Walden University

ScholarWorks

Walden Dissertations and Doctoral Studies

Walden Dissertations and Doctoral Studies Collection

2020

Midwestern College Student Perceptions of Police and the Power of Names

Melessa Renee Henderson
Walden University

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/dissertations

Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

This is to certify that the doctoral dissertation by

Melessa Renee Henderson

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by
the review committee have been made.

Review Committee
Dr. Gerald Regier, Committee Chairperson,
Public Policy and Administration Faculty

Dr. James Castleberry, Committee Member,
Public Policy and Administration Faculty

Dr. Richard DeParis, University Reviewer,
Public Policy and Administration Faculty

Chief Academic Officer and Provost
Sue Subocz, Ph.D.

Walden University
2020

Abstract

Midwestern College Student Perceptions of Police and the Power of Names

by

Melessa Renee Henderson

JD, William Mitchell School of Law, 2005

BS, University of Minnesota at Morris, 1997

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Public Policy and Public Administration

Walden University

August 2020

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore, understand, and describe college student

perceptions of the police based on if they grew up in rural or urban communities. Three

aspects of college student perception of the police covered in this study are effectiveness,

fairness, and legitimacy. Effectiveness may include police responsiveness and empathy as

well as crime prevention and resolution. As opposed to internal biases, fairness is more

external and may include equal treatment regardless of demographic differences. Lastly,

legitimacy is more philosophical and revolves around the lawfulness of state power via

police over a people. Researchers acknowledge that due to "urbanormativity," rural

populations are less studied in crime research. The literature also noted a growing divide

between rural and urban cohorts, especially after the 2016 U.S. presidential election.

Given the recent subculture divergence between rural and urban cohorts, a goal of this

study was to explore if perceptions of police diverge and if so on which aspects:

effectiveness, fairness, and legitimacy. Eight college students participated in the

qualitative study. The results of the study suggest that where a participant grew up (rural

or urban) was not as influential on perceptions of police as whether the participant knew

the name of an officer in his or her community. Findings from the study may be used by

police administration to develop a more nuanced understanding of how community

members knowing officers socially can improve perception of law enforcement.

Midwestern College Student Perceptions of Police and the Power of Names

by

Melessa Renee Henderson

JD, William Mitchell School of Law, 2005

BS, University of Minnesota at Morris, 1997

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Public Policy and Public Administration

Walden University

August2020

Dedication

Curtis & Annie

Acknowledgments

Dennis, Deanna, Lavern, Marjorie, Elmer, Elaine, Myrtle, Edla, Denny, Sus

Dr. Regier, Dr. Castleberry, Dr. Moats, Dr. Wiggins, Dr. Zapf, Dr. Bouchard, Chief Lee,

Kelsey Krueger, Lygie Lunyanga

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

With over 10 years of experience working in higher education, I have spent significant time with young adults between 18 to 25 years old. During that time I have seen differences in perception between students who grew up in rural communities and students who grew up in urban communities. This observation inspired deeper research into perception differences based on whether a young person grew up in a rural or urban community, especially regarding perception of police.

Background

The world of criminal justice has many elements: police, prisons, politicians, judges, and courts. Each of these is impacted by the backgrounds and worldviews of key participants. These backgrounds and worldviews can be different for those inside the criminal justice system and those outside the system who make judgements concerning it. This study was conducted to explore only a few facets of criminal justice: (a) the rural–urban divide and urbanormativity; (b) perceptions of police by youth, specifically college students between the ages of 18 and 25; (c) police effectiveness, fairness, and legitimacy; and (d) community policing. These are contemporary policy discussion frequently appearing in state and national news and political debates.

Rural–Urban Divide

The rural–urban divide was a key issue of this research. The geographical differences and challenges of rural policing resonates with Eldridge's (2012) discussion of the unique nature of rural areas as including but not limited to, (a) isolation due to a lack of back up officers; (b) close connections such that friends and family of the

investigating officer are often the victims/offenders/witness; and (c) compensation that is often lower than urban counterparts. Media has shaped public perception of rural policing as being idyllic such as what is portrayed in popular TV shows like *The Andy Griffith Show* (Sweeny, 1963), whereas police television shows in urban settings are depicted as far more intense. Rural and urban policing are distinct, yet urban policing solutions are often applied universally and are therefore often ill-fitted for rural crime issues (Eldridge, 2012).

Basic geographical differences and limitations make rural–urban policing differences unavoidable—something that those more accustomed to urban physical access and proximity to police may not understand. Rural crime and policing differs in quantity and type from urban policing and varies from nation to nation (Argent, 2012). Again, simple geographical distances, lack of population density, and a stronger sense of unity may be part of the reason there is disparity between rural and urban crime. For instance, Mawby (2009) explored perceptions of police in rural England, citing that rural concerns about policing primarily entail accessibility. Rural communities worry about a lack of access to police given geographical remoteness. Though accessibility is lower in rural communities, crime rates are lower. Rural communities are generally in favor of increased policing and have a more favorable perception of police than urban dwellers.

Another major difference between policing involves social connections; Gubeladze (2011) explored the experience of youth moving from rural to urban environments regarding the biological, psychological, sociological, and/or economic impact. The researcher found differences in cohesion and rapport between rural and

urban communities. Cohesion and rapport in rural communities supports the idea that there is greater informal social control in rural areas, which makes policing different from urban areas (Shapley, 2012). Rural areas have lower rates of reported crime, which may be the result of stronger informal control (Rennison et al., 2013). Because of this, rural residents often rely on their neighbors to help prevent crime.

The rural–urban divide affects police legitimacy. Police legitimacy is shaped by law enforcement's focus on community safety and responding to needs, and increasing focus on public safety will also increase perceived police legitimacy (Blanks, 2016). For urban residents, increased proximity to drug and other criminal offenders means that even innocent urban residents will endure higher rates of pretextual stops, thereby increasing negative perceptions of police. The National Research Council for American Police suggested that there is a reciprocal relationship between police fairness and motivation for those policed to comply and report crime (Kochel et al., 2013). Legitimacy is cyclic in nature; police are perceived as more legitimate when they focus on community needs, which increases trust, improves behavior, and then increases police legitimacy.

Urbanormativity. Thomas, Lowe, Fulkerson, and Smith (2011) covered critical rural theory (structure, space, culture) and introduced the term *urbanormativity* to describe the urban bias evidenced by the lack of sociological research on rural populations. The rural is habitually associated with wildness, simplicity, and/or escapism. However, these assumptions are undermined by Robertson, Caroline, Smokowski, and Cotter (2014), who examined the worldview of rural students between 6th and 8th grade and found that identity formation was a central aspect of adolescence. Further, diversity

of identity can be based on ethnicity, cultural traditions, and religious affiliation. Rural populations are not monolithic—something often mischaracterized in textbooks, news reports, and policy discussion (Caroline et al., 2014).

Perceptions of Police by Youth

Adolescence spans from age 12 to 20 and is followed by early adulthood (20 to 35; Armstrong 2008). According to the National Institute of Justice (2014), the period of late adolescence and the first years of early adulthood are peak ages for criminal activity with a sharp decline after age 25. My research focused on that late adolescent to early adulthood age bracket, specifically college students between ages 18 and 25. Of all life stages, the 18 to 25 age bracket has one of the highest rates of criminality (Armstrong, 2008). However, the 18 to 25 demographic is often overlooked in studies focusing on the general population.

The perception college students have of police was a foundational aspect of the study. Perception is a key factor in legitimacy—not just police legitimacy but authority of other constructs as well. According to Justice Samuel Alito, basing legal decisions on public perception would destabilize the legitimacy of the U.S. justice system (2006). But perception of police differs based on the race of the perceiver. Racial minority youth have a fragmented understanding of the police, whereas White youth have a more unidimensional perception (Hyun Ra & Kim, 2019). A determination not yet understood is whether perceptions of police are more influenced by race or place, be it rural or urban environments.

Studies on youth perceptions of police often focus on urban youth. For example, Adorjan, Ricciardelli, and Spencer (2017) discussed rural Canadians' perceptions of police legitimacy and cited that studies on legitimacy rarely focused on youth. Rural Canadian youth who have experienced frequent informal contact with police hold more positive views and are more likely to cooperate with police. Rural police are challenged by the remote nature of their positions because rural youth tend to view police more favorably when response times are faster, a tougher challenge in remote areas than in denser urban area.

Police Effectiveness, Fairness, and Legitimacy

Many topologies about perceptions of police resonate with the three aspects of effectiveness, fairness, and legitimacy. Several studies attempted to clarify how perceptions of police effectiveness, fairness, and legitimacy intersect, though there is no final consensus. For instance, Cooper (2014) cited that police need to establish a dual legitimacy; legitimacy must be established in the community, and police must also justify their existence to the elected leadership that determines power and funding. An organization can establish legitimacy through its actions and achievements. Taylor, Wyant, and Lockwood (2015) also delved into the definitions of and differences between terms such as lawfulness and legitimacy. They described lawfulness as observable and objective and measurable on the field by set standards. In contrast, legitimacy is more subjective (p. 291). People are more likely to obey laws when the laws are instrumental and substantively moral and when there is procedural legitimacy in their making and enforcement.

For my study, the research instrument inquired of student perceptions of police generally, not community policing given college students may not fully understand the difference. However, background on community policing is necessary because more effective community policing necessitates better understanding of rural–urban community differences, especially how rural and urban youth perceive police (Stepler, 2017). In some rural areas, law enforcement has already taken steps to implement community policing and benefits from the pre-established ties between officers and citizens (Thurman & McGarrell, 2015). When properly implemented, community policing improves public perception of police. However, community policing strategies depend on place; what works well in one community may not in another, and chiefs should be careful not to assume what was successful in one time and place will work for a different demographics (Thurman & McGarrell, 2015).

Community policing could be enhanced by better understanding of how effectiveness, fairness, and legitimacy can enhance perception of police. Community policing may also vary in rural and urban communities based on differences in social control. There is internal and external social control; the former relates to the inner restraint of the individual and the latter to the external crime prevention factors such as neighborhood surveillance (Groff, 2015). Passive contacts among community members foster social control, increase group cohesion, and reduce crime; passive contacts are possibly one of the best means of reducing crime. Established trust and confidence in set standards for behavior encourages others to respond affirmatively when help is needed by others in the community. Being familiar with community members sets behavior

standards and expectations and reinforces informal social control. Rural areas have lower rates of reported crime, which may be the result of stronger informal control, relying on their neighbors to help prevent crime (Rennison et al., 2013).

Gaps and Deficiencies in Prior Research

At least in Canada, there is limited research on perceptions of police and especially rural youth perceptions of police (Adorjan et al., 2017). Future studies regarding police legitimacy could focus on how perceptions of police develop, why those perceptions change, and if there are turning points in perception changes (Tankebe et al., 2016). My study focused on the power of place, be it rural or urban, in that development of perceptions of police and legitimacy. My study also focused on both urban and rural youth rather than all age brackets or urban youth exclusively. My research has begun repairing an oversight in rural research due to urbanormativity (Placide & LaFrance, 2014) by bringing rural subjects into the discourse. For example, Elliott, Thomas, and Ogloff (2012) detail the concept of procedural fairness, though not specifically regarding youth perceptions nor the rural–urban divide. Mazerolle, Bennett, Davis, Sargeant, and Manning (2013) also detailed legitimacy and fairness, though not specifically rural–urban differences, nor do they focus on youth. Taylor, Wyant, and Lockwood (2015) cited that a question not completely resolved is if perceptions of police are more impacted by race, place, race/ethnicity, or being in an urban area. My study focused more exclusively on place by examining college students from rural or urban communities.

Importance of Present Study

The importance of the present study is that no other study to my knowledge has been done on the same complex intersectionality of the rural–urban divide, with focus on ages 18 to 25 regarding perceptions of police effectiveness, fairness, and legitimacy. According to one of the major metropolitan governments in the state of my study, youth voices are critical for communities to hear and affirm in managing public safety (Saint Paul Government, n.d). There is not much research on public perception of police especially regarding youth perception of police (Adorjan et al., 2017). My study was focused exclusively on those youth voices, contrary to many studies focusing on perceptions of police effectiveness, fairness, and legitimacy of the general population.

<center>**Problem Statement**</center>

The central problem is the growing divide between rural and urban communities and how youth in these two subcultures may perceive police. This growing divide has been evidenced recently in both local Minnesota policy (Condon, 2015) and national elections (Kurtzleben, 2016), where rural communities typically aligned with Republican party politics and urban communities with Democratic ones. In Minnesota, there is also a division between rural and urban dwellers' confidence in the government, with the former less trusting of government and the latter more so. Conversely, rural citizens express a higher degree of trust in the police than urban ones (American Public Media Research Lab, 2018). Over half of both urban and rural residents believe there is a rural–urban division of values. Most rural residents do not believe their values align with urban

residents and vice versa (Bialik, 2018). Also, there is a divide between perceptions of rural and urban youth (Tu, 2018).

Part of the problem concerns the idea of urbanormativity (Thomas et al., 2011) which expresses a disproportionate focus on urban crime policy to the detriment of rural research. This privileging appears in the definition of rural as that which is not urban (Ratcliffe et al., 2016). Policing theory has almost exclusively focused on urban police (Barrett et al., 2009), which is problematic given the divergent realities of policing in rural and urban subcultures as well as the different lived experiences of the police officers themselves. Rural police are often generalists whereas urban police may specialize, and rural police are often isolated and geographically remote from other officers whereas urban police frequently have fellow officers and support nearby (Suun & Chu, 2009).

Another part of the problem is that police officers may not understand the differences between urban and rural cultures (Eldridge, 2012), which can lead to less effective policing especially in the context of community policing where that understanding becomes critical. Community policing occurs when law enforcement partners with the community in policing and engages in community service (National Institute of Justice, 2017). Community policing strategies try to better understand the people and cultures of the community (Stepler, 2017). Therefore, enhanced community policing via a better understanding of rural–urban community differences could serve to bridge the growing rural–urban divide as it requires police to have knowledge of the differences between rural and urban subcultures including perceptions of police. Police should understand the cultural nuances of the communities they serve and how strategies

may not work the same in different places (Thurman & McGarrell, 2015). Law enforcement should incorporate practices that support community involvement, public health, and youth-related issues.

Purpose of the Study

My qualitative study was focused on the ignored youth voices that, according to the Saint Paul Government (n.d.), must be heard. Its purpose was to explore and understand the difference in perception that Midwest college students have toward police effectiveness, fairness, and legitimacy based on whether they grew up in rural or urban communities. Young people today are bombarded with live video of police actions that may be different from the perception of police that they remember from their culture and home community. Media has shown to be highly influential in perceptions of police (Graziano, 2009), and it is critical that police work to ensure youth have a positive perception of and attitude toward them (Stewart et al., 2013).

Researchers segment perceptions of the police in different typologies though commonly along the lines of police effectiveness, fairness (often denoted as procedural justice), and legitimacy (Taylor et al., 2015). Perception of police effectiveness involves but is not limited to crime prevention, solving crime, and response times. Perceptions of police fairness concerns equal treatment, whereas police legitimacy is more philosophical and resonates with the lawful underpinning of state power via police and their actions.

This study was conducted to further understand the growing divide between urban and rural subcultures (Blankenau & Parker, 2015) through Midwest college student perceptions of police effectiveness, fairness, and legitimacy. This study delineated the

perception differences of rural and urban cultures toward police and thereby could broaden and empower training approaches for community policing.

Research Question

How do Midwest college students perceive police effectiveness, fairness, and legitimacy based on whether they grew up in rural or urban communities?

Theoretical Framework

The framework for this study is shaped by other studies on rural and urban populations (Argent, 2012; Bialik, 2018; Blankenau & Parker, 2015), although their focus differs from this study on perceptions of police. Argent (2012) delved into rural–urban policing disparities due to geography/population density and other external factors. Additionally, Blankenau, and Parker (2015) examined the rural–urban divide in Nebraska and quantitatively explain broader policy issues such as disparate rural–urban worldviews on sex education and prayer in public schools. Finally, Bialik (2018) reported on the nation as a whole and delved into the differences between rural and urban values and feelings about their own community. In contrast, this study focused on youth perceptions of police within the context of two theoretical frameworks: narrative policy framework (NPF) of McBeth, Shanahan, and Jones (2005) and the social construction framework (SCF) of Sabatier and Weible (2014).

Another foundational concept was that different periods in an individual's lifecycle tend to present higher chances of deviance; for example, ages newborn to 10 or ages 70 and older are generally less criminal than the various age brackets in between those extremes (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, n.d.). This study

was focused on college students between the ages of 18 to 25, an age bracket that statistically tends toward higher levels of deviancy. Additionally, the concept of urbanormativity impacted this study because the focus on rural and urban aspects was equal rather than focused on urban communities and crime policy.

The questions asked of the study participants revolved around concepts of police effectiveness, fairness, and legitimacy. Police effectiveness and perceptions of it vary but may include response times, crime deterrence, and dispute resolution. Police fairness may include equal, or at least equitable, treatment of all within the given community. Police legitimacy is a more philosophical concept regarding the role of state power over the people, such as use of force and the monopoly of power as employed by the state. The overarching theoretical concept was formed by a combination of the rural–urban, police effectiveness, fairness, and legitimacy, as they influence and are influenced by community policing.

Narrative Policy Framework

NPF explores how individuals are impacted by policy narratives (McBeth et al., 2005). This study explored how each individual participant perceives police and how community and media-perpetuated policy narratives influenced them. NPF may entail that police establish their legitimacy to policymakers (Cooper, 2012). Legitimacy is influenced by individuals and individuals are influenced by policy narratives perpetuated by media more than actual crime (Miller & Davis, 2008).

Social Construction Framework

The second framework developed by Sabatier and Weible is SCF, which focuses more broadly on social construction as a motivation force behind the failures of public policy and inequality of citizenship (Sabatier & Weible, 2014). SCF is a lens through which to examine how communities develops shared perceptions of reality. Smith and McElwee (2013) proposed that social constructions of rural people perpetuate problematic narratives and injustices by adhering to romanticized stereotypes and overlooking aspects of rural crime. This framework had previously been exemplified by the work of Smith and McElwee as they focused on the social constructions resonating with rural crime policy. The two theoretical frameworks (NFP and SCF) are not mutually exclusive and both were employed.

Nature of the Study

The nature of this study was a generic qualitative model exploring the experiences of the participants, with aspects of narrative and phenomenological design (Creswell, 2013). The narrative approach focuses on the stories as told by individuals (Creswell, 2013), including stories participants shared about police and how those experiences impacted their perception. The phenomenological approach is used to examine how a community may share experiences (Creswell, 2013). The generic qualitative model is a hybrid of both narrative and phenomenological in that it explores phenomena as well as the worldviews and perspectives of participants (Cooper & Endacott, 2007).

The purpose of the study was to better understand how college students perceive police differently or similarly based on if they grew up in rural or urban communities.

First, conducting the study started with a campus dean selecting seven students who grew up in a rural community and seven who grew up in an urban community to be participants; the dean has access to the database of the entire student body and can easily search addresses and zip codes. I asked the participants whether they grew up in a rural or urban community to confirm that formative years were not split between the two subcultures. Selection was criterion based (Creswell, 2013) in that each participant had the criterion of having grown up in rural or urban communities not both or overseas. Participants were mostly nursing, business, communication, teacher education, pastoral studies, or science majors given those are ones with which I have the least contact or influence. Second, I interviewed each participant individually during February of 2020 and preliminarily asked the questions in Appendix A. Third, each interview was recorded, transcribed, and coded. Lastly, the data were examined for common themes within the two cohorts.

