South King Fire & Rescue	Federal Way	WA
Stafford County Fire and Rescue	Stafford	VA
Valdosta Fire Department	Valdosta	GA
Virginia Beach Fire Department	Virginia Beach	VA
Wakefield Fire Department	Wakefield	MA
Waltham Fire Department	Waltham	MA
Wausau Fire Department	Wausau	WI
Winston-Salem Fire Department	Winston-Salem	NC

The geographical representation of the fire departments represented in the study,

excluding Country Fire Authority of Victoria, Australia, can be found in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Map of US Fire Departments Represented in the Study
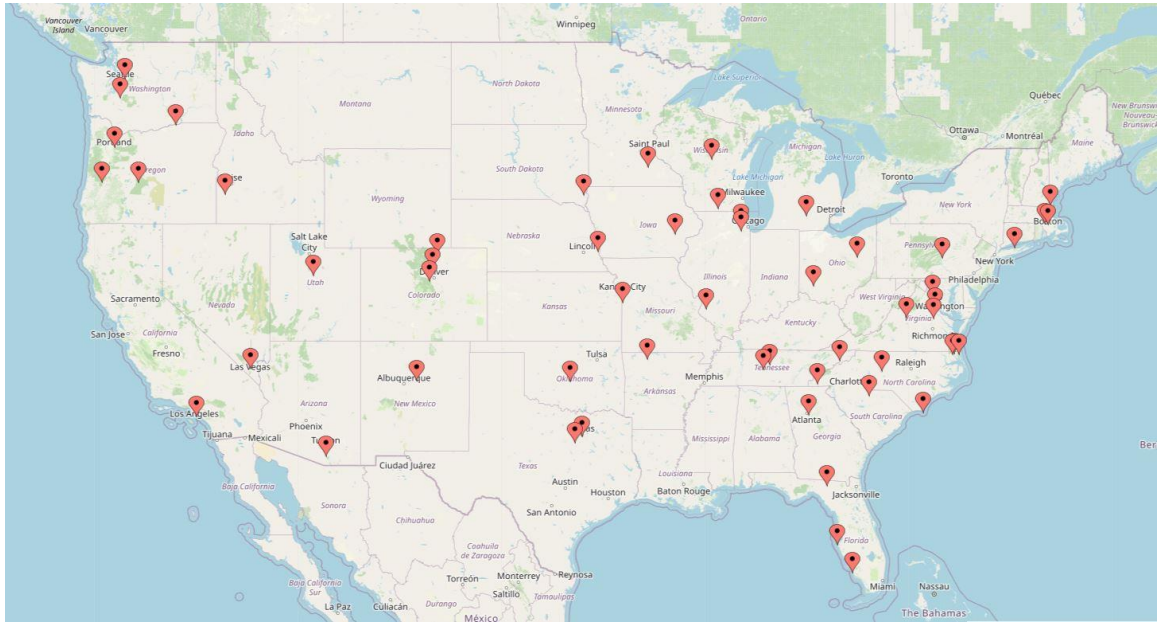
Echo Chamber

As I read through each paper and noted the reference section, I observed a lack of

diversity in the sources cited. The authors cite other EFO papers, documents produced by

the USFA, or internal department documents as their sources. Many papers cite website

articles and fire service magazine articles as sources; unfortunately, such resources tend to

be subjective and unsupported by research, often opinion-based short essays written from

the personal experience of fire service personnel. Few EFO papers list peer-reviewed

articles as references. Most books that were listed as references are assigned as class

readings, so the same few books appeared on many of the reference lists. The other books

found on the reference lists were fire service promotional books, which are used to study

for the exams required for promotion within the fire service. Many fire departments are

civil service and promote department members through a competitive exam; often, to avoid any legal issues with the test and to remain impartial, a fire department will use a testing company from which they purchase promotional tests. These tests have been validated by the distribution company so that there will be a low likelihood that a test question would get overturned or thrown out in court if it was challenged by a test taker. The source material for these promotional tests are often the same one to two dozen books on fire service operations and leadership. Most EFO paper authors state there is a lack of scholarly research on the fire service, though, as seen in my literature review, it does exist, if limited. It also did not appear that any authors attempted to apply research in other areas to the fire service. Therefore, this body of research appears to exist in an echo chamber: a perpetual recycling of limited, primarily non-academic research that exhibits a lack of new ideas.

Core Values

Generally, authors attempting to determine appropriate core values for their fire departments conducted interviews, strategic planning sessions, and surveys. Survey transcriptions revealed that many firefighters do not feel that their fire department's core values are operationalized, nor are they reflective of the fire department's culture. They also expressed that when leaders did not espouse the values, firefighters were not interested in espousing them either.

While the authors of the EFO papers had different methods for getting feedback on core values, they generally solicited that feedback from fire department members. One author held internal and external stakeholder meetings in order to get feedback for creating a strategic plan for his fire department (Grainger, 2019). He first conducted an

analysis of the department's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT). Next, he held open meetings where he queried the stakeholders on what services they value in the fire department. Based on the feedback from the internal stakeholders, which he noted represented every rank in the department, and the SWOT analysis results, the following core values were established for the fire department: courage, integrity, pride, respect, and service. He did not address how the core values would be operationalized and none of the strategic planning documents, nor the SWOT analysis documents, were included as appendices.

Many authors echoed the sentiment that they had difficulty operationalizing core values when the values chosen did not match the values held by the firefighters. In order to identify the success of implementing organizational values that represented the department's true values, one author surveyed several professional organizations of fire chiefs to find that 57% of respondents felt that the system they used to determine core values was effective (Shaumeyer, 2018). The systems used by the respondents to identify core values were as follows: focus groups (45%), surveys (17%), labor/management input (20%), and consultants (18%). The survey also identified the percentage of the department that was invited to participate in the process of identifying core values, which ranged from 10%-100%, with the low and high ends receiving the most responses. Only 56% of the survey respondents felt that the core values had been successfully implemented into policies and organizational goals. When given the opportunity to add any additional comments, the author received feedback that employing a consultant to determine core values did not result in firefighter buy-in of the values.

