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MASSACHUSETTS STATE POLICE

A Career with the Massachusetts State Police

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Master of Science in Criminology & Criminal Justice

Merrimack College

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A Career with the Massachusetts State Police

On May 16th, 1865 then-Governor John Andrew signed into law the Massachusetts State Police Constabulary and appointed William Sterling King as the leader of this new agency. Massachusetts legislated a ban on alcohol in 1855 and enforcement of these laws became the focal responsibility for King and his Constabulary (The New England Historical Society, 2020). This Constabulary staffed around three-hundred and fifty constables and the majority of these officers, Like King, had recently fought in the Civil War. Yet, the Massachusetts constituency did not favor the enforcement of alcohol and the idea of a centralized law enforcement agency. The dislike of the Constabulary among Massachusetts residents and local sheriffs led to the abolishment of the agency in 1875. The Massachusetts State Police (MSP) resurfaced in 1921 and underwent drastic changes in its structure (The New England Historical Society, 2020). During this time the MSP expanded their number of officers and stationed these officers to barracks throughout the state with the responsibility of deterring crime in rural Massachusetts.

The MSP is a statewide law enforcement agency and maintains investigative, tactical, and support units throughout the Commonwealth (The Commonwealth of Massachusetts, 2021). Today, state troopers are responsible for patrolling assigned areas, conducting thorough crash investigations, following up on complaints, conducting criminal investigations, enforcing motor vehicle laws, obtaining evidence, testifying in court, rendering medical aid, directing traffic, conducting arrests, community policing, and engaging in crime prevention and reduction measures. The MSP boasts forty-eight specialized units that perform various functions throughout the Commonwealth and assist with partner law enforcement agencies in the interest of public safety” (The Commonwealth of Massachusetts, 2021; see Table 1 for specialized units.) MSP’s headquarters are located at 470 Worster Road, Framingham, Massachusetts but the expansive purview of MSP entails this agency to be divided into six different patrol areas.

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Moreover, these patrol areas collectively maintain a total of thirty-eight state police barracks.

Troop A: Northeast, Troop B: West, Troop C: Central, Troop D: Southeast, Troop F: Logan Airport, and Troop H: Metro Boston are the six patrol areas and regions. For example, Troop A: Northeast has barracks in Andover, Newbury, Concord, Medford, Revere, and Danvers. Yet, each barrack has jurisdiction over numerous but specific cities and towns. In other words, state troopers working out of the Andover barracks patrol the cities and towns of Andover, Dracut, Dunstable, Lawrence, Lowell, Methuen, North Andover, North Reading, Reading, Tewksbury, Tyngsboro, and Wilmington, Massachusetts.

Table 1. Specialized Units

Unit	Responsibilities	Unit	Responsibilities
Air Wing	Public Safety Aviation Unit (Airborne Support) Provide commanders with aerial tracking and imaging	Commonwealth Interstate Narcotics Reduction Enforcement Team (CINRET)	Disrupt and dismantle drug trafficking organizations
Special Tactics and Operation Team (STOP)	Execute high-risk search/arrest warrants Large security missions	Narcotics Section	Investigate drug trafficking agencies
Special Emergency Response Team (SERT)	Missing person searches Civil disturbances Crowd management Site security	Incident Management Assistance Team	Manage unmanned Aerial systems Help troopers plan major events Participate in Department of Homeland Security Investigations
Marine Unit	Enforcement of state laws and marine regulations in ports,	State Identification Section	Identification of criminal history services (e.g.

