



# The Architecture of Authority

## **NYPD Power and Promotion Structures: An Analysis of Institutional Selection Effects**

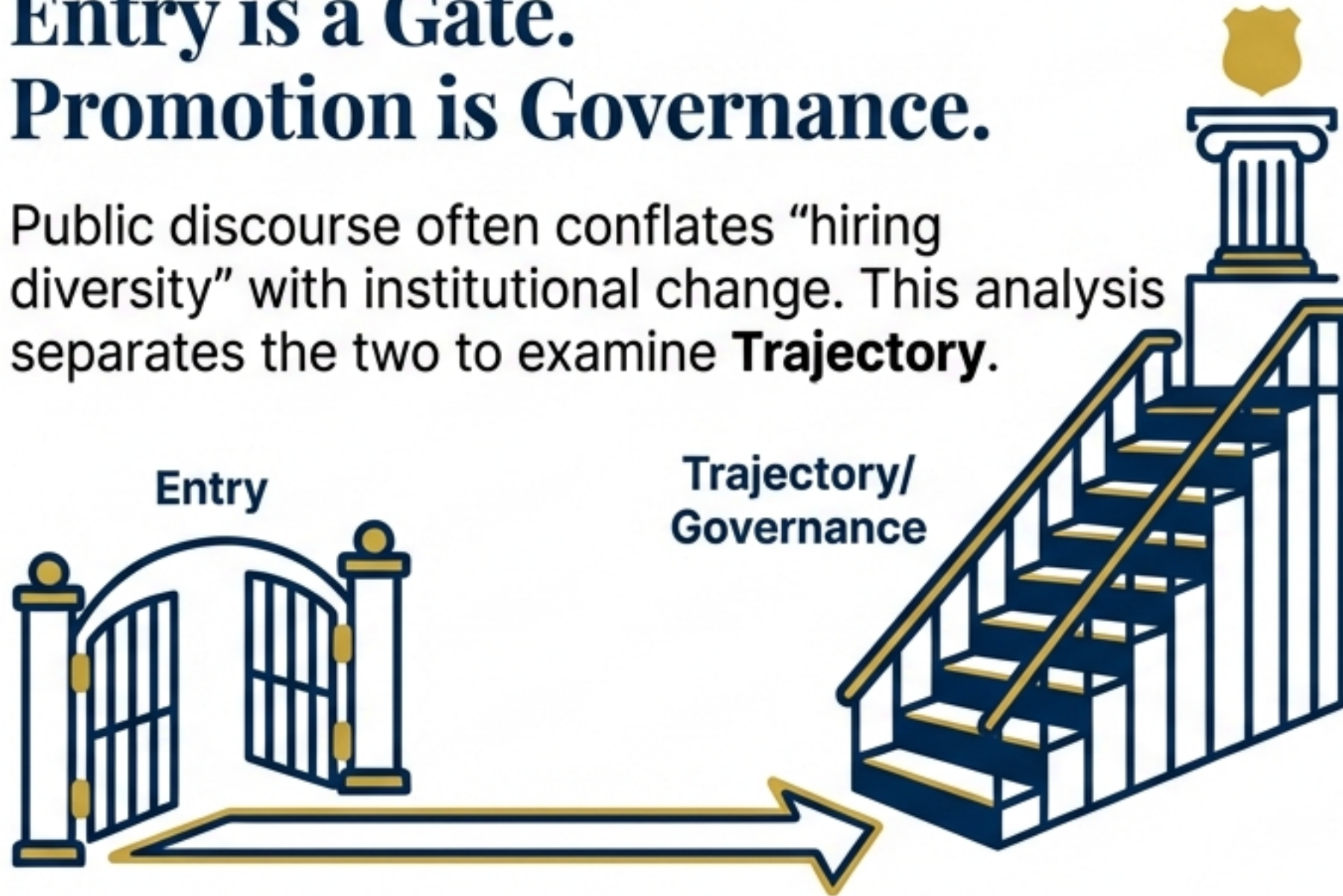
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Based on the Report by Eric Sanders | January 18, 2026



# Entry is a Gate. Promotion is Governance.

Public discourse often conflates “hiring diversity” with institutional change. This analysis separates the two to examine **Trajectory**.



**Entry (Hiring)** determines who crosses the threshold.

**Trajectory (Promotion)** determines who governs the organization, shapes culture, and enforces discipline.

## The Data Landscape

- Analysis relies on the **October 23, 2025** workforce snapshot.
- Represents actual workforce outcomes, not applicant pools.
- **Key Insight:** New officers have minimal discretion. **Structural power** resides in the ranks of Sergeant and above.



