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Defining the Police Mission

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ABSTRACT

Directives and duties of law enforcement have changed drastically over time. Today there is little agreement within society regarding what is needed and wanted from police. Even within the police ranks, it is unclear whether there is a single view of what "good" police work is (and if so, what that looks like). An officer may learn what "good" policing is from numerous channels including departmental missions, informal cultures, personal characteristics, and community contexts. Officers' opinions may also derive from personal beliefs about policing, personality traits, and/or attitudes toward police work. The purpose of this study is to determine what new officers believe "good" policing is, assess from where these officers learn what "good" policing is, and examine how new officers spend their time. To answer these questions, qualitative interviews were conducted via video/phone call with new police officers from Northeastern Massachusetts. Two researchers used open and selective coding to analyze participants' responses, identifying themes and patterns. Findings suggest that new police officers believe community policing activities, being visible to the public, interacting with people, and proactive policing (apprehending offenders) are the tenants of "good" police work. These new officers learned the most from their field training officer programs and from their experience on the job, rather than through formal training. In light of these findings, the future of policing should consider the importance of community policing, the strength of informal channels of communication among officers, and align promotional criteria with what officers think "good" policing is. Implications for future research and the field of policing are discussed.

Keywords: police, police officers opinions, police officer learning, police officer training, community policing, proactive policing, promotion

INTRODUCTION

The mission of policing is ever-changing. As the public demands change and new issues come to light, police officers' idea of what "good" policing is needs to change in order to satisfy the public. Major events such as the terrorist attacks on September 11th, 2001, publicized instances of police brutality, police reform legislation, and the COVID-19 pandemic, change the face of policing and alter the types of police activities that officers engage in. Many have recently (and begrudgingly) claimed that the police mission is not evolving (or evolving fast enough) to address modern-day problems. Most police officers today continue to believe that enforcing the law is their most important goal (Cochran & Bromley, 2003). However, if communities would rather police focus on other tasks, like order maintenance or community building, then such a disconnect could strain the relationship between police and the community. This disconnect, in addition to other factors, has contributed, at least in part, to the deterioration of the relationship between the public and the police.

The mission of the police has varied and currently varies drastically across time and place. Communication of goals within police departments can be poor and officers therefore can individually develop ideas regarding the nature of "good" or appropriate policing. In this study, we seek to understand new police officers' conceptions of "good" policing, which may also be referred to as their personal policing mission. Prior research has examined police officers' preferred policing style, their occupational orientations, the tasks that police officers engage in, police subculture(s), officers' opinions on specific policing strategies, and/or police department's mission statements, any or all of which could contribute to an individual officer's personal conception of "good" policing. However, little work focuses explicitly on how police officers

learn or make determinations regarding what "good" police work is. These conceptions of what "good" policing is, are especially important among new police officers entering the field, as they are the individuals engaging with the public, patrolling communities, and regularly making discretionary decisions on how to solve problems and respond to emergencies. Theoretically, an officer's personal policing philosophy should shape all of these aforementioned tasks. Using data gathered from semi-structured interviews with new police officers in the state of Massachusetts, this study aims to bridge the gap in research that looks singularly at officer preferences, orientations, and time use by assessing the following questions: 1) How do new officers define what "good" policing is? 2) How do new officers learn what "good" police work is? and 3) How do new police officers spend their time?

Understanding how police officers view their job and their purpose serves several functions. Attitudes and beliefs shape behavior, so an important part of understanding police work is not just about describing what officers do, but uncovering the reasons behind their actions. By investigating what new officers view as "good" police work and where these conceptions come from, we can more easily understand and potentially change police behavior and how discretionary decisions are made to align with public needs or departmental philosophy. Further, if there are discrepancies among officers' philosophies and/or variations from the departmental mission, this may allow executives the opportunity to clarify the desired police mission and establish a clear and objective training curriculum to disseminate information to new officers. With a clear vision of what good policing looks like there can also be objective standards for hiring and promotion. Finally, solidifying expectations for what police can and

should do may even improve the public's trust in the police and improve the relationship between the community and the police.

