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Interest in Police Patrol Careers: An Assessment of Potential Candidates' Impressions of the Police Recruitment, Selection, and Training Processes

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INTEREST IN POLICE PATROL CAREERS

An Assessment of Potential Candidates' Impressions of the Police Recruitment, Selection, and Training Processes

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THE UNIVERSITY OF **SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI**®

School of Criminal Justice, Forensic Science and Security

PREFACE

In the spring of 2017, Chief Leonard Papania of the Gulfport (MS) Police Department and I began a conversation regarding the persistence of a crisis in the recruitment of police personnel, addressing the difficulty police agencies of varying size and jurisdictional character were having in generating basic interest in police careers. The well-publicized "cop crunch", as discussed in previous police literature, was not going away despite the apparent economic recovery from the 2008 recession and its aftermath. Why, we wondered, despite the robust and increasing numbers of entry-level positions in police patrol, was the career of police patrol work such a "hard sell" with the current potential applicant pool? Also, why were some of those very individuals seemingly interested in specialized police work (e.g., detective or investigator, K9 officer, narcotics officer) but averse to patrol officer positions? Were these potential applicants fearful of the selection process (i.e., invasive background investigations and social media oversight)? Were these people deterred from police patrol careers because of the perception that the initial training expectations were too rigorous (i.e., academy physical training and the challenge of attending a lengthy academy)? Another consideration which grew out of this conversation was the potential inability or failure of police agencies to possibly address basic recruit expectations, namely assistance with the application process, realistic job preview, and mentoring. We considered the one-way police application process that had existed for decades, of agencies which recruited by providing application information, and the lack of potential applicants who were interested enough in the career to walk through the proverbial open door. Now that the door was flung wide open, and the applicants were few, what was the source of the continuing challenge? Was it "fear points" on the part of candidates, or the reluctance of police recruiters to embrace the recruiting process which was now reversed, that of candidates recruiting the agency, not the way it had been for generations?

Our interest in resolving this dilemma led to a basic research agenda and project idea. Chief Papania had been a guest lecturer at The University of Southern Mississippi (of which he is an alumnus) for several years, and he proposed a series of roundtable discussions allowing college students (representing a sample of potential candidates) to share their opinions and impressions of police careers, the recruitment, selection, and training processes, and what their potential "fear points" were regarding a patrol career. I began to itemize a list of these possible "fear points" through consultation with not only existing college students but also recent graduates and then-current patrol officers and academy cadets. A survey instrument which focused on numerous potential barriers to police patrol career interest was developed, grouped by venue (the recruitment and selection processes, the training academy) and by group of interest (pressure from family and friends, community and peer expectations, and more global impressions of one's role within the contemporary police population). I asked Dr. Michael Rossler of Illinois State University to assist me with the project because of his interest in police organizational management. In the fall of 2017 we distributed the survey to five undergraduate institutions in their criminal justice courses, in order to capture not only potential criminal justice majors but also students who may have a passing interest in police careers. In the spring of 2018 we began to analyze the data, which serves as the basis for many of the discussions, conclusions, and suggestions for police recruitment strategy here.

We hope that this report and its findings will illuminate previously-misunderstood features of the police recruitment process, especially in an era when police practitioners are continually challenged to adapt to the existing pool of career applicants in crafting police officers of future generations.

Dr. Charlie Scheer
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RESEARCH SUMMARY

Both criminal justice researchers and practitioners have suspected that generational preferences and the nature of police patrol work have acted as dual forces leading potential police recruits away from police careers, resulting in large numbers of unfilled police positions. This challenge is exacerbated by accelerating retirements and expanding police duties. Police recruitment became an even larger managerial issue after the 2008 recession failed to resolve the most critical factor driving people away from police careers in the first place: police departments saw fewer and fewer qualified applicants, despite the recession bringing more applicants in number. In the wake of the 2008 recession, attention has turned to generational preferences of post-Millennials and the potential incompatibility of their career expectations with the realities of police patrol work (Haggerty, 2009; Morison, 2017; Orrick, 2008; PERF, 2010; Wilson et al., 2010).

Little research has been conducted from the demand, or applicant, side of this critical workforce management issue facing police departments, especially as public demands for accountability and police legitimacy are escalating. This research project addresses this critical question, and the results inform police leaders as to how better to market and recruit future officers more effectively while balancing community demands and budgetary realities. Additionally, it furthers workforce management theoretical perspectives on the nature and character of human resources dynamics among post-Millennials.

This research project utilizes a survey questionnaire distributed to college students enrolled in criminal justice courses to gauge reaction to prompted statements regarding their perception of the police profession, the application process, contemporary public demands of police officers, and initial police training. Survey results detail "fear points" regarding these expectations. The sample is composed of undergraduate students at the following institutions: The University of Southern Mississippi, Illinois State University, Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, University of Massachusetts Lowell, and Missouri State University. Participant responses gauge student expectations of a police career, examining their consideration of such a career. This data helps inform practitioner strategies for recruitment of post-Millennial generations.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

THE CURRENT STUDY

STUDY BACKGROUND

During the years prior to the 2008 recession, studies of police workforce management tended to focus on role adjustment (Sun, 2003) and topics related to workforce diversity, usually derived from organizational recruiting strategy (Sanders, 2003; Tartaro & Krimmel, 2003). The concerns of police agencies with respect to personnel recruitment for sworn positions appeared to center upon the challenges of workforce diversification, "best practices", and models sought to illuminate ways police leadership could attract minority and female applicants (Kaminski, 1993; Meagher & Yentes, 1986; Raganella & White, 2004). Little discussion arose of generational differences in police recruitment until the years just prior to the recession itself, when a strain of police workforce management literature sought to explain the more esoteric features of Generation X and Millennials with respect to perceptions of career longevity and reasons for becoming an officer (Orrick, 2008; Raganella & White, 2004). Anecdotal prediction immediately after the 2008 recession was that the struggling economy, coupled with high numbers of available police positions, would stabilize the need for new officers, despite evidence that employee retention and retirements continued to exacerbate the recruitment challenge in policing (Taylor et al., 2006; Wilson et al., 2010).

As the economic recovery from the 2008 recession began to accelerate, trends in police workforce management that appeared to transcend the recession itself (namely, continued high numbers of retirees and the lack of qualified applicants wrought by changing generational preferences and expectations) persisted in police workforce settings (Derby, 2008; Wilson et al., 2010). Attention in police management turned toward achieving a deeper understanding of these transformative generational preferences, and contemporary research and managerial attention toward the career preferences and expectations of Millennials intensified in policing and other fields (Armacost, 2016; Brown & Vaughn, 2011; Copple, 2017; Kristl et al., 2011; Morison, 2017). Focusing on best practices for recruiting qualified applicants and popularizing police management attention to generational differences, this strain of research and interest searches for a substantive strategy to address contemporary recruitment challenges. But few of these contemporary studies have been derived from actual data on the current applicant pool's career focus and expectations; one notable research effort (Castaneda & Ridgeway, 2010) examined career attitudes of existing police academy cadets.

This research project seeks to fill a gap in existing focus on police recruitment by examining the attitudes of the potential current applicant pool through the use of a questionnaire disseminated to university criminal justice students. The findings from this questionnaire are certain to stimulate discussion of contemporary recruitment strategies used to attract qualified applicants from this cohort, but may also serve as valuable information to assist police agencies in targeting employee retention trends and in succession planning.

STUDY APPROACH AND DATA COLLECTION

The intent of this research project was to uncover potential "fear points", through the use of a Likert-based questionnaire distributed to college students enrolled in criminal justice classes, of potential police patrol applicants who may or may not be considering a police patrol career. The study approach was to visit criminal justice classes at five universities and, once permission was obtained by the university's Institutional Review Board and administrative staff, visit as many classes as possible in order to distribute (either at the beginning or the end of each class session) a 100-question survey designed to elicit responses to questions regarding their expectations, knowledge of, and feelings regarding various parts of the police patrol candidate recruitment, selection, and training processes.

SURVEY INSTRUMENT

The survey instrument was a hard-copy document provided to students during the first or last 15 minutes of class. Students self-administered the survey and were instructed to circle the response that most closely represented their feelings, with the exception of degree major and race/ethnicity which were fill-in-the-blank. Perceptions were measured using Likert-type scales ranging from one to five, with a "neither agree nor disagree" option as the middling value. For students present in the 39 course sections sampled, the response rate was 98.8 percent.

SAMPLE AND RECRUITMENT

Research staff decided to sample criminal justice students at colleges and universities for two reasons. First, the primary point of the study's original research agenda was to investigate if and why individuals taking criminal justice courses at the college level displayed a disinterest in police patrol careers despite their enrollment in the courses. Second, it was believed that criminal justice students at the college level, while not necessarily interested in police careers, would have some passing familiarity with the rigors of the application, selection, and training processes that went into making police officers This sampling strategy did not eliminate individuals who were potentially interested in police work from the study population because none of the five universities surveyed restricted criminal justice courses to criminal justice majors, or were necessarily required by the university's academic curriculum. Therefore, there were a wide variety of students enrolled in the courses surveyed: students of different academic and career interests, students of various ethnic, gender, and age groups, and students whose choice of future career was as-yet undetermined. The universities surveyed (The University of Southern Mississippi, Illinois State University, Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, Missouri State University, and University of Massachusetts Lowell) were selected for regional and programmatic variance.

RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

Respondents to the survey varied across a number of demographic features which are described below in Tables 1-6.

Table 1.

University Attendance

University	Respondents	Sample Percent
University of Southern Mississippi	186	24.1%
Illinois State University	102	13.2%
UMass-Lowell	94	12.2%
IUPUI	185	24.0%
Missouri State University	205	26.6%
TOTAL	772	

Table 2.

Ethnic Demographics of Survey Respondents

Reported Ethnicity	Respondents	Sample Percent
African- American	114	15.4%
American Indian/Alaskan native	2	0.3%
Asian	12	1.6%
Hispanic/Latino	49	6.6%
Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	2	0.3%
White	531	71.6%
Self-reported mixed	32	4.3%
TOTAL	742	

Table 3.

Gender Demographics of Survey Respondents

Reported Ethnicity	Respondents	Sample Percent
Male	315	43.8%
Female	403	56.1%
Self-report transgender	1	0.1%
TOTAL	719	

Table 4.

Year in School responses of Survey Respondents

Year in School	Respondents	Sample Percent
Freshman	136	20.5%
Sophomore	102	15.4%
Junior	205	30.9%
Senior	221	33.3%
TOTAL	664	

Table 5.

Age Demographics of Survey Respondents

Reported Age	Respondents	Sample Percent
18-21	524	68.9%
22-25	196	25.8%
26-29	26	3.4%
30 and over	14	1.8%
TOTAL	760	

Table 6.

College Major Demographics of Survey Respondents

Reported College Major	Respondents	Sample Percent
Criminal Justice	454	60.3%
Forensic Sciences	38	5.0%
Non-Criminal Justice Social Science Major	71	9.4%
Criminal Justice and another (Double Major)	50	6.6%
Public Safety Management	55	7.3%
Other/Undecided	85	11.3%
TOTAL	753	

BARRIERS TO PATROL CAREERS

PERCEIVED BARRIERS TO POLICE PATROL CAREERS

This study assumed and surveyed multiple possible barriers to a potential applicant's desire to be a police patrol officer. These are categorized in the following sections as questions about the *recruitment and selection* process, the *training and academy* process, and the *nature of police work itself*. Each of these three categories served as sources of questions which are reflected in the following bar graphs.

Questions about the recruitment and selection process itself.

The survey questions considered a wide array of potential "fear points" regarding the recruitment and selection process for police careers, including invasive background checks, discussions of prior drug use, aversion to the length of the hiring process, and the scrutiny of one's social media use. The results below indicate a mixed reaction to the hypothetical fear points. It is apparent from the responses that, while there may be traditional and substantive apprehension to the application process, there also exists a marked confidence and interest in the career despite the challenges of applying. We have also provided three control variables (two for ethnicity, and one for gender) for questions deemed critical to common perceptions of disparity: criminal history, drug use, and the overall hiring process. As a baseline point of discussion, we asked agreement with the phrase "I am interested in a police patrol career" to gauge basic interest on the part of respondents, resulting in an even distribution. Questions about mentoring, the career ladder, and the respondents' generational self-perception are also included for context.