Definitions

Though many of the terms in this study are common, key terms are defined to avoid misapplied definitions and be clear of usage in this study. There is not yet consensus on the relationship between police effectiveness, fairness, and legitimacy. Some literature suggested that fairness is a dimension within legitimacy (Tankebe et al., 2016), though my research explored how students may perceive fairness and legitimacy separately.

Community policing: Community policing occurs when law enforcement officers and civilians work together to maintain public safety and solve problems within their community (U.S. Department of Justice, 2012).

Effectiveness: Police effectiveness includes but may not be limited to crime prevention, accessibility, and response times (Mawby, 2008), and timely, judicious dispute resolution. Perception of police effectiveness is often fostered by individual experience whereas perception of police misconduct is influenced by media (Miller & Davis, 2008). Effectiveness is linked to perception by the consensus that, for police to be most effective, their public image must be positive within the community they serve (Zahnow et al, 2017). Further, adequate information about crime deterrence, occurrence, and police response is key for the public to have an accurate perception of police effectiveness (Ho & Cho, 2017). Actual police effectiveness and police perceived effectiveness may not be entirely the same thing.

Fairness: Police fairness is that the public perceives police as treating individuals equally by demonstrating neutrality in matters of race, religion, gender, or other characteristics. According to Professor Tom Tyler at Yale Law School, there are five components to police fairness: (a) voice, or that the individual has been heard; (b) respect, or that the individual has been treated with decency; (c) neutrality, or that the individual perceives that procedure is unbiased; (d) understanding, or that the individual can comprehend the rational and legal process; and (e) helpfulness, or that the individual perceives the police are useful (Gold & Bradley, 2018).

Legitimacy: Legitimacy refers to an entitlement (of power generally) endowed by the people to an institution which is empowered to enforce rules and be obeyed (Hinds, 2008). Legitimacy reflects both the belief that police should be able to keep order in their communities and the willingness of the people to follow the law and defer to authority (Gilbert et al., 2014). To clarify, lawfulness is observable and objective and something that can be measured in the field by set standards, whereas legitimacy is more subjective (National Academic Press, 2004, p. 291).

People are more likely to obey laws when (a) the laws are instrumental; (b) the laws are substantively moral; and (c) there is procedural legitimacy in the making and enforcing of the laws (Taylor et al., 2015). Whereas lawfulness is measured by observable administrative standards, legitimacy is more subjective (National Academic Press, 2004). Community safety is improved when the public holds a positive perception of police and police legitimacy in particular, which again illustrates the cyclic and complex nature of legitimacy (Henry & Franklin, 2019).

Rural: Defining the term *rural* reflects the issue of urbanormativity in that even the U.S. Census Bureau defines rural as "all population, housing, and territory not included within an urban area…" (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018, para. 3).

Social control: Social control can include either formal or informal control. Formal control may include formalized, codified rules, laws, and regulations. Informal control can be broken down into internal and external. Internal informal control is the values and personal restraints lending toward lawful behavior such as fear of a higher power or belief in karma. External informal control includes concepts such as stigma,

shunning, peer pressure, or adherence to community cultural norms rather than formal codified laws (Groff, 2015).

Urban: The U.S. Census Bureau (2018) defines urbanized as areas well developed, densely populated, and 50,000 or above people.

Urbanormativity: An urban bias evidenced by lack of sociological research regarding identity of rural populations (Adorjan et al., 2017). The perpetuated perceptions of anything rural is that it is something wild, simple, and/or an escape. Progressive urbanization led to distinctions as well as dependency and domination (Thomas et al., 2011).

Assumptions

It is assumed that better understanding of community differences, such as how rural and urban youth may differently perceive police, can be beneficial to policing in general and especially to community policing. Research indicates perception differences among races, yet relatively little delineates the differences between communities in rural and urban subcultures. The scope of this study focused qualitatively on the differences between rural and urban communities and perceptions of police rather than quantification of how that knowledge enhances police training. This study may lend toward later research to better ascertain if and how much influence knowledge of community differences impacts police training and effectiveness. It was also assumed that the students answered accurately and fairly given that a researcher cannot prove that they gave truthful answers. Another assumption from both the literature and from experience is that there is a real rural–urban divide.

Scope and Delimitations

The goal of the study was to explore and isolate the perceptions of young people ages 18 to 25 toward police, the age range that often has the highest rates of criminality (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, n.d.). I explored equally the perceptions of young people who grew up in rural and urban communities rather than focus on urban alone, as do many studies (Adorjan et al., 2017). A generic qualitative approach was taken so that aspects of both narrative and phenomenological (Creswell, 2013) approaches could be employed to develop a rich understanding of how these two subcultures perceive police. The time frame of this study was the spring semester of 2020. The subjects were students between ages of 18 and 25, all of whom grew up in either rural or urban U.S. communities, rather than third culture or internationally. The focus of this study was on place rather than race, though racial issues did come up in the interviews.

Limitations

The limitations are that this study focused on one population (college students) of a specific age in one state as compared to exploring perceptions from a wider cross-section of the population and in other parts of the nation. I attempted to focus on rural–urban differences rather than racial disparities, though potential racial bias was included in participant responses. The focus was also on ages 18 to 25, an age bracket especially beneficial to understand given increased rates of several types of deviance. This study also focused on perceptions of police effectiveness, fairness, and legitimacy, though there are other topologies to consider when assessing perceptions of police.

Significance

As noted (Adorjan et al., 2017; Thomas et al., 2011), crime and police research has focused on urban populations and adults rather than rural populations and youth. This study focused on both rural and urban as well as exclusively on youth (college students), which should apply to other campuses or with non-college students in the same age bracket. This study was qualitative with a small sample size to delve deeper into understanding perceptions (Creswell, 2013) of rural and urban subcultures. Once various themes were identified, I or other researchers could employ quantitative research of much larger cohorts to either support or refute the smaller sample results. On a smaller and practical scale, this study may improve the new law enforcement major at the campus that the study participants attend.

Summary

The background was provided for the intersectionality of community policing, urbanormativity, and perceptions of police effectiveness, fairness, and legitimacy. The problem, including the current political climate escalating the timeliness of this research, was articulated. The research question, study design, and approach to answering the research question were stated. Lastly, I addressed the significance of this study, social change implications for police training and policy rhetoric, and direct impact on a new program at the college at which I teach. In the next chapter, I delve more deeply into the literature, search strategies, and theoretical foundation.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

An increasing problem is the growing divide between rural and urban communities and how these two subcultures perceive police. The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore and understand how Midwest college student perceptions of police effectiveness, fairness, and legitimacy differ based on whether they grew up in rural or urban communities. An enhanced understanding of how youth in rural and urban communities perceive police may empower community policing. Young people are overwhelmed with instant live video of police actions that may present an image of the police that differs from the general perception of police within their culture and home community. Media is influential on perceptions of police (Graziano, 2009), but less clear is whether and individual's attitude toward law enforcement officers is shaped by their culture and region of origin. A goal of this research was to develop a richer and deeper understanding of how college students view the effectiveness, fairness, and legitimacy of police today.

Literature Establishing the Relevance of the Problem

Policing can be a contentious current policy issue given highly publicized officer-involved shootings and intensified race relations. Community policing strategies have been effective; however, they may be improved with better understanding of the growing rural–urban divide and how those communities perceive police effectiveness, fairness, and legitimacy. The rural–urban divide has been cited in my home state (the setting for this study) of Minnesota (American Public Media Research Lab, 2017) as well as

nationally, where rural and urban subcultures are pitted against each other largely due to economics (National League of Cities, 2018).

Closely linked with the rural–urban divide is the concept of urbanormativity, or the bias (Barrett et al., 2009) and disproportionate focus in the literature on urban crime policy to the detriment of rural communities, as academics have failed to invest in rural research (Placide & LaFrance, 2014). Disproportionate focus on urban policing and crime policy can hurt rural communities because police chiefs could try to apply strategies heralded as successful in urban communities to rural communities. Urban strategies may not be as effective as anticipated given the distinct differences between rural and urban communities (Thurman & McGarrell, 2015).

The literature suggested that perceptions of police effectiveness and fairness vary by race (Taylor et al., 2015). The literature also indicates that rural and urban communities perceive police differently; many urban residents and racial minority residents perceive police power as illegitimate and have lower levels of trust for the police (Suun & Chu, 2009). In contrast, rural communities often perceive police as insiders to the community (Suun & Chu, 2009, p. 228), which contributes toward a positive perception of police legitimacy.

Preview of the Chapter

This chapter covers the literature search strategy regarding the theoretical foundation between the rural–urban divide and urbanormativity as well as police effectiveness, fairness, legitimacy, and community policing. Also provided is the literature supporting the conceptual and theoretical foundations of this research followed

by a detailed literature review. The conclusion details how this study fills a gap in the literature and provides currently needed knowledge in the field.

Literature Search Strategy

The literature search was initially focused on the rural and urban divide and differences between the lived experience of their respective inhabitants regarding concepts of community, home, identity, love, and deviance. But these concepts were too broad. As the research progressed and gaps in the literature became more apparent, the focus narrowed to the rural–urban divide as predominately related to community policing. Then the focus was further narrowed to youth perception of police and specifically police effectiveness, fairness, and legitimacy. These three aspects of policing lent toward research on each term individually as well as the complex intersectionality of the three through the lens of rural–urban differences. This study may lead to improved community policing techniques by enhancing knowledge of how rural and urban youth perceive police, though the students were not asked about their perceptions of community policing but rather policing in general.

List of Research Sources

The Walden University Library was a valuable place to start. I began by searching key terms in ProQuest, EBSCOhost, and SAGE Premier. I further located state and federal government web pages that provided key components to the study. Google Scholar also was helpful with finding sources that may were either missing or inaccessible from the Walden Library databases.

List of Key Search Terms

Terms used in searches included but were not limited to *rural*, *urban*, *urbanormativity*, *community policing*, *perception of police*, *formal control*, *informal control*, *youth*, *culture*, *rural culture*, and *youth culture* as well as *police effectiveness*, *fairness*, and *legitimacy* in all fields of the SAGE Journals database as well as EBCOhost and ProQuest Central. This search yielded many sources directly related to the research question. Searching Google for .gov sources also provided many primary sources.

Description of Iterative Search Process

The results of the circular research process between databases and government web pages, as well as discussions with key policymakers in the field of policing, helped refine the study from the broad focus on rural–urban differences in the lived experiences of community, home, identity, love, and deviance to the narrower focus on rural–urban differences in perception of police fairness, effectiveness, and legitimacy.

Once focused on police fairness, effectiveness, and legitimacy, I started to research the contemporary, historical, and philosophical underpinnings of each term individually as well as the intersectionality of those terms. Though police effectiveness, fairness, and legitimacy are not a novel trifecta of research, how each of those three are connected to and influence the others may vary in the literature and seems far from settled. This study aimed in part to explore the complex connection between police effectiveness, fairness, and legitimacy.

Upon obtaining a foundational understanding of the key aspects (police effectiveness, fairness, and legitimacy), I researched life cycles and ages of predominate

deviance. The cohort most accessible to me as a researcher was college students, an age

cohort typically more deviant, and as such, is a critical demographic to understand.

Further, my personal experience of living in both rural and urban communities motivated

my research on and investment in this topic.

<center>**Theoretical Foundation**</center>

Theories

The theoretical framework was NPF (McBeth et al., 2005), which explores how

people interface with policy narratives. According to NPF, police must establish their

legitimacy to policymakers (Cooper, 2012), something that is influenced by individuals,

and individuals are influenced by policy narratives perpetuated by media more than

actual crime (Miller & Davis, 2008). For example, Spring (2013) focused on the

individual and delved into a narrative regarding identity and "sense of place." In this

sense, his work is similar to my research. The narrative approach and theoretical

framework thus resonate with the qualitative design as well as the small participant

sample.

The second framework is SCF, which focuses more broadly on social

constructions and may help understand public policy failures (Sabatier & Weible, 2014,

p. 2015). A social construction is something that has common meaning in one population

that may not in another, such as the value of a dollar bill. SCF is a lens through which to

examine how a community develops shared perceptions of reality. Social constructions of

rural subjects perpetuate problematic narratives and injustices by adhering to

romanticized stereotypes and overlooking aspects of rural crime (Smith & McElwee,

2013). SCF in the work of Smith and McElwee, focused on the social constructions surrounding rural crime policy.

Relationship of Theory to Present Study

The two applicable theories to the present study are NPF and SCF. NPF explores how individuals are impacted by policy narratives (McBeth et al., 2005). I explored how each individual participant perceived police and how community, as well as media-perpetuated policy narratives influenced them. As a general example, NPF may entail that police establish their legitimacy to policymakers (Cooper, 2012), which is influenced by individuals and individuals are influenced by policy narratives perpetuated by media more than actual crime (Miller & Davis, 2008). The two theoretical frameworks (NPF and SCF) are not mutually exclusive and both were employed.

The Concept

The policing concepts as currently implemented may not be as effective as possible given the gap in the literature regarding the intersectionality between several major policy issues such as the rural–urban divide and urbanormativity, perception of police effectiveness, fairness, and legitimacy, and community policing. Certainly, personal experiences and demographics cause significant variance in evaluation (Stewart et al., 2013). The lived experiences of rural and urban youth yielded a better understanding of the power of place (rural or urban demographics and experience) on perceptions of police.

Rural–urban divide. The rural–urban divide has been accentuated in recent years, especially in the presidential race between President Donald Trump and Senator

Hilary Clinton (Truelsen, 2017). The rural–urban divide narrative may be fostered by the

growth of metro areas and economic development disparity, and even separates the

communities and pits them against each other (National League of Cities, 2018). The

divide issue can only be exacerbated by police departments attempting to apply urban

solutions to rural problems (Eldridge, 2012). New rural police chiefs, often from metro

areas, are often surprised by the diversity and different issues rural communities face as

compared to previous urban experiences (Eldridge, 2012).

There are strengths and weakness of rural policing; two influential factors include

but are not limited to the rural–urban differences in geographical isolation as well as

social community connectedness (Shapley, 2012). Different policing needs across a

diverse nation such as the United States is not surprising given that law enforcement is

not isolated but a piece of any given community; if the community is diverse then

expectations of how law police act may also vary (Ivković & Khechumyan, 2014). Better

understanding of how rural and urban youth perceive police could increase nuance in

police policy.

Academia has long neglected researching rural policing and that may have lent

toward prejudice and preconceived notions of rural policing, especially that of the iconic

rural sheriff as portrayed by media (Placide & LaFrance, 2014). Anything rural conjures

up often contradictory concepts of freedom yet isolation, simplicity yet lack of

opportunity or convenience (Placide & LaFrance, 2014). The sheriff as one of the, if not

the, most powerful elected leaders in the county (Shapley, 2012) is not only iconic but

becomes representative of the broader rural populace; if the sheriff is portrayed positively

in media that becomes part of the perception of rural people though if the sheriff is portrayed as foolish or dishonest, those characteristics are broadly applied to rural populations, too (Placide & LaFrance, 2014).

One difference in rural police as compared to urban is that rural police may not only function as enforcement but also social workers and peacekeepers (Adorjan et al., 2017). Additionally, the rural officers' duties may even include the gamut of detective as well as school liaison officer (Yang, 2017). Even further adding to the list of rural police duties, Shapley (2012) cited animal control, littering, parade escorts, home checks for vacationers, and even theft of farm equipment, livestock, or crops.

More locally to the setting of this study, research cited significant differences and similarities between the lived experiences of rural and urban residents (American Public Media Research Lab, 2017). Rural residents tend to more favorably view police than their urban counterparts (81% rural and 73% urban express trust for police); however, rural residents tend to hold more pessimistic views of government as compared to urban counterparts (61% rural consider government not deserving of trust and 52% urban) (American Public Media Research Lab, 2017). The study also cited in Minnesota that the split between rural and urban in population is 39% rural and 54% urban (American Public Media Research Lab, 2017), though this definition differs from the U.S. government's definition in that American Public Media Research Lab designates rural and urban by a county approach; in Minnesota rural residents are any outside of the following counties: Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott, and Washington (American Public Media Research Lab, 2017).

These local statistics are like England and Wales wherein Mawby (2008) reported similar rural–urban perception splits. However, perceptions of police vary between rural and urban also differ along the lines of accessibility. For rural residents, geography and proximity play a significant issue in their perception of police given that one of the primary concerns of rural residents is accessibility (Mawby, 2008) though rural residents may often still rate police more favorably than urban residents. Gender also lends towards disparity regarding perception of police with 48.9% of men and 53.4% of women having a positive perception of police, a perception that stays the same from ages 12 to 16 and even older (Stewart et al., 2013).

Regarding the political divide between rural and urban communities, rural areas are becoming more predominately Republican and urban areas more predominately Democrat in the past twenty years, whereas the suburbs are still more evenly split Democrat and Republican (Bialik, 2018). Slightly more rural residents perceive their values as different from their urban counterparts; 58% rural as compared to 55% urban perceive value differences in the other (Bialik, 2018). Similarly, 70% rural and 65% urban residents perceive those living in different types of communities do not understand the types of problems they face in their own. Lastly, and more drastically disparate, rural residents are far more likely to know their neighbors, with roughly 40% knowing all or most of their neighbors compared to only 28% of suburban residents and 24% of urban residents (Bialik, 2018). Knowing neighbors may seem a subtle point, though in social control theory it is significant. Rural areas may tend to have higher levels of informal social control and hence lower rates of reporting crime (Rennison et al., 2013).

Again, police policy research almost exclusively focuses on urban police departments (Barrett et al., 2009) lending toward the concept of urbanormativity. The trend may be shifting toward greater focus on rural police departments, too, however, there seems little research comparing both rural and urban police departments simultaneously (Suun & Chu, 2009). From the perspective of officers, urban rather than rural police officers are more likely to perceive bias as a significant issue in the department (Ioimo et al., 2011).

Informal social control enhances and is enhanced by a closer more insular community where residents often know each other. Theft, for instance, may not be reported but merely handled directly between parties with no police intervention (Shapley, 2012). Social control can be both internal and external, both of which may be enhanced by high familiarity with others in rural communities (Groff, 2015). Internal controls are enhanced by clear and adhered to shared community standards and values, and expected standards of behavior as well as acceptance of that moral code (Groff, 2015). External social control has more to do with surveillance by others (Groff, 2015) such as community watch groups. These types of informal control Groff (2015) suggested are far more effective in crime prevention than the formal controls, such as police.

Most significant to my research are Taylor, Wyant, and Lockwood (2015), researchers who also focused on the trifecta of police effectiveness, fairness, and legitimacy through the lens of the rural–urban divide. Taylor, Wyant, and Lockwood (2015), however, called for some differentiation between if perceptions of police were

more do to with geography (rural or urban), or racial differences. My research more exclusively focused on rural and urban differences and not race, though racial issues were mentioned in the responses by participants. My study also focused on a specific age bracket: college students from 18 to 25 years old.

     Perception. Perception is far more influenced by media than reality and public perception of crime influences police and how officers deal with crime (Wong, 2017). Ho and Cho (2017) posit that crime reduction alone is not enough to improve trust in police but how the public perceives effectiveness with regard to community and public engagement. Law enforcement may unduly be portrayed, as with by artists such as Tupac Shakur and Tomi Adeyemi, as racist in use of force. To contrast, a Harvard study in which regarding officer-involved shootings that after extenuating circumstances are accounted for there are no racial differences (Fryer, 2016). Though data is clearer regarding that most extreme use of force, officer-involved shootings; data is less clear and more complex regarding police non-lethal use of force and the interplay between perception and disparate lived experiences between different people groups (Fryer, 2016).

