A Step Towards Stronger Police-Youth Relationships: Examining How Youth and Police View the Role of Police in Communities

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Abstract

In an effort to identify barriers to stronger police-youth relationships, this study looks at whether there is a potential contrast in the way police officers and youth view the role of police in communities. An extensive review of literature was conducted to examine how policing practices may influence the way officers view their role in addition to the way youth perceptions of police are shaped. A deficit was revealed in the research on how youth view a police officer’s role, in particular. To answer this question, a sequential explanatory design was implemented. Multi-phase research was conducted through two slightly varying surveys followed by in-person interviews that were completed by 16-24-year-old members of a YouthBuild program and police department, both of which are located in a mid-sized coastal Massachusetts city. Findings showed that the hurdle was not in the way police officers and youth view the role of police, but in the perceptions that youth hold of police in addition to the lack of understanding by police of youth experience in the community. Suggestions are made towards overcoming such hurdles through the implementation of community partnerships with organizations that provide support to local youth. Limitations presented in time allotted for research, number of participants, and the diversity of police officer participants.

Keywords: police officer's role, police-youth programs, police-youth relationships
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Introduction

This study asks if police and youth view the role of police officers in contrasting ways. If police and youth perceive the role of a police officer in contradicting ways, does this disconnect create obstacles in developing stronger police-youth relationships? Reaching a common ground with regard to the understanding of the role and responsibilities of the police officer is crucial to building the strength of a community and those in it because “[t]he relationship between police and the communities they serve has long-term implications for the quality of life of both parties” (Caldas et al., p. 150). Young people, a particular group within these communities, must be looked at separately from the community as a whole. Perceptions of police matter because “[y]oung people’s assessment(s) of police legitimacy are likely to be linked to young people’s expectations of the type of job and role police perform in society, and as a consequence, also shape young people’s willingness to support police and comply with police decisions and rules” (Hinds, 2007, p. 203). Contrast in the way youth and police view the role of a police officer would create barriers to achieving a sufficient level of police legitimacy in a community.

62% of police officers believe that “their primary role is to serve as both protectors and enforcers” (Morin, Parker, Stepler, & Mercer, 2017, p. 8). However, just over half of the public, 53% to be exact, view the police this way (Morin et al., 2017, p. 8). The disparity continues as 31% of officers see their primary role as protectors, while only 16% of the public share this view (Morin, et al., 2017, p. 8). This is a clear representation of the disconnect between police and the public. While this information is vital to uncovering the obstacles in police-youth relationships, there is a gap in the research. Despite the vast amount of data on what police and the general public view their roles to be, the data on what youth view the role,
in particular, of police to be, is severely lacking. Developing strong police-youth relationships thus requires a mutual understanding of a police officer’s role in a community.

This study will address the deficit of research on the way youth view the role of police officers. It will first explore how police officers view their role, and then assess the way young people shape their perceptions of police. Finally, it explains the gaps in understanding that lead to the existing barriers to successful police-youth relationships. Through a sequential explanatory design, I utilized two slightly varying surveys followed by in-person interviews to be completed by members of a YouthBuild program and police department, both of which are located in a mid-sized coastal Massachusetts city. YouthBuild is an international organization that helps “low-income young people learn construction skills through building affordable housing for homeless and low-income people in their neighborhoods and other community assets such as schools, playgrounds, and community centers” (“About YouthBuild”, 2018). While learning a trade in carpentry and construction, YouthBuild also assists young people who left high school without a diploma by providing “an opportunity to reclaim their educations, gain skills they need for employment, and become leaders in their communities” (“About YouthBuild”, 2018), by provide basic education classes to prepare for the state high school equivalency test. In order to be eligible for the YouthBuild program used in this study, young people must be between the ages of 16-24, without a high school diploma, or basic skills deficient and at least one of the following: a member of a low income family, a youth in foster care, a youth offender, a child of an incarcerated parent, or a migrant youth.

The goal was to evaluate the overlap and disconnects that exist in police and youth views of the role of police officers as a hurdle to strong police-youth relationships. I will conclude by offering a discussion of how hurdles can be overcomes to produce such relationships between police and youth.
Literature Review

Existing research on the way that youth view the role of police officers is scarce. However, research on how youth perceive police officers is extensive. The role of a police officer is composed of the duties they are tasked with executing. The way they do so is open to interpretation from youth, who form perceptions based on their feelings of such execution. This section will probe such research, in addition to supplemental research on how police officers view their role, why youth view police the way they do, and the strategies that allow police officers to operate effectively within their jurisdiction. Before diving into the youth population specifically, it is important to look out how the public is policed as a whole. Therefore, I will define the various strategies in order to give context and understanding prior to outlining how they contribute to police officer and youth perspectives. I will use research that reveals how youth view police officers to assess the way they view such officers based on personal experiences and vicarious observations, as the first step in uncovering how they view the role of a police officer, in particular.

Policing Practices

Perceptions of Police Legitimacy. There are many strategies that officers use to police their communities, including stop and frisk. Whether or not these strategies are effective can be measured partly by the perception of police legitimacy in the community. Sunshine and Tyler (2003) define legitimacy as “a property of an authority or institution that leads people to feel that the authority or institution is entitled to be deferred to and obeyed” (as cited in Hinds, 2007, p. 196). This is represented in the respect and cooperation displayed by citizens towards police. Strategies like stop-and-frisk and the existence of the broken-windows theory can have a negative impact on legitimacy. The broken-windows theory instills the idea that “widespread physical and social disorders in a community break down the
existing system of informal social controls and the mechanisms regulating social interaction” (Xu, Fiedler, & Flaming, 2005, p. 148). These methods tend to target “low-level offenses, physical disorder, and poorly defined suspicious behavior” (Brunson & Pegram, 2018, p. 90). As Sunshine and Tyler (2003) emphasize police legitimacy is directly related to the way the public judges the fairness of officer’s decision making process when exercising authority (as cited in Brunson & Pegram, 2018, p. 91). If police are incorrectly identifying this “suspicious behavior,” citizens may feel they are being unfairly targeted. This would in turn diminish trust in the police for the reason Sunshine and Tyler (2005) state as, public trust being “linked to citizens’ perception that the police treat people equally and respectfully, and to their perception that the police are open to citizen input and give an explanation for their decisions or actions” from (as cited in Craen, 2016, p. 276). Craen (2016, p. 276) declared that such statements made by Tyler suggest that “procedurally fair behavior generates trust in the police because citizens infer from it that the police have good intentions.” Adversely, when the public shows distrust in the police, McCluskey et al. (1999), Tyler (2004), and Sampson and Bartusch (1998) claim there is a reduction in “the ability of the police to control crime and leads to heighten cynicism toward the legal system” (as cited in Caldas et al., 2018, p. 151). In addition, when the belief exists that officers are abusing their authority, the amount of trust in the police drops, ultimately leading to citizens decreased willingness to cooperate (from Tyler, 2005, as cited in Craen, 2016, p. 277).

Fairness is brought into play as a way to combat opportunities for these negative perceptions to sprout and to allow for the growth of trust. Meares and Neyroud (2015) found that by concentrating on fairness, citizens will be more inclined to view the police as legitimate (as cited in Brunson & Pegram, 2018, p. 93). Craen (2016, p. 276) conceptualizes a theory from Jackson and Sunshine (2007) by identifying another major component of building
trust as the embodiment of community norms and values by police officers. When this trust is developed, the probability of citizens willingness to comply increases. Hawdom, Ryan, Griffin (2003) suggest that when people believe the police are legitimately exercising their authority, they will be more likely to cooperate with police. This includes providing information about a suspect, and obeying the law in general, even when police are not present (as cited in Hockin, 2017, p. 3). Papachristos, Mears, and Fagan (2012) support this claim by stating that “offenders believed they were more likely to comply with the law when they saw the police as legitimate actors” (as cited in Hockin, 2017, p. 21). Skogan and Frydl (2004) added that not only would offenders be more willing to comply, but citizens would also possess a greater inclination to call them when they are in need and to assist in the process in identifying such offenders (as cited in Craen, 2016, p. 277). As stated by Tyler (2001) trust in the police is most often decided by the way in which one views the level of fairness involved in police behavior and procedures (as cited in Craen, 2016, p. 276). If this trust is the end goal, procedural justice takes the first step toward developing a sense of equality in police practice.

Procedural Justice. Murphy and Cherney (2012) as well as Sunshine and Tyler (2003), explain that the focus of the procedural justice model is aimed at police legitimacy and the willingness of citizens to “cooperate with them,” a similar observation to that of Skogan and Frydl (as cited in Petterson, 2014, p. 103). They define cooperation as the willingness of citizens to assist police officers by reporting a crime, provide information about a crime, and/or help to find a suspect – again supporting Skogan and Frydl’s observation that legitimacy requires cooperation police and citizens (as cited in Petterson, 2014, p. 103).

Tyler and Wakslak (2004) identified three components to policing strategies that indicate fairness: quality of decision-making, quality of treatment, trustworthiness (as cited in
Hockin, 2017, p. 3). Slocum and Wiley (2018, p. 410) echo this by labeling the four elements that they found to be large contributors to the way citizens evaluate the ability of officers to implement procedural justice: the extent to which citizens have a voice and can express their concerns, neutrality, politeness and respectfulness, and benevolence/trustworthy motives” (Slocum & Wiley, 2018, p. 410). When these factors are present in the policing practice, Craen (2016, p. 279) found that not only are citizens behaviors influenced by procedural justice, but their attitudes are as well. Murphy and Cherney (2012), Sunshine & Tyler (2003), Bradford, Jackson and Stanko (2009), Sargeant, Murphy, and Cherney (2014), and Bradford (2014), found a correlation between the utilization of procedural justice and the improving of citizens opinions of police (as cited in Petterson, 2014, p. 102-103). This finding is supported by much earlier research conducted by Tyler (2001), which claims that the way people react to authoritative figures is decided by how they are treated by these figures and how decisions on how to treat them are made (as cited in Craen, 2016, p. 276). Carr, Napolitano, and Keating (2007) came to the conclusion that support was present for carrying out a “procedural justice approach that views negative disposition toward police as indicative of a wholesale rejection of formal control but as transitory and context-dependent” (as cited in Hockin, 2017, p. 22). Taking this approach breaks down the dismissal of police control into circumstantial situations dependent on experiences had by citizens.

