

From the Editor

Dear Readers:

As we welcome the new beginnings of spring, we celebrate change and growth as a section. In this first *Police Forum* issue of the year, we salute the leadership and service of the outgoing executive board, and we welcome the incoming delegation.

A special thanks to Dr. Jeffrey Rush for his service as our section chair. We commend you for your service and leadership. We also welcome Dr. Veronyka James as our new chair. Veronyka is no stranger to the section; she has served as secretary and former vice-chair. We look forward to her leadership. The section remains in good hands.

Police practitioners and scholars have done much soul searching in the last two years. The legitimacy crises required answers to hard questions—everything was on the table. Ostensibly, old bottles were filled with new wine. However, the tempest of emotional policy included a silver lining. The urgency resulted, episodically at least, in two things that are typically absent in American policing: national research and a national training infrastructure.

The lead feature article, “The National De-escalation Training Center: A Model for Law Enforcement Research and Training,” is a timely and practical piece. NDTC is pioneering de-escalation by leveraging multi-site rigorous experiments to provide evidence-based policy. Readers will appreciate the article as it presents the state of de-escalation research and charts a promising course forward. Moreover, it integrates a proprietary personality model with novel additions. The outcomes of this model will undoubtedly inform the future of de-escalation.

The second feature article, “Student Perceptions of Policing and the Criminal Justice System” probes undergraduate perceptions of police and the broader criminal justice system. As agencies across the country struggle with recruitment and retention amidst negative police publicity, this article has implications for training and recruitment divisions and criminal justice educators.

Each article is fitting as we celebrate change and adaptation. The lessons have been hard, and yet, the future is bright. As always, this newsletter is yours. The content and quality are a function of your collective participation.

I include a call for you to submit your policing articles, any police/policing-related announcements, essays, book reviews, job openings, etc., for inclusion in future issues. We have a varied and large readership that will benefit from your additions. Please email your submissions to acjspoliceforum@gmail.com.

To new beginnings,

Eric Dlugolenski

Editor, *Police Forum*

From the Chair

Greetings!

In case you were not aware, I have taken over as Chair of the Police Section. Technically, I was supposed to take over at ACJS San Antonio...but we all know how that turned out. And then, because we also did not meet in Orlando in 2021, it didn't happen until Vegas this year. For those who don't know me, my name is Dr. Veronyka James, and I have been a Police Section member for many years. I served as secretary and then as vice-chair of the section. I used to work as police dispatcher during graduate school and then worked in academia for a few years. In 2020, I transitioned out of academia and now work for county government doing criminal justice research on a variety of topics.

As far as news, I don't have too much. We were able to meet face to face in Las Vegas for ACJS 2022. This was the first time ACJS met in person since March 2019 in Baltimore. It was cool to see everyone there and reconnect with friends and colleagues. There were also several police panels of interest attended while at Vegas.

During ACJS, we had the Police Section reception/business meeting and although attendance was far less than previous years, we still presented awards and gave brief section updates. We presented the O.W. Wilson Award to Dr. Robin Engle and the Founders Award to Dr. Tom Barker.

Other than that, we do need nominations for several board positions to be filled. So if you or anyone you know would like to serve on the Police Section Executive Board as secretary, executive counselor, or vice chair, please let me know. We're cool kids in the Police Section, and the Executive Board is even cooler, so spread the word and consider either nominating yourself or someone else to serve.

Other than that, "no news is good news", right? As soon as we have a full slate of nominees, an election will be coming soon so look for it and please participate and vote.

Take care everyone,

Veronyka James

Chair — ACJS Police Section

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Feature Articles

The National De-escalation Training Center:

A Model for Law Enforcement Research and Training

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- 2) Dr. Tamara Lynn is the President of the NDTC Executive Council, as well as co-director and program manager of the Central Region National De-escalation Training Center (NDTC) at FHSU. Dr. Lynn is also Chair and Associate Professor of Criminal Justice at Fort Hays State University. She has a Ph.D. in Sociology, with concentrations in Criminology and Political Sociology, from Kansas State University and a Master of Liberal Studies, with concentrations in Criminal Justice and Public Administration, from Fort Hays State University.
- 3) Dr. Patrick Guarnieri is the Chairman and CEO of the National De-escalation Training Center and is the developer of the NDTC De-escalation: Principles and Practice. He holds Juris Doctor, Doctorate in Strategic Security, and Master of Business Administration degrees. Dr. Guarnieri was the Chairman of the non-profit National Conference on Homeland Security that assisted the White House and Congress in forming the Department of Homeland Security. Subsequently, he became the Director of Training at the University of South Florida's National Intelligence Program, which was funded by the Office of the Director of National Intelligence and administered by the Defense Intelligence Agency.

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The internet references cited in this publication were valid as of the date of publication. Given that URLs and websites are in constant flux, neither the author(s) nor the COPS Office can vouch for their current validity.

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**The National De-escalation Training Center:
A Model for Law Enforcement Research and Training**

ABSTRACT

Reducing uses of force is one of the most significant challenges to policymakers and practitioners. Of the various methods being proposed, de-escalation training represents the option most likely to do so. This article reviews the literature concerning uses of force and describes the National De-Escalation Training Center, a decentralized research and training organization recently funded by the Department of Justice, Office of Community-Oriented Policing Services. With the popular support for de-escalation growing in the public consensus, NDTC answers the call for that training to be evidence-based, with the national infrastructure to distribute and evaluate it.

Keywords: Policing, de-escalation, training, use-of-force

The National De-escalation Training Center: A Model for Law Enforcement Research and Training

The death of George Floyd in May 2020 sparked protests across the U.S. (Bogel-Burroughs, 2020). The months that followed saw those protests, mostly peaceful but sometimes violent, present a united concern about police use of force. This concern was amplified by civil rights groups, politicians, and media reporting that deadly force has reached a much higher level than in the past. However, the solutions those groups propose are often unsupported by empirical literature. While researchers have begun examining the influence of body-worn cameras (BWCs), comparatively little has explored the influence of de-escalation training on officer use of force.

Of the 64 de-escalation training evaluations that Engel, McManus, and Herold (2020a) identified, the vast majority examined its effectiveness in medical or mental health contexts. Since that review, only a few studies examined de-escalation's impact within the criminal justice arena. Since that time, researchers have conducted only a few studies examining the influence of de-escalation training on officer behavior. Four relied on the Integrating Communications, Assessment, and Tactics (ICAT) de-escalation training (Engel, Corsaro, Isaza, and McManus, 2020b; 2022; Goh, 2021; Isaza, McManus, Engel, and Corsaro, 2019), with another using the Tact, Tactics, and Trust training (Wolfe, Rojek, McLean, and Alpert, 2020). Across the five studies, the researchers found a statistically significant change in officers' perceptions in how they should act towards and react to citizens. However, only three (Engel et al., 2020b; 2022; Goh, 2020) examined how the training affected use-of-force patterns, with all showing statistically significant declines in uses of force. Engel and colleagues (2020b) used a

randomized control trial to determine whether uses of force changed after the Louisville Metropolitan Police Department adopted the training, with their accounting for changing crime and enforcement patterns reinforcing their initial finding (2022). Goh used a synthetic control method to examine whether the quarterly rate of serious uses of force declined in Camden, NJ. While these three studies used methodologically rigorous designs, the idea that de-escalation training is universally effective should not be assumed.

