

2020

Disinterest in Pursuing a Law Enforcement Career Among Minorities

Howard E. Jordan
Walden University

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



Part of the [Public Policy Commons](#)

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Walden Dissertations and Doctoral Studies Collection at ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Walden Dissertations and Doctoral Studies by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact ScholarWorks@waldenu.edu.

Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

This is to certify that the doctoral dissertation by

Howard E. Jordan

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. Frances Goldman, Committee Chairperson,
Criminal Justice Faculty

Dr. Karel Kurst-Swanger, Committee Member,
Criminal Justice Faculty

Dr. Tamara Mouras, University Reviewer,
Criminal Justice Faculty

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

Walden University
2020

Abstract

Disinterest in Pursuing a Law Enforcement Career Among Minorities

by

Howard E. Jordan

MA, Tiffin University, 2014

BS, Ohio University, 2012

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Criminal Justice

Walden University

November 2020

Abstract

In the United States, women and racial minorities are underrepresented in the law enforcement profession. Ideally, law enforcement agencies should reflect the racial makeup of the communities they serve; which has been a challenge for departments. The purpose of this study was to investigate what effect media reporting of unarmed Black men killed by police has had on women and racial minorities' decisions to apply for police jobs. Another issue investigated was whether family attitudes influence women's and racial minorities' decision making about becoming police officers. The theoretical frameworks applied for this study were the critical race theory and punctuated equilibrium theory. A qualitative phenomenological methodology design allowed for information gathering via Zoom interview conference calls of participants. The study population consisted of a random sample of 11 women and people of color with no affiliation to law enforcement. The responses given by the participants from the interviews indicated a sense of distrust of law enforcement and a need for reform of current policies. Validation of this opinion was corroborated through the use of select coding and analysis software. The premise of this study was to help identify strategies that would encourage women and racial minorities to consider a career in law enforcement, which could reduce tension and perceived barriers between law enforcement officers and citizens. The findings may be used by law enforcement agencies to bring about positive social change through strategies that encourage women and racial minorities to consider a career in law enforcement. Having diverse law enforcement agencies could bring about positive social change for society overall.

Disinterest in Pursuing a Law Enforcement Career in the Midwest Among Minorities

by

Howard E. Jordan

MA, Tiffin University, 2014

BS, Ohio University, 2012

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Criminal Justice

Walden University

2020

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my loving wife, Ellen, and my wonderful children, Kathryn, Cameron, and Connor. Without your love, support, and understanding, this achievement would not have been possible. Words cannot express the gratitude I have for each of you as you encouraged and stood by me as I pursued my dream of attaining a Ph.D. I love you and thank you for helping me realize that I could do this.

Acknowledgments

To my family, friends, Sinclair College co-workers, and Walden University classmates, I thank you for your words of encouragement as I went through the ups and downs of this quest. You kept me motivated to finish this milestone in my educational journey.

To my dissertation team, Dr. Frances Goldman (chair) and Dr. Karel Kurst-Swanger (committee member/content expert), thank you for your patience and encouragement as you guided and prepared me for being a scholar in my profession.

To Julie McDaniel, a student success librarian at Sinclair Community College, thank you for leading a group of Sinclair employees pursuing advanced degrees from various colleges and universities online. Your talents as a librarian and providing resources and overall support was very much appreciated.

Finally, thank you to all the Walden University faculty and staff who played a role in preparing me for my next role as a scholar and an agent of social change.

Table of Contents

List of Tables	iv
Chapter 1: Introduction to Study.....	1
Background.....	4
Problem Statement.....	7
Purpose of the Study	9
Research Questions.....	9
Theoretical Framework.....	10
Nature of the Study	12
Definition of Terms.....	13
Assumptions.....	14
Scope and Delimitations	14
Limitations	15
Significance.....	15
Summary.....	16
Chapter 2: Literature Review	18
Introduction.....	18
Literature Search Strategy.....	20
Theoretical Foundation	21
Literature Review.....	22
Inspiration to Serve.....	22
Recruitment Strategies	25

Minority Officers Policing in the Community	31
Citizen Police Academies	36
Officers Ratio: Male / Female Disparity	37
Race and Social Dissonance	40
Discriminatory Practices	43
Conclusion	46
Chapter 3: Research Method.....	49
Introduction.....	49
Research Questions.....	49
Research Design and Rationale	50
Setting and Sample	53
Participants.....	54
Instruments.....	55
Role of the Researcher	57
Methodology	58
Data Analysis Plan.....	59
Issues of Trustworthiness.....	61
Ethical Considerations	63
Summary.....	64
Chapter 4: Results.....	65
Introduction.....	65
Setting	66

Demographics	66
Data Collection	67
Data Analysis	69
Evidence of Trustworthiness.....	74
Credibility	75
Results.....	75
Family Impact	76
Media Impact	77
Conclusion	83
Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations	84
Introduction.....	84
Interpretation of the Findings.....	85
Limitations of the Study.....	87
Recommendations.....	88
Implications.....	89
Conclusion	92
References.....	95
Appendix A: Interview Questions	102
Appendix B: Advertisement	104

List of Tables

Table 1 <i>Participant Group Demographics</i>	67
Table 2 <i>Words and Phrases</i>	70
Table 3 <i>Interview Questions and Responses</i>	72

Chapter 1: Introduction to Study

The disproportionate representation of gender and race in the law enforcement profession has been analyzed for the past 40 years (Gustafson, 2013). As reported by Ozkan, Worrall, and Piquero (2016), only about 25% of police officers in the United States in 2013 were minorities. Researchers have reached different conclusions as to why this disproportionality persists. There is an underrepresentation of minorities and women in the law enforcement profession, which is concerning to leadership in both law enforcement and local government (Hilal, Densley, & Jones, 2017). Results from approaches in both recruiting and hiring to increase the number of women and minorities in the profession have been marginal at best (Suboch, Harrington, & House, 2017). A successful process to not only attract but also encourage minorities and women to become police officers has evaded both law enforcement recruiters and government leaders (Wilson, Wilson, & Gwann, 2016).

Previous researchers who examined race and gender disparity in the law enforcement profession investigated areas such as personal interest, recruitment, media influence, family dissuasion, color-blind beliefs, and race/social dissonance. Despite previous research into the race and gender disparity, conclusions remain debatable (Dukes, 2018). Additionally, previous researchers have identified few shared motivational interests (e.g., salary, benefits, and job security) among race and gender candidates. Nonetheless, further examination of the phenomenon is still needed (Dukes, 2018; Hilal et al., 2017; White, Cooper, Saunders, & Raganella, 2010). In some cases, elected officials at both the state and local levels have restructured their testing and hiring

practices hoping to increase their minority law enforcement representation (Ricucci & Riccardelli, 2015). Additionally, leaders are reminded that lowering preemployment standards does not result in attracting suitable racial minority and women candidates to the profession (Hilal et al., 2017).

An aspect of race or gender disparity in law enforcement that has been researched and debated in previous studies is if having more racial minorities and women in law enforcement makes a difference in the community (Crotty-Nicholson, Crotty-Nicholson, & Fernandez, 2017). Building on Crotty-Nicholson et al.'s (2017) conclusions I asked participants in this study to explain the importance of having women or people of color as police officers as it pertains to community relations and trust. Campion and Esmail (2016) examined the motivation behind career choices among African Americans who graduated from historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) with a degree in criminal justice. Campion and Esmail (2016) concluded that despite its popularity in HBCUs, minority graduates had not pursued law enforcement jobs as anticipated. There is limited research into why many racial minority and female criminal justice graduates have not pursued a law enforcement career after graduation (Campion & Esmail, 2016; Dretsch, Moore, Campbell, & Dretsch, 2014). Dretsch et al. (2014) concluded that, although criminal justice is a popular major in mixed-race institutions (MRIs), unless graduates are shown evidence of fair treatment toward women and people of color within the law enforcement profession, recruitment from these groups will be difficult, thus making it challenging to increase their representation.

The lack of representation of women in the law enforcement profession has also been a challenge to overcome and even, to a greater degree, as it pertains to the hiring of Black women (Wilson et al., 2016). Greene (2000) addressed how women have been employed in policing since the 1800s, but since the 1930s, there has been little movement to decrease the male/female ratio disparity (Miller & Segal, 2012). A review of previous studies where researchers have explored this imbalance has had wide-ranging conclusions. I examined if the disparity is due to gender discrimination or if women today are going into other professions and are no longer considering law enforcement as a career choice, thus a possible reason for the disproportionate numbers.

Additionally, I examined both media and family influence on potential minority candidates. I assessed how much of an influence the media's reporting of young Black men killed by police has weakened the recruiting efforts of law enforcement officials and affected the career choices of women and racial minorities. I also examined if family influence or persuasion is a factor in the decision-making of eligible racial minority and women candidates in choosing whether to pursue a career in law enforcement.

After examining previous studies in which researchers have explored the underrepresentation of women and people of color in the law enforcement profession, I found that most had not asked women or people of color (who could be eligible police recruit candidates) if there was anything specific that caused them not to apply. Researchers, such as Wilson et al. (2016); Hilal et al. (2017); and Wilson, Wilson, Luthar, and Bridges (2013), concluded that issues such as the lack of minority role models in the profession and ineffective recruiting strategies to recruit women and people

of color, as being critical for the low number of applicants. These studies appear to focus exclusively on the police profession as being the primary cause of the imbalance. In my study, I asked participants more direct questions about their thoughts on pursuing a law enforcement career. To date, existing research does not mention whether minorities and women are just freely choosing other professions to pursue.

As I explored the possible causes for the gender and racial imbalance phenomenon in the law enforcement profession and why encouraging and hiring women and people of color continues to be a challenge, the remainder of this chapter is outlined with 11 relevant components that provide an overview of the disparity issue.

Background

Two of the primary duties performed by law enforcement agencies in the United States are enforcement of state and local criminal laws and maintaining public order and the safety of citizens. However, some racial minority groups might argue that the latter may not always appear to be the case. Several high-profile incidents (e.g., Michael Brown, Sandra Bland, and Freddie Gray) between police and those living in racial minority communities have caused tension and distrust toward the profession, making recruiting difficult (Trochmann & Gover, 2016). However, police and government leaders have not given up trying to find ways to attract, encourage, and potentially hire more women and racial minorities into the profession. Scholars continue to explore the cause of the disconnect and what has kept women and racial minorities from considering a career in law enforcement.

Many law enforcement recruiters have prioritized the recruitment of women and racial minorities is by conducting presentations in front of criminal justice students in colleges across the United States, specifically those at HBCUs. Dretsch et al. (2014) found that criminal justice programs are popular throughout HBCUs, indicating an interest in the profession. However, the programs' popularity has not translated into a sizable representation of racial minority police officers. The lack of interest has perplexed those who want to see more diverse police departments. Although there has been a more proactive approach targeting women and racial minorities in diverse communities, highlighting the benefits a career in law enforcement can provide, the approach has been met with moderate results (Espiritu, 2017). One Midwestern city has seen a decrease rather than an increase in both African American men's and women's interest in pursuing a law enforcement career (S.M. Crum, personal communication, August 28, 2019). Starting in 2016, the number of Black men who applied for the position of police recruit in one Midwestern city went from 74 applicants to 50 applicants in 2017, and then to only 24 applicants in 2019 (S.M. Crum, personal communication, August 28, 2019). During the same 3 years, Black female applicants went from 20 applicants in 2016, to 10 applicants in 2017, and to only nine applicants in 2019 (S.M. Crum, personal communication, August 28, 2019). Such disinterest during a period when cities are recruiting racial minorities and women demands deeper examination.

Although government and police officials believe increased minority representation would improve police-citizen communication and understanding, there is limited research to support the theory (Shjarback, Decker, Rojek, & Brunson, 2017).

However, Donovan and Klah (2015) found that the media plays a part in shaping the attitudes of citizens about law enforcement. The local news' reporting of serious incidents that involve citizens and police does affect how citizens view their law enforcement officers. Furthermore, though incidents involving Black men and police are reported frequently by the media, limited research has been conducted to identify if there has been a consequence on police recruiting efforts of minority citizens toward a career in law enforcement. Perceptions of racial tension toward the police can result in a negative attitude toward law enforcement (McNeeley & Grothoff, 2016). This belief could be a factor in why the recruitment of racial minorities and women remains ineffective.

Wilson et al. (2016) identified that a possible reason for the slow growth in minority and women law enforcement numbers is the marketing and recruiting methods used by police agencies. Engaging with minority communities and gaining the trust and cooperation of its members could be a way of attracting more toward the profession, but limited information is available on if this ideology is successful. Furthermore, there has been limited research in which scholars interview women and minority officers already employed in law enforcement, inquiring about what attracted them to the profession and why they remain.

In my study I did not interview current police officers, but I did ask women and people of color outside the law enforcement profession about their views on the advertisement, recruitment, and hiring of these underrepresented groups to the profession. Suboch et al. (2017) examined female and minority experiences in law enforcement and concluded that mentoring programs, not only for these two underrepresented groups but

for all officers, are an important aspect in retaining and diversifying police departments. While such mentoring was beyond the scope of this study, additional studies into these programs are needed and could provide answers on what efforts are successful in the recruitment of women and African Americans.

Successful recruitment of women and racial minorities has been a challenge for law enforcement officials (Suboch et al., 2017). The recruitment effort has not been made any easier with the frequent occurrence of violent incidents involving minorities and police, which are then reported in the media. Finding ways for law enforcement agencies to gain the trust of minority communities would enable better recruiting in these communities. The disproportionate numbers and underrepresentation of women and African Americans and other racial groups will continue to exist until stakeholders reach a better understanding of the issue and develop methods to attract, encourage, and hire from these groups.

Problem Statement

Political leaders and citizens across the United States pressure local law enforcement officials to diversify their police departments (Gustafson, 2013). Attracting racial minorities and women to a career in law enforcement has not been an easy task. Though the study of criminal justice is a popular major in colleges across the United States, including at HBCUs, this popularity has not translated into minorities applying for jobs as police officers (Dretsch et al., 2014). Attracting African American women to a career in law enforcement has been the most difficult. Unlike White women, “Black women are confronted by cultural and organizational barriers including interactional

dilemmas” (Greene, 2000, p. 235). Finding ways to eliminate these perceived barriers might help Black women become more interested in pursuing a career in the law enforcement profession.

Several strategies have been used to increase the applicant pool of minorities, including eliminating specific educational requirements or by applying court ordered/consent decree (Jordan, Fridell, Faggiani, & Kubu, 2009). Minimal increases have occurred using either of these strategies, but minorities are still underrepresented in law enforcement agencies. The problem is identifying the interest level of minorities as it pertains to the law enforcement profession. Prior research has identified that 60% of minorities who currently work in law enforcement reside in 10 states (Wilson et al., 2016). Identifying barriers, perceptions, or attitudes that may be keeping minorities from having an increased interest in law enforcement jobs is critical. The research could help agencies make themselves more attractive to minorities, increasing their chances of becoming a more diverse department.

Law enforcement agencies in the state of Ohio are not immune to this phenomenon of lack of interest in law enforcement. In this study, I explored whether specific requisites in the recruitment or hiring process have kept minorities and women from applying for jobs in law enforcement. If areas of concern are identified, the information could benefit city or county officials as they examine their hiring requirements.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore why racial minorities and women in one Midwestern city have exhibited a lack of interest in pursuing a career in law enforcement. Representation of racial minorities and women in the state of Ohio law enforcement agencies has not had a significant increase despite aggressive recruiting efforts by police and city/county government leaders. Understanding why minority representation has not increased despite these efforts could help officials develop strategies to make the job more appealing to women and racial minorities to increase diversity in the law enforcement agencies.

Research Questions

Several critical police events in the United States helped to form the basis for this study. Having a more diverse law enforcement profession could eliminate or at least minimize the allegation of racial profiling and other concerns as it pertains to race and gender (Crotty-Nicholson et al., 2017). However, finding and encouraging racial minority and female citizens to apply for police officer positions is a constant challenge for law enforcement and local government leaders. My quest to identify the cause for the lack of interest among racial minorities and women in pursuing a law enforcement career generated the following research questions:

RQ1: Has media reporting of unarmed Black men being killed by police deterred minorities from applying for police jobs?

