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Exploring the Impact of Negative Publicity and Organizational Justice Among Officers of a Southwest Agency

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EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF NEGATIVE PUBLICITY AND ORGANIZATIONAL

JUSTICE AMONG OFFICERS OF A SOUTHWEST POLICE AGENCY

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by

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THESIS

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Abstract

Three years since the murder of George Floyd and police departments, nationwide, are amid a staffing crisis. While the outcomes of "depolicing" have received much empirical attention, little has been placed on understanding how officer's attitudes were impacted, and how this affects their interactions with the public. This study uses survey data from a sample of 138 predominately Hispanic police officers to investigate the impact that negative publicity and organizational justice have on self-legitimacy (i.e., the confidence an officer has in their authority). Accordingly, multivariate regressions are estimated to test the independent effects of negative publicity and organizational justice on self-legitimacy. Modeling procedures are repeated using two distinct measures of external self-legitimacy and one measure of self-identification self-legitimacy. The findings reveal that officers who were less motivated due to negative publicity were likely to have low self-legitimacy, however, the perceptions of the organization confounded this relationship. Implications for theory, policing strategies, and future research are discussed.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Illustrations

Chapter 1: Introduction

In a span of seven months, more than 700 bills aimed towards police accountability were introduced into state legislatures,[1] with some estimates indicating close to 300 have since been enacted (Monnay, 2022). This immense response came immediately following the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis, Minnesota in May 2020, when millions of people engaged in mass demonstrations throughout the nation that called on city councils and state legislatures to defund or abolish their police departments (Andrew, 2020; Kaba, 2020). The magnitude of civil unrest that occurred in 2020 has been likened by some scholars to what occurred during the civil rights movement (Nix et al., 2023; Lum et al., 2022). For major cities such as Portland, Minneapolis, Austin, New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago (to name a few), community officials realized these demands and reallocated police funds to other community services. Overall, the year 2020 was the beginning of what would be a complex period for policing. In addition to the novel coronavirus, which expanded the police mandate to include the enforcement of social distancing ordinances, many police departments experienced a substantial reduction in staffing levels during 2020 and 2021. During these years, many departments across the nation witnessed an increase in resignations and retirements, and a decline of applications for police recruit positions.[2] (PERF, 2022).

These visible changes evince how police departments were changed within the proceeding years following the murder of George Floyd; one can measure the changes of total sworn personnel and department budgets or see how legislation has required police administrators to revise policies

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[1] See https://www.ncsl.org/civil-and-criminal-justice/law-enforcement-statutory-database

[2] This data was updated and now includes the year 2022, which indicates departments were losing more people than they can hire (PERF, 2023).

and practices. What is less visible but just as salient is the impact this negative attention may have had on the attitudes of officers, and how this, in turn, has shaped their behaviors with the public.

The objective of this thesis is to uncover such attitudes from police officers. Specifically, this thesis sets out to accomplish the following: (1) understand how the recent negative publicity on law enforcement has impacted officer's confidence in their authority; and (2) test the degree that officer's perceptions of their organization affect this relationship. The first objective speaks to the stark reality facing the police institution, that the failure of one department can be felt by others across the nation. Given the prevalence of body worn cameras, cell phones, and social media platforms in the United States, high-definition video of critical incidents is now able to be disseminated astonishingly fast—quicker than a quality investigation takes to complete.[3] As will be seen in the coming sections of this chapter, negative publicity on law enforcement has been implicated in what is known as depolicing, a phenomenon that's characterization is still the subject of empirical inquiry. Confidence in authority—known as self-legitimacy—is the outcome that negative publicity is hypothesized to influence and is the subject of a small but growing line of research that seeks to explain how officers come to engage in behaviors that the public views as rightful and legitimate. Although the evidence base still has much room to grow, self-legitimacy is proving to be a promising predictor of officer behavior. The first research question of this thesis asks: *does negative publicity affect officer's self-legitimacy?*

The second objective recognizes that police administrators may be inclined to prepare and train their workforce if negative publicity is indeed diminishing of officer's confidence in

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[3] Police executives or spokespersons are typically unable to immediately comment or divulge details on a critical incident until a thorough investigation concludes. Thus, the police have little control over the public's prevailing beliefs following the release of any footage. In cases where the wrongdoing stemmed from an organizational deficiency, as a democratic society, there is value in the people being able to objectively scrutinize and amend social institutions.

authority. To this end, the second research question that follows: *does an officer's perceptions of their organization—a realm that administrators have more control over—confound the effects of negative publicity?* This second question is poised in a way so to explore any organizational opportunities that police administrators can utilize to overcome the challenges that negative publicity may present.

To answer these questions, this thesis looks toward a city and police department that operated in the far peripheral from where most of the intense scrutiny on law enforcement occurred but was nonetheless affected by it. El Paso, Texas, a city at least four state lines away from Minnesota and that has consistently ranked as one of safest cities in the nation (Adrian, 2021; Aguilar, 2013), is not immune to the exogenous shocks that accompany critical incidents involving the police. Six days following the death of George Floyd, a demonstration that began peacefully and in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement ended with a brief but violent clash between protestors and officers in El Paso. While some community members were supportive and praised officers for their restraint during the heated encounter, others criticized their response, even calling for the removal of then chief of police, Gregory Allen, who was appointed chief from 2008 until his passing in January 2023. (Sanchez, 2023; Kapp, 2020; Martinez & Dearman, 2020).

SALIENCE OF STUDY

Addressing these questions has major implications for police and society. First, by investigating the key predictors of police self-legitimacy, evidence-based strategies, such as training, can be developed to encourage prosocial behaviors and decision-making from officers during their interactions with citizens. Second, measuring officer's perceptions of the public and their organization is timely given the aforementioned incidents that negatively affected law enforcement agencies in 2020.

The unique demographics of the El Paso Police Department contributes to the literature on policing by providing the perceptions of officers in a Hispanic-dominated police department operating along a largely Hispanic border town in the southern United States.[4] Local law enforcement agencies in the El Paso region contend with challenges that are vastly different than those experienced by agencies operating within the interior United States. For example, in December 2022, the mayor of El Paso declared a state of emergency when the city's resources became overwhelmed by mass migration from Mexico and Latin America (Melhado, 2022).

An area of inquiry in criminology and criminal justice encompasses the unique context of policing in American border cities. For instance, El Paso, Texas is one of the safest cities in the nation while its adjoining sister-city, Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, witnesses, on average, four homicides per day (Resendiz, 2022). The remaining sections of the introduction begin laying out the key concepts that drive the two research questions of this study.

NEGATIVE PUBLICITY AND "DEPOLICING"

Naturally, one would expect that such intense public scrutiny and budget reductions would impact how officers feel about their profession. What may be most concerning is that these developments lead officers to either leave their profession prematurely or pull back in their duties, a phenomenon described as "depolicing" (Oliver, 2017). In the case of officers that choose to stay employed with their agency, depolicing suggests that they may have adopted less proactive policing styles so to reduce the likelihood of being involved in a controversial incident (Shjarback

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[4] El Paso is a southwestern city situated along the Rio Grande, neighboring Las Cruces, New Mexico and Juárez, Mexico. According to the 2020 census, the population was 678, 815, with 81.6% identifying as Hispanic. The average household income was estimated at $51,325, and 18.3% of the population is considered living at or below the poverty threshold. In addition to the local agencies of neighboring counties, the mid-sized population and proximity to the southern border has resulted in numerous federal law enforcement agencies operating within the region, many of whom can be seen conducting drug interdiction and border enforcement efforts. Violent crime rates in El Paso are remarkably low. According to the El Paso Police Department, in 2021 there were 29 total homicides. That same year, Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua, the city bordering El Paso, reported 1,420 homicides—a 14% decrease compared to the previous year (Resendiz, 2022).

et al., 2017). This belief is shared by select politicians and police command staff who have contended that rises in violent crime rates are a direct result of such officer pull backs (Nix et al., 2017), however, the evidence base that supports this is rather mixed (Cassella et al., 2022; see Rosenfeld & Wallman, 2019; Shjarback et al., 2017).

Contradicting findings have been observed in the relationship between discretionary activities and incident-level crime rates. In recent studies, some researchers have found evidence that decreases in total officer-initiated traffic stops are associated with increases in violent crime rates (Cassell, 2020; Cassell & Fowles, 2018), while others have found decreases in terry stops and officer-initiated 911 calls did not have any significant impact (Cassella et al., 2022). Although the evidence is unclear on this particular front, it is important to note that other forms of proactive policing exist and provide a stronger evidence base than the total number of stops or calls a police officer responds to.

In their systematic review of evaluations of Problem-Oriented Policing (POP)—a form of proactive policing—, Weisburd et al. (2010) found POP strategies had a modest but statistically significant effect on reducing crime and disorder in their respective contexts.[5] This broad finding in review of POP strategies demonstrates not only the potential crime reduction benefits that communities may enjoy when proactive policing is implemented,[6] but also underscores the question of whether police administrators, given current staffing challenges, should continue to place emphasis on "quantity" over "quality" of officer's efforts. Regardless of how officer

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[5] The modest impact referred to by Wesiburd et al. (2010) draws from a review of ten methodologically rigorous evaluations of Problem-Oriented Policing (POP). The researchers also conducted a secondary analysis of studies of less methodological caliber ($n = 45$) but still found overwhelmingly positive impacts from POP on crime and disorder. POP, by design, encompasses a broad array of strategies to address various types of crime.

[6] Not all examples of proactive policing reduce crime rates without unintended consequences. Research has demonstrated that proactive policing efforts that resemble the order-maintenance style (e.g. aggressive enforcement of low-level misdemeanor crimes) can exacerbate police-community relations and reduce the public's perception of fairness by police officers (Gau & Brunson, 2010).

productivity is measured, what complicates the pursuit toward either is the inspiration needed by officers to achieve them.

Motivation is hypothesized to be the impetus behind officers pursuing self-initiated activities (Oberfield, 2014). A recent survey of a nationally represented sample of US police officers revealed the majority of respondents (72%) indicated they were less motivated to stop and question people they thought were suspicious (i.e. less willing to engage in proactive policing behaviors) (PEW, 2017). Additionally, researchers (Gau et al., 2022; Nix et al, 2018) have found that intense public scrutiny and negative media attention of law enforcement may lead officers to be less motivated, particularly in low-visible, high discretion scenarios, such as proactive stops of citizens.