Figure 2.1

I am interested in a police patrol career (n = 767)
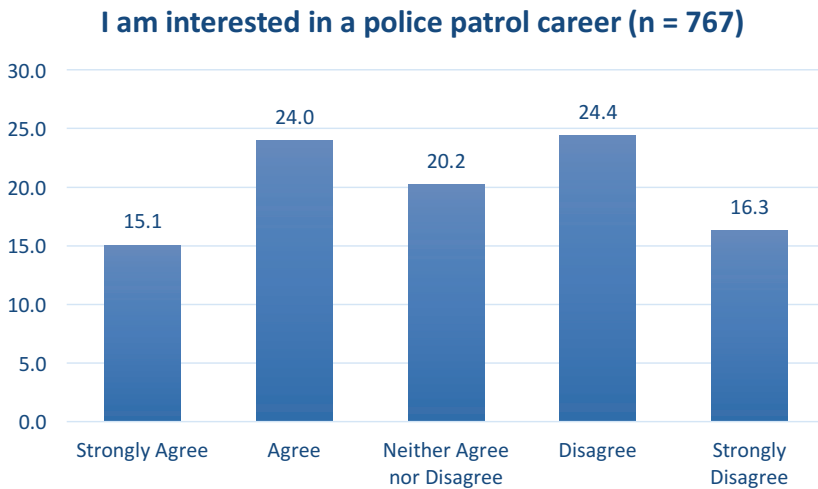
As shown in Figure 2.1, students displayed substantial variation in level of interest in a police patrol career. About thirty-nine percent indicated interest, while about forty-one percent indicated they would not be interested in a police patrol career. Roughly twenty percent of students neither agreed nor disagreed that they had an interest in a police patrol career.

Figure 2.2

The idea of going through a police patrol hiring process scares me (n = 762)
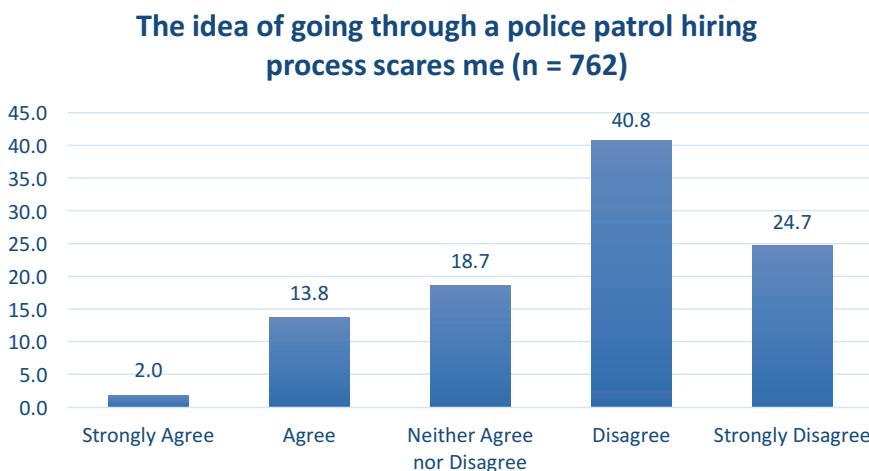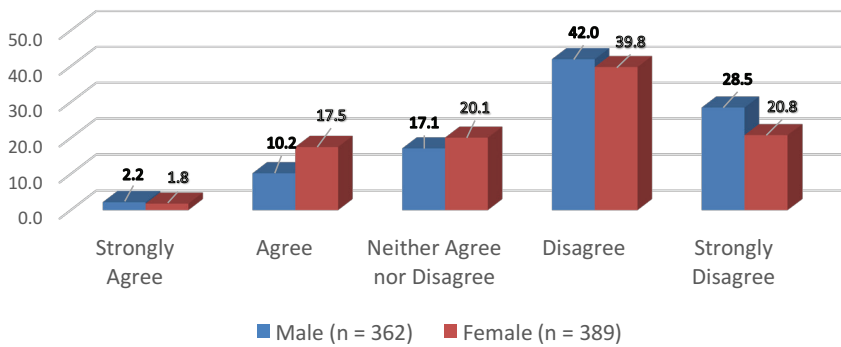

Many police administrators are under the impression that potential recruits, especially traditional students of contemporary generations, may be intimidated by the police recruitment process. As shown in Figure 2.2, only about sixteen percent of students indicated that they were scared of the hiring process, while sixty five percent indicated they were not scared of the hiring process.
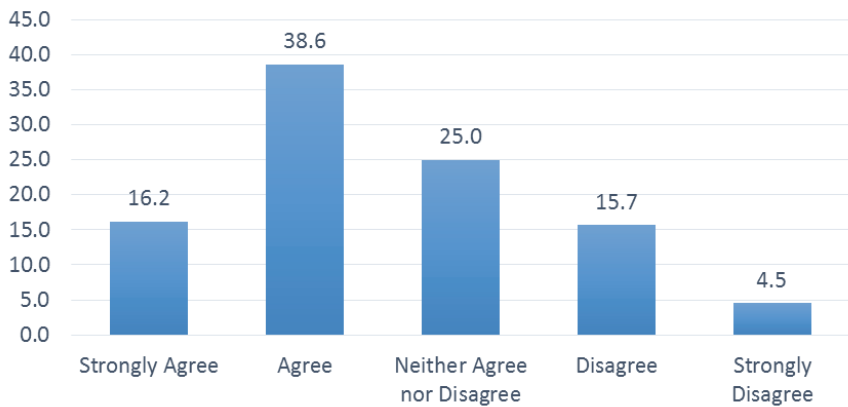
Figure 2.3

The idea of going through a police patrol hiring process scares me (by gender) (n=762)

Response	Male (n = 362)	Female (n = 389)
Strongly Agree	2.2	1.8
Agree	10.2	17.5
Neither Agree nor Disagree	17.1	20.1
Disagree	42.0	39.8
Strongly Disagree	28.5	20.8

Police agencies have speculated that difficulties in attracting female police officers may be partially due to intimidation with the recruitment and selection process. While there was a statistically significant difference between genders in fear of the hiring process, the difference was not especially striking as far a substantive difference. About twelve percent of male students indicated the hiring process scared them, while about nineteen percent of females indicated they were intimidated (Figure 2.3).

Figure 2.4

I would only be interested in police patrol as a ladder to some other career (n = 753)

Response	Percent
Strongly Agree	16.2
Agree	38.6
Neither Agree nor Disagree	25.0
Disagree	15.7
Strongly Disagree	4.5

Police agencies and criminal justice professors alike are under the impression that initiation of a police patrol career is viewed as a stepping stone to more specialized work within law enforcement by many students. The current data support this indication, as a majority (54.8%) of students indicated they would only be interested in a patrol career to advance to some other career path (Figure 2.4).

Figure 2.5

Having a mentor would make a difference in helping me choose a police patrol career (n = 750)

Response	Percent
Strongly Agree	24.3
Agree	46.0
Neither Agree nor Disagree	18.0
Disagree	8.4
Strongly Disagree	3.3
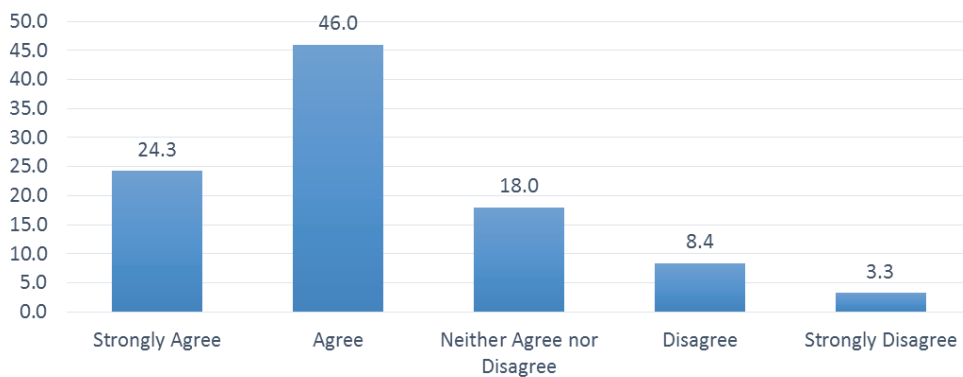
One area that is possibly overlooked by departments seeking to recruit patrol officers is the power of a mentoring relationship. The potential of having a mentor to recruit students into a police patrol career is supported by the survey data. Over seventy percent of responding students agreed or strongly agreed that having a mentor would make a difference in their selection of a career patrol career (Figure 2.5).

Figure 2.6

My personal criminal history would hurt my chances at ever being a patrol officer (n = 764)

Response	Value
Strongly Agree	1.7
Agree	3.3
Neither Agree nor Disagree	5.0
Disagree	23.1
Strongly Disagree	66.9

Figure 2.8

My personal criminal history would hurt my chances at ever becoming a patrol officer (by ethnicity) (n=764)

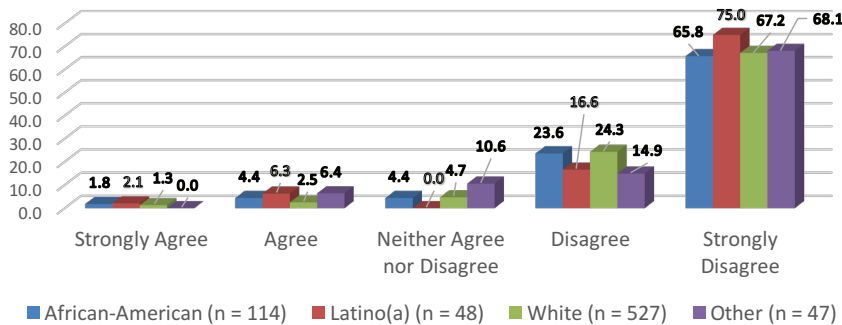| Response	African-American (n = 114)	Latino(a) (n = 48)	White (n = 527)	Other (n = 47)
Strongly Agree	1.8	2.1	1.3	0.0
Agree	4.4	6.3	2.5	6.4
Neither Agree nor Disagree	4.4	0.0	4.7	10.6
Disagree	23.6	16.6	24.3	14.9
Strongly Disagree	65.8	75.0	67.2	68.1

Figure 2.9

My past drug use would hurt my chances at being a patrol officer (n = 766)

Response	Value
Strongly Agree	3.9
Agree	9.7
Neither Agree nor Disagree	13.7
Disagree	24.7
Strongly Disagree	48.0

Figure 2.10

My past drug use would hurt my chances at being a patrol officer (by ethnicity) (n=766)

Response	African-American (n = 114)	Latino(a) (n = 49)	White (n = 528)	Other (n = 48)
Strongly Agree	3.5	8.2	3.8	0.0
Agree	7.9	10.2	10.1	10.4
Neither Agree nor Disagree	12.3	4.1	14.2	16.7
Disagree	28.1	40.8	22.7	20.8
Strongly Disagree	48.2	36.7	49.2	52.1

One area that has been indicated as a challenge to recruitment by many police agencies is finding an applicant pool with a background free of a problematic personal criminal history and substance abuse. This has also been used as an anecdotal justification for the lack of success in recruiting patrol officers who are racial and ethnic minorities. As shown in Figure 2.6, ninety percent of the 764 undergraduate students surveyed in criminal justice courses were under the impression that their personal criminal history would not hurt their chances at being a patrol officer. Additionally, no significant differences were displayed between racial/ethnic groupings in terms of background as a barrier to a patrol career (Figures 2.7 and 2.8). Similarly, nearly fourteen percent believed that their drug use may be a disqualifier for patrol work (Figures 2.9 and 2.10) with no significant differences between racial and ethnic groupings.
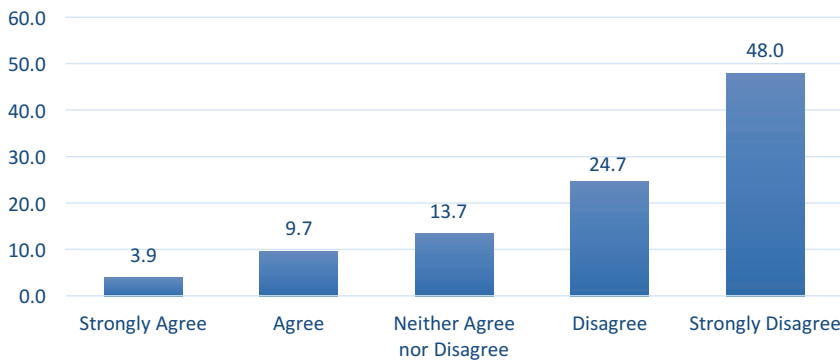
Figure 2.11