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	waterways, and coastal areas		fingerprinting)
Mounted Unit	Mounted patrols at state parks, beaches, and reservations	Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force (ICAC)	Identify predators that target children for sexual exploitation
Motorcycle Unit	Traffic escorts of dignitaries Large scale traffic operations	Digital Forensic Unit	A full-time lab that collects and preserves digital evidence
Underwater Recovery	Searches and recoveries in water bodies across the state	Armorer's Office	Testing and selecting the use of force equipment
State House Protection Section		Defensive Tactics Unit	Train recruit officers and current troopers in defensive tactics
K-9 Unit	Search for missing persons and suspects Community engagement	Driver Training Unit	Provides driver training in Law Enforcement Community
Motor Vehicle Registration Section	Vehicle inspections and licensing	Firearms Training Unit	Provide in-house department firearm training
Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Section	Ensure commercial vehicles are separately safely on roadways	Health and Fitness Unit	The medical unit treats injuries to academy trainees
High-Risk Victims Unit	Victim response to sex trafficking incidents	Dispatch Services Unit	Provide dispatch services to police, fire, and EMS.
Gang Unit	Combat gang-related crimes (e.g., weapons, narcotics)	Communications Radio Unit	Oversee radio systems for the commonwealth
Cyber Crime Unit	Technical investigations and digital forensic response to cyber	Compliance Unit	Provide auditing reports to Commonwealth

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	crimes		
Collision Analysis and Reconstruction Section (CARS)	Reconstruction motor vehicle crashes that cause death or significant injury	Supply Section	Oversees equipment and uniforms for sworn officers
Traffic Programs Section	Oversight of traffic safety initiatives Implements programs to deter dangerous driving	Facilities Management Section	Manages MSP facilities Manages lease and license agreements
Crisis Negotiation Unit	Communicate and negotiate with people in crisis, hostage, or barricade situations.	Fleet Section	Provide reliable vehicles to MSP
Anti-Terrorism Unit	Investigate and prosecute those who violate domestic terrorism statutes	Recruitment and Diversity Office	Recruit highly qualified candidates to MSP
Violent Fugitive Apprehension Section	Locate and arrest those who are wanted for violent felonies	Records Section	Repository for MSP investigative reports
Technical Services Unit	Deploy, install, and maintain electronic surveillance equipment	Staff Inspections Unit	Audit and inspects department resources
Emergency Management Unit	Liaison to Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency	Office of the Department Prosecutor	Review completed personnel investigations
Narcotics Inspection Unit	Manage and oversee narcotics controlled by MSP	Harassment Investigation Unit	Investigates harassment and discrimination within the department
Internal Affairs Section	Conduct investigations of employee misconduct	Fraud Identification Unit	Works with Registry of Motor Vehicles (RMV) to investigate offenses

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State Police Detective Units	Conduct investigations related	Unresolved Cases Unit	Works with district attorney's office and local police department to investigate unresolved cases of homicide, rape, and missing persons
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One can hold one of eight ranks in the MSP. The order of title and ranks of the Massachusetts State Police are as follows: Colonel/ Superintendent; Lieutenant Colonel/ Deputy Superintendent; Lieutenant Colonel; Major; Detective Captain; Detective Lieutenant; Lieutenant; Sergeant; and Trooper (see Table 2 for rank and salary).

Table 2. Rank and Salary

Rank	Median Salary and Range		
Colonel/ Superintendent	\$88,187	(\$80,136 and \$88,151)	(50%)
Lieutenant Colonel/Deputy Superintendent	\$131,256	(\$76-109k)	(40%)
Lieutenant Colonel	\$164,326	(\$82-102k)	(57%)
Major	\$150,551	(\$66-93k)	(35%)
Detective Captain	\$172,739	(\$118-220k)	(16%)
Detective Lieutenant	\$180,827	(\$181-209k)	(23%)
Lieutenant	\$228,699	(\$65-119k)	(41%)
Sergeant	\$130,172	(\$84-120k)	(42%)
Trooper	\$91,378	(\$64-91k)	(40%)

Hiring Process

One must have a high school diploma or equivalency certificate approved by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education if he or she wants to become a Massachusetts State Trooper. Moreover, candidates must not have been convicted of a felony or any offense punishable under M.G.L. Chapter 94C (drug law violations); or have been convicted of a misdemeanor and confined to any jail or house of correction as punishment for said crime.