POLICING OVER TIME

The history of policing contains a number of periods of reform wherein the public goals of policing, the way that police officers are hired, and the tactics that they use change. For example, the earliest police forces in the United States were tasked with controlling crime, cleaning cities, and preventing disease. They were all-purpose public servants, closely tied to local politicians, and largely disorganized in their work. This was the case until the mid-1930s when police departments were professionalized and narrowed their mission to focus only on responding to and preventing crime. Officers engaged in random preventive patrol and rapid response as a means to apprehend criminals. In the 1960s and 1970s, the mission of the police expanded again to focus on individual communities' needs and to take a more analytical approach to crime control and problem-solving. Police began to establish community bonds, conduct information gathering, and work with citizens to collectively respond to community problems (Kelling & Moore, 1988; Peak & Sousa, 2018). The history of policing contains constant, but slow change (DeLone, 2007). This change occurs in response to changing public needs and priorities within the law enforcement profession. As police goals change, so too do police tactics and discretionary activities. Officers must adapt to the ever-changing landscape of their profession. Because the goals and methods of policing shift over time, we should periodically stop and take stock of how police officers view their purpose and spend their time. It is especially important to conduct this exercise in times when police are scrutinized so closely by

the public and the media, when police-community relations are strained, and when the needs of the public are demonstrably not being met.

OFFICERS' PERSONAL CONCEPTIONS OF "GOOD" POLICING

An officer's conception of "good" policing is likely influenced by many factors. Influence may come from departmental missions, informal cultures, personal characteristics, and community contexts, to name a few. In the section to follow the potential factors that help shape what officers think "good" police work is are reviewed.

An officer's conception of "good" policing can be influenced by a departmental mission statement (DeLone, 2007). A police department's official mission statement delineates "the core purpose of the organization," and encompasses "an identity for the organization." (Denhardt, 1999, p. 249; DeLone, 2007, p. 220; Morreale & Lambert, 2009). The departmental mission statement may play an important role in the way that an individual officer forms their perception of what "good" police work is (DeLone, 2007). To illustrate, Boston, Massachusetts Police Department's official 2022 mission statement states: "The Boston Police Department is dedicated to working in partnership with the community to fight crime. We work to improve the quality of life in our neighborhoods. Through community policing, we want to be a reflection of the residents we serve. We aim to create a professional culture and inclusive environment that mirrors the best of all of us." (Boston Police Department). This mission reflects what the high-ranking police officials in the Boston Police Department would like their officers to value, aspire towards, and embody on the job, and therefore reflects what good policing is.

Police officers may also be told what good policing is directly from their superiors. Police departments communicate their goals and orders in a top-down manner; higher-ranking

officers give orders to their subordinates. Engel & Worden (2003) found that police officers'

perceptions of what "good" policing is aligned with what they believed their supervisors would

think "good" policing is, suggesting that this message is transmitted directly. However, research

has found that supervisors' and police officials' communication to lower level officers regarding

their mission, responsibilities, expectations, and performance is often poor (Engel & Worden,

2003; Lord, 1996; McCold & Wachtel, 1996; Lurigio & Skogan, 1994; Paoline, Meyers, &

Worden, 2000). Engel and Worden (2003) find that a problem with implementing new policies

and directives is that supervisors fail to properly communicate their priorities, leaving patrol

officers to rely on their own priorities for patrol. This is especially a problem when departments

attempt to implement community policing and problem solving strategies because research

shows that historically patrol officers generally have more negative attitudes toward these

activities (Engel and Worden, 2003).

     An understanding of "good" policing could also be formally communicated to officers

through promotional criteria. Police executives' criteria for promotion suggest what police work

is valued by the department, thus marking "good" police work. Similar to how police officers

focus on activities that they believe their supervisors would like them to focus on, officer

perceptions of what activities supervisors value for promotion may influence officers to focus on

these activities or value those activities themselves. Using basic logic, the promotional criteria a

department uses likely signals to officers, especially new officers, what "good" police work

looks like.