What I have said on social media in the past would hurt my chances at ever being a patrol officer (n = 767)

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
2.3	5.2	12.1	39.6	40.7
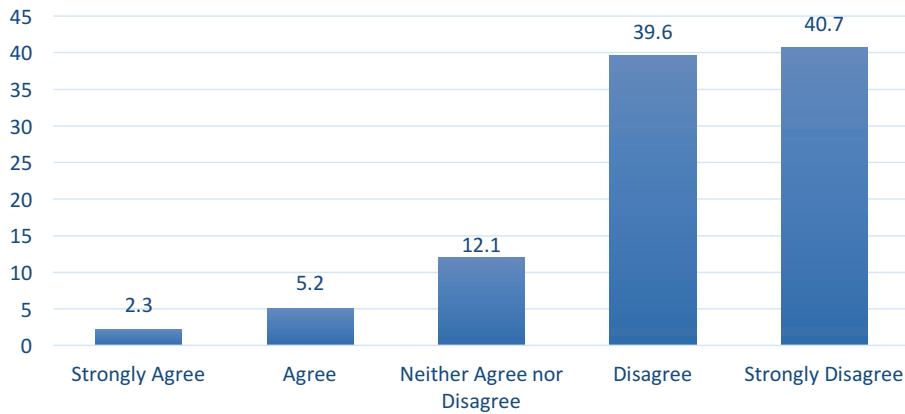
An emerging trend in police recruitment is that police agencies are now able to view social media usage of recruits as a potential disqualifier. Not only do agencies want to screen out recruits who will exhibit problematic behavior as officers, but many of the statements made by these individuals would call into question the discretionary decisions made as officers. Only about eight percent of students indicated that their social media usage may negatively affect their chances of a career in policing (Figures 2.11 and 2.12).
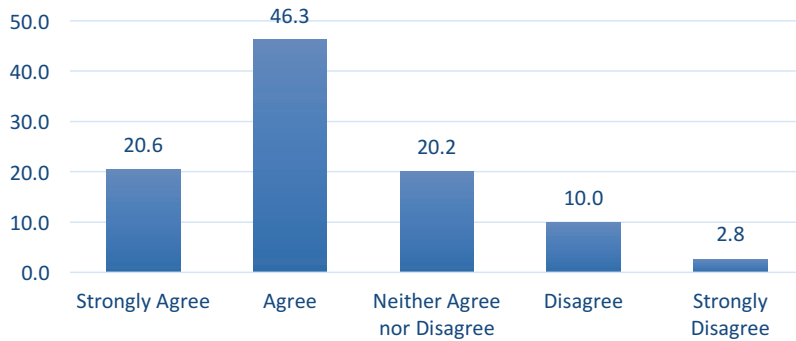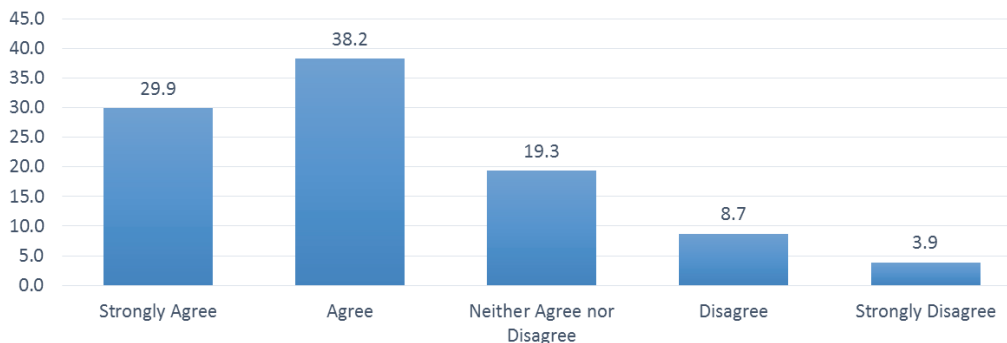
Figure 2.12

Looking at someone's social media activity can give you a good idea of what kind of character they have (n = 751)

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
20.6	46.3	20.2	10.0	2.8

Figure 2.13

People of my generation want an immediately successful career without "paying their dues" at an entry level position (n = 750)

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
29.9	38.2	19.3	8.7	3.9

One final question about the recruitment process focused on the potentially unrealistic expectations of students in the Millennial and Post-Millennial generations, who represent the age groupings most likely to enter patrol work for the next five years. As shown, sixty-eight percent of students in criminal justice courses agreed or strongly agreed that members of their generation have unrealistic career expectations (Figure 2.13).

Questions about the police training academy.

The survey questions considered that the longevity, intensity, and challenge of attending the police training academy was a potential barrier to interest in a police patrol career. The results displayed a marked confidence in respondents that not only does the academy itself not represent a "deal breaker" for considering police careers, but that confidence in attaining expected physical fitness levels and conquering intimidation of these expectations exists in the respondents. When examining gender differences, the question of physical fitness does display expected dissimilarity.

Figure 2.14

I have little knowledge about what actually goes on in a police academy (n = 757)
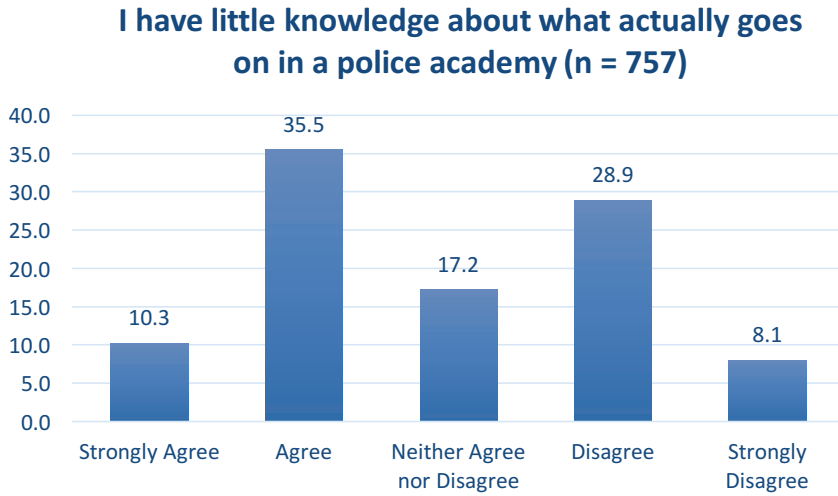
Intriguingly, a strong variation in student responses as to their knowledge about the realities of the police academy reveals that much work can be done to disseminate realistic academy preview to applicants (Figure 2.14).

Figure 2.15

The fact that I have to attend a police academy is a "deal breaker" for any police patrol career (n = 767)
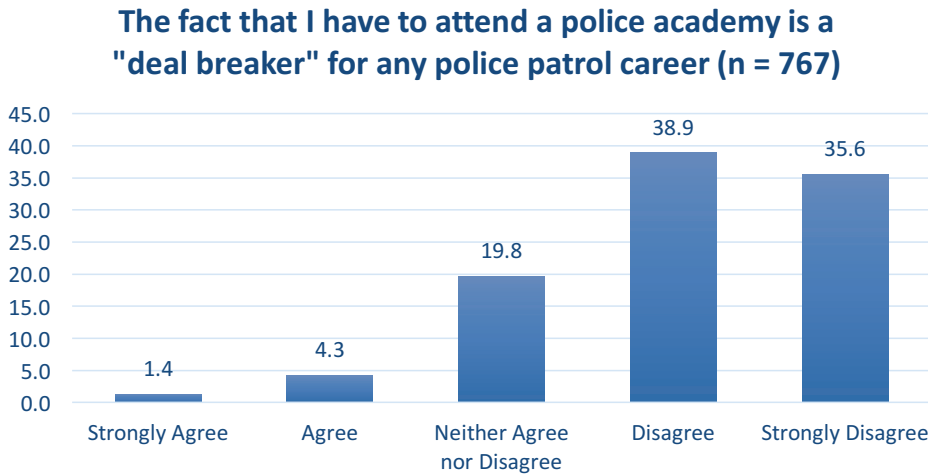
As shown in Figure 2.15, the academy as a whole is not perceived to be a substantial barrier to patrol career interest. Only about six percent of students indicated that attending the academy would be a "deal breaker."

Figure 2.16

I am afraid of attending a police academy (n = 767)
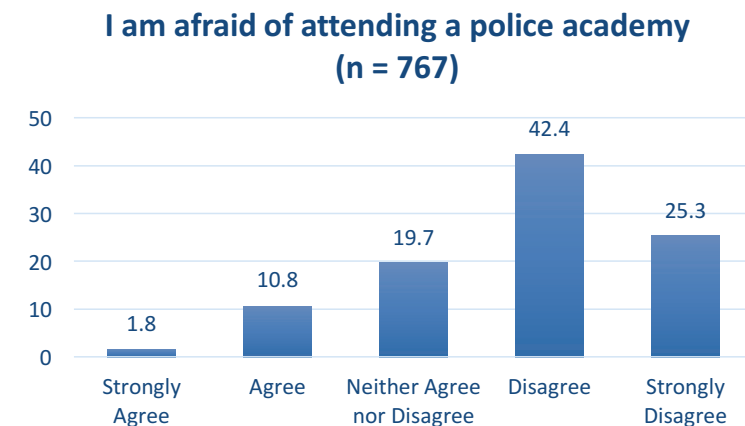
While not perceived as an extensive barrier in its entirety, about thirteen percent of students indicated they had some fear about attending a police academy (Figure 2.16).

Figure 2.17

The physical fitness training required to attend a police academy intimidates me (n = 768)

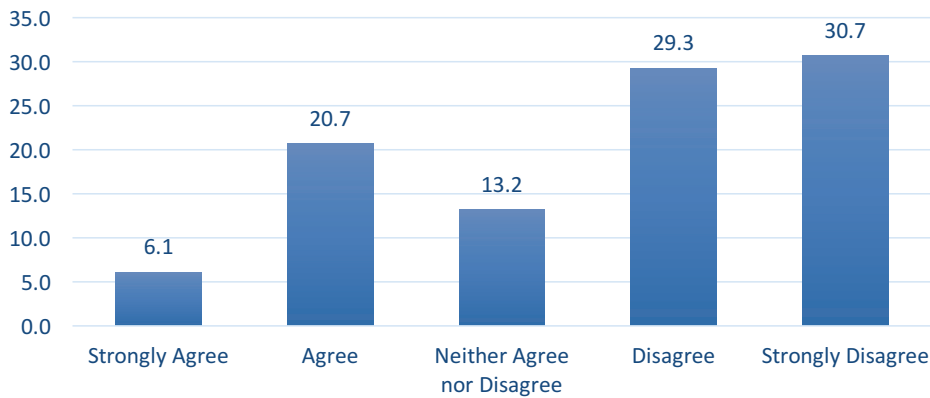Physical fitness is perceived as a substantial barrier to entering a patrol career. About thirty percent of respondents reported they would be intimidated by the physical aspects of attending a police academy (Figure 2.17). Significant differences in this regard were displayed between male and female students. About eleven percent of male students indicated that they would be intimidated by the physical training required in the police academy, while about forty-two percent of female students indicated they would be intimidated (Figure 2.18).