**Community Policing.** Community policing has been presented as a way to both increase police legitimacy and utilize procedural justice. The way to define such a strategy is an idea that has been tossed around for decades, with several options emerging. However, when these conceptualizations are blended together, one can gain a decently extensive understanding of the makeup of this practice. Anderson, Sabatelli, and Trachtenberg (2007, p. 23-24), state that community policing “involved addressing underlying issues related to
seemingly unrelated incidents of crime, de-emphasizing routine patrol and rapid response as the primary intervention, involving communities as partners in identifying solutions to crime, preventing crime by developing strategies for socializing children and youth, making high-crime areas safer, and changing organizations so as to support these objectives.” Bazemore and Senjo (1997) found that as a result of implementing recreational activities for police and youth to participate in together, community-policing officers showed less aggression towards the youth (as cited in Brunson & Pegram, 2018, p. 93). This supports Skogan’s (1997) claim that in order to promote mutual trust, citizens and police should also be interacting in settings outside the realm of law enforcement (as cited in Brunson & Pegram, 2018, p. 93).

To successfully incorporate this element of community policing, it is vital that officers understand the increased need to focus place safety and protection of these citizens rather than solely on law enforcement (Stoutland, 2001, as cited in Caldas et al., 2018, p. 153). In doing so, doors will be opened to exposing youth to a different side of the police officer role. The more they see officers active in the community taking actions other than “making arrests or hassling people,” the more favorable they would perceive the police (Brown and Benedict, 2002, p. 568). Brown and Benedict (2002, p. 568) are suggesting that by exposing citizens to police officers outside the realm of law enforcement would increase the positivity of perceptions of police that are held by citizens. Varying interpretations of best practices for policing, such as the implementation of community policing, shape the involvement of police officers in a community.

**Police-Youth Programs**

A popular way of increasing the frequency of citizen and police interactions, outside the realm of law enforcement, are programs centered around police and youth coming together to accomplish a common goal. As mentioned previously, mutual trust is an important
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factor in increasing police legitimacy. When programs bring police and youth together, not only do they create opportunity for this trust to form, but they also support the element of community policing that involves the two groups collaborating.

**Models.** Over the years several programs have launched, all with one thing in common, a focus on bringing police and youth together. A significant benefit to the implementation of such projects are the ability granted to youth to express themselves and to feel as though their input is valued by adult figures (Anderson et al., 2007, p. 24). They also allow participants and youth to not only “interact in less tense settings, but also show that police are concerned about the community” (Hockin, 2017, p. 62).

In order to prevent crime among youth, many police-oriented programs have been implemented in schools with a primary focused on drug education, and gang involvement prevention programs (Anderson et al., 2007, p. 24). Two prime examples of this are Drug Abuse Resistance Education, more commonly known as D.A.R.E., and Gang Resistance Education and Training (GREAT). A similar, but more localized cooperative program was evaluated in Ohio. Research found that by simply stationing police officers in schools, drug and gang activity declined, however youth reported officer behavior as overly aggressive (Goggins et al., 1994, as cited in Brown & Benedict, 2002, p. 557).

Researchers studying a Connecticut-based program called *Police Working With Youth in Non-Enforcement Roles*, - found that youth they declared to be “low functioning” at the start of the program reported increased levels of self-assertive efficacy by the end of the study (Anderson et al., 2007, p. 33). The program “provided funds for local communities to increase or enhance positive police interactions with youth outside of the traditional enforcement role” (Anderson, et al., 2007, p. 27). Though all youth reported the experience as positive (Anderson et al., 2007, p. 36), the most substantial finding was an increase across the board in
the “presence of caring, supportive, and trustworthy adults in their lives” (Anderson et al., 2007, p. 35). The Youth-Police Initiative was motivated by a similar goal of bringing police and youth together but provided a different service. The YPI model conducts trainings for police and youth to learn how to communicate effectively and properly resolve conflict (Watts and Washington, 2014, Executive Summary). YPI creates a space where youth labeled as “at-risk” and their local law enforcement can work to build relationships (Watts & Washington, 2014, p. 2). Over a course of six to seven days spread out across two weeks, the program puts forth an effort to develop youth leadership and presentation skills and to foster communication and relationships between “at risk” youth and police officers. Youth are also educated on “why police officers follow certain procedures and protocols during a police-citizen encounter” (Watts & Washington, 2014, p. 2). In order to boost youth and officers to get to know one another, all participants are asked to “share their own life stories and are encouraged to ask tough questions of one another, as well as to voice their fears and concerns about interacting with each other,” in addition to taking part in team-building activities (Watts & Washington, 2014, p. 2). Data collected from the program reflect enhanced attitudes of youth participants (Watts & Washington, 2014, Executive Summary). Most of these participants also agreed with the statement “this program helped me trust police officers” (Watts & Washington, 2014, p. 20).

Fine et al. (2003) and Presman et al. (2002) also claim that there is an opportunity for police-youth programs to combat the negative perceptions that they have of one another (as cited in Caldas et al., 2018, p. 153). The Police Athletic League (PAL) is an example of where this mission became a staple. Started in Baltimore City, PAL created spaces where youth learned skills from officers, collaborated with police on community service projects, participated in after school mentoring programs, and played on police-youth sports teams.
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(Anderson, 2007; Thurman et al., 1993, as cited in Caldas et al., 2018, p. 153). The implementation came in 1995 (Caldas et al., 2018, p. 153) after shifts in both Baltimore Police Department and government leadership that worked to move away from “zero-tolerance” strategies such as the broken-windows theory, and towards community policing practices (Kralstein, 2007; McCausland, 2008, as cited in Caldas et al., 2018, p. 153).

The reason this type of program was found to be successful in reducing negative perceptions is its focus on promoting positive youth development, enhancing the ability of officers to relate and connect with youth, and developing officers communication skills when corresponding with youth (Anderson, 2007; Broaddus et al., 2013; Giacomazzi & Thurman, 1994; Roth & Ryan, 2007, as cited in Caldas et al., 2018, p. 153). Unfortunately, leadership changes like the one that allowed for the creation of PAL, wound up creating substantial sustainability limitations (Caldas et al., 2018, p. 156). Ultimately, despite the proven benefits of the program, BCPD chose to cease their involvement in 2009 (Hermann, 2009, as cited in Caldas et al., 2018, p. 153). Although both police and youth expressed that participating in these programs was an exceptionally rewarding experience and played the sole role in changing their perceptions of one another (Caldas et al., 2018, p. 163), if the appropriate financial funds and political will are not in place, they are often diminished to “good talk” and are seen as “dispensable” (Caldas et al., 2018, p. 157). These aren’t the only hurdles. Caldas et. al (2018, p. 158, noted that when officers have schedules chock-full of shifts, they do not have the time or freedom to immerse themselves in police-youth programs. On the flip side, many youths, even those who are active participants in these programs, maintain a sense of skepticism with regard to the officers that they have not yet been given the time to work with” (Caldas et al., 2018, p. 161). Therefore, we must assess how police view their role and how they prioritize the duties that of which constitute the job. These prioritizations and
expectations shape the way police-youth programs fit into the puzzle that is the role of a police officer.

**How Police View their Role**

The idea of role theory “focuses on how individuals adopt patterned modes of social behavior - roles - to meet real or perceived social expectations” from (Merton, 1957, as cited in Huey, 2015, p. 195). This framework suggests that officers mold their behavior to fit what they believe society’s expectations to be. However, when society has varying expectations, so do police; not only may the police department alone have their own expectations, but individual officers may too. Officers who take on a “role orientation” (Myers, 2002, p. 51) with a more expansive view of their role tend to both apply authority and make arrests less often than officers with a more narrow view of their role (Myers, 2002, p. 54). Myers (2002, p. 54) identifies officers with an expansive view as those who see minor disturbances as a part of their role. These officers are also more likely to be willing to take part in community policing initiatives (Myers, 2002, p. 52). However, researchers found that regardless of how officers view their role, there are hurdles along the way to effectively taking part in such initiatives, particularly police-youth programs. These challenges arise from the simple fact that many community members have preconceived notions about police officers as antagonists, that are difficult to change (Caldas et al., 2018, p. 159).

It is no surprise that as citizens and police develop their understanding of what officers “role orientation” (Myers, 2002, p. 51) should be, there are varying points of view. Hockin (2017, p. 68-69) described the two primary functions of police as providing both proper social control and service to members of the communities they serve. Supporting the idea of serving the community, Nolan (1952) suggests that in addition to enforcing the law, officers should make efforts to do so in a manner that increases procedural justice and police legitimacy in the
eyes of adolescent youth (as cited in Brunson & Pegram, 2018, p. 85). Officers with this more expansive view of their role are deeply invested in “helping citizens with their problems and they have a strong desire to not just be part of the process, but to see problems through to the end.” (Myers, 2002, p. 51) In fact, in a study done by Huey (2015), found that a greater part of police officers saw either law enforcement or social work roles as “being most closely associated with their perceptions of what it means to be a ‘police officer’” (Huey, 2015, Abstract). The following are four roles found by Huey (2015) to be the most prominent the role of a police officer: law enforcement, peacekeeping, social work, and knowledge work.

**Law Enforcement.** Shearing and Leon (1992) found that an abundance of scholars view law enforcement as the dominant role of police officers, as the one that “defines the policing function” (as cited in Huey, 2015, p. 195). Brown (1988) found that some police officers believe the primary objective of police work is to combat violations of the law and that dealing with low caliber crimes “does not constitute ‘real’ police work” (as cited in Myers, 2002, p. 51). On the other hand, while they agree on the importance of law enforcement, police officers with an expansive “role orientation” (Myers, 2002, p. 51), also believe that handling such infractions and disorder in the community are a fundamental part of their role (Brown, 1988, as cited in Myers, 2002, p. 51). While the relevance of smaller scale crimes is debated upon, Bittner (1970/1990) believes it is widely understood that simply being in the position that police officers are, that grants them a “unique status as individuals empowered by the state to use force in the pursuit of lawful objectives (Bittner, 1970/1990, as cited in Huey, 2015, p. 195). Though these findings clearly portray the importance of law enforcement, Wilson (1968) found that the average officer spends more of their time doing administrative work (as cited in Huey, 2015, p. 195).
Administrative Duties. Due to the discrepancies between what officers think their role is versus the work they are actually doing, many officers find themselves becoming frustrated (Huey, 2015, p. 196). Administrative duties come along with law enforcement in the form of writing incident reports and entering data. Officers are often required to convert their in-person work over to data. (Huey, 2015, p. 196). Ericson and Haggerty (1997) describe the process as “transforming each of their activities, observations, and/or events attended into data that can be processed and used for governance and/or risk management purposes” (as cited in Huey, 2015, p. 196). Not only is data recorded in order for risk management, but it also used collectively to generate statistics (Ericson, 1982; Manning, 1977, as cited in Huey, 2015, p. 196). Though, this work is considered to be frustrating, it is not the only role that officers are often tasked with taking on.

