

# **POLICE ADMINISTRATORS IN INDIANA: A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY OF ATTITUDES, PERCEPTIONS, AND STRESSORS**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*Surveys were sent to 308 police chiefs and sheriffs in Indiana in the USA - resulting in 229 being returned for a response rate of 74%. The survey device measured six areas of policing: 1) demographics of police executives; 2) departmental characteristics; 3) stressors (external); 4) stressors (internal/work-related); 5) police executive attitudes toward the current use of police resources; and 6) police executive perceptions of the efficacy of current police strategies and tactics. Results showed that Indiana police departments and sheriff's offices are mostly small departments with little turnover and are rarely accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA). Civilian Review Boards and Early Warning Systems are rarely used to address police misconduct. Indiana departments are overwhelmingly white and male and attempts to increase diversity have failed. Police executive stressors were highest in the area of perceiving courts as too lenient, the criminal justice system as ineffective and media reports about police as overly hostile. Similarly, they indicate significant sources of stress in the areas of financial resources for the department, poor equipment, and dealing with complaints about their officers. Chiefs and sheriffs indicate strong support for the use of police resources for tracking sex offenders and enforcing drug laws. Problem areas were identified in that police executives are not familiar with research on policing. These misunderstandings result in stress on the part of police executives. Areas of misunderstanding include the effectiveness of random patrol and enforcing anti-marijuana laws. Policy implications are discussed.*<sup>2, 3</sup>

## **Introduction**

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<sup>2</sup> The research for this project has not been funded by an outside source.

<sup>3</sup> A comparison of research with other states is forthcoming.

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This is a descriptive study of police executives in Indiana in the USA. Police executives can be defined as the leader within a municipal police department (i.e. city police = police chief) or the county sheriff of a sheriff's department. Currently there is a scarcity of descriptive data concerning law enforcement and the attitudes and perceptions of police executives. This study will provide information about the leaders of Indiana police departments and sheriffs' offices in the following areas: 1) demographics of police executives; 2) departmental characteristics; 3) stressors (external); 4) stressors (internal/work-related); 5) police executive attitudes toward the current use of police resources; and 6) police executives' perceptions of the efficacy of current police strategies and tactics.

This study is intended to aid Criminal Justice professionals and academics. Academics (e.g., college-based Criminal Justice educators) will benefit from this analysis by being provided with descriptive information for Criminal Justice courses, particularly those related to law enforcement. This is important because students of Criminal Justice need to be aware of the attitudes and perceptions of police executives as well as stressors associated with the role in order to better understand the nature of, and potential hazards of police work in general, and police management in particular.

Criminal Justice practitioners will benefit from the study because it represents the first systematic statewide attempt to document the nature of policing in the areas noted above. This [www.internetjournalofcriminology.com](http://www.internetjournalofcriminology.com)

will allow Criminal Justice practitioners to better understand the nature of policing particularly in the area of police stress. Similarly, a better understanding of the nature of police executive stress in Indiana will allow for the development or alteration of policies to lessen the severity of this problem. Along the same lines, the findings will be generalizable within the USA because Indiana is more widely representative. Indiana represents a highly generalizable case study for the US Midwest as a whole (US Census, 2000). Also, the data will allow for a critique of Indiana policing and the development of policy implications.

### **Methods and Results**

The questionnaire used for this study was created to measure police department characteristics and police executive perceptions and attitudes for six primary areas. The 71 item device was mailed to 308 police chiefs and county sheriffs throughout Indiana. Each police executive was identified via USACOPS.com. A total of 229 surveys were returned for a response rate of 74%.

### **Department Organizational Characteristics**

Table 1 addresses Indiana police departments and sheriffs' offices departmental organizational characteristics. Judging from the table, the typical law-enforcement department in Indiana is a small (median = 15 officers) municipal department serving small towns (median population = 10,000).