Figure 2.18

The physical fitness training required to attend a police academy intimidates me (by gender) (n=768)
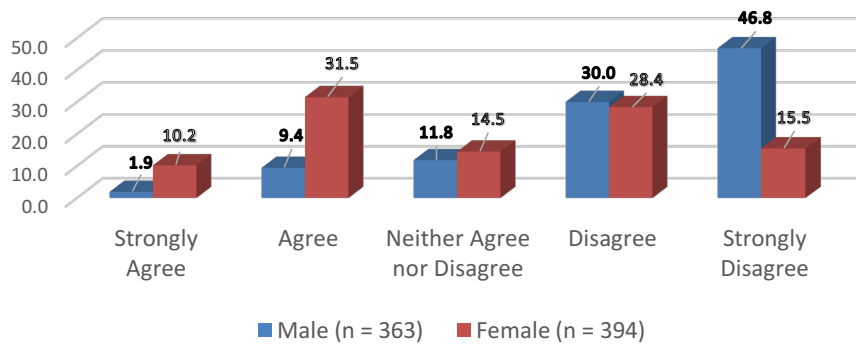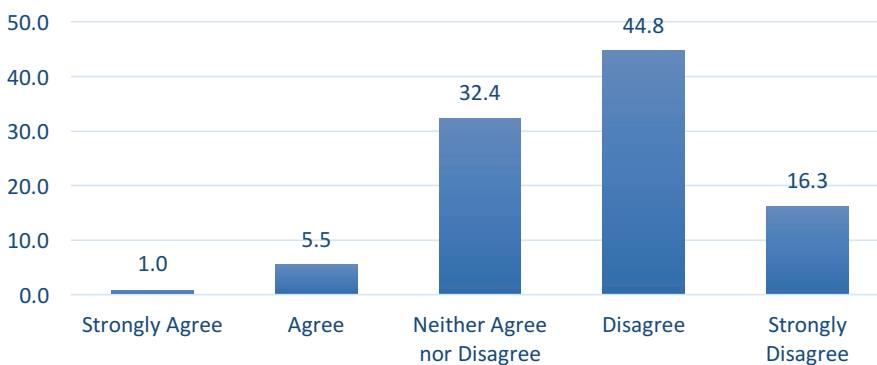

Figure 2.19

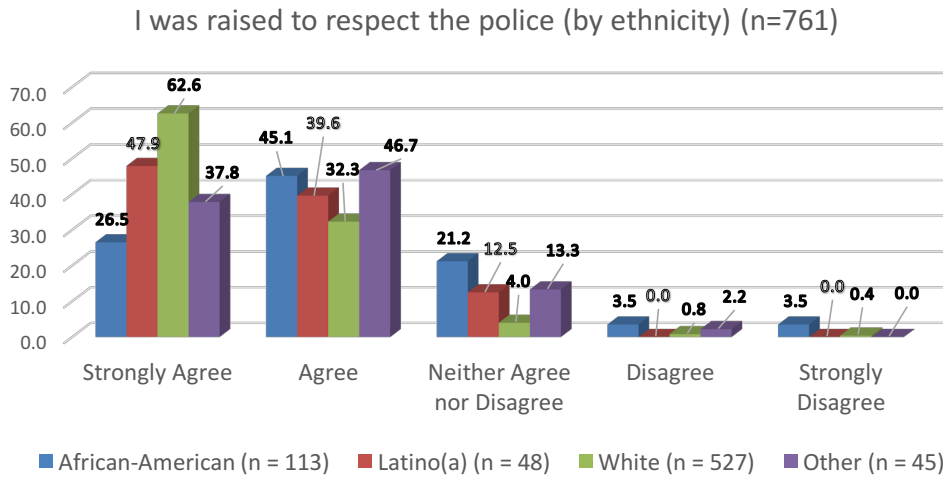**The police academy takes too much time to complete (n = 768)**

Among the respondents, the time commitment of the academy was not perceived as a barrier. Only six and a half percent of respondents agreed that the police academy takes too long to complete (Figure 2.19).

Questions about the nature of police work itself.

Intriguing results were indicated when survey respondents were asked about their agreement with survey items regarding their expectations of police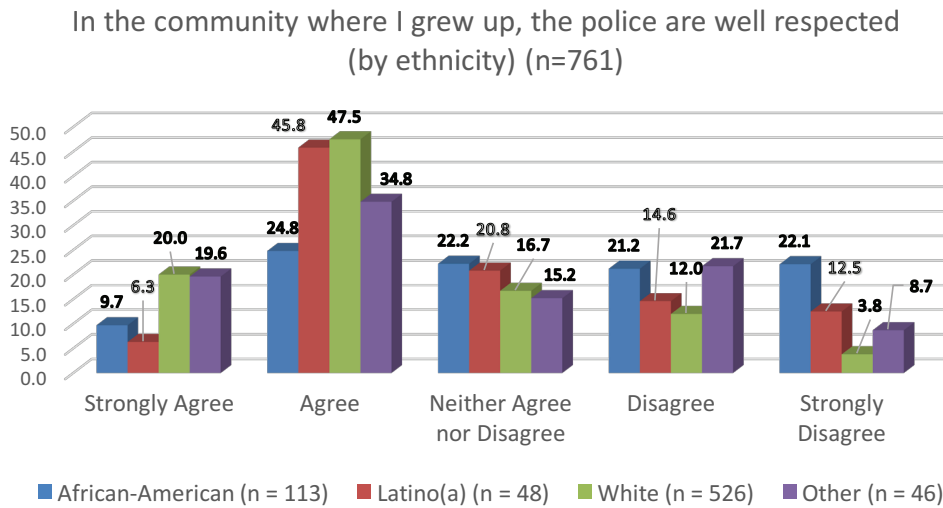 patrol careers. These questions probed their knowledge of the career ladder, social treatment, and societal and peer approval. As noted in our discussion following, the responses to expected promotions raise interesting opportunities for new recruit strategies.

Figure 2.20

I was raised to respect the police (by ethnicity) (n=761)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
African-American (n = 113)	26.5	45.1	21.2	3.5	3.5
Latino(a) (n = 48)	47.9	39.6	12.5	0.0	0.0
White (n = 527)	62.6	32.3	4.0	0.8	0.4
Other (n = 45)	37.8	46.7	13.3	2.2	0.0

Figures 2.20 through 2.24 represent results of questions asked regarding the levels and importance of respect for the police on potential career choice. About thirty eight percent of respondents indicated that the amount of respect that the police receive impacts their desire to enter policing (Figure 2.24).

Figure 2.21

In the community where I grew up, the police are well respected (by ethnicity) (n=761)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
African-American (n = 113)	9.7	24.8	22.2	21.2	22.1
Latino(a) (n = 48)	6.3	45.8	20.8	14.6	12.5
White (n = 526)	20.0	47.5	16.7	12.0	3.8
Other (n = 46)	19.6	34.8	15.2	21.7	8.7

Figure 2.22

The public should respect the police (by ethnicity) (n=761)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
African-American (n = 113)	31.9	32.7	33.6	0.9	0.9
Latino(a) (n = 48)	54.2	35.4	10.4	0.0	0.0
White (n = 527)	57.9	34.7	6.4	0.8	0.2
Other (n = 46)	37.0	50.0	13.0	0.0	0.0

Figure 2.23

It is unfair for the public to criticize what the police do (n = 749)

- Strongly Agree: 7.1
- Agree: 17.4
- Neither Agree nor Disagree: 29.8
- Disagree: 31.8
- Strongly Disagree: 13.9
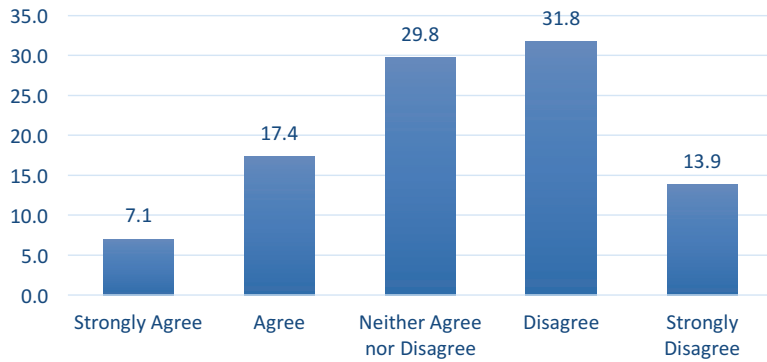
Figure 2.24

The amount of respect the police receive impacts my desire to be a patrol officer (n = 758)

- Strongly Agree: 11.3
- Agree: 25.1
- Neither Agree nor Disagree: 31.7
- Disagree: 22.6
- Strongly Disagree: 9.4
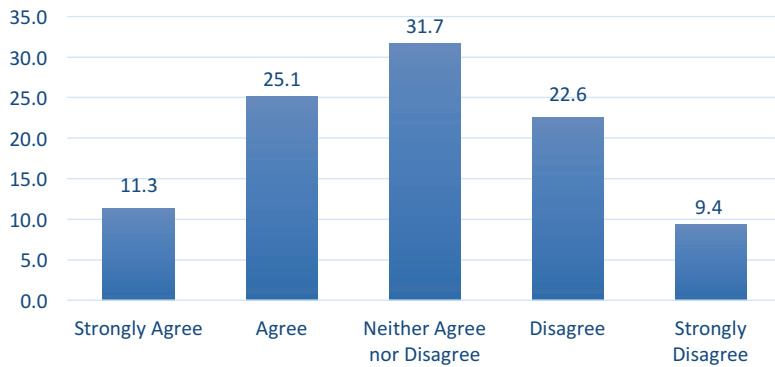
Figure 2.25

I am afraid of physical fighting and hand-to-hand combat associated with patrol work (n = 767)

- Strongly Agree: 2.9
- Agree: 9.3
- Neither Agree nor Disagree: 14.6
- Disagree: 40.9
- Strongly Disagree: 32.3
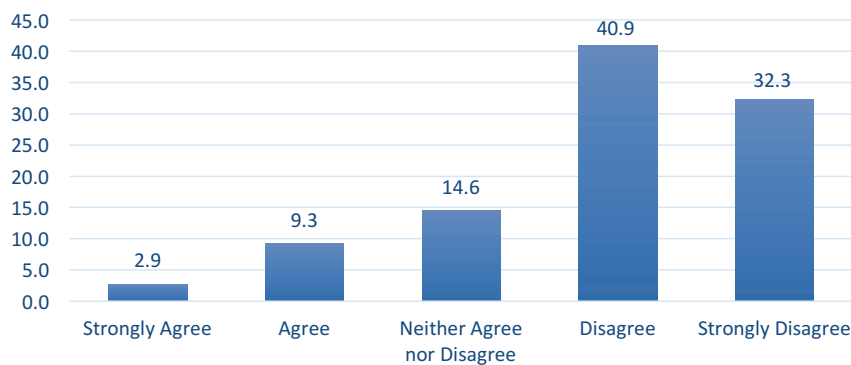
The physical nature of patrol work is perceived to be a barrier to entering the career by some. About twelve percent of respondents agreed that they would be afraid of the physical fighting aspects of a patrol career (Figure 2.25). While the physical fighting realities of a patrol career were not overwhelmingly shown to be a barrier, substantial gender differences were noted. As shown in Figure 2.26 female students were significantly more likely to agree or agree strongly that they would be afraid of fighting (20.0%) than males (3.6%).

Figure 2.26

I am afraid of physical fighting and hand to hand combat associated with patrol work (by gender) (n=767)

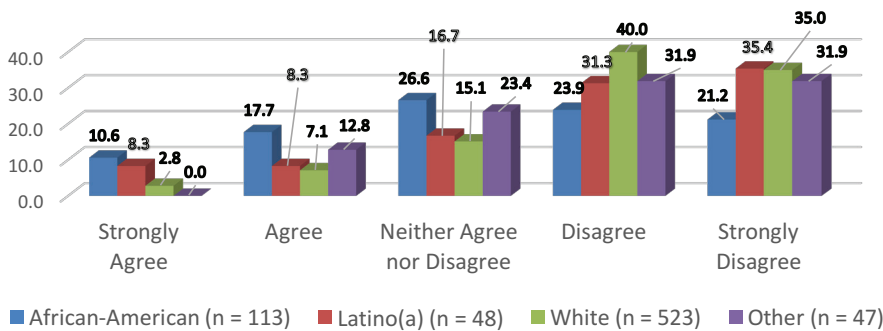|	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Male (n = 362)	0.6	3.0	10.8	42.8	42.8
Female (n = 394)	4.8	15.2	17.8	39.6	22.6
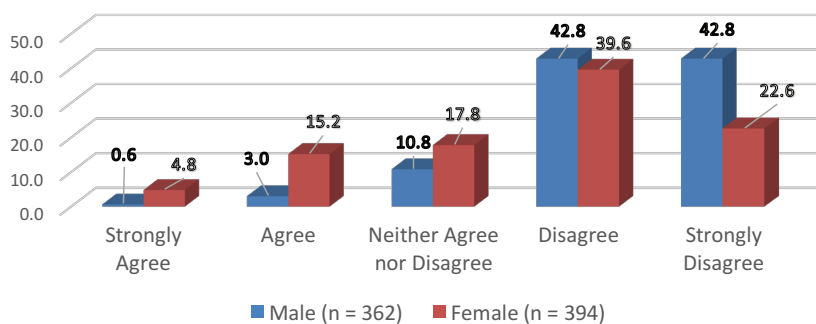
Figure 2.27