Given the widespread public outcry for reforming the police after the deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and so many others, politicians, advocates, and the public demanding that de-escalation training is a part of those reforms, it is less a question of if but when U.S. police agencies are trained (Engel, McManus, and Isaza, 2020c). However, the lack of evidence is unacceptable. Given the broader focus on evidence-based policies, this article will first review the extant literature concerning the predictors of uses of force and the various attempts to control it. Then, it will describe the recently established National De-Escalation Training Center (NDTC), the NDTC De-Escalation Principles & Practice, which uses DISC Esoterica[®] de-escalation training provided by the Center (*hereafter*, DISC Esoterica[®]), and a description of research studies that will be conducted.

Understanding Use of Force Patterns and Policies

Examples of police using force against citizens frequently appear in media, leading Americans to believe these incidents are far more prevalent than statistics support. The extant research consistently demonstrates that the media have the “assumed ability to shape attitudes, opinions, and beliefs” (Compaine and Gomery, 2000, p. 538-39). Both traditional and social

media shape the public's views toward the police (Greer and Reinder, 2012; Pariser, 2011), with the more salacious or controversial videos of officers' behavior having a more drastic effect (Boivin, Gendron, Faubert, and Poulin, 2017).

This stands in contrast to the available statistics concerning officer uses of force. During 2014, there were approximately 385 million police-citizen contacts in the U.S., resulting in 11.2 million arrests, 48 thousand assaults on police officers, and 990 civilian deaths (FBI.gov, 2014; Johnson, 2016). Thus, police officers killed civilians in 0.0003% of all police-citizen contacts, in only 0.009% of all arrests, and 2.06% of all assaults on officers. However, while these statistics indicate the limited use of deadly force, they do not provide data to understand the prevalence of other types of force. What the criminal justice field knows about how officers use force is fairly limited in scope to within single departments or agencies, which reduces the generalizability of the findings. This knowledge can be separated into three separate, but interconnected areas: situational, demographic, and jurisdictional.

Predictors of Officer Use of Force

Officer decision-making is affected by citizen behavior and situational characteristics. These can include the presence of bystanders or multiple involved parties (McCluskey and Terrill, 2005; Paoline and Terrill, 2007; Terrill and Mastrofski, 2002), presence of a weapon (Paoline and Terrill, 2007; Rydberg and Terrill, 2010) active resistance (Johnson, 2011; McCluskey and Terrill, 2005), and when officers must effect an arrest (Paoline and Terrill, 2004; 2007). Bolger's (2015) meta-analysis found these factors consistently affected if officers used force. Some of these relationships have been explored through direct observation (Muir, 1979;

Todak and James, 2018), while others relied on indirect examinations of the effects of body-worn cameras on use of force decisions (Gaub, Todak, and White, 2020; Groff, Haberman, and Wood, 2019).

The suspect and officer characteristics also play an important role in whether and how much force is used in an encounter. Officers are more likely to use force against males (Rydberg and Terrill, 2010), minorities (Terrill and Mastrofski, 2002), and young adults (Bolger, 2015). Male and younger officers are also more likely to use force in archetypal situations (Johnson, 2011; Paoline and Terrill, 2004), though this is somewhat ambiguous (Bolger, 2015). Moreover, officers' experiences consistently impact their decisions to use force. Officers that have earned a college degree, are more experienced, and those within specific roles are significantly less likely to use force (Paoline and Terrill, 2004; 2007; Rydberg and Terrill, 2010).

After accounting for the influence of situational factors in his meta-analysis, Bolger (2015) found that several demographic characteristics across various studies consistently affected the officers' decision to use force. The suspect's age, demeanor or resistance level, intoxication, social class, race, and sex were all consistent predictors of the police using force. Of the officer characteristics, only the officer's sex consistently predicted their using force, with males using force more often across the 44 studies.

Early examinations into the relationships between community characteristics and use of force patterns found there was not a consistent effect, with only Terrill and Reisig (2003) finding a positive relationship between crime and force, while Lawton (2007) found no relationship between racial composition and force. However, because of the diversity of agencies and

communities across the U.S., accounting for these factors is crucial to assessing the impact of any national reform. This includes accounting for the relationship between patterns of use of force and community socioeconomic conditions, such as poverty and diversity.

Answering the Call for Evidence-Based Research in Policing

Historically, agencies across the criminal justice system were unaffected by scientific research and inquiry. However, this has shifted in recent years. This shift has been driven by several factors, including 1) criminal justice practitioners using research to guide policy; 2) scholars have engaged in more research and have provided more practitioners with more accessibility than ever before; 3) the political climate is less influenced by ideology on this issue, as shown by the bipartisan bills seeking criminal justice reform; and 4) support from federal, state, and local governments is increasingly available to those who implement evidence-based policies and practices (Robinson and Abt, 2016, pgs. 13 – 14). Nevertheless, there is often little difference in practical law enforcement activities, with officers reacting rather than responding based upon evidence-based best practices, and the public requiring immediate changes in policy and practices and scrutinizing law enforcement behavior (Engel, McManus, and Isaza, 2020c). While officers need discretion to handle ambiguous situations, this ability is both the root of and solution to the problem. Frequently, administrators and the public have tried to constrain discretion through increasing accountability with body-worn cameras and early intervention systems, while also reducing force overall through de-escalation and implicit bias training. Despite increased attention and research about the various interventions, Engel et al. argue the interventions lack significant data to pass as evidence-based practices.

Evidence-based policing (EBP) is receiving increased support from the federal government (Sherman, 2018; 2020), with our understanding of how officers use force being a noticeable gap. However, with more than 18,000 police agencies across the U.S. (USAFacts.org, 2020), this will not be an easy goal to accomplish. This article responds to the need to develop evidence-based practices through the implementation of a nationwide model that is designed to train law enforcement officers in advanced de-escalation techniques. It will provide officers with an additional tool to reduce the use of force, especially lethal force. It will also provide a comprehensive data repository through coordinated research and the development of best practices within the National De-escalation Training Center network.

On the Need to Reform the Police

Beyond the moral reasons for reducing the use of force, departments and communities have a significant financial incentive to do so. Federal and state laws protect citizens and non-citizens against police misconduct. These laws address the inappropriate or excessive actions of local, state, and federal law enforcement officers including those employed in prisons and jails. Federal charges may be brought under 18 U.S.C. §§ 241 and 242 against law enforcement officers who engage in acts such as the use of excessive force “under color of law” through their use of the power given to the officer by the governmental agency or department. Penalties may include fines and or imprisonment. The Department of Justice may also bring actions against police agencies and departments for patterns or practices of conduct that deprive persons of rights protected by the Constitution, such as the use of excessive force under 34 U.S.C. § 12601.

Seven percent of excessive use of force complaints by civilians are sustained, rather than dismissed or rejected (IACP, 2001, p. 61), raising the specter of significant financial penalties.

Farmer (2018) indicates that police misconduct cases have caused significant financial strain to cities, including the closure of police departments. America's ten largest police departments paid a total of 248.7 million dollars in 2014 and more than one billion dollars from 2010 to 2014 due to claims against police officers (Elinson and Frosch, 2015). In Los Angeles, between 2015 and 2018, over 350 million dollars were spent to settle claims against the police (Gullapalli, 2019). According to Newman (2019), Chicago's lawsuits for police misconduct cost the city 113 million dollars in 2018 and more than 500 million since 2011. In New York City, the public was paid more than 38 million dollars for police misconduct case settlements in the first six months of 2019 (New York City Law Department, 2019). Consequently, reducing the use of force that may provoke a lawsuit would significantly reduce legal expenses that may burden police departments and their communities.