### **TABLE 1: Department Organizational Characteristics (N = 229)**

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Type of Department	
Municipal Police	68%
County Sheriff	25%
Other (State)	6%
Median Number of Sworn Officers	15
Median Population Served	10,000
Turnover within Dept. For the Last 3 Yrs	
High	13%
Medium	24%
Low	63%
Accredited by CALEA	
Yes	7%
No	93%
Depts. Using Civilian Review Board (CRB)	32%
Depts. Using Early Warning System (EWS)	26%

Turnover within departments tends to be very low suggesting that stability of personnel is a common trait. Turnover rates were categorized as high, medium and low; these categories were not defined specifically but police executives were allowed to interpret this for themselves.

The most striking aspect of Table 1 pertains to the last three variables. That is, only 7% of departments are accredited by the Commission for Accreditation of Law Enforcement Agencies

(CALEA), fewer than 1 in 3 (32%) utilize a Civilian Review Board (CRB) to investigate police officer misconduct and barely 1 in 4 (26%) have an Early Warning System (EWS) in place to identify problem officers. The benefits of CALEA accreditation are numerous. The nearly 1,000 out of 18,000 law enforcement agencies in America that are accredited, for example, enjoy the following benefits:

1. Nationwide recognition of professional excellence;
2. A method of executing daily agency operations under a professional format (i.e., the appearance of professionalism);
3. Continued planning, programming, and development on an ongoing basis;
4. Better community understanding and support;
5. State and local government confidence in the agency;
6. State of the art impartial guidelines for evaluation and change;
7. Proactive management and information systems to give feedback on policies and procedures;
8. Better coordination with neighboring agencies and various components of the Criminal Justice system;
9. Access to the latest in law enforcement practices via interfacing with other accredited agencies;
10. Pride, satisfaction and confidence in the agency and confidence that comes with success;
11. Substantially lower liability insurance premiums as well as fewer successful civil lawsuits against the department (CALEA.org).

To initiate the accreditation process, a department files an application while simultaneously conducting its own self-assessment of required standards (e.g., maintaining proper equipment, inspection of policies regarding hiring and termination of employees, proper authority given to Civilian Review Boards, etc.). CALEA then assigns its own investigators to inspect the department. Once the department passes the inspection, accreditation is granted during a formal presentation ceremony in the local community.

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Civilian review boards (CRBs), although they have several benefits, also have negative aspects that must be considered. CRBs sometimes are created for prophylactic reasons. The boards listen to complaints against officers but have no power to subpoena officers and compel them to testify. The police department can then ignore the recommendations of the CRB. CRBs create the impression to the public that they are involved in law enforcement, when in actuality they have no real power. When implemented properly, however, CRBs can investigate and sanction (e.g., suspend, reprimand, or dismiss) troublesome officers.

The widespread failure and neglect throughout Indiana to pursue accreditation puts departments at a much higher risk of liability, increases the cost of operations and suppresses the respect and confidence that ordinary citizens have concerning their local police. Lack of accreditation also hampers opportunities for successful communication between departments and the sharing of important information and techniques that come from regular accreditation assessments.

CRBs are very useful tools to increase community support of law enforcement agencies (Rojek, Decker, and Wagner, 2005). American police departments have historically and notoriously fought public attempts of achieving more oversight. By encouraging lay participation in the investigation of complaints against officers, the charges of police secrecy and cover-ups of misbehavior are greatly diminished. This important tool helps to make the investigation of police conduct as transparent as possible. Clearly then, Indiana police departments are largely

failing to take advantage of this option given that fewer than 1 in 3 departments report using CRBs. Finally, less than 1 in 4 Indiana departments report using EWS to identify problem officers. For example, if an officer fires a weapon, has two or more complaints filed against him/her, or uses force to affect an arrest a specified number of times within a five-year period, the officer is “red-flagged.” The officer may then be monitored more closely by supervisors and/or offered intervention (e.g., counseling or in-service training such as anger management or sensitivity training). This type of program has proven extremely successful at identifying potentially dangerous officers (Walker, 2003). This deficiency, combined with the lack of CRBs for public oversight of the police, and the systematic lack of attempts at achieving accreditation means that the public as well as Indiana police departments are at a heightened risk of liability due to police misconduct. This also means that Indiana has fallen behind many other states in implementing strategies to increase police professionalism. Indiana has fallen behind other states due to a lack of education and a lack of funding to pay for accreditation. The more highly educated police administration becomes, the more attuned to these problems they will become and the more likely they will be to implement programs like accreditation and CRBs (Dunham and Alpert, 2005).

