SECTION

5

Police officers begin their careers working on patrol.

Career Paths of Police Officers

Section Highlights

- Examine why people choose to become police officers.
- Review the three phases of training.
- Identify the factors that influence officers to seek promotion.

Police work is often presented as an exciting and challenging profession on popular television programs. Despite the fact that police work on TV has been edited to present some of the most interesting aspects of the job, many people are still drawn to this profession each year. Other than the excitement of the job, why do people choose to become police officers? And once they have made this career choice, what do they have to do to become police officers? This section begins with a discussion of some of the most common reasons that people choose to become police officers. Standard application and selection requirements are then covered to provide a general overview of the hiring process. This section also covers three types of police training that take place over the course of a typical policing career: police academy training, field training officer (FTO)/police training officer (PTO) program, and in-service training.

Choosing a Career in Policing

The career paths of individuals who choose to become police officers begin with them making the decision to apply. Research indicates that people choose careers in policing for an opportunity to help other people, a good salary and job security, a job that is exciting, and the prestige that comes with being a police officer.[1] Surprisingly, men and women give very similar responses when asked about their motivations for becoming police officers.[2] A recent study of police recruits in the New York City Police Department revealed that, in general, motivations for pursuing policing careers were also similar across all racial/ethnic groups.[3] Police cadets in the Los Angeles Police Department reported that they had decided to become police officers several years before they had actually applied for the job—they stated that it was something that they had always wanted to do.[4] There are other people that choose policing as a career as a result of recruitment efforts by police agencies.

Recruitment

Police agencies use a variety of recruitment techniques to attract the best applicants. Visiting technical schools, community colleges, and universities is a common recruiting practice used by police agencies. Potential applicants are also reached through career fairs, advertisements in newspapers, television and radio, and Internet recruiting websites. Some police agencies begin the recruitment process early by visiting local high schools. The **Explorers program** is another way to spark interest in a policing career early on in youth populations. The Explorers program gives youth a hands-on look at the profession by allowing them to participate in activities with officers from local police agencies. This is a program offered in cities across the United States.[5] All of these recruitment efforts are important, as they have a direct impact on the quality of police officers that are ultimately hired.

The Explorers program introduces young people to the policing profession.

The diversification of police agencies has become an important part of the recruitment process for American police agencies. Agencies specifically seeking female applicants highlight their family-friendly policies to attract women who might have otherwise believed that having a family would be a barrier to a career in policing.[6] Female police officers also attend career fairs to attract female applicants, and are able to give them first-hand accounts of what it is like to be women working in this profession. Similarly, agencies that are looking to expand racial/ethnic diversity within their organizations provide mentoring programs in which minority police officers share their experiences with minority citizens that are considering jobs in policing. Other police agencies conduct focus groups and community meetings in racially diverse neighborhoods to attract more diverse applicants.[7] Many police agencies have found that they need to go beyond traditional recruiting efforts if they want to attract a more diverse pool of applicants.

Standard Employment Requirements	
U.S. citizenship/driver's license	Residency requirements
Minimum age 21 years	Education—at least high school diploma
Height proportionate to weight	Vision—varies across agencies
Criminal record—no felonies	

What Are Some of the Common Requirements for Hiring Police Officers?

There are no national, standardized employment requirements imposed on police agencies in the United States. Requirements for employment vary from state to state and agency to agency. This variation in employment requirements explains why police agencies are so different from one another across the country. Most police agencies, however, do have standard employment requirements in the following areas:

U.S. Citizenship/Driver's License

Being a citizen of the United States is a nearly universal requirement that needs to be met in order to become a police officer in any state in the United States.[8] A valid driver's license is also a universal requirement to become a police officer.

Residency Requirements

Residency requirements vary from one police agency to the next. Some police agencies require their officers to live within the city limits of the communities they serve, while other agencies do not. Less restrictive residency requirements might allow their employees to live no further than a certain number of miles away from police headquarters. Residency requirements have been debated for some time and have even been contested in court. In general, residency requirements have been deemed constitutional by federal level courts as long as the employing agency can demonstrate that there is a rational basis for such a requirement.[9]

Reasons police officers should be required to live within the communities they serve include the idea that this will allow them to better understand the needs of their community; they will have a greater stake in serving the community; they will contribute to the local tax base; it could reduce absenteeism of officers; and it allows police officers to respond quickly if they are needed in emergency situations.[10] In contrast, there are many reasons to oppose residency requirements, including the idea that it could disqualify otherwise qualified applicants that live outside of the community; police officers will be able to provide quality services even if they do not live in the communities they serve; and officers should be given the choice to live wherever they want to live—housing in some cities is very expensive and could cause financial hardship for police officers forced to live there.[11] This requirement has become negotiable in some jurisdictions when police agencies have had difficulty attracting qualified applicants within the community.

Age

The minimum hiring age commonly used by police agencies in the United States is 21 years old.[12] Recently, there has been discussion about raising the minimum hiring age beyond 21 years old. Justification for increasing the **age requirement** is based on the idea that chronological age may not reflect an individual's maturity level; thus, raising the hiring age by a few years will give people more time to mature. The opposing side of this debate asserts that if the age is raised too high, it will reduce the overall size of the pool of applicants. On November 5, 2010, the Chicago Police Department announced that it had raised its minimum hiring age from 21 to 25 years old. Police Superintendent Jody Weis stated that this increase in the minimum hiring age was an effort to encourage a more mature police force.[13]

Education

Nearly all local police agencies in the United States have some kind of education requirement as part of their hiring standards.[14] A majority (82%) of local police agencies require that applicants have a high school diploma, while 6% require some college credits but no degree, 9% require a 2-year degree, and 1% requires a 4-year degree.[15] When these statistics are compared to those from previous decades, it is clear that police officers are becoming more educated in the United States over time. But does an increase in education requirements result in better police officers? This question has been studied extensively over the last four decades. In the Roberg and Bonn article included at the end of this section, the impact that higher education has on police officer attitudes and job performance is discussed in detail.

Height/Weight

Many police agencies in the United States used **height and weight requirements** as part of their selection process for hiring until the late 1970s.[16] Some agencies required that applicants weigh at least 150 pounds and measure 5'8" or taller.[17] This requirement had an exclusionary effect on women and some racial/ethnic minorities interested in becoming police officers. Under **Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act**, the courts determined that this screening requirement was discriminatory, as it would disqualify a higher percentage of female applicants when compared to male applicants.[18] Further, the courts ruled that this requirement was not an accurate way to assess whether someone could do the job. Most agencies eliminated this requirement after the Supreme Court ruling in the case of *Dothard v. Rawlinson* (433 U.S. 321, 1977).[19] Today, some agencies use a modified version of this requirement by requiring that applicants' height is proportionate to their weight; however, most police agencies will assess whether someone is physically capable of doing police work by requiring them to complete a physical agility exam.[20]

Vision

Many police agencies have a vision requirement. The level of vision required by applicants varies from one agency to the next. In most agencies, peripheral vision must be normal and there cannot be a history of eye disease.[21] It is important to have good vision when performing most job-related tasks, but any problems with vision can jeopardize both a police officer and public safety in this particular line of work.

Criminal Record

According to recent statistics, all local police agencies in the United States conduct criminal record checks on all applicants as part of the hiring selection process.[22] Most police agencies will not hire people that have been convicted of felony charges, as most state Police Officer Standards and Training (POST) programs will not allow certification of people with such convictions.[23] There is great variation from one police agency to the next regarding the type of violations that will be allowed as part of the hiring process. Many police agencies have a list of the criminal violations that are either tolerated or not on their department website.[24]

In the past, when police agencies have lowered their hiring standards, the results have been disastrous. For example, in 1988, Congress required the District of Columbia to hire 1,500 new police officers within a 20-month time period or it would lose $430 million of aid. This rushed hiring process (which involved lowering hiring standards) resulted in more than half of the officers hired during that timeframe either being arrested or being brought up on criminal charges.[25] Similarly, many of the officers that were involved in the 1998 Rampart scandal in the Los Angeles Police Department were hired during a time when employment standards were lowered. Many of the Rampart police officers had been previously convicted of a variety of criminal acts, including selling marijuana, domestic violence, grand theft, and driving under the influence.[26] After investigating the police officers that were directly involved in this scandal, the Los Angeles Police Department concluded that

> While it is impossible to substantiate completely, it appears that the application of our hiring standards was compromised when these officers were hired during periods of accelerated hiring in the late 1980s and early 1990s. . . . Several employees were aware of the Department hiring people with prior gang affiliations, drug use and criminal histories.

These examples demonstrate the importance of maintaining high employment standards for police officers.

Selection Process

The process of becoming a police officer goes beyond filling out an application and meeting the minimum employment requirements. This process can be lengthy (6 months or longer) and requires applicants to demonstrate that they are both physically and mentally fit to be effective in this profession. The selection process varies from one police agency to the next, but there are some general steps used by most police agencies across the United States. The steps in the selection process also vary in the order of occurrence across police agencies.

Written Exam

Once it has been determined that the minimum standard requirements have been met by applicants, they will likely be asked to take a written examination. Most (80%) American police agencies serving populations of 25,000 or more require applicants to take a written aptitude exam.[27] Written exams measure reading comprehension, vocabulary skills, and, in some cases, analytical and problem-solving skills. The content of written exams varies from one agency to the next. Many police agencies tailor written exams to measure skills that they feel are important for police officers working in their communities. Exams are graded and

Applicants are required to demonstrate that they are physically able to do the job.

then rank ordered from the highest to the lowest score. Exam scores are often combined with other scored requirements for each applicant over the course the hiring process to determine each applicant's overall ranking in the pool of candidates.

Physical Agility Exam

Applicants will be asked to take a physical agility test to determine if they are capable of meeting the physical demands of police work. Most (90%) police agencies serving populations of 25,000 or more require applicants to complete a physical agility test.[28] Physical agility exams require applicants to do push-ups, do sit-ups, and run a specified distance to judge their cardiovascular endurance levels. Some police agencies also utilize obstacle courses to test an applicant's physical agility. There has been some controversy over the use of agility courses, as they often disqualify a high percentage of female applicants.[29] Research on this topic finds that physical agility courses do not reflect the skills that police officers actually need to be able to provide adequate services to the public.[30]

Oral Interview

Nearly all (99%) police agencies require their applicants to participate in an oral interview with a panel of professionals.[31] The composition of professional panels varies from one police agency to the next, but police executives, civil service representatives, human resource personnel, and, in some instances, citizens from the community could be part of this group. Like many of the other steps in the hiring process, the content of the questions asked during an oral interview will vary across agencies. Some general questions that could be asked may be related to why an applicant wants a job in that particular agency; why he or she wants a job in policing (in general); or how the person might respond to hypothetical situations (i.e., would you write your own mother a speeding ticket?). In some cases, applicants are asked questions regarding elements of crimes or criminal code for their jurisdiction.

Medical and Psychological Exams

Applicants will also be asked to take both medical and psychological examinations. Many police agencies leave these examinations for the end of the screening process because of the costs associated with such services. A majority (89%) of American police agencies require medical examinations to ensure that applicants are in good physical condition.[32] The examination includes elements of routine annual physical examinations conducted by physicians. In addition, audiograms (hearing), vision testing, pulmonary function testing (breathing), chest x-ray, electrocardiograms (heart function), and cardiopulmonary

stress tests (heart and lungs) are sometimes included in medical exams.[33] Drug testing has become part of the medical examination in some agencies. In fact, most (83%) police agencies require drug testing prior to being hired.[34]

Psychological screening is used by many (72%) police agencies as part of the screening process.[35] The type of test used in psychological screening varies across police agencies; however, the **Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI)** is often used to assess the psychological state of applicants.[36] The MMPI screens for psychological issues, including paranoia, schizophrenia, depression, and manic behaviors.[37] The Inwald Personality Inventory is another test that is used during the screening process. This instrument is used to identify negative personality traits, including rigidity, loner mentality, emotional instability, impulsivity, antisocial attitudes, and difficulty with interpersonal relationships.[38] This "screening out" approach has been criticized because it focuses on identifying negative traits while failing to identify people who have positive traits that would be suitable for this profession.[39]

Record Checks/Background Investigation

Nearly all (99%) police agencies conduct a background check on applicants.[40] The depth of background checks varies across agencies, but in general, this usually involves telephone interviews with neighbors, teachers, personal references, and former employers. It is also at this stage in the process that applicants' driving, criminal, and credit records are examined. Recent statistics indicate that all police agencies check to see if applicants have criminal records, and nearly all (99%) agencies check driving records.[41] The inclusion of credit history as part of the background investigation is becoming common in police agencies. For example, 70% of police agencies serving populations of 25,000 or more looked at the credit scores of applicants in 2003; this increased to 83% in 2007.[42]

Polygraph Examination

Polygraph examinations are not used as frequently in the hiring process compared to some of the other screening techniques mentioned in this section. Only half (50%) of local police agencies require applicants to take a polygraph exam.[43] This practice has become less common over time, as it is expensive and the accuracy of this test has been challenged in court.[44] It has been suggested that if police agencies choose to use this screening approach, they should use it to deter lying instead of detecting lying.[45] In addition, the results of such an exam should not be weighted as heavily as other parts of the screening process, as the accuracy of its results is debatable.