RQ2: Do family attitudes influence women and African Americans in their decision making about becoming police officers?

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework relevant to this research study was critical race theory (CRT). Minorities have been in law enforcement since the 1800s, but few pursue it as a career choice. In 2010, women comprised 13%, African Americans 12.1%, Latinos 15.2%, and Asians 2.7% of police officers in the United States (Ricucci & Saldivar, 2014). However, in 2013, African Americans accounted for over 28% of arrests in the United States and 40% of inmates in prison (Ethridge, Riddick-Dowden, & Brooks, 2017). With so many African Americans behind bars and so few in law enforcement, lacking representation in the profession seems understandable.

Historically, law enforcement has been a White-male-dominated profession in the United States (Dukes, 2018). Using CRT, I examined whether elements of the hiring process (background disqualifiers, physical standards, and educational requirements) make it difficult for women and people of color to apply. In my study, I conducted face-to-face interviews of racial minority and women individuals who were not employed in law enforcement (potential applicants) for their perspectives as a group outside the majority currently in the profession. I did not examine if racism exists in the law enforcement profession, but I explored whether other life skills (good communication, eagerness to learn, problem-solving skills, attention to detail, and good self-control) are being considered by police recruiters and other government officials outside those currently used to evaluate people who might be viewed as unlikely law enforcement candidates.

In their book about CRT, Delgado and Stefancic (2017) mentioned numerous scholars, such as Bell, Freeman, Delgado, Crenshaw, Matsuda, and Williams, who have used CRT during their examinations of systemic racism and discrimination in the United States. Delgado and Stefancic (2017) explained how lawyers use CRT to expose bias in the system. In my study, I reviewed some of the testing requirements (i.e., civil service exam, physical assessment, and background requirements) used to evaluate/eliminate police recruit applicants to explore if they could be biased against minority groups (including women). Suboch et al. (2017) and Hilal et al. (2017) used CRT to examine hiring practices in law enforcement. I discuss CRT in more detail in Chapter 2, and I explain how CRT was applied in my study.

A second framework that I used in the study to complement CRT was punctuated equilibrium theory (PET). Though Baumgartner et al. (2009) used PET in their evaluation of national and international policy issues, the approach could also be used to assess policy issues in local governments. Baumgartner et al. (2009) described how the U.S. system has design flaws to be efficient in creating policies from calls for change.

In recent years, citizens in minority communities, along with government leaders, have called for more women and people of color to become police officers and patrol neighborhoods. Though there has been a call for change, it has not translated into a sizable increase of women and people of color joining the ranks. Local governments create guidelines on how the hiring process will be controlled for those interested in becoming police officers. In one Midwestern city, persons interested in law enforcement jobs must pass a civil service process before becoming law enforcement officers.

Because the hiring process of law enforcement officers has come under question, the internal procedures (civil service exam, background screening, and the oral interview process) used by law enforcement agencies in one Midwestern city, has been reviewed to see if there is a correlation to why racial minorities and women have exhibited a lack of interest in pursuing a career in law enforcement. In my study, I viewed these as criteria used to evaluate individuals who want to become police officers. My plan was to identify commonalities used among police agencies looking to attract and hire new officers. PET was introduced by Baumgartner and Jones in the 1990s during their examination of public policymaking, and I discuss it in greater detail in Chapter 2.

Nature of the Study

Obtaining information crucial to this study will require several approaches that may suggest to stakeholders' actions they could use to attract women and racial minorities toward careers in law enforcement. The methodology used was qualitative, with a phenomenological design. The racial and gender disproportionality phenomenon in law enforcement has led leaders and researchers to examine possible issues and causes so that the lack of representation can be addressed. I chose a phenomenological design based on van Manen's (2016) definition: "a phenomenological question may arise any time we have had a certain experience that brings us to pause and reflect" (p. 31). Understanding why the disproportionality still exists after a concerted effort to increase racial minority and women hiring may help leaders to address the issue.

I selected a qualitative methodology because it offers several ways of obtaining information from stakeholders in the community. McDavid, Huse, and Hawthorn's

(2013) explanation of the qualitative methodology is appropriate: “Qualitative evaluation methods are typically distinguished by their emphasis on textual sources, interviews, and other media that consist of words, either written or spoken” (p. 189). Both the design and methodology that I have chosen for this study will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3. Data were collected through interviews and a review of relevant documents (past civil service police exam results and application data) to provide sufficient information to present a logical explanation for the phenomenon.

The qualitative methodology approach aligns with the topic and research questions I sought to examine. Assessing the interest of women and racial minorities about a career in law enforcement will require more than crunching numbers. Asking open-ended questions will solicit responses from participants that cannot be explained using numbers. McDavid et al. (2013) explained the value of using a qualitative approach (less structured) in comparison to a quantitative method. Data needed to answer the research questions for this study are not in numerical form; thus, a qualitative approach creates flexibility during analysis.

Definition of Terms

Bracketing: A process researchers may use to recognize their personal experiences and biases before conducting a study (Dawidowicz, 2016).

Color-blind racial beliefs: Beliefs of a person who does not see race as the sole premise for behavior and views everyone as equal (Hughes, Hunter, Vargas, Schlosser, & Malhi, 2016).

Double meaning: Words or phrases that have different meanings for different people (Dawidowicz, 2016).

High-profile event: Serious or fatal incidents that involve law enforcement and individuals from communities of color, which are then reported by national or local media (Ozkan et al., 2016).

Police legitimacy: The public's perception of law enforcement officers in a community. If the perception is positive, then trust and willingness to obey the law is greater; if the perception is negative, willingness to cooperate and obey the law is less (Gustafson, 2013).

Selective coding: When researchers reintegrate data to identify underlying themes and patterns to answer research questions (Dawidowicz, 2016).

Assumptions

In this study, I assumed that the interviewees were willing participants and provided honest and straightforward responses to the questions asked of them. Unless there is evidence to show otherwise, the participants will be from a recognized minority group (e.g., women, African American/Black, or Hispanic).

Scope and Delimitations

The disproportionate number women and racial minorities in the law enforcement profession has been studied, but there is no definitive answer as to why this lack of representation persists. The participants in this study were members of a minority group classification according to the U.S. Census Bureau (e.g., African American/Black, Hispanic, or other ethnic groups). The participants' gender was either male or female, and

participants were between the ages 21 and 35. This age range is a requirement with most law enforcement agencies for applicants who do not currently hold a peace officer certification. The participants were individuals not currently working in law enforcement and who reside in the state of Ohio.

Limitations

A limitation of this research is that it is only examining a small sample of minorities (12 participants) from a region in southwestern Ohio. However, according to Dawidowicz (2016), a good sample size should range between eight and 12 participants or a number to acquire sufficient data. Conversely, participants in other regions of the United States may have experiences different from those of individuals in the Midwest. Another limitation was the exclusion of participants younger than 18 and older than 35. Most law enforcement agencies in the United States require new applicants to be between 21 and 35. Finally, because the information was inconclusive as to why there is a shortage of minorities and women seeking careers in law enforcement, I have only a nominal amount of studies to compare my results.

Significance

Women and minorities are not applying for police positions as anticipated despite aggressive recruiting efforts by police officials. Few researchers have explored why minorities are not becoming police officers. Lee and Gibbs (2015) suggested that African American distrust in law enforcement could be a reason more African American people do not apply for police jobs. In another study, Wilson et al., (2016) concluded that some police agencies used purposeful tactics to exclude women and racial minorities from

being hired. Whatever the reason, women and racial minorities are underrepresented in the law enforcement profession. An understanding of why this underrepresentation still exists has yet to be determined.

Two areas that were not explored in previous studies are the media component and the family influence dynamic. Exploring both could provide the answers needed to advise law enforcement agencies and government officials on what the next step should be in the recruitment of women and racial minorities into the law enforcement profession.

Summary

The Kerner Commission found that the more diverse a law enforcement agency is, the better the chances of fostering positive relationships with the community it serves (Dukes, 2018). Achieving increased diversity within U.S. police departments has been a slow process, and the issue continues to be brought to the forefront when a critical incident occurs between a White police officer and a person of color. Despite an increase in hiring of both women and racial minorities since the early 1970s, the argument remains that newer ways to increase the number of women and people of color in the profession are still needed (Suboch et al., 2017).

Government leaders and community citizens have an expectation that increasing minority representation in law enforcement will reduce negative perceptions about police officers among members of minority communities (Sharback et al., 2017). Alderden, Farrell, and McCarty (2017) found that minority officers had a more positive opinion about their departments when leadership was more diverse. Nonetheless, identifying and understanding the motivational factors that attract White men to the law enforcement

profession are not generally the same that attract women and people of color to the profession (Campion & Esmail, 2016). Using CRT and PET, I examined the lived experiences of women and racial minorities and their perceptions of a career in law enforcement, and I examined if the current policies in the hiring process have prevented more from becoming officers.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Law enforcement leaders and local government officials have been frustrated by unsuccessful attempts at making their police departments more diverse (Shjarback et al., 2017; Suboch et al., 2017; Trochmann & Gover, 2016). Attracting, hiring, and retaining qualified racial minority and women candidates is a top priority of police officials, but it has been a slow process to achieve (Suboch et al., 2017). Furthermore, controversial, high-profile encounters (e.g., Michael Brown, Eric Garner, Tamir Rice, Freddie Gray, and others) between police and African Americans have made hiring women and people of color difficult (Jordan et al., 2009; Trochmann & Gover, 2016). These incidents have sparked protests and civil disorder against law enforcement and the criminal justice system, which may have decreased the interest of racial minorities, specifically African Americans and women, in pursuing a career in law enforcement (Campion & Esmail, 2016; Hilal et al., 2017).

Law enforcement has come under examination for the disproportionate ratio of White men to African Americans (and other minorities) and women police officers. Several researchers have examined this disproportionality, but conclusions have not been indisputable. The 1964 Civil Rights Act indicates the effort government officials have attempted to decrease the racial disparity within law enforcement (Miller & Segal, 2012).

The primary recruiting goal of local government and law enforcement leaders is to assemble police departments comprised of men and women who closely resemble the communities they serve (Shjarback et al., 2017). According to Reaves (as cited by

Shjarback et al., 2017), the African American representation among law enforcement officers in the United States was approximately 11.9% in 2007, which closely mirrored that of the general African American population at that time. However, a desire to increase the number of minorities in law enforcement is still shared by government and law enforcement officials.

For this study, I conducted a review of scholarly articles that addressed the underrepresentation of racial minorities and women in law enforcement and the recruitment strategies currently used by law enforcement agencies to attract people of color and women to the profession. Despite previous studies into the problem, areas of the phenomenon still need examination. A review of these scholarly articles also showed a pattern of categorical themes (e.g., education, motivation, race and gender discrimination, social dissonance, and recruitment) in each. Possibly, these areas collectively appear to be of some significance toward the underrepresentation of women and people of color in the law enforcement profession.

Finally, in this study I sought to identify the perceptions of why minorities, including women, are not responding to recruiting efforts designed by government and law enforcement leaders. Officials specifically targeted these two groups to help in diversifying police departments, but the results have been minimal. The results of this study may provide evidence to help pinpoint the ineffective strategies currently used by law enforcement recruiters and may provide information that could increase interest among minority groups in pursuing a career in law enforcement. Eliminating ineffective recruiting practices designed to increase interest in law enforcement would save time,

energy, and money spent by agency personnel. Recognizing and suggesting the strategies that have proven successful in attracting, encouraging, hiring, and retaining racial minorities and women in the law enforcement profession will increase the chances of hiring qualified individuals resulting in positive social change.

Literature Search Strategy

An extensive search using the Walden University Library was conducted in finding peer-reviewed and scholarly literature that explored the gender and racial disparity of police officers in law enforcement. I used the following databases and search engines: ProQuest, EBSCO HOST, Google Scholar, Sage Journals, and Taylor and Francis online. I was able to retrieve 30 scholarly articles that addressed past and current concerns that have impacted the hiring or retention of minorities and women as it relates to the law enforcement profession. An assessment of each article returned in the search was conducted to determine its significance to this study. However, due to the abundant number of articles returned that explored concerns of inequality, six perceptions were identified that appeared in the majority of articles reviewed: (a) motivation to serve, (b) recruitment, (c) communication, (d) discrimination, (e) gender disparity, and (f) social dissonance. The selected topics appear to be essential to individuals who contemplate a law enforcement career. The following keywords were used to conduct my search: police or law enforcement; minorities or African American or people of color; females or wom?n; recruitment or hiring or personnel or representation.

Theoretical Foundation

Determining whether race or gender cause the underrepresentation of women and racial minorities in the law enforcement profession is a challenge. Though the disparity has been under examination many times (e.g., Dukes, 2018; Greene, 2000; Miller & Segal, 2012; Uhlmann, Brescoll, & Machery, 2010), the results have been mixed on whether discriminatory practices by law enforcement agencies or local government, whether direct or indirect, is the primary cause of the imbalance. Examining past and current recruiting and hiring practices used by law enforcement agencies and local government could provide an understanding of why the disparity remains.

Two theories I used to examine the phenomenon were CRT and PET. Using these two theories, I could examine if race or gender was a detriment in applying for an officer position in law enforcement (CRT) or if government (and law enforcement) hiring policies had discouraged women and people of color from applying for jobs as police officers (PET). Greene (2000) examined the underrepresentation of Black people and women in the profession and how it took new legislation (federal equal employment; 1963 Equal Pay Act; Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, and other enacted laws) to change the culture. However, the examination of discrimination did not stop there; Miller and Segal (2012) examined the effects of affirmative action on Black and female employment in law enforcement, and Uhlmann et al., (2010) examined motives (against members of stigmatized groups) and stereotype-based discrimination. These problems could still be occurring in the law enforcement hiring process. In this study, I explored the race and

gender phenomenon through face-to-face interviews of randomly selected women and racial minorities and examined previous civil service results of past police recruit testing.

Literature Review

Inspiration to Serve

An individual may choose to pursue a career in law enforcement for several reasons. Regardless of the reason, all have a common characteristic: a willingness to serve and protect others (White et al., 2010). Law enforcement officers are entrusted gatekeepers of the community they serve. A police officer's primary responsibility is that of safeguarding against crime or civil unrest to ensure the safety and order of society. Though the police officer position is that of a civil servant, the application process can disqualify or eliminate many from the hiring process because they do not meet the minimum qualifications to become a sworn law enforcement officer. Criminal history, health, physical issues, and emotional and mental state are important aspects of the screening process to be considered for a law enforcement position. Additionally, there are other preemployment tests (e.g., civil service examination, polygraph test, psychological examination) that must be passed before entering a police officer training academy.

Despite its importance, some government leaders and police officials' opinions vary on whether the above pre-employment testing provides a reliable analysis of an applicant's abilities to be a good police officer (Hilal et al., 2017). Although this may be true, it appears community leaders' focus is more so on the minimal interest that is being shown by minorities and women towards law enforcement job opportunities. In some cities, government leaders have lowered or eliminated specific requirements in the

background process to increase the number of eligible minorities in the applicant pool (Jordan et al., 2009). Several studies have examined potential causes for this lack of interest in pursuing a law enforcement career by people of color and women, but the conclusions have been mixed on what the responsible factors are and why the phenomenon exists (Raganella & White, 2004; White et al., 2010).

The motivation to pursue a career in law enforcement varies among individuals. There are those who may see it as their contribution to the community, while others may be continuing a family legacy in the profession. Traditionally, the pursuit of a career in law enforcement has been quite popular amongst young White-men in the United States (Raganella & White, 2004). However, the pursuit of a law enforcement career is just the opposite amongst people of color and women. Despite agencies' aggressive recruitment strategies to attract racial minorities, including women, to the profession, the results have been minimal at best (Jordan et al., 2009).