### **Department Personnel and Police Executive Characteristics**

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Table 2 indicates that Indiana police officers are overwhelmingly white males with less than a four-year college degree. This relative scarcity of college graduates is at least partially due to the low mean starting salary (\$31,181). In terms of complaints, it appears that the vast majority of complaints against officers involve minor rule infractions (e.g., disrespect, untidiness, tardiness, poor driving, sarcasm, and discourtesy) and other aspects of improper demeanor. It is noteworthy to point out that despite being overwhelmingly white and male, very few instances of racial or sexual harassment complaints were noted. Nevertheless, when harassment, excessive force, or Fourth Amendment violations (i.e., improper searches) do occur, the legal liability consequences can be nearly catastrophic (Fridell and Scott, 2005). Indiana law enforcement agencies must seek to diversify their departments. Most chiefs and sheriffs pointed out that the major obstacle in this area was an extreme scarcity of female and racial minority applicants. Another problem commonly cited by police executives was the difficulty of retaining women and minorities after they were hired. Police executives frequently indicated on the survey that these individuals routinely resigned their positions to move on to other departments (either within the state or with the federal government). Table 2 also shows that the typical police executive in Indiana is male, middle-aged, white, rarely a college graduate, and someone who has been in management for an average of six years. Another recent development in this area relates to the fact the Indiana State Police (ISP), Indiana's largest police agency, has now dropped its minimum college credit hours requirement due to the extreme scarcity of applicants able to satisfy it. Therefore, it appears that in the future, even fewer Indiana police officers will

have a four-year degree (Indianapolis Star, 2005).

**TABLE 2: Department Personnel and Police Executive Characteristics (N = 229)**

Avg. % Females	2.6%
Avg. % Racial Minorities	2%
Avg. Starting Salary	\$31,181
Avg. % of Officers with 4 Yr College Degree	16%

**% of Depts. Ranking  
Complaints Against  
Officers as 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup>  
In Frequency**

Minor Rule Infractions	84%
Improper Demeanor	68%
Excessive Force	7%
Sexual or Racial Harassment	7%
Improper search	3%
False Arrest	2%

**Police Executive Characteristics**

% Male	97%
Avg. Age	49
% Caucasian	100%
Avg. Yrs. as Chief or Sheriff	6.3

**Partnering Status**

With another person	88%
None	12%

**Education**

HS Grad	88%
College Grad	10%
Other (e.g., GED)	2%

**Police Executives and Stress: Background**

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Stress among police executives has been addressed in other states in the US. In a recent study on the stress of small, rural, municipal officers in Pennsylvania, Scott used a 3-point scale to determine stress levels of officers (low, medium, and high) (2004). Some of the types of stressors that were measured included organizational issues (promotions/discipline/frequent interaction with city administrators), work encroachment on family life, lack of adequate resources for the job, and frequent interaction with the community. The study found that over half (55%) of officers indicated that the work environment (organizational issues) was the most stressful, but only a little over one-fifth of the officers surveyed (22%) rated one of the other issues (family, community relations, and lack of resources) as their most stressful aspect of their job (Scott, 2004).

Rainguet and Dodge's (2001) exploratory study about turnover rates among police executives examined issues police chiefs viewed as the largest factor(s) for leaving the job. They found that health and personal (family) reasons were the prominent factors as to why the police chiefs they surveyed left the job. Personnel issues within the department rated high as well, with issues involving corruption and the need to continually take disciplinary action against officers being particularly disconcerting. Political turmoil was also recorded as being a high level stressor that helped precipitate leaving the job (Rainguet & Dodge, 2001).