OFFICERS AS EMPLOYEES

A recent summit in Washington, D.C. was undertaken to address the staffing crisis police departments, both small and large alike, are experiencing. Hundreds of police chiefs and senior managers attended and told a similar story, that their workforce is understaffed and exhausted from mandatory overtime (Wexler, 2022). Revisiting hiring processes may be a viable solution to identify where departments are losing qualified applicants to the many pre-employment hurdles they undergo, but what may be just as important of a solution for bolstering staffing levels are efforts to reduce employee turnover. As one senior officer of the Charleston, South Carolina Police Department stated, "Policing is a business…if you're not running it appropriately, people leave." (Wexler, 2022) Although policing, as a business, may not be the best analogy, the point that this senior officer appears to be conveying is that officers are like employees of a business, and they expect to be treated in a way that doesn't require them to look elsewhere for employment.

In recent decades, criminologists have begun to apply theoretical frameworks and concepts from the business psychology literature to better understand what leads officers to certain beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors that are conducive to fair and just treatment of citizens (Wolfe, 2021). For officers whose attitudes toward their community have been adversely impacted by negative media attention, a promising remedy may be for police administrators to understand how their officers view their workplace and supervisors (Nix & Wolfe, 2017). Officers who reported they have been treated fairly by their supervisors were more likely to support community-oriented policing and procedurally-fair treatment of citizens, have more favorable attitudes toward the public, and demonstrate less cynicism toward the job (Wolfe & Lawson, 2020). Attitudes toward an organization and supervisor have even demonstrated predictive value in classifying officers who were found to have a sustained allegation of misconduct in their career (Wolfe & Piquero, 2011).

Clearly, there is value in employing the lens of organization-based frameworks to identify predictors of pro-organizational outcomes in policing. One line of research has sought to investigate the relationship between officer's perceptions of their organization and their sense of confidence in their authority, (Nix & Wolfe, 2017; Tankebe & Meško, 2015), known as self-legitimacy.

POLICE SELF-LEGITIMACY

The police legitimacy literature was largely only centered on citizen's perceptions until Bottoms & Tankebe (2012) introduced the dialogic model of legitimacy. The researchers conceptualized legitimacy as more than just a static characteristic of a group or person, they described it in terms of a dynamic "dialogue" between power-holder (police) and audience (citizen). Bottoms & Tankebe argued that police officers are making a claim of authority when they exercise their police powers over citizens (e.g. conducting a traffic stop, effecting an arrest or

search, etc.). Importantly, these claims of authority are tempered by the degree to which officers believe in their own right to wield such power. In other words, officers must believe in their own authority before they claim it over citizens. The officers that exhibit high levels of confidence in authority are theorized as those who are most inclined to utilize the principles of procedural justice (Tankebe, 2013), the least likely to be provoked into impulsive actions (Tankebe, 2019), and those who consider the law carefully when engaging in dialogues with citizens that seek to establish the characteristics of legitimacy (Bottoms & Tankebe, 2013).

These theoretical underpinnings of self-legitimacy have enjoyed a small but growing evidence base. Research has associated higher indexes of self-legitimacy with beneficial work behaviors and positive attitudes toward the community (Wolfe & Nix, 2016; Tankebe, 2014). Officers who reported greater self-legitimacy were also more likely to show greater restraint in the decision to use force (Tankebe & Meško, 2015). Understanding how to foster officer self-legitimacy may translate into strategies that directly benefit police-citizen interactions.

RESEARCH ISSUES AND GAPS

The current study addresses the following three research gaps in the police legitimacy literature. First, the data gathered on officer's perceptions of negative publicity—a theoretically and empirically salient predictor within the self-legitimacy framework—is scant. Three studies that explored this construct were all drawn from the same sample of sheriff deputies (Nix & Wolfe, 2017; Nix & Wolfe, 2016; Wolfe & Nix, 2016), and the responses during the time of data collection were most likely informed by the death of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri. Post-George Floyd, and at the time of this writing, only one study has captured officer's perceptions of negative publicity (Gau et al., 2022). Given the magnitude of civil unrest that was

garnered in 2020, the opportunity appears paramount to understand how officer's view negative publicity within this new context.

Second, little is known on the variance of self-legitimacy by officer race/ethnicity. Despite representing the second largest racial/ethnic population in the United States (Pew Research Center, 2022), Hispanics have continued to be regarded as one of the least studied groups in policing research (Gau et al., 2021; Weitzer, 2014). This is most apparent in the police self-legitimacy literature, where race and ethnicity are often combined to ensure anonymity but obscure any variance between non-Hispanic/White and Hispanic populations of officers. Furthermore, Gallardo (2020) commented that research on minorities in policing has centered on a racial binary model (Black/White), which may have contributed to the assumption that minority respondents in a singular racial/ethnic category are homogenous[7] in their views. Nix & Wolfe's (2017) analysis utilized this racial binary model to ensure anonymity of participants, however this decision underscores the inability to untangle the perceptions of non-White populations of officers.

Third, the self-legitimacy construct has not been measured consistently in the extant literature, nor have scholars agreed on how it is theoretically derived by officers. Gau & Paoline III (2021) best called attention to the measurement problem by taking count of studies that used different measures of officer self-legitimacy. In total, six studies were identified, with all using unique survey items. In addition to highlighting the need to standardize the operationalization of self-legitimacy, Gau & Paoline III noted that two conceptually distinct frameworks of self-legitimacy exist. One theoretical framework suggests that officer self-legitimacy is influenced by the public's perception of police authority (external type), while the other purports it to be influenced only by the officer's own self-assessment, absent of public opinion (self-identification

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[7] See Krogstad, Passel, Noe-Bustamante (2022) for the most recent breakdown of the countries of origin for Hispanics in the U.S.

type). The practical implications of these competing frameworks will be explored in the literature review on self-legitimacy.

CURRENT STUDY

The current study draws from a survey administered to police officers of the El Paso Police Department in 2022 and expands Nix & Wolfe's (2017) inquiry into the relationships between negative publicity, organizational justice, and self-legitimacy. The current study also responds to the call put forth by Gau & Paoline III (2021) for furthering the understanding of the conceptual structure of the self-legitimacy construct. Specifically, this study tests how three distinct operationalizations of self-legitimacy currently found in the literature interact with the organizational justice and negative publicity variables while other predictors of self-legitimacy are held constant. Because organizational justice has demonstrated to be a strong correlate of self-legitimacy (Nix & Wolfe, 2017), the current study tests if organizational justice behaves as a confounding variable on the hypothesized association between negative publicity and self-legitimacy, net of statistical controls.

ORGANIZATION OF THESIS

The remainder of this thesis proceeds as follows: Chapter 2 provides a review of the literature on legitimacy and organizational justice concepts, providing the theoretical frameworks that inform the hypotheses of this study. Chapter 3 then details the methodology used to test the hypotheses, that is, the data, empirical measures, and analytical strategies. Chapter 4 reports the results of these descriptive and inferential analyses. Chapter 5 discusses the overall findings, policy implications, and how future research can build on this vein of the police legitimacy literature.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

LEGITIMACY

Prominent German sociologist, Max Weber, proffered the first definition—which is accused of being tautological (see McLean & Nix, 2022)—, that legitimacy is the normative belief that a person or group has the right to hold power (Weber, 1947). Contemporary arguments surrounding the concept have evolved and are now traceable to the seminal work produced by Tom Tyler in 1990, *Why People Obey the Law*. In his study, Tyler strays from the normative understanding posited by Weber and asserts that legitimacy is moreso an individual-level characteristic of the person/group in power. An intrinsic part of this characteristic—what leads people to believe the power is appropriate—is the way the person/group in power demonstrates fairness through procedural interactions. The findings by Tyler support the notion that people are more likely to obey and cooperate with police officers if they view officers as acting fair and impartial, even in situations that result in unfavorable outcomes for the citizen such as arrest.

Broken windows theory

Tyler's findings fall in stark contrast to Wilson & Kelling's (1982) broken windows theory, a preceding framework that was widely adopted by police agencies for understanding the causes (and solutions) to crime, and what was perhaps partly responsible for the legitimacy crisis the police institution would face in the 1990s. The premise of broken windows theory is that minor forms of crime (i.e. nuisance crimes such as jaywalking, public indecency, breach of the peace, etc.), if left unaddressed, contribute to a perception of lawlessness, which then promotes the tolerance for more serious crimes to occur (Wilson & Kelling, 1982). Broken windows theory was championed, most notably, by then chief of police of the New York Police Department (NYPD), William Bratton. For policing, the broken windows thesis set the stage for what became known as

the order maintenance or "zero tolerance" style in the early 1990s. The NYPD premised their enforcement activities on broken windows theory, leading officers to focus on addressing minor crimes in their boroughs. Simultaneously, the emergence of computer statistical programs, known as "COMPSTAT", became a focal point for police executives to measure mid-level supervisor's performance on combating crime rates. Under the auspices of broken windows and a fervent effort to hold police supervisors accountable for crime reduction, it appeared the NYPD was properly positioned to effectively curtail crime. However, in viewing this historical point in policing in hindsight, and through the lens of Tyler's (2006) concept of procedural justice—that citizens are more concerned with fair treatment than police's ability to reduce crime rates—, one may see how policing in the 1990s shifted towards what Tyler describes as a performance-based model rather than a process-based model. In other words, the broken windows-inspired style of policing did not properly consider the perceptions of the community.

Procedural-based and process-based models

Tyler's notion of what contributes to police legitimacy is split into two distinct models: performance-based and process-based. The performance-based model holds that citizen's perceptions of the police are based on the police's ability to effectively address criminal activity, whereas the process-based model holds that the legitimacy of the police is more based on the police officer's procedural treatment of citizens. Although the process-based model has found much empirical support from surveys of citizens (Dai, Frank, Sun, 2011; Reisig et al., 2007; see Tyler, 2006; Tyler & Huo, 2002) than the performance-based model, and has even gone on to be translated into training for law enforcement agencies, there is evidence of a disconnect between what the police and community respectively believe is important to fostering legitimacy. In a recent study, Nix (2015) surveyed a nationally represented sample of police executives on what

they believe contributes most to police legitimacy. The executives indicated that performance was more important than procedural justice in building legitimacy with the public. Despite there being a lacuna of empirical evidence to support the performance-based model over the process-based (as cited by Nix), the policy implications are apparent. As was seen in New York during the Stop and Frisk program, the police's ability to generate a large amount of stops is underscored by such a belief in a performance-based model, however the unintended consequence of this effort was the perception of unfair treatment by many citizens in the targeted areas of the city, eventually leading to class-action lawsuits and allegations of civil rights violations (Rushin & Edwards, 2016). In turn, the lack of fairness, as shown in the disproportionate amount of Black and Hispanic citizens stopped and frisked during the program, undermined the legitimacy of the NYPD (Gau & Brunson, 2010).