One author listed the following core values from his department's strategic plan: accountability, dependability, integrity, respect, excellence, compassion, and trust (Hurguy, 2017). He noted that the strategic plan not only outlines each value, but also demonstrates each value in a contextual sentence to provide a shared meaning for firefighters. When context of the values is provided, the firefighters were better able to envisage those values as they are operationalized in their daily actions and tasks. Another author, who worked for a very large metropolitan fire department of approximately 650 department members, claimed his department adopted the following core values in 2015: compassion, professionalism, and integrity (Langlois, 2017). Two years later, he reassessed how the values impacted the culture and decision-making of department members. Overall, the majority of the respondents claimed the core values were observed in the daily actions of peers and supervisors, but they were not observed in fire department management. Respondents also claimed that the adopted core values were personal values that are already present in firefighters and in people drawn to the job of firefighter. They stated that the core values were operationalized because they are inherent in many firefighters and not because someone hung a poster on the wall of the fire station with the values listed on it. Several respondents felt the department did not hold people accountable to the core values and they were merely words with no meaning behind them. The respondents agreed that they wanted the values exemplified in their department leaders.

Another author also suggested development of behavior statements to help further clarify the meaning and context of the values (Gabrenya, 2016). This author ensured he received feedback from all levels of his department by creating a strategic planning committee whose members represented every rank. He then conducted a department

survey and personal interviews to determine the fire department core values. The top 10

identified personal values of firefighters were: family, teamwork, integrity, honesty, trust,

compassion, respect, reliability, attitude, and competence. The top five identified values

that respondents wanted as organizational core values were: trust, respect,

communication, openness, and transparency. The top five overall values identified in the

survey were: respect, teamwork, trust, integrity, and compassion. Survey respondents

highly valued family, but they did not believe that it should be an organizational core value.

When two fire agencies merged, a committee selected by management was

assembled to develop organizational values for the newly merged organization. The author

explained that values were chosen through email communication, along with contextual

statements, and posters were hung at the fire stations displaying the new values of fairness,

innovation, responsibility, and ethics (F.I.R.E.; Heppel, 2016). The author stated that there

were no other reinforcements of the values and firefighters beheld the department values

in conflict with the values held by individual department members. The author cited that

common fire department core values include honesty, integrity, pride, courage,

professionalism, and service. He quoted former fire chief Rick Lasky (2006), when he

claimed that a good firefighter should have pride, honor, and integrity. Rick Lasky is a

former fire chief in Lewisville, Texas and now has written a book on fire service leadership.

The author surveyed his organization and found that members selected the following

values as most important: integrity, honesty, family, compassion, and pride. When asked

open-ended questions for recommendations to implement the department values,

respondents replied that chief officers should embody the values and ensure all

department members understand the values. The author also surveyed other fire

departments and inquired what core values they had adopted and how they were

communicated. The following values were cited for the surveyed organizations:

- Safety above all else, open and honest communication, trust, integrity, respect of community and members, teamwork, fiscally responsible (Siuslaw Valley Fire Rescue, Florence, Oregon)

- Dedication, excellence, honor, integrity, respect, safety (Greeley FD, Colorado)

- Professionalism, responsibility, integrity, duty, everyone goes home (PRIDE; Harris County ESD 13, Texas)

- Service, honor, integrity (Moraga-Orinda Fire District)

- Honesty, service, honor, valor, respect (Glassy Mountain FD)

- Integrity, leadership, fairness, professionalism, trust, respect (Albuquerque FD)

- Professionalism, Integrity, Compassion (Overland Park FD)

- Safety and performance, customer service, professionalism (Pleasant Hill and Goshen Fire Districts

Similar to survey responses in other EFO papers, the organizations replied that they

communicate their core values through posters hung in the fire stations, on department

letterhead, on social media, through discussions in training academies, and through day-to-

day interactions.

One author conducted a survey to department members to seek feedback on values

that would improve decision-making. The top 10 values identified in the survey by the fire

department personnel were: professionalism, integrity, safety, teamwork, accountability,

pride, service, dedication, reliable, and dependable (Morris, 2016). The top 10 values

displayed by fire department members from the perspective of other city departments

were: professionalism, teamwork, dedication, safety, integrity, courage, service, dependable, pride, and honor. The top 10 values displayed by fire department members from the perspective of the citizens were: professionalism, dedication, integrity, safety, courage, accountability, service, dependable, responsibility, and excellence. Upon consideration of these values, the author proposed the following values to be adopted by his fire department: professionalism, integrity, safety, teamwork, and excellence. During a focus group meeting with 16 officers present from the suppression and administration divisions, the author revealed that three to five core values were ideal and easily recollected. The author also found focus group members preferred core values that represented the department membership over values that made up an acronym, and they felt the values should serve as guiding posts for decision-making in the absence of a policy to follow.

Approximately 59% of fire departments across the country had a defined set of core values, as one author found through a feedback instrument emailed to members of the International Association of Fire Chiefs and the Chief Fire Officer Management Training participants at the Massachusetts Fire Academy (Purcell, 2015). He emailed 907 fire officers and received 179 responses. Of the departments that had established core values, the top six most common values were: integrity, professionalism, teamwork, courage, duty, and honor. However, only 18% of the respondents believed their organizations were reflecting the values through their behaviors and actions. When asked how core values were institutionalized, respondents cited through personal interactions, posting banners, printing the core values on business cards and challenge coins, posting on their websites and social media, weaving them into the policies and strategic plan, and in handbooks and

published internal documents. Some of the respondents stated the core values were not institutionalized and their department had no follow up with members on communicating the core values. The author also emailed the feedback instrument to the 51 members of his department and received 41 responses. The top core values identified by fire department members through the survey were: integrity, professionalism, accountability, teamwork, courage, duty, and honor. When asked how best to institutionalize the core values in the department, the department members focused most on communication and action over printed materials. Many members stated the department management should lead by example. Finally, the author emailed the feedback instrument to 75 local stakeholders and received 43 responses. The top core values of the department that were recognized by the stakeholders were: accountability, integrity, professionalism, duty, teamwork, safety, and courage. The stakeholders also believed the best way to institutionalize the values was to lead by example and remind department members regularly. After conducting focus group meetings, the author proposed the following department core values: integrity, professionalism, accountability, teamwork, courage, and duty.

By capturing the institutional knowledge of the leadership, one author claimed that future success of the organization is dependent upon mentoring and succession planning (Aust, 2018). He noted the core values that must be passed on to new members of the department are teamwork, integrity, and excellence. Several authors cite that activities of the department must align with the core values and purpose of the organization.