# The Analytical Lens: UGESP and the Four-Fifths Rule

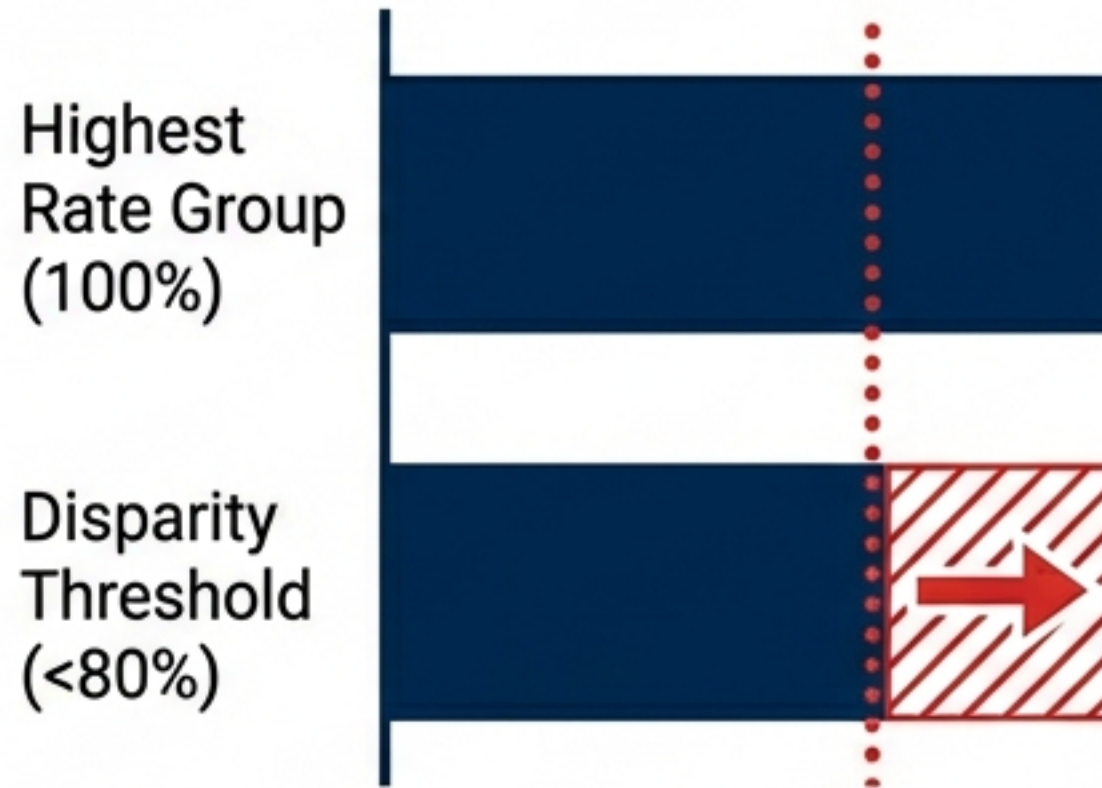
## Core Principle

The Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures (UGESP) focus on **outcomes**, not intent.

We measure the system, not the individual.

## The Diagnostic Tool

The “Four-Fifths Rule” acts as a screening heuristic.



A disparity exists if selection rate is less than 0.80 of the highest group.