Community Stability. Maintaining stability in the community, or what Bittner (1967) has identified as “peacekeeping,” has been identified as one of the main roles assumed by police officers. Muir (1977) characterizes “peacekeeping” as lessening disorder and tensions to the best of their ability in order to prevent crimes or disturbances. Issues that have the potential to create such chaos are often ones that occur on an interpersonal level. When officers act as “peacekeepers” they are making efforts to deter disturbances such as verbal disputes or activity with the potential to result in a crime (Muir, 1977, as cited in Huey, 2015, p. 195). Practices such as community policing play a large role in the success of maintaining community stability. A major component of community policing is the knowledge that officers have of members of their community. Taking part in such a practice increase the level of exposure that officers have to community members outside the realm of law enforcement. The work of Bittner (1967) reiterated this idea in stating that officers having this
Understanding allows them to respond effectively to situations like those previously described (as cited in Huey, 2015, p. 196).

**Social Work.** Perhaps the most controversial role assumed by officers is that of social work. Like administrative duties and community stability, social work is often referred to as another type of assistance that police provide that lies outside of the traditional law-enforcement duties (Wiseman, 1970, as cited in Huey, 2015, p. 196). Those who oppose the idea of police as social workers have been known to refer to police-youth programs as a service that is unnecessary for police to engage in. In a study conducted by Caldas et al. (2018, p. 157), one police commissioner stated, “We’re not social workers, and I don’t want my men and women doing these youth programs or these mentoring programs anymore.” Another community leader expressed similar grievances with regard to the PAL program supporting a fellow officer’s idea that “young healthy police officers should not be babysitting young kids in PAL centres. They should be on the street arresting people” (Caldas et al., 2018, p. 159). Those who feel the opposite tend to see police as being answerable to the public (Trojanowicz et al., 1998, as cited in Huey, 2015, p. 196). In fact, Nolan (1952) noted that there were numerous officers from the Juvenile Aid Bureau who held master’s degrees in social work (as cited in Brunson & Pegram, 2018, p. 85). It was the education that came with these degrees that allowed these officers to provide distinguished care to citizens who needed it (Nolan, 1952, as cited in Brunson & Pegram, 2018, p. 85). Community policing practices as a whole support the social work role of police officers. Herbert (2001) and Goldstein (1990) believe that such practices “underscore the social work component of policing through a re- visioning of the police as proactive ‘problem solving’ within communities” (as cited in Huey, 2015, p. 196). The contradiction created between officers who support community policing and social work roles and those who do not creates a mutual misunderstanding. Officers who
do support these roles desire the ability to become involved in police-youth programs. When they are unable to do so due to uncooperative leadership, community members label police unwilling as a whole, rather than only labeling those who truly are. This demonstrates the ability of police behavior to shape youth perceptions. The degree in which a police officer views community engagement as a part of their role may play influence the way they are viewed by youth.

**Shaping How Youth View the Police**

Before we can determine the appropriate ways to reduce these negative perceptions, it is vital to develop an understanding of the details of a broad range of perceptions, how they are formed, and the influence of police behavior. After all, it is developing an understand of the way youth view police that will pave the way to understanding how youth view the role of a police officer. There are various ways in which youth are exposed to police officers; social media and personal experiences being two broad themes that emerge. Shaping appropriate perceptions based on exposure to police officers in either matter is complex because the intentions of the police officers in addition to the context in which a situation unfolds is not always lucid (Hockin, 2017, p. 52). By implementing community policing practices, police may appear to be more responsive in the community and in turn lead to the belief that they are better fit to help people in need (Myers, 2002, p. 162).

**Social Media.** Social media adds to the complexity of developing such understanding because of the inevitable filter it creates. Hockin (2017) identified several themes of social media as a tool for creating perceptions of the police. There were two, however, that explain this filter; only seeing extreme instances and avoiding vicarious experiences (Hockin, 2017). If youth do not want to look at or watch something on social media, they are capable of avoiding it. This filter also serves as a way to most often exposing youth to the most extreme
instances of violence (Hockin, 2017, p. 50). While this may be influential for most people, it especially poignant with those who have little to no first hand encounters to compare it to (Hockin, 2017, p. 50). Hockin’s (2017, p. 70) study found that participants use of social media had an extensive influence on the way that youth perceives policing.

**Personal Experience.** Whether it be via first hand or vicarious experiences, perceptions of police are influenced in a way that may also shape attitude. Hinds (2007, p. 204) found that negatively perceived encounters with police officers play a primary role in shaping attitudes about police. Hockin (2007) also found that many people’s perceptions are formed during adolescence but shift as the person ages.

**Age.** A theme of changing perceptions as youth age emerges in various studies. Brick et al. (2009, p. 493) reported that younger youth hold more positive perceptions towards police officers than older youth. Hinds (2007, p. 196) suggests that these positive attitudes have a lasting effect on how they will perceive police as adults, however, she adds that as youth mature, they begin to develop beliefs about law enforcement based on what they are exposed to. Hinds notes that what youth identify as their social norms, values, and beliefs to be are challenged by their personal experiences (Hinds, 2007, p. 196). Hockin (2017, p. 68-69) found that study participants reported early adolescence as a time where they experienced things that made them question the role of police officers.

Slocum and Wiley (2018, p. 404) call this process “legal socialization” that is a result of these experiences and the social interactions that come along with them. It is these experiences that increase the complexity in which youth view the police (Hockin, 2017, p. 31), especially those experiences that do not align with ones the youth have had or lessons they were taught during adolescence (Hockin, 2017, p. 32). For experiences that involve direct communication with police, the strategy used by the officers played a role in shaping youths’
perceptions. Hinds (2007, p. 201) found that the strongest influence on these perceptions is the use of procedural justice.

**First Hand Encounters.** The way youth perceive police is heavily influenced by the first hand interactions that they have with officers (Leiber, Nalla, & Farnworth, 1998, as cited in Brunson & Pegram, 2018, p. 88). Brick et al. (2009, p. 493) found that youth who been arrested had more negative attitudes towards police than those who did not have any contact with police. This was especially true when they were unsatisfied with how the officers treated them (Slocum & Wiley, 2018, p. 408). The negative contact plays a major role in the way youth view the legitimacy of police (Hinds, 2007, Abstract). Though negative encounters are shown to result in negative perceptions, it makes no difference whether the experiences are positive or negative with measuring the impact it has on shaping youths’ attitudes towards police (Griffiths and Winfree, 1982, as in Brown & Benedict, 2002, p. 557).

**Vicarious Experiences.** Youth who are not exposed to police through first hand experiences can also be exposed to police officers through things they witness and things they hear. Hurst and Frank (2000) found that when people see or hear encounters between police officers and citizens that display perceived disrespect on behalf of the officer, they tend to have more negative perceptions of police as a whole (as cited in Brunson & Pegram, 2018, p. 89). Such behavior can be defined as rudeness, physical abuse, not maintaining neutral in a dispute between citizens, and concealing a fellow officer’s wrongdoing (Hurst & Frank, 2000, as cited in Brunson & Pegram, 2018, p. 89).

Whether the experience a young person has with police officers is first hand, vicarious, or through social media, the perceptions they form as a result resemble the relationship youth and officers maintain.
Police-Youth Relations

Improving the relationships between police and youth is a significant factor in improving relationship between police and the community as a whole (Hinds, 2009, as cited in Caldas et al., 2018, p. 153). When these relationships are weak, citizens may be less likely to comply with the law and to report law violations and suspicious behavior (Tyler, 1990, as cited in Hinds, 2007, p. 196). This is reflective of the interdependent relationship that exists between police and the community. Not only are police dependent on cooperation from the community, but the everyday lives of youth can be altered by police (Peterson, 2014, p. 110). After all, police are most often the only agents of criminal justice that young people interact with (Hinds, 2007, p. 197) and the more positive an attitude they hold towards police, the more likely they are to cooperate (Decker, 1981, as cited in Taylor, Turner, Ebensen, and Winfree, 2001, p. 295). Hockin (2017, p. 61) suggests solutions that would allow for more positive interactions and ultimately improve police-youth relationships: communication skills, restrained use of physical force, offering opportunities to interact with police, and addressing systemic root causes.

Police Behavior. While it may be common belief that the citation a police officer distributes is what shapes a citizen’s attitude towards them, it is more often the officer’s behavior that shapes citizens attitudes (Cox and White, 1988, as in Brown & Benedict, 2002, p. 552). This behavior, however, is formed by officers through an on-the-spot assessment of the young person's' likelihood to violate the law, potential for rehabilitation, and their general character (Brunson & Pegram, 2018, p. Summary). The behavior that results from these assessments is a strong indicator of the way youth will perceive police officers. Negative perceptions come from several aspects of police officer’s actions. When youth feel they are not being respected by officers they are likely to form negative opinions of the police
Microaggressions emerge as possible markers for disrespect on the behalf of police officers. While these comments are subtle, they still belittle the youth (Pierce, Carew, Pierce-Gonzalez & Wills, 1977, as in Hockin, 2017, p. 13). Additional markers are searches that feel random, targeted, and/or threatening. When talking to youth in a study analyzing complaints from such youth about police officers, respondents stated that they felt police stopped them or focused particularly on their group of friends without having a justified reason for doing so (Petterson, 2014, p. 106). As for threatening behavior, youth also reporting experiencing encounters with police where officers joked by threatening to misuse their power (Petterson, 2014, p. 106).

These perceived mistreatments have the potential to create the belief by youth that they cannot reach to police when they are in need (Slocum & Wiley, 2018, p. 405). They also increase the likelihood of a young person acting out in defiance (Sherman, 1993, as in Hockin, 2017, p. 14) and to adopt norms that will allow them to withstand certain circumstances without receiving assistance from the police (Slocum & Wiley, 2018, p. 405). In order to combat such behavior, police officers should be working to communicate effectively with youth rather than instilling fear in them (Caldas et al., 2018, p. 159). In working to earn youths respect, police must take youth’s perceptions of mistreatment seriously (Petterson, 2014, p. 110). It is then that youth may become more open to the idea of harmonizing with police (Petterson, 2014, p. 110).