Gender and Diversity

Gender-biased language was present in the survey responses of a number of EFO papers, even those that did not explicitly aim to deal with gender. Authors who included

transcriptions of interviews showed that firefighters were often referred to as "guys" or "brothers" and the fire service is often referred to as the "brotherhood." I found 17 instances of the words "brother" or "brotherhood" across nine separate papers. Four of those papers used the phrase "brother/sister" or "brotherhood/sisterhood." There were 26 instances of firefighters referred to as "guys" across eight papers and nine references to "fireman" or "firemen" across three papers. These gender-biased references revealed the embedded notions of masculinity in the firefighter identity.

Generally, the three of the "gender" EFO papers written by women were more thoroughly researched and displayed a more personal tone. All the "gender" papers advocated for targeted recruiting, resources (time and budget) allocated for recruitment, community assessment, and follow up. To prepare firefighters to work with women, one EFO paper, authored by a woman, advocated a gender diversity training program (Bednarcik, 2019). She noted that in her department, women have completed the physical ability test, which is a requirement to be hired, whereas some men are unable to complete the test. She also commented that older fire stations may not have separate bathroom and shower facilities for women, which can create awkwardness. She stated that the fire departments should create their own anti-discrimination policies that go beyond what federal laws require. She commented that many females do not report instances of discrimination or harassment for fear of retaliation. This author's fire department featured females at almost every rank and was just at the national average with 4% female representation of firefighters. She stated that the more important issue than hiring women is recognizing that women have a place in fire departments' services. She goes on to explain that all firefighters should learn and understand the value of diversity in the workplace.

She cited that a smaller framed woman could be better equipped for a confined space rescue than a large, muscular man, though this comment is, itself, gender-biased.

All EFO papers echoed the sentiment that fire departments do not represent the community they serve in gender or diversity. Another EFO paper written by a woman pointed out the value in employing women firefighters; for example, when responding to rape or domestic violence calls, women patients might be more comfortable with another woman caring for them (Connolly, 2019). She stated that while firefighting is still a very physically demanding profession, the majority of fire service calls have shifted to emergency medical care, which requires more compassion and empathy. She believes that mixed gender teams are more valuable than single gender teams, and they have better collaboration and increased sensitivity. She also recommended that fire departments create anti-harassment policies, breast-feeding and pregnancy policies. She advocated for targeted recruiting to attract more women to the profession of firefighting. When she interviewed her fire chief, and inquired about a line item budget for recruiting, he began to explain that he was not supportive of lowering the hiring standards in order to hire more females. He stated that one out of 100 women could do the job at the same level that he would want. His suggestion to improve diversity was to get young athletic women interested in the fire service.

To determine if firefighters thought their department had a culture that is respectful of ethnic and gender diversity, one author surveyed department members on their personal experience during their hiring processes (Lanier, 2019). Approximately 93% of the respondents felt the department had a culture respectful of diversity and 6% responded felt they did not. In interpreting these results, it is important to note that the

author stated his fire department demographic makeup contains 2% minority and 3% female. Two chief officers were interviewed about the hiring process. One chief officer claimed that until the organization became accepting of cultures and recognized inclusion as a strength, it would be difficult to reflect diversity within the ranks. The other chief officer noted that historical beliefs about the fire service included that one cannot be female and do the job of firefighter. The author outlined the following recommendations to improve diversity: setting up processes to collect details on recruiting, selection, and hiring; following a defined improvement process to allow for monitoring, evaluation, and follow up; and focusing on improving internal organizational views of inclusion as key to achieving diversity goals.

Two EFO papers included 10 key initiatives to achieve and retain a diverse workforce from the International Association of Firefighters (IAFF). One author noted that the articles and research for his literature review on diversity in the fire service was heavily laden with opinion and generational bias. He recommended the creation of a diversity taskforce, a formal recruiting program, and to monitor the program's progress (Andrews, 2017). Another author observed that departments who had increased their number of women firefighters had difficulty retaining those firefighters (Hallock, 2017). He cited that at one point, San Diego, CA had 13% female representation of firefighters, then it decreased to 2% years later, which he felt was due to the unwelcoming environment for women in the fire stations. Another author noted the same trend in Boulder, CO where the percentage of female firefighters was 18% in 1992 and then 6% in 2015 (Brown, 2016). The author stated that one reason for the decrease could be due to retirements, but she attributed it more to women's lack of interest in the job of firefighter.

When a woman fire chief, who had 20% female representation of firefighters in her fire department (and another female fire chief had 21% female representation) was interviewed by one author, she stated that women may not be attracted to the fire department because 24-hour shifts would be difficult to work if one is thinking of, or already has started a family (Boutwell, 2016). The interviewed fire chief also noted that advertising is not enough to recruit women and she criticized the physical ability test because it is completed by each person individually but, in reality, firefighters work in teams on the job. This author also interviewed recruiters from the Navy and Air Force. While the Air Force does not target women, the Navy includes women in their recruitment literature and they recruit at gyms, health food stores, and any areas where they might find fit females. The Navy currently has 20% female representation, with a goal of 40%.

An Australian author noted that the fire service in Australia equally lacked diversity and was made up of mostly White males (O'Day, 2016). He asserted that the fire service was primarily volunteer with approximately 60,000 volunteer firefighters spread across 1,216 fire stations. He commented that women firefighters thought other women were probably discouraged by the physical testing and would rather work in police or emergency medical services. He commented that a Malaysian firefighter felt marginalized when he was hired, but once the other firefighters got to know him, he felt that he was treated the same. While affirmative action plans aim to diversify the workforce, one author found that mandated diversity plans created a system of compliance over a culture of inclusion.

Power Structures

Power structures inherently exist in fire departments because of the hierarchy of supervisors, or chain-of-command system. Within these power structures exist opportunities for leadership and opportunities for authority. The EFO papers, written by authors seeking opportunities for leadership, suggest that firefighters often observe their supervisors taking the opportunities for authority. Many survey responses indicated that firefighters felt management did not choose core values that represent the culture of the fire department, nor did they see management embody those chosen core values. There was also an obvious lack of communication between chief officers and firefighters noted in the papers.