Assessment Centers

An **assessment center** is a place applicants go to participate in a series of situational exercises that simulate responsibilities and working conditions of police officers.[46] The situational exercises are used to assess applicants' abilities to work in teams, their communication skills, and their ability to interact with the public.[47] They are another tool that is used to supplement (not replace) the traditional screening process used by police agencies. Slightly more than one-third (35%) of all local police agencies use assessment centers as part of their hiring process.[48] The high cost of using assessment centers prohibits some agencies from utilizing this tool in their screening process.[49] But are assessment centers better than traditional cognitive exams for predicting who will be good police officers? Joan Pynes and John

Bernardin conducted a study comparing the predictability accuracy of traditional cognitive exams (pen-and-paper format) and assessment center exercises.[50] This study revealed that traditional cognitive exams were better predictors of police academy performance, while assessment centers were better predictors of on-the-job performance.

If applicants successfully make it to the end of the selection process and are offered a job, they will be required to enroll in a police academy. In some places, people are not allowed to enter academy training until *after* they have been offered a job with a police agency.[51] People who have been offered a job prior to entering the police academy would be paid all or a portion of the salary they will receive once they are done with academy training, and the agency may also cover all or some of the costs of academy training. In contrast, some agencies require people to complete police academy training *before* they begin the screening process.[52] The drawback of entering police academy training before having a job offer is that the individual would be responsible for paying for his or her own police academy training.

Training

Police officers go through three stages of training over the course of their careers: police academy training, field training officer (FTO)/police training officer (PTO) program, and in-service training. Each phase of training provides officers with the information and skills that are necessary to be effective in this position.

Police Academy Training

Police academy training is the first phase of training for police officers. The purpose of academy training is to teach police cadets about what is expected of them once they become police officers and also the proper way to conduct police work. In 2006, there were 648 state and local law enforcement training academies providing basic training skills across the United States (98% of these academies were approved by state agencies).[53] The average police academy program lasts 19 weeks or 761 hours (not including field training requirements).[54] The average number of training hours (including both classroom and field training) is 1,370 hours.[55]

Police academy training has both a classroom and field training component. The topics covered in the classroom portion of academy training vary from one academy to the next; however, there are several topics that are covered by most police academies:[56]

- Criminal law (average of 36 hours)
- Constitutional law (average of 12 hours)
- Cultural diversity (average of 11 hours)
- Community policing (average of 8 hours)
- Mediation/conflict management (average of 8 hours)
- Report writing (average of 20 hours)
- Ethics (average of 8 hours)

Some police academies offer training on a variety of specialty topics, including domestic violence, interacting with juveniles, terrorism, hate crimes, and handling hazardous materials.

Training in the field is also part of police academy training. This type of training focuses on the physical aspects of police work. Some common topics covered in field training include:[57]

- Firearm skills (average of 60 hours)
- Self-defense skills (average of 51 hours)
- Health and fitness training (average of 46 hours)
- Patrol (average of 40 hours)
- Investigations (average of 40 hours)
- Emergency vehicle operation (average of 40 hours)
- Basic first aid skills (average of 24 hours)

Firearms training is just one of several practical applications covered in the academy.

Police academies have been criticized for not incorporating more training related to community policing and problem solving into their curricula.[58] The criticism comes from the idea that most police agencies claim to have adopted community policing and problem-oriented policing practices (which rely less on physical skills), but a large portion of police academy training is focused on the physical aspects of the job instead of skills related to community and problem-oriented policing. Another criticism is that the academy curriculum reinforces the idea that masculinity and aggressiveness are valued and necessary traits associated with being a police officer. An emphasis on such traits can make police academy training difficult for some women.[59]

FTO/PTO Programs

The **field training officer (FTO) program** was developed in San Jose, California, in 1972.[60] This stage of training requires newly sworn police officers to apply what they have learned in the police academy to real-life situations on the streets while being observed by field training supervisors. The FTO program also helps to determine who will be able to function effectively as police officers. There are several general phases included in most FTO programs:[61] (1) an introductory stage in which recruits learn about policies and procedure that are unique to their agency; (2) training and evaluation phases in which recruits are introduced to more difficult tasks associated with policing; and (3) the final evaluation phase in which recruits work independently while they are being critiqued by field training supervisors. FTO programs have been criticized because they do not contain elements of community or problem-oriented policing.[62]

A new postacademy training program, the **police training officer (PTO) program**, was created in the early 2000s through funding provided by the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services in Washington, DC.[63] The Reno, Nevada, Police Department worked in conjunction with the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) to study the training needs of police agencies across the country. Based on findings from this study, the new PTO program was designed around the concept of problem-based learning. Problem-based learning is a process that helps officers develop problem-solving skills, the ability to be critical thinkers, and skills to work well in a team setting.[64]

The PTO program is composed of eight phases.[65] (1) *Orientation phase* provides information before trainees enter the field training program. (2) *Integration phase* teaches trainees about department resources, their agencies' administrative procedures, and the PTO process. (3) *Phase A* is the initial training, which emphasizes nonemergency incident responses. (4) *Phase B* is the second training experience, which focuses on emergency incident responses. (5) *Midterm evaluation* allows PTO supervisors to evaluate the progress of trainees at the midway point to determine if additional training is needed or if the trainee can move on to the next phase. (6) *Phase C* focuses on training related to patrol-related activities. (7) *Phase D* centers on training related to criminal investigations. (8) *Final phase* once again requires trainees to demonstrate their abilities in front of PTO supervisors. If trainees have difficulty with certain tasks, they will be allowed to go back for additional training. If trainees do not demonstrate appropriate levels of ability after they receive additional training, they will be terminated.

The PTO program is different from the FTO program, as it is emphasizes problem-based learning skills that enhance problem solving and critical thinking, while the FTO program focuses on developing mechanical repetition skills and rote memory capabilities.[66] The FTO program places great emphasis on applied skills, which include defensive tactics and shooting abilities, while the PTO places great emphasis on problem-solving and critical-thinking skills. The PTO program was designed to be flexible so that each individual agency can tailor the training to fit its individual needs, while the FTO program is structured in a more general manner based on the assumption that most police agencies function in the same way.[67] The PTO program is viewed as more reflective of both problem-oriented and community-based policing, while the FTO program is based on a more traditional policing model. Thus far, there has not been a nationwide adoption of the PTO program, but some police agencies are choosing PTO programs over FTO programs today.

In-Service Training

In-service training takes place over the course of police officers' careers once they have completed both academy and FTO/PTO training. Nearly all (92%) local police agencies in the United States require their officers to participate in some type of in-service training each year.[68] The type of training and the number of required hours varies from one agency to the next. Recent statistics indicate that the average number of in-service training hours required by American police agencies each year is 35.[69]

A wide range of topics can be included in this phase of training. Training in certain areas may be required of police officers each year (such as firearms or defensive tactics training); however, officers may also be able to choose from some elective topics. Some examples of elective training topics include problem-solving skills, computers, equipment (such as breathalyzers or nonlethal weapons), search and seizure, domestic violence, crime scene investigation skills, and interview and interrogation skills.[70] This type of training is important because it helps police officers stay current on any changes that may impact their work, and it allows them the opportunity to continually refine their policing skills.

Promotion

Promotion within police organizations is a way to facilitate organizational continuity and reward officers that demonstrate excellence at work. The promotion option also provides police officers the opportunity to learn new skills and take on additional responsibilities that can expand their roles within the organization. Promotional opportunities may also keep police officers from getting bored with their work and, as a result,

increase their commitment to the job.[71] The availability of promotion opportunities differs from one agency to the next, with large police agencies providing more opportunities for advancement than smaller agencies with fewer positions overall.

But how does the promotion process work? Similar to the recruitment, hiring, and training of police officers, the promotion process varies across the country. Several general elements are included in the promotion process.[72] (1) *Written test*—the written exam is often used at the beginning of the promotion process to help rank order people based on their general knowledge of policing. (2) *Practical exercise*—officers are given tasks that mirror those that they may encounter once they are promoted. For example, each person might be asked to write a memo to the chief explaining how she or he believes a policy or procedure could be changed to be more effective. (3) **In-basket exercise**—this type of activity is used to assess quick and effective decision making. A common in-basket exercise would require officers to respond to a series of e-mails (all of which pose a different set of problems) in an allotted amount of time. (4) *Oral interview board*—this assesses officers' attitude, judgment, leadership skills, and professional accomplishments. The composition of this board differs from place to place; however, it is common to have sworn police personnel and/or community representatives or a combination of both in this group. (5) *Review of performance evaluations*—the idea behind the review of performance evaluations is that past job performance can predict future job performance. Once officers have been scored using several means of assessment, they are rank ordered and placed on the promotion eligibility list. The chief of police then uses this list to choose who will be promoted.

Promotion allows police officers to take on new challenges and responsibilities.

So why do police officers choose to pursue promotional advancement? Thomas Whetstone found that officers pursue advancement because it is a personal goal they have set for themselves, because promotion allows for additional career opportunities, some people want to be in leadership roles, and because others in the department had encouraged them to do so.[73] Both male and female police officers gave these reasons, with slight variation in the order. There were some racial differences in motivations for pursuing promotion. White officers stated that they viewed promotion as a personal goal, while minority officers reported that promotion would allow them to be positive role models to youth in their community.[74]

Research has also explored the reasons officers choose *not* to pursue promotion. There are three general categories of reasons some police officers opt out of the promotion process.[75] First, there are personal reasons—these include a potential decrease in salary (they might lose opportunities for overtime if promoted), child care, and familial concerns, because a promotion may require a shift change, and they believe that they are not ready for the test. Second, officers cited professional reasons, including that they prefer their current shift and assignment, they are not interested in the promoted position (specifically the position of sergeant), and they feel that they are not ready to be promoted. And finally, officers reported several organizational reasons, such as perceptions of unfair testing practices, bias by the administration, not enough openings, and that they were not encouraged to do so by others/supervisors.

With a few exceptions, there is little variation in the reasons given for why male and female police officers choose not to pursue promotion.[76] In a recent study, female police officers reported both personal and organizational reasons for choosing not to pursue promotion (similar to those previously mentioned) but also stated that being married to male officers working within their organization hindered their ability to advance—hence, they paid a "marriage tax."[77] Tokenism is another factor that impacts the promotion of both racial minority and female police officers. A recent study by Carol Archbold and Dorothy Moses Schulz found that some women choose not to pursue promotion because they believe that their male colleagues will think that they were promoted because they are women and not because they are qualified to do the job.[78] Racial/ethnic minority police officers share similar experiences when they seek promotion within police agencies.[79]

Retention

The decision to leave the policing profession can take place at any time over the course of an officer's career. Joan Barker studied the occupational socialization of Los Angeles police officers and found that there are several stages in an officer's career at which he or she may question his or her career choice:[80]

1. *Hitting the streets*—this phase occurs during the first 3 years, including the time in the training academy and probationary period, and also the time that officers begin learning the realities of police work. During this stage, officers are trying to prove themselves, and their colleagues help them learn the ropes using both formal and informal practices unique to their department.
2. *Hitting their stride*—this is a 5-year phase in which officers are gaining confidence and developing their own style of policing. At this point in their careers, they begin to notice and express dissatisfaction with negative parts of their job.
3. *Hitting the wall*—this phase lasts roughly 4 years. Officers begin to question many aspects of their work and become disillusioned about their job.
4. *Regrouping*—this phase lasts until an officer makes the decision to retire or leave the job before retirement. This phase consists of officers re-evaluating their careers and deciding how to proceed. If they choose to remain in policing, they take time during this phase to figure out a strategy toward finishing their careers through retirement.
5. *Deciding to retire*—the final phase in an officer's career is when he or she decides to retire from policing. This is a hard decision for most officers, as many retire at a young age and are then faced with the task of finding another way to spend their time (in some cases finding another career).

Some of Barker's career phases identify times when officers may be more likely to think about leaving policing. For example, when officers are first exposed to the realities of police work in the hitting-the-streets phase, they could decide to leave before becoming too entrenched in the work. The hitting-the-wall phase is also a point in time at which some officers might become so disillusioned with their jobs that they decide to leave.

But why do some people choose to leave? Being unhappy with salaries and benefits (primarily in small agencies), frustration with police administration and the criminal justice system, and job and family stress are some reasons people choose to leave this line of work.[81] There is evidence that female police officers are more likely to leave policing compared to male officers.[82] Minority police officers are also more likely to drop out of policing when compared to White officers.[83] The article written by Robin Haarr that is included at the

end of this section examines the reasons people (specifically racial/ethnic minorities and women) drop out of policing. Police administrators need to track individuals who choose to leave their agencies (perhaps by using exit surveys) to better understand why these individuals decided to leave. This information may then be used to implement changes within their organizations that could result in fewer people leaving in the future. In contrast, studies have also revealed that good salaries and benefits, job security, the challenge and excitement of the job, job satisfaction, an opportunity to work with people, and simply needing a job are some of the reasons people choose to remain police officers.[84]

SUMMARY

- Men and women give very similar reasons for wanting to pursue policing careers.
- Most police agencies have a minimum hiring age of 21 years.
- After submitting an application, most people will be required to take a written exam and participate in a physical agility test, an oral interview, and medical and psychological testing and agree to a background investigation.
- There are three stages of training that take place over the course of a police officer's career: police academy training, field training officer (FTO)/police training officer (PTO), and in-service training.