I am afraid of being around firearms (n = 758)

Response	Value
Strongly Agree	2.6
Agree	7.1
Neither Agree nor Disagree	9.1
Disagree	30.1
Strongly Disagree	51.1
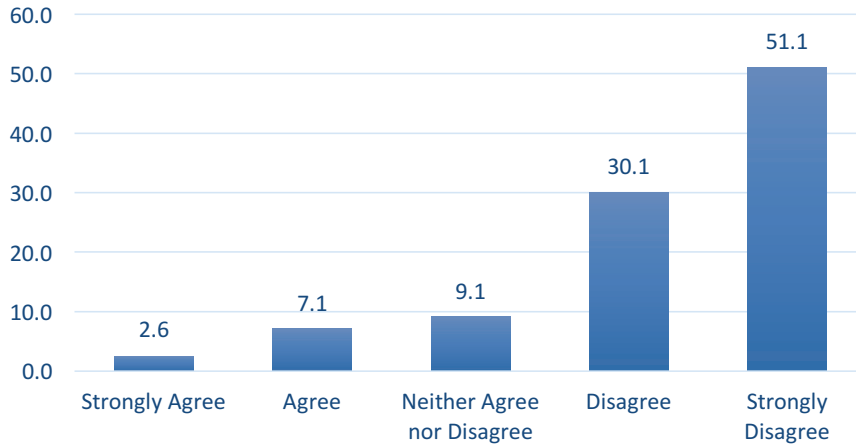
Another barrier to entering a patrol career is the support potential recruits receive from their social circle. As shown in Figure 2.27, students of color from all displayed racial and ethnic groupings perceived less approval from their family than did white students.
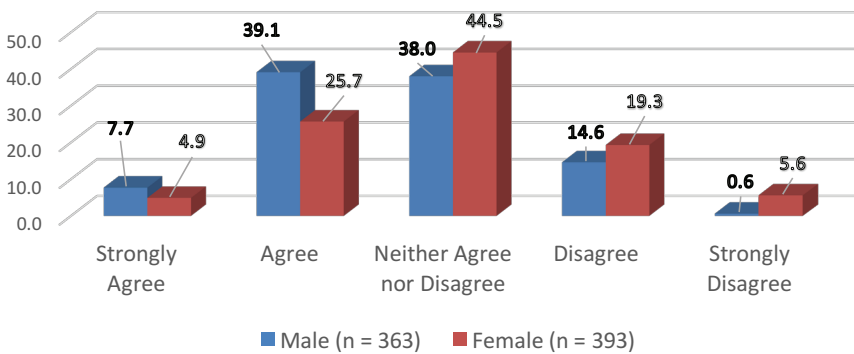
Figure 2.28

My family would not approve of me becoming a patrol officer (by ethnicity) (n=757)

Response	African-American (n = 113)	Latino(a) (n = 48)	White (n = 523)	Other (n = 47)
Strongly Agree	10.6	8.3	2.8	0.0
Agree	17.7	8.3	7.1	12.8
Neither Agree nor Disagree	26.6	15.1	23.4	—
Disagree	23.9	31.3	40.0	31.9
Strongly Disagree	21.2	35.4	35.0	31.9

Figure 2.29

A police patrol career would provide me a good opportunity to raise a family (by gender) (n=767)

Response	Male (n = 363)	Female (n = 393)
Strongly Agree	7.7	4.9
Agree	39.1	25.7
Neither Agree nor Disagree	38.0	44.5
Disagree	14.6	19.3
Strongly Disagree	0.6	5.6

Another of the potential barriers to entering a police patrol career is that it may contain challenges that make family life difficult. This may be perceived to be especially challenging for female recruits. As shown, twenty-five percent of female students disagreed or disagreed strongly that entering a patrol career inhibited opportunities to raise a family, as compared to fifteen percent of male students (Figure 2.29).

Figure 2.30

Police patrol work requires serious personal lifestyle changes (n = 768)

Category	Value
Strongly Agree	17.1
Agree	41.7
Neither Agree nor Disagree	27.3
Disagree	12.9
Strongly Disagree	1.0

Figure 2.31

Police patrol salaries allow me to live the kind of lifestyle I want (n = 768)

Category	Value
Strongly Agree	4.2
Agree	21.7
Neither Agree nor Disagree	35.7
Disagree	27.9
Strongly Disagree	10.5

Figure 2.32

I would enjoy being a detective or investigator (n = 768)

Category	Value
Strongly Agree	45.8
Agree	39.7
Neither Agree nor Disagree	8.3
Disagree	3.5
Strongly Disagree	2.6

About sixty percent of students indicated they agreed or strongly agreed that patrol work would require a serious lifestyle change (Figure 2.30). So, while they perceive unrealistic career expectations amongst their peers, a majority of students understand that a patrol career would change their personal habits. Additionally, only twenty-six percent of students agreed that a patrol career would give them the salary to live the type of lifestyle that they would want (Figure 2.31).
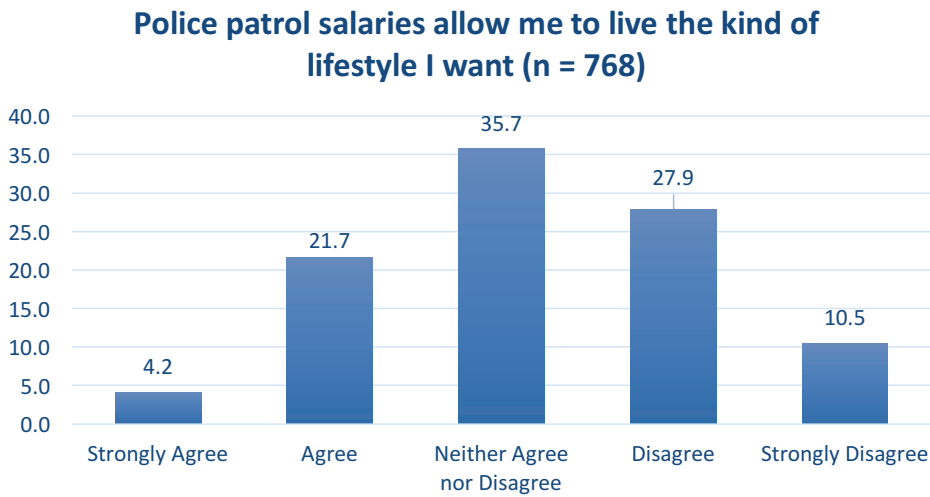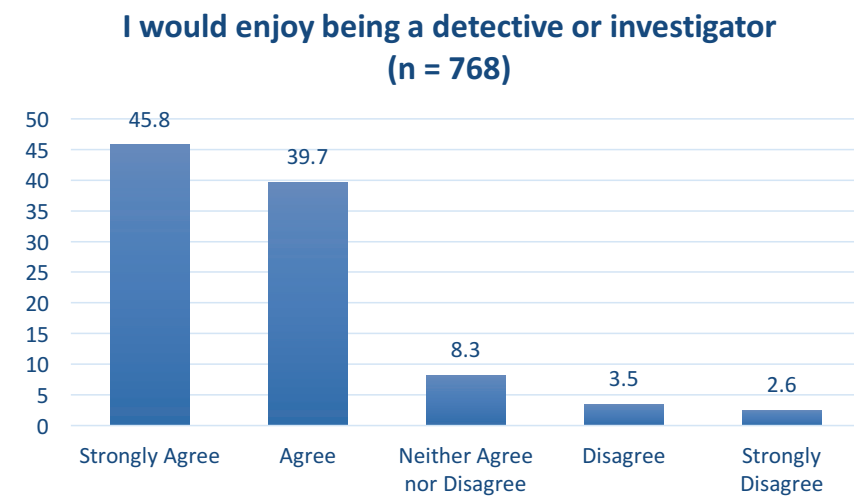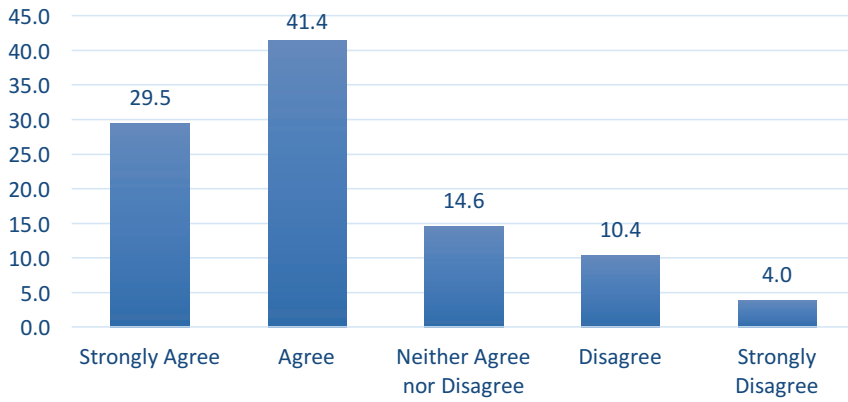
Along with the agreement that patrol work largely represents a stepping stone, a vast majority of students (85.5%) agreed that they would enjoy a career as a detective or investigator (Figure 2.32). Additionally, about seventy-one percent indicated they would enjoy narcotics investigation (Figure 2.33), but only about thirty-nine percent agreed they would enjoy a career in a police supervisor role (Figure 2.34). However, only about forty-four percent of students indicated that they understood what a police supervisor does (Figure 2.35).
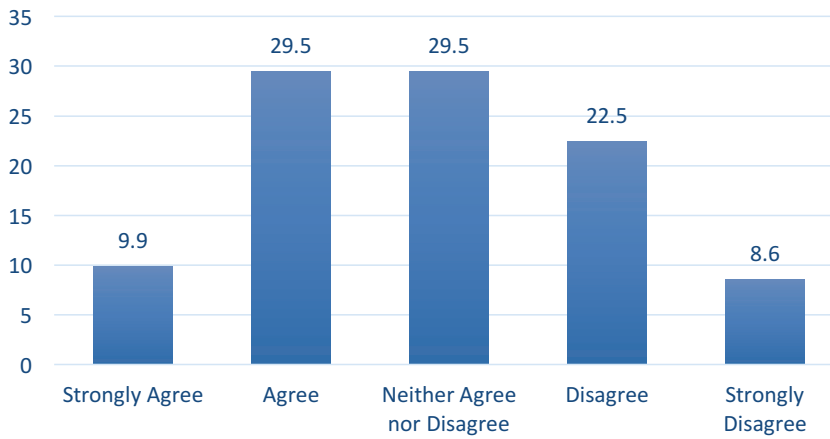
Figure 2.33

I would enjoy working narcotics investigations as a specialized role (n = 766)

Strongly Agree	29.5
Agree	41.4
Neither Agree nor Disagree	14.6
Disagree	10.4
Strongly Disagree	4.0

Figure 2.34

I would like being a police supervisor (n = 769)

Strongly Agree	9.9
Agree	29.5
Neither Agree nor Disagree	29.5
Disagree	22.5
Strongly Disagree	8.6

Figure 2.35

I'm not sure what a police sergeant actually does (n = 769)

Strongly Agree	7.4
Agree	36.2
Neither Agree nor Disagree	21.6
Disagree	28.5
Strongly Disagree	6.4
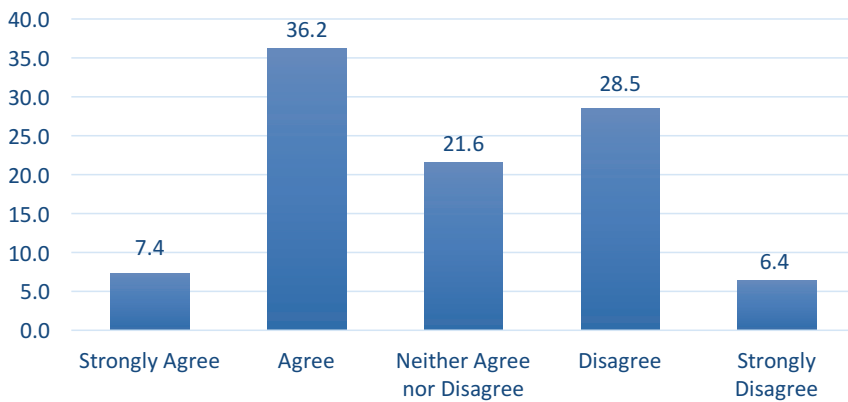
Figure 2.36