     Racial and geographical aspects complexly influence perception of police in that if someone lives close to high crime and violence then trust in police may be influenced by that experience and disproportionate exposure to victimization (Zahnow et al., 2017). To what degree confidence in police is based on race or place (isolated from crime or near to it) seems not entirely clear. Again, my research attempted to focus more so on place (rural or urban) and influence it has on perception of police.

How the public perceives not only police but also victims, criminals, and even crime is largely shaped by media portrayal (Dowler, 2003). However, the National Institute of Justice cited that though media influences public perceptions of police it is less influential than personal interactions with police (National Institute of Justice, 2014, March 18). Furthermore, how a community perceives police is influenced by media; an issue that is overlooked yet better understanding could advance police-community research (Graziano, 2009). Again, *actual* police effectiveness and *perceived* police effectiveness may not be the same, though arguably the later more than the former may influence perceived legitimacy.

Police effectiveness. Police effectiveness often revolves around crime deterrence, response times to emergency situations, and dispute resolution after crisis. However, the intersectionality of police effectiveness and fairness are not easily extrapolated. One study suggested that racial disparity of effectiveness impacts perceived fairness (Taylor et al., 2015). Cooper (2015) clarified the dual nature of legitimacy and how law enforcement needs to demonstrate value to both the community it serves as well as the governmental hierarchy above it. Community perception of police is improved when people see them respond to crimes and then this responsiveness decreases community fear of victimization (Zahnow et al., 2017). Thus again, illustrating the circular nature and complex intersectionality of police effectiveness and legitimacy.

Media coverage is far more powerful at shaping perceptions of crime than actual crime (Wong, 2017). Certainly, community perception of police is distorted with incomplete information, perceptions often formed by both media and personal beliefs

rather than actual statistics and police effectiveness (Ho & Cho, 2017, p. 236). Studies on public perception of police often centered on adults and urban populations; far less research has been done on rural populations and especially rural youth regarding perception of police (Adorjan et al., 2017). Slow response times more likely in rural areas can negatively shape the perceptions youth hold of police as not responsive and therefore may have negative implications for their perception of police legitimacy (Adorjan et al., 2017).

      Police fairness. Police fairness often entails the equitable treatment of all cohorts within the given community. There are five components to police fairness: (a) Voice, or that the individual has been heard; (b) Respect, or that the individual has been treated with decency; (c) Neutrality, or that the individual perceives that procedure is unbiased; (d) Understanding, or that the individual can comprehend the rational and legal process; (e) Helpfulness, or that the individual perceives the police are useful (Gold & Bradley, 2018). Police fairness is highly contentious given accusations of racial disparity in police use of force, especially deadly force.

      A Harvard study suggested that though there may be racial disparity in non-lethal use of force, there is no racial differences in the most extreme use of police force, that of police involved shootings (Fryer, 2016). The disparity, however, of non-lethal force can have the ripple effect on Black youth and adult perceptions of inequality and economic outcomes (Fryer, 2016). The disproportionate contact police have with Black communities only magnifies distrust (Gilbert et al., 2014). However, the pretextual stops of innocent racial minorities may be in part due to coincidence of proximity to drugs or

other criminal acts (Blanks, 2016). This proximity issue inclines the inverse may be true, that an innocent rural person may not endure as many pretextual stops simply because drugs may not be as prevalent, yet, in many rural areas.

There are four pillars of procedural justice (fairness) in that there must be fairness in process, fairness in actions, all voices have opportunity to be heard, and unbiased decision making (United States Department of Justice, 2018). These four are echoed by Adorjan, Ricciardelli, and Spencer (2017) in that when police are perceived as being on the same side as the community then people have an increased sense of police fairness.

Fairness is even more important to a community than actual outcomes. Fairness is determined by the following four aspects: (a) Quality (politeness and respect) of treatment; (b) Voice in the process; (c) Neutrality; and (d) Trustworthiness. (Elliott et al., 2012). In fact, these four aspects of the police were more important to victims and communities in moving on from a crime than solving crime (Elliott et al., 2012).

Police legitimacy. Legitimacy, as compared to effectiveness and fairness, resonates with a more philosophical and long-standing debate on the role of state power, and for purposes of this study state power as manifested in police actions. Legitimacy, as compared to effectiveness and fairness, is how willingly those in the community defer to police power (Gilbert et al., 2014) but also hinges on constitutional, philosophical, and even literary rhetoric.

Constitutional provisions regarding police legitimacy include but are not limited to the rights of both Fourth Amendment rights and Eighth Amendment rights. The Fourth Amendment states that:

> The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects,
>
> against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no Warrants
>
> shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and
>
> particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be
>
> seized. (U. S. Const. amend. IV)

The Eighth Amendment states that "Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted" (U.S. Const. amend. VIII). Case law further clarified that these amendments set limitations of state power over the citizenry. Foundationally, the Supreme Court has held that what is a legitimate use of force by law enforcement under the Fourth Amendment should be determined by an objective and reasonableness standard, and that reason should be that of an officer at the scene at the time of incident rather than reasonable in hindsight (Graham v. Connor, 1989).

Max Weber's foundational classic *The Protestant Ethic and Spirit of Capitalism* (1904/1958) cited how legitimacy may be conferred from the people to the state out of duty and tradition, adoration for a charismatic leader, or the rationality of the law; legitimacy of a given regime is based in the public's belief in it as well as willingness to obey. Similarly, celebrated author William Carlos Williams allegorically posits the problem of state power in his short story "The Use of Force" (1938). Williams tells the story of a doctor (WCW was both author and medical doctor) and an obstinate child wherein the doctor's use of force over the child at first seemed benevolent but then turned prideful and overbearing. Williams seems to question when and where is the line between

legitimate use of force for the benefit of the subservient and when is use of force for the ego and vain glory of the more powerful over the powerless.

Legitimacy can be defined as power that is rightful and acknowledged by "relevant agents" (Tankebe et al., 2016) and legitimacy is multidimensional in that it entails aspects such as lawfulness as well as procedural and distributive fairness. The greater the police legitimacy often the greater the cooperation and compliance (Tankebe et al., 2016). Also, the three aspects of legitimacy are lawfulness, procedural fairness, and distributive fairness (Tankebe et al., 2016), and legitimacy may differ based on context of the situation.

Both direct and indirect experiences with police shape public perception of police and if procedures and practices are perceived as fair people are more likely to judge police as legitimate and therefore comply (Hinds, 2008). These preexisting perceptions are carried by people into their interactions with police (Hinds, 2008). Taylor, Wyant, and Lockwood (2015) also explore the intersectionality between effectiveness, fairness, and legitimacy finding that the fairer police treat the citizenry the more effective police function, and that perceived effectiveness even bolsters perceived fairness. Similarly, legitimacy is undermined by police practices viewed as too aggressive or discriminatory (Blanks, 2016).

Peelian principles of policing (Home Office, 2012) suggest that policing by consent necessitates police power, depending upon public approval of their actions and public respect. Police should demonstrate impartiality, as well as offer service and sacrifice in protecting and preserving the lives of those they serve. Police power should

come from the public's common consent rather than from state power (United Kingdom, 2012). Certainly, legitimacy is formed by a community's response to those in power; the people grant police power and therefore legitimacy because of their belief that police will use power for their best interest as they deter and solve crime (Henry & Franklin, 2019). If police are perceived as more legitimate people are more likely to comply, and therefore police are more effective.

The National Institute of Justice (2016) cited that many law enforcement agencies want to both effectively prevent crime as well as increase trust in the communities they serve, something that may be increased by improved legitimacy of policing. According to the National Academic Press (2004), fair exercise of police authority is critical to police legitimacy. Whereas lawfulness is more objective and measured by observable administrative standards, legitimacy is more subjective; legitimacy is an attribute of public institutions over the people yet is endowed by the people to those institutions (National Academic Press, 2004). Legitimacy is a critical component for increasing community compliance as well as increasing safe interactions between police and the people they serve (Henry & Franklin, 2019). If police are perceived as legitimate, they can be more effective, and if more effective that may yield greater public investment via tax dollars into police departments (National Academic Press, 2004).

Trust is critical in establishing police legitimacy and that can be done by treating people fairly, with respect, and by giving people a voice by hearing their side of the story (Gilbert et al., 2014). Legitimacy is the perception that police should be given authority to enforce order and that there are three community perceptions police must maintain: (a)

Trust in their honesty and fidelity to community protection; (b) Willingness to obey enforcement; and (c) Belief that law enforcement has moral justification (Gilbert et al., 2014). When law enforcement increases those three, they may also increase public compliance and cooperation with police in crime prevention as well as institutional support for police (Gilbert et al., 2014).

According to Gold and Bradley (2018), legitimacy is an underpinning to procedural justice (fairness) in that police must perpetually demonstrate legitimacy to the public they serve; without perceived legitimacy people are less likely to comply. In circular nature, people are more likely to comply if people perceive procedural justice (fairness) is increased as evidenced by fair treatment and process (Gold & Bradley, 2018). Fairness and procedural justice are critical to develop positive perception of police legitimacy, especially with regard to police stops (Henry & Franklin, 2019). The dual nature of police legitimacy is that they must establish legitimacy to the community they serve but also the justified value in the government hierarchy (Cooper, 2014). Police can establish and maintain that legitimacy with the community by connection to the community (Cooper, 2014).

Legitimacy is an expanding area in academia and police policy; additionally it is an institution's property of sorts predicated upon public perception that the given institution is entitled obedience (Adorjan et al., 2017). One thing that seems to erode youth perceived police legitimacy is response time, an aspect more challenging for rural police given the limitations of a larger geography to cover compared to urban counterparts (Adorjan et al., 2017).

Former Chief Justice Rehnquist explains the complex relationship between police use of force and Fourth Amendment rights; the standard to use is what a reasonable officer would have done in the given circumstances, not what one would have done well after the fact with the benefit of hindsight (Graham v. Connor, 1989). What is legitimate use of police force seems far from settled in contemporary policy rhetoric; my study explored youth perceptions of the legitimacy aspect of policing.

Community policing. In some rural areas law enforcement has already taken steps to implement community policing, and the often already existing close ties between officers and rural communities have benefited local law enforcement agencies (Thurman & McGarrell, 2015). Community policing improves public perception of police. Community policing strategies depend upon place; what works well in one community may not in another and chiefs should be careful not to assume what was successful in one time and place will work the same in another community with different demographics. Community policing strategies are often effective (National Institute of Justice, 2017; Stepler, 2017), yet, the degree to which community policing initiatives are effective depend upon if the strategies are tailored to the given community (Thurman & McGarrell, 2015). The degree to which a community willingly works with police in crime solving influences how well the police function in that community (Henry & Franklin, 2019).

Synthesis of Literature Related to the Framework

A major framework of this research was the perception of police effectiveness, fairness, and legitimacy. There seems much diversity in how the intersectionality of effectiveness, fairness, and legitimacy are connected, and are influenced by each other.

From the research of the literature, Taylor, Wyant, and Lockwood (2015) employed the framework of effectiveness, fairness, and legitimacy most similarly to my own study. Taylor, Wyant, and Lockwood (2015) studied both race and place, whereas my study more so isolated on place/geography (rural or urban) regarding public perception of police. And, my research more narrowly focused on participants from ages 18 to 25, rather than the general public.

Other studies focused on other aspects of public perceptions of police, or more exclusively narrow in on one or two rather than all three of the following: effectiveness, fairness, and legitimacy. Cooper (2014) focused on police legitimacy, but also territoriality and isomorphism, terms this study did not have the time to delve into. Another framework within this study is that of rural–urban perceptions of police, rather than other potential cohorts such as male–female, Black–White, young–old perceptions of police. Given that crime policy and research tend to focus on urban issues, lending toward urbanormativity, this study equally focused on both rural and urban perceptions.

Literature Review Related to Key Concepts

The conceptual framework for this study is based on the intersectionality of several major policy discussions, the foremost the growing divide between rural and urban communities and community policing. For law enforcement to effectively implement community policing strategies, a more nuanced understanding of rural–urban community differences could be advantageous. Another foundational concept was that different periods in an individual's life cycle tend to present higher chances of deviance; for example, people younger than 10 and older than 70 are generally less criminal than

the age brackets in between those extremes (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency

Prevention, n.d.). This study focused on college students between the ages of 18 to 25, an

age bracket that typically has a higher rate of most types of deviance. Additionally, the

concept of urbanormativity impacted this study in that the focus on rural and urban

aspects was equal rather than heavily or exclusively directed toward urban society.

      The framework for this study was shaped by other studies on rural and urban

populations (Argent, 2012; Bialik, 2018; Blankenau, & Parker, 2015). For example,

Argent (2012) considered rural–urban policing disparities that are due to

geography/population density and other external factors, though not the internal factors

such as perceptions of police. Further, Blankenau and Parker (2015) examined the rural–

urban divide and broader policy issues such as disparate rural–urban worldviews on sex

education and prayer in public schools. Bialik (2018) also reported on the differences

between rural and urban perceptions, though not on police but rather rural–urban value

differences and feelings about their own community.

      Another concept is how people perceive police; the questions asked of the

participants revolved around concepts of police effectiveness, fairness, and legitimacy.

Police effectiveness and perceptions of it vary but may include response times, crime

deterrence, and dispute resolution. Police fairness may include equal, or at least equitable

(a 13 year old may not be treated *equal* to a 30 year old regarding a community curfew,

but how the individuals are treated may be *equitable*) treatment of all within the given

community. Police legitimacy is a more philosophical concept regarding the role of state

power over the people, such as use of force and the monopoly of the power as employed by the state.

Concepts of growing rural–urban divide, the need for increased community policing, and perceptions of police effectiveness, fairness, and legitimacy are intertwined. This is especially true in the current political climate of increased scrutiny of police power and relationship to the community. Simultaneously, society is currently witnessing a growing divide between rural and urban worldviews. The increased demand for more effective community policing necessitates exploration of the disparities between rural and urban communities.

Another concept is that improving community policing may reduce crime and that a better understanding of the differences between rural and urban communities could improve policing in those respective communities. This study narrowed the focus to one of the age brackets (18 to 25) most likely to engage in risky or deviant behavior (National Institute of Justice, 2014). As such, their perception of police is significant in future police policy rhetoric. Exploration of rural and urban community differences may be useful for police training given the growing divide between the two subcultures. For instance, increasing police legitimacy in rural areas may require increasing response times given access issues due to remoteness and other geographical challenges (Adorjan et al., 2017). In urban areas, increasing police legitimacy may attend to the optics of fairness given fairness has a greater impact on perceived effectiveness than increased effectiveness has on perceived fairness (Taylor et al., 2015).

Description of Related Studies

Adorjan, Ricciardelli, and Spencer (2017) researched the perception of rural, Canadian youth of police and found that youth who had more informal contact with police tended to have a more positive view of them and therefore were more likely to comply in formal contacts with the police.

Eldridge (2012) cited that media portrayal of rural communities is shaped by the idyllic images of Andy Griffith and Mayberry, whereas the more intense media portrayals of policing are often in urban settings, and those media portrayals may not reflect the reality of rural and urban communities. Eldridge continued that though the media may inaccurately portray both rural and urban policing, there are differences between rural and urban communities that necessitate different solutions to solve crime problems; new, small town police chiefs who came from metro areas may not be prepared for the distinct issues in rural policing. Some of those uniquely rural issues may include but are not limited to: lack of backup officers, friends and family in the community may also be victims, offenders, and/or witnesses to a crime, and longer periods of inactivity that urban counterparts may not experience.

Regarding the increasing divide between rural and urban communities, over the past twenty years rural communities have become more Republican, urban communities have become more Democrat, and suburban areas are still roughly evenly split between Republican and Democrat (Bialik, 2018). The split, according to Bialik (2012), is more than just between Republican and Democrat but also how rural and urban residents perceive those who are not from their respective community type (rural or urban) do not

share their same values (over half for both rural and urban cited value differences). Bialik further cited that between rural, urban, and suburban residents, rural residents are the most likely to know all or most of their neighbors.

Tankebe, Michael, Reisig, and Wang (2016) attempted to clarify the intersectionality of legitimacy and fairness, though rather than the general term fairness, they further parcel out procedural fairness (police actions and respectful conduct) from distributive fairness (resource allocation and dispute outcomes). Procedural fairness, distributive fairness, and lawfulness are all components within legitimacy (Tankebe et al., 2016).

Hinds (2008) explored how perceptions of police are shaped by both direct and indirect experience and that, not surprisingly, contact with the police that is requested (a 911 call) is viewed more favorably than police initiated contact (stopped for speeding). Hinds (2008) somewhat differently from Tankebe, Michael, Reisig, and Wang defined legitimacy as something conferred by the public that entitles police to be obeyed, and that perceptions of legitimacy are influenced by a myriad of factors including but not limited to demographics, rate and fear of crime, economics, police effectiveness and fairly treating the people in their community. Hinds further cited that the more people perceive police as fair that the more they see the police as legitimate. Henry and Franklin (2019) also posited that it is not surprising that researchers want to better understand what influences increased police legitimacy due to how critical it is for effective policing.

Mawby (2008) cited perception differences rural and urban dwellers have of police and that accessibility can put rural police at a distinct disadvantage given

med

med

med

med

med

challenges of increased geographical distances a single officer must cover. Though potentially less accessible in rural areas due to proximity challenges, rural residents tend to rate police more favorably than do urban residents (Mawby, 2008).

The most closely related study to my research, Taylor, Wyant, and Lockwood (2015), focused on public perceptions of police via the lens of effectiveness, fairness, and legitimacy, focusing more on race and place and group-position theory. My study attempted to focus more exclusively on place (rural or urban). Taylor, Wyant, and Lockwood emphasized that effectiveness and fairness are related, however, fairness has far more influence on perceived effectiveness than effectiveness on fairness. That said, police efforts to increase legitimacy should focus on both increasing fairness and effectiveness because one influences the other (Taylor et al., 2015).

Justification from Literature for Selected Concept

The selected concept is the intersectionality between rural–urban perceptions of police and how exploration of this area may enhance community police efforts. Justification for this research is based on a specific focus on college students between the ages of 18 to 25, an age bracket that often has higher rates of deviance than those on the extremes of young or old. The narrower focus on participants from ages 18 to 25 fills a gap in the literature cited by Adorjan, Ricciardelli, and Spencer (2017) in that, at least in Canada, there are few studies on the police perceptions of rural youth. More locally, the capital city government of the state where my research takes place is Saint Paul called for increased affirmation and recognition of youth voices (Saint Paul Government, n.d.).

My research was justified by timeliness with the increased public rhetoric on police use of force and community policing initiatives, as well as the increased rural–urban divide especially evidenced by recent U.S. political elections (APM, 2017; Condon, 2015; Kurtzleben, 2016). Policing practices that prove successful in urban settings may not be effective in rural communities. The divide issue can only be exacerbated by police departments attempting to apply urban solutions to rural problems (Elderidge, 2012). New rural police chiefs, often from metro areas, are often surprised by the diversity and different issues rural communities face as compared to previous urban experiences (Eldridge, 2012).

Finally, this research was justified because of the calls to increase community policing. In some rural areas law enforcement has already taken steps to implement community policing, and the often already existing close ties between officers and rural communities have benefited local law enforcement agencies (Thurman & McGarrell, 2015). My research was justified because community policing improves public perception of the police. Community policing strategies depend upon place; what works well in one community may not in another and chiefs should be careful not to assume that what was successful in one time and place will work the same in another community with different demographics. Community policing strategies are often effective (National Institute of Justice, 2017; Stepler, 2017). The degree to which community policing initiatives are effective depend upon if the strategies are tailored to the given community (Thurman & McGarrell, 2015).