KEY TERMS

age requirement
assessment center
Explorers program
FTO/PTO program
height/weight requirement
in-basket exercise
in-service training
Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI)
residency requirement
Title VII (1964 Civil Rights Act)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are some of the ways that police agencies recruit applicants for police officer positions?
2. Discuss the history of the use of height/weight requirements by police agencies.
3. How are assessment centers used by some police agencies during the hiring process?
4. Why have some police training academies been criticized over the years regarding the substance of their training curricula?

WEB RESOURCES

- To learn more about the Explorers program, go to http://exploring.learningforlife.org/services/career-exploring/law-enforcement/.
- To learn more about law enforcement training academies, go to http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/index.cfm?ty=tp&tid=77.
- To learn more about careers in policing, go to http://www.policecareer.com/careerassessment.htm.

READING 9

This article explores whether a college education is necessary for police officers working in modern police agencies in the United States. Roy Roberg and Scott Bonn explain the evolution of higher education in policing, as well as the debate over its importance to this profession. The authors believe that there is strong empirical evidence to support a college degree requirement for all police officers; however, they suggest that the requirement should be implemented at a slow, graduated pace.

Higher Education and Policing: Where Are We Now?

Roy Roberg and Scott Bonn

Introduction

For nearly 100 years, there has been a debate over whether a college education for police officers is desirable or even necessary. In present-day society, with the ever-expanding complexity of the police role and the transition to community policing, this question is more important than ever. Interestingly, the initial requirement of a high school diploma to enter the field of policing occurred at a time when most of the nation's population did not finish high school. Thus, a requirement of a high school education actually identified individuals with an above average level of education.

Today, the high school diploma has essentially been replaced by a college degree as the above-average level of educational attainment in the USA. In fact, 24.4 percent of Americans age 25 and over have a four-year college degree or higher (US Census Bureau, 2000). Consequently, local police departments that have not raised their educational requirements for entry have failed to keep pace with their early tradition of employing people with an above-average education. It should be noted, however, that while police departments in general do not require a four-year degree, an increasing number of police officers do have them. Also, many local departments require a minimum two-year degree, or its equivalent in college units. Baro and Burlingame (1999, p. 60) argue, however, that while an increasing number of officers are completing college units, this could simply represent "degree inflation" as an associate's degree (two year) today may only be the equivalent of a high school diploma in the 1960s.

The evolution of higher education in policing, the long-term debate over its importance, social and technological changes, and the complexity of the contemporary police role provide the focus of this article.

The History of Higher-Education Programs for Police

The debate over higher educational requirements for police officers is not new. Starting in the early 1900s, Berkeley, California, Police Chief August Vollmer called for the recruitment of officers who were not only trained in the "technology of policing" but who also understood "the prevention of crime or confrontation through [their] appreciation of the psychology and sociology of crime" (Carte, 1973, p. 275). Vollmer, known as the

father of police professionalism, required his officers to attend classes at University of California at Berkeley and designed a series of courses there specifically to enhance their formal education. Because of his outspoken support of higher education, his officers became known as "Berkeley's college cops" (Carte, 1973).

Following Berkeley's lead, other programs emphasizing police education were developed at major universities during the 1920s and 1930s. Early programs laid the foundation for higher education in criminal justice, which was typically labeled police science, police administration, or law enforcement. Such curricula were developed in selected four-year institutions and many community colleges through the mid-1960s.

Even with the development of academic police programs, the concept of the college-educated police officer was strongly resisted by the majority of rank-and-file officers. In fact, it was not until the latter 1950s and early 1960s that a minimum requirement of a high school or general equivalency diploma (GED) was firmly established (Garner, 1999). Officers who either had a degree or were attending college were often viewed with suspicion and distrust by their peers and supervisors. Goldstein (1977, p. 284) aptly described their plight during this era:

> The term itself implied that there was something incourageous about an educated police officer. College graduates despite their steadily increasing number in the general population, did not seek employment with the police. The old but lingering stereotype of the "dumb flatfoot," the prevalent concept of policing as a relatively simple task, the low pay, and the limitations on advancement—all of these factors made it appear that a college education would be wasted in such a job.

Two significant and interrelated events, however, took place in the mid- to late-1960s that required the country to take a hard look at the level of professionalism and quality of US police forces as well as the rest of the criminal justice system. These two events played a major role in ushering in the "golden age" for higher education for the police (Pope, 1997). The first event was the enormous increase in the crime rate that began in the early 1960s; the second event was the ghetto riots, which occurred in the mid-1960s. The burning, looting, and general turmoil in many of the nation's major cities was the catalyst that spurred the public and the government into action. It was at this juncture that the "war on crime" began (Pope, 1987).

As a result of a heightened emphasis on crime prevention, the growth of law enforcement programs in both two-year and four-year schools during the 1960s and 1970s was dramatic. It has been reported that in 1954 there was a total of 22 such programs in the country (Deutsch, 1955), but by 1975 the numbers had increased to more than 700 in community colleges and nearly 400 in four-year schools (Korbetz, 1975). Southerland (2002) reported a total of 408 four-year criminal justice programs in the USA in 1999–2000.

Also playing a key role in the debate over higher education in policing, the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice (1967) issued a comprehensive report titled *The Challenge of Crime in a Free Society* which documented the serious impact of crime on US society. The report identified the need for college-educated personnel (including the police) to address the increasing complexities of society. One of their most significant, and controversial, recommendations was that the "ultimate aim of all police departments should be that all personnel with general enforcement powers have baccalaureate degrees" (President's Commission, 1967, p. 109).

Shortly thereafter, Congress passed the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968, which created the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA). Through LEAA, the federal government poured billions of dollars into the criminal justice system—focusing on the police—in an attempt to improve their effectiveness and reduce crime. Under LEAA, an educational-incentive program, known as the Law Enforcement Education Program (LEEP), was established in the late 1960s, professedly to increase the educational standards of officers throughout the nation. In practice, it provided financial assistance primarily to

in-service police personnel, rather than "civilians" who wished to pursue law enforcement as a career.

In 1973 a highly influential *Report on Police* by the National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals (1973), further advanced the higher-education recommendations made by the President's Commission. The *Report on Police* included a graduated timetable that would require all police officers, at the time of initial employment, to have completed at least two years of education (60 semester units) at an accredited college or university by 1975, three years (90 semester units) by 1978, and a baccalaureate degree by 1982 (National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals, 1973, p. 369).

Based on these reports and the federal government's educational-incentive program, a meteoric and unregulated increase in police science (law enforcement) programs ensued. Serious questions about their academic rigor and viability were soon raised. In order to capture their fair share of the LEAA funds, many schools hurriedly spliced together programs that were lacking in academic quality. These programs failed to meet the President's Commission's goals, that is, to provide a broad educational background that would help officers to meet the demands of their changing and increasingly challenging roles.

The National Advisory Commission on Higher Education for Police Officers spent two years conducting a national survey and documenting the problems of police education (Sherman and The National Advisory Commission on Higher Education for Police Officers, 1978). The report was extremely critical of the state of the art of police education at the time. The Commission found that many criminal justice college programs were "simply extensions of academy-based courses" (Garner, 1999, p. 90). It recommended significant changes in virtually all phases of police higher education, including institutional, curriculum, and faculty. Significantly, the Commission recommended that police should be educated prior to employment; this argument attacked the very basis of the LEEP program, which as previously noted, provided an overwhelming amount of its funds to in-service personnel. This recommendation started a serious debate on whether police departments should place more emphasis on "recruiting the educated" or on "educating the recruited." The commission concluded that the "occupational perspective" of full-time police work, "probably reduces the impact of college on students" (Sherman and The National Advisory Commission on Higher Education for Police Officers, 1978, p. 13).

Since the late 1960s and early 1970s, many police programs have broadened their focus, emphasizing criminal justice administration rather than technical training. As the LEEP program was eventually phased out, so too were most of the weaker police programs in higher education that had emerged largely to pursue federal funding. The stronger programs continued to recruit PhDs trained in criminal justice and other social sciences for their faculties, thus establishing a more scholarly approach toward teaching and research. These changes in higher education in criminal justice, including faculty quality, student body makeup and curricular content, have allowed the field to mature quite rapidly and gain academic respectability. As reported by Garner (1999, pp. 90–91), "many of the past decade's mistakes have resulted in a natural 'course correction' as a consequence of demanding increased standards and reduced discretionary funding."

Higher Education Requirements for Police

Advances in raising educational requirements for police have been slow and sporadic. In fact, a four-year college degree requirement is still virtually nonexistent. A national study of approximately 3,000 state and local police departments serving communities of all sizes, conducted by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) (Hickmans and Reaves, 2003a), indicates that only 1 percent of departments required a college degree for employment in 2000. However, in some jurisdictions the number is considerably higher than 1 percent, for example, 6 percent for departments in cities serving between 500,000 and 1,000,000 residents. Interestingly, 0 percent of departments serving more than 1,000,000 residents require either a four-year or even a two-year

degree. However, 33 percent of departments serving more than 1,000,000 residents do require some college. A total of 15 percent of departments had some type of college requirement, usually a two-year degree (8 percent). For sheriffs' offices, the BJS survey (Hickman and Reaves 2003b) reports that 12 percent of offices serving more than 1,000,000 residents require some college (while none require a degree); 6 percent of all offices require a two-year degree.

The BJS national survey (Hickman and Reaves, 2003a, p. 6) further reported that the percentage of officers employed by a department with some type of college requirement for new officers in 2000 was 32 percent, or about three time that of 1990 (10 percent). From 1990 to 2000, the percentage of officers employed by a department with a degree requirement increased from 3 percent to 9 percent; for Sheriffs' offices, the percentage with a degree requirement increased from 3 percent to 5 percent. These trends are encouraging, but there is clearly room for improvement.

Even though the development of formal educational requirements has been slow, some research suggests that approximately one quarter of officers in the field have a baccalaureate degree, most likely due to the increased number of colleges and universities offering criminal justice/criminology degrees. For instance, a 1994 national study of departments with more than 500 sworn officers (Sanders *et al.*, 1995) found that approximately 28 percent of the officers were college graduates. Data from another national study for the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) of 485 state, county, and municipal police departments (Carter *et al.*, 1989a) indicated that 65 percent of police officers have completed at least one year of college and an additional 23 percent possess a four-year degree (as reported by Carter and Sapp, 1990b).

Just as the percentage of police officers holding college degrees has increased, so too has the number of police chiefs holding degrees. A study conducted by PERF (*Law Enforcement News*, 1998) of 358 city and county police chiefs in jurisdictions of 50,000 or more residents discovered that 87 percent held bachelor's degrees, almost 47 percent had master's degrees, and nearly 5 percent had law or doctoral-level degrees. This is an important finding because it suggests that with highly educated police chief executives as role models, higher education may finally be emerging as an important part of the police culture. It is likely that these chiefs will begin to emphasize, and even require, higher education as part of their overall strategy to improve their departments, including promotional and hiring practices.

A study of 51 sheriff's departments and municipal police agencies in Colorado indicated that 22 percent had a written policy requiring a college degree for promotion (Nees, 2003). The PERF survey on higher education (Carter *et al*, 1989a) found a growing trend for departments to tie educational requirements to promotion. Some 20 percent of those responding indicated that they had either a formal or informal policy requiring some level of advanced education for promotion; 5 percent required a college degree (as reported by Carter and Sapp, 1992).

The Arlington, Texas, Police Department provides an example of what college degree requirements may look like in the future. Arlington, with approximately 600 sworn and 180 non-sworn personnel, began phasing in college degree requirements in 1986; currently, about 75 percent of Arlington officers hold a bachelor's degree (Bowman, 2002). Table 1chronicles the development of the Arlington Police Department's emphasis on higher education.

As Table 1 indicates, by 1999, all new recruits in Arlington were required to hold a bachelor's degree. With respect to promotion, by 1991 a bachelor's degree was required for deputy-chiefs, and in 1995 for lieutenants. A master's degree requirement was instituted in 1990 for assistant chiefs; and in 2000, at least a four-year degree was required of officers seeking promotion.

The Impact of Higher Education on Police Attitudes and Performance

Early research on the impact of college on police attitudes centered on comparing levels of authoritarianism of college-educated police to police with little or no college. For instance, it was shown that police with

Table 1 Development of higher education requirements in the Arlington, Texas, police department

For entry	For position
1986, Bachelor's degree required for new recruits with no prior police experience. Associate's degree required for recruits with a minimum of two years' experience	1991, Bachelor's degree required for deputy chiefs
	1995, Bachelor's degree required for lieutenants
1994, Bachelor's degree required of all new recruits, regardless of experience	1999, Master's degree required for assistant chiefs
	2000, Bachelor's degree required of officers seeking promotion

Source: Bowman (2002)

some college (Smith *et al*, 1968) and those with college degrees (Smith *et al*, 1970) were significantly less authoritarian than their non-college-educated colleagues. Guller (1972) found police officers who were college seniors showed lower levels of authoritarianism than officers who were college freshmen and of similar age, socioeconomic background, and work experience, indicating that the higher the level of education, the more flexible or open one's belief system may be. Dalley (1975) discovered that authoritarian attitudes correspond with a lack of a college education and increased work experience. The author suggested that a more liberal attitude is more conducive to the discretionary nature of law enforcement. A number of other researchers have also found college-educated officers to be more flexible and less authoritarian (Parker *et al*, 1976; Roberg, 1978; Trojanovicz and Nicholson, 1976).