Dialogic model of legitimacy

Tyler's (2006) notion of procedural justice and legitimacy sparked a large body of literature on what leads people to obey the law and cooperate with police. Eventually, the study of legitimacy was conceptually advanced by Bottoms & Tankebe (2012), in what they describe as the dialogic model of legitimacy. The researchers argued that extant research has failed to consider the dynamicity of legitimacy during power-holder-audience interactions. In the context of policing, an example may be illustrated through the example of a routine traffic stop. During the course of the interaction, a police officer (power-holder) may issue lawful commands to the person (audience) of the stop (e.g. exit the vehicle, provide identification documents). These commands, along with the very act of initiating the stop, may be viewed as the officer's claim to rightful power. According to Bottoms & Tankebe, the citizen's response to this claim—whether they choose to obey or disobey a command—functions as a reflection of the officer's claim to power, either bolstering or

diminishing it. Through this lens, Bottoms & Tankebe highlighted the importance of police officer's perceptions. Their dialogic model not only provided a more nuanced understanding of legitimacy, but also highlighted the need for future studies to develop how officers come to gain such confidence in their claims to power.

SELF-LEGITIMACY

Gau & Pauoline III (2021) pointed out that while a large body of research has participated in the inquiry of gauging citizen perceptions of police legitimacy, "little attention has been paid to the sources from which officers themselves derive their self-perceived legitimacy." (p. 277) There are currently two competing theoretical frameworks that attempt to explain police self-legitimacy. The first, according to Bottoms & Tankebe (2012), is that a police officer's confidence in their power is shaped by citizen's response to their claims of authority. Thus, functioning like a mirror, a citizen's response can impact an officer's attitudes about the rightfulness of their use of power and how they should use it. The other theoretical framework is informed by Barker (2001), who argued that a police officer's confidence in authority is not dependent on public support; rather, it is self-assessed and by virtue of being designated a junior-power holder of the state. In other words, Barker argued that an officer's confidence comes from their intrinsic belief that they are characteristically superior to most citizens and thus deserving of power by their own self-assessment.

It is evident how these two different frameworks on the derivation of police self-legitimacy may have implications for community-oriented policing. Bottoms & Tankebe's (2012) idea of audience legitimacy positions the police as reflective authority figures that are paying attention to the public's thoughts on them and changing their behaviors accordingly, whereas Barker's (2001) idea of self-legitimacy explains police officers' confidence as callused from public opinion. Both

theories have their own set of practical concerns. If the police are as in tune with public opinion as Bottoms & Tankebe assert, then negative publicity would have the adverse effect of reducing an officer's sense of confidence in their authority. As was observed in Nix & Wolfe's (2017) study, sheriff deputies that indicated they were less motivated due to negative public opinion were more likely to score lower on the scale measuring their confidence as law enforcement authority figures. On the other hand, if a police officer's sense of confidence is as indifferent to public beliefs as Barker purports, then confident officers may be at risk of being more dismissive towards criticism on policing, impeding their ability to change undesirable behaviors.

Clearly, these risks associated with each theorization of police self-legitimacy highlight their differences, and support Gau & Paoline's III (2021) call for future studies to include them both when measuring self-legitimacy in police officers. Although it still warrants further theoretical development, the extant literature reveals a consistent pattern: self-legitimacy has a role to play in the police-community relationship. Brandon & Quinton (2014) found that officers with higher scores on self-legitimacy assessments demonstrated a greater commitment to being procedurally fair with citizens. In another study using hypothetical scenarios to capture officer's decision-making, Tankebe & Meško (2015) found officers with higher indications of self-legitimacy were more likely to verbally deescalate than use force on the offender in the scenario. Fostering confidence in police officers does not appear to be as risky as Barker (2001) suggests; overall, its benefit consistently shows positive outcomes for citizens.

ORGANIZATIONAL JUSTICE

Police officers are employees of an organization—they expect to be treated fairly and with respect (Wolfe, 2021; Lind, 2001). It should come as no surprise, then, that they too are just as susceptible to the effects of workplace injustice (Wolfe et al., 2018). The large body of literature

on perceptions of employees first began with the seminal study by Adams (1965), where he put forth equity theory. Adam describes equity theory as the phenomenon of employees comparing the effort of work they produce (input) to what they receive from their employer (output). The expectation for employees is that they receive a fair outcome (e.g. promotion, pay raises, praise) for what they have given or sacrificed to their organization.

Adams's (1965) equity theory would go on to be expanded and combined into the broad umbrella term of organizational justice, which consists of four distinct dimensions: distributive, procedural, informational, and interpersonal justice. Each of these dimensions tap into a specific expectation from employees. Distributive justice refers to what Adams originally conceived, that there ought to be a fair allocation of resources based on employee's input. Procedural justice focuses on the fairness of procedures that an employee experience. An example often used to describe this dimension is promotional decisions: employees expect a supervisor to use fair judgment when deciding who to promote. Informational justice describes the expectation that employers should provide adequate explanation to employees that pertain to organizational changes, such as policy/procedural updates or change in duties. Lastly, interactional justice is the expectation by employees that they deserve to be treated with dignity and respect during their interactions with supervisors.

These concepts, which were limited in application to business organization settings, would eventually be used by criminal justice scholars. To date, organizational justice has been used across various contexts in the criminal justice literature. A recent meta-analysis of the construct by Wolfe & Lawson (2020) found that organizational justice in the criminal justice context to be strongly associated with employee's work outcomes.[8] Police officers with low scores on organizational

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[8] Their meta analysis included 143 studies that contained 95 independent datasets.

justice have been found to be more cynical of the public, an obstacle in the effort for police agencies that are adamant on building trust with the community and adopting community-oriented policing strategies (Car & Maxwell, 2018). Low scores were found to be predictive in differentiating between officers who had disciplinary histories and those who have never been found to be engaged in misconduct (Wolfe & Piquero, 2011). Several studies have found officers' perceptions of their supervisors and organization to be associated with self-legitimacy (Nix & Wolfe, 2017; Wolfe & Nix, 2016; Bradford & Quinton, 2014).

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The first two hypotheses align with the findings by Nix & Wolfe's (2017) study. Prior research has found high levels of self-legitimacy are positively associated with beneficial work outcomes, such as officer's willingness to engage in community policing and report greater organizational commitment (Wolfe & Lawson, 2020). In contrast to high levels of self-legitimacy, low levels may have a potentially negative impact (Lawson et al., 2021). The third hypothesis is also in line with the finding by Nix & Wolfe, but also draws from the conceptualization put forward by Wolfe et al. (2018) of the relationship between negative publicity and organizational justice. In their study of federal customs officers, the researchers found that feelings of uncertainty from negative publicity surrounding law enforcement were mitigated by perceptions of fair treatment from supervisors.

H_1: Greater perceptions of negative publicity are associated with lower self-legitimacy.

H_2: Greater perceptions of organizational justice are associated with higher self-legitimacy.

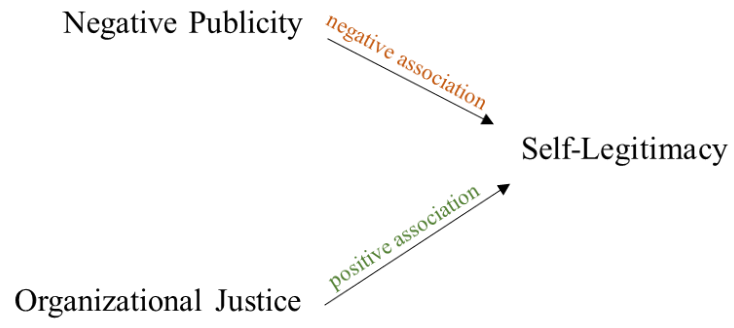H_3: Organizational justice confounds the relationship between negative publicity and self-legitimacy.

Negative Publicity   *negative association*

Self-Legitimacy

positive association

Organizational Justice

Illustration 1: Hypothesized relationships

Chapter 3: Methodology

DATA COLLECTION

Surveying the perceptions of police officers is marked by difficulty in the history of police research.[9] As Reiner (2000) accurately stated, the first obstacle is gaining site approval and access to them.[10] Respondents who elected to take the survey were required to read and acknowledge a cover letter that described the purpose of the survey, which explicitly stated that their responses would remain anonymous. Additionally, the decision was made to provide a "Prefer not to answer" choice for each question of the survey in the event participants did not feel comfortable answering specific questions.

In March 2022, the El Paso Police Department's administration distributed an email containing a secure link to the online survey to all sworn personnel at the rank of officer.[11] The survey instrument was created using QuestionPro,[12] an online survey software. All police officers who chose to participate in the survey clicked on the link and submitted their responses on a volunteer basis. The domain names of the email addresses were not shared, and the data collected from the survey did not contain any personal identification information. The link to the survey remained active for two-weeks. In an effort to increase participation, the police administration agreed to resend the email halfway through the two-week data collection period.

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[9] For a review of the history of sociological and criminological survey research on police organizations, see: Thomas, G. (2014). Research on policing: insights from the literature. *The Police Journal, 87*(1), 5–16.

[10] What likely played a role for the current study to gain such access was this author's concurrent employment with the El Paso Police Department during the development and administration of the survey. Naturally, being employed by the department and attempting to conduct independent research of it posed another set of unique challenges. The main concern was ensuring participants that the researcher and department would not have any knowledge of who took the survey, and that their participation would, in no way, affect their employment status or promotional opportunities.

[11] Those at the rank of officer represent the largest portion of the El Paso Police Department and are those who regularly engage in power-audience dialogues.

[12] QuestionPro [Computer software]. (2022). Retrieved from http://questionpro.com

Skogan (2015) noted the role "insiders" (e.g. endorsement from police union, command staff, chief of police) play in encouraging their fellow officers to participate in surveys. With this in mind, the decision to rely on the police administration to distribute the survey on behalf of the research team was vital in gaining participant buy-in. If the email inviting participants came directly from members of the research team instead of an employee of the department, participation may have decreased simply because the research team holds the characteristic of being an "outsider" whose agenda is not affirmed by trusted members of the organization (Nix et al., 2019). This concern was shared both by the research team and police administration. The concern appeared valid, that officers would be skeptical of responding to an email that came from an outside entity.

DEPENDENT VARIABLES

The dependent variables capture confidence in authority as a law enforcement officer—self-legitimacy. In their discussion, Gau & Pauoline III (2021) called on scholars to utilize both the self-identification (Barker, 2001) and external (Bottoms & Tankebe, 2012) measures of self-legitimacy to help further theoretical development. Regarding the external self-legitimacy type, the researchers point out the lack of consistency across studies in measuring it, which has resulted in a variety of different survey items. This study recognizes this issue by using three self-legitimacy scales—*external self-legitimacy (Nix & Wolfe), external self-legitimacy (Gau & Paoline III),* and *self-identification (Gau & Paoline III)*—present in the extant literature and aims to note the differences in their interactions with the organizational justice and negative publicity variables while other predictors of self-legitimacy are held constant.