Contrast to the findings of Jordan et al. (2009), Campion and Esmail (2016) reported that despite the perceived lack of enthusiasm towards the profession, racial minorities are still pursuing a career in the field of law enforcement. Furthermore, Campion and Esmail reported as college criminal justice programs enrollment numbers increased, so did the numbers in all race classifications. However, they also reported there had been few studies that examined why one chooses to pursue a career in criminal justice, and even fewer when analyzing racial minorities and women. Nonetheless, it is important to point out that previous studies have also determined that individuals whose personalities coincide with the profession (i.e., military types and authoritative) continue

to apply for law enforcement jobs more often than non-military types (White et al., 2010). So, the question remains, why is there minimal interest in pursuing a law enforcement career amongst racial minorities and women?

As previously mentioned, Campion and Esmail (2016) identified a noticeable student enrollment increase in criminal justice programs in all race classifications. However, the increase did not result in significant hiring of minority or women criminal justice college graduates into the law enforcement profession. Likewise, Dretsch et al., (2014), also identified an increase in student enrollment of college criminal justice programs, and specifically, historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs). They also noted that despite an increase in enrollment, a concern of underrepresentation of racial minorities and women in law enforcement still exists.

The underrepresentation of racial minorities and women in the law enforcement profession is a major concern of city officials. However, what is most puzzling is the fact that enrollment in college criminal justice programs is quite popular among African American students who attend HBCUs. Still, that popularity has not transferred into applying for law enforcement positions after graduation in communities across the United States. Dretsch et al. (2014) acknowledges that finding employment in other occupations can be difficult but claimed the law enforcement profession is growing and wants to increase its minority representation. However, attracting, encouraging, and hiring qualified racial minorities and women into the law enforcement profession has been difficult. Possible causes for this disinterest could be due to the current community perception of law enforcement officers by racial minorities, in conjunction with negative

peer support. No longer is family support essential to a person considering a law enforcement career. The need for affirmation from one's peers has replaced it (Suboch et al., 2017). Affirmation from one's peers is an interesting selectivity, which led me to construct the first of two research questions for my study: How much do family attitudes influence women and racial minorities' decision-making on becoming police officers?

Surprisingly, the most important concern to a person of color considering a law enforcement career is being accepted by his/her peers in the community (Suboch et al., 2017). Previous research has largely overlooked this critical aspect when evaluating the reasons why minorities are not signing up in hopes of becoming police officers. Being called and viewed as a sellout or traitor by people of your race merely because of a profession has persuaded individuals to seek or pursue other career opportunities (Campion & Esmail, 2016; Suboch et al., 2017;). Changing the views and attitudes that citizens in racial minority communities' have about law enforcement officers is an ongoing challenge that government and law enforcement leaders must face. Finding ways to increase racial minority interest in pursuing careers in law enforcement require changes in the current hiring process. Additionally, if change does not occur, racial minorities and women will continue to be underrepresented in the law enforcement profession.

Recruitment Strategies

Law enforcement officers are public servants and have taken an oath to protect and serve the citizens who live or work in the community. However, just as there are many reasons why one is attracted to the law enforcement profession, there are just as

many reasons one is not. Being aware of strategies that have proven successful in attracting and encouraging individuals who might be interested in a law enforcement career is important. A limited number of studies have examined the recruiting component and even fewer when it pertains to minorities and women. The results from previous studies differ on the best methods used to recruit people of color and women. Regardless, recruiters in law enforcement agencies need to become more creative with its advertising to raise citizens' interest, and especially those in minority communities who are tentative in choosing a career in law enforcement (Wilson et al., 2013).

Raganella and White (2004) explained that prior studies determined current recruiting methods need upgrading to fresher ideas that will attract a different generation of candidates. Likewise, White et al., (2010) concluded that one's motivation about a law enforcement career may differ from the attraction to the job many may have shared years ago and that a different approach is needed to appeal not only to the White-male audience but to racial minorities and women as well. However, a "one strategy" fits all mentality will not work. White et al. (2010) claimed that prior research examined the reasons why those wanting to serve in a law enforcement capacity had changed over time and the methods used then to attract White men and women to law enforcement may not successfully work attracting racial minorities (including minority women) to the profession today.

Though past studies have shown there are some commonalities (serving one's community, honorable profession, nice salary, para-military organization) as it pertains to motivation between gender and race (Hilal et al., 2017; White et al., 2010), research has

not been as extensive and is inconclusive on motivational factors that attract racial minorities to the occupation (Raganella & White, 2004). Finding creative ways that will attract and encourage women and racial minorities to pursue law enforcement careers should be of major importance for recruiters in police agencies. Attracting good candidates toward the profession should be no different from the methods used by employers in other professions to attract qualified candidates. Communities want officers who are trustworthy, hard-working, non-bias, and attentive. Exploring the reasons why anyone would want to lower these standards to appease certain interest groups could provide insight as to why a disparity exists.

Understandably, in an ideal society, first responders would reflect the communities they serve. Hiring the best candidates for the available jobs is the goal of any law enforcement agency (Jordan et al., 2009). However, due to pressure being placed on law enforcement agencies to hire more women and racial minorities, some agencies have become quite creative with their hiring requirements and, in some cases, reduced or eliminated automatic disqualifiers (e.g., minor criminal record, allowance of some minor drug usage, and some minor traffic violations) to increase their applicant pool (Jordan, et al., 2009). Consequently, while these methods may increase the applicant pool with more racial minorities and women, it also opens the door for more White men to apply who may not have qualified otherwise (e.g., bad driving record, minor criminal convictions, minor drug usage).

A recruitment strategy that is being utilized by many law enforcement agencies when recruiting minority candidates is that of visiting historically Black colleges and

universities (HBCU) and, in particular, the Criminal Justice Department. One would expect to find male and female students interested in learning more about starting a career in law enforcement. Although one could reasonably surmise that a person who is majoring in criminal justice would want a job in that field after college, research studies have shown otherwise. Dretsch et al., (2014) discovered that even though criminal justice is a popular program major at HBCUs, it has not increased racial minorities' interest in pursuing a law enforcement career.

Negative perceptions of the job and community reaction to high-profile events may have decreased or even discouraged the interest of minorities in pursuing a career in law enforcement (Campion & Esmail, 2016). Champion and Esmail's (2016) conclusion differ from Wilson et al., (2013) who concluded that unique recruiting strategies that designed specifically to attract racial minorities to law enforcement is key to increasing the applicant pool. Are racial minorities interested in becoming law enforcement officers in response to these "special" recruiting strategies, or are they interested in full-filling their dreams in becoming police officers despite what researchers have concluded in past studies?

Numerous African-American college students at HBCUs who major in criminal justice show an interest in law enforcement studies. However, it has not crossed over into pursuing a career in the profession (Dretsch et al., 2014). Furthermore, Jordan et al.'s, (2009) study contradicts Dretsch et al. (2014), where it was stated police recruiters who used the Internet as a form of marketing showed an increase in minority interest via submitted applications. Racial minority candidates are submitting applications and

showing interest in being police officers but are not getting jobs at police agencies. Conversely, Wilson et al. (2013) expressed that law enforcement agencies' attempt to recruit, retain, and promote minority officers is not genuine and misleading. It is presumed a conflict exists because most law enforcement recruiters are White-male officers who spend most of their time in designated areas comprised mostly of White-male individuals (Wilson et al., 2016). Few studies have examined the correlation between White police recruiters and non-White applicants as a factor that has discouraged racial minorities from pursuing law enforcement positions.

Another facet about law enforcement's recruitment of racial minority candidates is that every branch in law enforcement is targeting the same population pool. To date, not much investigation has looked at the different law enforcement agencies (e.g., local, state, and federal) competing against each other, wanting to hire qualified racial minority and women candidates. Wilson, Wilson, and Thou (as cited by Campion & Esmail, 2016) reported that only 12% of all law enforcement officers working in the United States in 2010 were minorities (male and female). The difficulty attracting qualified minority law enforcement candidates has been problematic and has reached a point where law enforcement agencies are recruiting / or attempting to entice individuals from outside its jurisdiction to come and work for them (Jordan et al., 2009; Wilson et al., 2013;).

Finding qualified minority candidates to fill law enforcement positions have been a problem for small, medium, and large size departments. Though larger agencies have had some minor success in finding applicants, smaller agencies, at times, receive few to no job applications turned in by minorities or women (Jordan et al., 2009).

As mentioned earlier, few studies have attempted to explore if the race or gender of the recruiting officer has a bearing on the number of minorities and women who show interest in a law enforcement career. It was suggested by Jordan et al. (2009) that minority and female interest in police jobs do fluctuate and are determined based on the race and gender demographics within the community. If an area where recruiters are surveying has a low to zero minority population, chances are unlikely to increase the applicant pool with minority applicants. Consequently, previous studies had also shown that minorities, specifically Blacks, living in areas highly populated with minorities, had applied and were later hired by law enforcement agencies at a greater rate when the recruiter was also a person of color (Wilson et al., 2013). Another point to take in an account about low numbers in an applicant pool is where Dretsch et al., (2014) claimed that minority underrepresentation is due to wide-ranging unchecked prejudice within the law enforcement agencies when it comes to all aspects of the hiring process.

Finally, the lack of interest shown by minorities and women about law enforcement careers could be due to Campion and Esmail's (2016) claim of "symbolic interactionism." The suggestion is that if minorities and women cannot see themselves in the role of police officers, the propensity is not to apply for open positions in the field. That belief coincides with what is claimed by Dretsch et al., (2014), who expressed that female and minority criminal justice students tend to be less interested in pursuing a career in the profession if they perceive unfair treatment and limited or zero opportunities for advancement within the agency. Feeling valued by an employer is essential to most prospective employees, and if there is no indication of that occurring, the desire to seek

employment with that organization is non-existent (Wilson et al., 2016). If one believes they are just a “number” or filling a “predetermined” quota, finding suitable candidates to fill jobs will be challenging.

Minority Officers Policing in the Community

A theory that has been expressed by government officials and leaders in the Black community is by hiring more minorities, specifically African-Americans, to patrol African-American communities, it would help establish police legitimacy and foster working relationships between African Americans and law enforcement (Gustafson, 2013). However, Ozkan et al., (2016) study refuted the theory and reported that there is limited evidence to support it. Aesthetically, it is appealing to those living in minority communities to see persons of color patrolling their streets, but what exactly are the citizens expecting differently? One could make the argument that if citizens want to live in a safe community, they should cooperate with the police regardless of the officer’s race. Since there is limited data for examination, it is unknown how much of an effect having racial minority officers patrolling minority communities would be. Ozkan et al. (2016) investigated that a little over 25% of local police officers in the U.S. in 2013 were minorities. That percentage closely mirrors the total minority population in the U.S. at that time. Wilson et al., (2016) argued that police departments that show little to no diversity amongst its rank and file have poor community relationships in predominately minority communities.

The belief is if police departments are more reflective of the communities they serve, there would be less urban unrest and tension between officers and citizens in the

community (Crotty-Nicholson et al., 2017; Espiritu, 2017; Hughes et al., 2016). Having a diverse police department may be true in some aspects of community relations between police and citizens. The ideology is identical to that of Ozkan et al. (2016), who concluded that a diverse police department would reduce violent incidents between police officers and minorities within the community. Conversely, in a study conducted by Crotty-Nicholson et al., (2017), they found there is no substantive evidence to show a reduction in officer-involved shootings of minorities where the agency is more diverse than those which are not.

Having served as a law enforcement officer for thirty years, I have read and heard about the projected effectiveness in having more women and minority police officers patrolling in communities where the residents are predominantly people of color. However, the suggestion is one which few studies have examined, and the anticipated impact it would have is relatively unknown. Ideally, it would be preferable that the theory is explored in more depth to determine the effectiveness of an increased presence of minority officers patrolling in minority communities. Establishing and maintaining positive relationships within the communities they serve should be the goal for all law enforcement agencies. However, it has been a challenge for some time now and even more so when it comes to race relations between law enforcement officers and citizens in minority communities (Trochmann & Gover, 2016; Zimny, 2015).

If law enforcement leaders are looking for ways to improve their relationship within minority communities, the way each communicates with the other needs to change. The word “transparency” has become a word used quite frequently among media

professionals when reporting on incidents that involve people of color and law enforcement. It comes as no surprise that trust is woefully lacking in minority communities after the media's reporting of fatal incidents that involved African American men and White male police officers. Incidents such as the ones occurring in New York City, Cleveland, Ohio, Baltimore, Maryland, and Ferguson, Missouri, have created a disconnect between minority communities and law enforcement (Hilal et al., 2017; Ozkan et al., 2016; Wilson et al., 2016;). However, is the tension between minorities and law enforcement solely about racial injustice, or is it "deep-rooted" defiance towards anyone who wears a police uniform (Trochmann & Gover, 2016)? History has exposed the injustices committed by White police officers against people of color. However, that is not an indication that every White police officer is a racist or a bad person. It has been a major challenge for law enforcement officials in trying to establish trust with those who live in communities of color. Finding some common ground between the two could be a good place to start.

Historically speaking, African Americans have served our communities in some capacity of law enforcement since the 1800s' (Wilson et al., 2016; Wilson, et al., 2013). However, previous research that has chronicled the role of minority law enforcement officers is limited, and recent focus tends to be negative instead of highlighting the benefits minority officers bring to the profession (Wilson et al., 2016).

To emphasize the importance of minorities working in law enforcement positions, Dukes (2018) expounds on the benefits that a diverse police department can provide as he points to the Kerner Commission's conclusion. The commission determined that agencies

whose personnel are representative of the communities they served had better relationships with its citizenry, thus minimizing the negative perceptions and conclusions people of color have with a lesser, transparent department. Wilson et al., (2016) study align with the commission's conclusion claiming when diversity is lacking within a police department, its relationship within the minority community suffers, and cooperation is reduced. Despite an increase in minority representation in law enforcement, its impact on the community is still inconclusive (Shjarback et al., 2017).

I have not found a study that has examined the media's impact on police recruitment of minorities with its continuous reporting of police shootings of unarmed Black men. The inadequate assessment of media influence is yet another identified gap in the literature that requires further examination. To what extent has media reporting of Black men killed by police deterred minorities from applying for law enforcement jobs?

When looking at past media reporting of such incidents between police and African American men (e.g., Rodney King, Eric Garner, or the death of Freddie Gray in police custody), all three sparked protests that turned violent and resulted in substantial damage to property in minority communities. The chant of "No Justice, No Peace" reverberated around the country. However, nothing was heard from government and community leaders asking minorities and women to go down to their local Human Resources Department and ask for information on how to become police officers. Could this have been a missed opportunity to encourage women and minorities to seek jobs in law enforcement?

Another consideration about minority disinterest in a law enforcement career is the impact that police dramas and “reality” shows on television have had on recruiting minorities and women to law enforcement. Soulliere (2004) articulated how popular police shows have been on television for almost 40 years. However, the author is quick to point out that the representations of officers in these shows may not be accurate and overdramatized the everyday duties of police officers. Unfortunately, some believe the representation is factual and that law enforcement officers on television exemplify the behaviors and actions of those in real life. Changing the negative opinions of citizens about law enforcement officers derived from characters from television shows or movies could be challenging or, in some cases, impossible.

Opinions vary across the board when discussing issues of race and law enforcement. As expressed by Trochmann and Gover (2016), the conversation is not new and is quite dividing. Is police work inherently discriminating against people of color and women? Do police officers look at people of color and women differently in comparison with their White male counterparts? Uhlmann et al.’s, (2010) study of stereotyped based discrimination against marginalized groups could explain what could be occurring subconsciously with White male police recruiters when trying to recruit people of color and women. If recruiters have beliefs that people of color are not good workers and women make poor supervisors, chances are good, and they will not receive much encouragement to seek a law enforcement career. Recruiter bias is another area that is limited in research, and further examination is needed.

An interesting phenomenon examined by Hughes et al., (2016) explored “color-blind racial beliefs” held by police officers and citizens. Hughes et al. (2016) concluded that law enforcement work appeals to individuals whose values-system is that of having a color-blind mindset (not seeing race and treating everyone equally). The idea is that people who welcome and promote this belief system could eventually lessen bias or discriminatory practices raised when discussing issues with the criminal justice system. In their final analysis, Hughes et al. (2016) claimed that police officers and police recruits showed a higher propensity to approve of the “color-blind” mindset than laypersons.