**Youth Behavior.** Behavior is far from one-sided when analyzing police-youth relationships. The manner in which youth behave also plays a key role in determining potential success in such relationships. It has not shown to be uncommon for police behavior to be a result of perceived youth behavior. Werthman and Piliavin (1967) found that youth
were more likely to be arrested when the officers perceived the youth’s attitudes to be negative (as cited in Brunson & Pegram, 2018, p. 86). The same can be expected for verbal and behavioral disrespect (Myers, 2002, p. 181). Brown, Novak, and Frank (2009) also came to a similar conclusion. When youths’ behavior is interpreted as disrespectful, officers become less tolerant (as cited in Brunson & Pegram, 2018, p. 86). On the other hand, youth who appear to be frightened and regretful have a greater chance of going free (Werthman & Piliavin, 1967, as cited in Brunson & Pegram, 2018, p. 86).

Avoidance is another common theme in youth behavior. Weitzer and Brunson (2009) stated that the reason for this behavior was the expectation youth have that the encounter is bound to be negative (as in Hockin, 2017, p. 23). Another reason reported by youth themselves was that people who are seen engaging with the police are often seen as “snitches,” a title they did not want to hold (Weitzer and Brunson, 2009, as in Hockin, 2017, p. 23). While avoiding police may appear to eliminate unwanted interactions, police may see it as an “evasive action” and focus more heavily on the youth participating in such behavior (Najdowski, Bottoms, & Goff, 2015, as cited in Brunson & Pegram, 2018, p. 92). While youth have acknowledged that their behavior has an influence on the outcome of police encounters, they justify it as a result of the mistreatment they receive from police (Hockin, 2017, p. 23).

Summary

It has been outlined here that there is potential for stronger police-youth relations if a mutual understanding of the role of a police officer is established. Encounters with police officers has shown to influence the way youth shape their perceptions of police as a whole. It is important to understand how contrasting views of a police officer’s role and resulting perceptions impact the potential for strong police-youth relations to form. The following section will discuss the research methodology used to achieve this goal.
Methodology

This study utilizes both qualitative and quantitative research through a sequential explanatory design. Surveys are employed to find baseline perceptions, understandings, and experiences from the subjects. Following data collection from surveys, focus groups are utilized to develop an understanding of the origin of themes emerging in survey results. The focus groups allow for subjects to elaborate on particular questions from the survey, as well as create a space for discussion amongst subjects with regard to the results.

Survey

Surveys were distributed to YouthBuild members via the Program Director and to the police department via the Chief of Police. This was to protect confidentiality and encourage participation. Due to the fact that the study focuses on two populations, YouthBuild members and the local police officers, two separate surveys were crafted. Many of the questions were identical on both surveys. The majority of the questions that were not were simply variations of similar questions that were reworded to reflect the population reading them. Survey questions focused on various life experiences of YouthBuild members in order to gauge the level of understanding that the police have of the youth living in the community that they serve. Numerous questions focused on the amount of trust YouthBuild members have in the police and what the police believed this amount to be. The purpose of gauging subject’s knowledge was to find a starting point for establishing police-youth relationships. If the police had no understanding of what the YouthBuild members lives were like, the first step would be to introduce them to the correct information. However, if the two populations were on the same page, the first step would be finding a way for the police to act as a support network for the youth, in order for them to work collaboratively as opposed to individually.
Interviews

Upon the conclusion of the survey process, six interviews were conducted. Three interviews were held with members of the local police department and the other three were with YouthBuild members. Of the police officers interviewed, two were male and one was female. One officer was a former patrolwoman who progressed to become a detective. The other two officers were patrolman at the time of their interviews. These interviews were designed in a way to dive deeper into the resulting survey themes. Subjects were asked questions that revealed why such themes emerged.

Limitations, Confidentiality, Positionality

While conducting my research, I encountered the following limitations: time, number of participants, and range of police officers surveyed. Being that I was only allotted four months for data collection, analysis, and writing, there was a limit on the amount of time I could spend working to gather more participants. I had originally intended on having 30 YouthBuild members and 30 officers from the local police department take the survey. Due to this lack of time, I was only able to gather valid survey responses from 17 YouthBuild members and 13 police officers. The YouthBuild program used in the study was in a transition period of one cohort graduating the program and another about to enter. A second round of surveys was administered to the incoming cohort prior to conducting the interviews. Being that I am a fellow at this YouthBuild program, I was aware when looking at the original survey results that they were not representative of the programs population. The members surveyed in the first round have had little to no interaction with the police officers in this city, while the members in the second group had experiences much greater exposure. There was also a limited number of officers from the local police department that were able to take part in both the survey and interview portions of the study. Additionally, two of the three police
officers that were interviewed have a background in social work. This may influence my findings by showing a greater number of officers who have previous interest and/or experience in working with youth or in the welfare of others, prior to joining the police department. Results may have been influenced by the lack of diversity in police officers interviewed.

I was able to maintain anonymity in the survey process by utilizing Qualtrics as my network for data collection. The consent form for both the survey and interview were located separate from the survey therefore survey results could not be connected with individual participants. Interviews were kept entirely confidential as all identifying information was discarded when using quotes throughout my findings. All survey and interview data were kept safe as password protected electronic records.

My interest in researching this topic was a direct result of being a graduate fellow at this YouthBuild program site with the intention of becoming a police officer. Despite making all attempts to remove any bias, there is a possibility that my personal investment in police-youth relationships may have influenced the lens in which I utilized to analyze data.

Findings

Survey Findings

Out of 39 total responses from both of the surveys combined, 30 were valid. Figures 1 shows the demographic data that was collected in the surveys of YouthBuild students and police officers. It is significant to note that of the police surveyed, 100% identified as Caucasian/White while only 12% of the YouthBuild members identified as such. Also, more than 60% of respondents from both surveys were male.
Figure 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YouthBuild (N = 17)</th>
<th>Police Department (N = 13)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-17</td>
<td>0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>18-20</td>
<td>59%</td>
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<tr>
<td>21-24</td>
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<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Race</strong></td>
<td><strong>Race</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/African American</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed race</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figures 2 and 3 display the average percentage of time in which survey respondents believe police officers should spend on the four roles identified by Huey (2015). Youth reported that police should spend an average of 30.3% of their time on law enforcement while the police reported an average of 37.1%. The average percentage of time a police officer should spend on social work had the least difference with 23.2% on the YouthBuild survey and 24.3% on the police officer survey.
Figures 2 and 3 represent the percentage of survey respondents who believed the noted challenges to be those commonly faced by youth in this coastal Massachusetts city. The
The greatest disparity fell in the category of mental health issues with 19.1% of police officers reporting that they believed it was a challenge for youth, but only 7.3% of youth reporting this belief. Another notable gap is that 13.5% of YouthBuild students reported that they believed lack of affordable housing as a common challenge, while only 8.5% of police officers reported the same. Substance abuse, however, held the least difference being reported by 14.6% of youth and 14.9% of police officers.

**Figure 4**

![Figure 4](image_url)

**Figure 5**

![Figure 5](image_url)

Figures 6 and 7 show a vast difference in responses from youth and police officers.

When asked what factor youth in this city primarily use to develop their perceptions of police officers on, 47.1% of youth reported personal experience and 29.4% reported social media. Only 7.7% of respondents on the police officer survey reported personal experience while 69.2% reported social media.
Figure 6

Youth in this city develop most of their perceptions of police officers based on...
Reported on YouthBuild Survey (N = 17)

- Experiences of my peers: 23.5%
- Media (including social media): 29.4%
- Personal Experience: 47.1%

Figure 7

Youth in this city develop most of their perceptions of police officers based on...
Reported on Police Survey (N = 13)

- Experiences of my peers: 23.1%
- Media (including social media): 69.2%
- Personal Experience: 7.7%

Figure 8 shows the responses provided by youth when asked if they trust police officers. Almost half of the youth (47.1%) reported that they only trust police officers in certain situations while more than a quarter (35.3%) reported that they do not trust police officers at all.
Figures 9 and 10 represent the percentage of youth and police who reported levels of agreement regarding the importance of police officers understanding the previously presented demographic characteristics and common challenges faced by youth. More than 60% of respondents on both surveys strongly agreed that it is important for police officers to understand such challenges in the community they serve. More than 50% of respondents on both surveys strongly agreed that it is important for police officers to maintain relationships with both youth services/agencies and with youth themselves in the community they serve.
Open-Ended Responses. Respondents were provided with the opportunity to provide qualitative information to expand upon particular responses they gave to multiple choice questions on the survey. As shown in Figure 8, many YouthBuild members who responded to
the survey stated that they only trust police officers in certain situations. When given the opportunity to explain why, one member responded, “They act like they are there to protect you, but really they only want to get whatever it is that they want from you.” Another member stated, “If a cop is looking for trouble you’ll know, but if a cop is nicely talking to you then they’re trustworthy in that moment.” One member who reported that they did not trust police officers stated, “I have heard and seen enough times where they were bad guys.”

When asked if these youth may have strengths and/or abilities that they could contribute to this community, yet they go unrecognized, police responses varied. One officer stated, “Yes, no one cares about them, they are doomed. No direction at all.” Another officer replied, “I believe many youths could contribute their strengths but do not know which avenues to take to express themselves, or the initiative.” When the youth were asked this same question, one member responded, “I feel that these strengths go unrecognized because they are afraid to show what they could do, they lack the confidence.” A second member stated, “They have a good handle on technology that with the right guidance would help out in the future.”

In-Person Interview Findings

As intended, the in-person interviews provided elaboration of the responses collected from the survey. Four underlying themes emerged through this process:

1. The influence of relationships with youth on a police officer’s role
2. Roadblocks to building trust between police officers and youth
3. A mutual desire by police officers and YouthBuild members for police officers to understand more about YouthBuild.
4. The significance of personal encounters had between police and youth in shaping perceptions of police
The influence of relationships with youth on a police officer’s role. Police officers and YouthBuild members were asked, “Do you believe that it is part of police officer’s role to build relationships with the youth in their community?” and “What impacts, if any, do you believe these relationships could have on your life?” both police officers and YouthBuild members expressed the impact that these relationships have. For police, this in particular this aids in the ability to do their job. One officer noted:

If the juveniles or the adults in that areas they don’t like you because of either the way you’ve treated them in the past or a situation that you had to deal with them and you didn’t handle right or maybe you got off on the wrong foot, they’re not gonna help you.

Another officer emphasized this by saying:

I think the more you develop that relationship with youth, they may be more willing to confide in police officers, go to you to report crimes, go to you for assistance with whatever they may need you know whether it may be something as simple as a conversation or something that is more significant like reporting a crime, when there are things that are troubling them and you have that relationship, even on a small level, I think that can one reduce crime and make the youth more willing to speak with police officers.