External self-legitimacy (Nix & Wolfe)

External self-legitimacy is derived by Bottoms & Tankebe (2012), that an officer's confidence in their authority is inextricably connected to the public's views of them. The first dependent variable of self-legitimacy uses five items developed by Nix & Wolfe (2017): "I have confidence in the authority vested in me as a law enforcement officer", "As a law enforcement officer, I believe I occupy a position of special importance in society", "I believe people should always do what I tell them as long as my orders are lawful", "I am confident I have enough authority to do my job well", "I believe law enforcement is capable of providing security for all citizens of this country".

As displayed in Table 1, Principal Component Analysis with varimax rotation was used to assess the degree that scale items clustered.[13] The results (see Table 1) indicated all items loaded onto a single component ($\lambda = 2.58$, factor loadings $> .63$). These items were measured using a 5-point Likert scale and numerically coded and summated to calculate scores for each respondent, with higher scores indicating greater agreement that confidence in authority is tied to citizen support ($\alpha = .78$).

External self-legitimacy (Gau & Paoline III)

The second dependent variable is also a measure of the external self-legitimacy type—it was developed by Gau & Paoline III (2021)—, and uses the following six items: "When police officers issue formal orders directly to citizens, those citizens comply", "Citizens believe that complying with officers is the right thing to do", "Citizens show deference to the authority of officers", "Citizens accept officers' decisions even if they don't like the outcomes", "Citizens trust that officers act in the best interest of the community", "Citizens treat police officers with respect".

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[13] A list of the survey items for all dependent and independent variables, along with coefficients from the Principal Component Analyses are provided in Table 1.

21

Respondents measured their agreement with each of these statements using a 5-point Likert scale with answers ranging from (1) *Strongly Disagree* to (5) *Strongly Agree*. The distribution of scores appeared negatively skewed, where the majority of respondents contained higher scores ($M = 14.94$; $SD = 3.79$).

The results of the Principal Component Analysis (see Table 1) revealed the six items loaded onto two components. The survey item, "Citizens show deference to the authority of officers'' exhibited the lowest factor loading (.11) and was removed, allowing the remaining items to load onto a single component ($\lambda = 4.23$, factor loadings > .73). Responses to these remaining five items were then numerically coded and summated to calculate scores for each respondent, with higher scores indicating greater agreement that confidence in authority is tied to citizen support ($\alpha = .87$).

Self-identification self-legitimacy (Gau & Paoline III)

The last dependent variable is *self-identification (Gau & Paoline III),* which is informed by Barker's (2001) notion that a police officer's confidence is tied solely to their self-assessed belief that they are morally and ethically superior to citizens. The three survey items used to capture this measure of self-legitimacy were those created by Gau & Pauoline III (2021): "Police officers are more moral and ethical than other people", "Police officers are less likely to break the law than other people", and "It takes a special kind of person to be a police officer." Respondents measured their agreement with each of these statements using a 5-point Likert scale with answers ranging from (1) *Strongly Disagree* to (5) *Strongly Agre*e. The distribution of responses showed slightly more than half of respondents scored above average ($M = 11.65$; $SD = 1.99$).

The results of the Principal Component Analysis indicated all items loaded onto a single component ($\lambda = 1.48$, factor loadings > .65). Responses to the items were then numerically coded

and summated to calculate scores for each respondent, with higher scores indicating greater agreement that confidence in authority is derived by self-assessment ($\alpha = .74$).

INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

Organizational justice

Organizational justice serves as the key independent variable. Seventeen items were initially used to measure officers' perceptions of their organization (see Table 1 for a complete list). Nix & Wolfe (2017) reported these specific items are consistent with the organizational justice literature (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001; Colquitt et al., 2001). Respondents measured their agreement with each statement using a 5-point Likert scale with answers ranging from (1) *Strongly Disagree* to (5) *Strongly Agree*. The Cronbach's alpha for these items calculated to a high level of internal consistency ($\alpha = .89$). Responses were numerically coded and summated to generate scores with higher values indicating more favorable views of the organization.

The results of the Principal Component Analysis (see Table 1), however, revealed the items loaded onto four components. This came as no surprise, as organizational justice, particularly the operationalization used for this study, employs items that encompass three dimensions: distributive, procedural, and interactional (as reported by Nix & Wolfe, 2017). Attempts were made to identify the items found clustering into these distinct dimensions, but the results of these subsequent analyses revealed multiple items were not loading as they were theoretically intended to. Thus, the decision was made to only remove items that hindered the construct's ability to load onto a single component. In the end, the following seven survey items were retained, which resulted in a single eigenvalue of 4.28 and factor loadings greater than .67: "My agency's policies are designed to generate standards so that decisions can be made with consistency", "I trust the direction that my department's command staff is taking our agency", "I feel confident about top

management's skills", "Command staff considers employees with kindness and consideration", "Command staff clearly explains the reasons for their decisions", "Command staff clearly explains the reasons the agency makes policy changes", "I trust that command staff makes decisions that have the agency's best interest in mind".

Negative publicity

The second key independent variable is comprised of Nix & Wolfe's (2017) nine survey items used to gauge officer's attitudes on negative publicity of law enforcement (see Table 1 for a the complete list). The preceding clause they used for each item was changed from "In the past six months" to "In the past few years". Prior to this survey being administered, the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis had occurred nearly over two years prior and significantly impacted the policing institution. The modification of this clause in the negative publicity survey items was intended to start the respondent's frame of reference from this point, in hopes of capturing how this incident may have impacted their attitudes toward the public. Three items were used to gauge whether officers believed their job had become more dangerous due to negative publicity—*negative publicity-danger*. Respondents measured their agreement with each statement using a 5-point Likert scale with answers ranging from (1) *Strongly Disagree* to (5) *Strongly Agree*. The Cronbach's alpha for these items calculated to a high level of internal consistency (α = .83), therefore responses were numerically coded and summated to generate scores with higher values supporting the belief that negative publicity has made policing more dangerous as a profession.

Six items were used to gauge if negative publicity had caused respondents to be less motivated in their duties as officers—*negative publicity-motivation*. Respondents measured their agreement with each statement using a 5-point Likert scale with answers ranging from (1) *Strongly Disagree* to (5) *Strongly Agree*. The Cronbach's alpha for these items calculated to a high level of

internal consistency (α = .87), therefore responses were numerically coded and summated to generate scores with higher values indicating that negative publicity has caused them to be less motivated in their duties.

Similar to Nix & Wolfe's (2017) finding in their sample of sheriff deputies, the descriptive statistics of these variables in the current study revealed that, on average, officers scored neutral on the belief that negative publicity in the past two years has caused them to be less motivated (M = 19.87), and scored well above average on the belief that policing has become more dangerous in the past two years (M = 13.10).

As illustrated in Table 1, the results of the Principal Components Analysis revealed the nine-items for negative publicity loaded onto two components. The three items for *Negative publicity-danger* loaded onto one component (λ = 2.25, factor loadings > .83), and the remaining six items for *negative publicity-motivation* loaded onto another (λ = 3.61, factor loadings > .68). The survey item, "…made it work difficult for me to be motivated at work" cross-loaded and was therefore dropped from the analysis (see factor loadings for survey item four of the Negative Publicity Scales in Table 1).

Table 1: Principal components analysis of all scale items

Survey Items	Component loadings			
	1	2	3	4
Negative Publicity Scales				
Over the last few years, negative publicity surrounding law enforcement has				
1. made it more difficult to do my job.	.34	**.81**		
2. made it more dangerous to be a law enforcement officer.	.18	**.86**		
3. forced some US law enforcement agencies to make policy changes that ultimately threaten officer safety.	.13	**.83**		
4. made it more difficult for me to be motivated at work.	**.66**	.47		
5. caused me to be less proactive on the job than I was in the past.	**.79**	.20		
6. caused me to be more apprehensive about using force even though it may be necessary.	**.75**	.30		
7. caused me to be less likely to want to work with community members to solve local problems.	**.74**	.03		
8. negatively impacted the way I do my job.	**.79**	.18		
9. made it less enjoyable to have a career in law enforcement.	**.66**	.35		
Eigenvalues	3.93	2.18		
Organizational Justice Scale				
1. My agency's policies are designed to generate standards so that decisions can be made with consistency.	**.57**	**.51**	.01	-.06
2. My agency's policies are designed to allow employees to have a voice in agency decisions (e.g., assignment changes, discipline).	.29	**.61**	.47	-.26
3. My agency's performance evaluation system is fair.	.18	**.66**	.43	.17
4. My agency's investigation of civilian complaints is fair.	.25	**.60**	-.05	.33
5. I understand clearly what type of behavior will result in discipline within my agency.	.16	**.65**	.10	.28
6. Landing a good assignment in my agency is based on whom you know.	.21	-.12	**.76**	.11
7. If you work hard, you can get ahead at this agency.	.05	.28	**.67**	.16
8. As an organization, my agency can be trusted to do what is right for the community.	.20	.24	.07	**.77**
9. I trust the direction that my department's command staff is taking our agency.	**.65**	.35	.39	.21
10. I feel confident about top management's skills.	**.75**	.27	.21	.18
11. Command staff considers employees with kindness and consideration.	**.70**	.06	.12	.32
12. Command staff treats employees the same regardless of their gender.	.29	.27	.57	.27
13. Command staff treats employees the same regardless of their race or ethnicity.	.10	.16	.29	**.76**
14. Command staff clearly explains the reasons for their decisions.	**.66**	.35	.39	.11
15. Command staff clearly explains the reasons the agency makes policy changes.	**.70**	.37	.14	.03
16. Generally, command staff treats employees with respect.	**.51**	.00	.16	**.66**
17. I trust that command staff makes decisions that have the agency's best interest in mind.	**.75**	.04	.08	.23
Eigenvalue	7.14	1.51	1.29	1.05
External Legitimacy Scales - Gau & Paoline III (6-items); Nix & Wolfe (5-items)				
1. When police officers issue formal orders directly to citizens, those citizens comply.	**.86**	.08	.10	
2. Citizens believe that complying with officers is the right thing to do.	**.79**	.23	-.01	
3. Citizens show deference to the authority of officers.	.11	.37	-.08	
4. Citizens accept officers' decisions even if they don't like the outcomes.	**.74**	.08	-.04	
5. Citizens trust that officers act in the best interest of the community.	**.87**	.01	.08	
6. Citizens treat police officers with respect.	**.75**	.24	-.02	
1. I have confidence in the authority vested in me as a law enforcement officer.	.07	**.72**	.20	
2. As a law enforcement officer, I believe I occupy a position of special importance in society.	.04	**.68**	.38	
3. I believe people should always do what I tell them as long as my orders are lawful.	.06	**.65**	.24	
4. I am confident I have enough authority to do my job well.	.14	**.82**	.07	
5. I believe law enforcement is capable of providing security for all citizens of this country.	.14	**.64**	.04	
Self-Identification Scale - Gau & Paoline III				
1. In general, police officers are more moral and ethical than other people.	.06	.09	**.86**	
2. In general, police officers are less likely to break the law than other people.	.09	.09	**.88**	
3. It takes a special kind of person to be a police officer.	-.07	.19	**.65**	
Eigenvalue	4.23	2.58	1.48	

Note. Coefficients with values greater than |.50| are shown in bold.