Citizen Police Academies

In an effort to repair what is considered a strained relationship between minority communities and law enforcement, several law enforcement agencies have created Citizen Police Academies to help bridge the differences between officers and the people they serve. Citizens have an opportunity to observe and, in some cases, experience what officers go through during a shift. Lee’s (2016) claim is that if citizens were more aware of the day-to-day activities that officers must contend with, they might be more understanding when mistakes happen. I have not located a study that has explored whether a program like this has positively impacted communities of color concerning law enforcement.

Though the Citizen Police Academy appears to be a good start in establishing an understanding between police and citizens, Reaves (as cited by Lee, 2016) reported that only 15% of law enforcement agencies used this type of program in 2007. Furthermore, the claim is that most of the participants in the program are select individuals of the

community and lacked diversity. Although Lee's study concluded that the program is a positive start and has educated the community about law enforcement work, it still has excluded marginalized groups in certain situations (i.e., paying a participation fee in some cases). Finding ways to include rather than exclude marginalized groups from the program should be a major objective of law enforcement agencies. The possibility of recruiting women and minorities from this type of program would be an excellent way of increasing the minority and women applicant pool in law enforcement agencies.

Officers Ratio: Male / Female Disparity

Much discussion has occurred about the lack of minority representation in police departments. However, somewhat lost in that discussion is the under-representation of female minorities who wear the badge. The majority of discussions about minority representation on police departments centers around the disparity between Black male officers to White male officers. Female law enforcement officers are also an underrepresented group in the law enforcement profession and even more so as it pertains to Black women (Wilson et al., 2016). Even though Black female officers have been around since the 1930s' (Greene, 2000; Suboch et al., 2017), their role in law enforcement has been an enigma. Not only has there been limited movement with Black women in law enforcement at the officer level (Suboch et al., 2017), the rise up the ranks has not fared any better.

Greene (2000) identified that Black women's interest in law enforcement has waned due to challenges culturally and organizationally within police departments. Greene's conclusion differs from Dretsch et al., (2014), whose conclusion suggests there

is proof women today have fewer concerns about unfair treatment and discrimination as they once did in the past and are applying more frequently to become law enforcement officers. To support their claim, Mbuba (as cited by Dretsch et al., 2014) claimed that women have a better all-around attitude towards a career in law enforcement than their male counterparts. A study that would examine the concerns Black women have about law enforcement could help recruiters create new strategies that would not only encourage Black women to apply for jobs but show that there is advancement within the department.

Due to the underrepresentation of minorities, including women and especially Black women, discrimination lawsuits have been filed in cities whose law enforcement agencies have not shown a sincere effort to diversify its safety forces (Miller & Segal, 2012). Additionally, gender discrimination lawsuits and Equal Employment Opportunity allegations are lodged yearly against law enforcement agencies for their lack of advancement through promotions for women, which includes Black women, and other racial minorities (Miller & Segal, 2012). Reaves (as cited by Alderden et al., 2017) found that very few women were in supervisory roles, and only 3% of police chiefs in local police departments in 2013 were women. This information relates to that of Wilson et al., (2013), who expressed the importance of Black women being seen in minority communities as officers, in supervisory roles, and other important positions in law enforcement agencies. It would not only encourage other racial minorities, especially women, to pursue careers in law enforcement but could also help in the retention of minority officers who are already serving the community.

Several studies (e.g., Campion et al., 2016; Dretsch et al., 2014; Gustafson, 2013; Jordan et al., 2009; Lee and Gibbs, 2015; Wilson et al., 2016; Raganella and White, 2004) that have examined the racial and gender disparity in law enforcement and why it still exists, have been mixed. Furthermore, finding ways to close the gap has been an ongoing challenge. Finding ways to increase the number of minorities and women in the law enforcement profession continues to plague city leaders. Even though the conclusions have been conflicting on the impact or effectiveness a diverse police department has on a community, continued effort in trying is a must. In a study conducted by Ozkan et al., (2016), they claimed that women and people of color on the force bring about professed acceptability and a raised level of law enforcement services in minority communities. Ozkan et al. (2016) also acknowledged that there are challenges to the perception. However, Alderden et al.'s (2017) study concurred with Ozkan et al. (2016), claiming those police agencies who are diverse in management and workforce exhibit an appearance of fairness and equality not only among the rank and file but to the communities they serve.

Women in law enforcement have faced and conquered many hurdles since the 1800s to established themselves as a valuable asset to the profession. However, there are still matters that need addressing. Suboch et al., (2017) suggest via the use of a Feminist theoretical viewpoint, that as leaders embrace new approaches to address the issues that law enforcement women (particularly Black women) face today, they will find solutions to the current problems and correct the wrongs that women have endured over time.

Race and Social Dissonance

Effective communication is a key component found in most respectable relationships (Turaga, 2016). The relationship between law enforcement officers and the communities they serve, specifically in minority communities, have been strained for many years due to ineffective communication (Gustafson, 2013). However, effective communication does not mean that participants have to agree on every element of an issue. Nevertheless, it will take effective communication to find common ground to resolve the problem at hand. To do that, it will require participants to listen to each other's concerns, communicate clearly what the problem is, and then work together to resolve their differences (Turaga, 2016).

“Compromise” is a word commonly brought up to resolve most disagreements. With that being said, minority citizens have complained that White police officers do not understand their way of culture, thus creating a breakdown in communication. Due to this breakdown, minorities' confidence in the police is lower than that of Whites (Lee & Gibbs, 2015). Racial minorities' attitude towards the police are an individual choice. Lee and Gibbs (2015) explained that one's interaction with law enforcement determines their attitude about law enforcement. If a person has a family member, friend, or relative in law enforcement, chances are their view of law enforcement might differ from a person who has very little or no contact with the police. Additionally, a person who had a negative encounter with the police will have a negative opinion of police officers regardless if they were clearly in the wrong and the officer was just doing his job (Lee & Gibbs, 2015).

The term “social distance,” as described by Lee and Gibbs (2015), is the perception a person or group has about law enforcement officers depending on the amount of interaction they have with them. The least amount of interaction or “social distance” with police, the more positive the perception. The “social distance” ideology corresponds with Nordberg, Crawford, Praetorius, and Hatcher-Smith’s (2016) assertion that minority youth feel targeted by police due to the frequency they patrol their neighborhoods looking for criminal activity. An excellent point made by Nordberg et al. (2016) is that there needs to be more examination of minority groups to sensibly conclude why they have the opinions they do about law enforcement. Has the media’s reporting of unarmed Black men killed by White police officers created tension within communities of color? Nordberg et al. (2016) suggest that if law enforcement encounters with minority men were either less frequent or more positive, it could reduce the unreceptive attitudes people of color have towards officers.

A concern that is frequently discussed by communities is the “militarized” look police departments have adopted, which has increased the social distance gap (Bieler, 2016). However, what citizens fail to recognize is that violent criminals have “upped their game” with high-powered weapons, thus causing police agencies to do the same with its weapons and equipment to match the threat level they might face on the street. This look has caused minorities to be more suspicious of law enforcement because officers spend more time patrolling in their communities in comparison to middle-class or affluent communities.

Racial minorities have expressed feelings of being treated like inmates rather than citizens by the police. This dislike towards police could be a reason why young African Americans cannot envision themselves working as a law enforcement officer. A study that would listen to their concerns could uncover why the disconnect exists. If law enforcement officers can establish trust with minority communities using clear and sincere communication, it could help increase women and people of color interest in pursuing careers in the law enforcement profession.

From a statistical standpoint, Blacks accounted for 28.3% of all arrests in the United States and 40% of inmates behind prison bars and yet made up only 12.9% of the U.S. population in 2013 (Ethridge et al., 2017). To date, data retrieved from the United States Census Bureau website shows that the estimated Black population in 2018 was 13.4%, and the female population was 50.8% (U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts, n.d.). In comparison to the 2013 incarceration data, Blacks accounted for 475,900 inmates in federal and state prisons in the United States in 2017 and were 13% of the total U.S. population (Gramlich, 2019). The incarceration percentage is down from the number of Blacks incarcerated ten years earlier, 592,900 (Gramlich, 2019).

When looking at the numbers, one could reasonably deduce why the applicant pool numbers are low for African Americans who submit applications to become law enforcement officers. As mentioned earlier in this Literature Review, a background check, which consists of a criminal history search, is mandatory during the screening process, and all applicants must go through one. Being a convicted felon is an automatic disqualifier for anyone seeking a job as a law enforcement officer. Carrying a firearm is

required equipment for a police officer, and a person convicted of a felony crime cannot legally carry or possess one in the United States. As mentioned by Ethridge et al. (2017), having a criminal record has excessively prevented minorities from being hired for law enforcement positions conversely to that of Whites.

Lastly, an observation that is rarely, if at all, mentioned in previous studies, is that not every woman or a person of color is in quest of becoming a police officer. Previous studies have somewhat disregarded or failed to explore this important detail. While previous studies have identified suspected discriminatory practices in law enforcement recruiting as a possible cause for the race and gender disproportionality, none have explored or mentioned the professions or trade most women and minorities have pursued as a career (e.g., engineer, medical doctor, factory worker, etc.). Exploring what occupations minorities and women see themselves working in could help determine if race and gender disparities do exist in law enforcement.

Discriminatory Practices

Due to perceived unfair treatment, denied promotions, and alleged racial discriminations, law enforcement officers are filing discrimination lawsuits against their respective agencies. However, what is surprising is that the majority of these lawsuits are filed by White men who believed they are also victims of discrimination (Ricucci & Saldivar, 2014). White men are being by-passed on entrance and promotions exams in favor of minorities regardless if they scored higher. Due to city and government officials wanting to increase the representation of minorities at the entry, mid-management, or upper management levels, alleged unfair discriminatory practices are now under

examination. However, what comes as a surprise is that White men filed between the years 2000 and 2011, 32 out of 35 lawsuits of discrimination, and the other three were minority police and fire plaintiffs (Ricucci & Saldivar, 2014). Employers are taking the risk of being sued for reverse discrimination in an attempt to increase the representation of minorities and women in the law enforcement profession.

Due to these perceived racial and gender discriminatory practices and the legal ramifications that have surrounded the law enforcement profession, I have chosen to examine the alleged practice through the lens of the CRT and Punctuated Equilibrium Theory (PET). CRT was vital in examining (the mid-70s) the constructs of racism in American society during the 1960s. CRT recognizes that racism is engrained in the fabric and system of American society. I want to explore if White privilege and supremacy are still active within our police departments, and if so, to what extent has it hindered the diversification of our law enforcement agencies. Through the use of PET, I can examine if past and current policies of local government have hindered the hiring process of both women and minorities from joining the law enforcement profession. A review of physical, educational, and background requirements set by local government, in addition to federal law, could explain why some police applicants are removed from the hiring process.

Considering the aggressive tactics being used to hire or promote minorities in law enforcement agencies, either by court order (Affirmative Action) or Department of Justice ruling (consent decree), relationships between police officers (male, female, Black, or White) have become strained. Finding ways to increase minority representation

in the rank and file and in management, is important but discovering ways that would be more productive and beneficial to the law enforcement community could minimize the chances of a toxic environment (Alderden et al., 2017).

To emphasize the race and gender disparity that exists in law enforcement, Riccucci and Saldivar (2014) reported that in 2010, women represented 13%, Hispanics 15.2%, African Americans 12.1%, and Asians 2.7% of police officers in the U.S. Likewise, reports show that women made up 50.7% and Hispanics 16.3% of the U.S. population in 2010. Riccucci and Saldivar (2014) suggest that employers are receiving pressure into finding ways to improve female and minority representation in law enforcement while minimizing discrimination lawsuits filed by White men.

According to Riccucci and Saldivar (2014), it was not until the passage of the 1972 Equal Employment Act that unfair hiring practices and tactics were found to have discriminated against women and minorities in both the police and fire departments. Tactics were also used to prevent or deny minorities and women from being promoted to high-level positions. Rather than correcting the problem internally, outside litigation in the form of Consent Decrees or Affirmative Action plans were needed to level the playing field within police departments. Furthermore, Miller and Segal (2012) reported that imposed guidelines through litigation resulted in sizable increases in the hiring of minorities and women into law enforcement. In comparison, female hiring increased substantially over that of African American representation. However, very little increase occurred within the upper-echelon of police organizations in promoting minorities and

women. Miller and Segal concluded that temporary Affirmative Action plans are effective long term and can minimize discriminatory practices committed by employers.

Race and gender disparities still exist in our law enforcement agencies despite increased attention and effort to reduce the margin. Several studies (e.g., Dukes, 2018; Nicholson-Crotty et al., 2017; Suboch et al., 2017) have examined the issues concerning race and gender discrimination in our law enforcement agencies, attempting to identify why this problem still exists.

Conclusion

After a review of past and current scholarly articles that explored issues connected with the disinterest among minorities and women as it pertains to a law enforcement career, there are still several hurdles these groups face today. Despite the repeated attempts of leaders in the law enforcement profession to diversify their police departments, the challenge remains ongoing (Shjarback et al., 2017; Suboch et al., 2017; Trochmann & Gover, 2016). Attracting and encouraging racial minorities and women to seek law enforcement jobs continues to remain a phenomenon where a further examination is still needed.

Though criminal justice is a popular major in colleges across the United States, including historically Black colleges and universities (HBCU), it has not translated into minorities applying for jobs as police officers (Dretsch et al., 2014). Furthermore, attracting African American women and other racial minorities towards the profession has been the most difficult part of all (Campion & Esmail, 2016; Hilal et al., 2017;). A

question that is continually asked by community leaders is, why are women and minorities not seeking law enforcement careers?

After reading several peer-reviewed scholarly articles about the racial and gender disparity in law enforcement, it appears that researchers are indecisive about the circumstances that have caused it. There are several studies where researchers determined that law enforcement recruiting is outdated and needs a newer approach to attract and encourage minorities to apply (Raganella & White, 2004; White et al., 2010;). Whereas in other studies, researchers concluded that women and racial minorities are applying for law enforcement jobs. However, qualified racial minorities are sought after by other law enforcement agencies (i.e., local, state, and federal) wanting to increase their minority representation (Campion & Esmail, 2016; Jordan et. al, 2009).

The previous studies that have examined the disparity concluded that the testing process (e.g., civil service exam, background check, criminal history) is a major reason why the racial disparity exists (Hilal et al., 2017). However, research has largely overlooked the family influence dynamic and the impact of the media's reporting of unarmed Black men killed by law enforcement as a major contributor to the imbalance. Secondly, I could not locate a study that explored whether a career in law enforcement was ever a desirable profession that minorities and women would like to go into regardless of the negative issues occurring in our communities. Though history has shown minorities (Black women since the 1930s) have been a part of law enforcement since the 1800s, it has been the White male that has continually pursued it as a career choice (Raganella & White, 2004).

With the number of available jobs in law enforcement, coupled with the aggressive recruiting tactics utilized by law enforcement agencies to attract and encourage minorities and women into applying to the profession, further examination is needed to find out why only a small percentage are doing so.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine and understand the perceptions of disinterest in pursuing a career in law enforcement among racial minorities and women. The results of the study could have social implications (revised policies and procedures in hiring) for women and racial minorities in the United States who are denied the opportunity to become law enforcement officers. As reported by Baumgartner et al. (2009), governments contend with many different social issues, including seeking a hiring process for law enforcement officers that is fair and equitable.

Many strategies have been used to promote the hiring of more women and people of color into the law enforcement profession, but it has been an extremely slow process. In the United States, women and racial minorities are underrepresented in the profession, and the problem persists. Amplified attention is given towards the issue after high-profile incidents occur between White police officers and a racial minority citizen. In this chapter, I provide an explanation of the issue and the methodological approach (i.e., research design and rationale, role of the researcher, methodology, data analysis plan, and issues of trustworthiness) I used to examine the phenomenon.

Research Questions

Several researchers (e.g., Dretsch et al., 2014; Gustafson, 2013; Jordan et al., 2009; Lee & Gibbs, 2015; Raganella & White, 2004; Wilson et al., 2016;) have explored the underrepresentation of women and racial minorities in the law enforcement profession, compared to that of White men. However, I could not find a study in which a

researcher explored whether the disproportionality occurred because of media reporting of incidents that involve White police officers and racial minority citizens or whether family influence discouraged women and racial minorities from applying. The following two research questions were developed to help guide this study:

RQ1: Has media reporting of unarmed Black men killed by police deterred minorities from applying for police officer positions?