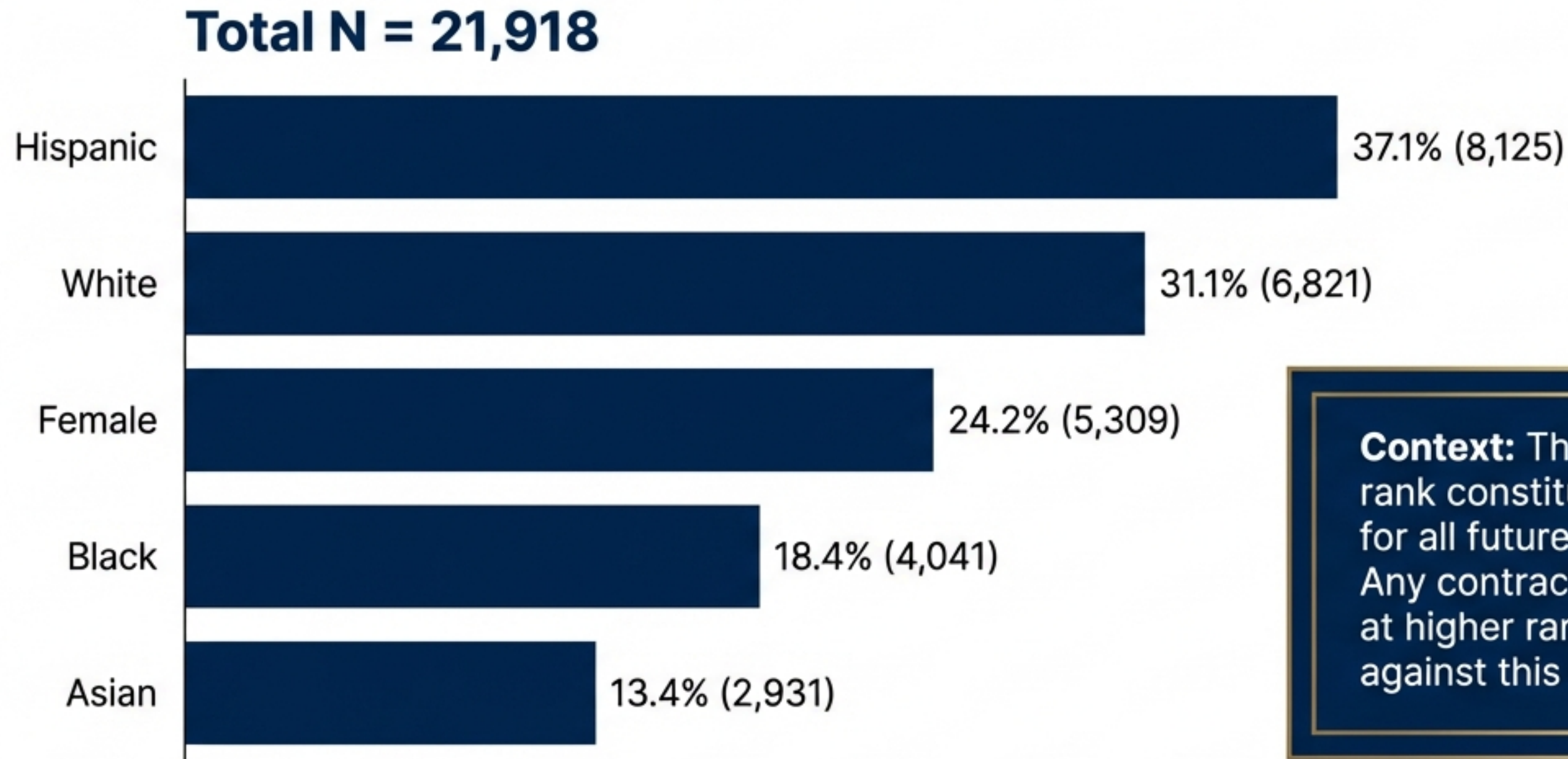
## The Methodology

- Utilizes **Rank-to-Rank comparisons** (e.g., Sergeant to Lieutenant).
- Isolates internal selection mechanisms from external labor market.
- **Goal:** Determine if the system is a neutral progression or a structural filter.



# The Feeder Pool: Police Officer Representation

The entry-level pool is relatively balanced. This is the benchmark for all future ranks.

