

## Background & Design

### How are civilians perceiving threat within interactions with police?

While many studies have examined police officer's threat perceptions and responses to civilian-police interactions, little work has considered civilian's perspective on these processes, considering the police as a threat.

To address this gap, we employed a joystick approach avoidance task, postural sway tracking, and the startle-eyeblink paradigm to investigate defensive and physiological responses

## Methods

### Participants completed separate measures of defensive bodily and behavioral responses

#### Approach Avoidance Task (n=259)

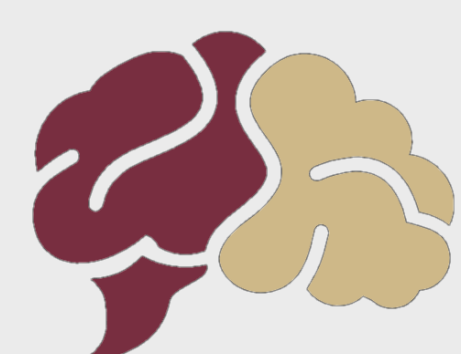
- Indexes the speed of reaction when pushing the joystick (avoid) or pulling (approach) images of police vs non-police
- Faster "pushes" indicate automatic avoidance tendencies

#### Postural Sway Task (n=126)

- Indexes a standing person's center of pressure along separate planes, as well as defensive freeze response
- Uses a stabiometric force platform
- Reduced anterior-posterior bodily sway indicate anticipation of threat

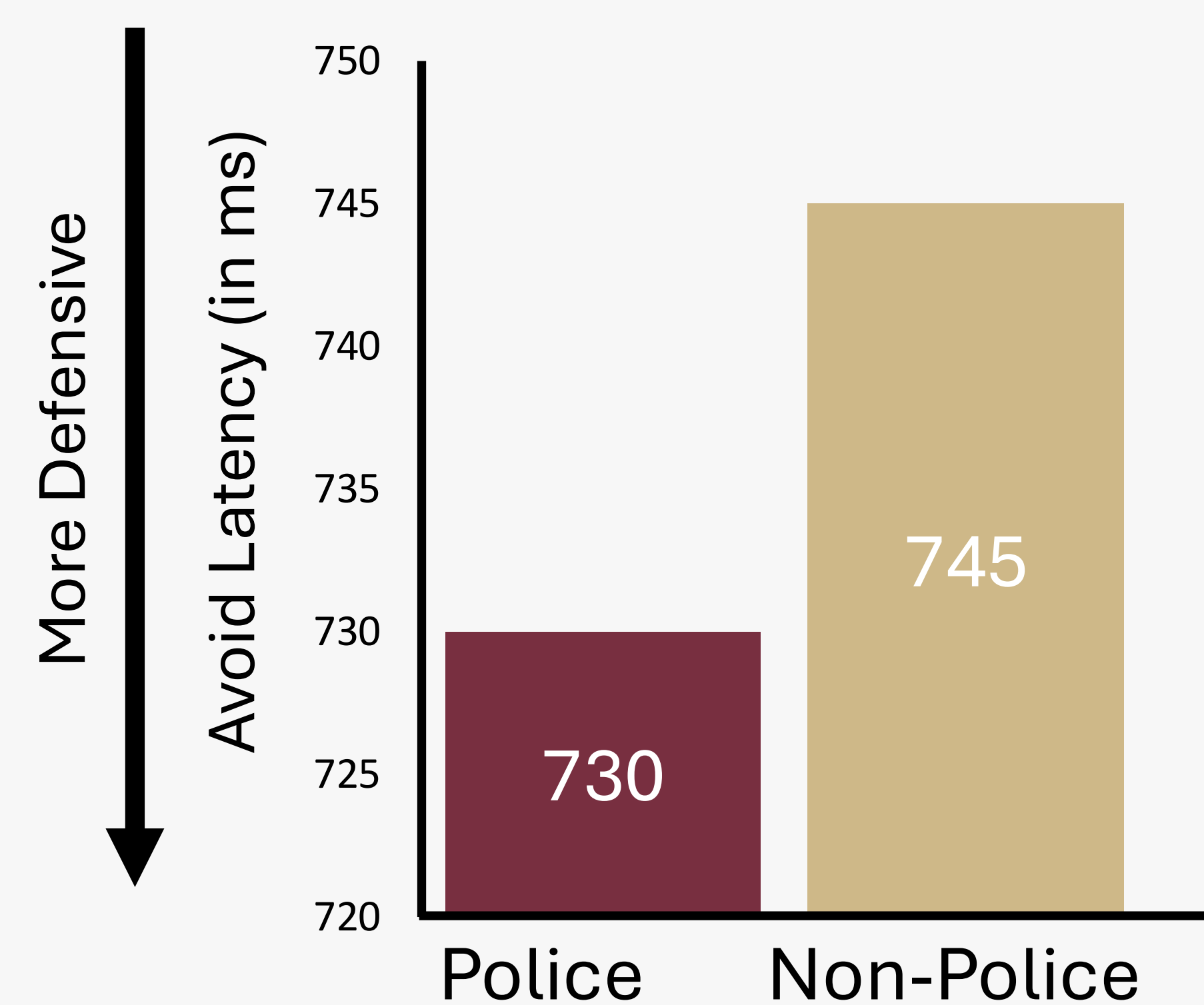
#### Startle-Eyeblink Paradigm (n=218)