Review and Synthesis of Related Studies of Concept

Rural and urban populations relate with police differently and as such urban policing strategies may not be applicable in rural communities. One difference in rural police as compared to urban police is that rural police may not only function as enforcement but also social workers and peacekeepers (Adorjan et al., 2017). Additionally, rural officers' duties may even include the gamut of detective as well as school liaison officer (Yang, 2017). Even further adding to the list of rural police duties, Shapley (2012) cited animal control, littering, parade escorts, home checks for vacationers, and even theft of farm equipment, livestock, or crops. The concept of rural–urban cultural differences necessitating different policing practices is established in the literature, though the why and remedies may necessitate more exploration. My research explored how perceptions of police effectiveness, fairness, and legitimacy are influenced by and can influence law enforcement.

Review and Synthesis of Related Studies to Research Question

Of the many studies somewhat related to one or more of the intersectional aspects of my study, the research of Taylor, Wyant, and Lockwood (2015) is closest. Taylor, Wyant, and Lockwood (2015) focused on the three aspects of effectiveness, fairness, and legitimacy though on place and race and combinations between the two. My study attempted to focus on place (rural or urban) more exclusively for several reasons, but primarily due to relatively little discussion about cultural difference based on rural–urban differences as opposed to racial differences.

Police training also tends to focus on racial or cultural differences, and not the rural–urban differences though those are often central to the vastly different daily experiences of rural and urban law enforcement (Adorjan et al., 2017; Yang, 2017). Taylor, Wyant, and Lockwood (2015) focused on race, whereas my research narrowed the focus to a specific age, exclusively on college students ages 18 to 25. This 18 to 25 age bracket, as compared to those much younger or much older, lends to higher rates of deviance, as such, for deviance deterrence exploring their perceptions of police may be especially important for police training. The call for focus on youth voices was cited in the *21st Century Policing Recommendations* put out by the Saint Paul, Minnesota government, the local capital city in the state of the study. Youth voices need to be heard and affirmed in research, problem solving, and enhancing youth/police relations (Saint Paul Government, n.d.).

Known and Unknown in the Discipline Related to the Topic of Study

One of the knowns in police policy is the effectiveness of community policing strategies (National Institute of Justice, 2017; Stepler, 2017). The degree to which community policing initiatives are effective depends if the strategies are tailored to the given community (Thurman & McGarrell, 2015). Another known is the existence, and even expansion, of the divide between rural and urban communities (Truelsen, 2017). Moreover, some age brackets tend to be more deviant than others (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, n.d.), specifically the age bracket of the participants, from 18 to 25.

One of the unknowns is how students between the ages of 18 to 25 more specifically perceive police rather than rural and urban individuals across all ages. Some age brackets have higher rates of deviance than others, and this age bracket (18 to 25) tends to have higher rates of deviance (depending upon the type of deviance) than other age brackets (such as 0 to 13 or over 50 age bracket). A more focused exploration of an age bracket more prone to deviance may prove more fruitful than a study less focused and spanning all ages.

Summary and Conclusions

This chapter presented concepts of the rural–urban divide, community policing, as well as police effectiveness, fairness, and legitimacy. The complex connection between each is not yet entirely clear in the literature, though better understanding of rural–urban community differences could improve community policing practices was illustrated. Lastly, why focusing on certain age cohorts (such as ages 18 to 25) lends toward more effective crime policy was explained.

Major Themes in Literature Summarized

The major themes in the literature are the rural–urban divide (as well as urbanormativity) and how the divide between rural and urban communities may be widening. Community policing is also a critical theme in the literature given exploration of how rural and urban communities perceive police may enhance community policing strategies. Finally, much of the literature focuses upon the themes police effectiveness, fairness, and legitimacy individually as well as the complex intersectionality of each with the others.

Gaps in Literature Filled by This Study

      Scholars suggest that the divide between rural and urban communities is widening. Scholars also suggest that community policing strategies are effective. Lastly, scholars cite some age brackets have higher rates of deviance than others. This study may help fill the gap in the literature regarding the major policy issues of the rural–urban divide, community policing, and the complex intersectionality of police effectiveness, fairness, and legitimacy. Previous researchers have not explored the differences between rural and urban college students regarding how they perceive police effectiveness, fairness, and legitimacy. This research and study results may provide a foundation for potential future research to further clarify if differences in perception of police effectiveness, fairness, and legitimacy traverse different age brackets, or locations within the United States and abroad. The next chapter explains the methodology employed in this study to help fill this gap in the literature.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore and understand how Midwestern college student perceptions of police effectiveness, fairness, and legitimacy differ based on whether they grew up in rural or urban communities. In this chapter, I explain the research design as well as the central concepts and framework of the study. The rationale for participant selection including number of participants and process of section is also elaborated. Data collection method, rationale for that method, and procedure followed for the process are defined. Lastly, I clarify potential biases, ethical procedures, and trustworthiness.

Research Design and Rationale

Research Question

The research question for this study is as follows: How do Midwestern college students perceive police effectiveness, fairness, and legitimacy based on whether they grew up in rural or urban communities?

Central Concepts

I explored the intersectionality of several policy issues: (a) the rural–urban divide and urbanormativity; (b) perceptions of police by youth; (c) police effectiveness, fairness, and legitimacy; and (d) community policing.

Rural–urban divide and urbanormativity. Rural areas have a unique nature compared to urban areas, which includes (a) isolation with lack of back up officers; (b) close connections, meaning friends and family are often the victims/offenders/witnesses;

and (c) compensation lower than urban counterparts. Rural and urban policing is distinct, yet urban solutions are often applied universally and therefore ill-fitted for rural crime issues (Eldridge, 2012).

Perception. Students may encounter video of police actions that may be different from the perception of police they remember from their culture and home community. This study was focused on rural and urban communities and subculture differences. Perception of the criminal justice system is largely influenced by portrayal in media (Dowler, 2003). When a community does not have accurate facts about crime, then perceptions of their safety may not be based on actual effectiveness of public safety initiatives (Ho & Cho, 2017). Therefore, this study addressed questions such as whether media has changed student perceptions, whether students believe what they see on TV, and whether TV reinforces earlier perceptions. So, has media changed student perceptions? Do they believe what they are seeing on the news or television shows? Or, does news and television shows reinforce earlier perceptions? These and other questions were conveyed to students during this research to attain a thorough understanding of how they view the effectiveness, fairness, and legitimacy of police today.

Police effectiveness, fairness, and legitimacy. Several studies attempted to clarify how perceptions of police effectiveness, fairness, and legitimacy intersect, though there is no consensus. It is important for police to establish legitimacy in the community, and police must also prove their value and justify their existence to the elected leadership determining power and funding (Cooper, 2014). An organization can establish legitimacy by what it does and achieves. Legitimacy and effectiveness are inseparable in that

cooperation and involvement of the community are needed for police effectiveness; without community partnership policing may become oppressive and dictatorial (Johnson et al., 2008). For the police to be effective "agents of control," police and the community they serve must cooperate.

Much of the research in the United States has focused on perceptions of police effectiveness and responsiveness as opposed to other aspects such as police misconduct. Perceptions vary on police effectiveness and responsiveness, which are separate from perceptions on police misconduct (Miller & Davis, 2008). Broadly speaking, women have a higher opinion of police than men do, older people have a higher opinion of police than younger do, and the wealthy have a higher opinion of the police than the poor do. Public confidence in the police is a complex issue. Perceptions of police misconduct have been formulated by media and perceptions of police effectiveness and responsiveness have been formulated from personal or second-hand experiences (a ripple effect of stories being retold to friends and family; Miller & Davis, 2008).

Further, lawfulness is more objective and something that can be measured on the field by set standards (Taylor et al., 2015). In contrast, legitimacy is more subjective. People are more likely to obey laws when (a) the laws are instrumental; (b) the laws are substantively moral; and (c) there is procedural legitimacy in the making and enforcing of the laws.

Community policing. In some rural areas law enforcement has already taken steps to implement community policing, and the pre-existing ties between officers and rural communities have benefited local law enforcement agencies (Thurman &

McGarrell, 2015). Community policing improves public perception of police.

Community policing strategies depend on place; what works well in one community may

not in another. Chiefs should be careful not to assume that what was successful in one

time and place will work the same in another.

Research Approach and Rationale

The research tradition of this study was qualitative with a generic approach to

better understand the perceptions college students have of police based on whether the

student grew up in a rural or urban community. The generic qualitative model is a hybrid

of both narrative and phenomenological designs in that it is used to explore phenomena

and the worldviews and perspectives of participants (Cooper & Endacott, 2007). The

generic qualitative model allowed me to explore the experiences of the participants, with

aspects of narrative and phenomenological design (Creswell, 2013). The narrative

approach was focused on the stories as told by individuals, such as personal anecdotes

about police and how those impacted perception of police. The phenomenological

approach was used to examine how a group may share experiences (such as participants

who grew up in rural or urban communities share common phenomena in their

experiences and perceptions of police).

The rationale for selecting a qualitative research design primarily employing a

generic approach that includes aspects of phenomenology (Creswell, 2013) was that the

research questions are more qualitative regarding the *how* and *why* compared to the

quantification of anything at this juncture. Additionally, qualitative research typically

uses constructivist theories and focuses on the experiences of the research participants as

well as alternative perspectives (Rudestam & Newton, 2015). The research was focused on the experiences of individuals who spent formative years in rural or urban settings and on comparing perceptions of police effectiveness, fairness, and legitimacy.

Role of the Researcher

My role as the researcher was complex in that professionally I work at the place in which the participants attend college. Interest in this area of research stemmed in part from getting to know students who grew up in rural communities and students who grew up in urban communities, and noticing how their different worldviews lined up with others of similar upbringings. It seemed that much research had been done on racial and gender differences, as is often reflected in both academic and corporate diversity training. Yet the literature seemed to cover relatively little about this rural–urban cultural difference in relation to youth perception of police. Following the 2012 election cycle, the rural–urban worldview difference became increasingly conspicuous and present within the public conscious. Nevertheless, its significance seems still not reflected in professional or diversity training.

I have personally experienced the cultural divide between rural and urban communities. I have spent half of my life in a rural area and half in a major metropolitan one. The college where I teach has a new law enforcement major, so the results of this study could directly influence that program as it develops. This college is uniquely positioned on the outer edge of the major metropolitan area of my home state. As such, it pulls from both rural and urban communities and is a geographical bridge between rural and urban communities. This college is also the only higher education institution in the

county. The hope is that regarding the rural–urban divide that this institution will be on the forefront of research and training regarding rural–urban community differences and perhaps even help bridge that divide.

Researcher Bias

The first 21 years of my life were spent in rural communities. I grew up on a farm in southwest Minnesota. My undergraduate degree is from the University of Minnesota at Morris, a town well below the 50,000 population threshold the U.S. Census Bureau designates as urban. Due to imprinting, any bias of mine may be in favor of rural communities. This bias is tempered significantly by the fact that the later 20 plus years of my life have been lived in urban areas. My home and family are in an urban community, so my bias has shifted toward the urban mentality. That relatively rare life split between rural and urban communities gives me as a researcher a unique and intimate perspective into the nuances between rural and urban communities. I attempted to mitigate my bias by having the participants review the results of the study, reviewing the interview questions and interview results with academic colleagues, and avoiding leading questions during the interviews. Though blind studies are ideal (Holman et al., 2015), when that is unfeasible, having many different people look at the entire process can help mitigate bias. For this study, working at a college gave me access to many research peer reviewers.

Personal and Professional Relationships

My personal background in both rural and urban communities, and connections with law enforcement professionals and training facilities, enhanced the depth and breadth of this research. The institution where I teach, and the location of the college that

student participants attend, is the only higher education institution in the county. As such, we have access to all levels of local governance and law enforcement professionals. This institution also has articulation agreements with one of the most esteemed law enforcement skills training centers in the nation. This study was advanced by these connections and access. Similarly, my institution and community may benefit from this research as well.

Ethical Issues

Ethical issues addressed involved the risks of students as participants. All participants were over 18 and at the college by choice rather than compelled by law, as is the case with minors in a public school. All participants were selected and invited by the dean of faculty to ensure that I did not have undue influence over these students.

<p align="center">**Methodology**</p>

The participants were 14 college students at a private college in the upper Midwest. On campus students are predominately undergraduate students; therefore, students are generally between the ages of 18 to 25. Given the small size of the campus personal knowledge of the students is often known by faculty and administration. The college gave me written permission that after IRB approval students may be participants and the dean would assist in selecting participants from the student body, which he did. This selection ensured that neither I nor the dean chose students we knew had unique experiences with police that may skew the results, such as having spent time in prison or students with two year degrees in law enforcement and have already worked as police officers. Those participants would not have a representative perception of police based on

geography during formative years but by personal experience as a cop or criminal. Students currently unduly taxed were not included; some are enduring family hardships and health issues and those students were excluded s participants so to not unduly burden them with participation in a study.

Students were selected by looking at student files, which only the dean had access to. I ascertained the participants' primary region in which they were raised to ensure it was exclusively rural or urban and not spent between both subcultures. Seven of the students grew up in a rural environment and seven grew up in an urban environment, which means this was criterion sampling in that participants meet a certain criterion to be part of the study (Creswell, 2013). According to Creswell (2013) between five and 25 participants is ideal for a phenomenological study.

Instrumentation

I developed the instrument, reviewed by the dissertation chair, committee, and dean at the college where the participants attend. Interviews were conducted using opened ended questions during in person individual interviews. There are multiple places to start formulating interview questions (Yin, 2013); it could be from the literature or it could be from the field. In this instance, the research and instrument questions were formulated from both the literature and the field (Appendix A).

This study involved generic qualitative research, an aspect of which was phenomenology. Phenomenological research needs circular questioning (Van, 1990). There were three primary questions, and each had multiple supporting questions. The interview questions along with the in-person interviews allowed for robust discussions

that best clarify the perceptions participants have of police. In-person interviews allowed me to discover more than may have been possible in other instrument modalities such as e-mailed response.

Data Collection Procedures

Participants identified by the dean as likely having grown up in rural *or* urban communities and not overseas were sent an invitation via e-mail with the interview questions. After participants accepted the invitation they were given the informed consent form. After that was signed by the participants I met them for an interview.

Scientific researchers of humans select the interview because of their interest in a phenomena experienced by the study participants and what that phenomena means (Englander, 2012). The goal of this study was to understand if there is a phenomenon within the rural and urban cohorts regarding participant perception of police possibly influenced by their lived experience of growing up in either rural or urban communities. The interview time was approximately 45 minutes to one hour long, allowing for a deep and nuanced conversation, but not overly taxing the participant.

Data was collected via in person interviews that took place in a private office on the campus at which I work during the spring semester of 2020. Interviews were recorded with a password protected device. I took notes during the interviews. The aim for researchers doing phenomenological research is to discover phenomena from descriptions given by participants (Englander, 2012). The initial questions asked are in Appendix A. Though the questions provide a semi-structure, during the in person interviews I probed

for more detail asking related questions for a more nuanced understanding of the participant's description of experiences with and perceptions of police.

Descriptive phenomenological research describes the participants' real life experiences (Moustakas, 1994). This generic qualitative research model employed a descriptive phenomenological approach because during the interviews my goal was to better understand the lived experience of the participants via their descriptions of experiences with and perceptions of police.

Data Analysis

A coded designation was assigned to each interviewee on an Excel spreadsheet that was saved on my password protected computer that is with me and if not with me it is in my private office surrounded by security cameras. The interviewees were then referred to by that designation for confidentiality when findings are compiled and reported.

Data analysis started by transcribing the recorded interviews. After transcribing the interviews, I read and reread the transcription allowing thoughtful, meditative time to reflect on each individually as well compared to the others within the rural or urban cohorts and then against the backdrop of the larger context of the study. I then ascertained if there are any common themes, conceptualizing if there are relationships between these themes and subthemes.

Common themes within the rural and urban cohorts respectively were identified and coded. Coding was primarily emergent and developed after reviewing the data, especially identifying if there are any common words, phrases, experiences, and/or

sentiments expressed by those participants within the same cohorts. Coding was not a priori in that I do not have pre-established categories, however, researchers will generally be pragmatic and use both types in the study (Elliott, 2018). The goal was to see if there are any common phenomena within the two cohorts. Nodes, codes, and themes were identified by looking for common phrases stated by participants and then ascertaining if those common phrases are exclusive or more common to one cohort or the other. One "code" was "yes" or "no" with regard to personally knowing someone in local law enforcement. One "theme" was how the participant views effectiveness, fairness, and/or legitimacy of police.

Lastly, fracturing data is to break it apart for analysis to then determine common themes, whereas connective qualitative analysis strategy is identifying relationships that connect the issue back to the larger whole (Maxwell, 2013). Given the plan was to employ a generic qualitative model that incorporates aspects of multiple traditional approaches, such as narrative and phenomenological (Creswell, 2013) approach, to this study, fracturing the data was utilized. In my study, I looked at the experiences of each participant, broke that down, and then identified common themes of experienced based upon where the participant spent formative years, be it in a rural or urban community.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness and validity are also important in any study and two means by which to bolster validity of a qualitative study include review by an expert in the area and feedback from the participants (Simon, 2011b). There is not another study that focuses on the same cohorts or worldview issues, though several different studies cover similar

themes. The results were compared with those studies to ensure validity. Also, there are quite a few experts even at my own institution on the issues within my study, so I had convenient access to degreed experts for review. Lastly, feedback from the participants was an illuminating part of the entire process. Given the proximity of the students, feedback is easily accommodated and may bolster validity (Simon, 2011b).

The collection test was initially conceptualized from an earlier unpublished and informal study I was required to do with my faculty peers at the undergraduate institution where I teach. That unpublished and informal study was more quantitative (Creswell, 2013) in that it focused more upon the values in the following five cohorts: freshmen, sophomores, juniors, seniors, and faculty. Then, the study contrasted the shift in values as students progressed through their years of college as compared to that of the faculty. That unpublished study seemed to show that the faculty had influence upon the students in that the values by senior year more closely aligned with that of the faculty than did that of the freshmen as compared to the faculty. It was fascinating, though I had hoped at that time to delve more deeply into the value differences more qualitatively between the rural and urban students.

Part of the process of ensuring quality, trustworthiness, and credibility was avoiding isolation that could pose the risk of an echo chamber. From the inception of this idea it had been discussed and debated with my colleagues as a viable and valuable area to pursue further research. Continued contact throughout the entire research and writing of my dissertation was critical for quality, trustworthiness, and credibility given as the researcher I was so close to the details and emotionally invested that it presented the risk

of bias subconsciously influencing the process at many points along the way, even in the literature review in preparation of this study. So, if the foundation of the study was flawed or untrustworthy, the rest cannot be viable. As such, the questions were interview form and were discussed with colleagues repeatedly for many months before dissemination to participants.

There are three broad factors to ensuring quality research: high standards in methods, a credible researcher, and the appropriate value upon the process of qualitative research (Patton, 2015). Bias seems increasingly common in the media and even in academia. Given that lives may depend upon research, especially if it is published and then widely cited and disseminated. As noted previously, having others critique every step of the process (and this critique should include not those of the same demographic or political inclination), hopefully increases trustworthiness.

Credibility

Threats to credibility include limited background of a researcher in both rural and urban communities, undue influence of a researcher over the student participants in the study, and bias of a researcher in the entire process from selection of participants to biased probing for answers to inaccurate recording of responses. In this study, as the researcher I have the relatively rare experience of having lived twenty years in a rural community (on a farm even) and twenty years in an urban community (urban by U.S. government definition, though suburban by common parlance). This intimate and extensive experience in both communities helped prevent bias, and also gives me a certain fluency in the lived experience of participants from both types of communities.