A third officer mentioned a way to utilize youth’s abilities, “Today’s youth is very good with technology and they can disseminate good information to the community through technology. They can use their phones and they can use computers very well and they can pass that information along. In order for these relationships to have such impacts, YouthBuild members remarked on the importance of police understanding the various positions that youth are in:
I feel like that would be a good thing because the youth would build trust because nowadays there’s no trust at all and I feel like for the police officer it would give them a sense like these kids don’t mean to do the things they do they just feel like they have no one so they go to drugs, violence, gangs, a lot of those things.

Roadblocks to building trust between police officers and youth. Both police officers and YouthBuild members noted several hurdles in building this trust when asked “Do you trust police officers in this city?” * or “Do you believe youth trust police officers in this city?” One member stated, “People have been arrested for no reason because a lot of police officers tend to come for people.” Another mentioned the negative showcasing of police on the news:

You see the things on the news with the police officer stopping the kids or shooting the people, I feel like if the police just come talk to the youth, maybe the youth would have a better understanding of their part, like that they’re not out to get them.

An officer discussed influences that create this hurdle, “The trust is tough because especially with juveniles, dependent on the age, they are hugely influenced. So, it all depends on their influences that they’re getting, that shapes how they’re going to react to you as well.” This officer also mentioned parents as a hurdle to building such trust:

Parents have this weird thing of well they’re a police officer and I’m going to tell them and they’re gonna take you and I’m a huge like, I’m against that. Don’t put us in that position cause essentially, you’re using us to threaten your kid that we’re bad and we’re gonna take you from your parents and then some of those kids will be too afraid to tell us something because they think that we’re gonna take them.

A mutual desire by police officers and YouthBuild members for police officers to understand more about youth in their community. When asked “What is your knowledge
of the role that YouthBuild members play in the community?* every officer stated that they did not have any, but wanted to know more. One YouthBuild member recalled on a time she presented to a group of police officers in this city:

We went to the station to present on YouthBuild and they had no idea who we were. We were asking them if they knew anything about YouthBuild since they are right down the street and they said that they had no clue what that was or what they do. It seemed like they just wanted to get it over with and didn’t really care.

The officers interviewed discussed their desire to learn more and the impact that it would have, “I think as much knowledge as possible regarding resources that are available to youth and the community in general would be highly beneficial.” One officer discussed the importance of positive encounters with youth:

If you have a positive interaction with them it brings out the best in them and gives me a better perception of who these kids are, their upbringing, who they come from, you know, as opposed to the negative aspects, sometimes as police officers we are directly involved in with youth.

The significance of personal encounters had between police officers and youth in shaping perceptions of police. When asked “Have you had any interactions with the police department in this city? If yes, what is the nature of your encounter or encounters with these police officers?”*, YouthBuild members often mentioned their personal experiences. These experiences varied. One member recalled upon a time he had a run in with the police in this city, “I had a warrant for my arrest, and they arrested me because of it. They were actually really nice, and they told me they respected how I cooperated.” Another member recalled upon a similar instance, but with a different perspective:
They came off as smooth criminals, but it was almost like I knew I was going to jail. They ended up telling me I had warrant for my arrest. I just knew when the cop he was like “you’re not going to jail” I was like “bro.” It was like three police officers that came out of one van.

Police officers also looked back upon interactions they had with youth in this community:

It can be as simple as a basketball game; you see kids playing get out of the cruiser ask if you can play with them. Their first reaction is oh a cruiser pulled up, what’s going on here why are they here and then I’ll start talking to them, start throwing the ball around with them, whatever and their really into it. They’re looking at their friends like wow a cop is playing with us this is cool, this robocop, whatever perception they have.

This officer also mentioned the importance of using these interactions as a “learning experience for me and the youth so they don’t see a tall 200 plus pound man in this uniform with all the gears, weapons, and tools that come with it, they see me as me.”

**Discussion**

The research produced in this capstone contradicts the original hypothesis that states “Police and youth view the role of police officers in contrasting ways.”

Although the research reviewed examines the way youth perceptions of police are shaped, there was an absence of research looking at the way youth view the role of a police officer. Huey (2015) suggests that law enforcement, knowledge work, peacekeeping, and social work are the four roles played by police officers. When both youth and police were asked to identify the percentage of time police officers should spend on each role, the results were strikingly similar. Most surprising of all, was finding a difference of only 1.1% in the average percentage of time YouthBuild members and police reported that they believe police
officers should spend in their social work role. Existing research showed a considerable split between police who viewed social work as an important part of their role as an officer and those who felt it was too far outside of their job description; a divide that was not present in this study.

The lack of disparity in the way that police and YouthBuild members viewed the role of a police officer discovered in this study, revealed that there may be alternative hurdles to creating healthy police-youth relations. Thus, the original hypothesis appears to be null. The way the youth in this study perceive police appears to be a much greater indicator of their willingness to be involved in a relationship with police officers. Recent research by Hockin (2017), Hinds (2007), and Brunson and Pegram (2018), pointed toward social media as primary experiences that shape the way youth perceive police: social media, personal encounters, and vicarious experiences. A salient variation was found in where police and YouthBuild members believe that youth in their community shape their perceptions of police officers. While 69.2% of police surveyed believed that youth shaped their perceptions primarily based on media, including social media, 47.1% of youth surveyed reported the actual primary source to be their own personal encounters, as opposed to 29.4% of youth reporting they shape their views of police through social media. When discussing their interactions with the police in this community, two YouthBuild members chose to tell stories of first hand encounters they had while being brought into custody by officers from this particular department. These specific encounters, in addition to other personal encounters they had with this department were noted by members as the primary experience that shaped their perceptions.

A direct correlation was uncovered in the influence that such perceptions have on the potential for strong police-youth relationships to form. As cited in literature by Hockin
police and youth behaviors have an impact on the formation of such relationships. YouthBuild members who reported negative encounters with police officers were less likely to take part in relationship building with police in this community. On the other hand, the 29.4% of youth who reported having positive encounters, were more likely to be willing to take part in building such relationships. Trust was also noted as a major factor. Some youth expressed that what they believe to be officers’ intentions can get influence whether they trust them or not. One member stated that he believed police officers come at people with “no reason.” When such hurdles to strong relationships exist, one may begin to question the value of fighting to overcome them.

Due to the gap in whether police view relationships with youth as a key part of their role or not found in existing research, the responses collected in this study are noteworthy. Each of the three officers interviewed emphasized the importance of relationships with youth on their role. They noted that the interactions they have with youth in the community, influence the willingness of those youth to assist them in future cases. Police interviewed reported that when healthy relationships exist, police are able to use youth as a resource for gathering information and have experience reduced crime rates by these youth. As noted in literature by Petterson (2014), negative behavior from police officers often leads to negative opinions of police held by youth. This held true in interviews, as youth who had experienced positive encounters had more positive perceptions of police and those who had negative encounters had more negative perceptions.

The question now stands, how can perceptions of police officers be improved to begin overcoming the hurdles they put up to creating strong police-youth relationships?

*Questions have been altered from original script to protect the identity of human subjects*
Conclusion

Though the answer to my original questions appears to be no for this particular study, a potential revision could be tested. Rather than a contrast in the way police and youth view the role of a police officer being an obstacle to establishing stronger police-youth relationships, future researchers should examine the impact that perceptions of police have on these relationships. This study should be used as a vehicle for conducting research with other police departments and youth organizations. While further research does not have to focus on YouthBuild members, it would be important to note the demographics of the youth as those of YouthBuild represent a particular population of youth.

In addition to noting demographics, it would be beneficial to explore police-youth programs that put an emphasis on the matters deemed important by the youth in this study such as understanding common challenges faced by youth communities being served and maintaining relationships with youth-oriented services/agencies in these communities. Rather than educating youth on the role police officers play in the community, it would be interesting to analyze the results of a program that educates police officers on the role youth are playing in their community. This could potentially open doors for new ways for police and youth to work together, therefore strengthening police-youth relationships.

I would suggest that programs include various elements that create a safe space for police and youth to pursue open communication. Connecting with one another outside the realm of law enforcement may influence the perceptions of police held by youth. I believe programs where the two can interact in person would be most impactful as this study showed the majority of youth shaping their perceptions based on personal encounters. In addition, I would suggest that creating community partnerships with local youth organizations be the
basis for these programs. Such partnerships could open doors to programs that create a mutually beneficial relationship between police and youth.

Based on the statements gathered from both police and youth in this study, there is great potential for stronger police-youth relationships to form. However, both groups must be motivated to do so in order for police-youth programs to be successful. I strongly recommend program evaluations to be conducted for any future police-youth programs and the influence of perceptions measured in the process.
References


Appendix A: Initial Email Inquiry

I am writing to invite you to participate in a research study titled, "A Step Towards Stronger Police-Youth Relationships: Examining How Police and Youth View the Role of Police in Communities." The purpose of the study is to develop a deeper understanding of how both Youth and Police view the role of police officers in the city of [City], Massachusetts. The primary activities will include surveys and in-person focus groups. The following are eligible to participate: [Youth and Police description].

If you have any questions, feel free to email me back or call my cell phone at [Phone number]. I look forward to speaking with you.

Thank you,
Brooke O'Leary

B: Consent to Participate

Minor Consent Form

MERRIMACK COLLEGE

315 Turnpike Street, North Andover, MA 01845 | www.merrimack.edu

PARENTAL PERMISSION FORM FOR CHILD’S RESEARCH PARTICIPATION

Study Title: A Step Towards Stronger Police-Youth Relationships: Examining How Youth and Police View the Role of Police in Communities

Principal Investigator: Brooke O'Leary

Student Researcher(s): Brooke O'Leary

Faculty Supervisor(s): John Giordano

IRB Study Number: IRB-FY-18-19-102
Your child is being asked to take part in a research study. This form has important information about the reason for doing this study, what we will ask your child to do, and the way we would like to use information about your child if you choose to allow your child to be in the study.

Key Information
1. This project is being conducted as research and your participation is entirely voluntary.
2. The purpose of the study is to develop a deeper understanding of how both 16-24 year old YouthBuild students and members of the Police Department view the role of police officers in the city of Massachusetts. Ultimately, this research may be presented as a paper and published in an academic journal.
   a. Online survey - Approximately 20 minutes
   b. Individual Interview - Approximately 45 minutes
3. The potential risks of being involved in this study include any emotional distress as a result of being asked questions involving your child’s encounters with police officers in the community.
4. There are no expected benefits for participation in this study.
5. Should your child wish, they may complete a hard copy version of the survey as opposed to the online version.