- Indexes defensive physiological response through eye blink amplitude through facial electromyography (fEMG)
- Larger startle eyeblinks indicate police's evocation of heightened defensive physiological preparation

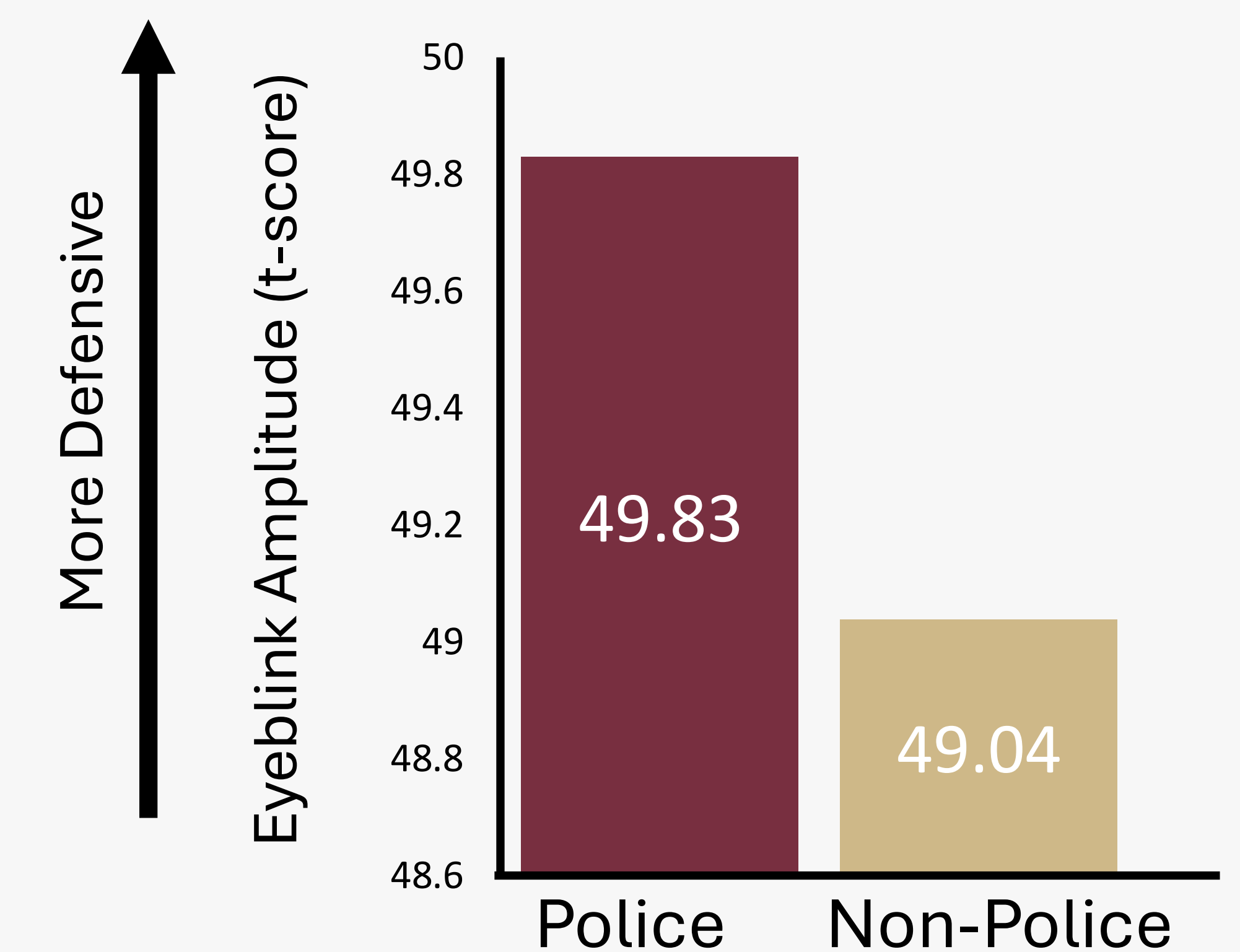


## Results

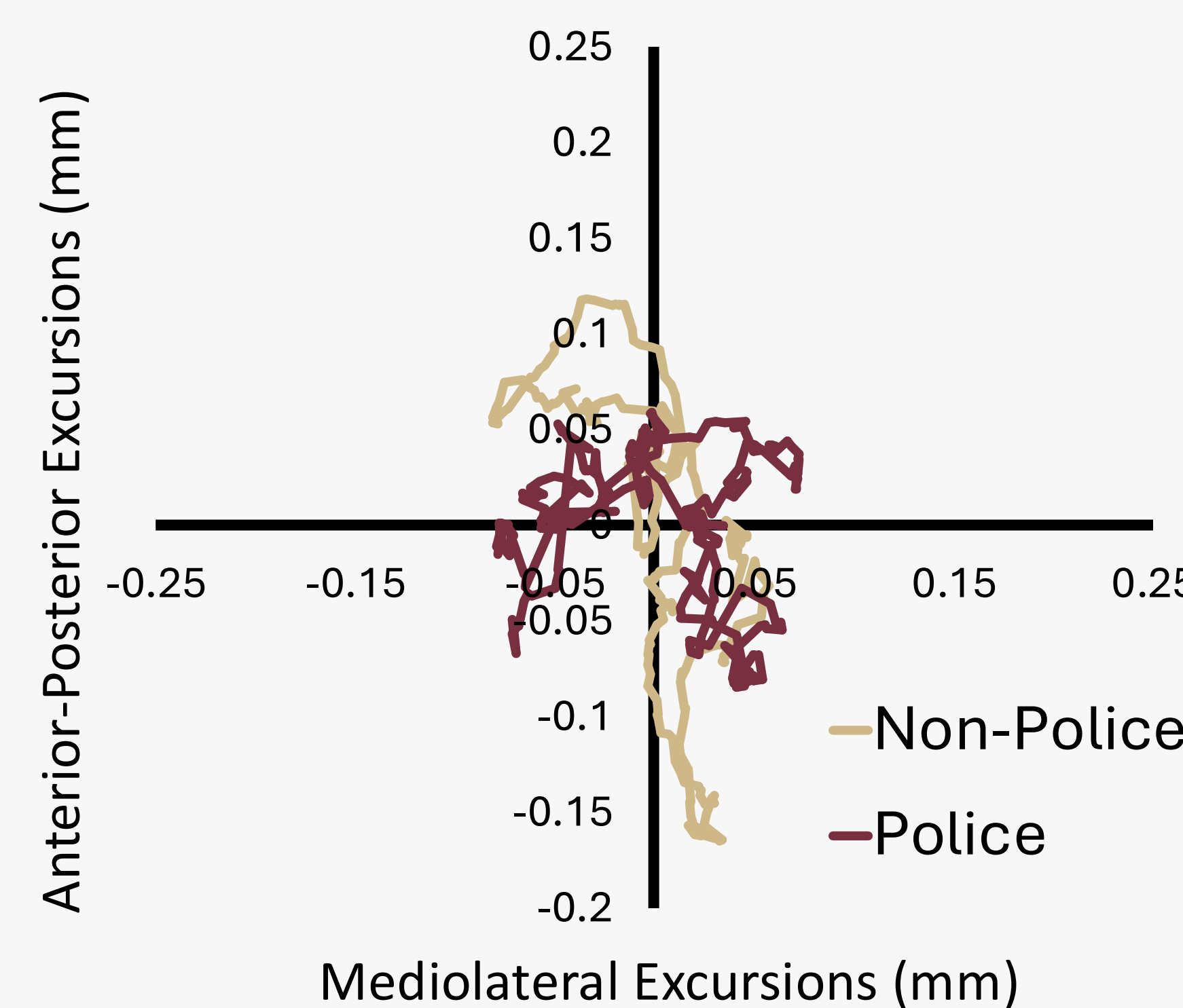