There is some evidence to indicate that college-educated officers are not only more aware of social and cultural/ethnic problems in their community, but also have a greater acceptance of minorities (Weiner, 1976), are more professional in their attitude (Miller and Fry, 1978) and ethical in their behavior (Tyre and Braunstein, 1992). In addition, college-educated officers are thought to be more understanding of human behavior, more sensitive to community relations, and hold a higher service standard (Miller and Fry, 1976; Regoli, 1976). This suggests that such individuals may be more "humanistic" police officers. Carian and Byxbe (2000) conducted a study of undergraduate college students (235 criminal justice majors and 428 non-criminal justice majors) at three large southern universities in which subjects were asked to specify the prison sentence for a white or black convicted felon in one of two hypothetical cases. No significant differences were found in sentencing preferences between criminal justice majors and their non-criminal justice counterparts—suggesting that higher education appears to deliver a more humanistic candidate for police work—a good sign as the nationwide trend toward community policing continues. It has been argued that humanism is a valuable trait in departments that practice community policing because an officer's ability to empathize and communicate with local citizens is vital to its success (Meese, 1993).

Because police departments are so diverse, it is difficult to define performance measures. What is considered to be "good" or "poor" performance may vary from department to department. The criteria used to measure police performance are not clear-cut and are often controversial. Accordingly, research findings on police performance will usually be more useful if they are based on a wide variety of performance indicators. The research described next, on the relationship between higher education and police performance, is based on a number of different measures of performance.

Several studies have indicated that officers with higher levels of education performed their jobs in a

more satisfactory manner than their less educated peers, as indicated by higher evaluation ratings from their supervisors (Finnegan, 1975; Roberg, 1978; Smith and Aamodt, 1597; Truxillo *et al.*, 1998). The Roberg (1978) study of 118 patrol officers in the Lincoln, Nebraska, Police Department, indicated that officers with "college degrees had the most open belief systems and the highest levels of job performance, indicating that college-educated officers were better able to adapt to the complex nature of the police role" (Roberg, 1978, p. 344). It was shown that age, seniority, and college major had no impact on the results, lending support to the notion that the overall university experience may be important in broadening one's perspectives. It is important to note that all of the college graduates were from a major land-grant state university that could be considered to have high-quality academic programs. Thus, the quality of the educational experience may also be an important variable in determining the impact of higher education.

The Smith and Aamodt (1997) study, which consisted of 299 officers from 12 municipal departments in Virginia, found that the benefits of a college education did not become apparent until the officers gained some experience. This finding is not surprising and suggests that higher education is simply another tool, along with training and experience, which allows officers to become more effective performers. Truxillo et al. (1989) studied a cohort of 84 officers in a southern, metropolitan police department over ten years and found that college education was significantly correlated with promotions as well as supervisory ratings of job knowledge.

Other researchers have found college to have a positive effect of a number of key, individual performance indicators. For example, several researchers have found college-educated officers to have fewer citizen complaints filed against them (Cascio, 1977; Cohen and Chaiken, 1972; Finnegan, 1976; Sanderson, 1977; Trojanowicz and Nicholson, 1976; Wilson, 1999; Lersch and Kunzman, 2001). Additional research has indicated that college educated officers tend to perform better in the academy (Sanderson, 1977), have fewer disciplinary actions taken against them by the department, have lower rates of absenteeism, receive fewer injuries on the job, and are involved in fewer traffic accidents (Cascio, 1977; Cohen and Chaiken, 1972; Sanderson, 1977). There is even some evidence that better-educated officers tend to use deadly force (i.e. fire their weapons) less often (Fyfe, 1988). In one recent study, citizen encounters involving inexperienced and less-educated officers resulted in increased levels of police force (Terrill and Mastrofski, 2002). Another study conducted in the state of Florida (*Law Enforcement News*, 2002), reported that police officers with just a high school diploma made up slightly more than 50 percent of all sworn law enforcement personnel between 1997 and 2002, yet they accounted for nearly 75 percent of all disciplinary actions issued by the state. Based on these findings, the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) has commissioned a two-year national study on the correlation between higher education and disciplinary action against officers (*Law Enforcement News*, 2002). The goal of the national study is to provide empirical support to police administrators who want to implement college requirements in their departments.

Some interesting findings with respect to the evolution of police departments indicate that college-educated officers are more likely to attain promotions (Cohen and Chaiken, 1972; Polk and Armstrong, 2001; Roberg and Laramy, 1980; Sanderson, 1977; Whetstone, 2000), tend to be more innovative in performing their work (Trojanowicz and Nicholson, 1976), and are more likely to take leadership roles in the department and to rate themselves higher on performance measures (Coben and Chaiken, 1972; Trojanowicz and Nicholson, 1976; Weirman, 1978; Krimmel, 1996). Kakar (1998) indicated that these officers with higher education rated themselves higher in leadership, responsibility, problem-solving and initiative-taking skills in comparison to less educated officers.

Of course, not all of the research findings on higher education and policing are either positive or have significant findings. For example, in one large-scale reanalysis of survey findings in a 1977 study, Worden (1990) found that the effects of higher education on attitudes and performance were so small that

they were not statistically significant. Nevertheless, he did discover that supervisors found educated officers to be more reliable employees and better report writers, and citizens found them to be exceptional in their use of good judgement and problem solving.

There is also evidence that college-educated officers become involved in cases of "individual liability significantly less frequently than non-college officers" (Carter and Sapp, 1989. p. 163), and that college-educated officers tend to have a broader understanding of civil rights issues from legal, social, historical, and political perspectives (Carter and Sapp, 1990a). Because lawsuits claiming negligence on behalf of police departments are on the increase (along with the amount of damages being awarded—often between $1 million and $2 million per case), this is an important area for future research. If a correlation between higher education and reduced liability risk can be established, the availability and cost of such insurance to police departments requiring higher education could be affected.

Higher Education and Community Policing

One of the most important changes in police organizations over the past 20 years has been the evolution of community policing. According to Geller and Swanger (1995, p. 3), community policing involves a "strategic shift…toward the view that police can better help redress and prevent crime, disorder, and fear, through active, multifaceted, consultative, and collaborative relationships with diverse community groups and public and private-sector institutions." At the heart of community policing is the notion that "public safety [is] a community responsibility, rather than simply the responsibility of…the police." This change "transforms the police officer from an investigator and enforcer into a catalyst in a process community self help. Rather than standardized services, police services become "customized" to individual communities" (Osborne and Gaebler, 1993, pp. 50, 174).

The Bureau of Justice Statistics reports a substantial movement toward this approach. The BJS national survey (Hickman and Reaves, 2003a) of approximately 3,000 state and local police agencies, serving communities of all sizes, reported in 2000 that 90 percent of all officers worked for a department with either a formal or informal community policing plan. The survey revealed that 60 percent of the nation's largest police agencies (serving 1 million or more residents) had a formal plan, while 40 percent had an informal plan, indicating that 100 percent of the nation's largest departments now have some form of community policing plan. In addition, the BJS national survey of the nation's sheriffs' offices (Hickman and Reaves, 2003b) reported that in 2000, 74 percent of all sworn personnel worked for an agency with either a formal or informal community policing plan. Even though the BJS data cannot tell us the degree to which such plans have usually been implemented, or how well they conform to community policing principles, it is nevertheless clear that a national, philosophical shift toward community policing has developed.

It has been argued that "the implementation of a community policing plan supports and empowers front-line officers, decentralizes command, and encourages innovative problem solving" (Hickman and Reaves, 2008b, p. 14). Vital to the successful application of community policing is a problem-solving orientation by its practitioners. As noted by Goldstein (1979, p. 236), a problem-oriented approach suggests that the police develop "a more systematic process for examining and addressing the problems that the public expects them to handle." Goldstein argued that the police have historically been too narrowly focused on specific incidents (i.e. they handle the same incidents time after time) and should instead became more involved with solving the problems that lead to these repeated incidents. Goldstein also believes that the community policing approach should improve the working environment for educated officers, who have much greater flexibility to take the initiative and be creative in solving problems. An improved work environment should lead to increased job satisfaction for the police and improved quality of police service provided to the community. Significant to the debate over higher education, a

transition to community policing should more effectively utilize the potential of college-educated officers, "who have been smothered in the atmosphere of traditional policing" (Goldstein, 1987, p. 28).

Griffin *et al.* (1978) found that as education increases, sources of job satisfaction may be related to internal factors, such as control. Accordingly, they recommended that structural changes (i.e. decentralization) be implemented in police departments to allow for more control among lower-level officers. Likewise, Sherwood (2000, p. 210) states that job satisfaction may be linked to the "use of a variety of skills, the ability to follow the task through to a conclusion, freedom to make decisions, and knowledge of the effectiveness of one's efforts..." This is consistent with the less hierarchical structure and more autonomous style of community policing which, logically, should be most appealing to officers with higher education. Reinforcing the need for higher education to effectively implement community policing, Redelet and Carter (1994, p. 156) stated:

> Given the nature of this change, the issue of college education is even more critical. The knowledge and skills officers are being asked to exercise in community policing appears to be tailored to college preparation.

Perhaps most importantly, higher education can provide the skills necessary to analyze and to evaluate a range of nontraditional solutions to a problem. Worden (1990, p. 576) stated:

> Because college education is supposed to provide insights into human behavior and to foster a spirit of experimentation, college-educated officers are (hypothetically) less inclined to invoke the law to resolve problems, and correspondingly are inclined more strongly to develop extralegal solutions.

In turn, the freedom to exercise one's reasoning and analytical skills (i.e. the ability to "think outside of the box") should lead to increased job satisfaction among educated officers (Sherwood, 2000).

Higher Education, Community Policing and Terrorism

The threat of domestic terrorism will undoubtedly affect the police role. DeGuzman (2002), for instance, argues that patrol work in the post 9-11 USA will need to be "target-oriented" with greater emphasis placed on "event" analysis in addition to crime analysis. Target-oriented is the concept that officers assess likely targets in their districts; that is they should not only be watching over obvious places and persons who might be of danger, but also where disruption in "safe places" might occur. This suggests that the police should be able to "deconstruct the obvious" (Crank, 1999; Manning, 1979). In other words, they should attempt to determine the vulnerability of people and places and how they may become targets of terrorism. Event analysis suggests that the police should be aware of ideologies and cultural context, including important celebrations and event anniversaries of known activists, terrorists, or groups and attempt to determine whether these events may be connected to a possible terrorist act. Because one of the central themes of community policing is problem solving, many departments are already familiar with one method of analysis that could be used for this purpose, known as scanning, analysis, response and assessment (SARA). The SARA process would be appropriate for analyzing events in the community and their relationships to possible terrorist acts.

DeGuzman (2002) believes that the threat of terrorism will test officers' decision-making and communication skills, and provide a challenge to police legitimacy (i.e., belief that police are fair and equitable). The author suggests this will occur as a result of traffic enforcement being intensified to combat terrorism, it is believed that no-nonsense (or even "zero-tolerance") policies regarding traffic violations will limit the movement of terrorists. A number of Supreme Court decisions have expanded the use of traffic stops for the purpose of stopping, searching and investigating. Thus, it is suggested that the previously unreliable "hunch" or "sixth sense" by the police is slowly being acknowledged by the courts as legitimate grounds for police intervention. And, given the social climate of the time, it is not

expected that the courts will be likely to strictly interpret the requirements of the exclusionary rule (against unreasonable searches and seizures) as originally set out in *Mapp v. Ohio* (1961)[I]. Of course, while such an approach may, at least on the surface, appear better able to track and investigate certain people, there are important constitutional issues with respect to "racial profiling," and perhaps just as importantly, police legitimacy. Recently, this type of "sixth sense discretion" and zero tolerance policies have led to distrust of the police by minority groups, with a concomitant loss of police legitimacy (Kennedy, 1997).

While undoubtedly more emphasis will need to be placed on anti-terrorist activities in the future, the police need to be careful not to develop a "we versus they" attitude with respect to these activities. Thus, it seems more crucial than ever to promote a community policing approach, where vital information can be gained through improved relationships with the community. In this way, the public plays an important role not only in helping to combat traditional criminal activity, but potential terrorist acts as well. Additionally, this should also lead to gains in police legitimacy, which, in turn, will lead to additional help and information from the public in preventing crime and terrorism. In fact, studies have indicated that police legitimacy among the public is highly correlated to a willingness to obey the law (Tyler, 1990) and that community policing facilitates police legitimacy (Skogan, 1994). The superior communication and problem-solving skills derived from higher education, implicitly required by community policing, would seem well suited to fostering legitimacy among citizens for law enforcement officers.