The issue of undue influence of the researcher over the participants was mitigated by one of the campus deans selecting the participants to first filter students who are in my program and advisees of mine. Next, the dean filtered students who grew up in both rural and urban communities, limiting to students who grew up only in one or the other. Lastly, the participants were limited to those between the ages of 18 to 25; excluding those much younger (possibly even 15 years old) as well as the potentially much older non-traditional students. Distancing of me as the researcher from selection lends toward credibility because I was not able to "cherry pick" students illustrating any subconscious bias or latent agenda.

Transferability

A first threat to transferability is that few other campuses in the United States are similarly situated as is the campus the participants attend. It is a small, private college located on the outer cusp of the major metropolitan area of my home state. This setting presented a relatively unique equal access to students from both rural and urban communities. Researchers at other academic institutions who may attempt similar research might not have such access to participants who grew up in rural communities.

Dependability

Like reliability, dependability depends upon researcher consistency. Dependability was enhanced by distancing myself as the researcher from the participant selection and rather having a dean at the institution that the participants attend filter and select the participants. It is critical for the researcher to ask if the participants of the study

really belong to the population the research is trying to study; this inquiry lent towards

dependability (Englander, 2012).

Confirmability

Confirmability was addressed by several means. From the start, in selection of

participants distancing myself as a researcher and having a dean on the campus select the

individuals was advantageous for multiple reasons. First, it lent toward distancing myself

as a professor at the given institution from having undue influence over the participants in

my study. Also, it lent toward a more unbiased selection of participants so to preclude me

as a researcher from cherry picking my ideal participants to illustrate a predetermined

personal agenda.

The dean selecting the participants filtered out all students who are in my

programs and are advisees of mine by looking at the student files to which he has access;

as a faculty member I do not have access to the entire database of students so I needed

someone at the dean level for that access. Next, the dean filtered out students who grew

up abroad, or in a split experience between rural and urban. It was optimal for the

participants, to the degree possible, to have grown up more exclusively in rural or urban

communities rather than a split between both. This singular experience in either rural or

urban environments was in attempt to isolate the power of geography in perception of

police.

Ethical Procedures

The IRB approval for this study was approved at both campuses. Consent

agreements were presented to each participant and each participant signed the agreement

before any participation in the study. Participants also received the questions in advance so to be fully informed about what was covered in the interviews.

Treatment of participants. Ethical issues addressed included the risks of students as participants. All participants were over 18 and at the college by choice rather than compelled by law, as with minors in a public school. All participants were selected by the Dean of Faculty so to ensure that I, as the researcher, did not have undue influence over these students. As discussed in the literature review, the 18 to 25 age bracket is especially germane given rates of deviance during that season of life tend to be higher than during younger or older time periods. Also, limiting participants to those within this narrow 18 to 25 age bracket helped focus the research on place (rural or urban) rather than other factors, such as age, influence the data.

Treatment of data. Data is on my personal laptop computer that is password protected and is with me nearly always; it is not left at work even overnight. If there is a need for a flash drive or hard copies of anything, those are be locked in my office desk drawer at the college where I teach. Access to the data is limited to the researcher and will be kept for five years after the final dissertation approval.

Summary

The research was conducted at a Midwest college in the spring semester of 2020. The lens of the research was the stated goal of exploring the similarities and differences in how college students perceive police based on if the student grew up in a rural or urban community. More specifically, the goal was to better understand how participants perceive police effectiveness, fairness, and legitimacy. The knowledge garnered from this

research could hopefully influence police training and enhance community policing. I investigated the differences and similarities between the rural and urban cohorts through a generic qualitative study that employed both narrative as well as phenomenological approaches. The approach was chosen because it allowed for a rich and nuanced opportunity to answer the research question.

My role as a researcher was as an observer, though one with a depth of experience in both rural and urban communities as well as high connectedness to and lived experience in both rural and urban communities. Selection was criterion sampling (Creswell, 2013), ensuring that all participants have the particular lived experience of having grown up in either rural or urban communities and are within the ages of 18 to 25. Data was collected through in person interviews at my office, via open-ended interview questions seen in Appendix A; interviews were transcribed, coded, and then analyzed for common themes to answer the research question. Ethical issues as well as researcher bias were addressed. Chapters 4 and 5 discuss the results after the data is collected.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore and understand how Midwestern college student perceptions of police effectiveness, fairness, and legitimacy differ based on whether they grew up in rural or urban communities. Perception of the criminal justice system is largely influenced by portrayal in media (Dowler, 2003). Thus, I addressed the following questions along with others to develop my understanding of how students view police today: Has media changed student perceptions? Do they believe what they are seeing on the news or in television shows? Or, does the media reinforce earlier perceptions? In a broader sense, I sought to understand the growing divide between urban and rural subcultures (Blankenau & Parker, 2015) and focused on this subculture influence on Midwestern college student perceptions of police. I attempted to delineate the differences assumptions of rural and urban cultures with the intension to empower the community policing approach. In this chapter, I describe how I conducted the research study and give a detailed explanation of the setting and experience of the participants. I describe the relevant demographic characteristics of the participants, number of participants and rationale, selection process of participants and rationale, means by which data were collected, and type of data collected. I also provide data analysis and the trustworthiness confirmation explanation. Finally, I present the findings.

The Setting

The setting was a small, private college on the edge of a major metropolitan area in the Midwest. The geographic location of the campus between urban and rural

communities made it an ideal setting to interview both rural and urban study participants.

Because the setting was neutrally situated between the two community forms, it did not

likely sway the data, as might a college in a more distinctly urban or rural community.

The specific setting for the interview was in my private office at that campus. Much of

the campus is in one building, so for participants to come meet was not much of a burden

given the close proximity of the meeting place to other classrooms. Participants did not

need to sacrifice additional drive time or parking expenses to participate and were given a

small gift card to the campus store as a token of appreciation for participation in the

study.

The college is largely homogenous in faith background. As a religious institution,

the school has a statement against underage drinking and is a nonalcoholic campus, an

aspect that may differ from secular colleges. This factor should also be taken into

consideration when interpreting the data given that students electing to attend a dry

campus may be more law-abiding than students opting for less stringent policies on

alcohol consumption. Those more law-abiding students are less likely to have negative

interactions with law enforcement and as a result may have a better perception of police

officers in general.

Demographics

Eight of the participants were male and six were female (see figure 2). The

participants represented diverse racial backgrounds; six of the 14 were people of color

(see figure 3). All participants were between the ages of 18 to 25 and grew up in either a

rural environment or an urban environment (see figure 1) rather than a combination of

both or in a foreign country. Participants were from the following study majors/career paths: four business majors, three teacher education majors, three biblical studies majors, one science major, and three yet undecided in their career paths. None of the participants were current advisees of mine. Because I am presently am a professor at the setting of the study, it was necessary to eliminate all advisees of mine from the study. As a result, many criminal and social justice, law enforcement, and criminology majors were ineligible to participate. As such, those more likely inclined toward a positive perception of the police (given my majors are those chosen by students going into law enforcement) were excluded from participation. This exclusion of students in those majors may have been a limitation to the study and skewed the results.

Figure 1.

Figure 2.

Race

Minority Caucasian
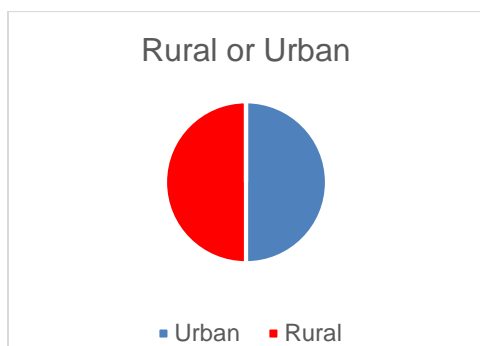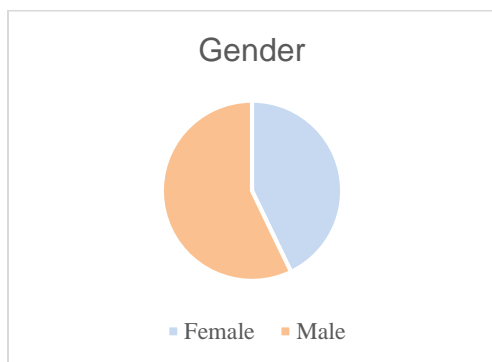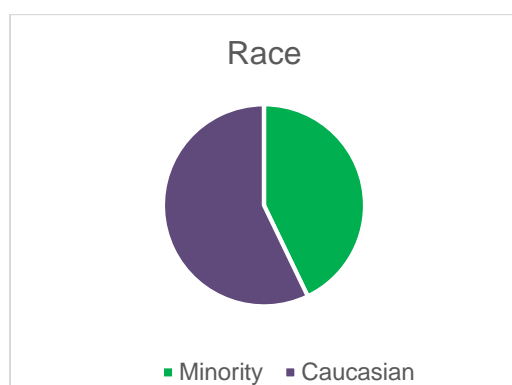
Figure 3.

Data Collection

Participants were filtered and invited by the dean of faculty at the college by e-mail directing them to call me if interested in participating. The first filter objective was to ensure the students were over the age of eighteen, second that they were not from a foreign country, and third, that my advisees were excluded to maintain impartiality. The dean's involvement distanced me from the selection process and thereby mitigated undue influence I may have had over the students.

After the students were filtered and invited, they contacted me by phone for an in-person interview. Each participant met me in my private office for between 20 and 60 minutes. I introduced myself and my role in the interview and explained that the research was not part of my role as a professor but for my doctoral studies. Next, I set participants at ease by asking about her or his semester and vacation plans (interviews took place before COVID-19 changed all plans for break). I presented each participant with the consent form and verbally confirmed that each was over 18 years of age. I let them know

that their participation was voluntary and they were welcome to pass on specific questions or stop the interview entirely at any time. These assurances were also stated on the consent form which each participant reviewed, signed, and returned to me before proceeding.

I began to ask the instrument questions (see Appendix A) and add clarity to each question when the participant seemed unsure of its meaning. The interviews were semi-structured in that I started with the questions in Appendix A; however, the in-person modality allowed me to probe further when some participants gave an answer and it seemed there was more to explore. For instance, one participant was arrested and upon my encouragement for her to elaborate, she explained that she was the victim of identity theft. The arrest was the result of the crimes of another; face-to-face interviews allowed for that detail of personal experience to be ascertained. Each participant seemed to answer the instrument questions to the degree possible and even seemed to enjoy the chance to share personal experiences with and perceptions of the police.

While the participants were giving their replies, I took notes on the computer and recorded the audio of the interview on my personal, password-protected phone so to be able to fill in my notes after the interview and also review to catch nuanced inflections of the participants' answers. After the interview I reviewed both the typed notes and the recorded version to ensure that nothing was missed or recorded erroneously. The interviews were preserved by recording pursuant to the methodological plan. Nothing unusual happened relative to the interview or recording process.

After the conclusion of the interview, I encouraged each of the participants to contact me if there was anything she or he would like to add to the discussion. None of the participants contacted me at that point. Following my review of the recordings, I contacted the participants to give them a transcription of their interview ask them to clarify its accuracy. Four out of fourteen replied that the transcription was correct, one replied with some additional information, and nine did not reply back.

Given the COVID-19 global pandemic, study participants (students from the college where I work) had been sent home and the campus was shut down with all employee entry keys deactivated. It was not likely the campus would reopen to students or employees until fall. All students completed the semester in the virtual learning modality, and so were still accessible via e-mail. However, meeting in person with the participants to review the interviews was not possible due to shelter in place orders. After member checking was complete, I continued to identify themes and assign codes.

Data Analysis

My first interview took place on February 3, 2020, and the last of the fourteen interviews took place on February 27. Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014) encourage researchers to not spend too much time collecting data before analysis, and rather analysis should be part of the data collection process so that data does not become too daunting to discern themes or explore an alternative hypothesis. The analysis of data started with me re-listening to the recordings of the interviews, reading through the transcriptions, and reflecting on possible themes, common terms and experiences, and especially the unanticipated responses. Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014) cited that

taking notes as I did in the margins of the transcription is called memoing, a process which helped illuminate themes between the interviews.

Having both the audio as well as the transcribed record was helpful to both hear and visualize the emergent themes. After each interview I reviewed the notes and the process to improve for subsequent interviews. Each previous interview experience was helpful in understanding how to probe effectively for more nuanced and reflective participant responses. Creswell (2013) cited that the process or analysis is not so much a linear as a circular process. As such, each subsequent interview even lent context to the previous one.

Seven codes were illuminated by reading and rereading, annotating, and revisiting the transcripts after several days. As seen in Table 3, seven participants have a high perception of police, four have a medium/average perception of police, and two have a low to medium perception of police. Table 3 also shows how ten participants knew a police officer socially and ten knew the name of a police officer in the community in which he or she grew up.

The codes almost directly translated into themes, but for high, medium, and low to medium under the overarching theme of "Perception." The two predominate coding methods I used were values coding and descriptive coding (Miles et al., 2014). Description coding attaches a label to data that summarizes a section of data. These are noted in Table 1 on the horizontal axis as: (a) Racial Profiled: Minority & Targeted for Minority; (b) Deviant Contact, i.e. Traffic Stop, Arrest, etc.; (c) Social Contact, i.e. Gym, Friend, Social Circle; and (d) Participant Knew Officer in Community on First Name

Basis. An example of values coding on Table 1 is the column labeled Perception of Police: High Medium Low. Some participants gave a number value from one to ten of their perception of the police; a four response would be a medium value. Other participants chose to not give a number; in that case, for instance, if the participant had only positive things to say about police then the value code assigned was high. As seen on Table 3, two of the participants had a low to medium perception of the police, five had a medium perception of the police, and seven had a high perception of the police.

As I was notetaking, there were several key themes that became prevalent, however, the most powerful and relevant themes as noted in Table 1 were race and profiling, deviant contact with police such as a traffic stop, social contact such as at the local gym, and knowing an officer in the community by name. Media perceptions were also impactful, however, not as relevant or indicative of positive or negative perceptions as other themes, such as personal contact (deviant or social), knowing an officer by name, and racial profiling.

Especially salient seemed the impact of personally knowing a police officer by name or from social interactions had on participant perception of police. As seen on Table 1, the more the participants knew officers either socially or by name the more it seemed they had a positive perception of law enforcement. Personal connection with law enforcement even seemed to supersede the rural–urban divide and more indelible than even media influence on shaping perception of the police.

The last phase of the "research spiral" is to represent the data in a visual image (Creswell, 2013). Table 1 identifies the participants on the vertical axis and the major

themes on the horizontal axis. Putting the data in the table illustrated how the power of

knowing police was more impactful in how participants perceived police than the rural–

urban dichotomy. The participants with the most connection to police outside of their role

as an officer had the highest positive perception of the police. The participants with the

least social or lacking first-name basis with the police had the lowest perception of the

police. Even Participant 14 who was a rural, White male but did not have social

interaction with police in his community nor knew one by name, seemed more likely

given the literature to have a positive perception of police had an unanticipated negative

perception of police. To contrast, Participant 13, an urban, racial minority male had a

highly positive perception of police, however, having served in the military he personal

knew multiple police officers.

Table 1

Themes from Interviews

Male or female m/f	Perception of police: high/ medium/ low	Rural/ small town or urban/ suburban	Racially profiled: minority & targeted for being minority	Deviant contact i.e. traffic stop, arrest, etc.	Social contact i.e. gym, friend, social circle	Participant knew officer in community on first name basis
Intv. 1:F	High	Rural	No	No	Yes	Yes
Intv. 2:M	High	Rural	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Intv. 3:M	Medium	Urban	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Intv. 4:M	Medium	Urban	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Intv. 5:F	Medium	Urban	Yes	Yes	No	No
Intv. 6:F	High	Rural	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Intv. 7:M	High	Urban	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Intv. 8:F	High	Rural	No	No	Yes	Yes
Intv. 9:F	Low-Med.	Urban	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Intv. 10:M	High	Rural	No	Yes	No	Yes
Intv: 11:F	Medium	Rural	No	No	No	Yes
Intv. 12:M	Medium	Urban	No	No	No	No
Intv. 13:M	High	Urban	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Intv. 14:M	Low-Med.	Rural	No	Yes	Yes	No

Table 2

Participant Demographics

IDENTIFIER	RURAL/URBAN	FEMALE/MALE	RACIAL MINORITY/WHITE
PART. 1	Rural	F	White
PART. 2	Rural	M	White
PART. 3	Urban	M	Racial Minority
PART. 4	Urban	M	Racial Minority
PART. 5	Urban	F	Racial Minority
PART. 6	Rural	F	White
PART. 7	Urban	M	White
PART. 8	Rural	F	White
PART. 9	Urban	F	Racial Minority
PART. 10	Rural	M	White
PART. 11	Rural	F	White
PART. 12	Urban	M	Racial Minority
PART. 13	Urban	M	Racial Minority
PART. 14	Rural	M	White

Table 3

Meaning of Coded Data

Code	Participants' Perception	Participants with Responses Resonating with Code
High	Participant had a generally to highly positive perception of police as evidenced by more than half of the given participant's responses being positive or supportive of police.	P1, P2, P6, P7, P8, P10, P13
Medium	Participant had a generally neutral perception of police or a fair balance of positive and negative comments of police.	P3, P4, P5, P11, P12

Low-Medium	Participant had a generally less than positive perception of police as evidenced by more than half of the participant's given responses being negative or highly fearful of police.	P9, P14
Profiled Minority	Participant was both a racial minority and expressed having been or the perception of police as having profiled them. There were two racial minority participants who did not express being profiled.	P3, P4, P5, P9
Deviant Contact	Participant had deviant contact with police such as traffic stop, was detained, and/or arrested.	P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P13, P14
Socially	Participant knew police in their own community from social and/or civic events such as church, school, the gym, etc. outside of police role. Participant knew police more intimately as friend or family, but not in community where participant grew up, such as an uncle or college roommate.	P1, P2, P3, P4, P6, P7, P8, P9, P13, P14
By Name	Participant knew police in their own community by name, but as an officer.	P1, P2, P3, P4, P6, P7, P8, P10, P11, P13

Two professional colleagues with significant law enforcement experience (a retired police chief who is now a professor as well as a former police commissioner now a professor) reviewed my findings and analysis, and concurred with the logistical differences between rural and urban police as likely influential in how well they know the community and how well the community knows them. Both the retired chief and the

former commissioner, as have I, spent significant time in both rural and urban

communities so also have a nuanced perspective on the differences between rural and

urban subcultures. Both also acknowledged the need for community members to know

the names of those in power, and those in power knowing the names of the people they

serve.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness, validity, transferability, and reliability are critical. Two means

by which to bolster validity of a qualitative study include review by an expert in the area

and feedback from the participants (Simon, 2011b). Two experts in the field were

consulted; as noted, one is a retired police chief and another was a police commissioner.

Both are not only experts in police policy and law enforcement logistics, but have

experience in both rural and urban communities and are also educators today. Both

concurred with the findings of this study. Also, participants were reached out to multiple

times since interviews, and five replied. COVID-19 shelter in place orders have resulted

in all participants (students) moving back home, so in person contact was not feasible at

this time.

Transferability is increased when detailed characteristic descriptions of the study

participants, setting, and processes are documented (Miles et al., 2014), as detailed in

Chapter 4. All participants are current college students or had graduated from the

institution within twelve months of the interview. Each participant grew up in a rural or

urban community so had refined and intimate knowledge of the cultural nuances as

compared to having recently moved to a rural or urban community as a young adult or for

college. The in-person interviews were necessary to capture nuanced responses to the interview questions. Each of the participants was recorded and the recordings were available for review.