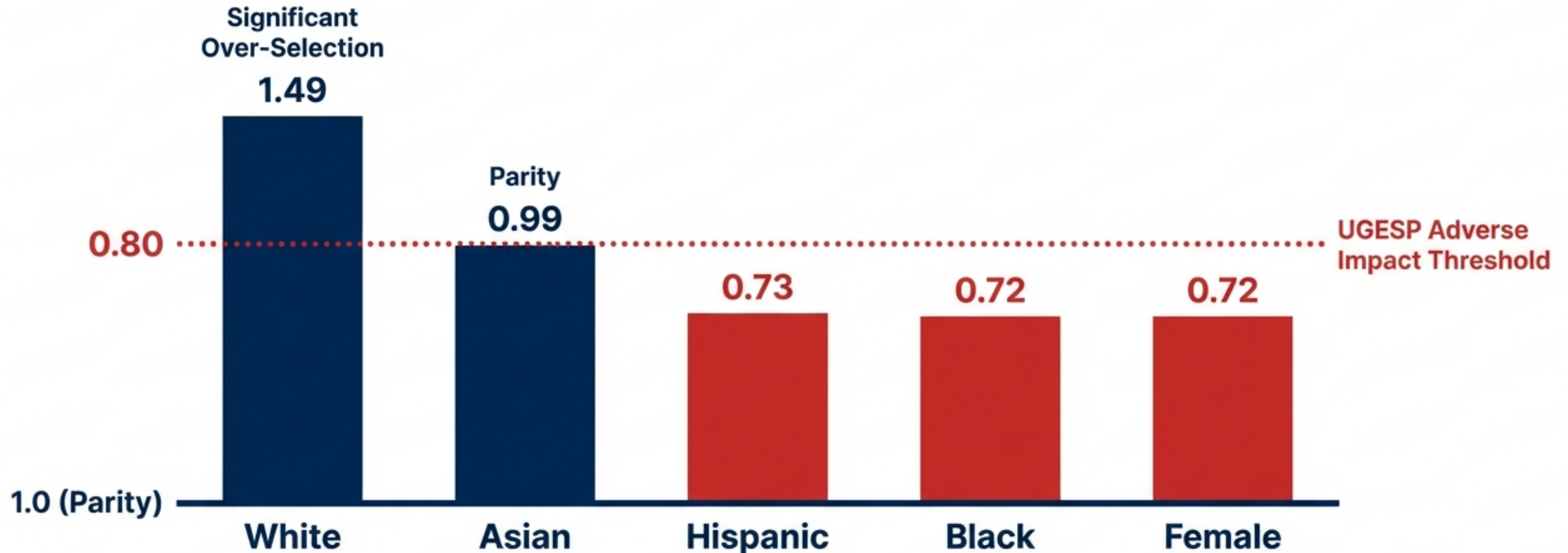


**Context:** The "Police Officer" rank constitutes the primary pool for all future supervisory roles. Any contraction in representation at higher ranks must be measured against this distribution.



# The First Filter: Sergeant and the Onset of Disparity

Comparing Sergeant Selections to the Police Officer Pool (Retention Ratio)



**Insight:** At the very first rung of supervision, Black, Hispanic, and Female officers fall below the Four-Fifths threshold. This occurs despite civil service exams, suggesting pre-exam factors (assignments/evaluations) play a role.



# Lieutenant: The Compounding of Advantage

Cumulative Selection favors those with early sponsorship.



**\*\*Mechanism: Cumulative Selection\*\***  
Candidates who benefited from favorable assignments as Sergeants are positioned for efficiency here. Those without institutional backing stagnate.

**Insight:** The disparity observed at the Sergeant rank not only persists but widens significantly at the Lieutenant level. The compounding effect of early advantages and disadvantages creates a more pronounced imbalance, with the White group gaining substantial ground while Black and Female representation experiences a severe decline. This suggests that initial placement heavily influences future promotion trajectory.



# The Hinge Point: Captain



## The Definition

Captain is the first true **Command Rank**. They do not just enforce policy; they operationalize it. This is the gateway to the executive corps.