In seeking the reason behind deviation from department policies, one author surveyed internal department members and the state fire chief's association (Barteck, 2019). The survey results were combined so I was unable to decipher the comments made by chiefs as opposed to the comments by firefighters. However, many comments expressed a common feeling that management inconsistently enforced policies. Comments stated that management used policies as a mechanism to discipline employees. The comments also noted that management did not follow the policies they enforced and policies were often implemented with little input from the ranks. Some respondents felt that management cared more about politics and making money than policies that help protect firefighters. A respondent commented that management creates policies that are difficult for members to follow and when the policy is not followed, depending on who did not follow the policy and if they are in favor with management, the member may be disciplined.

A transcription of a conversation between a battalion chief and fire chief showed the lack of communication that exists between ranks in one author's fire department. The battalion chief felt excluded from budget meetings, and he felt like the fire chief was not communicating effectively with him. One respondent commented that including more department members in processes and meetings can help improve morale and disseminate information. Other respondents echoed that they wanted more information from the fire chief. The respondents felt that fire department management withheld important information.

Written survey responses included in one author's paper suggested what methods or strategies could be implemented to change the organizational culture and maximize the value and effectiveness of the service the department delivers (Smith, 2015). The author organized responses by rank of the respondent and included the responses in an appendix. The chief officers noted a sense of brotherhood and sisterhood in the department and suggested more consistency and training for future leaders as ways to improve the culture. The support staff suggested more training and consistency. The operations-level staff (captains and firefighters) noted that they would like more transparency and noted there was a lack of trust between management and the shift firefighters. One respondent stated that the chiefs and assistant chiefs never visited the stations, which created a disconnect between the two divisions. Another respondent requested that the middle management be more tightly controlled for better continuity. A respondent noticed that employees in positions of influence did not have good relationships with employees in similar positions, which created inefficiencies. Several respondents commented that communication between shifts and management needed improvement, but then referred to the presence of a "good

ol' boy" club, citing that some officers retain and restrict information from everyone else and are not open to new ideas. A shift captain explained that challenging each other does not implicitly question one's authority, but instead ask questions and help make leaders better. One respondent claimed that there are department members on the list for promotion whose leadership no one would want to be under. Members who are ill-prepared for a promotion will not have the respect of the firefighters.

Culture

Several authors sought to audit their fire department's culture. After interviewing six internal fire department members ranging from chief to firefighter, one author then sent out a survey to department members on the importance of supporting fire prevention and community risk reduction efforts (Blay, 2019). Each interviewee understood and acknowledged the importance of supporting fire prevention efforts in order to reinforce positive relationships between the fire department divisions (operations and prevention divisions). However, among those department members surveyed, approximately 55% did not agree that the fire department emphasized fire prevention as an important part of job responsibilities and 35% did not agree that the fire department culture did not support fire prevention efforts. However, of those surveyed, 100% believed that fire prevention is the responsibility of every firefighter and 97% believed that a fire department culture that supports fire prevention efforts builds trust, communication, and cooperation between divisions.

One author surveyed the fire department on the importance of fire prevention efforts (Elkins, 2016). Approximately 49% of the respondents valued suppression activities (fighting fires) over prevention activities, and 60% of the respondents did not agree that

the department recognized the top three risks in the community. The majority of the respondents did not agree that the department members understood the goals and direction of the department, nor did they agree that innovation and risk-taking was encouraged and rewarded. The survey sent to different ranking firefighters of other fire departments revealed that 75% of respondents believed suppression activities were valued over prevention activities.

Summary

This chapter reviewed the findings of a qualitative research study that examines core values in the fire service. I examined a 5-year sample of professional papers written by executive fire officers. These papers provided insight into how firefighters view fire department core values and how core values are chosen. The findings also included the review of gender-related professional papers. I sought to determine how fire departments assign core values and how those values contribute to the rhetorical identity of the firefighter. I found the following common themes in these EFO papers: value misalignment between management and firefighters, firefighter disconnection from values, gender and diversity issues, and stagnant research. The discussion of my findings is presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION/CONCLUSION

My analysis of data from the NFA's EFO applied research papers, referred to in this

dissertation as EFO papers, was designed to answer the research question: how do fire

department core values influence the rhetorical construction of the firefighter identity?

Through qualitative discourse analysis, I examined data from 50 EFO papers with the

keyword "values" and 11 EFO papers with the keyword "gender" published on the NFA's

library website from 2015-2019. These papers provide significant information about the

ways that fire departments select and employ organizational core values. I ultimately found

that assigned core values do not substantially influence the rhetorical firefighter identity. I

also found that a more constitutive value in the firefighter identity is masculinity. This

chapter reviews data from the findings, identifies and explores the trends found in the EFO

papers, and links the data to the theoretical framework presented in Chapter 3.

Summary of Results

The EFO papers provided insight into how firefighters view fire department core

values and how core values are chosen, as well as illuminating gender-related issues and

other problems created by inherent power structures in the fire service. I found the

following common themes in the papers: value misalignment between management and

firefighters; firefighter disconnection from values, gender and diversity issues; and

stagnant research. Overall, the adoption of fire department core values appears to be an

empty practice of organizational rhetoric. While the process is traditional to strategic

planning in the fire service, it can be severely devalued by the disconnection between

adopted fire department core values, the fire department culture, and firefighter behaviors.

Values

The most prominent theme I found in the EFO papers was the lack of value

alignment. I also found a strong disconnection between the core values claimed by fire

departments and the rhetorical firefighter identity. When fire department core values were

identified by processes outlined in the papers, they did not appear to align with the

personal values of the firefighters, nor with the culture of the firefighters. Overall, the

process of adopting fire department core values appears to be an empty rhetorical process

that does not affect the behaviors of the firefighters, due to the misalignment of values

between firefighters and chief officers and the inaction or ineffectiveness of

operationalizing the values.

Value Misalignment

Most authors of the EFO papers conducted surveys, stakeholder meetings, and

feedback sessions to help determine their department's core values. Given that their

feedback was solicited, along with other department members, it seems clear that

firefighters are involved in the process of selecting core values and would therefore be

invested in those core values. According to Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's (1969)

concept of group attributes, the firefighters will act based on the expectations of the group.