### **External Stressors and Indiana Police Executives**

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For the current study, Table 3 shows that overall, external sources of stress tend to be less salient than internal ones. After combining the most stressful and stressful categories, no source of stress was identified by more than one-half of respondents. Nevertheless, the perception of an ineffective Criminal Justice system, lenient courts and political interference in decision-making as well as hostile media coverage do seem to be somewhat stressful to police executives (all were identified by more than 1/3 of the respondents). Police executives may perceive the Criminal Justice System as ineffective. The United States has been notoriously inept at achieving efficiency in its Criminal Justice System largely due to its fragmented nature. The layered nature of Criminal Justice (e.g., federal, state, local) creates police, courts and corrections agencies at each level. These entities tend to be focused exclusively on their own goals and objectives to the detriment of communication and cooperation between agencies. The various levels of government have demonstrated an inability and unwillingness to coordinate efforts of any kind, particularly as it relates to police, courts and corrections. Oftentimes, this inability to work together comes from a lack of communication and understanding of what each agency is doing. Problems also arise when one agency attempts to take over the situation and fails to coordinate its efforts with the entire group (Cordner, Scarborough, and Sheehan, 2004). Similarly, police executives oftentimes perceive the media as hostile and feel the resultant stress. Since the early 1990s with the Rodney King beating, police departments have been excoriated by media attacks challenging their integrity and questioning the amount of authority that is granted to them.

**TABLE 3: Police Executives’ Perceived Level of Stress from External Sources: (% indicating that the source of stress was either most stressful or stressful) (N = 229)\***

Ineffective Criminal Justice System	47%
Overly Lenient Courts	47%
Political Interference in Policy and Decision Making	42%
Overly Critical Media Coverage of Police Actions	36%
Lack of Interagency Cooperation	21%
Lack of Community Support	20%
Inability to Access State and Federal Records	12%
Inability to Access Fingerprint or Vehicle Databases	12%
Police-minority Relations	9%

\*A 5 pt. Likert scale was used ranging from most stressful, stressful, neutral, not very stressful, and not stressful at all.

While copious abuses undoubtedly do occur, it is obvious that individuals and groups hostile to law enforcement have capitalized on celebrated cases in order to criticize the police. It is unclear, however, the extent to which police executives perceive the media as hostile in a general sense or if these views come from direct experience with local media. The survey did not ask specifically if the perception was based upon a personal experience with media or just general perceptions. Police executives may use selective observation when it comes to their feelings toward the media. Executives may extrapolate from widely discussed cases to create their own [www.internetjournalofcriminology.com](http://www.internetjournalofcriminology.com)

feelings of hostility with the media. Although police executives can view the media as hostile, this does not imply that journalists should stop reporting abuses that undoubtedly do occur (Dunham and Alpert, 2005).

About 2 in 5 (42%) police executives rated political interference as being a significant source of stress. This is entirely a local matter usually dealing with police priorities and allocation of resources (Rutledge, 1988; Peak, 2006; Dempsey and Forst, 2005). The only source of external stress ranked in the top four in Table 3 that is clearly unjustified pertains to overly lenient courts. Simply stated, courts in the United States (as well as in Indiana) are far from lenient. The United States ranks first in the world in per capita incarceration rates (Harrison and Beck, 2003). This represents a significant area of disconnect between police executive perceptions and empirical reality. For example, the per capita incarceration rate for Indiana is 343 per 100,000. By comparison, the rate for Canada is 170; United Kingdom 92, France 86, and Sweden 66 (Terrill, 2003). This pattern holds even after controlling for crime rates. Given these data, it is difficult, if not impossible, to argue that Indiana courts are lenient. Research nationally has suggested that this misunderstanding on the part of police may be due to the widespread practice of plea-bargaining and the availability of bail (Neubauer, 2005).

Anecdotal evidence suggests that police executives would prefer to see a much greater use of preventive detention for those awaiting trial as well as severe restrictions placed on local

prosecutors to curb the use of plea-bargaining. Changes such as these, however, inevitably lead to an even more exacerbated problem of prison and jail overcrowding (Albanese, 2005). Once again this represents the fragmented nature of American Criminal Justice in that police executives in Indiana seem to be failing to appreciate the harshness of state courts and the ripple effect of such policy changes.