There were no substantive changes between procedural expectations set forth in Chapter 3 to the interview process. As planned, I gathered data from fourteen students between ages 18 to 25; seven grew up in predominately rural areas and seven in more so urban areas. Six were female and eight were male; six were racial minorities (African American, Asian, Hispanic, or other) and eight were White; such diversity thus lent toward reliability (Miles et al., 2014). None of the participants grew up abroad, which should help mitigate other factors influencing perceptions of police (such as places plagued with war, anarchy, or embrace entirely different police functions).

Research Results

The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions Midwest college students have of police officers' effectiveness, fairness, and legitimacy and if there is disparity between those perceptions if the research participants grew up in a rural or urban community. This section will cover the three major questions asked of participants, the supportive questions, and several key responses from participants. This section also illuminates the major themes that arose from the interviews, the most salient being the power of participants knowing police by name and/or social setting upon their perception of police. I came to these major themes from reviewing the interview transcripts and seeing repeated common perceptions of police by participants who knew the names of police officers.

Major Question 1:

Describe the community in which you grew up. Was it urban (more than 50,000 population) or was it rural?

After explaining the process, the consent form, and double checking that the participant was over eighteen, I asked each participant Major Question 1 to make sure each was clear about the basic definition of rural and urban. Seven of the participants grew up in rural communities and seven grew up in urban communities. Some participants were in communities that were technically a small town or a sub-urban community and not so clearly rural or urban, however, for this study those from towns under 50,000 were rural and over 50,000 were urban even if participants considered that suburban.

Supportive Questions to 1:

If you grew up more rural, did you live in a town on or in the country?

Of the participants who grew up rural, or in towns 50,000 or less, four grew up in the country and/or on a farm. The more remote the participants were from a city, even a small one, the more likely they may not have had access to police given geographical limitations. All of the participants from the country/farm seemed not too remote to have access to law enforcement when needed.

Do you plan to live in a rural or urban community after college?

Of the fourteen participants, five said they planned to live in a rural community after college, four said urban, and five were undecided or open to where their job options dictated. Each of the five who planned to live in a rural community grew up in a rural

community and each of the four who said urban grew up in an urban community.

Familiarity seems to play a significant factor in future plans.

When you think of the word community, what comes to mind?

I asked this question to see how rural and urban participants were different or similar and if that perception of community may have impact on perceptions of police. Participants varied widely on responses though there did not seem any common theme between rural or urban, male or female, racial minority or White responses. For instance, Participant 3 (see Table 1) was a racial minority male from an urban area; he described community as "A whole bunch of people coming together to accomplish a common goal" (personal communication, February 6, 2020). Similarly, Participant 6 was a rural, White female who described community as "People gathering either through hardships or the happy moments of a wedding" (February 11, 2020). There were not many substantive outliers in these responses and no discernable aggregate difference between the rural and urban cohorts with regard to perception of community.

Major Question 2:

Can you tell me about your perception and/or personal experience with law enforcement?

Of the six racial minority students, four perceived police racially profile, and one White student perceived police as treating him better in a traffic stop than they would have treated racial minorities in the same scenario. Thirteen of the fourteen participants expressed perceptions resonating with the sentiment that though there are bad cops, they are needed and most do good. Participant 14, a rural, White male perceived his friend

who is a cop could be a threat given his perception of unchecked police power.

Participant 13, urban, racial minority male perceived police "are pretty good and really

there to protect safety (personal communication, February 24, 2002). Participant 6, a

rural, White female, responded that "my identity was stolen...During this the cops were

very nice probably because I knew them from working at the gas station" (personal

communication, February 11, 2020). Participant 3 noted that "I was once with my

girlfriend who was White and was followed around by the police and questioned by the

door on the way at a Walmart: (February 6, 2020). Some of these responses were

consistent with the literature and others contradictory.

Supportive Questions to 2:

Did you ever have a personal encounter with the police in that community? If so,

could you describe it?

Of the fourteen participants, ten said they had some sort of personal deviant

(traffic stop, arrest, or other) contact with law enforcement. The four who did not have

personal deviant contact but did have secondhand contact with law enforcement, such as

a friend gone missing and police interviewing the community for leads (personal

communication, February 24, 2020). Participant 6 (rural and female) was the victim of

identity theft that resulted in her being temporarily taken into custody. Participant 3

(urban and male) also was detained at his own home suspected of being a burglar.

Participant 5 (urban and female) recalled, "In middle school there was a pregnant girl and

the cop had her down on her stomach. That was traumatizing (personal communication,

February 2, 2020). Participant 8, (rural and female) that she "loves law enforcement. I'm

former military and I've not had a negative connection with the police" (personal

communication, February 14, 2020). Other than the aforementioned perception of racial

profiling (or lack of racial profiling as with Participant 14), all participants seemed to

have a mostly positive perceptions of their personal encounters with police.

> Did you personally know one or more of the police officers in your community by
>
> name or other social interactions? Church? Sports team coach? Civic
>
> organizations?

As seen on Table 1, only four participants did not know a police officer

personally in some sort of social role. Also, four of the fourteen participants did not know

the name of an officer in that community in which he or she grew up. Participants

personally knowing officers from the community and from social events other than as

police officers seemed more salient than the rural–urban divide, gender, or race in the

perception of law enforcement.

> Do you think the police were effective in preventing crime? Do you think the
>
> police were effective in helping resolving conflict? Do you think police were
>
> responsive to the needs of the community such as responding to 911 calls or other
>
> emergency situations?

These three supportive questions overlapped and participants did not differentiate

much between effective and responsive. Participant 13, (urban, racial minority male)

replied that, "I think that police help minimize crime but I think overall they cannot get

everything. The number of police vs. the number of people out there is a big ratio. They

can't stop everything and how they are working to stop crime in their community"

(personal communication, February 24, 2020). Participant 14, a rural, White male questioned, "I wonder how much is prevented by police and how much is deterred by the community" (personal communication, February 27, 2020). Participant 1, a rural, White female replied that, "Yes, we seriously saw them always driving and monitoring. Our neighborhood is quit and not much happens. We've not had much in the line of conflict just because they are really good at watching our neighborhood…We have a bunch of old people so they show up really quickly" (personal communication, February 3, 2020). Participant 12, an urban, racial minority male said that, "I would say so. Yes, detecting and stopping it. But overall I think they are effective at stopping crime and they have authority to do so, and they should have the right. Most definitely. I remember two houses away, different house, my neighbor called the cops and they came a few minutes later" (personal communication, February 24, 2020). So, across the rural–urban divide, gender, and races all participant responses seemed substantively similar.

Do you think the police treated all people in that community fairly?

Whereas there seemed much consensus between all fourteen participants that police were effective, with the question of fairness there seemed more disparity. Participant 8, a rural, White female noted that, "I assume, so but don't personally have experience. I've not heard much from others either," (personal communication, February 14, 2020). Participant 7, an urban, White male said that the "times they pulled me over they seemed fair to me. Also, the few times in my neighborhood they were fair to everybody" (personal communication, February 11, 2020). Participant 5, an urban, racial minority female, noted that "I've never seen a police encounter with anyone else so I

would not know" (personal communication, February 7, 2020). Participant 9, an urban, racial minority female said that "It depended on the officer. The majority seemed fair, but some by the way they looked at you or treated you, it seemed more race related" (personal communication, February 18, 2020). Fairness seemed more so aligned with perceptions of racial profiling than any other factor such as gender or geography (rural–urban).

> Do you think the power that police have is legitimate in that they should be able to fulfill their duties including but not limited to the pulling over of drivers, administering breathalyzer tests, enforcing curfews and other community standards?

Legitimacy is more of a philosophical concept with regard to if the state via police should have power over the people rather than the more pragmatic, first-hand experience that deals with effectiveness and fairness. Participant responses regarding legitimacy did not vary as much as responses regarding fairness. Participant 7, an urban, White male reported that, "I think it is legitimate, the power that people have to pull people over keeps people accountable and having weapons and more than just a baton is good thing; it is a good thing they are armed with guns. A baton will not do a whole lot with an armed shooter. The power they have is good and justified" (personal communication, February 11, 2020). An urban, racial minority male, Participant 3, reported that, "they have too much power and the whole I'm going to turn on my lights because I'm waiting at a red light shouldn't happen. I've heard stories of cops pulling people over. I'd rather see more undercover cops" (personal communication, February 6, 2020). Participant 8, a

rural, White female suggested that "Yes. That's completely legitimate. Even if I was doing something wrong I'd want them to have the authority to correct the situation. They have a scary job" (personal communication, February 14, 2020). However, an urban racial minority, female, Participant 9, reported regarding the legitimacy of police power that it "depends on the officer. Some abuse the power, but it's not all of them" (personal communication, February 18, 2020). There seemed a general consensus between participants that the police power was legitimate and even if not perfect there might not be a feasible alternative.

Do you have any close family or friends who work as a police officer? If so, what is your impression of her or him?

As noted in Table 1, of the fourteen participants, all but four knew an officer socially, and all but four knew (three of the same four) an officer in charge in that community where the participant grew up. For instance, Participant 14 knew an officer, a friend from college, but did not know an officer part of law enforcement in his community. Likewise, Participant 10 knew the name of an officer part of law enforcement of the community in which he grew up but not one socially outside of that role as officer. No participants who knew an officer from the community socially outside of the role of officer or knew the name of an officer in law enforcement over the community in which the participant grew up had a negative perception of that officer or officers or officers in general. Any perceptions participants mentioned about officers he or she knew socially or by name were positive.

Do you hope to become a police officer someday?

None of the participants planned on being a police officer. I am the advisor for the law enforcement major and pursuant to the IRB none of my advisees could be in the study.

What is your tentative job/career after college?

Career plans for participants included one scientist, one motivational speaker, two pastors, three teachers, four heading into business, and four undecided. There seemed no differences in perceptions of police based on career path. However, the two students who said they had served in the military, one urban, racial minority male and one rural, White female, both seemed to express high regard for police. This more positive perception of police by those having served in the military is perhaps not surprising given the somewhat overlapping functions and training of both military and law enforcement.

How could the police in the community in which you grew up do a better job?

What would be your recommendation to the police force in that community?

There was surprising consensus between participants on how police in the community could do a better job. Participant 9 cited that police should "Get to know the community and all variety of the community, not just little kids but also families" (personal communication, February 18, 2020). Participant 8 recommended that law enforcement should "Update their web page because you can't see who the cops are" (personal communication, February 14, 2020). Participant 10 suggested that police "reach more into the community and hold some events or something. Like a grill out" (personal communication, February 18, 2020). Participant 5 encouraged that police should be "from that community and really want to make a place better and not be corrupted"

(personal communication, February 7, 2020). Participant 11 seemed to best capture the aggregate sentiment of all participants by saying that police officers should "Get out of the cop car and speak to the community. Putting a face to something helps separate power and the person" (personal communication, February 21, 2020). The most common reply resonated with officers knowing the community and the people of the community knowing the officers more. Not one participant mentioned the police could do a better job with regard to use of force or police shootings of citizens. Every response seemed to resonate with increased personal and social connections between law enforcement and the communities they serve.

Major Question 3:

Does your real-life experience with the police seem similar to or different from that portrayed in movies or television shows? How so?

Participant answers varied. Participant 8, a rural, White female, noted that "Movies and television are very dramatic. I don't watch a lot of TV. Every time I deal with an officer, if a weapon is pulled it's not immediately but in movies and television weapons are pointed at people" (personal communication, February 14, 2020). Participant 2, a rural, White male chimed in that "the media is always trying to portray them as a bunch of idiots and, you know, throwing them under the bus, and how can we get these people out of their job. Just knowing the people I know it is a very, very different situation" (personal communication, February 5, 2020). Participant 4, an urban, racial minority male, noted that "it's very different from movies and where you see officers take action in all situations" (personal communication, February 6, 2020).

Participant 3, an urban, racial minority male, expressed a nuanced and mixed reply in that "Definitely the same in regards to myself being followed. And, different in the sense a gun has never been pointed at me whereas in movies guns are pointed for possibly drama. I think it's different because movies incite drama" (personal communication, February 6, 2020). And, Participant 9, an urban, racial minority female, added that "with movies it's been showing the potential of what happens that people don't talk about" (personal communication, February 18, 2020). How much influence media had on participant perception of police varied and seemed to impact racial minority participants more than the White participants. However, it seemed personally knowing an officer impacted perceptions of police more than media. Not all racial minority participants had a negative view of police. More than one seemed to have a positive view of police. On the contrary, all participants who knew a police officer by name or from a social setting, such as the gym or religious setting, had a more positive view of police.

Supportive Questions to 3:

Does your real-life experience with police seem similar to or different from that portrayed in news reports of police? How so?

Can you describe examples of legitimate use of police force? Or times police force was not legitimate?

Has media changed youth perceptions? Do you believe what you see on the news or television shows? Or, does it reinforce earlier perceptions or experiences?

Participants did not have much to add to Major Question 3 with the supportive questions, however, a few interesting perspectives were illuminated. Participant 6, a rural,

White female and the only participant who mentioned being detained and arrested replied that, "At the time I was arrested it was confusing, but looking back it was legitimate. From the facts they knew I was a threat, but after getting the full story then they were able to see I was the victim of identity theft" (personal communication, February 11, 2020). The only other participant, number three, (an urban, racial minority male), to have been detained was also wrongfully so; his nuanced reply was that "I don't feel like I have it as hard as African Americans who are getting shot down or killed by police officers. When I was pulled out of my house, the cop was reasonable. I think there is a disconnect. The way platforms work is simply to get clicks and not necessarily to get truth out there but rather get public reaction" (personal communication, February 6, 2020). Another illuminating perspective was from Participant 7 who stated that "I guess compared to how news portrays it the police are often portrayed as unreasonable whereas police seem very reasonable in my real life experience" (personal communication, February 11, 2020). Across the board, personal experiences were more powerful than media.

Findings. There were not substantively unusual or unexpected circumstances encountered, but for some surprising personal stories of firsthand encounters participants had with police. Examples included Participant 6, a rural, White female being falsely detained and arrested due to identity theft and Participant Three, an urban and male, also was detained at his own home suspected of being a burglar.

No data was lost and all interviews were available to review multiple times to ensure my perceptions at the time of the interviews were accurate. All transcriptions were sent to the participants to review, change, or edit. Of the fourteen participants, four

replied with approval of the transcriptions and one replied with some slight clarification and edits. Nine did not reply though were given ample opportunity to do so.

Some interview responses not anticipated reflected more layers of complexity and nuance rather than clear lines of difference between the rural and urban perception of police. For example, two students defied stereotypes; Participant 13 was a racial minority, urban male and his perceptions of police seemed generally higher than Participant 14, who was a rural, White male. I anticipated more clear themes within the rural and urban groups, but rather themes were more subtle and not as clearly defined as presumed.

One of the most distinctive themes if a participant had positive or negative impressions of police was if the participant knew the name of a police officer or knew an officer from social settings outside of the role as officer. Of the fourteen participants, ten had some sort of social contact with a police officer and ten knew the name of a police officer in that community in which they grew up (Table 1). Of the participants with a high perception of police, all but one both new an officer socially and new an officer in that community by name. Of the participants with low perception of police, both knew an officer socially (brother, roommate, friend, etc.) but neither knew the name of one from the community in which they grew up (Table 1). Future quantitative surveys should explore how would the participant rate the police in their community and then second ask if the participant knows the name of an officer in that community.

Knowing the name of a police officer, and preferably in the community in which the participant grew up, as opposed to a school friend or distant relative from another

community, seemed to be the most common theme between participants with positive perceptions of police across all three lenses of effectiveness, fairness, and legitimacy. It seemed that the most germane factor was not even so much if the participant may have known an officer as a friend or relative, but the knowing a name of the very officer(s) policing the given community. Of the fourteen participants, seven seemed to have a high perception of police. Of those seven, three were urban and four were rural (Table 1), but of those seven all but one both knew a police officer socially as well as one from their community by name, and that one still knew an officer from that community by name. Of the fourteen participants, two had a low-medium perception of police; one of those was rural and one urban, but neither knew the name of an officer from their community (Table 1). Knowing more personally the people with state sanctioned power (police) over the participants influenced participant perception of that power.

This one commonality of knowing a police officer's name and/or knowing officers from social settings seemed to supersede all other themes, be it race, gender, negative or positive firsthand random experiences (traffic stop, accidents, etc.), media, or geography in perception of police (Table 1). Interestingly then, it may not be so much that the previous literature suggesting different perceptions of police officers based on rural or urban communities was incorrect but possibly incomplete. Rather, knowing a police officer's name is a more likely byproduct of growing up in a rural community where there are so few people and possibly only one or two police officers. As cited in the literature review, rural police are often generalists and urban police more specialized.

This logistical difference between rural and urban policing seems to lend toward police being more known by name in the communities they serve.

Similarly, officers may more likely know the names of the people over whom they have police power in a rural area given more multifaceted connections officers seem to have with the community in rural areas, such as Participant 2, a rural, White male, who knew police officers socially from both the gym and bible studies and knew the names of officers in the community where he grew up (Table 1). They also knew his name, too (personal communication, February 5, 2020). Therefore, the question that future research would perhaps entail is a bit of a chicken or the egg sort of question: Is perception of the police more influenced by people knowing the name of police officers or police officers knowing the name of the people they serve more salient in perception formation? Or, are both mutually critical for enhancing positive perceptions of police?

One participant (Participant 6, a rural, White female) was even a victim of identity theft; a crime committed by another for which she was arrested by the police and held until cleared of any wrongdoing. Fortunately, she had a close relationship with the police from her place of employment at a convenience store. As such, what was a terrible situation was made better by the previous positive relationship with police in the very community of her arrest and her perception of police was still high (Table 1).

Another participant, male and from a rural area, had an exceedingly high view of police (Table 1) but was also in a bible study with several officers in his community. This participant also knew police who worked out at the gym he frequented. Personally

knowing a police officer by name outside of the role of police officer seemed the most indicative of the degree to which the participant had a positive impression of police.

Four participants (Table 1) suggested race was a factor in how police treated people and that seemed to influence how the participants perceived the police and police power in general; responses suggested both media and personal encounters with police influenced this perception. Two racial minority participants, one male and one female, cited personal and disparate police treatment in the form of being strangely followed in stores by police or treated oddly during a traffic stop. Both were from an urban community. One rural, Caucasian male expressed he perceived being treated better than racial minority peers would have been treated during a traffic stop of his own.

Most participants expressed concern for police and recognized the exceptionally hard task police have especially in this time with police at the forefront of media and policy rhetoric (personal communication, February 3 to February 27, 2020). However, participants also recognized some police make bad choices that negatively influences perceptions of all police. Both rural and urban, male and female, racial minority and White students seemed to echo these sentiments across the board though the rural participants may have had slightly more positive perceptions of police across all aspects of effectiveness, fairness, and legitimacy, however, all of the rural participants were White. As such, if the more positive aggregate perception rural participants had of police is higher than urban participants because they were from rural communities or because they were all White is difficult to extrapolate with such a small number of study

participants. That nuance could be more clearly determined in future larger, quantitative studies.

Key Findings Summarized

Rural and urban participants in the aggregate seem to have slightly different perceptions of police with rural having a more positive perception. Of the seven rural participants, five had a high perception of police, one had a medium/average perception, and one had a low to medium perception. To compare, of the seven urban participants, two had a high perception, four had a medium/average perception, and one had a low-medium perception (Table 1).