Following this idea, firefighters in a department that have adopted the core value of

"excellence" should exhibit excellence, in the manner defined by their organization. The

disconnect between organizational core values and firefighters' response to them seems to

suggest, however, that they identify much more strongly with the profession of firefighter

and their fellow firefighters than with the organization as a whole.

Another important theme that emerged is the disconnect between word and action, between symbolic language and *praxis*. Some EFO authors stated that once the core values were determined, they were published in email signatures, printed on posters and hung in the fire stations, and printed on business cards. This attempt to inculcate firefighters is an example of organizational rhetoric and an exercise commonly practiced in an effort to operationalize fire department core values. Fire department management hopes to promote values that will influence the daily behaviors of the firefighters. However, according to one author's survey, if core values are disseminated without any context, the members of the organization feel disconnected from the values (Smith, 2015). In order for the firefighters to truly understand and operationalize core values, they must first have a common understanding of what those core values mean in the context of the firefighter identity. The author noted if the core values are disseminated with example sentences to illustrate said core values in a firefighter's behavior, then the values were more meaningful and identifiable to the firefighters (Smith, 2015). Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969) assert that the shared beliefs and values of group members contribute to acting together. Since the firefighters do not necessarily share the core values chosen by their superiors, however, they are not part of their constitutive identity. One author's survey found that firefighters felt certain common core values already existed in the types of people drawn to the job of firefighter (Langlois, 2017). This would indicate that it does not matter what core values a fire department rhetorically adopts, because the firefighters already inherently embody the values that they perceive to be crucial to the job. Then, the shared values that Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca attributed to agreement and acting together are not the

core values chosen by the fire department, but instead they are personal values that firefighters believe the group to have.

Department core values, as assigned as part of an organizational exercise, may also be misaligned with the personal values of firefighters. Another author's survey in an EFO paper found that firefighters chose different personal values for themselves than the values they chose to represent the organization (Gabrenya, 2016). The firefighters chose personal values that centered around family, compassion, and integrity. The values they chose for the fire department centered around trust, respect, communication, openness, and transparency. This misalignment highlights the fact that firefighters differentiate organizational core values from their own held personal values.

Another common theme among the EFO papers was the disengagement between firefighters and fire department management. One EFO author found that chief officers are more interested in promoting core values through written and visual communication, while firefighters prefer to see core values operationalized in the actions and behaviors of their leaders (Purcell, 2015). Firefighters were less inclined to embody core values when they could not recognize those core values in the actions of their chief officers. This notion suggests that firefighters are disengaged from chief officers and the two groups are no longer consubstantial. While the chief officers are still firefighters in name, they do not perform the daily tasks of the firefighters due to their administrative roles. Their rhetorical identity has evolved from a firefighter to a manager and, as a manager, their values are not aligned with those of the firefighter. Instead, they are in the position of assigning and enforcing department core values. With that loss of consubstantiality, department

management and chief officers are ill-equipped to choose department core values that are part of the firefighter identity.

Respondents of another author's survey claimed that, in fact, chief officers sometimes weaponize the adopted core values in order to discipline firefighters (Barteck, 2019). In these instances, firefighters reported that core values were not consistently expected, but when a chief officer needed to discipline a firefighter, then the core values became an expectation to which the firefighter was held accountable. This practice exemplifies Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's (1969) idea that in an effort to control or influence group members, group leaders will make attempts to expose those not in alignment with the group values, through threats or compulsion. Regardless of fire department management and chief officers' motivation for using adopted core values as a tool of discipline or incentive, the misalignment of values, and the effort to control behaviors through the adoption of values, is extant.

Gender and Diversity

The initial research for this study was aimed at discovering how fire department core values were adopted and their influence on the rhetorical firefighter identity. Upon review of the literature, I found that fire departments are considered gendered organizations and firefighter is typically viewed as a masculine profession (Acker, 1990; Britton, 2000; Cooper, 1995; Thurnell-Read & Parker, 2008). I found that masculinity is the primary constitutive value in the rhetorical firefighter identity, as they must repeatedly "act together" in ways that reinforce masculinity in order to be accepted in the profession. This was reinforced in the EFO papers, as I found gender-biased language in the survey responses of several papers. Authors who included transcriptions of interviews showed

that firefighters were often referred to as "guys" or "brothers." The fire service is often referred to as the "brotherhood," and the EFO papers repeatedly reflected instances of "brother" or "brotherhood." Several authors used the phrase "brother/sister" or "brotherhood/sisterhood," which attempted to include men and women in the "brotherhood." However, these gender-biased references reveal the embedded notions of masculinity in the firefighter identity, which led me to include the role of gender as it pertains to the adoption of core values in this study.

The fire service has a notoriously low representation of women, so it is unsurprising that only three of the 61 EFO papers were written by women. Only 4% of full-time career firefighters in the United States are women (Evarts & Stein, 2020). Women in the fire service have historically faced issues of discrimination, biases, and judgement based on their perceived ability to do the job of a firefighter (Ainsworth et al., 2014; Chetkovich, 2004; Haddock et al., 2017; Jahnke et al., 2019; Maleta, 2009; Perrott, 2016; Wright, 2008; Yoder & Aniakudo, 1996; Yoder & Berendsen, 2001).

Diversity Recruitment

In addition to the misalignment of values between management and firefighters, a misalignment of values also exists in the area of gender and diversity recruitment. There were 10 EFO papers containing the keyword "gender" and they primarily addressed gender and diversity recruitment. While these authors explored reasons why the representation of women firefighters is so low, they cited multiple incidents of marginalized firefighters feeling uncomfortable and unwelcome at fire stations. The authors described encounters of bullying, discrimination, and harassment. One author (Bednarcik, 2019) pointed to the hypocrisy in the Firefighters Code of Ethics, which stated, "Never discriminate on the basis

of race, religion, color, creed, age, marital status, national origin, ancestry, gender, sexual preference, medical condition or handicap" and further stated, "Never harass, intimidate or threaten fellow members of the fire service or the public and stop to report the actions of other firefighters who engage in such behaviors" (USFA, 2022). It is a common practice when firefighters are sworn in with their fire department to vow to abide by the Firefighter Code of Ethics. When firefighters vow to never discriminate, harass, or bully, yet these are all common occurrences for women and minorities in the fire service, then the Firefighter Code of Ethics becomes another empty rhetorical exercise of organizational rhetoric, just as the adoption of core values. The most commonly cited core value in the EFO papers is integrity, which is cited as an adopted core valued by 23 fire departments; however, behaviors of discrimination and harassment completely lack integrity. Other cited core values that should seemingly prevent discriminatory behaviors are compassion, excellence, honor, professionalism, respect, and teamwork. Again, this reinforces my claim that core values are excluded from the rhetorical firefighter identity.