     It is a widely held belief that almost every police officer also subscribes to a culture

within police departments. Like publicly stated missions, the internal police culture(s), can

dictate how police spend their time, make decisions, and view their jobs (Cochran & Bromley, 2003; Demirkol & Nalla, 2017; Paoline & Terrill, 2005; Paoline, 2004). Paoline (2004) described police culture as being a set of norms that promote distrust and cynicism toward the public, disinterest in any activity beyond investigating and stopping crime. The police culture may also include a "code of silence," or an unyielding loyalty to other police officers, among other beliefs. Socialization to such a subculture would likely lead officers to prioritize certain activities, like making stops, questioning citizens, and arresting suspects.

Most research treats police culture as one "monolithic," mindset. More recently, some research has questioned the idea of one traditional police culture and has suggested that there are multiple subcultures or orientations that officers can subscribe to (Brooks, Piquero, & Cronin, 1993; Cochran & Bromley, 2003; Demirkol & Nalla, 2017; Paoline, 2004). Groups of officers may share similar orientations but are not similar to the "traditional" police culture as described above. These groups of officers may form multiple smaller informal subcultures within a department. Research indicates there may be as many as seven distinct groups of officer orientations towards police work; "Traditionalists," "Old-Pros," "Law Enforcers," "Peacekeepers," "Lay-Lows," "Anti-Organizational Street-Cops," and "Dirty Harry Enforcers" (Paoline, 2004). "Traditionalists" focus on law enforcement tasks and have no desire to engage in order-maintenance activities or community policing. They also feel as though procedural guidelines can be a barrier and feel as though supervisors are unsupportive. "Old-Pros" have a positive outlook regarding citizens, their supervisors, procedural guidelines, aggressive patrolling, and use of discretion. These officers enjoy participating in law enforcement, order maintenance, and community policing activities. However, some officers coined as, "Law

Enforcers," are distrustful of citizens and do not believe that citizens are helpful. Officers that are categorized as "Law Enforcers" focus heavily on their law enforcement duties, they accept order maintenance activities but show displeasure toward community policing activities. Oppositional to "Law Enforcers," are those who trust the public and feel slightly favorable about citizens' cooperation level. These officers, labeled "Peacekeepers," trust the public and feel slightly favorable about citizens' cooperation level. They enjoy order maintenance and community policing practices far more than law enforcement activities. "Lay-lows" feel as though citizens can be trusted and are cooperative. These officers focus solely on required law enforcement activities. Similar to "Traditionalists" and "Lay-lows," "Anti-organizational Street Cops" tend to share some of the same values but also "hold the most optimistic beliefs" of any of the officer categories (Paoline, 2004 p. 225). "Dirty Harry Enforcers" closely resemble the characteristics of "Traditionalists" and "Law Enforcers." but believe that violating citizens' rights is acceptable in order to execute their law enforcement role (Paoline, 2004). Many researchers including McCold & Wachtel (1996), find evidence that officers may overlap between multiple officer orientations. The way that members of these potentially various police subcultures speak and act toward others, may be learned by new officers and contribute to the way in which new police officers come to understand "good" policing.

Public mission statements, direct communication, and informal subcultures can all shape the way individual officers determine what "good" police work is. Especially among new officers, messages from superiors and socialization to an existing departmental culture(s) could be extremely important in determining what police should do or what effective policing is. These messages from the department and senior officers likely combine with other individual factors

such as personal beliefs about policing, personality traits, and/or attitudes toward police work, to comprise an officer's personal conception of what "good" policing is. Attributes of the work environment including; one's experience level or time on the job, on-duty experiences, job satisfaction/stress, perceived citizens' support of the Criminal Justice System, and the character of the community or neighborhood being served likely also matter (McCold & Wachtel, 1996).

Research has shown that behavioral patterns of individuals are strongly correlated to their attitudes and beliefs (Ajzen et al., 2018). Changing officer behavior likely hinges upon our ability to understand and shape officer attitudes regarding "good" policing. With such a potentially complex and abstract notion, deriving from numerous diverse sources, it is crucial to discover what officers define as "good" policing and where these ideas come from.