The unique and complicated challenges posed by the threat of terrorism will require police officers that are at once both analytical and socially aware. Being well versed in the latest crime fighting technology will not suffice, unless it is accompanied by an awareness of social context. Consistent with this line of reasoning, Goldstein (1987) believes that if the police are to improve operations and to mature as a profession, they need to focus more directly on the end product of their work (including the consequences), and to become more sensitive to the community in which they operate. Logically, the analytical skills provided by higher education will prepare an officer to meet the complex challenges presented by terrorism, while exposure to the humanities and social sciences through higher education will produce a more sophisticated, "socially conscious" and culturally attuned officer.

Validating Higher Education for Policing

Given the increasing number of college-educated officers in the field, such slow progress in developing higher-education standards is perplexing, especially considering the evidence that, in general, college education has a positive effect on officer attitudes, performance, and behavior. With such support for higher education, why have standards not been significantly raised by most police departments? The PERF study (Carter *et al.*, 1989a) identified two common reasons.

1. Fear of being sued because a college requirement could not be quantitatively validated to show job relatedness.
2. Fear that college requirements would be discriminatory toward minorities.

Each of these important issues warrants discussion.

Higher Education as a BFOQ

As the PERF study of police executives reported (Carter *et al.*, 1989a), one of the primary reasons departments had not embraced higher-educational requirements more vigorously was the dilemma of not being able to validate such a requirements for the job, thus opening the department to a court challenge. Establishing higher educational requirements as a bona fide occupational qualification (BFOQ) for police work could be an important step in facilitating the use of advanced education as a minimum entry-level

selection criterion. A brief discussion of higher education as a BFOQ for police work follows:

Interestingly, the courts in this country have continuously upheld higher educational requirements in policing to be job related. In *Castro v. Beecher* (1972)[2], the requirement of a high school education by the Boston Police Department was affirmed citing the recommendations of the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice (1967) and the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders (1968). *Arnold v. Ballard* (1975, p. 73B)[3] supported the notion that an educational requirement can be quantitatively job validated in stating that such requirements "indicate a measure of accomplishment and ability which … is essential for…performance as a police officer." And, in *Davis v. City of Dallas* (1985)[4], the court upheld a challenge to the Dallas Police Department's requirement of 45 semester units (equivalent to one and one-half years of college) with a minimum of a C average from an accredited university.

In *Davis v. City of Dallas*[4] the court's decision was based partially on the complex nature of the police role and the public risk and responsibility that are unique to it. Such a decision indicates that higher standards of qualification can be applied to the job because police decision making requires an added dimension of judgement. This logic has been applied by the courts to other occupations such as airline pilots and health-related professions. Thus, the *Davis v. City of Dallas* (1985)[4] decision can be viewed as the next logical step in increasing police professionalism and may provide further support for police executives to require higher education (Carter *et al*, 1988, p. 10).

Higher Education, Discrimination and Recruitment

A second area of concern reported to PERF by police executives was the potential impact the higher-education requirement might have on the employment of minorities. If minority-group members do not have equal access to higher education, such a requirement could be held to be discriminatory by the courts. Not only that, but there are also obvious ethical and social issues raised. Any educational requirements for policing, then, must not only be job related but also nondiscriminatory.

In the *Davis v. City of Dallas*[4] case, the suit contended that higher-education requirements were discriminatory in the selection of police officers. According to Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, there cannot be employment barriers (or practices) that discriminate against minorities, even if they are not intended to do so. However, in *Griggs v. Duke Power Co.* (1971, p. 853)[5], the US Supreme Court held that if an employment practice is job related (or a "business necessity"), it may be allowed as a requirement, even though it has discriminatory overtones. Thus, courts must base decisions on the balance between requirements that are necessary for job performance and discriminatory practices. In *Davis v. City of Dallas*[4], the city of Dallas conceded that the college requirements did have a "significant disparate impact on blacks" (*Davis v. City of Dallas*, 1983, p. 207[4]). As noted above, the court nevertheless held that the complex requirements of police work (e.g. public risk and responsibility, amount of discretion) instigated against the discriminatory effects of a higher-education requirement.

In other words, if certain requirements for the job can be justified, even though they may discriminate against certain groups, the benefits of such requirements are judged to outweigh any discriminatory effects. Following this line of reassuring, if higher educational requirements can be shown to be a bona fide occupational qualification (BFOQ), then such a requirement would be considered a business necessity, and thus a legitimate requirement for successful job performance.

Some data, however, exist to suggest that requiring a bachelor's degree may have an adverse impact on race. Decker and Huckabee (2002) explored the effect of raising educational requirements to a bachelor's degree by analyzing recruit information from the Indianapolis Police Department over four years. They concluded that almost two-thirds (65 percent) of successful candidates overall would have been ineligible,

and 77 percent (30 of 39) of African-American applicants did not have degrees. The researchers also looked at raising the age requirement to 25, and found that 25 percent of the traditionally successful applicants would not have been eligible, however, the age requirement would not have a disproportionately high effect on minorities as it would have eliminated only 18 percent of black applicants. While the research did not discuss whether any recruitment efforts were made to increase the pool of college educated minority applicants (unlikely), it is worth noting that nine of the 39 African American applicants did possess baccalaureate degrees.

While it appears, at least in this instance, that a college degree requirement had an impact on race, it also had an impact on the overall applicant pool, which is likely to occur when departments are attempting to improve the quality of their personnel by raising standards. There is little doubt that departments that raise their educational requirements will also need to significantly enhance their recruitment efforts, as other professional fields have done. For example, using multicultural recruiting task forces and employing broad-based recruitment efforts, including college campuses and reaching beyond city, county and state boundaries, have proven to be effective (*Law Enforcement News*, 1997).

Some police departments already aggressively recruit college graduates. For instance, in a study of 37 Texas police department (TELEMASP, 1996), it was found that the median number of recruiting trips to college campuses was six, that 21 departments (56 percent) have educational-incentive pay, providing additional pay for officers who have attained certain levels of higher education. In addition, some departments grant bonus points on hiring tests or use an accelerated career ladder for those with college education. Still others provide tuition-assistance programs and flexible duty shifts for officers who are still working on their degrees. One of the departments reported that it has had some success in recruiting college-educated officers through participation in a college internship program.

The PERF study (as reported by Carter and Sapp, 1992) found that most of the departments had developed one or more educational-incentive policies to encourage officers to continue their education beyond that required for initial employment. Some of these include tuition assistance or reimbursement, incentive pay, shift or day-off adjustments, and permission to attend classes during work hours. Another study of 72 Texas police departments, representing more than half of the police officers licensed in the state (Garner, 1998), indicated that 52 departments (72 percent) offered some type of incentive for obtaining a college education, 42 reported various forms of tuition reimbursement, while 32 provided higher pay for those with degrees. Other educational incentives offered by numerous departments included the use of vehicles for transportation to classes, time off to attend courses, and scheduling preferences to accommodate the college semester. Various departments used one or more of these incentives.

The preponderance of data indicates that a trend toward higher education exists in policing and appears not to have the negative impact on minority-officer recruitment that was initially feared. The fact that the proportion of minorities employed by state and local departments, especially in medium to large agencies, is approximately equal to proportions in the national population (Hickman and Reaves, 2003a; Hickman and Reaves, 2003b) is also encouraging. As Carter and Sapp (1992, pp. 11–13) argued:

> It appears that a college requirement is not impossible to mandate as evidenced by both the legal precedent and empirical data. A college educated police force that is racially and ethically representative of the community can be achieved. This only serves to make a police department more effective and responsive to community needs.

Requiring a College Degree and Policy Implications

If college education is to become an entry-level requirement for policing, it is important that supporting policies also be established. As noted above, it is possible to offset the possible discriminatory effects of

a higher-education requirement through an aggressive recruitment strategy. Additionally, of course, it is helpful to have a competitive salary scale, good employment benefits and high-quality working conditions. It is important to point out that over the past decade, many medium and large police departments have implemented highly competitive salary structures, in line with, and often substantially above the starting salaries for college graduates in most public-sector and many private-sector jobs. In addition, healthcare and retirement benefits are often very good at the local and state levels. Finally, in the long term, the implementation of a community policing paradigm will likely be necessary in order to significantly enhance police working environments, creating a more professional atmosphere where college graduates will feel comfortable and can flourish.

In the final analysis, it appears as though enough evidence (both empirical and experiential) has been established to support a strong argument for a college-degree requirement for entry-level police officers:

- The benefits provided by a higher education, combined with social and technological changes, the threat of terrorism (along with civil rights issues) and the increasing complexity of police work, suggest that a college degree should be a requirement for initial police employment.
- If educational and recruitment policies are appropriately developed, a higher-education requirement should not adversely affect minority recruitment or retention.

Recognizing that there are diverse types of police departments throughout the country, with differing styles of operation, levels of performance, and community needs, it is apparent that some can adapt to a college-degree requirement more readily than others.

Consequently, perhaps some type of graduated timetable for college requirements similar to those found in the National Advisory Commission's *Report on police* (1973) would be appropriate (as noted previously, the Commission recommended that all officers be required to have a baccalaureate degree by 1982).

A graduated timetable could be set up for phasing in first, a two-year degree requirement, and second, a baccalaureate degree for initial selection purposes. In fact, PERF called for a similar plan years ago (Carter *et al*, 1989b). At the same time, requirements could be established for supervisory and executive personnel, first at the baccalaureate level, and then, at least for executives, at the master's level. These requirements could also be tapered to account for different types of agencies; for example, larger agencies serving larger and more diverse populations could have the requirements phased in earlier. However, the bottom line would ultimately require any officer with general enforcement powers to have a degree, regardless of location or type of agency. For those departments or cities that feel they could not comply with such requirement, they could contract with a nearby agency that can meet the requirements. Such an arrangement is not without precedent, as many small and/or rural cities contract for local police services through larger municipal or county departments.

The quickest way for a police department to require higher education is for the chief to get squarely behind it. This process, however, has been limited to a very small number of departments over the past four decades, and it is clear that something more is needed. It is likely that in order for higher education to become entrenched throughout the field, a serious push will be needed from the federal government, perhaps along the lines of the Justice Department's community-oriented policing services (COPS) program, which has provided funds nationally to promote community policing (but with tighter strings attached). With respect to higher education, federal funding should be provided to police departments for achieving higher educational standards. Specifically, the funds could be used for:

- broad-based recruitment efforts;
- educational-incentive programs;
- the elimination of policies that restrict applicant searches (including residency requirements); and
- to promote the development of a written policy defining college education as a BFOQ as it relates to the department.

However, as persuasively argued by Sherman and the National Advisory Commission on Higher Education for Police Officers (1978), the focus should be on "recruiting the educated" rather than on "educating the recruited," so as not to repeat the mistakes made by LEEP over 30 years ago.

Although some "growing pains" are to be expected, the advantages of such a requirement in today's ever changing, more highly educated and diverse society, outweigh any potential disadvantages of waiting for additional "evidence" of its importance to accrue. Recognizing that nearly 25 percent of Americans have a four-year college degree or higher, the law enforcement field has simply not kept pace with societal trends in education. Therefore, the time has arrived to upgrade American policing and service to the community, through higher education requirements, thus, moving the occupation closer to a professional status.

Notes

1. *Mapp v. Ohio* (1961), 367 U.S. 643.
2. *Castro v. Beccher* (1972), 549 F.2d 725.
3. *Arnold v. Ballard* (1975), 390 F. Supp., N.D. Ohio
4. *Davis v. City of Dallas* (1985), 777 F.2d 205.
5. *Griggs v. Duke Power Co.* (1971), 401 U.S. 432.

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Identify some of the ways that police officers with college degrees behave differently than those without degrees.
2. Explain how higher education for police officers coincides with the tenets of community policing.
3. What are some of the policy implications for police administrators to consider before they implement the requirement of a college degree for police officers?

READING 10

Robin Haarr examines why police recruits "drop out" of police work. Using interview data, Haarr found that people drop out of police work by deciding to leave the profession themselves, they are asked to leave the police academy, or the department initiates termination. Close attention is paid to the reasons why both women and racial/ethnic minorities leave the policing profession.

Factors Affecting the Decision of Police Recruits to "Drop Out" of Police Work

Robin N. Haarr

Resignation of police officers is a significant concern among police executives because of the direct financial costs of recruiting, selecting, and training police personnel as well as the indirect costs related to disruption of services and organizational efficiency, time spent waiting for police recruits to achieve a "streetwise" competence, and providing fewer services to citizens (Gettinger, 1984; Harris & Baldwin, 1999; Manili & Connors, 1988; Webster & McEwen, 1992). The financial costs of

premature resignation vary across police agencies; but, in 1999, Harris and Baldwin (1999) estimated the replacement cost for a single police officer to be approximately $14,300. If one considers that resignation often occurs during the earliest stages of a police officer's career, the replacement cost for an officer could be as high as $29,000.