Why are We Doing this Study?
Your child is being asked to participate in a research study about the role of police officers in Massachusetts.
The purpose of the study is develop a deeper understanding of how both 16-24 year old YouthBuild students and members of the Police Department view the role of police officers in the city of Massachusetts.

What will My Child be Asked to Do if They Participate in this Study?
Your child will be asked to take an online survey and take part in an individual interview. Your child will be asked about any encounters they have had with police officers, but responding is entirely voluntary. Participation should take about 20 minutes or less for the survey and 45 minutes for the interview.

We would like to audio tape your child as he/she performs takes part in the interview, to make sure that we remember accurately all the information. The researcher will keep these tapes in a secure computer drive and they will only be used by the investigator/student researcher. We will only audio tape your child if you and your child give us permission.

What are the Possible Risks or Discomforts to My Child?
Your child's participation in this study may involve the following risks: though the questions are not intended to cause discomfort, your child may be uncomfortable describing the nature of their encounters with law enforcement. If your child is uncomfortable, they are free to not answer or skip to the next question.
What are the Possible Benefits for My Child or Others?
Taking part in this research study may not benefit your child personally, but we may learn new things that will help others.

How Will You Protect the Information Collected About My Child?
Results of this study may be used in publications and presentations. Your child will remain anonymous. No names will be used in the publication of this study and any information collected in the process will be destroyed at the termination of this research study.

Payment of Compensation Information
Participation in this study will involve no cost to you or your child. Your child will not be paid for participating in this study.

What are My Child’s Rights as a Research Participant?
Participation in this study is voluntary. Your child may withdraw from this study at any time. Neither you and your child will not be penalized in any way or lose any sort of benefits for deciding to stop participation. If you and your child decide not to be in this study, this will not affect the relationship you and your child have with YouthBuild in any way. Your child’s grades will not be affected if you choose not to let your child be in this study.

Who Can I Contact if I Have Questions or Concerns About this Research Study?
If you or your child have any questions, you may contact the researcher, Brooke O’Leary by email at olearybr@merrimack.edu or by phone at (978) 408-0499. The faculty supervisor, John Giordano, may be reached by email at john@merrimack.edu or by phone at (978) 837-5000. If you have any questions about your child’s rights as a participant in this research, you can contact the Chair of the Merrimack IRB at (978) 837-5280 or by email at irb@merrimack.edu.

Parental Permission for Child’s Participation in Research
I have read this form and the research study has been explained to me. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered. If I have additional questions, I have been told whom to contact. I give permission for my child to participate in the research study described above and will receive a copy of this Parental Permission form after I sign it.

Consent to Quote from Interview

I may wish to quote from the interview with your child either in the presentations or articles resulting from this work. A pseudonym (fake name) will be used in order to protect your child’s identity.

Initial one of the following to indicate your choice:

_____ (initial) I agree to allow my child to be quoted using a fake name.
_____ (initial) I do not agree to allow my child to be quoted using a fake name.
Consent to Audio-Record Interview

Should you not want your child to be audio taped, they may still participate in the survey, however they may not participate in the interview.

Initial one of the following to indicate your choice:

_____ (initial) I agree to allow my child to be audio taped.
_____ (initial) I do not agree to allow my child to be audio taped.

_____________________________ ______________________________
Parent/Legal Guardian’s Name (printed) and Signature
Date

_____________________________
Name of Person Obtaining Parental Permission
Date

Police Consent Form

MERRIMACK COLLEGE

315 Turnpike Street, North Andover, MA 01845 | www.merrimack.edu

Consent to Participate in Research Study

Title of Study: A Step Towards Stronger Police-Youth Relationships: Examining How Youth and Police View the Role of Police in Communities

Investigators: Brooke O’Leary, Merrimack College
IRB Number: IRB-FY-18-19-102

Key Information
1. This project is being conducted as research and your participation is entirely voluntary.
2. The purpose of the study is to develop a deeper understanding of how both 16-24 year old YouthBuild students and members of the Police Department view
the role of police officers in the city of Salem, Massachusetts. Ultimately, this research may be presented as a paper and published in an academic journal.

a. Online survey - Approximately 20 minutes

b. Individual Interview - Approximately 45 minutes

3. The potential risks of being involved in this study include any emotional distress as a result of being asked questions involving your encounters with youth in the community.

4. There are no expected benefits for participation in this study.

5. Should you wish, you may complete a hard copy version of the survey as opposed to the online version.

Introduction
- You are being asked to be in a research study of the role of police officers in Salem, Massachusetts.
- You were selected as a possible participant because you are a member of the Salem Police Department.
- We ask that you read this form and ask any questions that you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

Description of the Study Procedures
- If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to do the following things: take an approximately 20 minute long online survey and take part in a 45 minute interview.

Risks/Discomforts of Being in this Study
- The study has the following risks. First, subject will be asked to describe the nature of the encounters they have had with youth in the community. These questions may cause distress and are not mandatory to answer. Online surveys and individual interviews will be put in place to increase comfortability of subjects when answering such questions.

Benefits of Being in the Study
- There are no expected benefits.

Confidentiality
- The records of this study will be kept strictly confidential. All research records will be electronic. Therefore, all electronic information will be coded and secured using a password protected file. Audio tape of the interview will only be accessible to the investigator for educational purposes and will be erased from the memory card and secure location on a private computer drive at the conclusion of the research study. We will not include any information in any report we may publish that would make it possible to identify you.

Payments or Compensation
- You will receive the following payment/reimbursement: There will be no payment, however food will be provided during the interview sessions.

Right to Refuse or Withdraw
- The decision to participate in this study is entirely up to you. You may refuse to take part in the study at any time without affecting your relationship with the investigators of this study, Merrimack College or any study partners. Your decision will not result in
any loss or benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You have the right not to answer any single question, as well as to withdraw completely from the interview or survey at any point during the process; additionally, you have the right to request that the interviewer not use any of your interview material.

**Right to Ask Questions and Report Concerns**
- You have the right to ask questions about this research study and to have those questions answered by me before, during or after the research. If you have any further questions about the study, at any time feel free to contact me, Brooke O’Leary at olearybr@merrimack.edu or by telephone at [phone number]. If you like, a summary of the results of the study will be sent to you. The faculty supervisor, John Giordano, may be reached by email at john@merrimack.edu or by phone at [phone number]. If you have any other concerns about your rights as a research participant that have not been answered by the investigators, you may contact the Chair of the Merrimack Institutional Review Board at (978) 837-5280 or by email at irb@merrimack.edu.
- If you have any problems or concerns that occur as a result of your participation, you can report them to the Chair of the IRB at the contact information above.

**Informed Consent**
- Continuing with this survey indicates that you have decided to volunteer as a research participant for this study, and that you have read and understood the information provided above.

**Consent to Quote from Interview**

I may wish to quote from the interview with you either in the presentations or articles resulting from this work. A pseudonym (fake name) will be used in order to protect your identity.

Initial one of the following to indicate your choice:

_____ (initial) I agree to be quoted using a fake name.
_____ (initial) I do not agree to be quoted using a fake name.

**Consent to Audio-Record Interview**

Should you not want to be audio taped, you may still participate in the survey, however you may not participate in the interview.

Initial one of the following to indicate your choice:

_____ (initial) I agree to be audio taped.
_____ (initial) I do not agree to be audio taped.
Title of Study: A Step Towards Stronger Police-Youth Relationships: Examining How Youth and Police View the Role of Police in Communities

Investigators: Brooke O’Leary, Merrimack College  
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Key Information
1. This project is being conducted as research and your participation is entirely voluntary.
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   a. Online survey - Approximately 20 minutes
   b. Individual Interview - Approximately 45 minutes
3. The potential risks of being involved in this study include any emotional distress as a result of being asked questions involving your encounters with police officers in the community.
4. There are no expected benefits for participation in this study.
5. Should you wish, you may complete a hard copy version of the survey as opposed to the online version.
Introduction

- You are being asked to be in a research study of the role of police officers in Massachusetts.
- You were selected as a possible participant because you are a member of YouthBuild North Shore.
- We ask that you read this form and ask any questions that you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

Description of the Study Procedures

- If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to do the following things: take an approximately 20 minute long online survey and take part in a 45 minute interview.

Risks/Discomforts of Being in this Study

- The study has the following risks. First, subject will be asked to describe the nature of the encounters they have had with police officers in the community. If these questions make you uncomfortable, you are free to not answer or skip to the next question.
- Online surveys and individual interviews will be put in place to increase comfortability of subjects when answering such questions.

Benefits of Being in the Study

- Taking part in this research study may not benefit you personally, but we may learn new things that will help others.

Confidentiality

- The records of this study will be kept strictly confidential. All research records will be electronic. Therefore, all electronic information will be coded and secured using a password protected file. Audio tape of the interviews will only be accessible to the investigator for educational purposes and will be erased from the memory card and secure location on a private computer drive at the conclusion of the research study. We will not include any information in any report we may publish that would make it possible to identify you.

Payments or Compensation

- There will be no payment, however food will be provided during the interview sessions.

Right to Refuse or Withdraw

- The decision to participate in this study is entirely up to you. You may refuse to take part in the study at any time without affecting your relationship with the investigators of this study, Merrimack College or any study partners. Your decision will not result in any loss or benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You have the right not to answer any single question, as well as to withdraw completely from the interview or survey at any point during the process; additionally, you have the right to request that the interviewer not use any of your interview material.

Right to Ask Questions and Report Concerns

- You have the right to ask questions about this research study and to have those questions answered by me before, during or after the research. If you have any further questions about the study, at any time feel free to contact me, Brooke O’Leary.
at olearybr@merrimack.edu or by telephone at [phone number]. The faculty supervisor, John Giordano, may be reached by email at john@merrimack.edu or by phone at [phone number]. If you like, a summary of the results of the study will be sent to you. If you have any other concerns about your rights as a research participant that have not been answered by the investigators, you may contact the Chair of the Merrimack Institutional Review Board at (978) 837-5280 or by email at irb@merrimack.edu.

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Informed Consent
- Continuing with this survey indicates that you have decided to volunteer as a research participant for this study, and that you have read and understood the information provided above.

Consent to Quote from Interview
I may wish to quote from the interview with you either in the presentations or articles resulting from this work. A pseudonym (fake name) will be used in order to protect your identity.

Initial one of the following to indicate your choice:

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_____ (initial) I do not agree to be quoted using a fake name.

Consent to Audio-Record Interview
Should you not want to be audio taped, you may still participate in the survey, however you may not participate in the interview.