CONTROL VARIABLES

Several sociodemographic variables were included to control for any potential effects on the dependent variables. Prior studies have demonstrated—although not consistently—that certain individual-level characteristics may be associated with self-legitimacy. In brief, Tankebe & Meško (2015) found years of service was statistically significant but weakly associated with self-legitimacy (β = -0.11; *p* < .10). Gau & Paoline III (2021), however, found a strong, positive

association (β = 0.21; p < 0.01). Military experience were more likely to show higher scores of self-legitimacy (Nix & Wolfe, 201). Furthermore, White et al. (2020) found non-White officers were more likely to score higher on self-legitimacy than their counterparts.

Binary indicators were created for the following characteristics: *Gender* (1 = male; 0 = female), *Education* (1 = four-year degree or higher; 0 = less than a four-year degree), *Race/Ethnicity* (1 = non-Hispanic; 0 = Hispanic), and *Military Background* (1 = yes; 0 = no). *Years of Service* and *Age* were captured as continuous variables. Table 2 displays the descriptive statistics for all variables.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics of all variables

	M (%)	S.D.	Min	Max
Dependent variables				
Self-identification self-legitimacy - Gau & Paoline III	11.65	1.99	3	15
External self-legitimacy - Gau & Paoline III	14.94	3.79	5	20
External self-legitimacy - Nix & Wolfe	20.17	3.51	5	25
Independent variables				
Negative publicity-motivation	19.87	6.02	6	30
Negative publicity-danger	13.10	2.56	3	15
Organizational justice	22.34	5.81	7	35
Control variables				
Years of service	13.49	9.08	< 1	33
Male	(82)	-	0	1
Hispanic	(74)	-	0	1
Four-year degree	(37)	-	0	1
Assigned to patrol	(36)	-	0	1
Military	(33)	-	0	1

N = 138 officers

There are three steps to the proceeding multivariate analyses. First, in order to test the first hypothesis and examine whether negative publicity was associated with self-legitimacy, a multivariate equation was estimated using ordinary least squares regression, where the response variable is the self-legitimacy index and the predictor variables are the negative publicity indexes. To isolate the effects of negative publicity, statistical control variables are included. Second, a new multivariate equation was estimated to answer the second hypothesis regarding the association between organizational justice and self-legitimacy, with the organizational justice index now serving as the predictor variable. Third, the final multivariate equation is estimated by including both the negative publicity and organizational justice variables to test whether the third hypothesis holds true, that organizational justice confounds the relationship between negative publicity and self-legitimacy.

One of the aims of the current study is to observe how three operationalizations of self-legitimacy interact with the independent and control variables. To this end, each step was repeated three times, resulting in a total of nine multivariate equations containing a unique self-legitimacy construct as the dependent variable.

Prior to conducting the aforementioned analyses, an examination of zero-order bivariate correlations were estimated to determine if collinearity among predictor variables would bias the parameter estimates. Table 5 provides a list of all bivariate associations (Pearson's *r*) among variables. The following chapter provides a discussion of the results.

Chapter 4: Results

The sections of this chapter are structured as follows. The first section reports descriptive statistics of the population and sample. The second section reports the results of zero-order bivariate correlations among the response, predictors, and control variables, allowing the identification of any potential collinearity problems. The final section reports the results of the multivariate regression analyses used to test the research hypotheses.

DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS

Population characteristics

At the time of the survey's administration, 779 sworn personnel at the rank of officer were eligible to participate[14]—Table 3 provides a list of the population characteristics. The population of officers that were eligible to participate were, on average, 39 years old; were predominately male (86%); and identified as Hispanic (85%). A small segment of the population indicated they had military experience (8%). For years of service with the department, the distribution of officers appears bimodal. The greatest portions of the population had less than five years of service (42.36%) and sixteen years or more of service (40.17%).

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[14] The population characteristics of the El Paso Police Department reflect staffing levels during the first week of survey administration (03/28/2022). This data was obtained through an open records request (#W106668-041722).

Table 3: Population descriptive statistics for sworn personnel at the rank of officer

Characteristic	% (M)	S.D.
Gender		
Male	86	-
Female	14	-
Age	(38.58)	10.29
21-30	29.01	-
31-40	28.63	-
41-50	23.75	-
50+	18.61	-
Years of Service	(10.82)	8.89
< 1 to 5	42.36	-
6 to 10	16.30	-
11 to 15	11.17	-
16+	30.17	-
Race		
Hispanic	85	-
Non-Hispanic	15	-
Military Experience		
Yes	8	-
No	92	-

$N = 779$ police officers

Sample characteristics

By the time the survey closed, 228 officers provided responses, representing a 29.3% response rate.[15] As is to be expected in survey research, not all questions were answered and some

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[15] The low response rate warrants concern for the potential of nonresponse bias (i.e. that the group of nonrespondents characteristically differ from those who chose to respond). Generally, response rates across certain survey types (e.g. telephone, mail, email) have experienced a long-term decline in recent decades (De Heer & De Leeuw, 2002; Nix et al., 2019); however, they have typically only been found to be weakly correlated with nonresponse bias (Nix et al., 2019). Although the design of the present survey does not afford the researcher the ability to precisely estimate the degree of this bias present—there is no datapoint that allows one to link those who participated to the population—, this author reasons it is minimally concerning for the current study for the following two reasons. First, nearly all descriptive statistics of the sample's demographics—with the exception of military experience—approximate those found in the population of officers eligible to participate during data collection. Second, the distributions of summative scores and descriptive statistics for the independent and dependent variables found in Nix & Wolfe's (2017) sample of sheriff deputies resemble those found in the current

respondents did choose to elect the "Prefer not to answer" option for some of the questions. After removing these and missing data, a total of 138 responses were able to be used for the current study.

A comparison of the sample and population are provided in Table 4. On average, participants were 40 years of age ($SD = 9.65$); 82% ($n = 113$) were male and 18% ($n = 25$) were female; and the average years of service for participants was 13.49 years ($SD = 9.08$). 74% ($n = 102$) of participants selected the Hispanic category for the race/ethnicity survey item. In order to ensure anonymity of participants, and due to the modest sample size, a less-than-ideal binary indicator was used to classify participants as either Hispanic and Non-Hispanic, with the latter accounting for 26% ($n = 36$) of the sample. Participants with military experience represented 33% ($n = 46$), and those without, 67% ($n = 92$). Participants with military experience appear to be overrepresented in the sample, as officers of the population of study that have military experience accounted for only 8%.

Table 4: Sample and population descriptive statistics

	Sample		Population[*]			
	M	S.D.	M	S.D.	Min	Max
Age	39.94	9.65	38.58	10.29	21	65
Years of service	13.49	9.08	10.82	8.89	< 1	39
Male	0.82	-	0.86	-	0	1
Military	0.33	-	0.08	-	0	1
Hispanic	0.74	-	0.85	-	0	1

n = 138 police officers
N = 779 police officers
*Total sworn personnel at the rank of officer.

sample—they obtained an 85.1% response rate. In light of this evidence, it stands to reason that nonrespondents would not have substantially departed in their answers to survey items compared to their responding counterparts.

Bivariate correlations are illustrated in Table 5. The following section describes the associations observed between the three dependent variables and the independent variables. Recall that two dependent variables—*external self-legitimacy (Nix & Wolfe)* and *external self-legitimacy (Gau & Paoline III)*—are informed by Bottoms & Tankebe's (2012) dialogic model. These two external self-legitimacy dependent variables were positively correlated with one another ($r = .28$, $p < .01$), although the strength of the correlation was weak. *External self-legitimacy (Gau & Paoline III)* was observed to be negatively correlated with *negative publicity-motivation* ($r = -.26$, $p < .01$). The direction of this relationship was the same for *negative publicity-danger* ($r = -.16$), although that relationship did not exert statistical significance. *External self-legitimacy (Nix & Wolfe),* however, did not reach statistical significance for either negative publicity variable. Interestingly, the positive association between *external self-legitimacy (Nix & Wolfe)* and *negative publicity-danger* was opposite to what was observed in *external self-legitimacy (Gau & Paoline III)* variable ($r = .14$). Although conceptually similar, the contradiction in directional relationships suggests these two iterations of external legitimacy may be analytically distinct from one another. This was further supported by the results of the Principal Component Analysis (discussed in Chapter 2), which indicated both measures of external self-legitimacy loaded onto two components instead of one (see Table 1).

The third dependent variable, *self-identification (Gau & Paoline III)*, did not achieve statistical significance with either of the negative publicity variables. This form of self-legitimacy holds that confidence in authority is irrespective of public opinion (Barker, 2004; Gau & Paoline III, 2021). Although conceptually distinct from the external types, a weak to moderate association was observed between *self-identification (Gau & Paoline III)* and *external self-legitimacy (Nix &*

Wolfe) (*r* = .38, *p* < .01). This was surprising given that the association between *external self-legitimacy (Gau & Paoline III)* and *self-identification (Gau & Paoline III)* was not as robust (*r* = .09).

Both external legitimacy variables—*external self-legitimacy (Nix & Wolfe)* and *external self-legitimacy (Gau & Paoline III)*—exhibited a significant, positive association with *organizational justice* (*r* = .21, *p* < .05; *r* = .27, *p* < .01, respectively). *Self-identification (Gau & Paoline III)* was not significant with organizational justice (*r* = .08, *p* > .10).

The measure for organizational justice exhibited a statistically significant, negative association with the *negative publicity-motivation* variable (*r* = -.37, *p* < .01). While organizational justice did not retain the strength of this relationship with the *negative publicity-danger* (*r* = -.15), the bivariate association between the two negative publicity variables was moderate in strength (*r* = .51, *p* < .01). Table 5 displays the bivariate correlations of all variables.[16]

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[16] The *Age* and *Years of Service* control variables, unsurprisingly, exceeded the .70 threshold that is indicative of potential collinearity problems (Licht, 1995). While there may exist an equitable argument to retain either variable, the ability to observe the experiential effect that years of service may have on self-legitimacy was ultimately preferred over an age effect. The extant literature has not implicated officer's age in predicting self-legitimacy; therefore, the trade-off was favored towards what the extant literature has shown to be of concern, which is, years of service (Gau & Paoline III, 2021).