Going into the hiring process unprepared is a common mistake candidates make. Those seriously interested in becoming an MSP trooper should go beyond the bare minimum requirements and take initiative to better themselves so that he or she is more likely to be selected to the police academy. For example, acquiring an LTC is not required to become an MSP trooper but is highly recommended. Having an LTC is a desirable credential candidate obtain and has practical importance because recruits will be testing their firearms skills during the academy. Recruits' mental and physical thresholds will also be seriously tested during the academy. Being mentally and physically tough is a necessity to pass any police academy. The physical demands of the police academy require recruits to train their cardiovascular health and calisthenics before entering the academy.

The MSP civil service exam is the first step of the hiring process and candidates must pass this examination. Subsequently, candidates must also pass the MSP Health and Wellness test (i.e. physical assessment test), medical assessment, psychological assessment, and background investigation before being selected for the police academy (The Commonwealth of Massachusetts, 2021).

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Civil Service

Civil service is a competitive examination that determines the appointment of qualified MSP applicants. Yet, candidates must monitor the civil service website because this examination is on a rotating basis and there may be as little as one examination every calendar year.

Candidates will apply for the examination and pay an examination fee on the civil service website. This application and payment must be submitted by the last filing day of the application window. Yet, this fee may be waived if the candidate receives certain state or federal public assistance, or unemployment insurance. Candidates will receive two separate confirmation emails when the application and payment fee are received by civil service. Candidates can submit a preference claim if he or she is a U.S. Veteran (e.g. army, navy, marine corps, coast guard, air force, full-time national guard) under *M.G.L. Chapter 4, § 7 (Clause 43)* or a child of a state trooper killed in the line of duty. Those candidates that lost a mother or father in the line of duty and have passed the examination will have their name placed on the eligible list of appointments above those other candidates who do not have this preference. Candidates that qualify for a veteran status will gain two points to their civil examination score.

Candidates will be asked to participate in The Health and Wellness test on a specified date after the civil service exam. This test is a physical examination to assess the candidate's ability to withstand and surpass the rigors of the Massachusetts State Police Academy.

State Police Academy

Those selected to participate in the MSP academy will do so at the training facility located in New Braintree, Massachusetts. Recruits will spend twenty-five weeks at this compound facility and will be required to live there, Monday through Friday. This 780-acre facility provides recruits access to over twenty buildings (e.g. classrooms, dining facility,

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gymnasium, firearms range) to carry out day-to-day activities. These day activities typically begin at 5:30 a.m. for physical training and end by 8:00 p.m. as students are finishing up learning their academics (e.g., criminal law, firearms, defensive driving, de-escalation). Yet, students are allowed personal time until the lights go out at 9:30 p.m.

Job Outlook

National estimates indicate that employment for “police and detectives” is going to increase 5% from 2019-2029 (U.S Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2021). In other words, the 813,500 “police and detective” employees from 2019 is expected to increase to about 854,200 employees in 2029. There will be about 59,100 job opportunities each year during that ten-year period (U.S Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2021). Yet, the U.S Bureau of Labor Statistics (2021) conceptualizes “police and detectives” as detectives, criminal investigators, Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) agents, fish and game wardens, transit and railroad police, and police and sheriff’s patrol officers.

Therefore, it is important to note that the USBLS considers state troopers as “police and sheriff’s patrol officers.” National estimates indicate that employment for “police and sheriff’s patrol officers” will increase 6% from 2019-2029. In other words, the 688,440 “police and sheriff’s patrol officer” employees from 2019 are expected to increase to about 727,400 employees. There will be about 51,000 job opportunities each year during that decade. There were about 17,510 Massachusetts “police and sheriff’s patrol officers” in 2018 and that number of employees is expected to increase 4% to 18,250 in 2028 with about 1,330 job openings during the decade (Career One Stop, 2021). However, this data also includes several other Massachusetts law enforcement officers, such as Deputy Sheriff (Generalist)-Bailiffs, Peace Officers, and Public Safety Officers that are not state troopers.