Initial one of the following to indicate your choice:

_____ (initial) I agree to be audio taped.
_____ (initial) I do not agree to be audio taped.

Subject's Name (print): ________________________________

Subject's Signature: ________________________________  Date ________
C: Surveys

Police Survey

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire about the role of police officers in our community and ways to strengthen the relationship between local youth and law enforcement in Salem, Massachusetts. For the purpose of this research, 'youth' are defined as those aged between 16 and 24. All questions are meant based on your experience working specifically in Salem, Massachusetts. While some of the terms in the survey will be familiar to police officers, their definitions have been included to make this survey consistent with a survey administered to YouthBuild students. This survey should take you approximately 20 minutes or less. All answers will be held in the strictest of confidence and all results will only be shared in aggregate.

Again, your participation is voluntary and you may skip any question on the survey.

0% [ ] 100% [ ]
First, please tell us a little bit about yourself.

What is your age?
- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65-74
- 75 and older

What is your race?
- Black/African American
- Caucasian/White
- American Indian/Aleut/Alaska Native
- Asian
- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- Mixed Race

Do you consider yourself as Hispanic, Latino, Latina, or of Spanish origin?
- Yes, Hispanic/Latino/Latina/Spanish origin
- No, Hispanic/Latino/Latina/Spanish origin

How do you define your gender?

What is your highest level of education?
- In the process of earning a GED
- High school graduate or GED
- Some college, no degree
- Associate's degree or equivalent certification
- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree
- Graduate or professional degree
What is your current rank?

- Chief of Police
- Deputy/Assistant Chief or Deputy/Assistant Commissioner
- Colonel
- Commander
- Major
- Captain, or Commander
- Lieutenant
- Inspector
- Sergeant
- Corporal
- Police Officer, Detective, or Technician
- Cadet, Recruit, Trainee, or Probationary Officer
- Other: 


Now let’s discuss resources in the community.

Below is a list of support agencies for youth in the community. Please check all those you are familiar and/or have worked with:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>I have heard of them / I am familiar with them</th>
<th>I have actively worked with them</th>
<th>I have not worked with them / I am not familiar with them</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YouthBuild North Shore</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Shore Community Development Coalition</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic Charities</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healing Abuse Working for Change (HAWC)</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys and Girls Club of Greater Salem</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salem YMCA</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lifebridge</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plummer Youth Promise</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthy Streets</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From your experience working with the Salem community what have you found...

To be the most common race/ethnicity?

- [ ] Black/African American
- [ ] Hispanic/Latino
- [ ] Caucasian/White
- [ ] American Indian/Alcat/Eskimo/Alaska Native
- [ ] Asian
- [ ] Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- [ ] Mixed race
A STEP TOWARDS STRONGER POLICE-YOUTH RELATIONSHIPS

From your experience working with the Salem community what have you found...

To be the most common race/ethnicity?
- Black/African American
- Hispanic/Latino
- Caucasian/White
- American Indian/Alaska Native
- Asian
- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- Mixed race

To be the most common response when a community member is asked if they are of Hispanic, Latino, Latina, or of Spanish origin?
- Yes, Hispanic/Latino/Latina/Spanish origin
- No, not Hispanic/Latino/Latina/Spanish origin

To be the most common issues for youth? Please check all that apply.
- Lack of affordable housing
- Mental health issues
- Substance abuse
- Access to education that fits student learning needs
- Access support for single parents
- Involvement in the criminal justice system
- Escaping abuse
- Need to help provide for their family
- Acceptance of LGBTQ identity
- Lack of support from either familial or non-familial adults
- Being an immigrant to the United States
- Being involved in the foster care system
- Other:

Do you think that youth have strengths and/or abilities that could contribute to their community yet they go unrecognized?
- Yes
- No

If yes, please explain.
Next, I'd like to explore some ideas about police legitimacy in Salem.

For the purpose of this research, ‘legitimacy’ is defined as “a property of an authority or institution that leads people to feel that the authority or institution is entitled to be deferred to and obeyed” (Sunshine and Tyler, 2003). In other words, this means the likelihood of citizens to believe that police officers are to be obeyed and trusted. ‘Community policing’ is defined as a strategy “emphasizes the need for officers to work together with the community to prioritize safety and to take on a more protective role, rather than an entirely enforcement-focused role” from (Stoulland, 2001).

Please indicate your degree of agreement with the following statements.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Youth view the Salem Police Department officers as legitimate.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth take advantage of Good Samaritan laws. These laws protect people from liability who assist a person who is injured or in danger if unintended consequences result from the administering assistance.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth would call the police if they witnessed or came across a person who had overdosed.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth would call the police if they were assaulted.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth would call the police if they or a friend needed medical assistance.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth would call the police if they were being abused.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth are not afraid to call the police when they are in need.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stop-and-frisk is an effective method for patrol. “Stop-and-frisk” is a non-intrusive search of a subject when police have reasonable suspicion that a crime has been, is being, or will be committed by the suspect. Police will stop the suspect and conduct a quick pat-down of the suspect's outer clothing.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community policing is an effective strategy for preventing crime.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community policing is implemented in units outside of the Community Impact Unit.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would be willing to participate in community policing practices with Salem youth.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Having strong relationships with the youth in my community will:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Having strong relationships with the youth in my community will:</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reduce crime committed by youth who participate in the relationships.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve the way youth perceive police officers.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase the number of youth who view the Salem police as legitimate.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase the number of youth who will report crime to the police.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve youths attitudes towards police officers.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve youth’s trust in police officers.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduce youth’s fear of crime in the community.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve police officers view of youth in the community.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduce the amount of physical force police have to use with youth.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve police officer understanding of the community that they police.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It is important for police officers to:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>It is important for police officers to:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understand the demographics of the youth living in the community they serve.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demographics are the characteristics of a population such as race, gender, income level, and education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand the common struggles of youth living in the community they serve.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain relationships with youth services/agencies in the community they serve.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain relationships with the youth population in the community they serve.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Youth in Salem would report their encounters with law enforcement as mostly:

- Positive experiences
- Negative experiences
- Neither positive nor negative experiences

Youth develop most of their perceptions of police officers based on:

- Personal experience
- Media, including social media
- Experiences of their peers and fellow community members
- Other [ ]
Lastly, please discuss your role as a police officer in the city of Salem.

My primary role as a police officer is as a:

- Protector
- Enforcer
- Both

If you answered both, to what degree do you believe police officers are protectors vs. Enforcers?

Please indicate the percentage of time you spend in your job doing each of these tasks (the total must add up to 100%):

- Paperwork (Writing incident reports, creating statistics, entering data, etc.) 0%
- Social Work (Providing supportive services in areas such as domestic abuse, substance abuse, child abuse, juvenile delinquency, etc.) 0%
- Peacekeeping (Minimizing disorder, reducing tension, settling disputes) 0%
- Law Enforcement (Upholding the law and holding those who violate it accountable) 0%
- Total 0%

Now, please indicate the percentage of time you believe you SHOULD be spending doing each of these tasks (the total must add up to 100%):

- Paperwork (Writing incident reports, creating statistics, entering data, etc.) 0%
- Social Work (Providing supportive services in areas such as domestic abuse, substance abuse, child abuse, juvenile delinquency, etc.) 0%
- Peacekeeping (Minimizing disorder, reducing tension, settling disputes) 0%
- Law Enforcement (Upholding the law and holding those who violate it accountable) 0%
- Total 0%

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. All responses will be kept confidential. If you have any question about this survey, please feel free to contact the researcher, Brooke O’Leary, at olearybr@nremack.edu.
Youth Survey

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire about the role of police officers in our community and ways to strengthen the relationship between local youth and law enforcement in Salem, Massachusetts. For the purpose of this research, ‘youth’ are defined as those aged between 16 and 24. All questions are meant based on your experience working specifically in Salem, Massachusetts. While some of the terms in the survey will be familiar to police officers, their definitions have been included to make this survey consistent with a survey administered to YouthBuild students. This survey should take you approximately 20 minutes or less. All answers will be held in the strictest of confidence and all results will only be shared in aggregate.

Again, your participation is voluntary and you may skip any question on the survey.
First, please tell us a little bit about yourself.

What is your age?

- 16-17
- 18-20
- 21-24

What is your race?

- Black/African American
- Caucasian/White
- American Indian/Alaska Native
- Asian
- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- Mixed Race

Do you consider yourself as Hispanic, Latino, Latina, or of Spanish origin?

- Yes, Hispanic/Latino/Latina/Spanish origin
- No, Hispanic/Latino/Latina/Spanish origin

How do you define your gender?

What is your highest level of education?

- In the process of earning a GED
- High school graduate or GED
- Some college, no degree
- Associate’s degree or equivalent certification
- Bachelor’s degree
- Master’s degree
- Graduate or professional degree
What is your family dynamic? *Check all that apply.*

- Raised by a single parent
- Raised by more than one parent
- Raised by a guardian other than your birth parent
- No longer have a relationship with family
- Foster care

What is your current living situation?

- Living at home with birth parent(s)
- Living with a relative or friend
- Living independently in a house/apartment
- I was homeless, but I have since found stable housing
- Homeless, living in my car
- Homeless, living at a shelter
- Homeless, temporarily staying in other's homes
- Other [ ]
Next, let’s discuss any challenges you may have come across.

The following challenges are commonly reported in studies of young adults. Please check all that you believe apply to youth in Salem:

- Lack of affordable housing
- Mental health issues
- Substance abuse
- Access to education that fits student learning needs
- Access support for single parents
- Involvement in the criminal justice system
- Escaping abuse
- Need to help provide for their family
- Acceptance of LGBTQ identity
- Lack of support from either familial or non-familial adults
- Being an immigrant to the United States
- Being involved in the foster care system
- Other: ____________________________

Do you think youth in Salem have strengths and/or abilities that could contribute to the Salem community yet these strengths and/or abilities go unrecognized?

If yes, please explain.

Do you think it is a common occurrence for youth in Salem to be parents?

- Yes
- No

Do you think it is a common occurrence for youth in Salem to be stopped by a police officer?

- Yes
- No
If yes, please explain why you think they are stopped.

[Blank space]

Do you think it is a common occurrence for youth in Salem to be arrested?

- Yes
- No

If yes, please explain why you think they are arrested.

[Blank space]

Do you think it is a common occurrence for youth in Salem to spend time in prison?

- Yes
- No

If yes, please explain why you think they spend time in prison.

[Blank space]

Below is a list of support agencies for youth in the community. Please check all those you are familiar and/or have worked with:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>I have heard of them / I am familiar with them</th>
<th>I have actively benefited from their services</th>
<th>I have not heard of them / I am not familiar with them</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YouthBuild North Shore</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Shore Community Development Coalition</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic Charities</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healing Abuse Working for Change (HAWC)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys and Girls Club of Greater Salem</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salem YMCA</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lifebridge</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plummer Youth Promise</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthy Streets</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Next, I'd like to explore some ideas about police legitimacy in Salem.