Several authors of EFO papers that address diversity interviewed chiefs in their departments. The resounding sentiment of the chiefs was that none of the fire departments reflect the diversity of the community they serve, but they should. The chiefs that were interviewed claimed they place a high importance on diversity and want to diversify their departments but had been unsuccessful. The recommendations by all of the authors can be summarized as: create a culture that values diversity, foster attitudes of acceptance and inclusion, receive a commitment by management to actively recruit women and minorities, and partner with diverse organizations in the community for recruitment assistance.

The lack of diversity in the fire service is recognized on a national level. The IAFF and the International Association of Fire Chiefs are the two largest organizations in the United States committed to serving firefighters. Both organizations tout numerous articles, initiatives, and education on diversity recruitment, as does the USFA. Therefore, it is recognized that diversity is essential and imperative to the success of the fire service. Yet, the fire service remains unsuccessful in diversifying, and of the 61 EFO papers, there is not one mention of diversity as a fire department core value. Professional organizations may espouse a commitment to diversifying the fire service, but the lack of diversity as a core value suggests that chief officers are not committed to diversity.

Alienation

Even though the lack of commitment to diversity is apparent, the lingering perception by firefighters is that their departments value diversity. One EFO author surveyed his fire department to determine if members believed that ethnic and gender diversity was valued (Lanier, 2019). He surveyed all of the firefighters and found that approximately 93% of the respondents agreed the department valued diversity and 6% respondents disagreed. While this statistic would initially indicate that value is placed on diversity and a culture of inclusion is present, the vast majority of the fire service (and of this author's fire department) is White and male. Therefore, the 93% of firefighters who claimed the department valued diversity most likely did so because their gender and ethnicity is largely represented. The 6% who responded that the department did not value diversity is more representative of the small, diverse population of the fire service.

Those firefighters who do not feel that their fire department values diversity illustrate Burke's alienation. They are alienated by the 93% of firefighters who are

oblivious that in the fire service, diversity is not appreciated nor is it observed. One chief officer that was interviewed for this EFO paper stated that until the organization becomes accepting of more diverse cultures and recognizes inclusion as a strength, it would be difficult to reflect diversity within the ranks (Lanier, 2019). This comment reinforces my claim that it is not what fire departments *say* they value but how they *act* that constitutes their group identity.

Exclusion

Another chief officer interviewed for an EFO paper noted that historical beliefs about the fire service included that one cannot be female and do the job of firefighter (Lanier, 2019). The historical belief that one cannot be female and do the job of firefighter is still held throughout the fire service despite the standardized physical ability test, which several authors noted is a requirement in their fire departments to be hired. The standardized physical ability test is a common requirement to be hired in most career fire departments, and it demonstrates that women are able to complete the same physical tasks as men that are necessary to do the job. When firefighters maintain the belief that women cannot physically do the job of a firefighter, then, as Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's (1969) theory would explain, they not only perpetuate that expectation within their group, but also reinforce to outsiders that expectation as a reality. Some women may not pursue the job of firefighter because they believe they can not physically do the job.

Historically, fire departments have used the physical ability test to disqualify women from their hiring process (Chetkovich, 2004). In doing so, they are gendering not only the physical ability test, but also the hiring process. Acker (1990) claimed that gendering of organizational processes is posited on the prior exclusion of women. Prior to

the 1970s, many fire departments did not allow women to be firefighters. In 1977, the New York City Fire Department (FDNY) allowed women to apply for the job of firefighter, but they also changed their physical ability test to increase the difficulty for women to pass (Chetkovich, 2004). By gendering the hiring process, the FDNY strategically worked to exclude women while maintaining the public perception that women could be hired. Of the 90 women who applied and participated in the physical ability test, none of the women passed. One of the first women to legally battle discriminatory use of the physical ability test was Brenda Berkman. After Berkman and all the other women failed the physical ability test for the FDNY, she organized a class-action lawsuit and won. She and 40 other women were hired by the FDNY in 1982 (Chetkovich, 2004). That lawsuit forced fire departments to change their physical ability tests to reflect job-related tasks. Throughout her career, Berkman experienced repeated instances of harassment and bullying because she fought to be hired in an organization where she was not welcome. Even when a woman successfully attains a job as a firefighter, she still may not have a sense of belonging with the other firefighters, particularly when they have gendered processes that exclude women.

In *Fire Engineering*, David Hollenbach (2014) commented that the lack of women in the fire service is often attributed to "lack of agility, upper body strength, and stamina generally attributed to feminine characteristics." Hollenbach (2014) further explained:

> The fact that women pass the same physical requirements tests as the men to gain employment also disputes this. Gender does not automatically predispose a person to a higher or lower aptitude for firefighting.

The idea of gender and the notions of masculinity and femininity are critical factors to be explored in women firefighters, despite the fact that actual biological differences in women in no way prevent them from performing the physical tasks of the firefighter. Butler (1988) drew from Simone de Beauvoir and Maurice Merleau-Ponty when she discussed the idea that women and women's bodies are an historical situation constrained by exterior perception. Even though women are required to pass the same physical ability test as men, they are perceived to lack physical strength due to their feminine characteristics. Hall et al. (2007) suggested that the question about women's ability to do the physical work of a firefighter is "undercut with tensions around their potentially disruptive effect upon the complex hierarchies of male sociality" (p. 541). Women firefighters can fulfill the technical tasks of the job, but they cannot perform the role of firefighter without the performance of masculinity. So, women in the fire service are at an immediate disadvantage when historical beliefs surrounding their bodies emit the perception that they cannot physically do the job of firefighter. Then, that disadvantage is compounded by the idea that women will disturb the male order.