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Candidates are recommended to continue their education beyond high school because only 12% of “police and sheriff’s patrol officers” have a high school diploma or equivalent. The majority of these officers (i.e., 62%) have either received their Bachelor’s degree (31%) or have been to college but did not receive their degree (31%). Moreover, 18% received their Associate’s degree, 6% received their Master’s, and 1% received their Doctoral or professional degree (Career One Stop, 2021). One can improve their oral expression, writing, reading, critical thinking, and general knowledge through higher education which are all important aspects of being a police officer.

Challenges Faced by Law Enforcement in the 21st Century

Police Use of Force: Perception v. Data

High-profile incidents of police use of deadly force against Black Americans have eroded the relationship between the police and the African-American community. Videos capturing police use of deadly force against Black Americans have resulted in national protests, a “Black Lives Matter” movement, and widespread calls for police reform. These incidents have led some to believe that the law enforcement profession is permeated with overt and implicit racial prejudices that adversely affect Black Americans. Those sentiments are only reaffirmed after the PUF instances that are seen as egregious or unnecessary in the eyes of any prudent or reasonable person. Yet, there are other instances when an officer is legally justifiable in using deadly force but is still scrutinized among the public. One problem is that there is disconnect between legally reasonable PUF and community standards for PUF. This disconnect has a negative correlation with the communities’ trust in police. PUF data is either overlooked, misconstrued, or ignored during PUF related discourse.

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Walter Scott was a fifty-year-old black male that was stopped by a North Charleston, South Carolina police officer for having a non-functioning brake light. Video footage shows the officer shooting eight rounds in Scott's back as the victim was trying to flee. This was egregious because Scott was unarmed and did not pose an imminent threat to the officer's safety.

Consequently, the officer involved was sentenced to twenty years in federal prison. Moreover, the death of George Floyd is likely the most noticeable incident involving police use of excessive force. Derek Chauvin and other Minneapolis Police Officers responded to an emergency phone call from a store owner that speculated Floyd had recently paid for a pack of cigarettes with a counterfeit bill. The interaction between Floyd and the Minneapolis Police Officers escalated into Officer Chauvin's handcuffing Floyd and kneeling on the back of his neck for nine and a half minutes. Chauvin's actions were significantly contributory (if not casual) to Floyd's deadly cardiac arrest, and the officer was sentenced and later convicted for his actions. Chauvin will serve a 22.5-year sentence for committing second-degree unintentional murder, third-degree murder, and second-degree manslaughter. Over 23 million people watched the verdict on television with media outlets across the globe covering a substantial portion of the legal proceedings.

Protests reached their pinnacle in the United States and across the globe after Floyd's death. Cities saw the good (i.e. peaceful protests) and the bad (i.e. violent disobedience) from community member's protests of racial injustice. Yet, these protests occurred after deadly PUF incidents in which racial prejudice was not clear. Michael Brown was shot twelve times by a police officer in Ferguson, Missouri but it was determined that Brown was attempting to grab that officer's weapon. Moreover, the circumstances of a "no-knock" warrant played a significant role in the death of Breonna Taylor. Plainclothes police officers executed a "no-knock warrant"

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in Taylor's Apartment around midnight. Breonna Taylor's boyfriend who was with Breonna at the time fired his firearm at the police officers thinking that they were Taylor's ex-boyfriend. The police returned fire that resulted in Taylor's death. One deadly PUF incident was considered legally reasonable because of self-defense (i.e. Michael Brown incident) and another came to fruition based on an inherently dangerous "no-knock" warrant law. Nevertheless, two more Black Americans died at the hands of police to add to the total of avoidable Black American deaths at the hands of police and community members are fed up as a result.