RQ2: How much do family attitudes influence the decision making of women and racial minorities in wanting to pursue a career in law enforcement?

Research Design and Rationale

I examined the race and gender phenomenon in the law enforcement profession using a qualitative research methodology approach. I explored if reading or watching broadcast media reports of unarmed Black men killed by police had any effect on the decision making of racial minorities regarding whether to pursue a career in law enforcement. Additionally, the same methodology was used to examine whether family attitudes toward law enforcement impact the decision making of racial minorities and women in whether to pursue a career in law enforcement. Though both questions center around the individual, they also probe how much outside influences impact the recruiting efforts of police officials trying to increase diversity within their agencies.

A suitable design that enabled me to interview participants, thus gaining their perspectives for this study, was that of a phenomenological approach. Creswell (2014) explained that this type of approach allows the researcher to talk directly to people while observing them in their natural environment. When using a qualitative methodology, and

specifically a phenomenological one, it is vital to listen to the lived experiences of the population under examination (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). In this situation, conducting interviews of racial minorities and women and listening to their feelings about the phenomenon could provide vital information on how they view law enforcement and if it has any bearing on whether to pursue a career in the profession. Moustakas (1994) discussed one of the steps in human science research: “The first challenge of the researcher, in preparing to conduct a phenomenological investigation, is to arrive at a topic and question that have both social meaning and personal significance” (p. 104).

The fact that both women and racial minorities continue remain underrepresented in the law enforcement profession despite concerted attempts to recruit them raises questions as to why the phenomenon continues. I am a Black man who worked in the law enforcement profession for 30 years, and I saw little increase in representation of women and people of color in the profession during my years of service. Another benefit in using a phenomenological approach is that it allowed for the examination of documents (e.g., civil service reports) to develop an understanding whether test scores or other aspects of the application and hiring process effect on how far in the hiring process women and racial minorities are reaching. It is important to explore each phase (e.g., background check, physical assessment, and education) of the hiring process and examine the impact each has on the employment of racial minority and women applicants. As described by Moustakas (1994), phenomenology research attempts to remove the prejudgmental thoughts of the researcher and to view the participants and evidence under evaluation as is. The assessment of civil service examination scores from the past three tests given,

broken down by gender and ethnicity, allowed for a review of discernable patterns or themes. This method of evaluation corresponds with what McDavid et al., (2013) described as qualitative methodology using both spoken words and written documents to examine group or individual perceptions of a social issue effectively.

The law enforcement profession has been described generally as being pursued mostly by White men (Raganella & White, 2004). However, as explained by Ravitch and Carl (2016), a well-designed research approach allowed me to stay focused on what it was I needed to know, understand, and explain to stakeholders why White-men continue to pursue law enforcement jobs, and identify the elements of the process that discourage women and ethnic minorities from doing so. However, also taken into consideration is what was reported by Rudestam and Newton (2015), who explained that a research design's purpose is not to prove or test an assumption but to allow for the gathered data to speak for itself. Their analogy compliments that of Creswell (2014), whose explanation of a qualitative research design is more so for examining and understanding the relationship between individuals (population/group being affected) and the issue at hand.

Lastly, a phenomenological approach was the most applicable way to gather the information needed for this study based on what is reported by Dawidowicz (2016), who described this type of approach as being “a collection and analysis of people’s perceptions related to a specific, definable phenomenon” (p. 203). Dawidowicz (2016) description of a phenomenological approach is similar to how Moustakas (1994) defined the applications to human science research years before where it is stated, “phenomenology is concerned with wholeness, with examining entities from many sides,

angles, and perspectives until a unified vision of the essences of a phenomenon or experience is achieved” (p. 58). Exploring many angles and variables with the intent of understanding why women and minorities are not as enthused as White men to pursue a law enforcement career could explain why the disproportionality in the profession still exists.

Using a phenomenological approach for this study is best summed up by van Manen (2017) where he explained that “phenomenology in its original sense aims at retrospectively bringing to our awareness some experience we lived through to be able to reflect phenomenologically on the living meaning of this lived experience” (p. 813).

Furthermore, in previous studies that used CRT, the impetus was to examine the divide between the races when it comes to education, wealth and power, and the workings of that structure. Examining whether the color of one’s skin or gender influences the decision-making of those who do the hiring for law enforcement agencies could explain why the imbalanced race and gender ratio still exists.

Setting and Sample

Initially, the intent was to interview female and minority participants face-to-face who live in the state of Ohio. However, due to Covid19 (coronavirus), the interviewing of participants was conducted via Zoom conference calling and included individuals from across the United States. Subsequently, in a news article of interest that examined several law enforcement agencies in the state of Ohio, it was reported that there is a city police department that employs 350 sworn police officers. However, only 10% of these officers were disclosed by the city’s Civil Service Department as being minorities (Frolik, 2017).

Also stated was that the city is roughly 40% African American, and the county is 74% Caucasian (Frolik, 2017). The racial breakdown of officers to the population is a disparate ratio under scrutiny.

Obtaining a good sample size to conduct this study, even though the limitation presented by the coronavirus was challenging, it was still paramount. According to Dawidowicz (2016), a researcher should acquire an adequate amount of information from the population under study, which should also include a variety of participants. A “good sample” size will range from eight to twelve participants. It is of the utmost importance to interview individuals that are willing to share their lived experiences and thoughts about the law enforcement profession.

Participants

For this study, the participant group members consisted of 11 people, comprised of women and ethnic minorities, between the ages of 18 and 35. The age range was selected based on the minimum and maximum age requirement that most police agencies have in place for first-time recruits entering a Police Academy. Six of the contributors were from a college research participant pool made up of students with varying majors, including criminal justice. The five remaining interview participants were local college-age students, also with different education aspirations. These individuals had heard about my study (snowball recruitment) and wanted to participate. Though there are exceptions to the minimum and maximum age requirement, and it is at the agency’s discretion on what the maximum (or minimum) age will be, I was mindful of the requirement when weighing the participant pool.

Another resource that I utilized was personal knowledge (college friends who knew of students who fit the criteria of my study and were not interested in pursuing a law enforcement career). An inquiry of these individuals on why they chose the career paths they did could provide some insight into the phenomenon. Additional criteria that participants had to meet is that they must have graduated from high school or received a General Equivalency Diploma (G.E.D.). They could not have any law enforcement experience in their background nor been convicted of any felony criminal offense. The participants also had to reside in the United States. Initially, I only sought subjects who were criminal justice students. However, I decided that requirement was not necessary, and with the coronavirus pandemic limiting the number of available criminal justice students, removing the requirement increased the participant pool numbers.

A purposive sampling method was appropriate due to the need to select individuals that would meet the minimum qualifications (minimum age requirement, high school graduate/diploma or G.E.D., no felony conviction(s), be a U.S. citizen, have a valid driver's license in the state of application, and be a resident of that state) prerequisite to apply at most law enforcement agencies.

Instruments

There were several instruments (e.g., civil service documents/test results, in-depth interviews, focus groups, observation) available to me in gathering information for this study. Nevertheless, as explained by Ravitch and Carl (2016), the primary instrument in a qualitative study is the researcher in that he will determine all the other instruments and methods that will be utilized to examine the phenomenon. Nonetheless, two instruments

that I had planned to utilize to examine the phenomenon were conducting face-to-face interviews (semi-structured) and a review of civil service documents (previous examination statistics). However, at the start of the data collection process, most states were under a “stay at home” mandate given by local and state government officials.

“Social distancing,” “self-quarantine orders,” and the closing of several public buildings limited the availability and opportunities to interview study participants face-to-face, and the review of public documents (previous test results). Adjustments were made to invoke modern technology (the utilization of a video communication service) to conduct interviews for this study. I decided a review of past documents was not required at this time but could be beneficial in a future study.

The interview consisted of 10 questions (with probes) for each participant to answer. The list of questions is included (see Appendix A) in this manuscript. As explained by Crawford and Lynn (2016), a semi-structured interview is the recommended method for an inexperienced researcher. The interviews were digitally recorded (30-minute average in duration) and were conducted virtually (Zoom.com). An outside transcription service (Temi.com or Transcriptionpuppy.com) transcribed the interviews.

Anonymity and confidentiality of participants were of major importance throughout the study. All possible measures (e.g., destruction of notes and other identifying materials) were taken to protect the identity of those who participated in the study. Thus information (i.e., actual names of cities, colleges & universities, identifying documents or correspondence, and businesses) were masked to avoid intentional or accidental discovery of the identities of those participating in the study. The interview

transcript and digitally recorded file for each participant interviewed were assigned a pseudonym or number separate from the data collected. Each participant was informed beforehand what personal information I would need for the study and how it would be protected. The participants were emailed a consent form to review five days before the interview. It provided information about the study, along with pertinent information on what to expect afterward.

Role of the Researcher

A researcher wears many hats during a study. Not only is there the responsibility of gathering data for examination, but the data collected requires organization and analysis for it to provide meaning (Creswell, 2014; Dawidowicz, 2016). It is during this process that as a researcher, being mindful not to allow personal biases steer the analysis in a direction that does not provide accurate perceptions or thoughts of the population under study (Dawidowicz, 2016).

As stated above, as a researcher, organization and analysis of the collected information are essential. In a qualitative study, the information collected by the researcher is subject to his or her interpretation (Creswell, 2014). Researchers must be careful not to steer participants in a direction different from their personal beliefs. Maintaining impartiality while interviewing participants and being cognizant of nonverbals and facial reactions during questioning could minimize or eliminate perceptions of interviewer bias (Dawidowicz, 2016).

Methodology

Identifying the population pool that can provide relevant information for the study is essential. However, as explained by Creswell (2014), setting boundaries can also help determine how the information is acquired. In the case of interviews, being careful not to entice interviewees with gifts in exchange for a viewpoint similar to my own belief is paramount. Capturing the lived experiences of those impacted by the problem without gifts can lend credibility to the study. Thus, the participants in my study received no payment or something of value for their cooperation.

The method I used to collect most of the information for this study was in the form of interviews. The interviews were digitally recorded (via Zoom and digital recorder) and later transcribed. The digital recorder was used mostly as a backup to capture audio responses during these interviews. The captured audio was compared to my handwritten notes to corroborate the non-verbal movements of the interviewee during the video recording of the interview. A list comprised of 10, mostly open-ended questions, were asked of each participant with follow-up prompts or probes to solicit a more detailed understanding if need be (Dawidowicz, 2016).

Another resource I had planned to utilize in recruiting minority participants for this study was via contacting the local chapter of the N.A.A.C.P. In years past, I had spoken to leaders within the organization when I was part of a police recruiting team, about encouraging people of color about signing up to take the civil service exam to become police officers. Listening to those concerns or experiences about the phenomenon from those who live in minority communities could provide added insight. However, due

to the coronavirus pandemic, the closing of several public buildings, and the social distancing requirement, I chose not to pursue this method of recruitment.

An additional tool of data collection that was available for this study was a document review of previous civil service examination results. Though I did not utilize this information during the final analysis of the data, it did shed some light on the disinterest level of women and minorities pursuing a law enforcement career. A review of test results broken down by race and gender highlighted just how many women and ethnic minorities were passing the entrance exam in comparison to the number of applications turned in at the start of the process. Examining whether the number of applicants had increased or decreased over the years also indicated interest amongst women and minorities as it pertains to police officer positions. In comparing applications to test results, it provided a better understanding of where the process needs further examination. It identified wherein the process, women and minorities were failing (dropping out in the process). However, due to the coronavirus outbreak and the shutdown of several public government buildings where I could obtain the most current data, this method was not utilized to stay in compliance with the “stay at home” mandate issued by local and state government officials.

Data Analysis Plan

The purpose of data analysis was to identify patterns and common themes that could help identify possible components of the problem at hand (Dawidowicz, 2016). The use of NVivo software to help organize and manage the collected data made the task a little easier to accomplish. For this study, the use of *selective coding* appeared to be an

appropriate method for identifying these components. This form of coding, as described by Dawidowicz (2016), is when the researcher “reintegrates the data to identify the underlying themes and the patterns that answer your research questions” (p. 210).

Dawidowicz (2016) definition of coding coincides with the explanation of coding given by Saldaña (2016), who explained it is a technique utilized to identify and reduce a word or short statement to a symbol or some other recognizable mark easily spotted when categorizing data from multiple resource documents. Recognizing similarly expressed opinions or concerns of participants who are experiencing the problem could suggest an identifiable pattern where further evaluation is needed. However, careful interpretation is critical to avoid “*double meaning*,” which are words or phrases that may have a different meaning for different people (Dawidowicz, 2016).

Equally as important as the coding of keywords and phrases from Zoom conference call interviews and just as vital to this study was the numerical data obtained from previous civil service examinations (collected pre-stay-at-home orders). A review of these test results dating back the previous three years showed a distinct pattern. The test results corroborated a concern that was raised by city leaders in Dayton, Ohio, in 2011 and reported by Sullivan (2011), who stated that not enough Blacks were passing the police recruit entrance exam. The two-part exam required applicants to obtain at least the minimum scores of 66% (57 of 86 questions) and 72% (73 of 102 questions) respectively for each part. Because not enough Blacks were obtaining the minimum required score, the minimum accepted score was lowered to 58% (50 of 86 questions) and 63% (64 of 102 questions) by city officials. Though there was an increase in the number of applicants

who passed the exam, the demographics of those who passed the test were unknown. I reviewed the information looking for a common trend or pattern in the numerical data. After a careful review of both components (interviews and numerical data) was completed, a better understanding of the phenomenon had become a little clearer. It was apparent that not being able to pass the civil service exam and having a non-interest towards the profession were indicators for the low numbers.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Several things come to mind as it pertains to the trustworthiness of a research study. As a researcher, questions of validity and credibility of your work can tarnish not only the current study but future studies as well. Remaining transparent and allowing the data to speak for itself is the primary objective. Collecting enough data to get a true representation of the problem is essential. Dawidowicz (2016) explained that the *triangulation* of the data provides a consistent and complete picture of the phenomenon. The use of analytical data triangulation could also help increase the validity of the data. By checking the data collected against (different agencies, people, and dates), it increases the chances for the understanding of the phenomenon (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Another way of safeguarding trustworthiness is by allowing participants to review their transcripts for accuracy. It can eliminate accusations of misrepresentation of their perceptions of the phenomenon.

Having worked in the law enforcement profession, I was careful not to dismiss the participants' perceptions of the phenomenon. Each participant has their perspective about the phenomenon that may not be the same as mine or other participants in the study. A

technique that was used to recognize my personal experiences and biases before conducting this study is termed *bracketing*. Dawidowicz (2016) described the technique as not manipulating the study population perceptions of the phenomenon with your own. During the study, if I found myself having a bias thought, I would document it and consider how it may affect the reliability and credibility of the data during my analysis.

Collecting data that is accurate and captures the perceived issues of the study populations is the primary goal. However, according to Dawidowicz (2016), it is hard to accomplish it in a qualitative study. Techniques and devices that can ensure issues of trustworthiness are key during the evaluation of the data. One such measure to consider is if the data has transferability, in other words, can the information from this study be applied in other situations, times, and with other groups (Dawidowicz, 2016). Another technique to test for the trustworthiness of the data can be confirmed (confirmability) through an audit trail (researcher's notes throughout as the study develops). Though statistical data in quantitative and qualitative studies can be confirmed and validated (through triangulation), other information (oral statements) can be hard to corroborate. With the collection of civil service documents, verbal information presented in this study will be compared to these documents to ensure its authenticity. A public records request can validate the previous civil service test results mentioned in this manuscript. Furthermore, I can only attest that the information given to me by the participants during their interviews was honest and factual as it was a testament to their own experiences.