However, this more positive perception of police by rural participants may be due to the rural participants all being White (seven of seven rural participants were White; two of seven urban participants were White); one of the rural, White participants mentioned being the benefactor of racial profiling and four of the urban, racial minority participants mentioned racial profiling (Table 1). Or, this more positive perception may be due to more of the rural participants knew police by name or from social settings (Table 1: Of the eight no responses to knowing an officer's name or socially, five of eight were from urban participants).

Personally knowing police by name or socially from other community settings is most salient in positive perceptions of police. Of the four participants to not know the name of an officer in his or her community, two of those participants had the lowest perception of police; the other two participants to not know the name of an officer had a medium/average perception of police (Table 1). Of the seven participants with the highest

perception of police, all but one both knew police officers from social settings and knew the name of at least one officer in the community of the participant (Table 1).

Not knowing police and negative personal experiences (especially the perception of being personally racially profiled) with police are most powerful influences in negative perceptions of police. Both of the two participants with the lowest perception of police felt as if police were racially discriminatory. One of those two perceived police having personally profiled her and treated her worse than a White person would have in the same situation. The other participant with the lowest perception of police was White and perceived he was treated better than a racial minority person would have in the same situation as he was with during a police stop.

Summary

This chapter covered the results of the research as well as the research process. The chapter also detailed some unanticipated findings and possible applications to community policing policy. The findings suggest a nuance perhaps not as clearly articulated in previous studies: There is positive power in people knowing the names of police officers in their community and knowing police in other social settings other than the role of an officer. This knowing of police is more powerful in perception formation than media, though media clearly impacts perceptions, too. In Chapter 5, I will discuss the interpretation and potential application of the research results.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore, understand, and describe college student perceptions of police based on whether they grew up in rural or urban communities. Three aspects of college student perception of the police covered in this study were effectiveness, fairness, and legitimacy. Effectiveness may include police responsiveness and empathy as well as crime prevention and resolution. As opposed to internal biases, fairness is more external and may include equal treatment regardless of any demographic differences. Lastly, legitimacy revolves around the lawfulness of police power over a people and police right to, for instance, stop people for speeding or driving under the influence.

Researchers acknowledge that due to urbanormativity rural populations are less studied in crime research. Studies also noted a growing divide between rural and urban cohorts, especially after the 2016 U.S. presidential election. Given the recent subculture divergence between rural and urban cohorts, a goal of this study was to explore whether perceptions of police diverge and if so in which aspects: effectiveness, fairness, and legitimacy. Differences between rural and urban perception of the police may necessitate police training on the divergent subcultures that better prepares police for community policing.

Findings concerning rural–urban perceptions of police effectiveness, fairness, and legitimacy were not as distinct as anticipated. There was not a large disparity noted between the participants with regard to perception of police effectiveness, fairness, and

legitimacy. Most students held relatively similar perceptions about police: Police have a challenging job and serve the community well but a few officers abuse their power.

The one key unanticipated theme was that those participants who personally knew not just any police officer (such as a friend or family member serving as an officer in another community) but an officer with state power over the participant seemed to have more fondness for police. That connection, the knowing of a name and/or knowing an officer from a social setting, seemed most significant in how positively participants perceived police.

Interpretation of the Findings

The results of this study suggest that there may be a difference between how rural and urban college students perceive police and that difference may be based on whether the participant grew up in a rural or urban community. This rural–urban disparity has been cited in the literature by other studies as well (Mawby, 2009). Contrary to what I anticipated, the perception of police seemed not so much based on growing up in a rural or urban community but if the participant knew the name(s) of the police officers in the given community. This knowing of police officers' names was more likely for rural participants given several distinct aspects of rural policing. Disparate perceptions were not so much based on cultural differences between rural and urban but possibly different logistics of rural and urban policing. As cited in the literature review, rural police are often generalists and urban police are often specialists. This logistical difference, rather than any rural–urban cultural difference, may to lend toward more rural participants

knowing the name of police officers and encountering them in the community as

members of the very community over which they have police power.

Extension of Knowledge

My study focused on a more specific cohort: Midwestern college students from

the ages of 18 to 25. More positive perception of police by participants from rural

communities may not be causal but rather co-relational. Positive perceptions of police

might not so much relate with having grown up in a rural or urban community. Rather,

having grown up in a rural community seemed to make it more likely that the participants

personally knew by name the police (and possibly vice versa) with state power over the

participant. The police were not merely a uniform but rather someone with whom they

had a relationship with or even knowledge of outside of the role of police officer such as

from the gym or church. Thus, this study extends current knowledge in a narrow but

pragmatic way. It is good for youth to interact with police in positive ways (e.g., games

and social activities) rather than only in negative ways (e.g., enforced curfews, speeding

tickets, etc.), often seen in viral videos of police in uniform playing basketball with boys

in the neighborhood and represents community policing.

The Rural–Urban Divide and Urbanormativity

This study was focused equally on both rural and urban perspectives, and the

purpose of the study was to examine the different perspectives between that nexus and

participants who grew up in rural or urban communities. Based on the results, the rural–

urban divide was not as indicative of positive or negative sentiments toward the police as

was personally knowing the police in the participants' own community and especially

knowing the police outside of that role, such as from the gym, religious affiliation, or other community groups. However, the nature of rural policing lent toward police and the people they serve more likely knowing each other's names. In the United States cultural changes and diversification will make it increasingly necessary for police roles to shift and even expand especially with interpersonal communication skills (Sereni-Massinger & Wood, 2016), which my research echoes and more narrowly indicates that knowing an officer's name is key for enhancing community policing through communication skills.

The Power of a Name

"Rules without relationship leads to rebellion" (McDowell, 2002, p. 203) seems more cited in parenting or education circles than with regard to state power and more specifically that power manifested through the police. Relationship arguably seems why community policing is key; police should be from or at least vested and present in the communities that they serve; if police have no relationship with those over whom they rule there may be increased rebellion.

Teachers are encouraged to know student names because it suggests that the teacher cares and it fosters a sense of trust, however, a teacher who does not know a student's name is perceived as both uninterested and unapproachable (Glenz, April, 2014). Arguably, it seems quite possible this sentiment in perception of teachers may parallel how people perceive police.

People often seem to say *my* dentist, *my* doctor, *my* teacher, *my* pastor, or even *my* senator. However, when people refer to law enforcement there is a shift from *my* to *the*. There may be some risks for a community to having a more personal relation with a

specific officer, however, it seems there are some potentially tremendous rewards, too. The participants in my study who personally knew one or more officers policing within their given community seemed to have a more positive all around perception of police. That personal relationship seemed more influential than media (be it news outlets, television shows, or movies) portrayals of police and even mitigated negative interactions with police.

The relationship between police effectiveness, fairness, and legitimacy are complex concepts that influence each other. So, too, the perception power of people personally knowing the police officers of their community by name likely influences and is influenced by police also knowing the names of people in their community. Words have power; perhaps a simple shift away from "the" police to "my" police may help bridge the gap and legitimize police to the people they serve.

Police and teachers are arguably the most iconic and symbolic images of the state. In education, the relational aspect of teachers with students seems well documented and refined. In the field of education, relational intentionality is when educators know the names of students, treating them with respect no matter how they respond, as well as celebrating their achievements rather than only correcting failures (Bouvier, 2016). To some degree, could this same relational intentionality be woven into the fabric of community policing? In the United States, as compared to other nations where police often perform markedly different functions, often the first encounter with police is negative and anonymous, symbolizing state use of force. Perhaps more first encounters

should be positive, with relational intentionality, and with officers as people in the community rather than only in the role of an officer.

By default, knowing names (both police knowing the names of those they serve and those they serve knowing the name of the officers) is possibly more common in rural policing for many reasons including, but not limited to, relative isolation, police having grown up in the very community they police, the limited number of police, and because in rural communities there is not that specialization more common for police in urban areas. Certainly, there are advantages to specialization seen in urban law enforcement practices, however, the disadvantage seems the limited specific contact officers have with the community.

Limitations of the Study

The limitations of the study include but are not limited to the fact that participants were all college students between the ages of 18 to 25 at a Midwest college. Other age brackets may perceive police effectiveness, fairness, and legitimacy vastly different than this 18 to 25 age bracket, however, this age tends to have higher rates of deviance than others (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, n.d.), so, perceptions of those in a more deviant age bracket may be more important to explore rather than those in age brackets not as prone to deviance.

Also, perceptions of young adults from 18 to 25 not in college at all, at a technical college, or at a state school may vary from those perceptions of students at a private religious college. Additionally, perceptions of young adults in the Midwest may vary from those in Alaska, New York City, or another country.

Lastly, bias is a potential limitation. As noted in Chapter 3 of this study, when blind studies are not possible then having many different people look at the entire process can help mitigate bias (Holman et al., 2015); working at a college gives me access to many scholars to review the research. Multiple work colleagues have reviewed this entire study from the inception. One fellow faculty member was a police commissioner and he noted that "enforcement of laws is best done with the recognition of humanity" and "I have always had a deep respect for reasonable officers who exert power in levels that respect the specific needs of the people they serve" (personal communication, March 25, 2020). Similarly, a retired police chief reviewed my results and concurred that rural and urban policing logistics may lend toward rural people knowing the names of the police in their communities which may have a positive impact on the relationship police have with those they serve (personal communication, March 24, 2020).

Additional research could include a larger participant pool with an instrument more focused on the issue of knowing police and less upon rural and urban cohorts. More specifically, future research could explore if the more impactful factor determining perceptions of police is if people know the police by name, socially, or as a friend or family member. Another angle for additional research is to explore which is more salient: participants knowing the name of police officers or police officers knowing the names of participants and how being anonymous, nameless even, changes the dynamics of empathy and respect. Future research could delve into the issues of "othering" as it applies to police relationships with the people they serve.

Recommendations

Possible recommendations for policymakers and law enforcement are to increasingly include in diversity training a component exploring the community differences between rural and urban subcultures. Given the growing divide between rural and urban world views, this rural–urban training may be more so needed than in previous decades. The advantage in rural communities with regard to positive perceptions of police is less anonymity; the people policed may more likely know the name of the police and the police often know the names of those in the community they serve. Police often live in the rural community, bank there, shop there, raise kids there, and have other relationships with the community outside of the police role.

Pursuant to the literature it seems that due to urbanormativity urban policing concepts have often been applied or misapplied in rural communities. Perhaps one strategy to consider would be modeling some rural community policing practices in urban areas. For example, according to the Department of Justice (2011), for every 1,000 people in a community there is on average 2.4 sworn law enforcement officers. In a small town of 1,000 people, it is arguably likely that many of those 1,000 residents know one or more of the two or three police officers by name given there are so few, proximity, and possibly the officer even grew up in the very community she or he serves.

However, in an urban and even suburban area with many more police officers in a more densely populated area, those officers "share" more citizens, lending to a more anonymous and even symbolic relationship between the people and the police. An old adage for parents with children at a swimming pool suggests that it is safer for the child if

one person watches the child than two given one person was more vigilant and also

responsible; two or more are not as vested, more prone to distraction, and often assume

the other is watching when neither might be. A more specific designation of one officer

over a smaller segment of a city may increase the level to which that officer is versed in

the needs of the smaller community as well as increases how vested she or he is in the

community.

Perhaps urban police could divide areas more clearly, and have neighborhood

liaison officers who could personally introduce police to the designated neighborhood.

Perhaps law enforcement vehicles could have officers' names displayed. Or, the police

officer directing before and after school traffic could be part of the school community,

too, and not just a changing uniform at the school property entrance. The more the officer

is a person rather than a symbol the more perceptions of police seem increasingly

positive. Possibly officers could more permanently stay in one community to better foster

visibility and therefore a relationship with that community (Verga et al., 2016). My

research suggests that visibility lends toward knowing the officer(s) individually by name

which increases positive perception of law enforcement as a whole.

Between the community and law enforcement there is a communication gap and

the degree to which that gap can be bridged will impact effectiveness of police initiatives

(Nalla et al., 2018). To that end, in Sweden, community volunteers have functioned as

almost liaisons with police, a trend that seemed to shift youth perceptions markedly from

hostile and antagonistic toward police to increased understanding and subsequently less

deviance; however, the challenge Swedish communities are still overcoming with this

trend is unclear boundaries in this quasi-police/spokesperson volunteer role (Uhnoo & Hansen Löfstrand, 2018). Young people in Ireland attempt to bridge that gap by working together with police in creative storytelling events whereby *both* youth and police share stories of personal experiences and collaboratively work together to help forge a more positive way forward (Whelan, 2018). Increased personal relationship with law enforcement seems key to improving perception of police officers.

With regard to the lens of effectiveness, fairness, and legitimacy, it seemed across the entire spectrum of my study, participants did not really differentiate those much even after explaining the differences and philosophical underpinnings. However, at least two racial minority students were slightly more concerned with racial disparities in how police treat people, a sentiment echoed by the research of Verga, Murillo, Toulon, Morote, and Perry (2016). Perhaps a longer interview and a more nuanced instrument could better ascertain differences between rural and urban participants along that effectiveness, fairness, and legitimacy topology. Again, though I anticipated more distinction between how rural and urban participants perceived police along these lines, participants did not differentiate much from each other on that topology.

Implications

This study has positive social change implications for police training and enhanced community policing. If police better understand the key differences between rural and urban communities, they may be better equipped to serve those respective communities. This knowledge is especially empowering if a police officer spent formative years in a rural environment and then is employed in an urban environment and

vice versa. On the smaller and more immediate scale, this research could inform and shape the new law enforcement program at the college where I currently teach.

Police have an uphill battle to combat against perceptions perpetuated by the media be that by news outlets, movies, or television, however, strategic public relations initiatives can mitigate that (Verga et al., 2016). Based on my research results, it seems the best means to dispel myths about police is by people actually knowing police personally. A nameless uniform seems easier to attach negative stereotypes, whereas, when police are not just police but known people in the community it seems perceptions are more positive. Participants knowing first names of an actual police officer in the participants' community seemed the most common and prevalent theme indicative of a positive impression of police officers.

My assumption before the study was that the rural–urban divide and sub-cultural differences had more impact on perception of police. However, the rural–urban divide was not necessarily causal nor did it even seem that something in the different sociological upbringing of college students from a rural community so much lent toward perceptions of police, but was rather a correlational factor. Rural communities by nature of being isolated, less dense, and having fewer but specific police allocated for a given citizenry seems to increase the likelihood of positive perception because the people had a more personal relationship with the specific officers outside of their role as officers.

Conclusion

Perceptions of police effectiveness, fairness, and legitimacy are not so much overlapping or concentric Venn diagram circles, but more of complex spirals of

intersectionality influencing and being influenced by the other. For police to be perceived as legitimate they must appeal to the voters who may prefer hearing tough on crime policies yet those wanting greater criminal justice reform (Miller & Fonoff, 2017). Within communities police must also establish legitimacy through increasing trust and positive connections which thereby will increase effectiveness, too (Blanks, 2016). Also, for police to establish legitimacy they must satisfy community needs of trust and fairness (Blanks, 2016), which may necessitate refined interpersonal and public relations skills by law enforcement organizations as well as individual officers, too.

Youth voices, both from rural and urban communities, should be heard regarding police policy; their views are nuanced with layers of complexity making it tenuous to extrapolate if perceptions are shaped by place (rural or urban) or the myriad of other issues such as race, media, and personal experience with police. Law enforcement faces a multifaceted challenge to meet needs of diverse stakeholders and given the increased focus on state power via police, this space warrants further exploration and explanation. However, a simple way to improve perception of police is by ensuring the people over whom they have power know officers not just by a uniform but by their name and even outside of their role as officers, such as acquaintances at the gym, religious, or civic activities. On duty officers playing basketball with local youth is a step forward, yet, it must be more of a long-term community relationship with specific officers as community members rather than merely the police in general.

The opportunity for community policing is that the rural and urban divide may not be entirely causal in the disparity of how rural and urban people perceive police, but

rather could be somewhat co-relational. Rural communities may have a more positive perception of police not because of rural–urban cultural differences but because of policing logistics and population density; rural communities are more likely to know the names of police officers and officers the names of those in the community. The real issue is not so much geography (rural or urban), but rather a real relationship and shared community with specific police officers, where the people know officers' names and the officers also know names of people over whom they have power.

References

Adorjan, M., Ricciardelli, R., & Spencer, D. C. (2017). Youth perceptions of police in

rural Atlantic Canada. *Police Practice and Research, 18*(6).

https://doi.org/10.1080/1514263.3017.1363961

American Public Media Research Lab. (2018). Differences and common ground: Urban

and rural Minnesota findings from the *2017 Ground Level Survey of Minnesotans.*

Ground Level. http://www.americanpublicmedia.org/wp-

content/uploads/2018/01/gl-survey-urban-rural-brief-1-22-18R.pdf

Argent, N. (2012). Rural policing and policing the rural: A constable countryside?

Geographical Research, *50*(3), 335-336. https://doi.org/:10.1111/j.1745-

5871.2011.00719

Armstrong, T. (2008). *The human odyssey: Navigating the twelve stages of life.* Sterling.

Barrett, K. J., Haberfeld, M., & Walker, M. C. (2009). A comparative study of the

attitudes of urban, suburban and rural police officers in New Jersey regarding the

use of force. *Crime, Law & Social Change, 52*(2), 159-179.

https://doi.org/10.1007/s10611-008-9179-4

Bialik, K. (2018). *Key findings about American life in urban, suburban and rural areas.*

Pew Research Center. http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/05/22/key-

findings-about-american-life-in-urban-suburban-and-rural-areas/

Blankenau, J., & Parker, J. (2015). Assessing the rural–urban divide in a red state. *The

Online Journal of Rural Research and Policy, 10*(3), 1-18.

Blanks, J. (2016, June 10). *Twenty years after* Whren*: A crisis of police legitimacy.* The

   Cato Institute. https://www.cato.org/blog/twenty-years-after-whren-crisis-police-

   legitimacy

Blanks, J. (2016). Thin blue lies: How pretextual stops undermine police legitimacy.

   Case Western Law Review, *66*(4).

   https://scholarlycommons.law.case.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=&httpsredir=

   1&article=4660&context=caselrev

Bouvier, C. (2016). RELATIONSHIPS as a teaching tool. *Teach*, 14-15.

Community Orientated Policing Services. (2012). *Community policing defined.* United

   States Department of Justice. https://cops.usdoj.gov/pdf/vets-to-

   cops/e030917193-CP-Defined.pdf

Condon, P. (2015, January 25). Urban-rural split in Minnesota grows deeper, wider. *Star

   Tribune*. http://www.startribune.com/urban-rural-split-in-minnesota-grows-

   deeper-and-wider/289688071/

Cooper. J. (2014). *In search of police legitimacy: Territoriality, isomorphism, and

   changes in policing practice*. LFB Scholarly Publications, LLC.

Cooper, S., & Endacott, R. (2007). Generic qualitative research: A design for qualitative

   research in emergency care? *Emergency Medical Journal*, *24*(12), 816-819.

   https://doi.org/10.1136/emj.2007.050641

Creswell, J. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry research design: Choosing among five

   approach*es (2nd ed.), Sage Publications.

Dowler, K. (2003). Media consumption and public attitudes toward crime and justice:
The relationship between fear of crime, punitive attitudes, and perceived police
effectiveness. California State University at Bakersfield. http:/engl102-f15-
howland.wikispaces.umb.edu/file/view/Kenneth+Dowler.pdf

Eldridge. L. (2012, June 27). Policing Mayberry: Misconceptions about 'rural' cops.
PoliceOne. https://www.policeone.com/rural-law-enforcement/articles/5827741-
Policing-Mayberry-Misconceptions-about-rural-cops/

Elliott, I., Thomas, S. D. M., & Ogloff, J. R. P. (2012). Procedural justice in contacts with
the police: The perspective of victims of crime. *Police Practice and Research,
13*(5), 437-449. https://doi.org/10.1080/15614263.2011.607659

Elliott, V. (2018). Thinking about the coding process in qualitative data analysis. *The
Qualitative Report, 23*(11).
https://nsuworks.nova.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3560&context=tqr

Englander, M. (2012). The interview: Data collection in descriptive phenomenological
human scientific research. *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology, 43*, 13-35.