PUF and racial demographic data must be examined to better understand the relationship between excessive PUF and race. Yet, it must be acknowledged that national PUF data is seriously limited. On January 1st, 2019, data collection on PUF was launched but agencies are encouraged rather than mandated to report their PUF instances. In 2020, only 6,543 out of 18,514 law enforcement agencies participated and released their data to the FBI (FBI, 2021). This lack of official disclosure led to outside sources (e.g., The Washington Post) to track the fatal shootings committed by on-duty police officers. About 1,000 people are shot and killed by police annually and this rate has been consistent over the past five years (The Washington Post, 2021). The public discourse of deadly PUF focuses on scenarios in which the victim is unarmed as these circumstances suggest deadly PUF may not be necessary. Only 7% of those 1,000 deaths involved an unarmed victim. Data from 2015-2018 shows that African American unarmed men are slightly more likely than white unarmed men to be killed by police adjusting for population (Washington Post, 2021). In other words, white unarmed men are killed by police more than black Americans in total, yet unarmed men are killed at a slightly higher rate per capita. Twenty-five percent of those 1,000 people killed were black Americans while about 50% were

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considered white (Washington Post, 2021). Yet, Black Americans are only 13% of the population (U.S Census Bureau, 2020).

In other words, Black Americans being killed at a percentage greater than 13% would be unsettling. That unsettling feeling is a reality because the rate at which Black Americans are killed is twice as high as the rate for whites killed by police (The Washington Post, 2021). This high rate of Black Americans killed is proportionate when viewing violent crime data. In 2019, Black Americans accounted for 51.2% of murders and non-negligent manslaughters in the United State (UCR, 2019). From 2015-2019, Black Americans represented 54% of the homicide offenders with reported race. Black Americans also disproportionately led the way for homicide victims with reported race at 53% (FBI, 2021).

Nevertheless, national attention to deadly PUF incidents involving unarmed Black Americans has led to many questioning the legitimacy of law enforcement. Those individuals may argue that the police have deep-rooted implicit prejudices against Black Americans and these prejudices can explain the abundance of PUF videos involving Black Americans. The media's consistent framing of this issue makes it understandable why one might not be aware of the totality of circumstances behind PUF. One can reasonably believe that the likelihood of PUF is diminished when a person cooperates with the police. A distrustful, negative perception of law enforcement can lead one to not cooperate with police during their interactions and this can result in unnecessarily dangerous consequences. The police's ability to perform their duties is dependent on the respect and approval of the public (Peel, 1829). Perception is reality and a negative perception of police will have detrimental effects on the law enforcement profession as a whole.

How Media Influences the Public's Perceptions of Law Enforcement

Mass media substantially influences the public's perception of law enforcement, and this influence is especially pervasive in the aftermath of incidents involving police use of force (i.e., PUF). This premise is grounded in cultivation theory which posits that one will accept the mass media's worldviews the more that he or she consumes that media (Gerbner, 1972; Gerbner & Gross, 1976). In other words, a negative depiction of police by mass media will result in a negative depiction of police among those viewing that media. Yet, it is important to hold police officers accountable for their wrongdoings and the media can justifiably be a medium of this accountability. Yet, mass media poses a serious problem to police legitimacy because their negative coverage of police misrepresents PUF incidents.

Negative media depictions of police exceed positive depictions (Schultz, 2019) even though instances of PUF and excessive force are rare (Mourtgos & Adams, 2019). One study found that those watching the news have a higher probability of viewing a negative representation of police (Shultz, 2019). In March of 2017, the New York Times posted twenty-two articles about police under a column titled "Police Misconduct, Brutality, and Shootings" (Markopoulos Jr, 2017). These depictions mislead viewers in overcompensating for the prevalence of PUF. In other words, people exposed to negative media coverage of police believe police misconduct occurs at a higher rate than those that were not exposed to that negative media coverage (Weitzer & Tuch, 2004). Overall, there is a significant relationship between negative perceptions of police and awareness of negative media coverage of police. In other words, there is a positive relationship between negative perceptions of police and awareness of negative news coverage of police (Graziano, 2018).