Since the 1970s, police agencies have undertaken special initiatives to increase the recruitment and hiring of female and racial/ethnic minorities, yet the numbers of full-time sworn personnel in police departments serving populations of 250,000 or more remains low. In 2000, females represented only 16.3% of full-time sworn personnel (up from 12.1% in 1990), Blacks made up 20.1% (18.4% in 1990), Hispanics were 14.1% (9.2% in 1990), 2.8% were Asian/Pacific Islander (2.0% in 1990), and 0.4% were Native American (0.3% in 1990) (U.S. Department of Justice, 2000). Thus, the costs of premature resignation of female and racial/ethnic minority officers are not amenable to the same financial calculations provided by Harris and Baldwin (1999).

Despite high costs associated with resignation of police personnel, research into the reasons for resignation and turnover is sparse (Fielding & Fielding, 1987; Harris & Baldwin, 1999; James & Hendry, 1991; McDowell, 1971; Reiser, 1974; Seidel & Courtney, 1983; Sparger & Giacopassi, 1983; Wales, 1988). Moreover, virtually no research has explored the reasons for resignation of women and racial/ethnic minority officers (Doerner, 1995; Fry, 1983; Holdaway & Barron, 1997). This article is significant because it adds to the limited literature on police resignation and explores why female and racial/ethnic minority officers drop out of police work during the early stages of their careers.

Theories of Resignation

A review of the limited literature on police resignation and turnover reveals four lines of inquiry, including job satisfaction, "burnout" theory, confluency theory, and cognitive dissonance theory. One of the earliest studies of police resignation (Wilson & McLaren, 1950) theorized that police officers who are dissatisfied with their job voluntarily resign from police work, whereas officers who have high levels of job satisfaction remain. Factors affecting job satisfaction included salary, rank, overtime compensation, insurance, length of work week, medical and safety programs, and retirement incentives.

Building on the concept of job satisfaction, Reiser (1974) proposed a theoretical link between police turnover and burnout caused by job stress. Adherents of burnout theory argue that police officers who voluntarily resign after relatively long periods of police service do so because they gradually experience a state of burnout that occurs due to inherently cumulative occupational and organizational dissatisfactions and stresses (DeLey, 1984; Favreau & Gillespie, 1978; Harris & Baldwin, 1999; Seidel & Courtney, 1983; Sparger & Giacopassi, 1983). In a study of Memphis police officers who voluntarily resigned from police work between 1975 and 1980, Sparger and Giacopassi (1983) concluded that veteran officers voluntarily resigned because of "burnout" resulting from the culmination of occupational frustrations and dissatisfactions related to traditional authoritarian management styles, organizational policies, departmental politics, lack of appreciation for their efforts, the system of internal discipline, pay and fringe benefits, relations with civic officials, court policies, and community expectations. Veteran officers who voluntarily resigned reported feeling stagnated in one's job (see also Seidel & Courtney, 1983; Singleton & Teahan, 1978).

More recently, Dick (2000) analyzed clinical data from therapy with police officers who were under stress and considering leaving the police force and described "epiphenal events" that resulted in emotional exhaustion and burnout. At the epiphenal event, officers reasoned that the organization stood in the way of their ability to make their desired, positive contribution through work. Dick presents the data as evidence of an officer's inability to cope in a way that allows continuation of work, whereas adherents of burnout theory contend that retention of officers requires an awareness of job satisfaction factors.

Harris and Baldwin (1999) tested confluency theory and eight variables associated with job satisfaction as predictors of turnover among officers who voluntarily left the Birmingham, Alabama, Police Department between 1992 and 1996. Confluency theory attributes police turnover to an absence of pre-employment job awareness and to incongruencies between job expectations and realities. Their findings failed, however, to support confluency theory and disagreed with conventional wisdom and the majority of turnover research findings (Hoffman, 1993; Phelan, 1991; Premack & Wanous, 1985; Seidel & Courtney, 1983; Sparger & Giacopassi, 1983; Wales, 1988).

Although job dissatisfaction and burnout theory are useful in explaining the resignation of veteran officers, it does not apply to the sample of police recruits in this study. Because police recruits in this study were tracked for a 16-month period, starting with recruits' entry into basic training, it is assumed that recruits would not experience a state of burnout; rather, recruits would experience problems of adjustment as they enter basic training and are socialized into their new role as police officer. Drawing on Festinger's (1957) theory of cognitive dissonance and prior research by McDowell (1971), Van Maanen (1975), and Fielding and Fielding (1987), I hypothesize that police recruits who "voluntarily resign" from police work within the early stages of police training and service experience problems of adjustment as a result of conflict between the version of policing embodied in their ideal, that projected in formal training, and the reality of policing in practice. Officers who experience adjustment problems and conflict within the early stages of their careers may respond to the psychological dissonance by altering and revising their belief systems and remaining in law enforcement or resigning from police work and relieving the painful psychological experience by preserving their idealized notion of the job (Fielding & Fielding, 1987). The decision to remain in or resign from police work is contingent on the recruits' stake in conformity to occupational and work group norms and commitment to the occupation and organization (Van Maanen, 1975).

Fielding and Fielding (1987) tested the use of cognitive dissonance theory in a longitudinal study of 125 police recruits who entered the Derbyshire Training Establishment, of which 28 (22%) resigned within 42 months of joining. They compared resigners to nonresigners on individual demographics and attitudes toward crime, law enforcement, and social and political issues. At induction into police work, resigners and nonresigners did not differ in their levels of instrumentalism (attitudes toward extrinsic aspects of the job: pay, status, or security); however, by the end of the first year, resigners reported greater instrumentality and less commitment to the police role. Resigners also expressed greater dissatisfaction with the amount of paperwork involved in the job, the social isolation associated with the job, and the public image of the police. Resigners were also more likely to advocate recriminatory action (use of corporal and capital punishment) against offenders, were less concerned with achieving fairness in assessing punishment, and were more concerned with punishing the offender. Fielding and Fielding concluded that those who were most likely to resign from police work within the first 4 years were those whose early idealism was soonest traded for the pragmatic instrumentalist perspective that overtook all police to some degree.

Cognitive dissonance theory of police resignation can be enhanced when coupled with the sociological concept of occupational socialization (Fielding & Fielding, 1987), which places emphasis on the formal and informal processes of socializing recruits to the fundamental features of the occupational culture, including team membership, acceptance of particular values and beliefs, stereotypical thinking, trust, forming of relationships through joke telling, and the manner of dealing with racial/ethnic minorities and other members of the public. Van Maanen (1975) contended that police officers are continually involved in the process of socialization, which begins prior to one's entry into police work (referred to as anticipatory socialization) and continues indefinitely forward to an officer's present position. Police officers experience their police careers in stages of career contingency, representing thresholds

at which officers can decide to withdraw from further commitment or continuation in police work. The decision to resign is contingent, in part, on officers' stake in conformity and commitment to the occupation and organization.

Female and Minority Officers' Resignation

A shortcoming of the police resignation and turnover research is that it reflects the experiences of Caucasian male police officers. Most resignation studies have failed to consider distinctive predictors of resignation among women and racial/ethnic minorities; rather, the tendency has been to present women's attrition from police organizations as related to family concerns (e.g., child care, unsupportive husbands) and personal failures in coping (Doerner, 1995; Seagram & Stark, 1992). This approach fails to consider the unique workplace problems for women in policing and a connection between these problems and resignation. For example, women in "male defined" occupations, such as policing, experience male coworkers and supervisors who are unsupportive and hostile toward females as well as sexual harassment and gender discrimination from peers, supervisors, and subordinates (Haarr, 1997; Lafontaine & Tredeau, 1986; Martin, 1980, 1990; Morash & Haarr, 1995; Texeira, 2002).

Research exploring the resignation of racial/ethnic minority officers from police work is virtually absent. The only systematic study of resignation among Black and Asian officers was conducted in Great Britain by Holdaway and Barron (1997) and revealed that Black and Asian officers were routinely excluded from full participation in the workforce and becoming a member of the occupational culture at various stages of their career. Minority officers who desired to be more integrated into the police force recognized the need to demonstrate their commitment to the dominant assumptions of the Caucasian occupational culture, which constructed racial prejudices and discrimination. Holdaway and Barron concluded that Black and Asian officers who resigned conveyed a pride and integrity about their status as Black and Asian people, and resignation became a means to harmonize one's cultural and personal identities.

This study explores the reasons why police recruits drop out of police work within the first 16 months of their policing careers, including those reasons that may be salient for women and racial/ethnic minorities. This study also explores the usefulness of cognitive dissonance theory as an explanation for the voluntary resignation of police recruits from police work within the early stages of police training and service.

Method and Data

The sample of dropouts for this study was obtained as part of a larger longitudinal study of a panel sample of 446 police recruits who were followed through the 606.5-hour, 16-week Phoenix Regional Police Basic Training Academy Program and then to their respective police agencies, where they proceeded through field training and the completion of a 1-year probationary period. The panel sample of 446 police recruits was selected from 14 successive training academy classes that began between December 1995 and October 1996. On entering the training academy, police recruits were pretested (Time 1; see Table 1). The pretest measured police recruits' baseline attitudes toward police-public relations, policing philosophies and strategies, and problem-solving techniques. A 16-week lag existed between the pretest and the first posttest (Time 2), which was conducted during the final days of basic training. At Time 2, 389 recruits completed the posttest. A second posttest (Time 3) was conducted at or near the end of the recruits' field training process, 12 weeks after the first posttest. At Time 3, 356 police recruits completed the posttest. Finally, a third posttest (Time 4) occurred after recruits completed 1 year of employment in their respective police agency. At Time 4, 292 police recruits completed the survey (administered between March 1997 and February 1998). Twenty-five Arizona police agencies had police recruits in the final sample.

Table 1 Characteristics of the Panel Sample by Time (%)

Characteristics	Time 1: Enter Academy (n = 446)	Time 2: Exit Academy (n = 389)	Time 3: End Field Training (n = 356)	Time 4: End 1 Year (n = 292)
Gender				
Male	89.7	88.4	88.5	90.1
Female	10.3	11.6	11.5	9.9
Race/ethnicity				
Caucasian	76.8	79.4	79.5	81.4
Black/African American	3.2	3.7	3.9	3.4
Hispanic/Latina	12.8	12.0	11.0	10.3
Asian American	2.5	2.9	3.4	2.8
Native American	3.2	0.8	0.6	0.0
Other	1.6	1.3	1.7	1.7
Age				
20–25 years	47.7	45.2	42.9	31.3
26–30 years	32.3	34.1	36.2	44.1
31–35 years	12.3	13.7	13.0	14.8
36–40 years	4.1	3.4	4.2	5.2
41 years and older	2.9	3.6	3.7	4.5
Level of education				
High School/GED	9.0	5.9	5.4	4.8
Technical school	4.1	2.3	1.1	1.7
Some college	48.4	52.1	51.9	51.2
Bachelor's degree	35.1	37.4	37.6	40.6
Graduate degree	3.4	2.3	4.0	1.7
Police agencies				
Phoenix PD	54.5	56.9	57.2	58.5
Suburban Phoenix	23.6	24.3	25.2	28.2
Rural Arizona agencies	11.7	11.1	11.5	8.2
Indian tribal agencies	4.9	2.8	2.2	2.4
University agencies	2.2	2.3	2.8	2.7
Other agencies	3.1	2.6	1.1	0.0

Sample and Survey of Dropouts

Of the original sample of 446 police recruits, 113 (25.3%) dropped out of police work during the period of the research, which included the 16-month period starting with each recruit's entry into the basic training academy. A "dropout" is an officer who voluntarily decided to leave police work or was terminated from police work. Fifty-two (46%) of the 113 police recruits dropped out during basic training (between Time 1 and Time 2), 18 (15.9%) dropped out during the field training process (between Time 2 and Time 3), and 43 (38.1%) dropped out after they completed the field training process yet prior to the end of a 1-year probationary period (between Time 3 and Time 4).

On completion of the third posttest (Time 4) in February 1998, a one-page questionnaire and a letter requesting participation in a telephone interview was mailed, via certified mail, to the 113 police recruits who dropped out of police work between December 1995 and February 1998. To encourage dropouts' participation in a telephone interview, they were offered $20 as an incentive for returning the one-page questionnaire and participating in a telephone interview. Thirty-four (30.1%) of the 113 dropouts returned the one-page questionnaire and consented to participate in a telephone interview. The overall size of the sample should be placed within the context of the obstacles faced when attempting to contact dropouts via mail. One obstacle faced was that 33.6% (n = 38) of the initial mailings came back as undeliverable by the U.S. Postal Service because the most recent address of a dropout, provided by the training academy, was out of date. The lack of accurate information about the current address of resigners clearly reduced the sample. Finally, 1.8% (n = 2) of the dropouts refused to accept the certified letter and declined to be interviewed.

The final sample was made up of 34 dropouts: 44.1% (n = 15) dropped out during basic training, 26.5% (n = 9) during field training, and 29.4% (n = 10) after completing field training yet prior to the end of a 1-year probationary period. The sample of dropouts includes 19 (55.9%) Caucasian males, 4 (11.8%) Caucasian females, 5 (14.7%) Hispanic males, 1 (2.9%) Hispanic female, 3 (8.8%) Native American males, and 1 (2.9%) African American male. There is nothing to suggest that the resigners interviewed were atypical of dropouts.