The Case for De-escalation

Training officers to de-escalate situations represents the best way to reform the police without compromising safety. Historically, de-escalation methods were most used in psychiatric facilities to manage severely ill patients. Only recently has de-escalation been implemented in policing professions to address the public scrutiny after a controversial incident. Effective de-escalation during an encounter with the police results in voluntary cooperation, peaceful compliance, and may decrease risk to either an officer or civilian. This desirable outcome is highly dependent upon an individual's perception of the legitimacy of law enforcement (Bradford and Jackson, 2010; Jackson et al., 2012; Tyler, 2006). Legitimacy is derived from the way law enforcement officers exercise their authority fairly, professionally, and according to morals and norms (Jackson et al., 2011; Reisig et al., 2012; Sunshine and Tyler, 2003). De-

escalation as a process reinforces officers' legitimacy within the encounter by treating the civilian in a procedurally just manner. Thus, the components of procedural justice are fundamental elements of most traditional de-escalation training.

Research suggests that de-escalation can be effective in reducing the need for police to resort to use-of-force during encounters with citizens (Engel et al., 2020a). However, there is limited research on de-escalation training's impact on officer behavior in the field (Engel et al., 2020c). Very few studies have strong enough internal validity to reach any broad conclusions about the training's effectiveness. At this critical juncture, there is both a need for extensive research to evaluate the use of de-escalation as well as the implementation of evidence-based practice in policing (Engel et al., 2020c).

Bennell, Blaskovits, Jenkins, Semple, Khanizadeh, Brown et al. (2020) argue that officers regularly de-escalate situations. When it is not effective, they advance to use of force as necessary to gain compliance or ensure their or bystander(s) safety. However, like Engel et al. (2020c), Bennell et al. argue, "the extent to which current de-escalation and use-of-force training aligns with sound practices remains unclear" (p. 2). They identified four elements crucial for implementing effective de-escalation training. These include a commitment to training in the first place, the development of an andragogically-sound and rigorous training, it is implemented appropriately, and is based on the principle of relying on evidence to guide policy and procedure objectively.

While police are currently using a variety of de-escalation training programs (Isaza et al., 2019), this proposal does not seek to eliminate these de-escalation training programs, nor serve as a replacement for thorough evaluations within specific departments. Instead, this proposal

describes the creation of a network using a single training program relying on best practices that evolve through research and input from across the network. Moreover, a collaborative university-law enforcement research structure will facilitate extensive research opportunities to maximize the field's understanding of de-escalation training's impact in the field.

The National De-Escalation Training Center

With over 18,000 departments and agencies, use of force policies and training changes face an uphill battle to demonstrate how such changes may positively benefit their respective communities while maintaining officer safety. Building on this, few studies can claim any level of generalizability due to the sheer diversity in the sizes of police departments. A common anecdote from less-frequently studied departments is that what works for Los Angeles, Cincinnati, Boston, or New Orleans is not going to translate to police departments and sheriff's offices in rural areas. To address this, NDTC has established several regional hubs for training and research for police departments, with two more being currently negotiated. While both the International Association of Chiefs of Police and the Police Foundation can lay claim to the roles of bellwether for the field as a whole, NDTC will operate as a decentralized and locally focused entity through the existing NDTC Regional Training Centers (RTCs) located at Wayne State University (Detroit, MI), Fort Hays State University (Hays, KS), North Carolina Justice Academy (Edneyville, NC), Temple College, (Temple, TX), Universities of New Haven and Yale, and Florida International University (University Park, FL) ¹. Of these, Fort Hays State

¹ For an updated list of Centers or funding, please visit ndtccenter.com

University was selected by the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, Community Policing Development, to receive 1.25 million dollars to provide de-escalation training.

The key benefits to this organizational structure are two-fold. First, it increases the internal and external validity of any study conducted by facilitating simultaneous, or near-simultaneous replication in a variety of locations and across different types of law enforcement agencies. This mirrors the approach used when the social psychology discipline tested the ego-depletion theory across 23 laboratories simultaneously (Hagger et al., 2016; Sripada, Kessler, and Jonides, 2016). In this registered replication study, participating laboratories followed Sripada and colleagues' protocol, with the results analyzed through a meta-analysis by Hagger et al. (2016). This tactic helped the researchers minimize publication bias, measurement and environmental effects, and other threats to internal validity. Moreover, studying the impact of this training within and across agencies of varying sizes, policies, organizational structure, and locations will help account for setting- and subject-dependent effects (Shadish, Cook, and Campbell, 2002) to maximize external validity. This builds on Eck's (2006) key insights; conducting thorough randomized controlled trials to study policy changes or new training is often prohibitively expensive and time-consuming, especially for smaller agencies. By conducting multiple less-rigorous experiments, researchers can produce evidence more efficiently.

NDTC's objective is to establish a similar level of rigor seen in Sripada et al. for de-escalation training. Although the DISC Esoterica[®] training (*hereafter* De-escalation: Principles and Practices) has strong preliminary evidence regarding its effectiveness at reducing aggression and potentially violent situations (Guarnieri, 2018), there remains a lack of thorough evaluation

of de-escalation's impact on police officer behavior in the field (Engel et al., 2020a). To implement these studies, each RTC will be using the same curriculum and assessments, minimizing threats to the validity of the measurement. In addition to officers' performance, perceptions, and beliefs, we also intend to collect data on department use of force policies, their patterns of use-of-force before the training, as well as after, to establish whether the training impacted department-level patterns of force, net of other factors. Given that a wide array of different police departments across the United States will be included, NDTC will be able to account for variances in structural and community factors, as well.

Second, the RTCs' localized nature provides for the adaptation to the areas' needs for research support and expertise-sharing. These jurisdiction-specific research efforts can provide for greater innovation, acceptance, and adoption of findings concerning post-hoc evaluations (Lum and Koper, 2015). Additionally, the reliance on RTCs rather than a single central location will encourage the development of best practices and the sharing of expertise across the network. This should improve the trainers' performance, as well as the officers' understanding of the concepts and methods.

Consequently, this organizational structure requires extensive coordination across the network, including academic, police, and government bureaucracies. Because the RTCs are frequently housed within universities or training centers, extensive institutional support and expertise are required. For example, the first RTC at Fort Hays State University had to obtain institutional buy-in from the upper echelons of university administration, including securing nearly \$40,000 in funding for the development of virtual training modalities, as well as legal reviews of its agreement with NDTC's parent institution and location of the national

headquarters at Wayne State University. This early investment has facilitated the recruitment of other regional training centers, as well as spurred the development of the NDTC De-escalation: Principles and Practice online curriculum.

Because of conducting research through multi-site experiments, NDTC has standardized certain practices and procedures through the Executive Council and National Research Coordinator. The Executive Council is comprised of members from within the discipline as well as veteran practitioners from each of the RTCs. Its role is to coordinate collaborative efforts across the RTCs and serve as a clearinghouse for information across the network. The National Research Coordinator ensures that measurement and protocol are consistent across the RTCs, including the use of standardized instruments and scales, training, and data collection procedures.