A police patrol position is a stepping stone to a federal law enforcement career (n = 750)
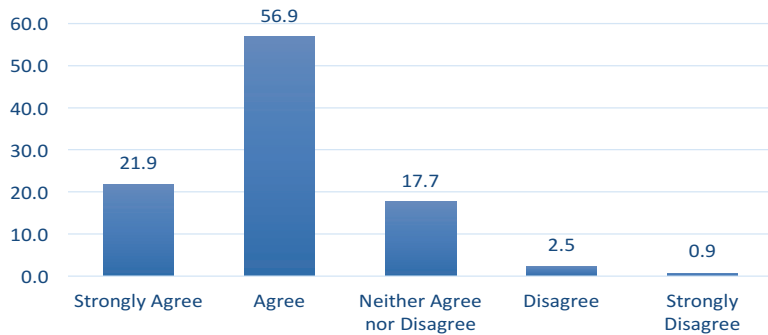
Results of questions examining the anecdotal belief that patrol candidates are fixed on future, more prestigious careers at the federal level, a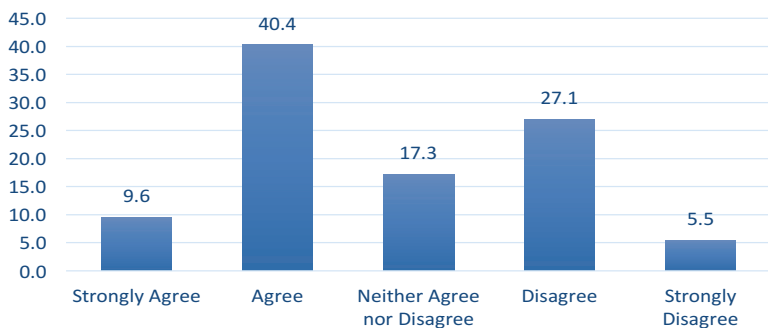s well as their realistic understanding of the rigors and goals of the promotions process within a department, are shown in Figures 2.36 and 2.37.
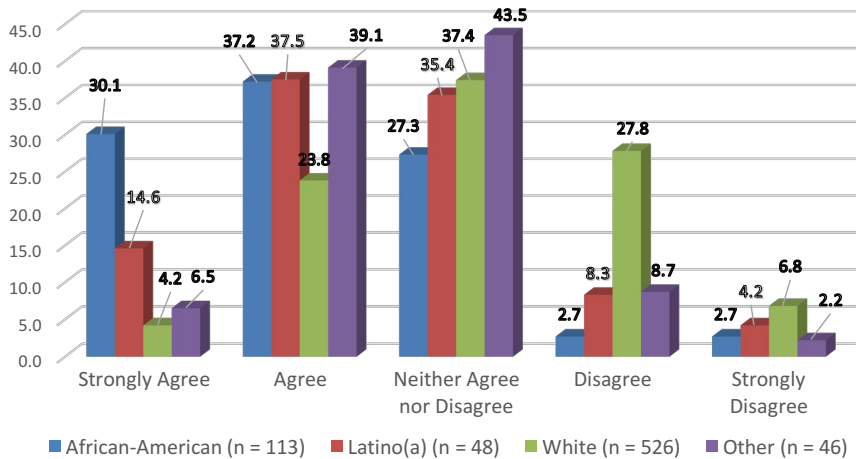
Figure 2.37

I do not fully understand the promotional process for police patrol careers (n = 757)

Figure 2.38

Police officers racially profile people (by ethnicity) (n=761)

■ African-American (n = 113) ■ Latino(a) (n = 48) ■ White (n = 526) ■ Other (n = 46)

Results of questions exploring the contemporary issue of police shootings of individuals shown by media, specifically with respect to the interpretation of those events as portraying police as having a racist agenda, are shown in Figures 2.38 through 2.40.

Figure 2.39

I would never be a police patrol officer because I don't want to be labeled as a racist (by ethnicity) (n=760)

■ African-American (n = 113) ■ Latino(a) (n = 48) ■ White (n = 526) ■ Other (n = 46)
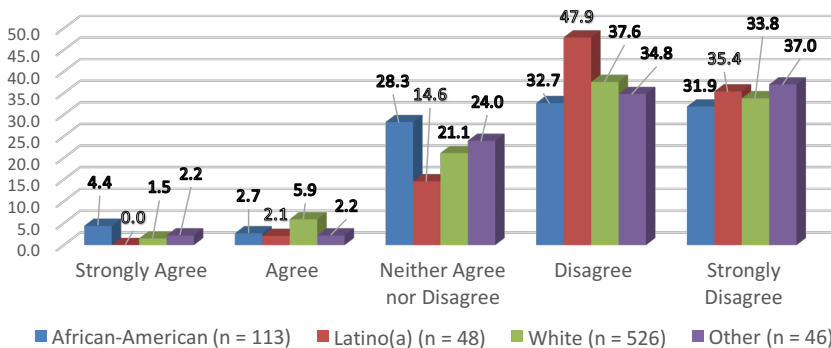
Figure 2.40

On-the-job shootings involving patrol officers occur frequently (by ethnicity) (n=769)

Legend: African-American (n = 114), Latino(a) (n = 49), White (n = 530), Other (n = 47)
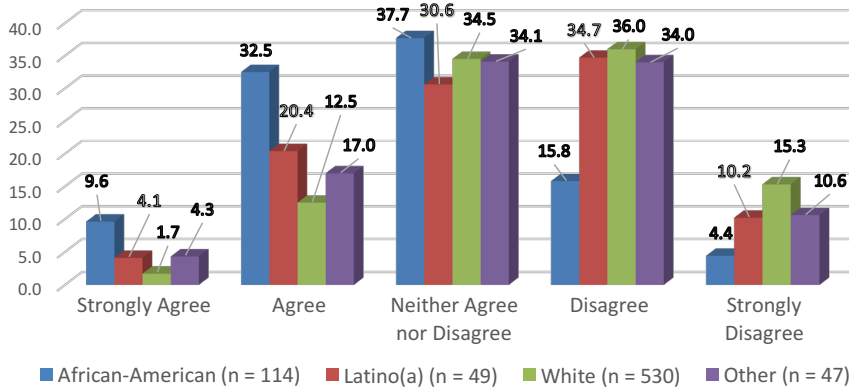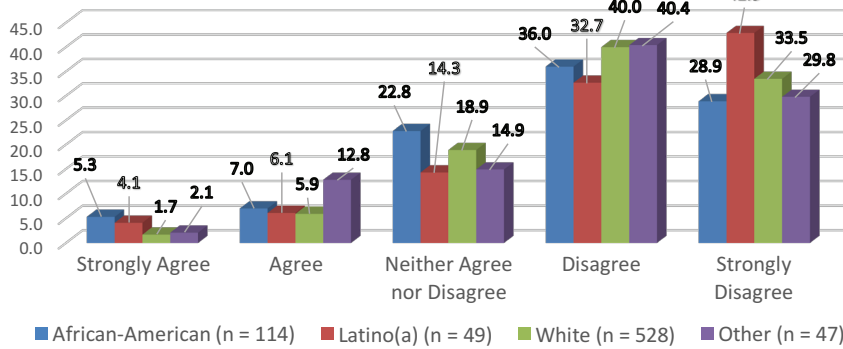
Figure 2.41

I dislike the idea of wearing a police uniform (by ethnicity) (n=767)

Legend: African-American (n = 114), Latino(a) (n = 49), White (n = 528), Other (n = 47)

The visible experience of wearing a police uniform which identifies one as a police officer was explored in a question regarding one's self-identification. There were some notable differences in the response of students by ethnicity as to their impressions of wearing a police uniform (Figure 2.41).

Figure 2.42

Police patrol work is too stressful (n = 758)
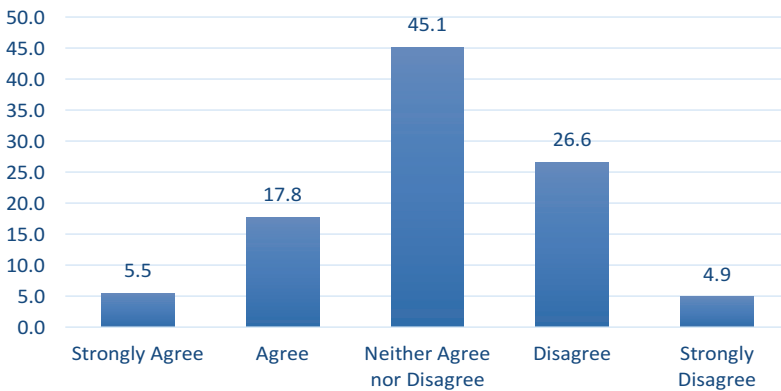
Evidence as to whether or not students perceived the work of a police patrol officer as "too stressful" shows some variation on behalf of respondents (Figure 2.42).

Figure 2.43

I could arrest someone for marijuana possession in good conscience (n = 758)
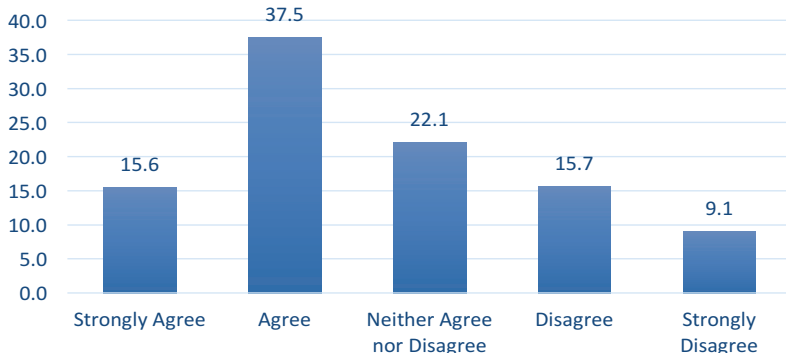
Figures 2.43 and 2.44 display respondents' conscientious attitudes toward arresting individuals for possession of drugs. While the impressions of arrests for marijuana display obvious reconsideration, their willingness to arrest individuals for cocaine possession remains strong.

Figure 2.44

I could arrest someone for cocaine possession in good conscience (n = 756)

Response	Value
Strongly Agree	49.9
Agree	37.0
Neither Agree nor Disagree	9.7
Disagree	1.7
Strongly Disagree	1.7
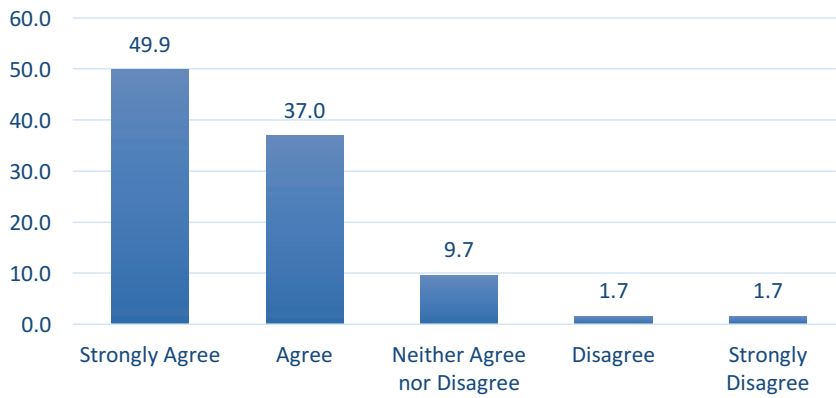
Figure 2.45

I would want to help child victims involved in criminal situations (n = 756)

Response	Value
Strongly Agree	61.8
Agree	32.4
Neither Agree nor Disagree	4.2
Disagree	0.9
Strongly Disagree	0.7
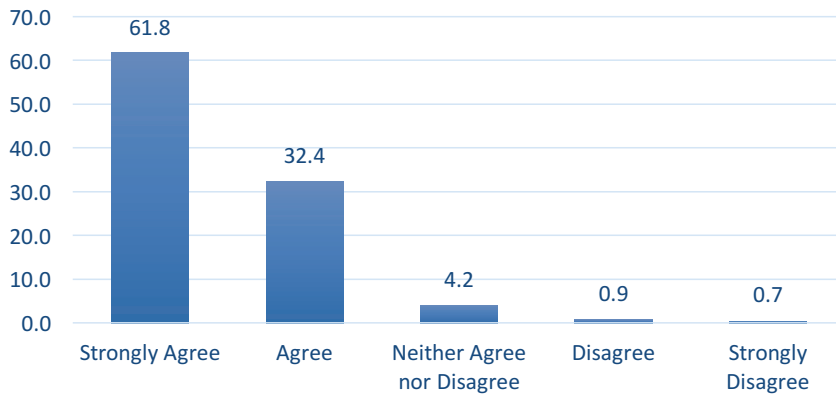
Respondents indicated strongly that they would be committed to assisting child victims as police patrol officers (Figure 2.45).