### **Internal Stressors**

Table 4 presents the findings from the items measuring police executives' perceived level of stress from distinctly internal sources (i.e., dealing with everyday aspects of the job from within the department). Seven items received ratings of 37% or higher when combining the categories of most stressful and stressful. Financial resources of the department (76%) and poor or substandard equipment (40%) are items that are internal but beyond the complete control of police executives. The lack of financial resources is the single greatest source of stress for police executives in Indiana. This item was correlated strongly with poor or substandard equipment. This is logical given that research has previously identified dilapidated automobiles as a primary stressor not only for police executives but patrol officers as well (Rutledge, 1988). The finding that dealing with other aspects of complaints was rated as stressful by almost half of respondents supports the findings of Scott (2004) discussed above.

**TABLE 4: Police Executives' Perceived Level of Stress from Job-related Sources: (% indicating that the source of stress was either most stressful or stressful) (N = 229)\***

Financial Resources of the Dept.	76%
Excessive Paperwork	50%
Dealing with Other Aspects of Complaints Against Officers (e.g., Issuing Reprimands, Suspensions, or Terminations)	49%
Maintaining Conflicting Roles In the Community (e.g., Law Enforcer and Public Servant)	45%
Dealing with Victims and the Families Of Victims	43%
Poor or Substandard Equipment	40%
Fatigue	37%
Fear of Lawsuits	31%
Lack of Feedback Concerning the Outcome of Cases	27%
Availability of Firearms to the Public	21%
Persistent Fear or Danger Associated With Police Work	20%
Dealing with Review Boards Concerning Officer Misconduct	19%

\*A 5 pt. Likert scale was used ranging from most stressful, stressful, neutral, not very stressful, and not stressful at all.

In sum, the sheer number of items at or above the 37% boundary suggests that police executives face significant sources of stress from within the department.

Finally, it is interesting to note that factors frequently associated with police work by the general public, scored low as sources of stress. For example, the availability of guns to the public and persistent fear or danger associated with police work were not identified as significant stressors. It is possible that police executives ascribe to the idea that there is substantial evidence that criminals do not want to confront armed victims and that defensive gun use is an effective crime prevention strategy and that unarmed citizens benefit from the possession of guns by others (Kleck, 1997; Kleck, 1995). Given the above information, police executives are probably not staunch supporters of further restrictions on gun ownership through legislative efforts.

#### **Police Executive Attitudes Toward the Use of Police Resources**

Eight items were used to assess the extent to which police executives agreed that police resources were utilized wisely. Table 5 shows that chiefs and sheriffs largely agree with all uses of resources. Support for the types of resource usage is relatively strong with little variation across items (i.e., the range is from 67% to 92% support). It is interesting, however, that DUI (Driving Under the Influence) enforcement ranks last on the list in terms of support. This is probably due to the fact that more and more police administrators are beginning to realize that alcohol addiction and drunken-driving are medical problems as much as they are law-enforcement problems. That is, treating a problem that potentially has medical origins as completely within the purview of law enforcement is similar to what Neubauer (2005) refers to as the “Rubik’s Cube” approach to Criminal Justice in that it is just as impossible to solve the

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nation’s alcohol problem by focusing so heavily on law-enforcement as it is to solve a Rubik’s Cube by focusing on one side at a time. Nevertheless, 2 of 3 police executives support the use of police resources to enforce DUI laws.

**TABLE 5: Police Executive Attitudes Toward the Use of Police Resources: % of Subjects Who Strongly Agree or Agree That It Is a Wise Use of Police Resources (N = 229) \***

Helping Track Sex Offenders	93%
Promoting Programs to Improve Police-community Relations	90%
Enforcing Anti-marijuana Laws	88%
Promoting Community Policing	81%
Helping with Background Checks for Gun Permits	76%
Enforcing Local Curfew Ordinances	75%
Enforcing Anti-prostitution Laws	73%
Enforcing DUI Laws	67%

\*A 5 pt. Likert scale was used ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

An even more troublesome finding was revealed concerning support for enforcing anti-marijuana laws. Almost 9 of 10 (88%) police executives strongly agreed or agreed that enforcing these laws is a wise use of police resources. Previous research has shown that an increasing number of Criminal Justice practitioners and academics are rejecting anti-drug law enforcement in general, and anti-marijuana laws in particular (Gray, 2001). According to the research, it is relatively safe to say that the “war on drugs” has been less than a complete success. The “war on drugs”