A Three-Level Model of De-Escalation Training

The NDTC and its network of regional training centers use a proprietary de-escalation training model that covers the three levels of de-escalation and is the first to include personality modeling using the Dominance, Influence, Steadiness, and Conscientious (DISC) model (Guarnieri, 2018). Traditional de-escalation begins with the principles of procedural justice; that by explaining the reasoning behind the officer's intervention and allowing the subject to understand and voice their opinion, compliance will follow. This foundation forms the first level of training provided by the NDTC. Apart from hostage negotiation, de-escalation models-utilize generic approaches that apply little deference to emotional agitation or individual personality type.

Building on the Memphis Model of officer-led crisis intervention pioneered by Dupont, Cochrane, and Pillsbury (2007; Hanafi, Bahora, Demir, & Compton, 2007), the NDTC trains officers in how to recognize when subjects are in an active state of mental or emotional crisis and adapt their response to provide the subject with the space and time necessary to regain control. This ability to distinguish “active” from “passive” states of agitation allows officers to understand when someone can be de-escalated and when they are too angry, scared, or sad to respond to officers. From there, officers are trained in how to allow someone to “vent” their emotions so that they return to a passive state, facilitating de-escalation.

Finally, the NDTC is at the forefront of de-escalation training techniques by developing a proprietary training based around tailoring the de-escalation message to the subject’s personality type. This training integrates best practices in traditional de-escalation while teaching officers to identify a subject’s personality quickly so they can adjust their approach to maximize effective communication and interaction. This method allows officers to address the motivations, needs, and underlying feelings of subjects to de-escalate, reduce the likelihood of using force or arrest, and gain peaceful compliance.

DISC is not only the most popular and broadly accepted personality model in the world, but NDTC has an exclusive license to utilize the most significant advancement in the original DISC model since its creation in 1928, DISC Esoterica[®], for public safety training purposes (Guarnieri, 2018). Unlike Myers-Briggs (which has 16 categories), DISC became the most accepted model for its simplicity and ease of use. The original DISC model was an oversimplification of personality that placed everyone in four general categories. Esoterica[®] not only removed some misconceptions about personality that resided in Marston’s original DISC

model, but also offers 26 substyles that can be used to identify the specific nature of a D, I, S, or C personality (2018). Esoterica[®] was developed in 2014 at the University of South Florida as part of a program funded by the Office of the Director of National Intelligence and administered by the Defense Intelligence Agency. It has been taught to the intelligence community, military, at universities, and many private companies including those among the Fortune 500. Those familiar with traditional DISC have lauded Esoterica[®]'s utility and deeper insights into personality. It has been used in de-escalation and insider threat training since 2015.

Evaluating the Impact of the DISC Esoterica[®] De-Escalation Training

To determine whether the NDTC De-escalation: Principles and Practice training affects agencies' use of force patterns, NDTC will facilitate a series of studies. These studies will examine how uses of force vary across U.S. departments and how the de-escalation training affects those patterns. More specifically, they will account for variation in officers' perceptions and agency policies and characteristics. Our goal is to produce high-quality evidence concerning de-escalation training's effectiveness across a variety of agency contexts, locations, and over time. As such, this design will function as a large-scale quasi-experiment where we can examine de-escalation training's impact on participating agencies' monthly counts of uses of force (all, lethal, and less-lethal force), complaints against officers, and officer injuries.

To account for the wide range of agency differences, we will collect several sets of measures that are likely to affect the results. First, the NDTC Research Coordinator will collect agency characteristics (size, complexity, demographic characteristics, staffing), along with relevant policies concerning the use of force. These will then be combined with the Uniform Crime Report and U.S. Census Bureau data for that jurisdiction so that we can account for both

the agency and community characteristics, along with their specific use of force policies. Next, each trainee will complete a demographic and perceptions survey that assesses their beliefs about community perceptions of law enforcement, crisis intervention, and internal procedural justice. Finally, trainees' performance in the training will be aggregated up to the agency level, along with their perceptions, to account for their receptivity to the training and their comprehension of the material. We believe that this structure will provide the most rigorous assessment of de-escalation training's impact on law enforcement behavior to date.

To conclude, NDTC has developed a comprehensive evaluation plan of the NDTC De-escalation: Principles and Practice model by creating a network of Regional Training Centers across the U.S. Given all the attention this decision has received in the past few years and most recently with George Floyd Justice in Policing Act of 2021 (H.R. 1280), law enforcement agencies and the public at large must understand first how police use force at an aggregate level, as well as what affects those patterns. Furthermore, the public narrative demanding changes in policing practices cannot be ignored. This coordinated model of NDTC and its RTCs will provide the evidence needed to establish or refute de-escalation as a solution, with the potential to literally change the face of policing.

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STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF POLICING

Student Perceptions of Policing and the Criminal Justice System

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Student Perceptions of Policing and the Criminal Justice System

ABSTRACT

This paper shows current attitudes of college students towards the criminal justice system. The researchers designed a survey instrument that posed a series of questions about student feelings regarding the criminal justice system and administered it to a group of criminal justice students. This study shows that most students perceive racial bias in the criminal justice system but that a career in the criminal justice system is still worthwhile, especially at the state and federal levels. Students showed an interest in helping the criminal justice system become fairer, especially towards racial minorities. These findings are of use to police departments and criminal justice educators. Police departments are struggling with recruiting, and criminal justice educators need to be equipped with the information necessary to teach students who have come of age in an era of increased awareness of past police misconduct.

Keywords: Student perceptions, criminal justice system

Student Perceptions of Policing and the Criminal Justice System

This paper shows the current attitude of college students towards policing and the criminal justice system. There is little doubt that the criminal justice system is experiencing a crisis. We have progressed from a police entrance examination for a large municipal agency having 50,000 applicants to barely garnering enough applicants to fill a recruit class. This is the consequence of numerous factors, including the filming of police-citizen encounters that are shared at the speed of the Internet on social and news media.

Fewer young people are choosing law enforcement as a profession. Young adults are speaking increasingly about changing their choice of profession in the criminal justice field. We chose to gauge this phenomenon, adding to the literature on young adults' current attitudes about policing and other criminal justice-related issues.

This paper also seeks to inform criminal justice educators about what current student attitudes towards the criminal justice system are. Professors who are more aware of their students' attitudes can more easily tailor their classes to their student's interests and can know where to spend time dispelling myths about crime and the criminal justice system.

Literature Review

Policing has fallen out of favor as a desirable career path. The original principles outlined by Sir Robert Peel, with the London Metropolitan Police Act of 1829, have been rejected by candidates, and this is troubling. There are several reasons for this, social media, among the most pronounced, and the increased police-citizen encounters in urban policing. This trend is not new but recently has come to the forefront of recruitment efforts.

As early as 2003, Ashcroft, et al. reported that the media had no influence on policing, but rather, informal contacts with the police increased positive perceptions. They added that opinions on police performance were not affected by race and ethnicity. They espoused the importance of informal contacts with the police and added that crime and disorder levels were significant in shaping opinions. What we know about the current state of affairs makes this notable but dated.

Current policing: especially in inner-city, crowded, marginalized neighborhoods where there is poor social cohesion and social control, has proven to be a detriment to community policing. In fact, the term “over-policing” has been added to the lexicon, to describe policing in these neighborhoods. Increased crime brings more police resulting in more police-citizen encounters and increased potential for adversarial interactions. This is Conflict Theory in action and certainly not conducive to the popularity of careers in criminal justice.

This negative perception of police is prevalent throughout the literature. Every single recent article reviewed indicated negative perceptions of police. Brown (2019), Ozburn (2017), and Poff (2020) discussed how race and experiences with the police created negative attitudes and mistrust. These findings were also supported by demographic area, with inner-city neighborhoods having greater negative perceptions of police when compared to rural areas.