CURRENT STUDY

The current study is designed to examine: 1) What do new officers define as "good" policing? 2) How do new officers learn what "good" police work is? and 3) How do new police officers spend their time? As a society, we currently assume that police recruits fully understand their mission, duties, and job responsibilities as they graduate from the police academy. Research has yet to examine how or to what extent new police officers actually understand their role. This is crucial to explore because if new police officers are not fully understanding what police administrators and the public are asking of them, there is no way for them to know what to change to properly serve their departments and the public.

DATA AND METHODS

SAMPLE

As the goal of this research is to be applicable to all police officers in the state of Massachusetts, a sample of officers from Massachusetts was selected based on a non-probability cluster-sampling method. Forty-two police departments across the state were selected as potential respondents. The departments were organized into four categories based on the jurisdiction's population. Each category contained nine to eleven potential police departments. The chief of police or the highest available officer of each department was contacted via email to request permission to participate in the research. Twenty-five of the forty-two departments responded and authorized their officers to be contacted regarding participation, depending on their eligibility.

In order to be eligible for this study, officers must have met the following criteria; 1) Must be a current police officer in the state of Massachusetts and, 2) graduated from a police academy within five years of the interview date. No more than three police officers were to be selected from any given department as respondents. The focus of this study is on officers who have been on the job for no more than five years for multiple reasons. Most importantly, new police officers are the future of policing and are the most likely to be reflective of the effectiveness of current training practices. Measuring the effectiveness of current training is essential to establish necessary changes and improvements that should be made. Five years was chosen as the threshold for participation in this research because it would provide a sample of officers with a variety of experiences but not such a large margin that officers' experiences would vary wildly. It was believed that officers that graduated from a police academy within the last five years would report that their perception of "good" policing is most likely formed from training rather than other factors.

The police chiefs that agreed to let their officers participate provided either a list of officers who met the criteria to be potential respondents or provided an officer's contact information who was in charge of human resources processes who then provided a list of potential respondents for this study. Twenty-seven of the officers provided by the departments were then contacted via email. Eleven officers responded and indicated an interest in participating. Nine interviews were conducted in total. Seven of the nine respondents were male, while two were female. The respondents were police officers in five different jurisdictions throughout Northeastern Massachusetts. Time while on the job varied among the respondents ranging from 1.5 years to 5 years. The respondents' average time on the job was 3.33 years.

MEASURES

An essential focus of the interview was also on understanding where these officers learned "good" policing, promotional criteria, etc. To capture these constructs, open-ended, broad questions were asked to allow officers to answer in a way that was as unguided as possible. The interview guide utilized is included in *Appendix A*. Officers were asked what "good" police work looks like, what tasks and activities "good" police officers should do, and how they know or learned what "good" policing is (e.g., academy experience, field training officer (FTO) program, word of mouth from other officers, etc.)., and what the officer thinks that police should focus on in the future. Officers were then asked to describe a typical day while on shift, and were questioned about what activities they prefer to do during unstructured time (i.e., the time between calls for service), and why they decide to spend their time this way (e.g., observing other officers, learned on FTO, department rules/policy, etc.). Officers were also asked about their opinions regarding what factors their departments value when making promotional

decisions and/or specialty assignments and where they learned this information from or what

they formed their opinion based on (e.g., personal observations, word of mouth from other

officers, etc.).

DATA COLLECTION: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with each new police officer. All interviews

took place via video or phone call and ranged from approximately thirty minutes to one hour in

length. An interview guide with potential questions was used during the interviews. The

questions were designed to elicit open-ended answers and targeted the subject's opinion on what

the "mission" of the police is, what it should be, and where they believe this knowledge is

formed. Sample questions and general order of questions is depicted in the interview guide in

Appendix A.