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The public's consumption of media has evolved with emerging technology allowing for instant access to information. Consumers have gravitated from traditional media services (e.g. television, newspapers, and magazines) to digital ones (i.e. social media). Television programs and internet websites remain the most popular media among U.S adults (Gottfried & Shearer, 2017). Nearly 1,200 California residents reaffirmed this when their participation in a survey revealed that 37% of them used the internet as their primary source of media while only 8% of them reported newspapers being their most important source. Approximately 50.2% of those respondents watched national television and 51.6% watched local news every day or most days of the week (Graziano & Gauthier, 2017).

Other research has distinguished social media applications from internet use via a computer. This research revealed that consumers used social media applications the most with internet and television usage being the second most common means of staying informed (Schultz, 2019). Ironically, the most common media service (i.e. social media) is also the least trustworthy among the public. PUF videos derived from social media sources are perceived less trustworthy than those identical PUF videos derived from national television networks (Miethe et al., 2018). Moreover, one survey revealed that the internet remains the most important news source among respondents yet these consumers view the police as less legitimate than those who report local television as the most important news source (Graziano and Gauthier, 2018). Another survey (n =18,000) found that news media does a better job of separating fact from fiction. Participants' positive perceptions of news media are predicated on that media's journalistic process, storytelling, and trusted brands while those with negative perceptions of social media thought this medium-low quality, unreliable (i.e. no fact checks), agenda-driven, and opinionated (Newman & Fletcher, 2017). Therefore, the media should have bear a burden in

trying to better police-community relations. Yet, there is a demand for sensationalized and partisan news as many want to confirm their own biases. “If it bleeds it leads” and many partisan media outlets would rather maintain their audience size and profits than report non-sensationalized and non-partisan news (Ladd, 2013).

Difficulties with Recruiting Quality Candidates to the Profession

High rates of police officers leaving the force coupled with a difficulty in recruiting quality candidates is a significant problem that the law enforcement profession faces in the twenty-first century. There has been a 23,000 drop in the number of sworn police officers from 2013-2018 and about a .32 decrease in officers per 1,000 residents (i.e. per capita) over the past twenty years (Kaste, 2018). Yet, police officers are retiring and resigning at substantially higher rates than in previous years. In 2021, The Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) asked their members (i.e., Police executives who are members of PERF) about those members’ agency staffing levels. Of these 194 agencies, there was an 18% overall increase in the resignation rate and a 45% increase in the retirement rate from 2019-2020 to 2020-2021 (PERF, 2021).

Recruitment of candidates, let alone qualified ones, exacerbates the problems of police retirements and resignations. Police agencies whose executives are members of PERF saw a 5% overall decrease in their hiring of officers. Yet, this decrease is more profound for those departments that have 250 or more sworn personnel (PERF, 2021).

Even greater consequential findings were found in 2019 by the International Chiefs of Police (IACP) when they surveyed their members (i.e., police chiefs) about those members’ recruitment of police candidates. Nearly 78% of respondents reported their agency having difficulty finding qualified candidates; 65% of respondents reported their agency having a too low of law enforcement applicants; 75% of respondents reported that recruitment is more

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difficult than it was five years ago; 50% of respondents reported that their agency had to change their policies in hopes of increasing applicants; and 25% of respondents reported that their agency reduced or eliminated agency services, specialized units, or job positions because of low staffing (IACP, 2019).

Police officers and the people that these officers serve will both experience the adverse effects of their police departments' inability to replace leaving officers. Agencies and officers working in those agencies will take on a substantial increase in responsibilities that can lead to police officers being burned out. This increases more stress for police officers in a workplace that already struggles with suicide and mental health. One study examined 13,000 sworn police officer respondents among 89 different United States law enforcement agencies. 19% of respondents experienced severe levels of emotional exhaustion while 13% experienced depersonalization. Workload demands were the strongest predictor of emotional exhaustion and a driving factor in depersonalization (McCarty & Aldirawi, 2019).