No Place to Stand

For one EFO author, more important than hiring women in the fire service is the issue of even recognizing that women have a place in fire department services (Bednarcik, 2019). As explained in the previous section, since most fire departments require every firefighter to pass the same physical ability test, the physical body of a firefighter should not matter. However, since a muscular body is associated with physical strength, and therefore masculinity, then women's bodies are rhetorically excluded from the firefighter identity. Butler (1988) would liken this exclusion to "the more mundane reproduction of

90

gendered identity that takes place through the various ways in which bodies are acted in relationship to the deeply entrenched or sedimented expectations of gendered existence" (p. 524). The firefighter identity is deeply entrenched in those gendered expectations. While those expectations act as an agency working to exclude women, the perceptions of women's bodies must be reframed to expose value in the diversity of bodies, not assignment of value based on the physical size of the body. Butler (1990) cited Beauvoir when she stated, "the female body ought to be the situation and instrumentality of women's freedom, not a defining and limiting essence" (p. 16). However, Butler (1990) advocated separating the idea of freedom from any associations of the female body.

Gendered expectations of a firefighter's body put women firefighters at constant odds with any suggestion that they belong in the fire service, even in very practical terms. For example, uniforms have presented challenges for women firefighters. Two authors of EFO papers cited that uniforms and safety equipment are less likely to fit a woman properly, because they are made for men. Ill-fitting uniforms and safety equipment could not only be hazardous, but also serve as a daily reminder to women that their bodies do not belong. Older fire stations also present challenges for women. Bednarcik (2019) stated that women in her fire department did not have separate bathroom and shower facilities and they had no adequate place to change clothes, which invites harassment and inappropriate comments from the male firefighters. Typically, in older fire stations, the beds are in a bunk room with little privacy and the bathrooms are communal spaces. Women in these fire stations find themselves in awkward situations when they must share these spaces with men. Again, due to the historical situation of their bodies, women are subjected to exclusion and harassment.

Discrimination

In addition to a lack of appropriate facilities for women firefighters, they are often not protected by SOPs. One author noted a lack of policies regarding pregnancy and lactation, which should be implemented to protect women during and after their pregnancy (Connolly, 2019). Most fire departments do not have these policies in place since they have such a small, if any, representation of women who would be affected. Another author noted that her department did not have an anti-discrimination or harassment prevention policy in place, which she felt encouraged a culture of harassing behavior (Bednarcik, 2019).

Multiple authors observed that when women are harassed in the fire service, they rarely report it for fear of retaliation. One author noted that early in women firefighters' careers, they learn that if they would like to continue their careers in the fire service, they must tolerate unwanted comments and harassing behaviors (Bednarcik, 2019). Another author observed that departments who had increased their number of women firefighters had difficulty retaining those firefighters (Hallock, 2017). He claimed that San Diego, CA had 13% female representation of firefighters, then it decreased to 2%, which he felt was due to the unwelcoming environment for women in the fire stations. The same trend was noted by another author in Boulder, CO where the percentage of female firefighters was 18% in 1992 and then 6% in 2015 (Brown, 2016). While other factors may contribute to the decrease in women firefighters, the authors felt that women left the fire service because of alienation and social ostracism. Women who continue their careers in the fire service are often split between demanding fair and equal treatment and quietly working for the love of the job. Those demanding fair and equal treatment may experience alienation not only by

men, but also by the women who prefer to quietly do the job. Chetkovich (2004) described these two kinds of women as:

> Those who fought for change, filed lawsuits, and forced the department to do things like add women's bathrooms and prohibit calendars featuring naked women in the station houses, and those who don't want to draw attention to their gender and are asked to be judged solely on their work. (p. 121)

Those women firefighters who wish to be judged solely on their work have most likely been exposed to harassing or discriminating behaviors, but they would rather not report it out of fear of retaliation from the male firefighters.

Masculinity

Women firefighters, whether they are fighting for equal treatment or just trying to do their jobs and fit in, are also contending with perceptions about their own bodies and identities. As mentioned previously, women's bodies are rhetorically excluded from the firefighter identity. However, women can, to a degree, construct masculinity in order to integrate into the fire service and establish their firefighter identities (Perrott, 2016). Masculinities in the fire service are not exclusive to behaviors, but they are also present in the clothing, language, equipment, and communal workplaces (Ainsworth et al., 2014; Gouliquer et al., 2020). If a masculinized language and culture are symptomatic of the fire service and function to marginalize and alienate women, then women can carefully navigate masculinity by constructing masculinity into their identities (Ainsworth et al., 2014).

However, one author of an EFO paper suggested that traits not associated with masculinity have value in the fire service and could benefit the community (Connolly,

2019). She suggested that since women can be more compassionate and better communicators than men, they can provide better patient care. Fire departments typically report around 68% of their total call volume is responding to medical emergencies, not fires (Hulett et al., 2008). Connolly (2019) also claimed that women firefighters take fewer risks on the fireground and are therefore safer and experience fewer injuries. Connolly (2019) touted the benefits of a diverse fire department, but she is also assigning those beneficial behaviors based on her perception of gender. It is that same perception of gender that has created the expectation of masculinity in firefighters. Interestingly, among the 50 EFO papers written about core values, there were multiple citations of caring, communication, compassion, and safety as adopted fire department core values, which are not values one would necessarily associate with masculinity (Barrett, 1996). This suggests that Connolly (2019), in an effort to assign worth to what she perceives as feminine values, recognized that fire departments place a higher importance on masculine values. This also suggests that although core values could be attributed to masculine or feminine characteristics, it is irrelevant because these are explicit core values are not put into action by the firefighters. The firefighters act to maintain the implicit value of masculinity.

Limitations and Biases

The most apparent limitation of this study is the stagnant research found in the EFO papers. In the literature review sections of the EFO papers, the authors cited the same few books, magazine articles, and other EFO papers; therefore, no new research is penetrating the fire service through these papers. The papers, written by executive fire officers, for other executive fire officers, while citing executive fire officers, create an echo chamber of research. Burke's notion of autonomy helps explain that since firefighters are a specialized

94

culture with an entrenched group identity, they are not always connected to the community around them. The fire service is an autonomous community that is often skeptical of outsiders and outside information. While the stagnant research limits the authors' ability to create and add to a repository of fire service literature, the content of the papers, particularly the transcriptions of interviews, was highly valuable for this study.

Another limitation of this study, and possibly the cause for the stagnant research in the EFO papers, is the idea that the EFO program is a rhetorical exercise to gain the EFO certification. If the executive fire officers are merely seeking a certification, then writing the EFO papers is an exercise, repeated once a year for the 4 years of the program. However, if the executive fire officers are genuinely working to solve a problem in their own fire department, then the rhetorical exercise is beneficial at least to that fire department.