The interviews began with identifying the personal characteristics of the subjects

including information on the officers' position, department, and basic demographics. These

questions were asked first to establish rapport and to gain important information that may have

impacted the officers' responses to the rest of the questions in the interview. Officers were then

questioned about their first shift as a police officer including their shift assignment, what

activities they took part in, and how they felt during and after the shift. This recall was designed

to make officers feel comfortable and to recall a salient job-related experience, which served to

transition into questions regarding the policing profession.

Although an interview guide was used as a reference for question wording and ordering,

the guide was not strictly adhered to in each interview. In some interviews, the order of the

questions asked would be shaped by the natural flow of conversation. This research was intended

for officers to indicate the most important aspects of their job, which meant that their answers really drove the interview conversations. Not all potential questions were asked in every interview if they were not relevant to the conversation the officer directed. If a respondent did not understand a question, it was rephrased and in some cases a general example given. Lack of standardization across interviews reflects both the unique conversational styles of each participant, the rapport built between interviewer and subject, and the natural flow of each conversation. To ensure adequate and comparable data were collected, the interviewer prioritized questions regarding how officers defined "good" policing and where these ideas come from by requiring they be included in every interview.

DATA ANALYSIS

Participants' responses were recorded during the interview through note-taking. Some of the responses were recorded verbatim, while others were paraphrased. Immediately after each interview, the participant's responses were transcribed from the document used to take notes to a data organizer spreadsheet. The purpose of this was to expand upon paraphrased responses to more accurately describe what the respondent had said. During this process, the researcher added more detail and explained their interpretation of what the interviewee was conveying. Following each interview, the researcher also conducted a "brain dump" where they recorded their thoughts and opinions regarding how the interview went, including the quality of rapport built, the attitude and level of interest shown by the respondent, factors that may have affected the interview, and other information not included in the data organizer.

Both open and selective coding methods were used for data analysis. Two independent researchers reviewed data gathered from the interviews. One of the which conducted the

interviews however, the second researcher was not present for any of the interviews. Analyzing data by using a researcher who was not privy to any of the respondents' answers helped to avoid bias and added rigor to the analysis process. The researchers established themes separately by analyzing the data organizer. They then cross-referenced the themes before going back and reanalyzing the data. Finally, the findings of both researchers were compared and contrasted.

RESULTS

WHAT IS "GOOD" POLICING?

Findings suggest that new police officers seem to accept and appreciate a wide scope of job responsibilities. Overwhelmingly, new officers believe that focusing on community policing-related activities is vitally important to being a "good" police officer. Many respondents explained their belief in the importance of getting out of their police cars and interacting with people in the community (especially kids and teenagers). Some described "good" police work as walking around public areas, visiting nursing homes, malls, libraries, and parks, and making conversation with people. Many respondents believed that their job was to problem solve, handle issues that were not traditionally thought of as being police-related, and focus on building and enhancing community relationships. Findings showed that new police officers felt a sense of personal responsibility to their communities, doing their job correctly, and working with the community rather than against it.

It is important to note that not all respondents felt positively about community policing, or that community engagement is an integral part of "good" policing. For example, contrary to the idea of working with communities, two respondents suggested that attempting to speak with members of the community can lead to negative outcomes. One respondent stated, "when you

get out of your car to try and talk to people, you're a racist. Stay out of people's hair, be as professional as possible, and try to leave people with a "good" taste in their mouth." Another respondent stated that it is important for officers to build community relationships however when you attempt to do this, you are putting yourself at risk of being called a racist. These responses may be the result of numerous factors, possibly including past negative interactions with the public, lessons learned from other police officers, and/or the current tension between some communities and their police departments.