Other research revealed a lack of resources (e.g., manpower, lack of funds) as the biggest predictor of job stress (Nisar et al., 2018). The community will also suffer from an increase in wait times for calls of service and a decrease in crimes or problems solved. Certain problems need to be solved as many large cities are experiencing a 24% increase in homicides (Westervelt, 2021). Violent crimes have spiked after a twenty-year downtrend rate of these crimes. Moreover, a lack of time and resources have resulted in some departments not being proactive (e.g., annually visiting address of registered sex offenders) like they used to be. The unsettling junction of police officers leaving their jobs amid a crime surge should be a cause for concern for everyone. Rehiring expenses and the loss of human capital are significant burdens to police departments. Replacing an officer costs more than replacing an officer's salary because of a

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variety of factors. In other words, recruiting (e.g. advertisements), hiring (e.g. costs of interviews, entry testing, medical/psychological examinations), and training (e.g. academy training & field training) new officers is a financial burden to police organizations (Markopoulos Jr, 2017; King, 2018).

The Ferguson Effect and a historically negative public image of police are arguably the biggest contributors to police officers leaving their jobs. In 2014, St. Louis Police Chief Sam Dotson conceived the “Ferguson Effect” term in light of a police officer shooting Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri. This shooting led to civil unrest and Chief Dotson articulated that the term is used to describe an increase in violent crimes but a decrease in arrests. This term was further defined as a hypothesis suggesting that police officers will be less proactive if he or she is aware of the public scrutiny of his or her law enforcement profession (Wolfe & Nix, 2016). This theory was empirically tested when researchers surveyed the Federal Bureau of Investigations graduate members who are active members of the FBI National Academy Associates organization. The researchers implemented a five-point Likert scale that required respondents to answer questions with answer choices ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. A one-sample *t-test* was used to identify a hypothesized and a real numerical value associated with the Ferguson influence on police motivations. In other words, the hypothesized numerical value was set at 15 meaning that a real mean score higher than 15 would indicate that the Ferguson Effect adversely affects police officers’ motives and proactivity. The research revealed that the scale question responses generated a numerical value higher than 15 and that the Ferguson Effect adversely influences the motivation and proactivity of the 1,445 FBI National Academy Associates (Markopoulos Jr, 2017).

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Additionally, the “Defund the Police” ideology has been a rallying cry for many since the death of George Floyd. Yet, this ideology aims to dismantle police departments by reducing staff and the resources allocated to that staff. Minneapolis saw 300 of their officers leave the force via attrition, disability, and retirement since the death of George Floyd. The rate of officers leaving Minneapolis police departments during this time is double the average attrition rate (Williams, 2021). The Seattle Police Department is another agency that has been negatively impacted by the anti-police climate. In November of 2020, the Seattle City Council voted to cut nearly 20% of the Seattle Police Department's budget with some members even proposing to cut 50% of the budget. A year later the Council considered cutting an additional \$2.8 million to the budget (Kroman, 2020). Unsurprisingly, those budget cuts preceded a record low in deployable police officers in Seattle. These record lows result from 180 police officers leaving in 2020 and 66 more and counting in 2021 (Land, 2021).

Potential Solutions and Recommendation for the Future

One can notice that the problems identified in this section are not mutually exclusive. The relationship between the community and the police is an adverse one and this is especially true for communities of color. Notable instances of police misconduct and corruption hinder police in regaining the trust of their community. Yet, the media's coverage significantly exacerbates these problems when they report negative frames of law enforcement at a rate that is disproportionate to instances of police malpractice. As a result, the negative depiction of the police profession has led to budget cuts, voluntary resignations, and drops in recruitment. Many will have to burden the responsibility of resolving and mitigating the issues plaguing policing in the twenty-first century. This is because problems that affect the police are problems that affect the community and problems that affect the community are problems that affect the police.