Table 5: Correlation matrix of bivariate associations

		X1	X2	X3	X4	X5	X6	X7	X8	X9	X10	X11	X12
X1	External self-legitimacy - Nix & Wolfe	-											
X2	External self-legitimacy - Gau & Paoline III	.28 **	-										
X3	Self-identification - Gau & Paoline III	.38 **	.09	-									
X4	Organizational justice	.21 *	.27 **	.08	-								
X5	Negative publicity-danger	.14	-.16	.14	-.15	-							
X6	Negative publicity-motivation	-.14	-.26 **	.03	-.37 **	.51 **	-						
X7	Male	.04	.20 *	.06	.00	-.02	-.02	-					
X8	Hispanic	.09	.14	-.03	-.02	-.02	-.11	.15	-				
X9	Four-year degree	-.06	-.07	-.13	-.01	.00	.08	-.19 *	-.05	-			
X10	Patrol	.08	-.05	-.08	-.10	-.03	-.10	.12	.00	.11	-		
X11	Years of service	-.06	.08	.20 *	.04	-.02	.12	.36 **	.09	-.15	-.23 **	-	
X12	Military	-.10	.06	-.04	.05	-.09	-.03	.25 **	.18 *	-.13	.04	.17 *	-

$N = 138$

Note: Zero-order bivariate correlations (Pearson's r); ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$

This section reports the results of the multivariate regression equations estimated for each dependent variable. Regression results are displayed in Tables 6, 7, and 8. The discussion of the regression models uncovers that the research hypotheses are partially or fully supported.

External self-legitimacy (Nix & Wolfe)

Table 6 reports the regression coefficients and test statistics of all independent and control variables on *external self-legitimacy (Nix & Wolfe)*. Model 1 addressed the first hypothesis, that negative publicity would be negatively associated with self-legitimacy. The overall model fit was statistically significant ($F = 1.85$), but only at the 90% confidence level. The two negative publicity variables were significant in predicting self-legitimacy, however the direction of their relationships differed. Specifically, *negative publicity-motivation* was negatively associated with self-legitimacy ($b = -.254$, $p < .05$). The unstandardized partial regression coefficient, *b,* translated to a -.25 score reduction on the self-legitimacy index for each one-unit increase in *negative publicity-motivation*. *Negative publicity-danger* was significant, although the association was found to be positive with self-legitimacy ($b = .265$, $p < .01$). This suggests that an increase in the perception of danger that has stemmed from negative publicity was associated with an increase in an officer´s sense of self-legitimacy. Although mixed, the overall findings show an association between the negative publicity variables and the measure for self-legitimacy.

Model 2 addressed the second hypothesis, in that *organizational justice* would be positively associated with self-legitimacy. The fit of Model 2 was statistically significant ($F = 1.91$, $p < .10$), and the association between *organizational justice* and the dependent variable was indeed positive ($b = .233$, $p < .01$). Officers that believed their department was fair and procedurally just were more likely to have higher degrees of confidence in their authority. This finding supported the

second hypothesis, demonstrating that the organizational justice variable is a positive correlate of self-legitimacy.

The associations found in Models 1 and 2 warranted further investigation into how the independent effects of the negative publicity and organizational justice variables would affected when held constant against one another. The results of Model 3 conformed, although partially, to expectations. The negative correlation between *negative publicity-motivation* and the dependent variable was attenuated by *organizational justice*, rendering the relationship non-significant ($b = -.164$, $p > .10$). This translated to approximately a 35% reduction in the standardized regression coefficient compared to what was reported in Model 1.[17] *Negative publicity-danger*, however, remained positively associated and statistically significant in Model 3 ($b = .250$, $p < .05$) (see Chapter 5 for further discussion).

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[17] The statistical method developed by Clogg et al. (1990) to compare regression coefficients between models indicated this reduction was not statistically significant ($Z = -0.6$).

Table 6: OLS Regression results – External self-legitimacy (Nix & Wolfe)

	External self-legitimacy - Nix & Wolfe								
	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
	b	SE	β	b	SE	β	b	SE	β
NP-motivation	-.254 **	.100	-.254	-	-	-	-.164	.106	-.164
NP-danger	.265 ***	.098	.265	-	-	-	.250 **	.097	.250
Organizational justice	-	-	-	.233 ***	.084	.233	.207 **	.090	.207
Male	.132	.246	.051	.157	.246	.061	.138	.242	.053
Hispanic	-.168	.195	-.074	-.248	.194	-.109	-.208	.193	-.092
Four-year degree	-.114	.179	-.055	-.174	.178	-.083	-.135	.176	-.065
Patrol	.139	.184	.067	.206	.185	.099	.193	.183	.093
Years of service	-.003	.010	-.024	-.007	.010	-.067	-.004	.010	-.039
Military	-.236	.186	-.112	-.309	.186	-.146	-.263	.184	-.125
Intercept	.122	.296		.246	.294		.166	.292	
F Test	1.85 *			1.91 *			2.29 **		
Adjusted R^2	.047			.044			.078		

Note. NP = negative publicity; * $p < .10$; ** $p < .05$; *** $p < .01$

External self-legitimacy (Gau & Paoline III)

Table 7 reports the regression coefficients and test statistics of all independent and control variables on *external self-legitimacy (Gau & Paoline III)*. Model 1 addressed the first hypothesis, articulating that negative publicity would be negatively associated with self-legitimacy. The overall fit of the regression model was statistically significant ($F = 2.31$, $p < .05$). Only *negative publicity-motivation* predicted self-legitimacy ($b = -.239$, $p < .05$). The partial regression coefficient translated to a -.24 score reduction on the self-legitimacy index for each one-unit increase in *negative publicity-motivation*. With respect to one of the control variables, males were associated with higher indexes of self-legitimacy relative to females ($b = .504$, $p < .05$). Although *negative publicity-danger* did not conform to expectations, the findings partially supported the first hypothesis, uncovering a negative association between *negative publicity-motivation* and self-legitimacy.

Model 2 addressed the second hypothesis, that *organizational justice* would be positively associated with self-legitimacy. The overall fit of Model 2 was statistically significant ($F = 2.81$,

p < .01), and the association between the *organizational justice* and self-legitimacy was indeed positive (*b* = .269, *p* < .01). Officers that believed their department was fair and procedurally just were more likely to have higher degrees of confidence in their authority. This finding supported the second hypothesis, demonstrating that the *organizational justice* positively predicts self-legitimacy. Similar to Model 1, males were more likely to score higher indexes of self-legitimacy than females (*b* = .514, *p* < .05).

The associations observed in Models 1 and 2 warranted further investigation into how the independent effects of the negative publicity and organizational justice variables would be affected when held constant against one another. The results of Model 3 were consistent with expectations. More specifically, the negative association between *negative publicity-motivation* and self-legitimacy was attenuated by the *organizational justice*, rendering the relationship insignificant (*b* = -.150, *p* > .10). This translated to nearly a 37% reduction in the standardized regression coefficient compared to what was reported in Model 1.[18] Males were again associated with higher indexes of self-legitimacy than females (*b* = .509, *p* < .05) (see Chapter 5 for a detailed discussion).

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[18] The statistical method developed by Clogg et al. (1990) to compare regression coefficients between models indicated this reduction was not statistically significant (*Z* = -0.6).

Table 7: OLS Regression results – External self-legitimacy (Gau & Paoline III)

	External self-legitimacy - Gau & Paoline III								
	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
	b	SE	β	*b*	SE	β	*b*	SE	β
NP-motivation	-.239 **	.098	-.239	-	-	-	-.150	.104	-.150
NP-danger	-.038	.097	-.038	-	-	-	-.053	.095	-.053
Organizational justice	-	-	-	.269 ***	.082	.269	.203 **	.089	.203
Male	.504 **	.243	.195	.514 **	.241	.199	.509 **	.239	.197
Hispanic	-.199	.193	-.088	-.283	.190	-.125	-.238	.190	-.105
Four-year degree	.004	.177	.002	-.048	.174	-.023	-.017	.174	-.008
Patrol	-.189	.182	-.091	-.097	.181	-.047	-.136	.181	-.066
Years of service	.001	.010	.013	-.002	.010	-.022	-.000	.010	-.002
Military	-.023	.184	-.011	-.046	.182	-.022	-.049	.181	-.023
Intercept	-.210	.293		-.112	.288		-.166	.289	
F Test	2.31 **			2.81 ***			2.70 ***		
Adjusted R^2	.071			.085			.100		

Note. NP = negative publicity*; * p < .10; ** p < .05; ***p < .01*

Self-identification self-legitimacy (Gau & Paoline III)

Table 8 reports the regression coefficients and test statistics of all independent and control variables regressed on *self-identification self-legitimacy (Gau & Paoline III)*. The overall fit of Models 1, 2, and 3 were non-significant ($p > .10$), indicating no linear dependence of the dependent variable's mean on the independent variables. Although *years of service* was positively associated with self-legitimacy across all three models, the lack of model fit renders the interpretation of this association as inappropriate. In sum, the regression models using *self-identification self-legitimacy (Gau & Paoline III)* as the dependent variable did not reach statistical significance *(p > .10)*. None of the stated hypotheses were supported when using this measure of self-legitimacy.

Table 8: OLS Regression results – Self-identification self-legitimacy (Gau & Paoline III)

	Self-identification self legitimacy - Gau & Paoline III								
	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
	b	SE	β	*b*	SE	β	*b*	SE	β
NP-motivation	-.084	.101	-.084	-	-	-	-.048	.109	-.048
NP-danger	.178 *	.099	.178	-	-	-	.172 *	.100	.172
Organizational Justice	-	-	-	.076	.085	.076	.083	.093	.083
Male	-.012	.249	-.005	.000	.250	.000	-.010	.249	-.004
Hispanic	.103	.197	.046	-.079	.197	.035	.088	.198	.039
Four-year degree	-.208	.181	-.101	-.229	.181	-.111	-.216	.181	-.105
Patrol	-.044	.186	-.021	-.029	.188	-.014	-.023	.188	-.011
Years of Service	.023 **	.011	.213	.022 **	.011	.197	.023 **	.011	.207
Military	-.136	.188	-.064	-.176	.189	-.083	-.147	.189	-.070
Intercept	-.245	.300		-.197	.298		-.227	.300	
F Test	1.46			1.31			1.39		
Adjusted R^2	.026			.016			.025		

Note. NP = negative publicity*; * $p < .10$; ** $p < .05$; ***$p < .01$

Chapter 5: Discussion

The first hypothesis, which argued that greater perceptions of negative publicity would be associated with lower self-legitimacy, was partially supported. The evidence from the data suggests that police officers who indicated they felt less motivated because of negative publicity were likely to report having less confidence in their authority. This was true across both multivariate regression models that used the external self-legitimacy measure as the dependent variable. However, an unexpected finding in the model using Nix & Wolfe's (2017) self-legitimacy measure was the bidirectional relationship observed between the two subscales of negative publicity. Specifically, officers who perceived their job to be more dangerous reported more confidence in their authority, whereas officers who were less motivated due to negative publicity reported less confidence in their authority.