The telephone interview schedule was premised on the view that a decision to resign from police work was rarely sudden or brought on by a single event but was part of a mental process of self-reflection that takes into account a variety of circumstances over a period of time (Holdaway & Barron, 1997). It was also developed to explore the usefulness of cognitive dissonance theory as an explanation for the voluntary resignation of police recruits from police work within the early stages of police training and service. Thus, the interview schedule consisted of a series of open-ended questions developed to tap eight information domains: reasons for entering police work, reasons for leaving police work, training academy experiences, experiences working in their police agency, expectations about police work, realities of police work that conflicted with their expectations, recommendations for changes to academy training, and recommendations for changes to field training. The telephone interviews, which lasted 15 to 45 minutes, were conducted to gain a descriptive understanding of dropouts' experiences in the training academy and the police department and their reasons for leaving police work.

Data Analysis

The first step in the analysis was to use data collected from the Police Personnel Survey to compare dropouts to non-dropouts on individual characteristics. This analysis allows us to determine whether select individual characteristics were significant in differentiating police recruits who dropped out of police work within the first 16 months of their police careers from those who remained. Next, qualitative data, collected via telephone interviews with dropouts, were systematically analyzed and dominant themes identified. Analysis was based on point of dropout, reason for dropout, and the interactive effects of race and gender. Data analysis was guided by the recognition that a police recruit does not

decide suddenly to resign from police work because resignation is a process of reflection and decision making (Holdaway & Barron, 1997). Thus, efforts were made to identify and understand those situations when doubts about remaining in police work were raised in the recruits' mind.

Results

Dropouts Versus Non-dropouts: Individual Characteristics

Using data collected from the Police Personnel Survey, dropouts were compared to non-dropouts on individual characteristics. Table 2 reveals that although the number of females (n = 46) entering police work is small, there was no statistically significant difference between males (25.3%) and females (28.3%) in the rate of dropout from police work.

Significant differences did emerge in rates of dropout among racial/ethnic minorities. One of the most interesting findings is that Native Americans had the highest rate of dropout at 85.7%. It is notable to point out that 91.6% (n = 11) of the Native Americans who dropped out did so during the 16-week basic training academy. Hispanics also experienced a high rate of dropout (38.6%), significantly greater than the dropout rate for Caucasians (22.0%).

Significant differences also emerged in rates of dropout among recruits who were separated or divorced (42.9%) on entering basic training versus those who were married (20.6%) or single (27.1%). In regard to level of education, recruits with a high school diploma/GED (37.9%) or some graduate courses/graduate degree (36.8%) were more likely to drop out of police work than recruits with some college/college degree (21.8%). There were no significant differences in dropout rates based on age or prior military or law enforcement experience.

Table 2 Comparison of Dropouts to Non-Dropouts on Individual Characteristics

Characteristics	Dropouts (n = 113)	Non-Dropouts (n = 333)	Total (N = 446)	χ^2
Gender				
Male	25.3	74.7	89.7	.69
Female	28.3	71.7	10.3	
Race/ethnicity				
Caucasian	22.0	78.0	76.8	37.07*
Hispanic/Latino	38.6	61.4	12.8	
Black/African American	14.3	85.7	3.214	
Native American	85.7	14.3	3.2	
Asian American	9.1	90.9	2.5	
Other	14.3	85.7	1.6	
Age group				
20–25 years	23.6	76.4	47.5	.89
26–30 years	25.9	74.1	32.1	
31–35 years	29.1	70.9	12.3	
36–40 years	27.8	72.2	4.0	
41 years and older	27.8	72.2	4.0	

Characteristics	Dropouts (n = 113)	Non-Dropouts (n = 333)	Total (N = 446)	χ^2
Marital status				
Single	27.1	72.9	49.9	7.22*
Married	20.6	79.4	43.8	
Separated/divorced	42.9	57.1	6.3	
Level of education				
High school/GED	37.9	62.1	13.1	9.80*
Some college/degree	21.8	78.2	78.4	
Some graduate courses/degree	36.8	63.2	8.6	
Prior military				
Yes	24.7	75.3	35.7	.09
No	26.0	74.0	64.3	
Prior law enforcement				
Yes	26.0	74.0	23.5	.02
No	25.3	74.7	76.6	

Note: All figures shown are percentages, except for those in the fourth column. $*p \leq .01$. $**p \leq .05$

Reasons for Dropping Out of Police Work

Analysis of qualitative data obtained via telephone interviews with dropouts revealed police recruits who dropped out of police work within the first 16 months of their careers could be grouped into three distinct categories: self-initiated resignations, academy-initiated terminations, and department-initiated terminations. Among the sample of 34 dropouts, 50% (n = 17) self-initiated resignation, 26.5% (n = 9) were terminated by training academy administrator, and 23.5% (n = 8) were terminated by their employing agency (see Table 3).

Table 3 Reasons for Dropout by Point of Resignation for the Sample of Dropouts (%)

Reason for Dropout	Time 1 to Time 2: Basic Training (n = 15)	Time 2 to Time 3: Field Training (n = 9)	Time 3 to Time 4: 1 Year (n = 10)	Total (N = 34)
Self-initiated resignation	17.6	17.6	14.7	50.0
Academy-initiated termination	26.5	—	—	26.5
Department-initiated termination	—	8.8	14.7	23.5
Total	44.1	26.5	29.4	100.0

Self-Initiated Resignation

The majority (88.2%, $n = 15$) of recruits who self-initiated resignation experienced a significant amount of stress and conflict when their beliefs and expectations about police work differed considerably from the actual practices and realities of police work. Police recruits who self-initiated resignation during the basic training program indicated that the conflict they felt when they realized their experiences in the training academy were inconsistent with or contradictory to their sense of self and their cognitions about what police work should be forced them to reconsider their decision to enter further into police work. One Caucasian male explained that within the first 4 days of basic training, he heard instructors lecture on "the cold reality of shooting someone." He recalled, "At the time, I struggled with the reality that I might have to shoot someone and wondered whether I would be able to, psychologically, cope with shooting another person." The act of shooting someone created a sense of internal conflict for him, and after discussing his internal conflicts with his wife, he decided to resign from police work. He explained, "I thought policing was the career for me. I spent 2 years going through the recruitment and hiring process and getting ready mentally and physically to go into police work." Within the first week of basic training, this recruit self-initiated resignation.

Police recruits who self-initiated resignation during basic training typically did not identify only one aspect of the academy experience that created conflict for them; rather, their decision to resign was based on a multitude of factors. The decision to resign was based largely on the realization that their attitudes toward police-public relations and interactions as well as appropriate and inappropriate work behaviors differed considerably from some of their classmates.

> I left police work because I was tired of my coworkers' attitudes, which were very different from mine. I wanted to do something for the community, but the other cops were unbelievable; some of them were egotistical maniacs. It was like if you're a moron in here, you must be a moron out there. …I guess maybe I just have a different approach to policing than some others do. A lot of them just like to go out there and kick ass. I like to talk. I liked actually being able to help people. (Hispanic male)

For some recruits, the recognition that their attitudes and values conflicted with their classmates was coupled with an aversion for the paramilitary nature of academy training. Under the paramilitary model, police recruits are expected to be obedient, obey orders, perform tasks in a precisely prescribed manner, and meet intellectual and physical demands in a highly structured environment with discipline and, in some cases, harassment. Considering that only 35.7% of the recruits who entered the training academy had prior military experience and 23.5% had prior law enforcement experience, it is not surprising that some recruits experienced conflict when exposed to and socialized into the paramilitary model of policing. The features of the paramilitary model that resigners found to be particularly stressful included the authoritarian style of management, the process of breaking down individuals in order to build them back up as police officers, the strict standards of physical fitness, and the stringent physical exercise regimen. One Caucasian female explained that the combination of experiences with classmates, training academy staff, and the paramilitary structure of the training academy culminated in her resignation.

> I left police work because I was discouraged with the system and lack of integrity. I witnessed cover-ups and officers not being truthful. I believe police officers are supposed to be held to a higher level of integrity than the general public, and I didn't see that [in the basic training academy]. I always thought police work was to uphold justice, and [I learned] that is not the case. . . . It was the atmosphere more than anything else. I also thought the training academy was too intense

> considering what police work really is like once you get on the street. The training and physical aspects are understandable, but the same standards are not held after you leave the academy; you have overweight officers on the street where in the academy if you were one pound over they threatened to kick you out. It just seemed like a double standard. I understand the point of the training academy is to break you down so that they can build you back up, but they never build you back up. For example, we had uniform inspections every day and they would always flunk you. They would always find something and it seemed extreme, like lint. We already had to run miles and miles, and if you flunked the uniform inspection, you had to run even more miles. We're only human. Plus, we are not going to chase a suspect for 2 miles, not on foot. We are going to get in our car, get the helicopters out, and get back up. It was just excessive; I guess the experience opened my eyes to the real work of the police, and it is not what I perceived.

Once police recruits complete basic training, they return to their respective police agencies, where they undergo the field training process, which represents an important stage in the process of socialization into the organization and occupation as well as immersion into the real world of police work. The field training phase presents the first real opportunity for the police recruit to experience the police officer role, engage in actual police work, and experience the environment and culture of the organization. During this stage, recruits are assigned to one or more field training officers (FTOs), who are responsible for training them in formal policies and procedures, teaching them how to put the skills acquired in the training academy to use on the street, teaching them which people should not be trusted and need to be policed, and exposing them to the informal culture of the police agency.

Police recruits who resigned during the field training phase found that the cumulative and interactive effects of the field training process, their incompatible relationship with their FTO(s), factors of the organizational environment, and the informal culture of the police agency caused them a substantial level of stress and conflict, which created a state of dissonance and led to their decision to resign from police work. Aspects of police work and the organization that resigners maintained caused them stress and conflict included risks related to the job, problems with FTOs and supervisors, the phenomenon of running call-to-call, the immense amount of paperwork, organizational policies and procedures, politics that guide assignments and promotions, and the possibility of being sued for doing one's job. Rather than allowing the powerful forces of the organizational environment and informal occupational culture to reshape their attitudes and behaviors to be more congruent with those of their FTOs and coworkers or adjusting their expectations to be more compatible with the realities of police work, they chose to resign from police work. In the end, many resigners concluded policing was not the job for them.

> I thought I knew what police work was all about. I enjoyed the academy, it was a different experience because I am not military, but once you get past that and get used to it, it was great. The academy taught [me] a lot, but you don't come out knowing all the things you need to know; the academy only teaches the basics. Field training is an incredible amount of information and you have no clue. In the academy, they tell you about the paperwork and how you will need to document details, but they don't tell you that paperwork is 99.5% of what you do and that only .5% will be contact with people and hands-on work. That was disappointing. I knew there was paperwork involved, but I didn't know how much. I don't enjoy paperwork. It isn't even the paperwork, but you are not even taught procedures for documenting. I came to field training and my FTO expected me to know policies and procedures. It was just too much

> information. I began to doubt myself and question my judgment. My FTO had me thinking that I was incompetent. . . . The field training process was a major part of my reason to quit police work. I always considered a police officer to be a public servant, but the majority of police work is the documentation of crime and not necessarily helping victims. I looked forward to helping victims. In the academy, the instructors preached community policing, but once you're working the streets, there is no chance of doing that. All you do is run call-to-call, and there is no opportunity to get out and talk to citizens. Even with victims, there is no time to assist them and say, "Here are some things you can do" or "These are your rights." It is so high volume that it prevents that kind of interaction. The reality of the work is show up, document, and leave. (Caucasian male)

When asked if there were any other reasons for leaving police work, he proceeded to explain,

> The officers I worked with were abusive to me and citizens. A lot of times you are humiliated in front of other officers or citizens to get you to learn something. Field training is stressful. There are so many officers around you who are knowledgeable and have so much experience. There is enough anxiety in field training, it didn't help to escalate things and make a scene. I was humiliated in front of citizens and coworkers. Also, I saw other officers go out of their way to demean citizens they came in contact with. My FTO said it was to elicit more information, but I think it was to get a rise out of them and get them upset. It was like it turned him on to bad-mouth suspects on the scene and other things like that. He was not the only one who did it; there were others on the squad. I thought police work was getting to know the community and finding ways to prevent crime. The reality is there is no time for community policing.

During the field training phase, FTOs and supervisors exert considerable power over police recruits. They can verify or negate a recruit's work performance, delay training progress, and interpret in formal communication and written records a recruit's motivations and abilities or lack thereof (Holdaway & Barron, 1997). Three Caucasian males recalled that their FTOs exerted considerable power over them in negative ways, which triggered feelings of self-doubt, self-consciousness, and depression.

After completing field training, recruits proceed to complete a 1-year probationary period during which they are expected to demonstrate that they possess the skills and knowledge necessary to maintain a satisfactory level of work and suitability for permanent employment. If a satisfactory level of work is not achieved during the probationary period, questions about a recruit's suitability for permanent employment will be raised and a permanent appointment may not be confirmed. Recruits are also expected to demonstrate the capacity to work with their colleagues, which implies an ascribed status as a member of the police team, which embodies the values and practices of the rank-and-file.