The greatest determinant of negative perceptions were reported along racial lines. Weisburd, et al. (2020) identified a racial divide in the United States. Perceptions were drawn along racial lines, with racial minorities having greater negative perceptions about police and criminal justice. In fact, Barak, et al., (2018) published a textbook on bias in the criminal justice

system. The textbook is telling and highlights the fact that justice is not necessarily blind. These racial perceptions were supported by Lewis (2016) and Rossler (2018).

The media was also identified as influencing negative perceptions of the police and criminal justice. Sharp (2019) found that increased exposure to media increased negative views of the police. This was partly supported by Claxton (2018), who found that how media portrayals were interpreted influenced perceptions of police. This is a subtle difference, but notable, nevertheless. Claxton found that social activists were less likely to perceive police favorably. This makes sense given the increased radicalism in our country and the daily use of media to document police-citizen encounters.

Of the hundreds of thousands of police-citizen interactions in the United States every day, it is those with the greatest impact that receive the most media attention. These few interactions, hardly reflective of the positive work that the police do, are perverted to ideological ends, creating a climate hostile to Peel's vision of who the police are and what their mandate is.

Gender was also identified as influential on perceptions of police and criminal justice. Jackson and Henderson (2019) found differences in male and female perceptions of police. They discovered that females were more perceptive to police discriminatory practices with white males less perceptive. They added that this lack of sensitivity was likely to manifest itself increasingly in the white male population. Brown (2019) found something different, however.

Brown reported that females had more positive attitudes about the police, including increased trust and confidence. Increased education, however, increased negative perceptions.

Methods

This research proposed to answer questions about the popularity of policing as a career and the general popularity of the various components within the criminal justice system. Survey methodology was used to collect the data for this research. The survey was an anonymous, self-administered questionnaire completed online voluntarily. The questionnaire consisted of two sections, a demographic portion designed to capture general participant information, class standing, whether the student was a criminal justice major, and age group. It also had a section on attitudes about several policing and criminal justice issues, appeal of policing as a career, fairness of the criminal justice system, impact of Covid on the criminal justice system, seeking a career, and popularity of careers in the criminal justice system. The second section consisted of statements designed to determine the level of agreement. All questions but one, a rank order question, were coded according to a 4-point Likert scale (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree). We decided on the 4-point scale to compel a choice. It has been our experience that using “undecided” provides an opportunity to dismiss the question in favor of expedience.

This type of survey was used to collect the data since it has the distinct benefit of descriptive and analytical statistics (Groves, et al., 2004; Bernard, 2000; Maxfield & Babbie, 2006). It had the added benefit of greater consistency due to its standardization. In this study, career was the dependent variable, and opinion was the independent variable.

Results

The analysis consisted of descriptive statistics. The descriptive statistics consisted of sample demographics and counts. Statistical power and internal consistency were calculated by Cronbach's alpha and G*Power respectively.

Cronbach's alpha was measured to determine the reliability of survey results. Here, we were interested in whether survey participants responded similarly. Our results were .506, which indicated a poor measure of consistency. We attribute this to the small sample size.

This fact was supported through G*Power, an application to determine statistical power for different tests. In this case, we performed a priori analysis using the correlation, bivariate normal model, with alpha equal to .05. The results indicated a minimum sample size of 38, which we did not achieve.

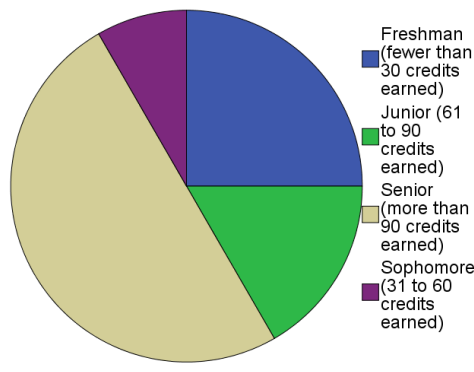
Our survey was uploaded to Microsoft Forms to provide maximum voluntariness and anonymity. A detailed announcement was posted in various Blackboard modules, allowing access to the survey for approximately three months. Twenty-four (24) students completed the survey. Freshman (fewer than 30 credits earned) comprised 6 respondents; Sophomores (31 to 60 credits earned) comprised 2 respondents; Juniors (61 to 90 credits earned) comprised 4 respondents; Seniors (more than 90 credits earned) comprised 12. Twenty-three (23) students were criminal justice majors; one (1) was not. Twenty-two (22) students were twenty-five years old or younger; two (2) were older than twenty-five (25).

This low response rate was expected for two reasons. First, although our program is one of the more popular ones at our University, it is still relatively small compared to other programs in the United States, consisting of approximately three hundred (300) students. Still, we can

work with 12.5% of the program population. Second, we expected a low response rate because of the increasing apathy we see in students. The reasons for this are many, but ultimately, this is indicative of the increasing reluctance to work in the criminal justice field.

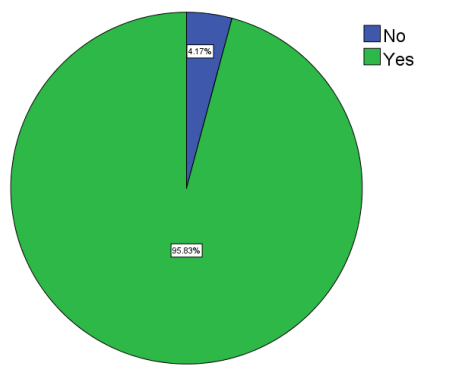
Because of the small sample size, our results were not generalizable, but still useful, since they reflect what other studies have reported.

Question 1: What is your class standing?



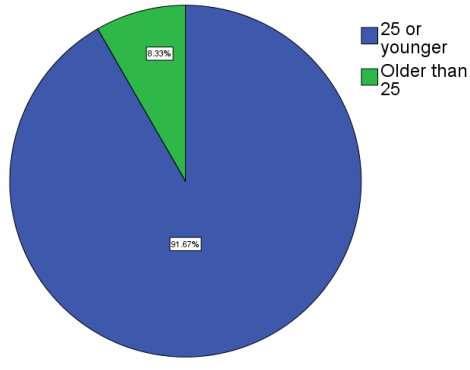
Exactly half (12) of the respondents were Seniors, four (4) were Juniors, two (2) were Sophomores, and six (6) were Freshmen.

Question 2: Are you a JLA (criminal justice) major?



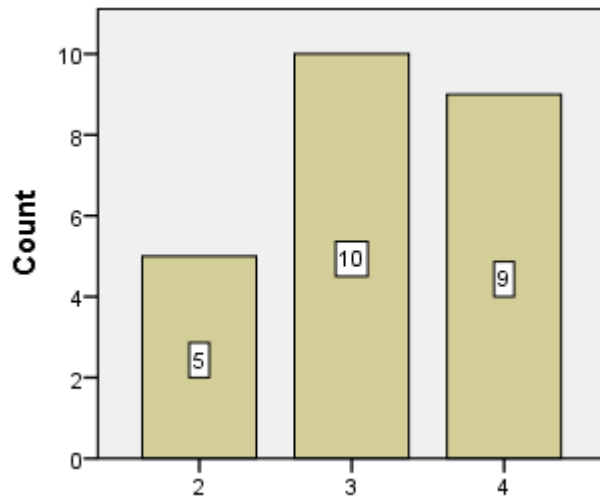
Twenty-three (23) respondents were JLA majors. One (1) was another major, not known.