OFFICERS' SOURCES OF KNOWLEDGE ON "GOOD" POLICING

In developing their philosophies of "good" police work, it was evident that new officers relied on the people around them more than their personal beliefs or formal training. Findings indicated that field officer training programs and experience from being on the job were the most valuable in teaching new police officers what "good" policing is. Approximately eighty percent of respondents reported that their field training officer program, or "FTO" program, was essential to their learning process. Field training officer programs are a form of on-the-job training in which a newly hired officer is paired with a more experienced officer(s) for a given period of time (usually anywhere from twelve to twenty weeks). Although all FTO programs are different, generally for the first few weeks the new officer or officer said to be "on" FTO rides along in the police cruiser with the more experienced officer, or FTO officer. Throughout the program, the FTO officer gradually gives the new officer more tasks and responsibilities. By the end of the FTO program, the new officer takes the lead on every traffic stop and call for service, while the FTO officer is observing, evaluating, and only steps in to assist when the situation dictates. The FTO program had such a big impact on the new officers that multiple respondents had either

become an FTO officer or would like to become an FTO in the future. Respondents reported that many of the activities that they still participate in, like going through the police call log prior to their shift, were learned from their FTO officer. Respondents also reported that one of the ways that helped them learn how to best do the job is on-the-job experience. Respondents used phrases like, "you won't learn it until you do it," and "I figured out how to do it on my own." However, the findings clearly show that there is no one source of information or experience that best teaches new officers how to police. Interestingly, half of the respondents who reported that they learned a lot on their own from personal experience on the job also reported that their FTO program was influential in their learning process. Findings show that officers learn what matters most for promotion through similar channels. Over half of the respondents stated that they learned what matters most for promotion from other officers (including FTO officers). A similar amount of respondents reported that they learned what criteria matter most for promotion through personal experience.

Considering that the respondents had recently graduated from a police academy, it was expected that they would have indicated that the academy was impactful in their learning process. However, only two respondents mentioned the police academy as being important in teaching them what "good" policing was. One of these respondents stated that they [learned a lot from a staff instructor at the academy] (paraphrased). Another respondent who mentioned the academy as being impactful stated that in relation to proactive enforcement of the law, the academy taught them that [it's better to be told to slow down than to do more (for example, to make fewer motor vehicle stops rather than more] (paraphrased). Only two other respondents specifically mentioned the police academy at all, and they mentioned negative experiences with

the academy. One respondent stated, [the academy makes it seem as though you should strictly

enforce the law. However, experience on the job taught them the importance of discretion]

(paraphrased). Another respondent stated that they "don't think the academy translates well to

the street. Getting yelled at doesn't make you a better police officer. The scenarios that you get in

the academy you don't normally see in the street." The future of police academy training is

discussed further in the discussion section.

OFFICERS' DISCRETIONARY TIME

Although responding to calls for service is one of the central duties law enforcement

officers are tasked with, call volume varies based on jurisdiction, population, events in the

community, and random chance. Findings show that during respondents' down-time, or "free

time" when they are not responding to calls, they believed that it was important to be visible to

the community and police proactively. Over half of the respondents (fifty-five percent) stated

that during their down-time, they believed that it's important to show the public that they are out

there to serve their community, park at schools as they are being dismissed to ensure that kids

and teenagers see them, and to go to malls, senior centers, and other locations in the community.

All officers who stated that it was important to be visible to the community also believed that

community policing activities were integral components of "good" policing.

These same five respondents also reported that being proactive is a "good" use of

down-time. When respondents mentioned proactive policing activities, they are primarily talking

about enforcing the law and apprehending offenders. Respondents stated that they think that it is

important to be proactive by trying to find guns, drugs, human trafficking, catching individuals

driving under the influence, making traffic stops, towing offenders' vehicles, issuing criminal complaints, and looking for other abnormal or suspicious behavior.

ADDITIONAL FINDINGS

There was a difference between what officers believed "good" policing is and what they believed their department values for promotion. Respondents believed that carrying out community policing activities, being visible to the community, and proactively enforcing the law were the most important parts of "good" policing. However, regarding promotion, seventy-seven percent of respondents believed that one's reputation within the department and personal characteristics were important in department promotional decisions. Forty-four percent of respondents reported that civil service test scores were important in promotional decisions. Forty-four percent of respondents reported that they believe that their departments value proactive, enforcement-based policing for promotion. Potential issues and implications for the future related to this finding are detailed in the discussion section.