A bias of this study is that of the researcher. I am a woman, employed full time as a battalion chief for a mid-sized, career fire department in North Texas. While I am not a certified firefighter, I am certified by the Texas Commission on Fire Protection as a master arson investigator, master fire inspector, fire instructor, fire and life safety educator, and plans examiner. I am also a master peace officer licensed through the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement. I have been employed by my fire department for the past 19 years and prior to that, I worked as a commissioned police officer. I have endeavored to limit my opinions and personal experiences in this dissertation and instead relied on existing scholarship and the data found in the EFO papers to support my claims.

Recommendations for Future Research

Limitations of this study also included topics that were mentioned but were not fully addressed in this dissertation. As mentioned previously, there are complex issues

regarding women constructing masculinity in entrenched groups, paramilitary organizations, and even in leadership roles that warrant further research. Future research could also include the study of masculinity in men working at female-dominated workplaces. These studies could contribute to scholarship on rhetorical workplace identities.

This dissertation only briefly touched on the hierarchies and power structures that are inherently found in paramilitary organizations, such as fire and police services. There is a reporting (power) structure that exists, called chain of command, and each fire department and police department member is expected to adhere to that reporting structure. It is through the chain of command that information is typically disseminated. These power structures contribute to how firefighters receive and perceive information. They also indicate that those in power positions are not doing the same tasks as the firefighters. Therefore, the firefighter identity is affected by their position of power and by the perception of other firefighters. Those power structures also include the exclusion of women and minorities and warrant further research.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to examine and understand how core values are assigned to fire departments and how those values influence the rhetorical firefighter identity. In the introduction, I listed the assumptions I had made prior to completing the study. I assumed that the NFA's EFO papers were the most effective artifact from which to glean a national picture of how core values are systematically adopted in fire departments. While I did identify that the literature review of the EFO papers was stagnant, the authors' research was invaluable for this study. Some authors included transcriptions of firefighter

interviews and strategic planning sessions, so the papers provided voices other than the author's voice. I also assumed the language used by chief officers in the EFO papers would be impartial and standardized. Primarily, their language was standardized, but the transcriptions of interviews and surveys provided the less standardized and more honest language of the firefighters. The transcriptions also provided a clearer perception of core values. I assumed there would be adequate regional sampling across the United States and the sampling was very widespread, including one paper written by an officer in Australia. I also assumed that I would find inherent power structures in the EFO papers since they were written by chief officers, however the power structures were not as prominent as I anticipated.

Through this study I found that core values do not appear to influence firefighter identity, but the unspoken value of the firefighter identity is masculinity. I found that a misalignment of values exists between fire department management and firefighters. That misalignment may be due to management performing different daily tasks than firefighters, so the two groups are no longer consubstantial and indicates that management may be unfit to choose firefighter core values. I also found that firefighters do not accept department core values because they believe that values necessary for the job are already present in the firefighter.

Since fire departments are considered gendered organizations and firefighting is typically viewed as a masculine profession, I found that masculinity significantly contributed to the firefighter identity (Acker, 1990; Britton, 2000; Cooper, 1995; Thurnell-Read & Parker, 2008). The firefighter identity is entrenched in shared values, beliefs, and expectations. As Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969) suggested, firefighters act based on

97

their expectations of the group and we create an impression of the group based on the actions of individual firefighters. So if the expectation, of other firefighters or of outsiders, is that firefighters are masculine, then women can be excluded from the firefighter identity if they are not considered masculine. Women are also excluded from the firefighter identity due to the historical situation of their bodies. The perception and expectation that women cannot physically do the job of a firefighter, even though they are required to pass the same physical ability test, reveals the historical gendering of the fire service. These expectations repeatedly discount the influence of core values and point to masculinity as the predominant value. Women's bodies are also excluded by the lack of properly fitting uniforms and safety equipment, and of separate fire station spaces for privacy, which are all ways in which fire departments act to make women feel unwelcome and draw attention to women's bodies. These issues encourage instances of harassment and discrimination and publicly announce that there is no place for women firefighters.

The findings also showed that while diversity is seemingly an important concern within the fire service, it was not cited as a core value of any fire departments represented in the EFO papers. Frequently cited core values include integrity, professionalism, and teamwork, which starkly contradict the discriminatory behaviors of firefighters described in the EFO papers with the keyword "gender." There is a strong disconnection between these adopted core values and the firefighter behaviors that create a culture of exclusion. Core values are the identification strategy intended to influence thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of firefighters, yet they do not appear to have any significant influence on the rhetorical firefighter identity. Instead, the unspoken value that overwhelmingly influences

the firefighter identity is masculinity. The rhetorical firefighter identity is centered around acting together through the performance of masculinity.

As evidenced by the research in this dissertation, the rhetorical firefighter identity is centered around acting (masculine) together. The rhetorical firefighter identity is reinforced at the same it perpetuates a culture of exclusion through the repetitive performance of masculinity. By recognizing the role of masculinity in the firefighter identity, I expose how it functions to exclude women and how it creates biases against women's bodies. These ideas and biases are not exclusive to the fire service. Any male-dominated workplace inherently contains similar historical biases regarding gender and masculinity. This research illuminates that the idea of gender and the notions of masculinity and femininity are critical factors to be explored in entrenched group identities and in male-dominated workplaces.

This dissertation has important implications for the development of an awareness of inclusion for the fire service and could potentially inform diversity recruitment strategies. When we demystify how discrimination originates from the perpetual biased expectations and historical beliefs of an organization, we can work to address and invalidate those expectations and beliefs. Then, we are better situated to diversify organizations by breaking down those expectations. This dissertation also reveals the lack of impact that adopted core values have on an organization. This lack of impact reveals a gap between organizational rhetoric and constitutive rhetoric. When organizations employ core values to influence thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of members, but those core values are not included in the collective identity of its members, then the core values become empty and meaningless. This study also provides a working definition for entrenched groups, which

suggests there is much room to investigate how they function and what motivates their

identity. In sum, this study provides a new understanding of constitutive rhetorical

identities and the tension between organizational and individual identities, with a focus on

the highly specialized and deeply gender-coded profession of firefighter.

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