Figure 2.46

Police departments understand what my generation expects from a career (n = 748)

Response	Value
Strongly Agree	3.9
Agree	19.7
Neither Agree nor Disagree	47.3
Disagree	23.5
Strongly Disagree	5.6
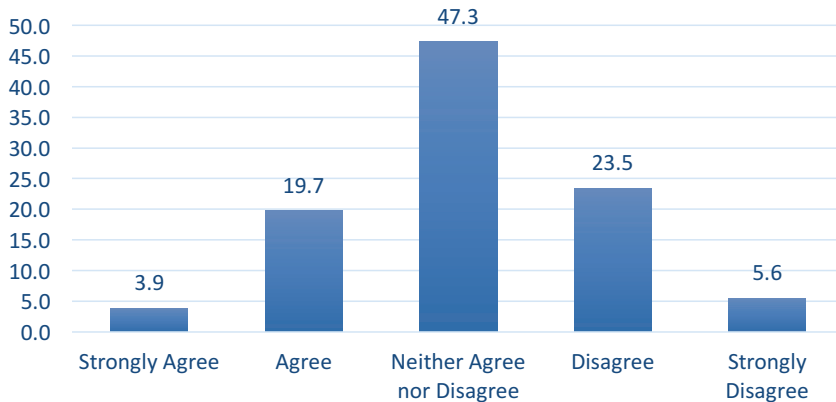
In Figure 2.46, variation in agreement that police departments anticipate current applicants' career expectations is shown.

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From five universities' criminal justice programs, this study sought to discover "fear points" from a variety of questions regarding perceptions of the recruitment, selection, and training processes for police patrol careers, and also if respondents agreed with common perceptions of policing itself as they considered career planning. We feel that no single fear point was demonstrated as being more substantively significant than another as a stand-alone response to the dilemma of police recruitment from the potential applicant pool represented in the survey. However, a number of intriguing and tangible lessons can be gleaned from the data, including some that have potential importance for police organizations seeking to expand recruiting efforts. We elaborate on five potential lessons in this chapter, and discuss each from the basis of what they may say about future recruitment strategy.

Respondents suggest the need for mentors during the career preparation process.

Mentoring in police work is institutional (for instance, in the form of field training, and in select agencies with well-defined succession planning and leadership training programs). Such mentoring within a department is often time and organization intensive. It requires insight, dynamic leadership, and buy-in at multiple organizational levels to successfully initiate, sustain, and evaluate mentoring programs. Many police agencies struggle to sustain even the simplest of these (i.e., internship programs), despite their popularity and seeming rewards for both recruitment and public outreach. Yet the data in these results can be considered in tandem to form novel approaches and strategies that go beyond traditional recruitment strategies in police work. For instance, the disparity among ethnicities when answering the question about family barriers to police work suggests that mentoring of applicants of color could take the form of greater, more immersive involvement in what is apparently the applicant's difficult life choice. Recasting the police recruiter as more of a "football coach"-type of recruiter (one who visits the families of a potential recruit), or as one who exercises one-on-one with recruits, or who socializes as a mentor with the recruit across multiple personal and professional contexts) may unlock potential possibilities of conversation, assurance, and strengthened relationships that display a side of the agency that was previously unforeseen. The respondents simultaneously agree with the idea of having a mentor (Figure 2.5) and show (at least in African-American contexts) a reluctance to confide in the family about one's career plans (Figure 2.28). This creates an opportunity for the agency in question to establish a deeper relationship beyond making available basic information about the selection and testing process, often the traditional extent of police recruiter behavior.

Respondents appear under-informed about the realities of the police career ladder.

While simultaneously showing some interest in police supervisory and leadership roles (a cumulative percentage of thirty-nine percent either strongly agree or agree, Figure 2.34), and also admitting lack of knowledge about the activities inherent in those same roles

(a cumulative percentage of forty-four percent, Figure 2.35), it is obvious that while the respondents are interested and curious about career advancement in police work, their information about those positions is lacking (also Figure 2.37). This suggests that there is little revealed to many potential interested applicants about what specifically the process for advancement, and the content of the roles beyond patrol, might actually be. Time should be taken by recruiters not only to engage in realistic job preview of patrol positions (through ride-along experiences, mentoring, internships, and the like) but also to expose potential applicants to what exactly sergeants, lieutenants, and captains in the department do, and how they arrived at those roles. Interestingly, respondents are freely admitting (by sixty-eight percent agreeing or strongly agreeing, Figure 2.13) that their generation has little patience with the entry-level position route of career advancement. This may be interpreted in conjunction with the question about the career ladder itself (fifty-five percent agreeing or strongly agreeing that patrol is an acceptable entry-level position should a future promotional opportunity await, Figure 2.4). What is evident is that the potential recruit's knowledge of what exactly lies beyond that entry level position is ambiguous. Strategies that target the potential recruit's impressions of the agency's career opportunities by sharing the importance, content, and relative prestige of these positions can potentially act as retention strategies as well.

Respondents feel confident about their criminal history, drug, and social media use.

The responses to questions about personal background (Figures 2.6, 2.9, and 2.11) can be interpreted two ways: did the candidate believe as though their personal past behavior was acceptable for police hire regardless of the potential infractions within, or are they fully aware of agencies' expectations and limitations regarding these background items and confirm that their behavior was within those boundaries? The second interpretation does not disclose much information about the first, but it can be assumed that the respondents had an opportunity to reflect upon what they knew to be their criminal, drug, and social media history, and answered as to whether they felt these behaviors "hurt their chance" at being hired. In an era of gradually relaxing attitudes toward marijuana use, and an expectation of social media transparency often regardless of the statement made, this concept can be problematic. Agencies could do well to communicate these expectations at the earliest stage of the recruit process, even prior to an individual expressing interest, and possibly to younger groups of people that visit or have contact with the agency. Many departments with established "Explorer" and high-school (and earlier) programs make clear the level of acceptability of these possible infractions; making this information a central part of recruitment can solidify recruit expectations early on.

Respondents appear confident about the police academy.

Police agencies which likewise provide preview of the academy experience could do well to communicate realistic expectations of

what takes place on a day-to-day basis within. Various ways of doing so include timely video clips of academy experiences beyond physical training (the respondents being college students, it is possible that their familiarity with classroom-based education is more acute than other potential applicant cohorts), and internship experiences that allow individuals time to immerse in the academy environment. Many older police officers can recall an era when such experiences were often held (even deliberately) as invisible as possible to preserve mystique and intimidate cadets, but changing generational preferences allow for more transparency to capitalize of evident recruit and applicant interest.

Respondents may benefit from one-on-one communication of the process.

Since the 2000's, widespread attention has been paid to the connectedness of Generation X and Millennial cohorts of job seekers, and the way in which their use of social media and computer technology to seek and retain information and communication has transformed the workplace. Similarly, social media has enhanced the police recruitment process, providing an almost global platform for police agencies to advertise and disseminate information pertaining to positions and application expectations. But when it comes to the police recruitment and selection process, specifically in light of many of the survey responses in this project, police agencies should continue to pursue non-digital means of identifying, mentoring, and building relationships with applicants. Specifically, respondents' statements about mentoring, physical preparation and training, gaining knowledge of advanced career opportunities and collateral duties, and ethnic differences in responses to questions about the influence of family opinions on the career decision open the doors to more traditional (and time-intensive) methods of recruiting. The use of social networking and cellular communication should not be the extent of a police agency's overall recruitment effort, despite their advantages. Future research efforts to investigate the extent to which police agencies' recruitment philosophies and strategies have been either transformed by or limited to social media and online-based efforts should be conducted to make more conclusive statements about the limitations of these options.

FROM THE CHIEF'S DESK

Leonard Papania, Chief of Police, Gulfport Police Department

History shows that in policing, especially in recent years, while many characteristics never change, new challenges are always present. For instance, the integrity of police officers has been under question as the public demands body cameras. Citizen contacts with law enforcement are now being scrutinized to levels that diminish the impact of police presence. Another challenge in law enforcement that has been influenced by the aforementioned contemporary changes in policing is recruitment and retention. In this study, we conclude with two overall questions. First, what changes in the occupation must be noted and adjustments to recruitment and retention be made? Second, what must remain constant in policing, and should not be changed?

The data collected in this study allow us to better understand the perspectives of the potential labor pool from which we recruit. It provides perspective of what an applicant can expect in the initial part of the career where an individual transitions from citizen/applicant to police officer. Also, some of the data provide an overall perspective as to what potential applicants perceive about policing overall. Prior to examining this data, it is important to understand what we (the employer) seek in our applicant. By understanding both the viewpoint of potential applicant and employer, we have the greatest opportunity of improving our approach to recruitment and retention while maintaining the integrity and competency in policing.

In my assessment of the data, I arranged responses into four categories I have titled *First Tier*, *Growth*, *Balance* and *Job*. First Tier is the initial phase of a law enforcement career. It includes the time period that encompasses recruitment, the application process, background investigation, and initial training. Generally, the duration of this time period will be one's first year as a police officer. For most agencies, the first year will follow an applicant's growth into a trained practitioner who operates independently. The second category, Growth, refers to those opportunities that arise for career growth after the First Tier. This includes promotions, special assignments, collateral duties, and so forth. The third category of Balance focuses on what the individual must consider in regards to his or her personal life, and those specific requirements of policing that will impact and possibly change their personal life. Lastly, the Job category specifies the perceived and anticipated challenges of the profession of law enforcement. These challenges are ones that are present throughout a law enforcement career. Because of the numerous contemporary challenges that exist in recruiting for diversity, I also examined specific data that present implications for recruiting members of minority communities, especially African-Americans.

THE FIRST TIER

There were several statements that solicit specific consideration about the potential applicant's preparation for a patrol career. When considering the position of patrol officer, it was revealed that generally the respondents are not averse to considering the idea of a patrol career (Figure 2.1). However, as we will see in the responses particular to Growth, respondents look past patrol duties towards

long-term service in other law enforcement capacities. I believe that the entry-level position of the uniformed officer, which accounts for most of the jobs in law enforcement, continues to be tarnished by the combination of negative media and either misunderstood or malicious police actions.

There were three statements in which the respondents had the opportunity to measure their perceptions of use of force (Figures 2.25, 2.27, and 2.40). Their responses gave indication that physical engagement was not a barrier to career interest. While the potential to use force was not a substantive concern, there was a statement that the respondent weighed in on arresting someone for marijuana (Figure 2.43). It was readily apparent that the contemporary movement toward legalization of marijuana has influence upon these college age respondents. Over half the respondents indicated that they were bothered with the notion of arresting an individual for marijuana possession. Less than twenty five percent indicated they would not have an issue. This view point may have a relationship to number of applicants that will report historic use of marijuana during the background phase.

Several statements offer insight into the perception of the police academy. Respondents tend to understand the need for the academy, but also they express a lack of full knowledge of what occurs in the academy (especially in Figure 2.14). Overall, it seems that the academy does not present a major obstacle for these respondents as they consider a law enforcement career.

Respondents were presented with opportunities to give insight into their background and character being analyzed for consideration of police employment. Respondents recognized the importance of integrity. Even prior to this report, it has been safe to assume the younger potential labor market for policing is heavily involved in the use of social media. Much of social media is concerned with self-expression and revelation. Past generations did not engage in public forums that allowed for so much personal exposure. In my personal experience, that was perpetually one of the training objectives: as a police officer you were expected to be constantly observed. Being of a prior generation, having an in-depth background investigation performed was a subject of concern. However, it is apparent that the respondents in this study (mostly college-age students) did not have an aversion to being examined in a background investigation, nor do they have an indifference to their social media being reviewed (Figures 2.11 and 2.12). Moreover, they indicated that a review of a person's social media gives a "good idea of what character they have." I believe this to be a strong indicator that today's potential applicants have much less apprehension to the invasiveness of body cameras, dash cameras, and so forth. The data revealed that less than ten percent of respondents had any such concern (Figure 2.11). Of the statements in this grouping, one gave indication of potential solutions for new police officers. Just over seventy percent of respondents indicated that a mentor would be beneficial to them (Figure 2.5).