## The Data (Total N=364)

**White:** 44.2%

**Female: 11.3%**

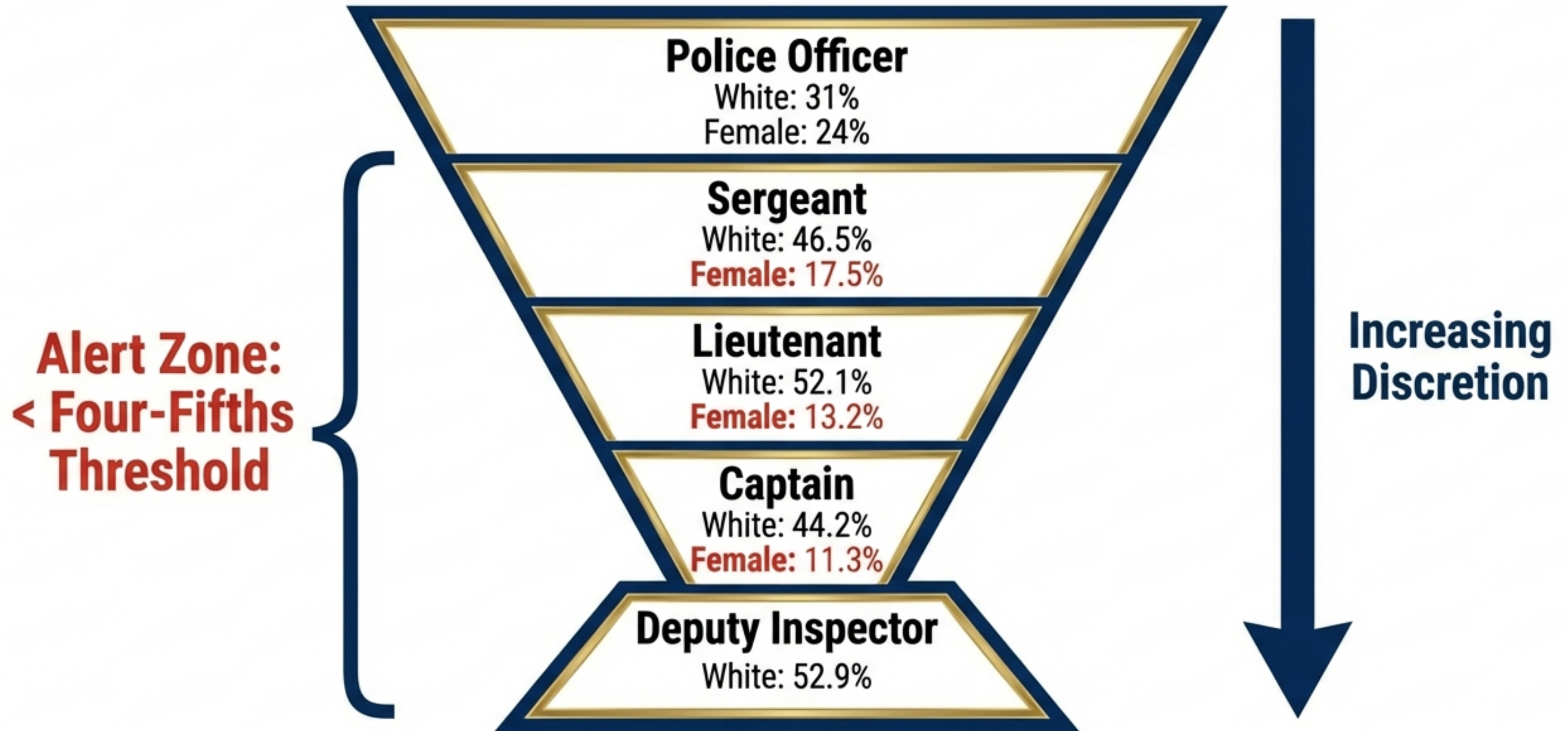
(Stark drop from 24.2% baseline)

## The Reality

**Tenure Arguments Fail.** Officers eligible for Captain have served 10+ years and were hired during diversity initiatives. The contraction here is durable, not transitional.



# Visualizing the Architecture of Authority





# The Executive Tier: Where Discretion is Total

Ranks above Captain are Appointments, relying on “trust” and “alignment”.

0	75%
Asian Assistant Chiefs (0 out of 21)	Male Chiefs

**\*\*Analysis: Institutional Self-Reproduction\*\***

Attrition explanations lose plausibility here. This is a closed loop of career officers. Leadership replicates leadership, reflecting who the institution trusts with absolute power.



# The Mechanism: Validated Exams vs. Unvalidated Discretion



**The Result:** Without feedback loops or validation audits, discretionary systems reproduce existing norms. Discretion magnifies disparity.



# The Governance Gap: Notice Without Obligation

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## Data Transparency (OpenData)

Demographic Data, Attrition Trends, Granular Reporting

## Accountability Mechanisms

No Formal Reconciliation, No Validation Audits

**The Paradox:** Maximum Transparency, Minimal Accountability.

The NYPD publishes granular demographic data, meaning the institution has **Notice** of the attrition.

**The Gap:** There is no formal mechanism requiring decision-makers to reconcile discretionary outcomes with these observed trends.

**Deliberate Indifference:** Continued reliance on the same selection architecture, despite knowing it produces **adverse outcomes**, shifts the issue from “inadvertence” to “policy choice”.



# Legal Implications: Liability in the Absence of Intent

Inter: Discretion increases responsibility, not immunity.

## UGESP Reality

The Guidelines do not require proof of animus (bad intent). They require a response to **Adverse Impact**.

## Risk Factors

1. **High Discretion:** Courts view discretionary systems as probative of structural issues.
2. **Continuity:** Stable patterns across time are not random.
3. **Custom:** Disparities can evidence an official "custom or practice".

## Conclusion

A system that relies on unvalidated discretion while producing consistent disparities creates significant legal exposure.



# From Rhetoric to Structure



The data forecloses the possibility of “indifference”. Hiring diversity is insufficient if the “Architecture of Authority” filters it out before command.

**The Obligation:** Public institutions must govern their systems. Recalibrate the mechanisms of advancement or accept that the resulting disparities are a feature of the design.

**Data without response is not reform.**