This is concerning for two reasons. First, recall that two measure of external self-legitimacy were explored as dependent variables. These two measures were both derived from the same theoretical framework, the dialogic model by Bottoms & Tankebe (2012). The presence of a positive association of the negative publicity-danger scale in one regression model and not the other suggests that the two measures of external self-legitimacy are qualitatively different. While the evidence of the current study is partially in line with Nix & Wolfe's (2017) finding, the positive association between perception of danger and self-legitimacy in one regression model calls for greater theoretical inquiry into the relationship between perceptions of danger and self-legitimacy. Moreto et al. (2021) found the same positive association in their study, theorizing that the perception of danger in the police profession translates to feelings of more importance behind the work. A similar framing on danger was supported in Paoline III & Gau's (2020) study, which

41

found that perceptions of danger increased job satisfaction for officers. Taken together, the findings of this study warrant further investigation of perception of danger as a facet of police self-legitimacy.

The second hypothesis, which argued that greater perceptions of organizational justice would be associated with higher self-legitimacy, was supported only when the external self-legitimacy measures were used as the dependent variable. An important limitation, however, is that the organizational justice measure used for the current study does not appropriately speak toward any one of the four dimensions that comprise organizational justice (i.e. procedural, interactional, informational, and distributive). Recall that the results of an initial Principal Component Analysis revealed factor loadings were not clustering as intended, resulting in the removal of ten items form the organizational justice measure. The less-than-ideal decision to reduce a multi-dimensional concept led to contamination of the subscales, a pervasive problem that has been observed in the extant criminological and criminal justice literature (Wolfe & Lawson, 2020). In line with Nix & Wolfe's (2017) findings, the results of the multivariate regression models that used this medley of organizational justice measures conformed to expectations: attitudes of the workplace are suggestive of greater confidence in authority. Organizational justice measures have consistently shown positive associations with positive work-related outcomes for criminal justice professionals (Wolfe & Lawson, 2020).

The third hypothesis, which posits that organizational justice confounds the relationship between negative publicity and self-legitimacy, found partial support. Nix & Wolfe's (2017) measure of self-legitimacy failed to show support for Hypothesis 3. The organizational justice measure did not confound the positive relationship observed between perception of danger and self-legitimacy. This finding, again, is counterintuitive to the notion that perception of danger is

negatively associated with officer's confidence (Nix & Wolfe, 2017). Where the hypothesis did find support, however, was in the motivation subscale of negative publicity. Organizational justice confounded the negative association between perceptions of less motivation and self-legitimacy. This finding was consistent across both multivariate regression models that used the external self-legitimacy. Consistent with Nix & Wolfe, officers that had positive attitudes toward their organization were less likely to be affected by negative publicity, and thus exhibited higher levels of self-legitimacy.

The self-identification measure of self-legitimacy did not support any of the hypotheses. The critical values of the F statistic in all three multivariate regression models that used the self-identification measure did not achieve statistical significance, rendering the model unfit. This lack of association, however, may lend credence to the theorization of Barker's (2001) self-legitimacy type. Barker argued that the public's opinions are of no concern to an officer's confidence—officers are the first and only mirror they look toward to remind themselves of their authority. The lack of association observed between negative publicity and this measure of self-legitimacy is in agreement with Barker's framework. The characterization, however, of a framework that suggests officer's confidence is irrespective of public opinion, remains open to interpretation. If confidence in authority is as Barker purports, then evidence of depolicing, such as less officer-initiated activities, would be less pronounced in the face of intense public criticism. Because such examples of depolicing have not been uniformly observed across all jurisdictions, the possibility exists that the antecedents of how officer's derive self-legitimacy varies. Perhaps officers of different agencies identify more to this self-identification type rather than the external one; this may be evidenced in the trends of officer's discretionary activities. This warrants future research on the social/environmental context in which police work.

Table 9: Summary of findings

	External self-legitimacy (Nix & Wolfe)	External self-legitimacy (Gau & Paoline III)	Self-identification self-legitimacy (Gau & Paoline III)
	Result	Result	Result
H$_1$: Negative publicity negatively associated with self-legitimacy	Partially supported	Supported	Not supported
H$_2$: Organizational justice positively associated with self-legitimacy	Supported	Supported	Not supported
H$_3$: Confounding effect of organizational justice	Supported	Supported	Not supported

POLICY IMPLICATIONS & FUTURE RESEARCH

With respect to the external self-legitimacy framework, the first and most obvious implication is that officers who are affected by negative publicity choose to pull back in their duties to avoid being involved in a controversial incident (Shjarback et al., 2017). It bears worth repeating that "depolicing" and its related outcomes are still the subject of empirical inquiry. The findings of the current study, however, may provide insight into how officers who are less motivated due to negative publicity are likely to have low self-legitimacy. Perhaps it is not a stretch of the imagination to theorize that officer's with low self-legitimacy are also those most likely to engage in depolicing-like behaviors given the shared association. If this holds true, the people who may be negatively impacted by "depolicing" are those who depend on officer's proactive strategies. On the other hand, if "depolicing" does not bring the increases in crime that some have purported (Nix et al., 2017), perhaps this is an indication of efficiency for a department. Future research may seek to explore self-legitimacy as a predictor of "depolicing" behavior.

Second, the impact of negative publicity on officers in this study speaks directly to the salience of dialogue that occurs between the police and community. Officers may indeed be receptive to the prevailing beliefs of citizens, both positive and negative. This serves as a reminder that legitimacy is a two-way street (Jackson, 2015). To be clear, the solution is not to reduce

scrutiny of the police, but to inquire into its nature and how it impacts the police-community relationship. News and social media outlets wield a substantial amount of influence over public interpretations of officer-involved shootings through the narrative structures they employ (Moreno-Medina et al., 2022). Understanding how these and other forms of dialogue reach police officers and color their perceptions is another endeavor future research can build on. If officers are as receptive to public opinion as Bottoms & Tankebe (2012) suggest, then the opposite of negative publicity—perceptions of public support—would be positively associated with confidence in authority.

The measure of self-legitimacy, however, ought to be carefully considered. The mixed associations across the regression models and the lack of clustering found in the Principal Component Analysis clearly indicate that self-legitimacy may be more nebulous of a construct than previously anticipated. One question that naturally draws from this study is whether each measure is tapping into a unique facet of self-legitimacy. While the associations observed with the self-legitimacy measures that are informed by Bottoms & Tankebe's (2012) dialogic model held true, the lack of associations observed with the self-identification measure that is informed by Barker (2001) warrants revisiting the theoretical underpinnings of self-identification.

The lack of association observed between negative publicity and self-identification self-legitimacy should also be considered carefully, specifically whether subscription to this belief proves useful to officers. In what would be his final, "Letter from the Chief" to officers and the El Paso community, then-chief of police of the El Paso Police Department, Gregory Allen, called on officers to always honor their oath of office, despite the criticism occurring in law enforcement (City of El Paso, 2021, p. 3) Perhaps it may be beneficial, or even necessary, for officers to

dissociate from the harsh criticisms that surround law enforcement if it allows them to refrain from "depolicing" that is ant-social in nature.

Lastly, the third but perhaps most important implication of the current study is the protective-like factor of organizational justice on officer's self-legitimacy. Officer's self-legitimacy is preserved, despite feeling less motivated, because of positive attitudes toward their organization. The workplace, then, is perhaps the greatest opportunity a police administrator can make true effort in promoting confidence in officers' authority. The dimensions of organizational justice (i.e. procedural, distributive, informational, and interpersonal) may serve as a guide for police administrators to implement evidence-based changes in their organization.

CONCLUSION

The data collection endeavor for this thesis has shed light on an understudied area of the policing literature. It is anticipated that the evidence-based conclusions garnered from this project will inform robust policing strategies. How police interpret the way others perceive them is important. But police officers find solace in a supportive organization.

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Appendix

El Paso Police Officer Perceptions Survey 2021

Please read this form and ask any questions before agreeing to participate. The purpose of this form is to provide you information that may affect your decision as to whether to participate in this study.

Matthew J. Duran (Graduate Student, University of Texas at El Paso) invites commissioned law enforcement officials currently in the officer rank to participate in a research study examining their perceptions and attitudes. The purpose of this study is to better understand how police officers are affected by publicity surrounding law enforcement, as well as their perceptions of their agency. Specifically, you'll be asked questions about your supervisors, community, and experiences as an officer. Please note that some questions, particularly those about your experiences, may cause discomfort. Therefore, I must advise this study is minimal risk to you. There will be a list of mental health resources available for you in the event you wish to speak with someone.

If you agree to participate in the study, your involvement will consist of completing this survey, which should take about 10-15 minutes to complete. All information will be anonymous. Please do not put your name anywhere in this survey. None of the information you provide will be linked to you, nor will any member of the research team attempt to contact or identify you. In addition, the records of this study will be kept private and confidential to the extent permitted by law. Any reports or articles that we might publish will have the data aggregated and not include any information that will make it possible to identify those who participated. The data from the completed surveys will be stored securely and indefinitely, and only the research team will have access to it—the El Paso Police Department nor the City of El Paso will have any access to it. Please provide honest answers to the questions contained in the survey. Your participation in this survey will contribute to our understanding of a vital part of the police-community dialogue: officer perceptions.

Your participation in the study is completely voluntary. Choosing to participate will not affect your employment nor standing with the El Paso Police Department. By initiating the survey, you acknowledge that you have read this information, and consent to participate in this research with the understanding that your participation results in no direct benefit or anticipated harm to you. Once starting the survey, you are free to withdraw your participation at any time or skip any question by selecting the "Prefer not to answer" option.

If you have any questions or concerns about the confidentiality and protection of information from this survey or a research-related problem, you can contact either Matthew Duran (915-356-5056, mjduran5@miners.utep.edu) or Mario Cano (915-747-7603, mcano13@utep.edu). You may also contact the UTEP Institutional Review Board and the Human Subjects Protection Office to speak to someone independent of the research team if you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant at 915-747-6590 or irb.orsp@utep.edu.

Your participation is greatly appreciated!

University Matthew Duran, Graduate Student
University of Texas at El Paso.