The five police recruits who self-initiated resignation during the 1-year probationary period revealed that they experienced continued conflict and a state of dissonance based on the realization that their attitudes about police work and police-public interactions differed from their coworkers. Even though many of these recruits were assigned to a single-person patrol car, they still found police work was not what they expected; in particular, they realized police work did not allow for the level of involvement in community policing activities they had expected. One Caucasian female explained,

> I have always been interested in policing. I was an officer in a big city and I expected a small city to be different. I thought they (small town officers) would be more community-oriented and different in the way they treated their citizens, but they were very

> heavy-handed. . . . I guess the agency's ideas about what crime is and how to interact with people is different from my philosophies.

Coupled with the lack of involvement in community policing, resigners from different police agencies reported feeling conflict as they witnessed their coworker use "heavy-handed policing" tactics. Several resigners felt that their coworkers acted and behaved in ways that provoked subjects to fight and resist arrest, resulting in an escalation of the use of force.

> I didn't leave police work, I just left that police agency. I didn't like the department or the city. It was the politics and policies. I responded to a fight and when I got there, the subjects involved were separated. One of the subjects had been drinking so he was a little out of it, but the officers weren't going to talk to him. It was like they just pushed the subject until he was provoked enough to fight. I guess I saw too much of that. (Caucasian male)

> It opened my eyes to the real police work and it is not what I perceived. I definitely like helping people, that was the most rewarding and fulfilling aspect of police work. The worst thing was having to stand by and watch officers conduct illegal searches. Like when they are searching women, they have them lift their bras. You can't do that. I had to stand by and do nothing; there was no way to stop it. If you say anything, then all the officers are against you. The problem with that is if you need backup, it is really slow. I was also surprised at the lack of supervision. (Caucasian female)

These data support the proposition advanced by Holdaway and Barron (1997, p. 29) that "decisions to voluntarily resign from police work are not sudden or dramatic; rather, the decision to resign is the end result of a consideration of incompatible experiences within the workplace and relationships with colleagues and supervisors."

Gender Discrimination and Self-Initiated Resignation

Policing is heavily influenced by gender and preserves a set of traditional Anglo American masculine values; as a result, it provides a social context that can often be uncomfortable for women. Texeira (2002) contended that the most difficult force for female officers to overcome is often not work, the community, nor their families but the antagonism and harassment of their peers and supervisors who are part of the male-dominated culture of policing (see also Haarr, 1997; Hunt, 1990; Martin, 1980, 1990; Morash & Haarr, 1995). Thus, it was not surprising that 3 of the 4 Caucasian female recruits (75%) who self-initiated resignation spoke of gender discrimination directed at them by their FTO(s) and supervisor(s). One Caucasian female explained,

> I was not prepared it, for the bad neighborhoods and drugs. I also had problems with my training sergeant. I felt like I was discriminated against, not in the sexual sense, but I was not treated the way I should have been. I heard other female officers had similar problems. . . . It was very different from the academy. There were not many females in the precinct I was working, and there were none on my training squad. So, it was intimidating. Plus, I heard some things about my training sergeant before I ever left the academy. They were not going to make it easy. It was a difficult transition, and there was not the support that I had at the academy. Also, I had to work with people who did not like me. It was negative because I was surprised that a department like that would have someone with such a bad reputation in a training position. Well, I figured if I could get through such a negative field training experience and work in a not-so-good neighborhood, then I can do just about anything. . . . Being new, I had no one to go to for help. I didn't feel like I had any support. It was the first time in my life I had no one supporting

> me in my professional life. I had my family and friends, but it is hard to tell them what you are going through.

The only female recruit who did not experience gender discrimination was a Hispanic female who was married to a veteran police officer working in the same policy agency. Similarly, Texeira (2002) found that African American women who were married to officers were less likely to be sexual harassed on the job.

Family Strain and Self-Initiated Resignation

Four male recruits (2 Caucasian, 1 Native American, and 1 Hispanic) and 1 Hispanic female maintained their decision to resign was based on a combination of personal and family stresses due to the demands and pressures of the training academy and police work. For the Native American male, the academic and physical demands of basic training were very challenging. He also spoke of difficulties related to attending a basic training academy that was more than 200 miles away from his home, family, and friends who were living on the Indian reservation. The pressures of traveling long distances to attend basic training and the impact of the job on one's sense of self caused tension within recruits' families, particularly among newly married recruits.

Two resigners revealed that their involvement in police work caused their children stress. One Hispanic male explained,

> I was very interested in law enforcement. The training academy was challenging, physically and mentally demanding. I thought police work would be good [for me], but I left because it was too stressful and risky. It was just too much. I needed to do what was best for my family.

Similarly, a Hispanic female who resigned during field training explained,

> Policing was something I always wanted to do. I liked that I was able to get out and help people. The area I worked had a lot of needs. I also speak Spanish and was able to help in that respect. I decided to leave police work because my children were having a hard time adjusting. My husband is a police officer and has been for 8 years, and the kids were used to me being home when he worked nights. The kids were OK while I was working days, but when I switched to nights, my son began biting his nails and my daughter wasn't sleeping very well. …I liked doing something other than caring for my kids.

Each of these recruits spoke to the dilemma of reconciling the "competing urgencies" of family and work (Hochschild, 1989).

Academy-Initiated Termination

Police recruits whose termination was initiated during basic training by academy administrators were terminated for three reasons: medical withdrawal, breaking academy rules, and academic failure. The most common reason was medical withdrawal due to injury. The majority (66.7%, $n = 6$) of these dropouts, 5 Caucasian males and 1 Hispanic male, injured themselves during the regimented physical training schedule, which includes running several miles each day on desert mountain trails, completing obstacle courses, and maintaining an advanced weight training program. Recruits who missed more than 5 conditioning days were given a medical withdrawal due to injury.

> I hit my heel while jumping the wall on the obstacle course. I tried to recuperate; however, I am still suffering from the injury. I was on crutches for a couple of days and then I was dismissed because I couldn't keep up with the program. It was injustice because I wasn't given the chance to go back. At the time, I was 48 years old; now I am 50. I don't feel like going back and starting over. They broke my dream. (Hispanic male)

Not all recruits were terminated due to physical injury. One Native American male was terminated by academy administrators after he was placed on academic probation for failing three academy tests. The other two academy-initiated dropouts, 1 African-American male and 1 Caucasian male, were terminated after they were caught breaking academy rules and regulations (i.e., holding a second job and sexual harassment).

Police recruits who were terminated from basic training by academy administrators did not experience preresignation conflicts related to police work, the work environment, or academy classmates. Rather, they expressed a high level of postresignation conflict surrounding their injury, the inability to complete the training academy, and being forced to leave police work unexpectedly and against their desires. Some recruits felt that their dream of being a police officer was broken and they were forced to move onto another job (55.6%, $n = 5$).

Department-Initiated Termination

Eight dropouts were terminated from police work by their employing police agency; 3 recruits were terminated during field training and 5 after completing field training yet prior to the end of a 1-year probationary period. These dropouts reported that they were terminated for inadequate performance (e.g., making mistakes on the job) and/or breaking departmental policies. One Caucasian female alleged her termination was due to a combination of inadequate performance and gender discrimination on the part of her immediate supervisor.

> My supervisor said I had an unsatisfactory probation. I was given the option to quit or be terminated and I chose to be terminated. I had a problem with report writing. My sergeant would give my reports harsh critiques. I submitted several memos requesting additional report writing training. The memos were completely unacknowledged. Then I had an on-duty accident. They tried to make it look as though I fell asleep, [but] I didn't fall asleep. Then there was a report of another accident that disappeared or got lost; after 14 days, it reappeared. They said there was no way it could have just vanished and resurfaced and they believed I just turned it in. . . . I was disillusioned when I came here with the notion of equality. . . . The superiors there have been around for 20 years or more, and they felt women were supposed to be moms or housewives. I am confident in myself and my ability to do this job. I know I can be good backup, I will get in there and fight, but that bothered my supervisors who expected me to duck, hide and run. . . . I am filing a suit for wrongful discharge, I want my job back, I believe it was discrimination.

Police recruits terminated by their employing agency were similar to those terminated by academy administrators in the sense that they expressed post-termination conflict. Six of the eight recruits terminated by their employing agency were trying to enter back into police work.

Discussion and Conclusion

The findings presented here demonstrate the usefulness of cognitive dissonance theory as an explanation for the voluntary resignation of police recruits from police work within the first 16 months of their careers. In keeping with the theory, police recruits who self-initiated resignation within the first 16 months of their police careers experienced conflict and a state of dissonance when their experiences in the training academy, field training, and police work were inconsistent with or contradictory to their sense of self and their cognitions about what police work should be. This conflict forced them to reconsider their decision to enter any further into or remain in police work.

At each stage of career development, recruits' decision to resign was based on a multitude of factors and

experiences. During basic training, voluntarily resignation was based on the realization that one's attitudes and beliefs about police-public relations and interactions and appropriate and inappropriate work behaviors differed considerably from one's academy classmates. For some recruits, this realization was coupled with an aversion for the paramilitary nature of the training academy. At the field training phase, resigners found the cumulative and interactive effects of field training, their incompatible relationship with their FTO(s), factors of the organizational environment, and beliefs and practices of the rank-and-file caused them a substantial level of stress and conflict. Recruits who voluntarily resigned after completing field training, yet prior to the end of their 1-year probationary period experienced dissonance when watching their coworkers use "heavy-handed policing" tactics, realized that their attitudes about police-public relations differed from that of their coworkers. Rather than allowing the powerful forces of the organizational environment to reshape their attitudes and behaviors to be more congruent with those of the rank-and-file, or adjusting their expectations to be more compatible with the realities of police work, recruits chose to resign from police work. The decision to resign, however, was not typically sudden or dramatic or brought about by a single event; rather, the decision to resign is the result of a mental reflection that takes into account a variety of circumstances over a period of time (Holdaway & Barron, 1997).

These findings confirm Van Maanen's (1975) hypotheses that police recruits face stages of career contingency and development within the early stages of their police careers. The stages represent crucial points at which recruits may experience temporary states of conflict and dissonance, which forces some recruits to reconsider their place in the organization and their decision to remain a member of the organization and occupation. Recruits who resign from police work chose to withdraw from further continuation in the socialization process and conformity to the norms, beliefs, and practices of the rank-and-file. In contrast, police recruits who were terminated by academy administrators or their employing agency did not experience pretermination conflict and dissonance; rather, they experienced posttermination conflict and a state of dissonance surrounding their unplanned and unexpected termination.

There were some similarities in the reasons for resignation of men and women and Caucasians and racial/ethnic minorities from police work, but gender and racial/ethnic minority status did exert a unique influence. Workplace problems that are salient to women, particularly gender discrimination, were woven into female recruits' mental reflections and decisions to resign. This finding provides support for prior research (Morash & Haarr, 1995), which has established that women are affected not only by workplace problems and stressors that influence men but also by some that are unique to their status as women and minorities. In comparison, Native American and Hispanic recruits had the highest rate of dropout within the first 16 months of their police careers and maintained that personal and family stresses related to the demands and pressures of basic training and police work weighted heavily on their decision to resign. These findings are the basis for the conclusion that there needs to be a more systematic examination of the resignation of women and racial/ethnic minority officers from police work. If the issue of resignation of female and minority officers is to be wholeheartedly undertaken, it must not be separated from the gendered and racialized dimensions of the organization and occupation (Holdaway & Barron, 1997).

In conclusion, these findings have raised important policy issues about the field training phase, including the selection, training, and supervision of FTOs. Careful selection of FTOs is essential because FTOs have a significant impact on the training and socialization of recruits to the understandings and practices of policing held by rank-and-file officers. Selection standards for FTOs should include, but not be limited to, work performance and aptitude, interest in training officers, and a genuine commitment to the integration of women and racial/ethnic minorities into the organization. FTOs should be systematically trained, informed of equal opportunity policies

and sexual and racial harassment policies, and supervised by supervisors who have been carefully selected and trained.

These findings are important, but one should consider that they are based on a small sample of police dropouts. These findings may also be placed in jeopardy by methodological problems, such as dropouts do not always have "good" memories and are not able to clearly articulate the timing and sequence of events that led up to their resignation, particularly when they feel distressed about their experiences and are relying on a retrospective account of what happened and particularly when they are recalling sensitive and hurtful experiences (Holdaway & Barron, 1997). Similar to Holdaway and Barron's (1997) findings, many dropouts offered lengthy and somewhat rambling accounts that move backwards and forwards from incident to incident and from specific matters to general situations. Also, some dropouts may have had poor performance records but were not willing to admit this during an interview and may have rationalized their resignation by focusing on other, more comfortable and acceptable subjects. Future research needs greater methodological rigor to help alleviate these problems. Replicating this study in another setting is important, as it would help to determine whether the findings are generalizable across training academies and police organizations.

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Describe how this study was conducted. Identify how data were collected and the location of this study.
2. What were the main reasons that women left the policing profession?
3. What can police administrators learn from the findings of this study?