THE IMPACT OF CAREER GROWTH POTENTIAL

This data offered an interesting cluster of statements for respondents to reveal their views and concerns about growth as a law enforcement officer. Many administrators and personnel involved in the recruitment and hiring of police officers are already aware of this topic. As I have stated, contemporary issues have caused much of society to look with greater scrutiny at the uniformed patrol officer. It is arguable that this group of respondent's revelations about growth in a career is influenced by this, in that it appears there is much consideration as to what lies beyond patrol work. Patrol work almost has the appearance of the "necessary evil" in developing a law enforcement career. Half the respondents expressed a lack of full understanding of the promotional process (Figure 2.37). That aside, it is clear what draws them to law enforcement is the perception of career opportunities beyond patrol. Eighty-five percent expressed interest in investigations (Figure 2.32). Just over seventy percent indicated they would enjoy being a narcotics detective (Figure 2.33). Less than forty percent indicated a desire to be a supervisor (Figure 2.34). Perhaps supervisory roles are less popular of a career path because that would keep them in a uniformed position. What was notable in regards to the Growth responses were impressions of the statement, "a police patrol position is a stepping stone to a federal law enforcement career." Seventy eight percent of all respondents indicated either agreement or strong agreement to this (Figure 2.36). I believe several things can be interpreted from this. First, and most concerning, is that most of the "top shelf" police candidates plan career tracks that mean early exits from local police agencies. Second, there remains a stigma with local uniform patrol positions. I believe, again this reveals that uniformed policing is still the "necessary evil."

THE IMPACT OF CAREER-LIFE BALANCE

As stated earlier, the category of Balance focuses on what the individual must consider in regards to personal life and those specific requirements of policing that will impact, if not require changes, in one's personal life (Figure 2.30). Respondents gave some indication that they have a general understanding of the impact of patrol careers on their personal life. There seems to be a slightly greater concern about their individual or personal time in comparison to time spent with family (Figure 2.29). One could speculate that that since respondents were college students, they would currently be single, and perhaps at a point in life where they are loosening ties with family. An additional consideration here is that since the respondents are in college and some may also be employed, they are adjusted to certain pressures associated with time management. The results also showed that generally there is not a high expectation of pay that would provide for a lifestyle the respondent wants (Figure 2.31). This is probably reflective of their understanding of the realities of contemporary police salaries. Interestingly, the variance in pay scales among the states represented in this study is notable (five different states are represented). However, the offset of differential cost of living among the sample may be responsible for the overall like results. Also notable is the overwhelming response to the statement, "police patrol work requires serious personal lifestyle changes" (Figure 2.30). Almost fifty-nine percent of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed to this. This response is much stronger than what was indicated in regards to personal/family time and finances. So if time and money are not viewed as substantively significant, what remains in the potential lifestyle changes that would be a factor in career

choice? Our respondent base is college students. As such, many of them are already at some point in the transformation from youth to adulthood. Because of this, the respondents most likely already have considerations of what will change in their lives upon graduation and entering life as an adult. That, combined with the contemporary issues in the media of law enforcement, is possibly why the respondents are able to have such a strong perspective when contemplating patrol work as an adult. I do not believe the thought of patrol work alone causes them to consider it as requiring a great lifestyle change. This is evidenced by the responses to the statement, "Police patrol work is too stressful" (Figure 2.42). Only twenty-three percent either agreed or strongly agreed to this.

Beyond the scope of this study, but built upon the observations I have seen within the context of police recruitment and retention, most new police officers have a more vested concern as to their off-duty time than with past generations. It is much in line with the adage, "what can the company do for me?" as opposed to, "what can I do for the company?" While for many seasoned law enforcement administrators this can be a concerning position, it must be evaluated and contended with as opposed to being disregarded.

THE IMPACT OF JOB PREFERENCES

The cluster of questions that allows respondents to assess the police career is truly interesting. It appears that overall respondents have a realistic understanding of the rigors of a law enforcement career. While they see it as an important and honorable profession, they are not blinded by the glow of the badge in that they understand there are vulnerabilities in the profession for undesirable officers, or incidents to occur. While not displaying a full understanding of the police profession, the respondents showed a credible understanding, if not consideration of significant segments of the duties of a police officer. Force and firearms were shown to be understood and accepted (Figure 2.25 and 2.27). Throughout the history of policing we have heard applicants and new recruits indicate that they have a desire to join the ranks so they could "help people." This remains much the character of those who are considering policing. Ninety-four percent of all respondents either agreed or strongly agreed when responding to, "I would want to help child victims involved in criminal situations." This was one of the strongest responses in the study (Figure 2.45).

The respondents, who were college students, are likely very much influenced by media stories of police behavior. While there could be a discussion as to whether or not this generation of people is more influenced than others, it is factual to say they certainly have more media by which to be influenced. For instance, our current society has a much more accepting view of marijuana. Use and legalization can be found daily in news, social media and entertainment. Just over half of the respondents indicated that they would have difficulty arresting someone for possession marijuana; this compared to eighty-seven percent would have no problem arresting someone for possession of cocaine (Figures 2.43 and 2.44). Less than twenty-five percent of respondents believed that it is unfair for the public to criticize what police do (Figure 2.23). This appears to indicate their understanding of the common belief that "police live in a fishbowl."

One intent of this study was to gain a better understanding of the potential labor pool available in the college community so that better practices of finding and recruiting police applicants could

be implemented. There were two statements that give insight into the fundamental issues of police recruitment. The statement, "police departments understand what my generation expects form a career" received agreement from only twenty-four percent of respondents (Figure 2.46). "People of my generation want an immediately successful career without "paying their dues" at any entry level position" generated an agreement of sixty-eight percent (Figure 2.13). In some ways this can be viewed as an admission from the respondents as to what is being faced in policing today. Many new police officers and potential police officers seek employment in policing with a reasonable understanding of what the job will be and what demands are place upon them. However, it can be argued that the world in which these young people are living provides an environment of immediacy for things that satiate their desires. As such, it is not a "disconnect" from the demands of policing that they may have; instead, it may be the difficulty they find when they realize the necessary "time in grade" that exists to develop and gain experience in policing so that they can advance in an organization. This may be yet another contemporary dilemma in police recruitment, and more importantly, in personnel retention. Police leadership must contemplate this finding. Should we continue to sift through diminishing levels of applicants to find those that fit our model, or do we evaluate our model and adjust it to address the demands of those who are entering law enforcement?

The answer to this dilemma is probably found with some level of "meeting in the middle". Many organizations (because of policy, civil service rules, or collective bargaining) have regimented avenues of advancement that rely on a specified "time in grade", normally the historic mainstream in police organizations. Seniority, regimentation, and other benchmarks have long been embraced. An organization that is willing to ask "why do we do it this way", and considers other methods, will have the greatest opportunity to develop into a modern police workplace that facilitates opportunities that will satisfy the demands of the contemporary police applicant pool.

THE IMPACT OF ETHNICITY

The relationship between law enforcement and African-American communities has a contentious past and remains at the forefront presently. While the media continues to create a disproportionately negative view of policing as it relates to African-American communities, the issues are also tethered to a real history that does not reflect well based on the modern principles of policing. Generally, there are three ways to develop an opinion regarding law enforcement. The first is based upon information provided by a trusted network which usually includes family and friends. This styled influence also allows for influence from occurrences that may be from a prior generation in addition to more current experiences. The second is that which is formed by media, social media and entertainment. Both aforementioned sources only carry as much influence as does the particular person or source relaying such. The third influence is that which is experienced firsthand. Firsthand experience is usually the most powerful, and in some instances it can change a perception that may have been formed in response to one or both of the other influences. It is an absolute necessity for law enforcement to understand both the nature of this relationship, its origins, and the potential opportunities to negotiate all three sources of influence to improve the overall relationship. While there are many areas that policing must strive to improve, this particular issue would bring one of the greatest gains.

The data collected in this study were sorted to provide for a comparative look among African-American and Caucasian respondents. It is important that while responses may vary due to life experiences unique to ethnicity, not all responses should be evaluated as only influenced by ethnicity. A young person contemplating a career in a field that has real inherent dangers will be influenced about such decision based upon many things. For instance, family members (especially parents) will tend to discourage certain career choices because of the dangers. Additionally, the financial realities of police salaries will have an influence on all candidates. While many factors can influence the responses, those which can be clearly identified as associated with ethnicity should be evaluated.

The influence of family on career choice is evident. Approval from the family of an individual becoming a police officer was less likely among the African-American respondents who agreed that this would be an issue at twenty-eight percent, while among Caucasians there were only ten percent who agreed (Figure 2.28). Both responses were relatively low in overall opposition from family. However, the variation in responses between those ethnic groups does indicate that family disapproval may be critical for African-American students' career choices.

Respect and policing also were addressed by respondents. When asked about whether the public should respect the police, about sixty-five percent of African-Americans agreed and almost ninety-three percent of Caucasians agreed (Figure 2.22). While there is a differential among the ethnicities, it is evident that both agree. More specifically, when asked about how they were raised pertaining to respecting the police, which speaks directly to the influences of family, about seventy-two percent of African-Americans indicated that they agreed in being raised this way and ninety-five percent of Caucasians agreed (Figure 2.20). Both races showed strong agreement. While each group expressed that they believed in the importance of respecting law enforcement (Figure 2.22), a much lesser group viewed respect of law enforcement as an influence as to whether or not they would enter law enforcement (thirty-nine percent of African-Americans saw this as important and thirty-five percent of Caucasians viewed it the same). These responses are indicative that while both groups were raised to respect law enforcement, it appears as though their life experiences were different. When asked about the community where they grew up and the level of respect police received, thirty-five percent of African-Americans indicated that respect for police existed. Only forty-nine percent of Caucasians believed the same (Figure 2.21).

Four statements allowed for respondents to address the image of policing and police actions. African-Americans and Caucasians responded almost alike when responding to whether or not they would be a patrol officer because they don't want to be labeled a racist (Figure 2.39). Seven percent of African-Americans agreed with this concern and almost eight percent of Caucasians agreed with this. Image again was contemplated when the respondents considered wearing a police uniform (Figure 2.41). Twelve percent of African-Americans disliked the idea of wearing a uniform compared to over seven percent of Caucasians that did. The influence of media was evident when respondents commented whether they believed "on-the-job shootings involving police patrol officers occur frequently" (Figure 2.40). Forty-two percent of African-Americans agreed, and

only fourteen percent of Caucasians agreed. The difference in opinion was even more evident in the responses to the statement, "police officers racially profile people" (Figure 2.38): sixty-seven percent of African-American respondents believed this, while only about twenty-eight percent of Caucasians believed it.

In many ways the views on the existence of racial profiling in policing becomes the crux of the problem in recruiting African-Americans. This study shows they were raised and believe that police should be respected. However, their life experiences and the influences upon them have led to perceived systemic issues regarding the police profession. Accepting these findings, it must be considered that recruiting African-Americans into policing is a huge "ask" of potential applicants. If applicants believe the profession as a whole is negative toward the ethnicity they belong to, then something must give in order to bring them into law enforcement. Again, this is clear evidence that law enforcement must understand the realities of the relationship between African-American communities and law enforcement. The findings of this study also show that while there is a race issue, there is also great evidence to show that the opportunities to overcome this and bring greater diversity into policing are very achievable.

CONCLUSIONS

New generations bring new challenges. More importantly, new generations bring change that has and continues to allow for improvements in policing. This study confirmed that many aspects of policing, from the selection process to the work itself, are not fully understood by individuals who may be considering it as a career. However, it is also evident that there are still those potential applicants who are of great character and who desire to be police officers. Police organizations must work to evolve in how we seek the greatest resource – our human resources. Part of this evolution is remodeling the processes of policing while keeping the mission statement intact. The labor pool, as demonstrated through this study, is seeking fulfilling careers with opportunities. They desire a quicker pace in career tracks. While it may not be realistic to completely fulfill this want, it must be examined. The desire for faster pace must also be contemplated as an influence on the problems with police retention which makes this a priority concern. Police organizations must, as they always have been required, to ask why they function the way they do, and seek to improve. Finally, the evidence shows that race and ethnicity challenges remain; but a positive interpretation of this study is that resolution of many fundamental problems is closer than ever before.

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