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has failed to reduce consumption by focusing on increasing the price of drugs and incapacitating drug users and sellers. In addition, the total law-enforcement approach to the drug problem has resulted in increased police corruption and a significant diminution of the moral force of law. The National Institute on Drug Abuse (2005) noted that marijuana has few addictive qualities and estimates that up to 70 million Americans have used it. Given the widespread use, it is clear that fewer people feel a moral compulsion to obey drug laws. A recent Zogby poll found that 41% of Americans favor treating marijuana similar to alcohol (Newman, 2003). That is, it should be regulated, controlled, and taxed but made illegal only for children. A high percentage of police executives throughout Indiana have, at least at this point, failed to recognize the futility of marijuana interdiction as an advisable use of police resources, which is quite disturbing.

### **Police Executives' Attitudes Toward Strategies and Tactics**

Police executives were asked to rate the effectiveness of various police strategies and tactics. Table 6 presents the results of these 10 items by combining the categories of very effective and somewhat effective. The greatest support is for the use of undercover officers to identify drug dealers (91%). Again, this is a disturbing finding given what we know about the negative side-effects of the war on drugs. In addition to the concerns noted above, the use of undercover officers exacerbates the problem in several ways. First, covert anti-drug operations can lead to violations of citizens' civil liberties. For example, it may be argued that the right to self-medicate and to be free from unreasonable searches is violated by the use of undercover officers

(Gray, 2001). Also, these activities blur the line between legal and illegal activities given that many undercover officers are allowed to both buy and sell drugs to create the ruse necessary to infiltrate the drug subculture. Also, undercover anti-drug activities frequently produce vast opportunities for police corruption. Officers are routinely put in the position of being exposed to drug money and drugs and oftentimes the temptation to supplement their income by stealing is simply too great (Gray, 2001; Trebach, 2005). Add to this the fact that Indiana police officers average only \$31,000 per year in salary and the risk of corruption can only be worsened.

Another serious concern is in the area of random patrol to deter crime (84% support). The efficacy of random patrol as a crime deterrent was debunked decades ago (Kelling, 1974). While it is true that the Kansas City preventive patrol experiment raised issues of construct validity, research has shown that having the police randomly driving around looking for crime makes about as much sense as a fire truck randomly driving around looking for fires. The best that can be hoped for, from any type of police patrol, is a displacement of crime from the targeted area to surrounding neighborhoods (Kelling, 1974). The causes of crime are too complex to be remedied by alterations in police patrol strategies yet Indiana police executives seem to be indifferent to this empirical reality.

Strong support for lowering the legal Blood Alcohol Content (BAC) to .08 is understandable. Police executives must be well aware of the fact that, nationally, there are approximately 1.5

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million DUI citations (1 for every 121 licensed drivers in the United States) every year (NHTSA, 2003). Even though less tolerance for DUI may save some lives, the utility of using arrest and fines as punishment for alcohol problems remains highly debatable; however, the economic benefits to local governments is clear. If the average fine for first-time offenders is about \$500, multiplied by the million or so successful prosecutions for DUI every year, one can see that municipal governments may be very interested in lowering BAC standards as a form of revenue enhancement.

Along the same lines, it is not surprising that police executives support sobriety checkpoints (74%). In addition to increasing the number of DUI citations, sobriety checkpoints are extremely useful for identifying and apprehending violators who are without proper registration, insurance, those with outstanding warrants as well as car thieves. Just about the only negative side-effect from the widespread use of sobriety checkpoints is that they tend to be correlated with lower public satisfaction of police (Fell, Lacey, and Voas, 2003; Ross, 1992).