Fryer, R. G. (2016). An empirical analysis of racial differences in police use of force.
Journal of Political Economy.
https://scholar.harvard.edu/fryer/publications/empirical-analysis-racial-
differences-police-use-force

Gilbert, D., Wakeling, S., & Crandall, V. (2014). Procedural justice and police
legitimacy: Using training as a foundation for strengthening community-police
relationships. *California Partnership for Safe Communities*.

https://www.bja.gov/bwc/pdfs/Procedural-Justice-and-Police-Legitimacy-Paper-CPSC-Feb-2015.pdf

Glenz, T (2014, April). The importance of learning students' names. *Journal on Best Teaching Practice*. http://teachingonpurpose.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Glenz-T.-2014.-The-importance-of-learning-students-names.pdf. 21-22.

Gold, E., & Bradley, M. (2013, September). The case for procedural justice: Fairness as a crime prevention tool. *The E-Newsletter of the COPS Office, 6*(9). https://cops.usdoj.gov/html/dispatch/09-2013/fairness_as_a_crime_prevention_tool.asp

Graham v. Connor, (1989). No. 87-6571 United States Supreme Court. Argued: February 21, 1989. Decided: May 15, 1989. https://caselaw.findlaw.com/us-supreme-court/490/386.html

Graziano, L. M. (2009). News media and perceptions of police: a state-of-the-art-review. *Policing: An International Journal, 42*(2). 209-225. https://doi.org/10.1108/PIJPSM-11-2017

Groff, E. R. (2015). Informal social control and crime events. *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice, 31*(1), 90–106. https://doi.org/10.1.1.871.1726

Gubeladze, I. (2011). The social identity transformation on the condition of rural youth migration in city. *International Society for Political Psychology*. https://doi.org/ /10.1037/e510372012-001

Henry, T. K. S., & Franklin, T. W. (2019). Police legitimacy in the context of street

    stops: The effects of race, class, and procedural justice. *Criminal Justice Policy*

    Review, *30*(3), 406–427. https://doi.org//10.1177/0887403417708334

Hinds, L. (2008). Public satisfaction with police: The influence of general attitudes and

    police-citizen encounters. *International Journal of Police Science &*

    Management, 11(1). 54-66.

Ho, A, & Cho, W. (2017). Government communication effectiveness and satisfaction

    with police performance: A large-scale survey study. *Public Administration*

    Review, 77. 228–239. https://doi.org/10.1111/puar.12563.

Holman, L., Head, M. L., Lanfear, R., & Jennions, M. D. (2015). Evidence of

    experimental bias in the life sciences: Why we need blind data recording. *PLoS*

    Biology, *13*(7), 1–12. https://doi.org//10.1371/journal.pbio.1002190

Home Office. (2012). Policing by consent. United Kingdom Government.

    https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/policing-by-consent/definition-of-

    policing-by-consent

Huberman, A. M., & Saldana, J. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis: an expanded*

    sourcebook (3rd ed.). Sage Publications.

Hyun Ra, K., & Kim, Y. (2019). Racialized perceptions of the police: Measuring the

    dimensions of juveniles' perceptions of the police. *Policing: An International*

    Journal, 42(2), 301-315.https://doi.org/ https://doi.org/10.1108/PIJPSM-11-2017-

    0144

Ioimo, R. J., Becton, R., Meadows, L. M., Tears, R. T., & Charles, M. T. (2011).
Comparing urban and rural police views of bias-based policing. *Professional Issues in Criminal Justice, 6*(1 & 2)
https://campus.purdueglobal.edu/DocumentStore/Docs11/pdf/CJ/PICJ_V6N12_Io im

Ivković, S. K., & Khechumyan, A. (2014) Measuring police integrity among urban and rural police in Armenia: From local results to global implications. *International Journal of Comparative and Applied Criminal Justice, 38*(1). 39-61. https://doi.org/ /10.1080/01924036.2013.777869

Johnson, D., King, W. R., Katz, C. M., Fox, A. M., & Goulette, N. (2008). Youth perceptions of the police in Trinidad and Tobago. *Caribbean Journal of Criminology and Public Safety, 13*1 & 2. https://eds-b-ebscohost-com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=4f568dd4-0a1e-4674-94da-449eb80803b8%40pdc-v-sessmgr03

Kochel, T. R., Parks, R., & Mastrofski, S. D. (2013). Examining police effectiveness as a precursor to legitimacy and cooperation with police. *Justice Quarterly, 30,* 895-925. https://doi.org/10.1080/07418825.2011.633544

Kurtzleben, D. (2016, November 14). Rural voters played a big part in helping Trump defeat Clinton. *National Public Radio.* http://www.npr.org/2016/11/14/501737150/rural-voters-played-a-big-part-in-helping-trump-defeat-clinton

Maxwell, J. A. (2013). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach*. (3rd ed.).

Sage Publications.

Mawby, R. I. (2009). Perceptions of police and policing in a rural county of England.

International Journal of Police Science & Management, *11*(1), 39-53.

https://doi.org/10.1350/ijps.2009.11.1.108

Mazerolle, L., Bennett, S., Davis, J., Sargeant, E., & Manning, M. (2013). *Crime

prevention research review: Legitimacy in policing.* U.S. Department of Justice.

https://ric-zai-inc.com/Publications/cops-p262-pub.pdf.

McBeth, M. K., Shanahan, E. A. & Jones, M. D. (2005). The science of storytelling:

Measuring policy beliefs in greater Yellowstone. *Society & Natural Resources,

18*, 413–29.

McDowell, J. (2002). Why true love waits: The definitive guide on how to help your kids

resist sexual pressure. Tyndale House Publishers.

Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldana, J. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis: a

methods source book* (3rd ed.). Sage Publications.

Miller, J., & Davis, R. C. (2008). Unpacking public attitudes to the police: Contrasting

perceptions of misconduct with traditional measures of satisfaction. *International

Journal of Police Science & Management*, *10*(1), 9-22.

https://doi.org/10.1350/ijps.2008.10.1.

Miller, K., & Fornoff, M. (2017, June 20). Is there still support for criminal justice

reform? *Minnesota Public Radio*.

https://www.mprnews.org/story/2017/06/20/future-of-criminal-justice-reform

Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. Sage Publications.

Nalla, M. K., Meško, G., & Modic, M. (2018) Assessing police–community

relationships: Is there a gap in perceptions between police officers and residents?

Policing and Society, 28(3), 271-290.

https://doi.org/10.1080/10439463.2016.1147564

National Academic Press. (2004). Fairness and effectiveness in policing: The evidence.

National Academics of Sciences, Engineering, Medicine.

https://www.nap.edu/read/10419/chapter/10

National Institute of Justice. (2014, March 11). From juvenile delinquency to young adult

offending. https://www.nij.gov/topics/crime/Pages/delinquency-to-adult-

offending.aspx

National Institute of Justice. (2014, March 18) Perceptions of treatment by police.

https://www.nij.gov/topics/law-enforcement/legitimacy/Pages/perceptions.aspx

National Institute of Justice. (2016, July 14). Race, trust and police legitimacy.

https://www.nij.gov/topics/law-enforcement/legitimacy/Pages/welcome.aspx

National Institute of Justice. (2017). Community policing.

https://www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=tp&tid=81#summary

National League of Cities. (2018) Bridging the urban-rural economic divide.

https://www.nlc.org/resource/bridging-the-urban-rural-economic-divide

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. (n.d.). *Statistical briefing book*.

https://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/crime/data.html

On the record: Alito's answers. (2006, January 11). *CNN.com*.

> http://www.cnn.com/2006/POLITICS/01/10/alito.answers/

Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods* (4th ed.). Sage

> Publications.

Placide, M. M., & LaFrance, C. (2014). The county sheriff in films: A portrait of law

> enforcement as a symbol of rural America. *International Journal of Police*
>
> *Science Management, 16*(2). https://eds-a-ebscohost-
>
> com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=bd8df336-
>
> 4144-4805-80bc-37f488312ea9%40sessionmgr4010

Ratcliffe, M., Burd, C., Holder, K., & Fields, A. (2016). Defining rural at the U.S. Census

> Bureau: *American community survey and geography brief*.
>
> https://www2.census.gov/geo/pdfs/reference/ua/Defining_Rural.pdf

Rennison, C. M., Dragiewicz, M., & DeKeseredy, W. S. (2013). Context matters:

> Violence against women and reporting to police in rural, suburban and urban
>
> areas. *American Journal of Criminal Justice, 38*(1), 141-159.
>
> https://doi.org/10.1007/s12103-012-9164-4

Robertson, E., Caroline, B., Smokowski, P., & Cotter, K. (2014). Individual

> characteristics, microsystem factors, and proximal relationship processes
>
> associated with ethnic identity in rural youth. *Journal of the Society for Social*
>
> *Work & Research, 5*(1), 45-77. https://doi.org/ :0.1086/675848

Rudestam, K. E., & Newton, R. R. (2015). *Surviving your dissertation: A comprehensive*

> *guide to content and process* (4th ed.). Sage Publications.

Sabatier, P. S., & Weible, C. M. (2014). *Theories of the policy process* (3rd ed.). Westview Press.

Saint Paul Government. (n.d.). Pillar 4: Community policing and crime reduction. https://www.stpaul.gov/departments/police/21st-century-policing-report/pillar-4-community-policing-and-crime-reduction

Saint Paul Government. (n.d.) *Twenty-first century policing recommendations*. https://www.stpaul.gov/departments/police/21st-century-policing-report/pillar-4-community-policing-and-crime-reduction

Sereni-Massinger, C. & Wood, N. (2016, April 4). Improving law enforcement cross cultural competencies through continued education. *Journal of Education and Learning*, 5(2), 258.

Shapley. D. (2012). Rural police. *The social history of crime and punishment in America: An encyclopedia*. https://doi.org/ 10.4135/9781452218427

Simon, M. K. (2011b). Validity and reliability in qualitative studies. *Dissertation and scholarly research: recipes for success.* http://dissertationrecipes.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/Validity-and-Reliability-in-a-Qualitative-Study.pdf

Smith, R., & McElwee, G. (2013). Confronting social constructions of rural criminality: A case story on 'Illegal Pluriactivity' in the farming community. *Sociologia Ruralis, 53*(1), 112-134.

Spring, J. (2013). Perspectives of a rural music educator: A narrative journey through "sense of place." *Rural Educator, 34*(3), 27-37.

Stepler, R. (2017). Key findings on how police view their jobs amid protests and calls for reform. The Pew Research Center, Washington, D.C. http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/01/11/police-key-findings/

Stewart, D. M., Morris, R. G., & Weir, H. (2013). Youth perceptions of the police: Identifying trajectories. *Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice, 12*(1), 22-39. https://doi.org/ 10.1177/1541204013480369

Suun, I. Y., & Chu, D. C. (2009). Rural V urban policing: A study of Taiwanese officers' occupational attitudes. *The Police Journal, 82*.

Sweeny, B. (Director). (1963). In Leonard, S. (Executive Producer), *The Andy Griffith show*. Paramount Television.

Tankebe, J., Reisig, M. D., & Wang, X., (2016) A multidimensional model of police legitimacy: a cross-cultural assessment. *Law and Human Behavior, 40*(1), 11-22.

Taylor, R. B., Wyant, B. R., & Lockwood, B. (2015). Variable links within perceived police legitimacy?: Fairness and effectiveness across races and places. *Social Science Research, 49,* 234-48. https://doi.org/2014.08.004

Thomas, A., Lowe, B., Fulkerson, G., & Smith, P. (2011). *Critical rural theory: Structure, space, culture*. Lexington Books.

Thurman, Q., & McGarrell, F. (2015). *Community policing in a rural setting*. Routledge.

Truelsen, S. (2017, March 1). The rural–urban divide. Farm Bureau. https://www.fb.org/viewpoints/the-rural-urban-divide

Tu, A. (2018). A descriptive study of adolescent perceptions of rural versus urban

Kentucky high school student mental health challenges. *The Young Researcher,*

2(1), 147-163.

Uhnoo, S., & Hansen Löfstrand, C. (2018). Voluntary policing in Sweden: Media reports

of contemporary forms of police-citizen partnerships. *Journal of Scandinavian*

Studies in Criminology & Crime Prevention, *19*(1), 41–60. https://doi-

org.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/10.1080/14043858.2018.1439635

United States Census Bureau. (2018). Geography: Urban and rural.

https://www.census.gov/geo/reference/urban-rural.html

United States Department of Justice. (2011). *Crime in the U.S.: Police employee data.*

https://ucr.fbi.gov/crime-in-the-u.s/2011/crime-in-the-u.s.-2011/police-employee-

data

United States Department of Justice. (2012, June). *Increasing analytic capacity of state*

and local law enforcement agencies: Moving beyond data analysis to create a

vision for change.

https://www.bja.gov/publications/lefgincreasinganalyticcapacity.pdf

United States Department of Justice. (n.d.). Procedural justice.

https://cops.usdoj.gov/prodceduraljustice

U. S. Const. amend. IV & VIII.

Van, M. M. (1990). *Researching lived experiences: Human science for an action-*

sensitive pedagogy. State University of New York Press.

Verga, C., Murillo, L., Toulon, E. D., Morote, E., Perry, S. M. (2016, Spring).

    Comparison of race-gender, urban-suburban criminal justice college students'

    satisfaction of the police department. *Journal for Leadership and Instruction,*

    15(1), 33-38.

Weber, M. (1904/1958). *The Protestant ethic and spirit of capitalism*. Scribner.

Whelan, F. (2018). Through the lens of power: An arts-based exploration of power

    relations with young people in Dublin. *International Journal of Art & Design*

    Education, *37*(4), 611–621.

Williams, W. C. (1938). "Use of Force." Stanford.

    https://web.stanford.edu/dept/HPS/force.html

Wong, C. M. (2017). *Police: global perceptions performance and ethical challenges.*

    Nova Science Publishers, Inc.

Yang, H. (2017, November 10). How small towns get their law enforcement needs met.

    Post bulletin. http://www.postbulletin.com/news/local/how-small-towns-get-their-

    law-enforcement-needs-met/article_28ae271d-f181-52f4-ab55-

    10d6d2a27a1b.html.

Yin, R. K. (2013). *Case study research: design and methods.* Sage Publications.

Zahnow, R., Mazerolle, L. Wickes, R. & Corcoran, J. (2017). Living near violence: How

    proximity to violence shapes perceptions of police effectiveness and confidence in

    police. *Journal of Environmental Psychology, 53*, 138-144.

Appendix A: Interview Questions

Major Question 1:

Describe the community in which you grew up. Was it urban (more than 50,000 population) or was it rural?

Supportive Questions to 1:

If you grew up more rural, did you live in a town on or in the country?

Do you plan to live in a rural or urban community after college? Why or why not?

When you think of the word community, what comes to mind?

Major Question 2:

Can you tell me about your perception and/or personal experience with law enforcement?

Supportive Questions to 2:

Did you ever have a personal encounter with the police in that community? If so, could you describe it?

Did you personally know one or more of the police officers in your community by name or other social interactions? Church? Sports team coach? Civic organizations?

Do you think the police were effective in preventing crime? Please describe. Give specific examples if possible.

Do you think the police were effective in helping resolving conflict? Please describe. Give specific examples if possible.

Do you think police were responsive to the needs of the community such as responding to 911 calls or other emergency situations? Please describe. Give specific examples if possible.

Do you think the police treated all people in that community fairly? Please describe. Give specific examples if possible.

Do you think the power that police have is legitimate in that they should be able to fulfill their duties including but not limited to the pulling over of drivers, administering breathalyzer tests, enforcing curfews and other community standards? Why or why not?

Do you have any close family or friends who work as a police officer? If so, what is your impression of her or him?

Do you hope to become a police officer someday? Why?

What is your tentative job/career after college? Why?

How could the police in the community in which you grew up do a better job?

What would be your recommendation to the police force in that community?

Major Question 3:

Does your real-life experience with the police seem similar to or different from that portrayed in movies or television shows? How so?

Supportive Questions to 3:

Does your real-life experience with police seem similar to or different from that portrayed in news reports of police? How so?

Can you describe examples of legitimate use of police force? Or times police

force was not legitimate?

Has media changed youth perceptions? Do you believe what you see on the news

or television shows? Or, does it reinforce earlier perceptions or experiences?

Appendix B: Consent Form

Consent Form

You are invited to take part in a research study about the power of place (rural or urban) during formative years upon perception of police effectiveness, fairness, and legitimacy. I, as the researcher, am inviting seven college students who grew up in a rural community and seven college students who grew up in an urban community to be in the study. The study focuses on perceptions of people ages 18-21.

This form is part of a process called "informed consent" to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether to take part. I am conducting this study as a researcher and doctoral student at Walden University. I am also an associate professor, though am not conducting this research as a professor but rather as a Walden University student.

You might already know me as a professor, but this study is separate from that role.

Background Information

The purpose of this study is to discover how college students perceive police effectiveness, fairness, and legitimacy.

Procedures

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to:

- Meet with me for 30-60 minutes.

- Describe the community in which you grew up.

- Reflectively answer questions about perceptions of and experiences with law enforcement.

Here are some sample questions:

Major Question 1: Describe the community in which you grew up. Was it urban (more than 50,000 population) or was it rural?

Major Question 2: Can you tell me about your perception and/or personal experience with law enforcement?

Major Question 3: Does your real-life experience with the police seem similar to or different from that portrayed in movies or television shows? How so?

Voluntary Nature of the Study

This study is voluntary. You are free to accept or turn down the invitation. No one at college will treat you differently if you decide not to be in the study. If you decide to be in the study now, you can still change your mind later. You may stop at any time.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study

Being in this type of study involves some risk of the minor discomforts that can be encountered in daily life, such as taking a one hour of time and discussing childhood memories of law enforcement. The meeting will take place in my conveniently located office.

To minimize inconvenience on you as the student/participant, I am available for many different time slots to meet. Being in this study should not pose risk to your safety or wellbeing.

The college provides free counseling services if you need a support resource in any event, including any emotional support needed as a result of this research.

Potential benefits for you as the participant may include the opportunity to discuss memories, the opportunity to better understand the research process, which could be advantageous if you attend graduate school, and also the research may benefit the college you attend by improving multiple majors such as course development including rural-urban perceptions of police.

Payment

As a participant, you will receive a $25 gift card to the campus store.

Privacy

Reports coming out of this study will not disclose the identities of individual participants. Details that might identify participants, such as the exact location of the study, also will not be published. As a researcher, I will not use your personal information for any purpose outside of this research project. All data will be kept secure.

Data security measures include keeping all collected data on my personal password protected computer and locked in my office during non-work hours. I will only send email information on a password protected private e-mail. I will keep data for a period of at least five years, as required by Walden University.

Contacts and Questions

You may ask any questions you have now. Or if you have questions later, you may contact me. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call the Research Participant Advocate at Walden University.

Walden University's approval number for this study is 01-08-20-0431493 and it expires on January 7th, 2021. I will give you a copy of this form to keep.

Signature Section

If you feel you understand the study well enough to make a decision about it, please indicate your agreement by signing below.

Printed Name of Participant   Date of consent

Participant's Signature

Researcher's Signature