Ethical Considerations

As described by Creswell (2014), a researcher should consider the ethical issues that may compromise the integrity of the study before starting it. Furthermore, before any research study can begin, gaining approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) is required. At the very least, the IRB can identify possible conflicts that need addressing (an action plan) before a study can commence. Therefore, in Chapter 4, I explain how I obtained permission from a participant via a signed consent form. I also explain how personal disclosure (the identity of participants), whether in written documents or audio recordings, was protected during and after the study had concluded. Also, participants received information about anyone other than me who have access to the data in the study.

A process to keep both anonymity and confidentiality of participants was of the utmost importance to maintain trust and confidence in the study. Therefore, participants were instructed to contact me immediately if they experience any emotional after-effects because of the interview. I also included that information in the informed consent form.

The primary goal of this study was to explore minorities' perceptions of disinterest in pursuing a law enforcement career. To obtain relevant information about the phenomenon, I needed to conduct this study in an appropriate area that would provide an adequate population pool to select from randomly. However, the study population must not have a vested interest in the results of the study (note: Because of the coronavirus pandemic and social distancing requirements here in Ohio and across the United States, conducting a research study in a specific geographical area was not permissible at this

time). Additionally, I had to be sensitive to the needs of the study population, respecting their comments and viewpoints about the phenomenon. I was careful not to interject my own experiences and dismiss the perceptions expressed by the participants. Though the participants must not have a vested interest in the results of the study, by the same token, it is equally important that the results provide information that can benefit the population overall.

Summary

The value of this study will be determined and validated by other researchers based on the processes adhered to in the procedural stage, which I have outlined in this chapter. A good methodological plan starts with an appropriate research design and approach that will provide enough data to explore and assess the problem. To gather the necessary data, I needed to equip myself with instruments that would accurately capture and assess the information under study. However, the most important aspect of this stage was choosing participants who were willing to share their perspectives and lived experiences about the phenomenon but who also recognize that personal grudges or hyperbole about the problem does more harm than good in finding non-discriminatory procedures that will benefit marginalized minority groups. In Chapter 4, I describe the results of the completed study.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative research study was to explore and understand the reasons racial minorities and women are not pursuing law enforcement careers. A purposeful sampling method was used to identify a total of 11 racial minority and female college students who were not interested in a law enforcement career. Using 10 open-ended interview questions, I captured the reasoning or beliefs that some racial minorities and women do not pursue a career in the law enforcement profession. The responses given by the participants allowed me to identify specific patterns or themes that suggest why the underrepresentation exists. As mentioned in Chapter 3, as the researcher, I was responsible for several elements of this study. I gathered data for examination and organized and analyzed the data to provide meaning (Creswell, 2014; Dawidowicz, 2016).

In Chapter 4, I sought to answer my research questions by asking the participants in this study 10 questions to gain a better understanding why they were not pursuing a law enforcement career. The first interview took place on June 12, 2020, and the final interview was on August 6, 2020. This chapter also provides information about the methodological approach (demographics, data collection, data analysis, evidence of trustworthiness, credibility, and environment) that was employed. The two research questions were:

RQ1: Has media reporting of unarmed Black men killed by police deterred minorities from applying for police officer positions?

RQ2: How much do family attitudes influence the decision making of women and people of color, preventing them from becoming police officers?

To examine the phenomenon with the hope of gaining a better understanding of it, I asked each participant 10 interview questions (Appendix A). After asking these questions, I had the interviews transcribed. I then hand-coded each one. Each was analyzed, categorized, and placed in a folder with the use of NVivo qualitative data analysis software.

Setting

The participants for this study were all college-age students. A total of 12 (later finalized to 11) participants volunteered to provide their perspectives on each of the 10 questions asked of them. Each interview was conducted via Zoom online meeting application due to the coronavirus pandemic and social distancing requirements. The interview setting for the participant was in a location of their choosing using whatever device (PC, iPad, iPhone, or laptop) with an Internet connection to communicate. I used a desktop computer at my residence, also with an Internet connection. The use of an encrypted line (ID number and password emailed to the interviewee by me) helped ensure the security of the interview while online.

Demographics

The participants in this study included six men and five women. Participants ranged in age from 18 to 35 years. Five of the six male participants self-identified as African American and the remaining man as Hispanic. Three of the female participants self-identified as Caucasian, one as African American, and one as Hispanic. The

participants also lived in different regions of the United States. The first and last names of the participants and the locations where they live were not provided in this manuscript to maintain confidentiality requirements. Rather than using their real name, I assigned a code name to each participant. Table 1 provides a breakdown of the demographic information of the participants and the region of the United States where they reside.

Table 1

Participant Group Demographics

Participant code	Race	Age	Gender	U.S. region
P1	African American	28	Male	South
P2	Hispanic	30	Male	West
P3	African American	20	Male	Midwest
P4	African American	18	Male	Midwest
P5	African American	21	Male	Midwest
P6	African American	22	Male	South
P7	Caucasian	35	Female	Northwest
P8	Hispanic	25	Female	South
P9	Caucasian	30	Female	East
P10	Caucasian	35	Female	South
P11	African American	21	Female	Midwest

Data Collection

Before the data collection process could begin, I had to obtain permission from Walden University's IRB. I submitted the required documentation to the IRB, requesting

permission to conduct my study. On June 1, 2020, I received an email approving my request that I could conduct my research study. In my initial request, I had stated that I would be conducting face-to-face interviews as part of my data collection. However, due to the coronavirus pandemic and social distancing requirements, I had to submit a change request to IRB, explaining that I would be conducting virtual communication interviews (Zoom conference calls) rather than face-to-face for my data collection. The request was approved. The Walden University IRB approval number is 06-01-20-0672447.

An announcement of my study that listed the criteria for participation was posted by a Walden staff member on the research participant pool webpage. Almost immediately, I began to receive emails from students wanting to participate. My first Zoom interview was conducted on June 12, 2020. The last interview occurred on August 6, 2020. I conducted 12 interviews, and all but one contributed to this study. The one I did not use was outside the age requirement (cutoff was 35 years old, and she was 53).

Before I scheduled an interview with a participant, I emailed the informed consent form to the interviewee a minimum of 5 days before setting up an interview. It allowed the participants time to decide if they still wanted to participate in the study. If they agreed to the interview, the participant had to reply to the same email with the words “I consent” in the body of the message. The response in this manner was necessary to comply with the social distancing requirements. Also, some of the participants lived in another state, so their email response was acknowledgment for the interview, being equivalent to an electronic signature. Additionally, I emailed the interview questions to each participant once they agreed to the interview so that they could prepare in advance

their responses to the questions. I believed this advance question review would lead to better, more thoughtful responses. All interview transcripts, Zoom video recordings, consent emails, and audio recordings are stored on an external hard drive that is password protected. I will keep this information on the external drive for the required 5-year minimum.

Data Analysis

The interviews for this study were both video and audio recorded. The Zoom application recorded the video (and audio) portion. I also digitally recorded the audio of the interviews using my recorder as a backup source. I transferred the recordings to an encrypted hard drive. I will keep the recordings on this hard drive for the minimum required time (5 years) for research studies.

After each interview, I uploaded it to one of two transcription services (Temi.com and Transcriptionpuppy.com). After the company transcribed the interview, I reviewed the transcript for errors and accuracy. After I completed my review of the transcript, I emailed the interviewee the transcript for their review, checking for the accuracy of their statements. This method, as described by Ravitch and Carl (2016), is just one means to eliminate misrepresentation accusations (trustworthiness). Once the participant emailed me back their transcript, I began the coding process. I looked for repeated words or phrases used by the participants during their interviews that could indicate a theme or pattern about the phenomenon.

Coding, as defined by Ravitch and Carl (2016), is where the researcher looks for repeated phrases, words, and thoughts that indicate a possible theme or pattern vocalized

by the person interviewed and categorizing it into a single word or phrase. As I reviewed each transcript, I used a different color highlighter to make these words or phrases easily identifiable and spotted. As explained by Saldaña (2016), this method allows the researcher to easily spot similarly expressed opinions of the participants from multiple documents. Table 2 depicts the themes/descriptors identified during the coding of the transcripts. These words showed a distinct pattern of emotional or physical angst expressed by the participants during their respective interviews.

Table 2

Words and Phrases

RQ1 (Media)	RQ2 (Family)
traumatized	lack of trust
shocked	confused
upset	pain
fearful	sadness
anger	traitor
stressful	sellout
anxiety	

Additionally, Table 3 includes a breakdown of expressed opinions or concerns, reduced to a single word or phrase voiced by the participants for each question. However, a research study of this kind is not about proving or testing an assumption but allowing the information obtained to speak for itself (Rudestam & Newton, 2016). Table 3 also

includes the questions I asked each participant and the type of responses (reduced to one or two words or a short phrase summary) I received. Though some of the words or phrases were stated multiple times (by different participants), I only listed it once as a response to the respective question.

Table 3

Interview Questions and Responses

Interview questions	Responses
1. What are some reasons you believe minorities and women apply for police officer positions?	Career stability; job security; decent money; make a difference in the community; create change; positive impact in the community; protector.
2. Have you ever applied or considered applying for a police officer position?	The breakdown of responses: Yes: 3 (which includes considered) No: 8 Males: 1 Yes (Hispanic) 5 No Female: 1 Yes (Hispanic) 4 No
3. What are some reasons you believe minorities and women do not apply for police officer positions?	Low pay/high risk; women (raise a family); fear; personality not a fit; male-dominated; mistreatment of minorities; unfairly judged by one's race; perceived barriers
4. How has media reporting of unarmed Black men killed by police impacted minority communities?	Traumatized; not affected; opened eyes about abuse; motivated for change; added fuel to the fire; created a platform; left out key details; fear of police officers.
5. How has media reporting of these incidents impacted you?	Taken a toll; angry; did not watch the news anymore; deeper understanding; driven towards change; stage to talk; afraid to leave home; distressing
6. How has the media's reporting of police incidents involving minorities caused a negative perception of police officers in communities of color?	Did not know; Increased negative perception; hesitant to call the police for anything; negative; viewed as the bad guys
7. Is your family's attitude about police officers the same as yours?	Yes (the same); No (vastly different); somewhat similar; neutral; don't know (Haven't asked or talked about the issue).
8. What are some reasons a family member or friend would discourage a person from pursuing a career in law enforcement?	Extremely dangerous / not enough money; sexual harassment; systemic problems; safety; negative view of the profession; would be considered a "sellout" or "traitor to their race.
9. What is your view of police officers' treatment of minorities compared to other race classifications? What impact has it had towards people of color and women applying for police officer positions?	Treated differently and unfairly; media hype is overblown; refusing to be silent anymore; depends on where you live; minorities treated worse than other groups; horrendous; terribly; individual events
10. In what ways could law enforcement officials encourage and attract minorities and women to the profession?	Increase pay; flexible work schedule for mothers; more training; inclusion & diversity; encourage at an early age; policy changes that reflect diversity or reform

Several responses given by participants were almost identical in some instances. The overwhelming concern each expressed was the need for change in how law enforcement agencies interact with people of color and women. The consensus was that, without significant changes within these agencies, participants felt that most women and people of color would not choose law enforcement as a career option. A couple of the participants were deeply passionate about their responses and had an extremely negative view of law enforcement in general. One participant envisioned doing away with all law enforcement officers. The participant expressed that law enforcement was no longer needed and promoted a restorative form of justice as the best way to build better relationships within the minority community. Based on responses from the participants, law enforcement agencies need more diversity within the ranks, but first these agencies need to address the current perception of law enforcement within communities.

The themes or patterns that emerged from the interviews were that of distrust toward law enforcement and a call for change or reform in the way law enforcement officers police communities of color. None of the participants mentioned or were concerned about excessive force committed against citizens in general by police officers, but only those incidents against people of color. P1 gave examples of individuals believed to have been killed by law enforcement. It was information that was broadcast on the news repeatedly. How much influence can the media have on the perception of racial minorities towards law enforcement? It was summed up by P11, who expressed that the media does more harm than good by constantly showing footage of a person of color being killed by police.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Unlike quantitative research, it is difficult for the researcher to validate the accuracy and honesty of the data (information) in a qualitative study (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). However, there are measures (triangulation) qualitative researchers can use to show the validity (trustworthiness) of the data. Creswell (2014) explained that in qualitative research, the researcher is the vital instrument used in a study. A researcher's primary goal is to show that his findings align with the data collected. As expressed by Schwandt (2015), the researcher's findings must be noteworthy to all audiences. Ravitch and Carl (2016) explained how a researcher could show the trustworthiness of a qualitative study by showing the transferability, dependability, confirmability, and credibility of the data collected.

The data collected for this study came from interviews with 11 participants who lived in different regions of the United States. The questions asked of each participant can be used in any geographical area and would have no issues of transferability (used in a different setting). The collection of data used in this study are facts based on the participants' lived experiences. The audio recording of the actual words used by the participants confirms that the lived experiences are theirs and not the preconceptions of my thoughts (confirmability). Unless the participants colluded to mislead me about the phenomenon under study, the information obtained through their recorded (video and audio) interviews should be taken as being reliable. I kept a ledger documenting the process of my data collection. Though the results could differ depending on the

participants' responses, the process that I used in this study could be duplicated in future examinations (dependability).

Credibility

The credibility of research findings is judged by whether they are believable to the reader (Ravitch & Carl, 2014). I had to consider that I would probably get different perspectives on the phenomenon based on gender, race, and what part of the United States the participants lived. There was a distinct possibility that women might view the phenomenon differently than men, Whites from people of color, and east coast inversely than the west coast (north, south, and Midwest), so I was careful not to dismiss these intricacies while conducting my analysis. What might appear to be quite clear to some might not be as clear to others.

As mentioned in Chapter 3, *bracketing*, as explained by Dawidowicz (2016), is where the researcher does not attempt to manipulate the perception of the phenomenon held by the population under examination. I believe because I did not share my background as a law enforcement officer, I received honest responses from the participants that I would not have gotten if they had known beforehand that I had worked in law enforcement.

Results

Looking again at the two questions I explored for this study: RQ1: What effect has media reporting of unarmed Black men killed by police deterred minorities from applying for police officer positions?

RQ2: How much do family attitudes influence women and African American (people of color) decision-making on becoming police officers?

I believe the participants' responses show that both the media and family influence does play into the decision-making of women and people of color, whether to consider a career in law enforcement. I have included a few of the responses from the participants that corroborate my analysis of the data:

Family Impact

The participants' responses as it pertained to Family Influence (RQ2).

P1 response: "No. As I was growing up, it was not something that Black people did. I was from the south, and people of color who would consider such a thing were considered "sellouts."

P8 response: "Yes, I considered applying but ended up not doing it. My family was against it because they did not believe it was a female type position."

P6 response: "No. I didn't even consider it because I don't agree with a lot of the things police officers have to do, and my family did not either."

P3 response: "No. I've never applied, nor have I considered applying for a police officer position. Not something encouraged by my family."

IQ8- What are some reasons a family member or friend would discourage a person from pursuing a career in law enforcement?

P1 response: "Dangerous job and low pay. Why would you want to contribute to a system that has historically played a part in incarcerating minorities in particularly Black men and women?"

P9 response: Being sexually harassed and the work schedule is not flexible enough for women who want to have a family (children). “You can’t be a good mom if you’re a cop.”

P7 and P8 responses: “Safety is a significant factor. It’s not a good fit for women.”

P6 response: “Being viewed as a sellout, outsider, traitor, or an ‘Uncle Tom’ to your race.”

P10 response: “I don’t want anyone I associate with to be associated with being a police officer.”

P2 response: “Yes. However, I got really sick from a pulmonary infection and withdrew. I didn’t reapply. My family was neither for nor against it.”

When assessing the media’s impact as it pertains to women and people of color not applying for police officer positions

Media Impact

The participants’ responses as it pertained to media influence (RQ1).

IQ4- How has the media reporting of unarmed Black men killed by police impacted minority communities?

P9 response: “I really have no idea. I don’t have any personal contact on a regular basis with anybody that’s a minority other than women. I don’t watch the news much anymore.”

P8 response:

I hope that there is more increased media reporting because I feel like the way that it impacted minority communities, it's, we have gotten more motivated and inspired to change policies, procedures, and how things are done in this country. It's creating anger and sadness within minority groups seeing those things happening to them.