Overall, respondents' answers showed that new officers have a sense of personal responsibility and are devoted to doing their jobs correctly. They believe that it is important to work with their communities rather than against them. These findings show promise for the future of policing. Although this may seem implied, given the turbulent and ever-changing environment of policing, it is encouraging to know that young, new officers are eager to do their best to help the communities that they serve.

DISCUSSION

It is widely believed that the police academy is the time and place in which officers learn the most about duties, tactics, and responsibilities. However, we were struck by the low rate at

which officers mentioned their academy training as a source of knowledge either with regard to their conception of "good" police work or promotional criteria. This finding could exist for a few reasons. First of all, policing is a profession that is characterized by camaraderie and respect for co-workers. It is also based on a hierarchical structure. Findings showing an emphasis on the FTO program may be because of new officers' deference to the more senior FTOs or respect for the experience of others. On-the-job experiences may be more salient as they are closer in time to the interviews or because they are "real" and not contrived. It is likely difficult to construct an academy environment that accurately reflects real-world scenarios. It may also be the case that the quantity or quality of training that officers receive in the academy differs. Although there is a minimum threshold of training time that each police academy needs to meet, it is possible that some recruits receive more than this minimum threshold, and/or the quality of the training they receive differs. Training may also be focused on more tactical elements of police work rather than the philosophical roots of the job, such that officers rely on their own time in service to develop those ideas. It is imperative that police academy administrators continue to reassess what training activities would be most beneficial to the recruits such that training aligns with what all officers believe "good" policing is. It is also important that state organizations, namely the Massachusetts Police Training Committee (MPTC) physically go to and observe instructors to ensure that recruits are getting the highest quality of training possible. Increased funding to training organizations and the creation of new and advanced facilities that would allow for more realistic scenario-based training may be beneficial.

Numerous prior research has suggested that multiple officer orientations, or police subcultures may exist (Brooks, Piquero, & Cronin, 1993; Cochran & Bromley, 2003; Demirkol

& Nalla, 2017; Paoline, 2004). Paoline (2004) developed seven different officer orientations to encompass all police officers. However, findings from this research found the most support for McCold & Wachtel (1996), which stated that police officers often overlap between multiple orientations. Although some beliefs and attitudes expressed by the officers may have been applicable with one of Paoline (2004)'s seven officer orientations, many of the same officers responses were applicable to a different orientation. Respondents' beliefs varied and made it difficult to categorize them into any one of the seven Paoline (2004) orientations.

Findings suggested that there was a difference between what officers believed "good" policing is and what factors officers believed mattered for promotion. Department administrators should be incentivizing police officers behavior through promotion. Officers should know what types of activities their department values for promotion and should focus on carrying out those activities. It is also worth considering changing promotional criteria to match officer perceptions of "good" policing if there is agreement among officers and executives regarding what constitutes exemplary police work. Policing is a field with a long history and respect for authority, but that does not mean that the profession should be reliant on outdated methods of reward and career advancement. Departments should consider auditing their promotion processes, identifying what actions and qualities are valued empirically, and making changes if they feel it necessary.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

These findings, as with any study, should be interpreted with caution and in light of methodological limitations. This study was limited by a small sample size. The COVID-19 pandemic constrained this research and did not allow researchers to obtain as large a sample as

desired. Findings should be considered to be preliminary and may not be generalizable to the entire population. The sample was made of officers from departments that were relatively close in proximity to each other. This research was a good first step in gaining a better understanding however, it should be expanded on with a larger sample size in the future.

Future research should also further examine the relationship between what officers believe is "good" policing, and what departments incentivize their officers to do through promotion. Officer orientations and subcultures should be further investigated by comparing and contrasting a large sample of officers responses to questions similar to the ones listed in *Appendix A*. It is also important for additional work to examine the relationship between police officers' opinion of what "good" policing is and the publics' opinion of "good" policing. To ensure the highest level of citizen satisfaction in the police, these opinions of "good" policing should be similar. If in reality, they are not, then conversations and education must take place to reconcile any observed differences. With regard to police officer orientations, it may be the case that police officers opinions today differ from one another more than in the past. The kind of research exemplified in this study could serve as a starting point for such reconciliation. Finally, further research should be conducted on new police academy programs that have been developed in the state of Massachusetts. These programs connect collegiate academic institutions (e.g., Merrimack College and Fitchburg State University) with police academy training. Future research should examine their effectiveness in teaching new police officers what good policing is.