Question 3: What is your age?



Twenty-two (22) respondents were twenty-five (25) or younger. Two (2) were older than twenty-five (25). The sample reflects the typical college-age.

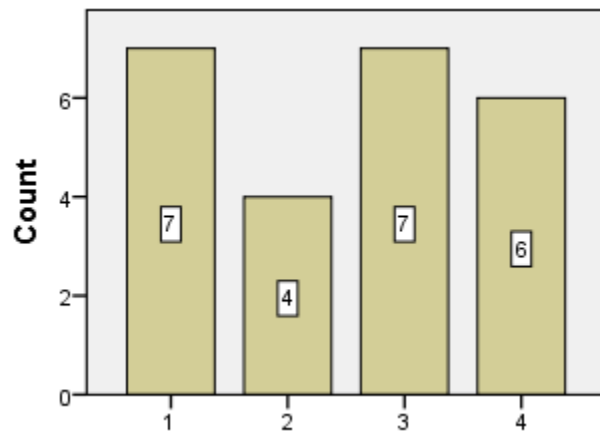
Question 4: I feel a career in law enforcement is less safe now than it was before 2020.



[Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Agree (3), Strongly Agree (4)]

Nineteen (19) respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. Five (5) respondents disagreed.

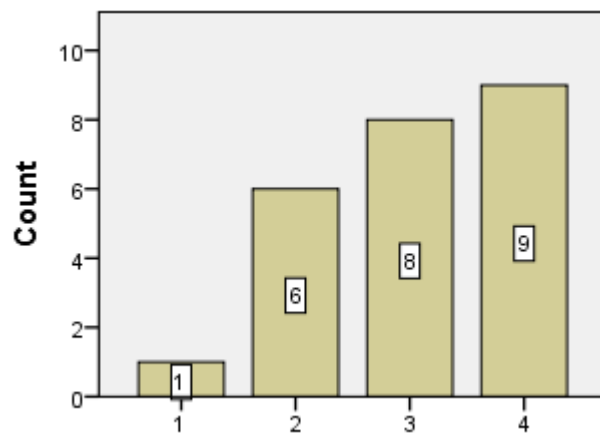
Question 5: Media reports of racially biased police have made me less likely to pursue a career in law enforcement.



[Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Agree (3), Strongly Agree (4)]

Eleven (11) respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. Thirteen (13) agreed or strongly agreed.

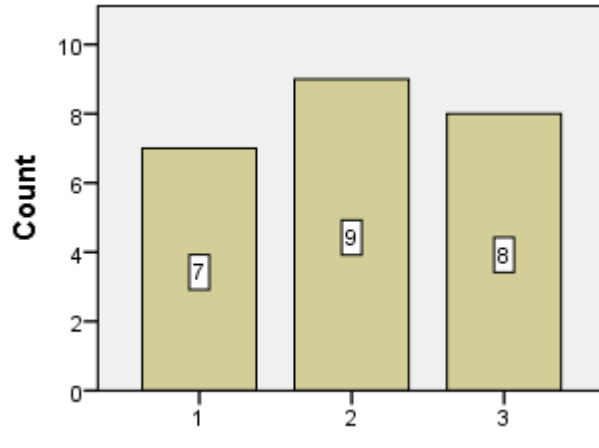
Question 6: Given all the negative reports of the police in the media, I still feel that pursuing a police career is worthwhile.



[Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Agree (3), Strongly Agree (4)]

Seventeen (17) respondents agreed with the statement. Seven (7) disagreed or strongly disagreed.

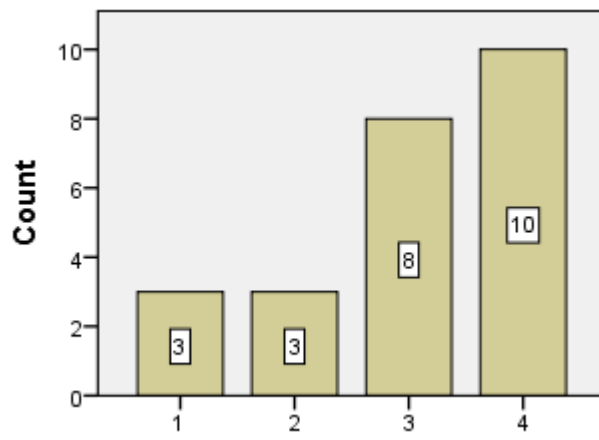
Question 7: Policing is still a safe profession, safer than others.



[Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Agree (3), Strongly Agree (4)]

Seventeen (17) respondents agreed or strongly disagreed. Seven (7) strongly disagreed.

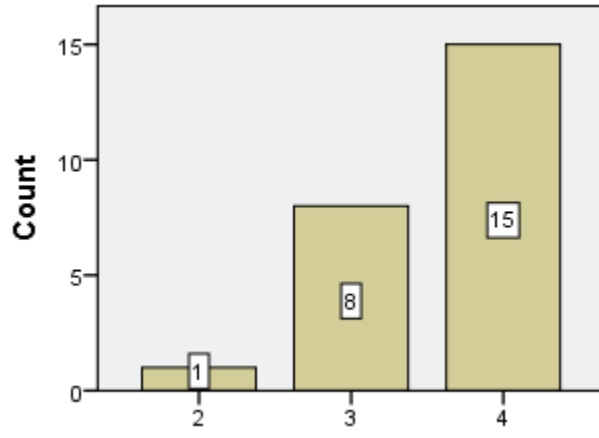
Question 8: Policing is still a profession that protects and serves the public.



[Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Agree (3), Strongly Agree (4)]

Eighteen (18) respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. Six (6) disagreed or strongly disagreed.

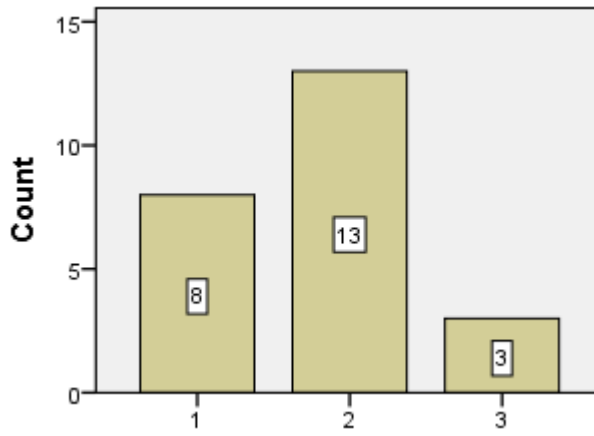
Question 9: I still want to have a career in the criminal justice system after I graduate from college (police officer, FBI, prison corrections officer, probation officer, parole officer, criminal defense lawyer, prosecutor, etc.)



[Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Agree (3), Strongly Agree (4)]

Twenty-three (3) respondents agreed or strongly agreed. One (1) disagreed.