P2 response: "The media's reporting of these incidents has added fuel to the fire.

It has created a lot of anger and fear, which has made it scary."

P5 response: "The media has created a huge platform. It's powerful, and it can change plenty and many things around the world. It's naturally altered our way of thinking."

IQ6- How has the media reporting of police incidents involving minorities caused a negative perception of police officers in communities of color?

P1 response: "I would be curious if the perception of police officers in communities of color were ever positive. There is not a lot of love for police officers. The media has heightened this idea."

P10 response:

Yes, the media is partially the reason, but the events themselves are just causing people to be people who are already skeptical of the oppressive systems that exist within our society. It's causing them even further to distrust them and rightfully so.

P7 response: “My first instinct is as far as when the media reports, they may be reporting from one side. Sometimes we only see a sliver of the story from the media, and we need to investigate and look further.”

Each interview ended with the final question being asked of each participant as to what could law enforcement officials do to attract and encourage more women and people of color to apply to become police officers? Below are a few of their responses:

P1 response: “Increase the amount of pay and eliminate sexist attitudes.”

P9 response: “Flexible work schedules (especially for working moms).”

P10, P8, & P2 responses: Promote diversity throughout the profession. It can be shown through policy changes and increased training.

P6 response: “A zero-tolerance stance for any officer who mistreats women and people of color (citizens and fellow officers).”

During my review/coding of the interview transcripts, I discerned a noticeable theme of distrust and fear of law enforcement officers, and a need for change or reform of the profession expressed by the participants when answering these specific questions.

Interview questions: 4 through 8 prompted many emotional characterizations of the phenomenon as it pertained to both research questions. Words such as *traumatized* and *shocked, upset* and *fearful, lack of trust, confused, pain, sadness, and anger*, were expressed by the participants. Participant 1(P1) described how the media’s reporting of these events had taken a toll on him physically (*high blood pressure and stress*).

Participant 8 (P8) explained that “she hoped there would be an increase in media presence.” She described the reporting of these incidents had impacted minority

communities, and it has gotten more people motivated and inspired to change policies and procedures currently used in law enforcement. She believed it would change how things are done in this country. Participant 3 (P3) believed the media's reporting of these incidents had impacted minority communities in a great way. "It has created some fear of police officers." He also explained "that it had sparked some desire for change across the board or certainly across the racial landscape for all people who feel marginalized."

The types of feelings described by the participants when answering interview questions 4 through 8 were a factor why themselves had not applied to become police officers but also why they had not encouraged any of their friends, family, or relatives to pursue a career in law enforcement. A few of the participants explained it was due in part to the past treatment of women and people of color by law enforcement. In a sense, as described by Delgado and Stefaniec (2017), CRT was evident as I coded the participants' interviews. Its viewpoint attempts not just to comprehend the racial injustices of society but to find ways to change it and making the places we live better. These authors also claimed that the theory contains an activist dimension. Interesting enough, three of the eleven participants expressed that they have become actively involved in the movement against racial injustice and the demand for change or reform. The other participants did not describe any direct involvement but did support those who were actively protesting for change.

The message that I took away from the participants' responses was unless some significant changes occur within the law enforcement profession, it will continue to struggle to attract women and people of color to the profession. I was not surprised by

any of the participants' responses considering the events and protests that have occurred since the death of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor. However, what is somewhat perplexing is that there has been no request made by leaders of these protests for women and people of color to go to their local police agencies and apply to be police officers.

It is hard to argue that the "system" is unfair to women and people of color when there is minimal interest by either towards the profession. As I reported in Chapter 2, the student enrollment in Criminal Justice programs at HBCUs has steadily increased over the years, but that has not translated into more minorities joining the law enforcement profession (Dretsch et al., 2014). Furthermore, as I reported in Chapter 3, one Midwestern city had even lowered its passing civil service examination scores for police applicants to 66% and 72% (two-part test) because not enough Blacks were getting a passing score. Even with the lowering of the minimum test scores, the declination of Black applicants continued.

Prior research studies that I have reviewed did not address the issue of lowering test scores to increase the minority applicant pool. Scholars have also failed to explore why Black community leaders refuse to aggressively challenge young Black men and women in their communities to pursue or least consider a career in the law enforcement profession. Today, professional athletes (i.e., LeBron James, and Colin Kaepernick), are quick to point out everything that is wrong in the law enforcement profession but fail to challenge young Black men and women on how they can make a difference in their communities by applying to become police officers.

In Chapter 2, I identified several categorical themes during my search of previous studies related to my study. One such category, “Inspiration to Serve” has risen above the others and is hard to dismiss as a topic of conversation. A law enforcement officer has the authority and responsibility of upholding the law and keeping order within the community. In some situations, an officer may have to use deadly force to save the life of a citizen, another officer, or themselves. Only one participant that I interviewed, went as far as applying for a job in law enforcement. The participant admitted he had only applied once and did not see himself applying again in the future. Could that be considered a real desire to serve? If there is no desire or inspiration by women and people of color to serve in law enforcement, how can the disparity be expected to decrease? If leaders focused more on the positive qualities a law enforcement officer can offer to a community it could change the negative perception some may have about the profession.

One of the two research questions I explored about the phenomenon dealt with family influence. During my search of previous studies on the topic, I found it interesting that Suboch et al., (2017) reported that being accepted by their peers rather than family was more of a factor in the decision making of Blacks in pursuing a career in law enforcement. Several of the participants that I interviewed confirmed what was reported by the authors. The thought of being called or considered a “traitor” or “sellout” to their race was enough for these individuals not to pursue a law enforcement career. Community leaders, along with law enforcement and government officials must figure out a way to remove the stigma associated with the profession in communities of color and promote a more positive image that will attract more towards the profession. As I

reported in Chapter 2, Campion and Esmail (2016) concluded that there are people of color who are interested in a career in law enforcement. However, the numbers are not where society or leaders would like them to be. Finding a strategy that will make the profession an attractive career choice in communities of color should be a top priority.

Conclusion

It is hard to understand why a group (Blacks and women) who complain about injustice and the need for police reform, are not willing to step forward and apply for jobs to increase its representation. The only way to increase minority and female representation in law enforcement is to have people in these two groups willing to go through the hiring process. As I stated earlier, only 1 of the 11 participants in this study applied for a police officer position. During the 11 interviews I conducted, there was no indication that any of them would apply now or encourage any of their family, friends, or relatives to pursue a career in law enforcement. It is inconceivable to believe that the problem will get better if women and people of color are not willing to apply. The participant that had applied explained that he had to drop out of the process due to a physical issue. However, he explained that it was the only time he had ever applied, and it was unlikely that he would apply again in the future.

Changing the negative perceptions women and people of color have towards the law enforcement profession will continue to be a challenge unless law enforcement officials become more involved in the communities they serve. Being seen more as people who are there to help (ally) rather than harm (enemy) those living in the community would be a good place to start.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this research study was to examine the perceptions among women and people of color regarding a career in law enforcement. A phenomenological approach was the most appropriate method to use to examine the lived experiences of the participants. I collected data from interviews with 11 racial minority and female participants. I asked the participants 10 open-ended questions to answer two predetermined research questions. I examined if the media's reporting of unarmed Black men killed by police had any effect on women and people of color not pursuing a law enforcement career. I explored if family attitudes toward law enforcement had a bearing on the decision-making process, whether to pursue a career in law enforcement by either of these two groups.

Few studies have been conducted that examine the perspectives of women and racial minorities regarding disinterest in pursuing a career in law enforcement. In this study, I aimed not to explore gender or racial discrimination concerns but to explore why the underrepresentation of these minority groups persists in law enforcement. While there were 10 open-ended questions to guide the interviews, if participants expressed concerns during the interview, I continued my examination with additional questions outside the 10.

I identified two theoretical foundations CRT and PET to use while examining the phenomenon in this study. However, the participants' responses did not indicate that racism was not a deterrent for the disinterest but suggested that a more aggressive

approach was needed to reform the current policies and procedures already in place (PET). I address these concerns later in this chapter. In Chapter 5, I include an interpretation of the findings, limitations of the study, my recommendations on future research, implications, and finally, my conclusion.

Interpretation of the Findings

I conducted interviews with 11 women and racial minority participants examining their perceptions of the phenomenon of underrepresentation of minorities in law enforcement. The interview consisted of 10 open-ended questions that addressed the two research questions I was exploring. Participants were six men (five African American and one Hispanic) and five women (one African American, three Caucasians, and one Hispanic). The participants ranged in age between 18 and 35 years. Each participant was assigned a pseudonym (P1 through P11) to conceal their identities.

The study's interview phase produced several responses from the participants that specifically addressed the two research questions under examination. Interview Questions 4 through 8 concentrated on media and family influence as it pertained to law enforcement careers. Delgado and Stefancic's (2017) CRT has been used to indicate whether nationalism or assimilation is the best choice for groups who are marginalized. In the case of women and people of color not pursuing a career in law enforcement, it would appear that government officials are trying to assimilate these two groups into the profession. Trochmann and Gover (2016) reported many within the Black community would rather have minority officers policing their neighborhoods. Members in the

community believe that minority officers better understand the culture and would treat people more fairly, unlike White police officers.

As I coded the participants' interview transcripts, I also checked to see if the second theory, PET, was present. The approach, as described by Baumgartner et al. (2009), is a review of governmental policies or procedures and the effect they have on society over time. The purpose was to evaluate if the policies have become outdated and if a change is needed. Without a doubt, the participants' responses called for an immediate change in policies and procedures used by law enforcement agencies. Special interest groups (e.g., Black Lives Matter) have called for either defunding the police or, worse, dismantling law enforcement entirely if a change is not implemented.

Dismantling law enforcement resonated with P11. P11's opinion was that the carceral system does not work and implementing restorative justice would be a better solution. The main sticking point was the recidivism rate, and P11 stated it is just a continual pipeline (school to prison). P1 said that training and tactics currently used by local law enforcement are questionable. P1 provided examples of (i.e., Dylann Roof and Timothy McVeigh), two White men who killed multiple people and were not injured, shot, or killed when authorities confronted them, yet Black people, like Tamir Rice, Eric Garner, Trayvon (Martin), and Ahmaud Arbery, have been killed without hesitation. According to P1, the actions of law enforcement officers have caused fear in communities of color, and something needs to change. P8 said that the testing process for those who apply to become police officers needs to change. Specifically, P8 said that if "psychological evaluations are not already in place, they need to be added."

Limitations of the Study

There were several limitations as I conducted my study that could not be overcome. The first issue was the global COVID-19 pandemic that led to several months of social distancing and has continued to modify how people interact with one another in public and social situations. My original intent was to conduct face-to-face interviews with participants, but that changed to Zoom video-conferencing calls. The Ohio governor's mandate required college and universities to close, which affected my potential participant pool. The limited participation in the study by African American women may have been a direct result of the smaller pool of eligible students. Though I was able to conduct my data collection using Zoom video conferencing technology, the personal dimension associated with a face-to-face in-person interview was absent.

Another issue that limited my study was the lack of time. The social distancing and stay at home mandate delayed my chances of starting my research sooner. The pandemic also interrupted my plans to interview criminal justice students directly from local universities. Once the global COVID-19 pandemic took hold, my recruitment relied on those who responded to my advertisement posted in a college research study participant pool forum online. It was a struggle meeting the minimum number (10) of participants I needed for my study.

Finally, this is a doctoral student research study that is short on time and participants. Due to the small sample of participants and my lack of experience as a researcher, it would be unlikely to predict how future studies would fare.

Recommendations

After listening to the 11 participants describe their reasons for a lack of interest in pursuing a law enforcement career, it was something that Participant 1 (P1) stated that summed up what probably a lot of people reading this can relate to. P1 stated that one of the reasons he never had an interest in a law enforcement career is because “he did not know exactly what police officers do daily.” It was an interesting comment by P1 because I assumed most people knew the duties of police officers. However, after asking a few ordinary citizens what the responsibilities of a police officer are, most could only give three: write tickets, take reports, and take people to jail. After hearing what P1 stated and what I heard from several citizens (roughly 20), educating the public about the job would be my first recommendation to attract people to the job.

Another suggestion would be creating flexible work schedules that might attract more women. It was what Participant 9 (P9) described that makes this a reasonable request. She explained that she never applied because the work schedule was not conducive for a working mother (police officer). She felt a woman could not be a good mother if she is working as a police officer on the night shift and can't be at home with her kids when they go to school in the morning and come home from school in the afternoon.

A few recommendations for future research could be interviewing racial minorities and women who currently work or who are now retired from the profession. It could be advantageous in getting their perspectives on what attracted them to the profession to pursue it as a career. Additionally, interviewing recent graduates of criminal

justice programs to determine choices made after graduation would provide further data for departments to assess in their recruitment efforts.

Finally, to get women and people of color interested in law enforcement, officials need to mentor them early on in life (fifth or sixth grade). A start could be the creation of police camps where boys and girls interact with police officers and learn about the job. Fostering positive relationships between young women and people of color can help eliminate the stigma associated with the profession.

Implications

The premise of this study is to help identify strategies that would help encourage women and minorities (people of color) to consider a career in law enforcement, which could reduce tension and perceived barriers between law enforcement officers and citizens in the community. Chances are groups that feel unwelcomed by the law enforcement profession are not going to consider it as a career option. As Participant 1 (P1) explained during his interview, “why would anyone want to contribute to a profession that mistreats women and people of color?” Providing information to shareholders that could help develop better materials/tools for recruiting candidates from these two groups can show an earnest effort in reducing the existing disparity.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, several studies reported that law enforcement officials and government leaders have become increasingly frustrated attempting to diversify their police departments (Shjarback et al., 2017; Suboch et al., 2017; Trochman & Gover, 2016). The possibility of accomplishing this goal has become more challenging due to past and recent deadly force events (i.e., George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Rayshard

Brooks, and others) that involved people of color and law enforcement officers (Jordan et al., 2009; Trochmann & Gover, 2016). These events have sparked protests, riots, and destruction of property. Calls for defunding the police or at minimum police reform have been heard across the country. However, will a diverse police department really make a difference? I believe for the most part it will. The current perception of society is that law enforcement officers do not understand cultural differences in the communities they served. By having a more diverse police department, that perception should diminish if not, cease to exist altogether.

To become a police officer in the United States, individuals must go through and successfully pass a battery of tests. These tests are not standard in every state and some police administrators and elected officials have even questioned the reliability of these tests in being able to identify candidates who will make good police officers (Hial et al., 2017). The testing process is inevitably questioned after a high-profiled police incident involving a White police officer and a person of color. Despite these concerns, some cities have lowered or even eliminated some of the requirements to be eligible for a police officer position (Jordan et al., 2009). The motivation to pursue a career in law enforcement can differ amongst individuals. However, a common characteristic that many individuals who want to become police officers share is that of wanting to serve and protect their community. That aspect was not brought up by any of the participants I interviewed. It is not that any of these individuals dislike their community, but none of them expressed a desire to serve and protect it as a law enforcement officer.

My study identified that the constant reporting of high-profiled events that involved law enforcement officers, and specifically White police officers, and the discouragement from family and friends (peers) has caused women and people of color not to apply for police officer positions. Though my study was only a small sample of the U.S. population, I believe the responses given by the participants provide a perception that has resonated across the country. Law enforcement officers are no longer viewed as “protectors” in communities of color. Law enforcement today is not “your parents” style of policing of the past. If officials want to appeal to the younger generation of today, police leaders and government officials must develop different recruitment strategies that will attract and encourage women and people of color to the profession. Raganella and White (2004) identified the recruiting problem many years ago when they concluded that fresher ideas were needed to attract a different generation of candidates. Though their study was 16 years ago, the same issues still exist and for the most part the same recruiting strategies are being utilized by police recruiters.

In Chapter 2, I asked, what are citizens in communities of color expecting to see differently if more of the officers patrolling were also men or women of color. In a study conducted by Crotty-Nicholson et al., (2017) they concluded there was no substantive evidence to show a remarkable difference in officer-involved shootings that involved people of color and departments that were more diverse. With the past and recent firings of several police chiefs in Rochester, New York, Baltimore, Maryland, and Dallas/Fort Worth, Texas, and the early retirement of the police chief in Seattle, Washington, whom all were people of color, are government leaders sending a mixed-message? In many

cities where protests were the most volatile, the person in-charge of the police department was a person of color. People of color and women inspiring to become police officers may think differently when they see how these leaders have been treated.