For the purpose of this research, 'legitimacy' is defined as "a property of an authority or institution that leads people to feel that the authority or institution is entitled to be deferred to and obeyed" (Surshine and Tyler, 2003). In other words, this means the likelihood of citizens to believe that police officers are to be obeyed and trusted. 'Community policing' is defined as a strategy "emphasizes the need for officers to work together with the community to prioritize safety and to take on a more protective role, rather than an entirely enforcement-focused role" from (Stoutland, 2001).

Please indicate your degree of agreement with the following statements.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I view Salem Police Department officers as legitimate.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have taken advantage of the Good Samaritan law. These laws protect</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>people from liability who assist a person who is injured or in danger</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>if unintended consequences result from the administering assistance.</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would call the police if you witnessed or came across a person who</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>had overdosed.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would call the police if I or a friend was assaulted.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would call the police if I or a friend needed medical assistance.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would call the police if they were being abused.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would not be afraid to call the police if I was in need.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stop-and-frisk is an effective method for patrol. “Stop-and-frisk” is a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>non-intrusive search of a subject when police have reasonable suspicion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>that a crime has been, is being, or will be committed by the suspect.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police will stop the suspect and conduct a quick pat-down of the</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>suspects outer clothing.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community policing would reduce the amount of crime committed by youth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in the community.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community policing is implemented in Salem.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would be willing to participate in community policing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>practices with Salem police officers.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Having strong relationships with the police officers in my community will:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reduce crime committed by youth who participate in the relationships.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve the way I perceive police officers.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve my perception of police legitimacy in the community</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve the likelihood of me calling the police in a time of need.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve my attitude towards police officers.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve my trust in Salem police officers.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduce my fear of crime in the community.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve police officers view of youth in the community</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduce the amount of physical force police have to use with youth</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve police officer understanding of the community that they police.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It is important for police officers to:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Understand the demographics of the youth living in the community they serve. “Demographics” are the characteristics of a population such as race, gender, income level, and education.

Understand the common struggles of youth living in the community they serve.

Maintain relationships with youth services/agencies in the community they serve.

Maintain relationships with the youth population in the community they serve.

My encounters with police officers have been mostly:

- Positive experiences
- Negative experiences
- Neither positive nor negative experiences
- I have never interacted with police officers

I develop most of my perceptions of police officers based on:

- Personal experience
- Media, including social media
- Experiences of my peers and fellow community members
- Other: [ ]

Do you trust police officers?

- Yes
- No
- Only in certain situations
If you selected that you only trust police officers in certain situations and are willing to share, please explain what the situations you DO and DO NOT trust them in and why this is so.

If you selected that you DO NOT trust police officers and are willing to share, please explain why this is so.
Finally, I would like to discuss how you view the various aspects within the role of police officers in the city of Salem.

The primary role of police officers is as a:

- Protector
- Enforcer
- Both

If you answered both, to what degree do you believe police officers are protectors? Enforcers?

Please indicate the percentage of time you believe police officers spend working on each of these tasks (the total must add up to 100%):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paperwork (Writing incident reports, creating statistics, entering data, etc.)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Work (Providing supportive services in areas such as domestic abuse, substance abuse, child abuse, juvenile delinquency, etc.)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peacekeeping (Minimizing disorder, reducing tension, settling disputes)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law Enforcement (Upholding the law and holding those who violate it accountable)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Now, please indicate the percentage of time you believe police officers SHOULD spend working on each of these tasks (the total must add up to 100%):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paperwork (Writing incident reports, creating statistics, entering data, etc.)</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Work (Providing supportive services in areas such as domestic abuse, substance abuse, child abuse, juvenile delinquency, etc.)</td>
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<td>Peacekeeping (Minimizing disorder, reducing tension, settling disputes)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law Enforcement (Upholding the law and holding those who violate it accountable)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. All responses will be kept confidential. If you have any question about this survey, please feel free to contact the researcher, Brooke O’Leary, at clearyb@merrimack.edu.

D: Interview Protocol
Youth Interview

Role of Police Officers Interview

Welcome
My name is Brooke O’Leary and I will be conducting today’s interview. I would like to thank you for volunteering to take part in this interview. I understand you are a busy individual and I truly appreciate your time. The interview will take no more forty-five minutes.

Introduction
The purpose of this interview discussion is to examine what you understand the role of police officers to be. Specifically, I want to understand how such perceptions can lead to efficient ways to strengthen the relationship between local youth and law enforcement. I will use this information to make suggestions on programs that may be successful in creating healthy police-youth relationships. You have been selected to participate in this study because you are a member of YouthBuild North Shore. Your point of view and experiences are extremely important in this research study. Do you have any questions regarding the purpose of this project?

Confidentiality
You have completed a consent form. By signing this form you agreed to participate in this interview and to keep our discussion confidential. We will use your first name only. Is it okay with this discussion being recorded to facilitate my recollection of your comments?

(If yes, switch on the recorder). Despite being recorded, I would like to assure you that the recording will be stored safely until it is transcribed word for word, and then it will be destroyed. The transcribed notes of the interview will contain no information that would allow individual subjects to be linked to specific statements.

(If no, the session will not be recorded). Per your request, I will not record this session. I will be taking notes for my recollection, so I may ask for clarification as I write my notes.

Ground rules
Before we begin, I would like to go over a few ground rules for the interview. These rules are in place to ensure that you feel comfortable sharing your opinions and experiences.

1. Voluntary - If you feel uncomfortable during the discussion, you have the right to leave or to pass on any question. There is no consequence for leaving. Being here is voluntary.
2. Confidentiality – The moderator will maintain confidentiality when sharing the information with others.
3. Use Respectful Language – In order to facilitate an open discussion, please avoid any statements or words that may be offensive.
4. Open Discussion – This is a time for you to feel free to express your opinions and viewpoints. There will be no right or wrong answers.
5. Questions - Do you have any questions about the ground rules?
Warm up
First, I’d like you to introduce yourself. Can you tell me your first name and how long you have been involved in YouthBuild?

Introductory Question
I would like you to take a moment to think about why you joined YouthBuild North Shore. Would you like to share what brought you to YBNS?

Guiding Questions
1. Have you had any interactions with the [redacted] Police Department?
   a. If yes, what is the nature of your encounter or encounters with these police officers?
2. Do you trust police officers in [redacted]?
3. What factors shape the level of trust you have in these police officers?
4. Do you believe that it is part of police officer’s role to build relationships with the youth in their community?
   a. What impacts, if any, do you believe these relationships could have on your life?
5. What do you believe to be the most important part of the role of a police officer?
6. What do you believe to be the role of a YouthBuild student in the community?
   a. Do you believe that police officers would benefit from understanding this role?
   b. Why or why not?
7. Do you believe you have strengths and/or assets that you could contribute to your community yet they go unrecognized?
   a. If no, why not?
   b. If yes, what are these strengths and/or abilities? How can they contribute to your community?
8. What, if any, do you believe to be the benefits of police-youth programs that allow the two to interact outside the realm of law enforcement?
   a. Would you be willing to participate in this type of program?

Concluding Question: Is there anything you would like to add about the role of police officers in your community?

Conclusion: Thank you for participating in today’s interview. This has been a very helpful discussion. The experiences and opinions you have shared will be a valuable asset to the study. If you think of any additional thoughts or comments that you would like to share please contact me at olearybr@merrimack.edu. As a reminder, any comments used in the study will be confidential.
Police Interview

Role of Police Officers Interview

Welcome
My name is Brooke O’Leary and I will be conducting today’s interview. I would like to thank you for volunteering to take part in this interview. I understand you are a busy individual and I truly appreciate your time. The interview will take no more than forty-five minutes.

Introduction
The purpose of this interview is to examine what you understand the role of police officers to be. Specifically, I want to understand how such perceptions can lead to efficient ways to strengthen the relationship between local youth and law enforcement. We will use this information to make suggestions on programs that may be successful in creating healthy police-youth relationships. All of you have been selected to participate in this study because you are a member of the Police Department. Your point of view and experiences are extremely important in this research study. Do you have any questions regarding the purpose of this project?

Confidentiality
You have completed a consent form. By signing this form you agreed to participate in this interview and to keep our discussion confidential. We will use your first names only. Is it okay with this discussion being recorded to facilitate my recollection of your comments?

(If yes, switch on the recorder). Despite being recorded, I would like to assure you that the discussion will be confidential. The recording will be stored safely until it is transcribed word for word, and then it will be destroyed. The transcribed notes of the interview will contain no information that would allow individual subjects to be linked to specific statements.

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4. Open Discussion – This is a time for you to feel free to express your opinions and viewpoints. There will be no right or wrong answers.
5. Questions - Do you have any questions about the ground rules?
Warm up

First, I’d like you to introduce yourself. Can you tell me your first name, rank, and how long you have been involved in the Police Department?

Introductory Question

I would like you to take a moment to think about why you joined the Police Department. What brought you to the PD?

Guiding Questions

1. Has your involvement with the Police Department helped you connect with youth in the community?
   a. If yes, what is the nature of your encounters with these youth?

2. Do you believe that it is part of your role as a police officer to build relationships with youth in your community?
   a. What impacts, if any, do you believe these relationships could have on your role?
      i. Reduce crime committed by youth? Increase the number of youth who report crime to the police?

3. Do you believe that youth trust the police in Salem?
   a. Why or why not?

4. What do you believe to be the most important part of your role of a police officer?
   a. How much time per week are you able to spend doing this part?

5. What is your knowledge of the role that YouthBuild students play in the community?
   a. Do you believe you do/would benefit in your role as a police officer from having this knowledge?

6. Do you believe youth have strengths and/or assets that they could contribute to their community yet they go unrecognized?
   a. If no, why not?
   b. If yes, what are these strengths and/or abilities? How can they contribute to the community?

7. What, if any, do you believe to be the benefits of police-youth programs that allow the two to interact outside the realm of law enforcement?
   a. Would you be willing to participate in this type of program?

Concluding Question: Is there anything you would like to add about the role of police officers in your community?

Conclusion: Thank you for participating in today’s interview. This has been a very helpful discussion. The experiences and opinions you have shared will be a valuable asset to the study. If you think of any additional thoughts or comments that you would like to share please contact me at olearyb@merrimack.edu. As a reminder, any comments used in the study will be confidential.