**TABLE 6: Police Executives' Perceived Level of Effectiveness of Strategies and Tactics: % Believing that Strategy or Tactic Is Very Effective or Somewhat Effective (N = 229) \***

Use of Undercover Work To Identify Drug Dealers	91%
Use of Laptops in Patrol Cars	86%
Use of Random Patrol to Deter Crime	84%
Lowering BAC to .08	83%
Use of Firearms Training System (FATS)	83%
Use of TASERS as a Nonlethal Alternative to Firearms	76%
Use of Sobriety Checkpoints	74%
Use of Foot Patrol to Reduce Fear of Crime	61%
Use of Accreditation to Enhance Professionalism	45%
Use of Civilianization	34%

\*A 5 pt. Likert scale was used ranging from very effective, effective, neutral, somewhat ineffective, and not effective at all.

Finally, police executives seem to exhibit the least amount of support for accreditation and civilianization (using civilians to perform police functions). The latter could be due to the fear that if civilians co-opt police roles, then municipalities will use this fact to cut police funding. Another problem could be the cost and time devoted to properly training civilian employees to perform police functions. Police officers undergo extensive training before becoming an officer and civilians would require some of this same training to perform police functions. With reference to accreditation, this represents yet another very disturbing finding. As noted above, [www.internetjournalofcriminology.com](http://www.internetjournalofcriminology.com)

there are many important benefits of police agency accreditation (Dunham and Alpert, 2005). Indiana police departments and sheriff's offices are not taking advantage of them nor do police executives in Indiana seem to even be aware of the advantages. Clearly then, Indiana has fallen behind in the quest to transform policing into a professional occupation.

Throughout the United States, only 6% of police departments are accredited. While it is true that Indiana is not dramatically behind the national trend in accreditation, the goal is not to be like the rest of the country but instead to be leaders. Leaders in law enforcement should seek accreditation, rather than being content to remain like the rest of the country.

### **Summary and Conclusion**

Judging from the results of this survey, several patterns emerge. Important demographics of police executives and departmental characteristics have been identified. On the positive side, police departments and sheriff's offices in Indiana seem to be relatively stable organizations and personnel turnover is low. This suggests that police officers and sheriff's deputies are content with their positions. Also, police executives seem to be experiencing less stress from outside the department when compared to internal sources of stress.

However, the negative findings of this survey far outnumber the positives. Indiana police organizations remain woefully behind in diversifying their workforce. Few people of color or

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women are working as police officers or sheriff's deputies and virtually none are serving as police executives. Indiana remains behind in hiring minorities. Even when women and minorities are recruited, they tend to leave shortly thereafter suggesting that Indiana police organizations have structural flaws that inhibit diversity.

As noted previously, Indiana departments lag behind in terms of the rate of accreditation, the use of Early Warning Systems to identify police misconduct, and the use of Civilian Review Boards to investigate police wrongdoing. The latter also help to improve police-community relations by giving the public a voice in how to discipline deviant officers. Police departments should be strongly encouraged to implement meaningful Civilian Review Boards to hear complaints against officers. These entities should be given adequate funding for investigations and subpoena power with the ability to compel officers to testify. They also should be allowed to participate meaningfully in the sanctioning process involving officers found to be at fault. In terms of police executive perceptions, several findings and deficiencies were noted. For example, police executives experience great stress related to financial resources of the department and poor equipment. They also suggested political interference in decision-making is a problem. These are issues that should be addressed at the local level but it is important to be able to empirically document these findings so that city officials cannot claim that there is only anecdotal support for these perceptions.

Finally, attitudes and perceptions of police executives were noted that are either based on misunderstandings or a lack of exposure to the scientific study of Criminal Justice. That is, Indiana chiefs and sheriffs mistakenly believe that courts are meting out lenient punishments, support the use of police resources to enforce marijuana laws, random patrol to deter crime, and fail to understand the importance of accreditation. There is solid empirical support to show that these findings are not merely attitudes, but actually represent inaccurate perceptions. These problems can only be addressed by bridging the gap between the world of the Criminal Justice practitioner and academic research. The creation of student led organizations at universities and colleges (e.g., Criminal Justice Associations) can be used to help bridge this gap. It is imperative that those individuals who study Criminal Justice scientifically reach out to those who serve as police executives. These organizations bring to campus Criminal Justice practitioners, such as police officers, lawyers, and federal agents, who can discuss issues relevant to students and students can share issues that would assist law enforcement officers. This relationship can help foster the cooperation between groups that is needed.

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