### Avoidance Latency



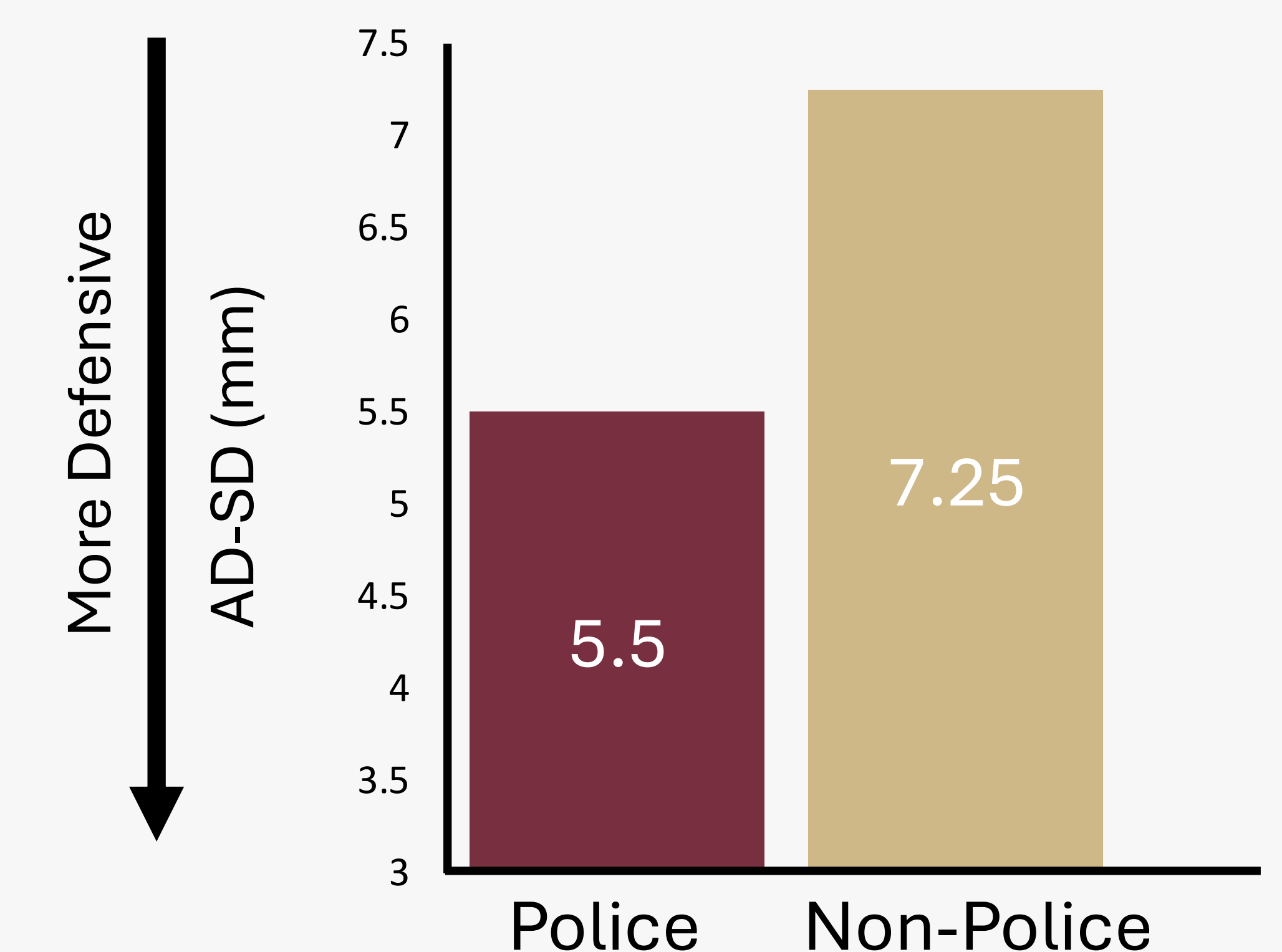
### Startle Eyeblink Amplitude



### Time-Course Grand Mean of COP



### Average Anterior-Posterior Sway



## Implications & Future Directions

### Arrest noncompliance may be driven by automatic self-protective motives

Implications are notable regarding "in-the moment" behaviors as a hesitation caused by automatic threat-associations may be considered hostility by police.

Attitudes toward the police may lean more negatively due to automatic police evaluations.

Automatic defensive responses evinced by Black individuals might be differentially perceived as threatening to police officers