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APPENDIX A
Unstructured Interview Guide

Disclaimer-- to be read casually

The purpose of this research is to learn about how you understand your mission as a police officer. I will ask you several questions about your job duties, career advancement, and the overall goals of policing. There are no "correct" answers to these questions. Your answers will be kept strictly confidential. I ask that you provide your personal opinion on these matters, in addition to any formal objectives for law enforcement communicated to you from others.

Opening Questions

- *What is your name and position?*
- *How long have you been a (department) police officer?*
  - *Have you previously been employed with another police department? If yes, which?*
- *When did you graduate from the police academy? Which one?*
- *Have you attended more than one academy?*
- *Think back to your first shift alone as a police officer on patrol, what was it like/what did you do?*
  - *What was your shift assignment?*
  - *Does your town/city use beat assignment?*
  - *Why did you do what you did?*
  - *Thoughts after first shift*

Topic: Police Mission

- *In your opinion, what does "good police work" look like?*
- *Then: ask which ever they didn't answer about:*
  - *In your opinion, why do we have police in society (philosophical)?*
  - *In your opinion, what tasks/activities should good police officers do (concrete examples)?*
    - *What has influenced your understanding of the police mission?*
      - *Most Important:*
      - *Personal Experiences-*
      - *Formal law enforcement training (academy)-*
        - *Which part of the academy?*
      - *Commands from superiors-*
      - *Departments mission statement-*
      - *Education-*
      - *Colleagues/other officers on the job-*

- *FTO's-*
- *Family/Friends-*
  - *Are they law enforcement?*
- *TV/Media-*
- *Personal beliefs-*
- *Military experience-*
- *What should police focus on for the future?*

Topic: Daily routines/unstructured time

- *Now that you have been on the force for X time, please describe a typical day.*
- *Assuming that your call volume allows for "down-time", how do you specifically spend your time in between calls for service?*
  - *Why do you choose to spend your down-time this way?*
  - *Do you have any departmental rules and regulations that govern and/or control your "down-time?"*
    - *If they do:*
    - *How are these departmental rules and regulations that govern and/or control your "down-time" communicated to you?*
    - *How are these departmental rules and regulations that govern and/or control your "down-time" recorded and measured?*

Topic: Departmental Advancement

- *Where do you see yourself professionally in the next 5-10 years?*
- *Are there any assignments or promotions you hope to earn?*
- *In your opinion, what factors are most important in promotion decisions?*
  - *Where did you learn these standards?*
    - *Personal Experiences-*
    - *Formal law enforcement training (academy)-*
      - *Which part of the academy?*
    - *Education-*
    - *Colleagues/other officers on the job-*
    - *FTO's-*
    - *Family/Friends-*
      - *Are they law enforcement?*
    - *TV-*
    - *Personal beliefs-*
    - *Military experience-*
- *Do you think these factors differ for specialty assignments?*

- ***Topic: Internal Police Communication***

- *What type of communications are used in your department to convey department missions/directive?*
  - *Do you believe that it works well*
    - *If relevant: How effective do you think "top-down" communication in your department is at communicating the true basis/rationale behind the mission/directive?*
  - *Do you understand why the formal police mission is X. Do your department or COs explain why the mission/directive of policing is this way?*
  - *Does informal (grapevine/rumor-mill, non-policy) communication exist in your department?*
    - *Potential clarification: For example, how much of your job duties or knowledge of the police mission is communicated between officers or via department norms? Rather than informal policy documents*
    - *How important are the department norms*
- ***Other***
- *What do you think your community thinks is good police work? How do you know?*