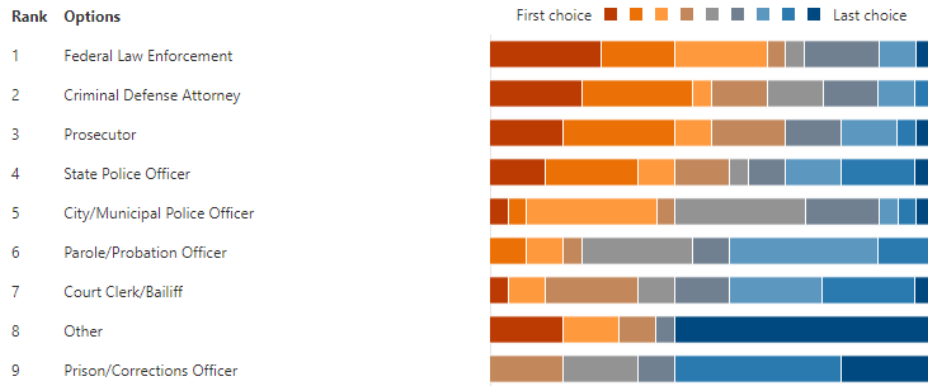
Question 10: I have changed my mind and want to have a career other than in the criminal justice system.



[Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Agree (3), Strongly Agree (4)]

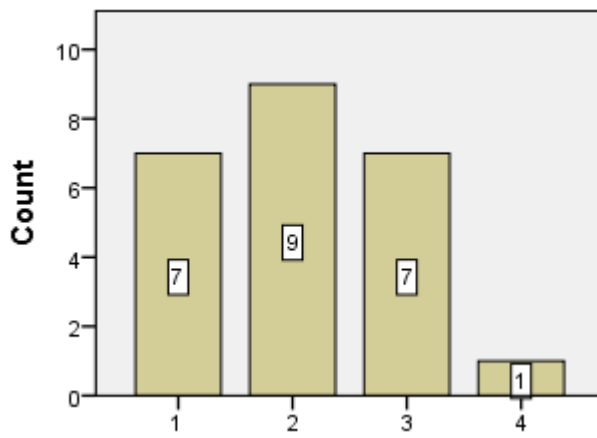
Three (3) respondents agreed to the statement. Twenty-one (21) disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Question 11: Please rank the following careers from 1-9 in the order in which you would choose them as a profession.



Federal and state law enforcement and being a lawyer were ranked as the top choices for the respondents. Municipal law enforcement, Correction officer, Probation and Parole officer were ranked the least likely career choices.

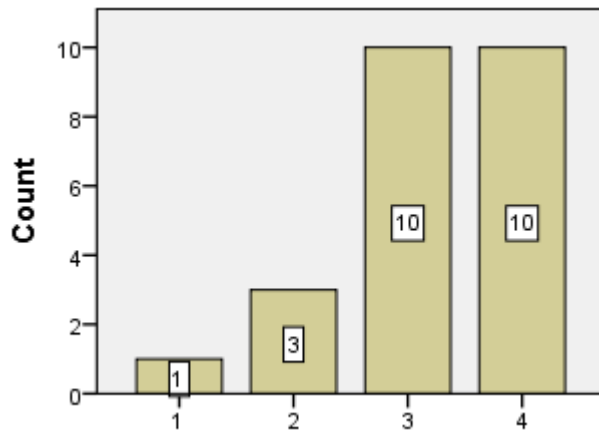
Question 12: I believe that the criminal justice system is fair.



[Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Agree (3), Strongly Agree (4)]

Eight (8) respondents agreed or strongly disagreed. Sixteen (16) disagreed or strongly disagreed.

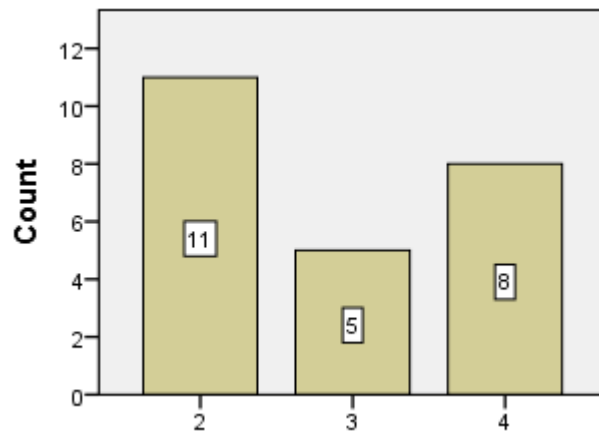
Question 13: I believe that race and ethnicity plays an important role in a person's outcome in the criminal justice system.



[Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Agree (3), Strongly Agree (4)]

Twenty (20) respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. Four (4) disagreed or strongly disagreed.

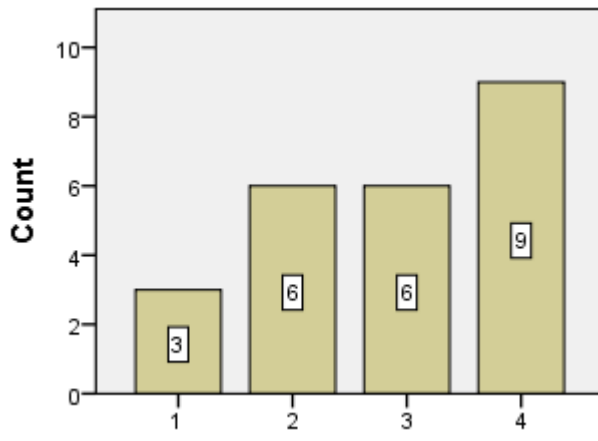
Question 14: I believe that we need to completely change the criminal justice system.



[Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Agree (3), Strongly Agree (4)]

Thirteen (13) respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. Eleven (11) disagreed.

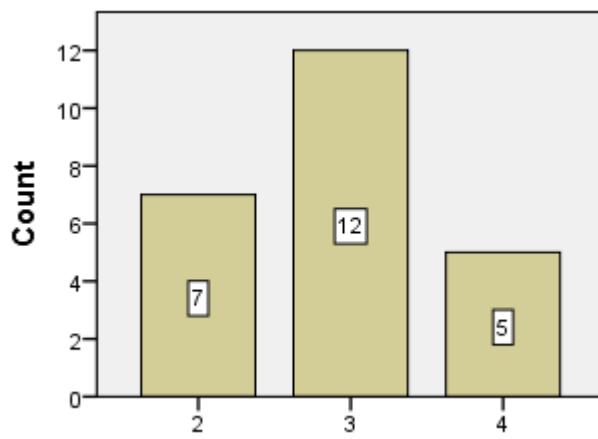
Question 15: Our adversarial system of justice has had a negative impact on people of color?



[Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Agree (3), Strongly Agree (4)]

Fifteen (15) respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, nine (9) disagreed or strongly disagreed.

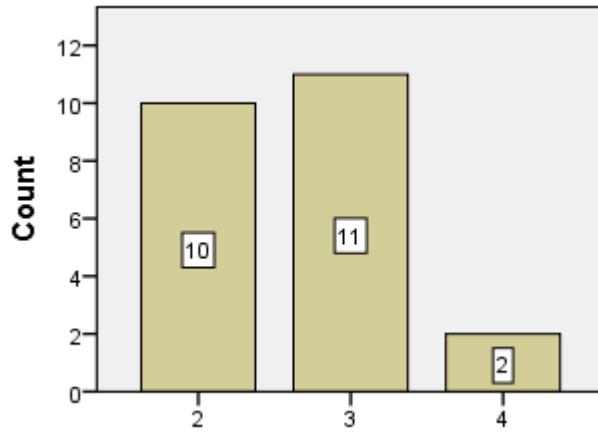
Question 16: I believe that it is difficult to be a law enforcement officer during the Covid-19 pandemic.



[Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Agree (3), Strongly Agree (4)]

Seventeen (17) respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. Seven (7) disagreed.