Approved on: January 24, 2022
Expires on: January 23, 2024
Study Number: [1838496-1]

El Paso Police Officer Perceptions Survey 2021

The purpose of this survey is to capture officers' perceptions of their organization and community. Also, it is to capture officers' thoughts about the current climate of American policing. You are being asked to participate because you are a sworn, full-time police officer. Please note that participation is **voluntary**, and you can stop at any time. There are no direct costs or risks associated, and you will not be financially compensated for taking part. The survey below should take **10-15 minutes** to complete prior to/during briefing/roll call, and all information provided will be kept **anonymous** (i.e., no personally identifiable info will be collected). Individual privacy will be maintained in all reports/publications resulting from this study.

SECTION A: Officer Information

1. How many years have you been a sworn law enforcement officer? _____ ☐ Prefer not to answer

2. What is your gender? ☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Prefer not to answer

3. What is the highest level of education you have completed? ☐ less than a 4-year degree (Bachelors)
   ☐ 4-year degree (Bachelors) or higher
   ☐ Prefer not to answer

4. What race/ethnicity do you identify with? ☐ White/Caucasian ☐ Black/African American ☐ Hispanic/Latino/a
   ☐ Asian/Pacific Islander ☐ Native American ☐ Other _____
   ☐ Prefer not to answer

5. What is your age? _____ ☐ Prefer not to answer

6. What is your marital status? ☐ Single (never married) ☐ Married or domestic partnership ☐ Widowed
   ☐ Divorced ☐ Separated ☐ Prefer not to answer

7. Do you have children aged from 0-17 living at home with you? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Prefer not to answer

8. Are you a military veteran? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Prefer not to answer

9. Did you live in El Paso, Texas growing up? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Prefer not to answer

10. Are you proficient in Spanish? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Prefer not to answer

11. What status best describes you? ☐ Immigrant (born in other country)
    ☐ 1st Generation American (parent/s born elsewhere)
    ☐ 2nd Generation American (grandparents born elsewhere)
    ☐ 3rd Generation American (grandparents born in U.S.)
    ☐ Prefer not to answer

12. On average, how many hours per week do you work (including off-duty assignments)? _____ ☐ Prefer not to answer

13. What regional command are you currently assigned to? ☐ CRCC ☐ MVRC ☐ NERC ☐ Prefer not to answer
    ☐ PHRC ☐ WSRC ☐ PDHQ

14. How long have you been assigned to this regional command? ☐ less than 1 year ☐ 1-2 years ☐ 3 or more years ☐ Prefer not to answer

15. Did you grow up in the area you are currently assigned to? ☐Yes ☐No ☐Prefer not to answer

16. Are you currently assigned to patrol? ☐Yes ☐No ☐Prefer not to answer

SECTION A: Perception of Publicity Surrounding Law Enforcement

17. Indicate your level of agreement with the following questions:

Over the last few years, negative publicity surrounding law enforcement has…

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Prefer not to Answer
… made it more difficult to do my job.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
… made it more dangerous to be a law enforcement officer.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
… forced some US law enforcement agencies to make policy changes that ultimately threaten officer safety.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
… made it more difficult for me to be motivated at work.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
… caused me to be less proactive on the job than I was in the past.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
… caused me to be more apprehensive about using force even though it may be necessary.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
… caused me to be *less* likely to want to work with community members to solve local problems.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
… negatively impacted the way I do my job.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
… made it less enjoyable to have a career in law enforcement.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

18. In the **last 6 months**, did you physically struggle or fight with a suspect who was resisting arrest? ☐Yes ☐No ☐Prefer not to answer

     18a. If "yes", approximately how many times? _____ ☐Prefer not to answer

19. In the **last 6 months**, were you verbally abused by a citizen while on duty? ☐Yes ☐No ☐Prefer not to answer

     19a. If "yes", approximately how many times? _____ ☐Prefer not to answer

20. In the **last 6 months**, were you physically assaulted (e.g., punched/kicked) by a suspect? ☐Yes ☐No ☐Prefer not to answer

     20a. If "yes", approximately how many times? _____ ☐Prefer not to answer

21. In the **last 6 months**, was there someone in the department who you are close to that's been injured due to a physical assault?
     ☐Yes ☐No ☐Prefer not to answer

     21a. If "yes", how were they injured? ☐Gun ☐Other Weapon (knife, object) ☐No weapon (fists/punches) ☐Prefer not to answer

22. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following questions:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Prefer not to Answer
I would recommend, to anyone interested in becoming employed in my position, to seek a college degree.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
A college degree will assist a police recruit in obtaining a job in my department.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I feel that higher education provides skills needed for an officer to perform his/her job in a more effective manner.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I feel that a college degree will assist police officers in receiving promotions within the department.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Having a bachelor's degree, when compared to those with less education, would be advantageous in understanding/implementing problem-solving strategies.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

SECTION B: Perceptions of Organization, Training, and Authority

23. Indicate your level of agreement with the following questions:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Prefer not to answer
My agency's policies are designed to generate standards so that decisions can be made with consistency.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My agency's policies are designed to allow employees to have a voice in agency decisions (e.g., assignment changes, discipline).	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My agency's performance evaluation system is fair.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My agency's investigation of civilian complaints is fair.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I understand clearly what type of behavior will result in discipline within my agency.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Landing a good assignment in my agency is based on whom you know.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
If you work hard, you can get ahead at this agency.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
As an organization, my agency can be trusted to do what is right for the community.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I trust the direction that my department's command staff is taking our agency.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I feel confident about top management's skills.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Command staff considers employees with kindness and consideration.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Command staff treats employees the same regardless of their gender.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Command staff treats employees the same regardless of their race or ethnicity.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Command staff clearly explains the reasons for their decisions.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Command staff clearly explains the reasons the agency makes policy changes.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Generally, command staff treats employees with respect.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I trust that command staff makes decisions that have the agency's best interest in mind.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

24. Indicate your level of agreement with the following questions:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Prefer not to answer
My supervisor looks out for the personal welfare of his/her subordinates.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My supervisor's approach tends to discourage me from giving extra effort.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My supervisor will support me when I am right, even if it makes things difficult for him or her.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The decisions or judgements I make are seldom criticized or modified by my supervisor.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My supervisor lets officers know what is expected of them.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I have complete faith in my supervisor.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

25. Indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Prefer not to answer
The overall value of my department's de-escalation training is low.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Participation in my department's de-escalation training has increased my appreciation for the dynamics of police interactions with community members.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Participation in my department's de-escalation training has increased my understanding of how my decisions and actions impact an interaction with a community member.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Participation in my department's de-escalation training has improved my skills of interacting with community members in general.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Participation in my department's de-escalation training has improved my ability to de-escalate potential conflicts with community members.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Officers in my agency benefit from going through this training.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

26. Indicate your level of agreement with the following questions:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Prefer not to answer
When police officers issue formal orders directly to citizens, those citizens comply.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Citizens believe that complying with officers is the right thing to do.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Citizens show deference to the authority of officers.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Citizens accept officers' decisions even if they don't like the outcomes.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Citizens trust that officers act in the best interest of the community.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Citizens treat police officers with respect.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I have confidence in the authority vested in me as a law enforcement officer.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
As a law enforcement officer, I believe I occupy a position of special importance in society.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I believe people should always do what I tell them as long as my orders are lawful.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am confident I have enough authority to do my job well.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I believe law enforcement is capable of providing security for all citizens of this country.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

27. Indicate your level of agreement with the following questions:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Prefer not to answer
In general, police officers are more moral and ethical than other people.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
In general, police officers are less likely to break the law than other people.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
It takes a special kind of person to be a police officer.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Officers in my department do a good job keeping the community safe from crime.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Officers in my department do a good job at maintaining order.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Officers in my department do their jobs well.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Police have a lot of control over crime rates.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Police are an effective deterrent against criminal activity.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Most of the citizens who call the police for help have real problems that need police attention.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Many citizens who are victims of crime bring it upon themselves.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Prefer not to answer
Citizens call the police for too many noncrime matters that they should handle themselves instead of involving police.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
In general, when I answer a call for service, I believe I am truly helping someone.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

28. Indicate your level of agreement with the following questions:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Prefer not to answer
Officers in my department are often rude or discourteous to citizens.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Officers in my department treat citizens with respect.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Officers in my department treat citizens fairly.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Officers in my department take time to listen to citizens.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Officers in my department make decisions based on facts and law, not on their personal opinions.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Officers in my department explain their decisions to people.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Officers in my department protect citizens' basic rights.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Officers in my department are honest.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

SECTION C: Activities/Perceptions of Community Policing and Citizens

29. How many citizens in the region you work…

	None	Few	Some	Most	Prefer not to answer
… would call the police if they saw something suspicious?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
… would provide information about a crime if they knew something and were asked about it by police?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
… are willing to work with the police to try to solve neighborhood problems?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
… share your values and beliefs?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

30. Indicate your level of agreement with the following questions:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Prefer not to answer
Law enforcement and community members must work together to solve local problems.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Collaborating with community members is an important aspect of law enforcement.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Working with the community to solve problems is an effective means of providing services to this county.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I routinely collaborate with community members in my daily duties.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

I feel my job positively impacts the community.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

If you have any questions or concerns about the confidentiality and protection of information from this survey or a research-related problem, you can contact either Matthew Duran (915-356-5056 / mjduran5@miners.utep.edu) or Mario Cano (915-747-7603 / mcano13@utep.edu). You can also contact the UTEP Institutional Review Board and the Human Subjects Protection Office to speak to someone independent of the research team if you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant at 915-747-6590 or irb.orsp@utep.edu.

Mental Health Resource List

Employee Assistance Program
https://www.elpasotexas.gov/benefits-and-risk-management/benefit-services/eap
(915) 593-5676

Crisis Counseling Program Hotline
https://www.epstrong.org/mental-health.php
(915) 779-1800

National Suicide Prevention Hotline
1-800-273-8255

Treatment Referral Hotline
1-877-726-4727

Vita

Matthew J. Duran was raised in El Paso, Texas and has served in the criminal justice field since 2016. Prior to receiving his bachelor's degree in criminal justice at the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP), Matthew worked as a detention officer for the El Paso County Sheriff's Office at the Jail Annex. While pursuing his master's degree in criminology, he created a private investigations company and was licensed as a private investigations company manager in the state of Texas. In 2021, he accepted employment as a research assistant with the City of El Paso and was assigned to the Planning & Research Unit of the El Paso Police Department, where he was later promoted to crime analyst. Matthew was granted permission by the El Paso Police Department administration and the Institutional Review Board at UTEP to administer a survey to police officers. He plans to continue analyzing the data and provide the EPPD with evidence-based recommendations. Upon graduation, Matthew will be relocating to Phoenix, Arizona, where he will be pursuing his Ph.D. in criminology and criminal justice at Arizona State University.

Contact Information

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