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Professionalizing law enforcement should be a desirable outcome for police agencies across the country. Professionalizing law enforcement is synonymous with implementing high standards of education and training in law enforcement. This focus on training and education was a pillar of President Obama's Task Force on the 21st Century Policing (2015). The task force recommended federally funding state Peace Officer Training Commissions so those mandatory crisis-intervention techniques, cultural responsiveness, and social interaction skills. (The Presidential Task Force of 21st Century Policing, 2015). Those specific training requirements are desirable because they focus on scenarios between police officers and community members. Crisis intervention training provides officers with de-escalation skills which are important because being adequately trained in this area could be the difference between whether or not an instance of PUF occurs. Having cultural responsiveness is useful when it comes to interacting with those with different beliefs, religions, ideologies, and cultures. This may especially be true when dealing with people of color in a societal dichotomy that pits those people of color against law enforcement and vice versa. A police officer can positively impact a person and even change that person's perception of police for the better because he or she simply listened to what someone had to say and empathized with that person's feelings. The significance of being able to impact someone at an individual level is something that should never be overlooked. Research shows that procedural justice is a strong predictor of one's perception of police legitimacy (Graziano & Gauthier, 2018). Social interaction skills will reasonably better police-community relations police officers will come off as more personable, likable, and trustworthy.

The 2015 Presidential Task Force Commission also emphasized a culture that values ongoing education and recommends all levels of government to encourage their agencies to incentivize higher education. Merrimack College offers a unique graduate program that allows

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students to earn their Master of Science in Criminology and Criminal Justice and complete a police academy all in one year. The Merrimack College Police Academy Program should serve as a model to other universities and colleges because the program fulfills the desirable education and training standards outlined by President Obama's Task Force Commission. Students and recruits will enroll in eight graduate courses consisting of thirty-two class credits while concurrently completing 800 hours of police academy training. The graduate curriculum consists of courses that require students to critically think about issues facing law enforcement in the twenty-first century. Students will apply the knowledge gained from these courses towards a final capstone research project with a focus on a specific criminal justice profession or discipline. Core principles of the MCPA derive from the notion that police officers are a part of the community. Practices such as ethical decision-making, fair and impartial policing, procedural justice, and creative problem solving are conducive to building trust and reducing social disorder.

MCPA is authorized by the MPTC and is structured like any full-time police academy in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The Merrimack College Police Academy process is unique because it differentiates from traditional police academy processes. Police departments typically hire a recruit before he or she reports to the department's academy. The department sponsors and pays for the academy training and the recruits will begin working for the department upon completing the academy. Yet, student officers in the Merrimack Police Academy are self-sponsored with the support of the Merrimack College Police Department. Student officers will receive their academy certification that is transferable to municipal, University of Massachusetts, and Environmental police departments across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Being academy trained alone is an attractive quality for police departments

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because those police departments do not have to spend money on the graduates of the Merrimack College Police Academy. Longitudinal research should be conducted to determine the long-term success of the program.

Police can improve their image by engaging with the public and the media. Individual police officers can gain respect and trust among community members through procedural justice. Being respectful, empathetic, and honest with community members positively impacts those community members who receive this compassionate behavior. The scope of this impact can broaden if police departments endorse ride-along with their officers and lead events involved in schools and popular community locations. Moreover, solving media bias is a difficult task. Media is often unethical in their portrayal of police officers yet they are not legally wrong for framing law enforcement. Objective truths should be demanded from the public as a means to change the media's disingenuous portrayals. Yet, law enforcement agencies can try to build relationships with media networks by coinciding in the dissemination of Bodycam videos. This would give transparency to incidents involving police and allows for those departments to gain respect and trust by being transparent and accountable. The media may be more genuine in their portrayal of police when they have a relationship with police departments. Problems of recruit reasonably are mitigated when there's a greater appreciation of law enforcement. More funding should be invested so that departments are properly trained and can adequately deploy officers to safeguard their communities. Additionally, the public needs to be educated more on the data regarding PUF so this knowledge may be more useful for them than those in law enforcement. Yet many states like Ferguson Missouri do not have a model that emphasizes community-orientated policing. Demanding high standards of training and implementing police participation

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in the community is imperative to police-community relations and the law enforcement profession well into the future.

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