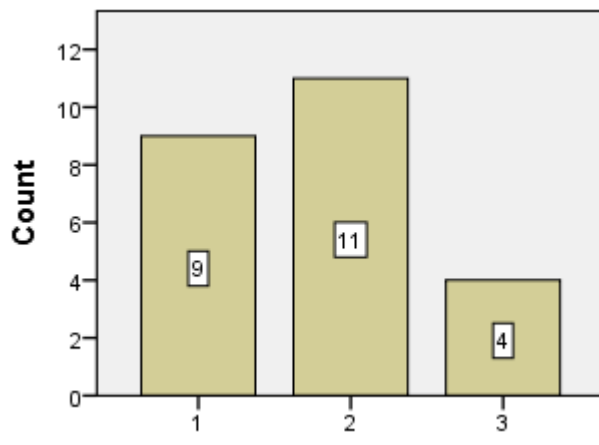
Question 17: I believe that it is less safe now to be a police officer during the Covid-19 pandemic.



[Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Agree (3), Strongly Agree (4)]

Thirteen (13) respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. Ten (10) disagreed.

Question 18: The pandemic has had no impact on policing.



[Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Agree (3), Strongly Agree (4)]

Four (4) respondents agreed with the statement. Twenty (20) disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Discussion

It was interesting to see how the media influenced the respondents' perceptions of policing as a career. Although almost half agreed that reports of racially biased policing dissuaded them from pursuing a career in policing, it was still considered a worthwhile profession. They agreed that the police mission was to serve and protect the public, reflecting Peel's principle that police should prevent crime and disorder. They indicated that policing was less safe than other professions.

Respondents indicated, however, that they were still interested in pursuing a career in law enforcement after graduation. This was probably an artifact that half of the respondents were Seniors, ready to graduate. At this point, most students have made their future career choices.

In the rankings of preferred professions, federal and state law enforcement and attorneys were the most popular. The least popular professions were municipal law enforcement, corrections, and probation and parole.

Regarding the overall criminal justice system, respondents indicated that the system was not fair, identifying race and ethnicity having a negative effect on outcomes. This finding is partly supported by increasing literature on people of color having had a disparate experience in the system. Although the scales of justice are blind, and that may be the case in court, criminal justice policies have shown to favor the power elite at the expense of the poor, marginalized population.

The pandemic has also had a negative effect on policing. Given the extensive media portrayal of the risks and hazards of infection, it is easily understandable how this impacts policing. Officers responding to calls for service are at risk of contagion infection due to the proximity of police-citizen encounters.

There is no doubt that the criminal justice system is experiencing a crisis of consciousness. Increasing awareness, the result of print and social media, has dissuaded suitable candidates from seeking employment in the field. And, why not? There are other professions, less scrutinized and more rewarding, that are becoming more popular. Apparently, the benefits of civil service employment in the criminal justice field are falling on deaf ears.

Replacing that is a growing recognition that the system is not necessarily fair all the time. Race, gender, and class are increasingly understood to have an impact on who enters the system and how successfully they navigate through it (Barak, et. al., 2018). Groups are not equal, conflict is prevalent, and policing and criminal justice are experiencing the consequences. Only a sustained effort to replace conflict with consensus, and a renewed effort to embrace Peel's Nine Principles will bring harmony to the system. This is a tall order, and we don't see it happening anytime soon.

Policy Implications

This study supported the existing literature. Race and ethnicity impact public perceptions of the police and the criminal justice system, negatively. This has led to a lack of diversity in policing and criminal justice and an overreliance on use of force to ensure compliance. We propose policy recommendations on three fronts. The first is increasing de-escalation training for uniformed personnel. Secondly, we recommend increasing recruitment efforts to better reflect

the diversity within communities. Finally, we recommend that college criminal justice programs attempt to tackle negative student perceptions of policing head-on by teaching community policing and how students can change law enforcement for the better.

Traditional policing has relied on use of force within a continuum to ensure compliance. This has led to an overreliance on coercive authority and at times, excessive use of force. Police training should focus on an approach that is less authoritative and less coercive. This approach reduces the high emotions evident in confrontation situations, reducing the potential for excessive force.

Years ago, officers were trained in Transactional Analysis. Basically, officers were conditioned that, “I’m okay, you’re okay.” The idea was that everyone mattered, and that mutual respect went a long way towards deconflicting adversarial situations. Officers need to revisit this philosophy and learn how to massage egos and respect to have a non-confrontational outcome.

Creating diversity in the workforce is a bit more problematic. Recruiting candidates from communities of color requires trust and communication. The problem is that you need trust to communicate, and you need to communicate to build trust. Only when police and other criminal justice agencies succeed in these efforts, with agencies reflect the Peelian principle, “Police, at all times, should maintain a relationship with the public that gives reality to the historic tradition that the police are the public, and the public are the police.” It is certainly time to revisit this and incorporate it into police operations. Only then, I fear, will a career in policing and criminal justice truly reflect the wonderful diversity of our communities.

Criminal justice educators can also be a large part of the solution. Students are impressionable and often believe the first person who provide them with information. For

privileged students, a relationship with a criminal justice professor may be the first significant relationship they may have with a law enforcement official. For students that have had negative interactions with police and a negative view of police, a criminal justice professor may be the person best situated to provide a personal touch to help overcome negative perceptions of a career in law enforcement.

Our results show that students are interested in changing the past inequities of the criminal system. Criminal justice educators can emphasize Peel's view of the police and how students can become a part of instituting it in law enforcement. Professors can explain and instill in young adults the need for community policing and that "the job" is far more than "getting the bad guys." Professors should emphasize that a good police officer is one who sees their primary duty as being a community problem solver.

It's not too late to change the criminal justice system if police departments and college criminal justice programs realize the negative perceptions young adults have of police and try to change them by embracing diversity and community policing.

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The format criteria for all submissions are as follows: reasonable length (less than 30 pages), double-spaced, and in a font similar to 12 pt Times New Roman. All submissions should be in Word format. All charts, graphs, pictures, etc. must be one page or smaller and contained within standard margins. Please attach these at the end of the submission as appendices. Due to formatting limitations, all appendices must be in a Word, Excel, or similar format - PDFs cannot be used.

Feature Articles

Feature Articles can be quantitative or qualitative. Tables, figures, and charts should be kept to a minimum and should be inserted at the end of the document with an appropriate reference to placement location within the text. The page limits are flexible, however, the editors reserve the right to edit excessively long manuscripts.

Practitioners Corner

Articles written from the perspective of persons currently or formerly working in the field, expressing personal observations or experiences concerning a particular area or issue. Page limits are flexible, however long articles may be edited for length.

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Authors are encouraged to work with another person to develop a point/ counterpoint piece. The initial argument should be between 2 and 5 pages. The initial argument should contain roughly 3 to 5 main points. Following the exchange of articles between debating authors, a 1 to 3-page rejoinder/ rebuttal will be submitted.

Research Notes

Research notes should describe a work in progress, a thumbnail outline of a research project, a conceptual methodological piece, or any other article relating to research methods or research findings in policing.

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Book reviews on any work relating to policing. Reviews of Internet sites or subjects concerning policing on the Internet are also welcome.

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News items of interest to the police section are welcomed in any form.

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Questions, comments, or suggestions about a given Criminal Justice topic, article, or research.

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Submissions on prior hot topics, research, or research methods in Criminal Justice from the past.

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