There are several areas that researchers have explored in the past attempting to identify the root cause of the race and gender disparity in law enforcement. However, none of the previous studies that I have read examined how media reporting of deadly police incidents involving people of color, and family influence (dissuasion) are possible reasons why the disparity still exists. Exploring more in-depth both the media and family influence could help leaders develop strategies that could decrease the disproportion that currently exists and continuing the gap reduction into the future.

Conclusion

This Qualitative Research study explored Minorities' Perceptions of Disinterest in Pursuing a Law Enforcement career. A search of previously scholarly articles that examined this phenomenon provided zero results. Much of the literature provided in Chapter 2 explored other areas of the racial and gender disparity associated with the law enforcement profession. Still, none examined the more direct reason why there is a lack of interest by women and people of color towards the job.

The total U.S. population listed in the 2010 U.S. Census Bureau report was 308,758,105 (U.S. Census Bureau Quickfacts, n.d.). The breakdown showed that Whites accounted for 76.3% of the population, Blacks/African Americans 13.4%, and Hispanic 18.5%. Women between the ages of 20 to 34 accounted for 10% (31,003,680) of the population. To put those numbers in perspective, The United States Department of Justice

website data showed that racial or ethnic minority groups (U.S. Census minority classification) comprised just 27% of the total local law enforcement officers (477,000) in the United States. African Americans and women each comprised 12% of that total (Percentage of Local Police Officers Who Were Racial or Ethnic Minorities Nearly Doubled Between 1987 and 2013, 2015).

One could argue that the percentage of Blacks in local law enforcement is commensurate with the total Black population in the U.S., thus a fair representation. However, the demographic population for each city (state) varies, so is it a true representation of minority officers in each municipality? Additionally, even if the total number of minority officers is representative demographically to the city's population, can it be assured that the same representation is on the street working every shift? The citizens in communities of color want to see more officers that look like them. However, for this to happen, leaders in the community will need to encourage women and people of color to pursue a career in law enforcement and espouse the benefits it will bring in doing so. The time for change is now, and the only way it will occur is by women and people of color stepping up and answering the call.

Not once did any of the participants claim the reason for their disinterest was due to negative recruiting tactics used by law enforcement. Wilson et al., (2016) suggested that some agencies use such tactics to discourage women and people of color from applying. None of the participants shared anything close to that analysis. However, several did mention that because of high-profile events (Tamir Rice, George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and John Crawford III) has caused many who had a slight interest in

looking elsewhere for career options. It confirms what was reported by Campion and Esmail (2016), who disclosed that community reaction to such events could discourage the interest of several minorities towards pursuing a career in law enforcement. Nonetheless, they also reported that despite all the perceived disdain for the profession, people of color are still applying for jobs as police officers.

Finally, there have been several studies (Campion et al., 2016; Dukes, 2018; Nicholson-Crotty et al., 2017; Suboch et al., 2017; Wilson et al., 2016) and many more that have explored the race and gender disparity and have attempted to identify why the issue continues to exist over time. However, none have looked at the media and family influence as being contributors to the problem. With the continued reporting by the media of every police officer shooting that involves a White police officer and a person from a community of color, there is no foreseeable ending to the disparity until there are changes across the board to build a better relationship and trust within the community.

References

- Alderden, M., Farrell, A., & McCarty, W. (2017). Effects of police agency diversification on officer attitudes. *Policing: An International Journal*, 40(1), 42–56.
doi:10.1108/PIJPSM-07-2016-0111
- Baumgartner, F., Breunig, C., Green-Pedersen, C., Jones, B., Mortensen, P., Nuytemans, M., & Walgrave, S. (2009). Punctuated Equilibrium in comparative perspective. *American Journal of Political Science*, 53(3), 603–620. doi:10.1111/j.1540-5907.2009.00389.x
- Bieler, S. (2016). Police militarization in the USA: the state of the field. *An International Journal of Police Strategies & Management*, 39(4), 586–600.
doi:10.1108/PIJPSM-03-2016-0042
- Campion, M., & Esmail, A. (2016). Understanding motivational career choices of African American criminal justice students. *Race, Gender, and Class*, 23(3/4), 129–154. Retrieved from <https://www.jstor.org/journal/racegenderclass>
- Crawford, L., & Lynn, L. (2016). Interviewing essentials for new researchers. In G. Burkholder, K. Cox, & L. Crawford (Eds.), *The scholar-practitioner's guide to research design* (pp. 281–290). Baltimore, MD: Laureate.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Crotty-Nicholson, S., Crotty-Nicholson, J., & Fernandez, S. (2017). Will more Black cops matter? Officer race and police-involved homicides of Black citizens. *Public Administrative Review*, 77(2), 206–216. doi:10.1111/puar.12734

- Dawidowicz, P. (2016). Phenomenology. In G. Burkholder, K. Cox, & L. Crawford (Eds.), *The scholar-practitioner's guide to research design* (pp. 203–214). Baltimore, MD: Laureate.
- Delgado, R., & Stefancic, J. (2017). *Critical race theory: An introduction* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: New York University Press.
- Donovan, K., & Klah, C. (2015). The role of entertainment media in perceptions of police use of force. *Journal of Criminal Justice and Behavior*, *42*(12), 1261–1281.
doi:10.1177/0093854815604180
- Dretsch, E., Moore, R., Campbell, J. N., & Dretsch, M. N. (2014). Does institution type predict students' desires to pursue law enforcement careers? *Journal of Criminal Justice Education*, *25*(3), 304–320. doi:10.1080/10511253.2014.895393
- Dukes, W. (2018). Measuring double consciousness among Black law enforcement officers to understand the significant role of race in law enforcement occupational cultures. *Journal of Ethnicity in Criminal Justice*, *16*(1), 1–21.
doi:10.1080/15377938.2017.1414008
- Espiritu, D. (2017). The future of diversity and police legitimacy does diversity make a difference? *The Journal of California Law Enforcement*, *51*(3), 7–14. Retrieved from https://cpoa.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/CPOA-2017-Journal-vol51-3_01-full-journal.pdf
- Ethridge, G., Riddick-Dowden, A., & Brooks, M. (2017). The impact of disability and type of crime on employment outcomes of African American and Latino offenders. *Journal of Applied Rehabilitation Counseling*, *48*(4), 46–53.

doi:10.1891/0047-2220.48.4.46

Frolik, C. (2017, May 30). Too many officers with Dayton Police Department are white, report says. *Dayton Daily News*. Retrieved from

<http://www.daytondailynews.com/news/local/too-many-officers-with-dayton-police-department-are-white-report-says/0bcm6gCxzv4STJ1JY9HeNL/>

Gramlich, J. (2019, April 30). The gap between the number of blacks and whites in prison is shrinking. *Pew Research*. Retrieved from

<https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/04/30/shrinking-gap-between-number-of-blacks-and-whites-in-prison>.

Greene, H. T. (2000). Black females in law enforcement. *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice*, 16(2), 230–239. doi:10.1177/1043986200016002007

Gustafson, J. (2013). Diversity in municipal police agencies: A national examination of minority hiring and promotion. *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies & Management*, 36(4), 719–736. doi:10.1108/PIJPSM-01-2013-0005

Hilal, S., Densley, J., & Jones, D. (2017). A signaling theory of law enforcement hiring. *Policing and Society*, 27(5), 508–524. doi:10.1080/10439463.2015.108i388

Hughes, C., Hunter, C., Vargas, P., Schlosser, M., & Malhi, R. (2016). Police endorse color-blind racial beliefs more than laypersons. *Race and Social Problems*, 8, 160–170. doi:10.1007/s12552-016-9170-0

Jordan, W. T., Fridell, L., Faggiani, D., & Kubu, B. (2009). Attracting females and racial / ethnic minorities to law enforcement. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 37, 333–341. doi:10.1016/j.jcrimjus.2009.06.001

- Lee, J., & Gibbs, J. (2015). Race and attitudes toward police: the mediating effect of social distance. *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies & Management*, 38(2), 314-332. doi:10.1108/PIJPSM-03-2015-0034
- Lee, T. (2016). Tennessee citizen police academies: Program and participant characteristics. *Am J Crim Just*, 41, 236-254. doi:10.1007/s12103-015-9304-8
- McDavid, J., Huse, I., & Hawthorn, L. (2013). Program Evaluation and Performance Measurements: *An Introduction to Practice* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publication.
- McNeeley, S., & Grothoff, G. (2016). A Multilevel Examination of the Relationship Between Racial Tension and Attitudes Toward the Police. *Am J Crim Just*, 41, 383-401. doi:10.1007/s12103-015-9318-2
- Miller, A., & Segal, C. (2012). Does temporary affirmative action produce persistent effects? A study of Black female employment in law enforcement. *The Review of Economics and Statistics*, 94(4), 1107-1125. doi:10.1162/REST_a_00208
- Moustakas, C. (1994). Phenomenological research methods. Thousand Oaks, Ca: Sage.
- Nordberg, A., Crawford, M., Praetorius, R., & Hatcher-Smith, S. (2016). Exploring minority youths' police encounters: A qualitative meta-synthesis. *Child Adolesc Soc Work J*, (33),137-149. doi:10.1007/s10560-015-0415-3
- Ozkan, T., Worrall, J., & Piquero, A. (2016). Does Minority Representation in Police Agencies Reduce Assaults on the Police? *American Journal of Criminal Justice*, 41, 402-423. doi:10.1007/s12103-106-9338-6

- Percentage of Local Police Officers Who Were Racial or Ethnic Minorities Nearly Doubled Between 1987 and 2013. (2015, July 21). Retrieved from [www.Justice.Gov.https://www.justice.gov/tribal/pr/percentage-local-police-officers-who-were-racial-or-ethnic-minorities-nearly-doubled](https://www.justice.gov/tribal/pr/percentage-local-police-officers-who-were-racial-or-ethnic-minorities-nearly-doubled)
- Raganella, A.J., & White, M. (2004). Race, gender, and motivation for becoming a police officer: Implications for building a representative police department. *Journal of Criminal Justice, 32*, 501-513. doi:10.1016/j.jcrimjus.2004.08.009
- Ravitch, S.M., & Carl, N. M. (2016). *Qualitative research: Bridging the conceptual, theoretical, and methodological*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Riccucci, N.M., & Saldivar, K. (2014). The Status of Employment Discrimination Suits in Police and Fire Departments Across the United States. *Review of Public Personnel Administration, 34*(3), 263-288. doi:10.1177/0734371x12449839
- Riccucci, N., & Riccardelli, M. (2015). The use of written exams in Police and Fire Departments: Implications for Social Diversity. *Review of Public Personnel Administration, 35*(4), 352-366. doi:10.1177/0734371x14540689
- Rudestam, K.E., & Newton, R.R. (2015). *Surviving your dissertation: A comprehensive guide to content and process* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Saldaña, J. (2016). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Schwandt, T. (2015). *The Sage Dictionary of Qualitative Inquiry* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publication.

- Shjarback, J., Decker, S., Rojek, J., & Brunson, R. (2017). Minority representation in policing and racial profiling. *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies & Management*, 40(4), 748-767. doi:10.1108/PIJPSM-09-2016-0145
- Soulliere, D. (2004). Policing on prime-time: A comparison of television and real-world policing. *American Journal of Criminal Justice*, 28(2), 215-233. Retrieved from <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2F02885873>
- Suboch, G., Harrington, C., & House, J. (2017). Why do female and minority police officers remain in law enforcement? *Race, Gender & Class*, 24(3/4), 100-118.
- Sullivan, L. (2011, March 10). City agrees to lower test scores for police exam. Retrieved from <https://www.daytondailynews.com/news/local/city-agrees-lower-test-scores-for-police-exam/gvpZhUZVBL9sDCMXZzkByO/>
- Trochmann, M., & Gover, A. (2016). Measuring the impact of police representation on communities. *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies & Management*, 39(4), 773-790. doi:10.1108/PIJPSM-02-2016-0026
- Turaga, R. (2016). Organizational Models of Effective Communication. *IUP Journal of Soft Skills*, 10(2), 56-65. Retrieved from <https://ezp.waldenulibrary.org>
- Uhlmann, E., Brescoll, V., & Machery, E. (2010). The motives underlying stereotype-based discrimination against members of stigmatized groups. *Soc Just Res*, 23, 1-16. doi:10.1007/s11211-010-0110-7
- U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts (n.d.): United States. Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/PST045218>.

- van Manen, M. (2016). *Phenomenology of practice: meaning-giving methods in phenomenological research and writing*. London: Routledge.
- van Manen, M. (2017). Phenomenology in its Original Sense. *Qualitative Health Research*, 27(6), 810-825. doi:10.1177/1049732317699381.
- White, M.D., Cooper, J.A., Saunders, J., & Raganella, A.J. (2010). Motivations for becoming a police officer: Re-assessing officer attitudes and job satisfaction after six years on the street. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 38, 520-530.
doi:10.1016/j.jcrimjus.2010.04.022
- Wilson, C.P., Wilson, S.A., & Gwann, M. (2016). Identifying barriers to diversity in law enforcement agencies. *Journal of Ethnicity in Criminal Justice*, 14(4), 231-253.
doi:10.1080/15377938.2016.1187234
- Wilson, C., Wilson, S., Luthar, H., & Bridges, M. (2013). Recruiting for diversity in law enforcement: An evaluation of practices used by state and local agencies. *Journal of Ethnicity in Criminal Justice*, 11, 238-255. doi:10.1080/15377938.2012.762755
- Zimny, K. (2015). Racial attitudes of police recruits at the United States Midwest Police Academy: A second examination. *International Journal of Criminal Justice Sciences*, 10(1), 91-101. Retrieved from www.sascv.org/ijcjs/previousissues.html

Appendix A: Interview Questions

Interview

The following is a list of questions I plan to ask each person interviewed for my study.

Below is a reminder of the research questions that I am exploring.

RQ1- What effect has media reporting of unarmed Black men killed by police deterred minorities from applying for police jobs?

RQ2- How much do family attitudes influence women and African-American decision-making on becoming police officers.

Questions

1. What are some reasons you believe minorities and women apply for police officer positions?
2. Have you ever applied or considered applying for a police officer position? If yes, what was the outcome? If no, why not?
3. What are some reasons you believe minorities and women (including women of color) do not apply for police officer positions?
4. How has media reporting of unarmed black men killed by police impacted minority communities?
5. How has media reporting of these incidents impacted you?
6. How has the media's reporting of police incidents involving minorities caused a negative perception of police officers in communities of color?
7. Is your family's attitude about police officers the same as yours? Please explain.
8. What are some reasons a family member or friend would discourage a person from pursuing a career in law enforcement?
9. What is your view of police officers' treatment of minorities compared to other race classifications? What impact has it had towards people of color and women (including women of color) applying for police officer positions?

10. In what ways could law enforcement officials encourage and attract minorities and women, including women of color, to the profession?

Appendix B: Advertisement

**Attention: Criminal Justice Students**

I am conducting interviews as part of a research study for my doctoral program to increase my understanding of how women and minority criminal justice students perceive a career in law enforcement. As a criminal justice student, you are in an ideal position to provide valuable first-hand information from your perspective. I am looking for students between the ages of 18-35, female or male; however, males must be a person of color (Black, Hispanic, Asian, or other U.S. Census minority classification).

The interview will take between 30-45 minutes. I am trying to capture your thoughts and perspectives of being a minority student in a criminal justice program. Your response to the questions will be kept confidential. Each interview will be assigned a number code to help ensure that personal identifiers (your identity) are not revealed during the analysis and write up of findings.

There is no compensation for participating in this study. However, your participation will be a valuable addition to my research, and the findings could lead to a greater public understanding of the need to increase the hiring of women and people of color to the law enforcement profession.

If you are interested in participating, please call or email me as soon as possible. You can suggest a day and time that suits you, and I'll do my best to be available. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask.

Thank you!

Howard E. Jordan