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Race and Proportionality of Traffic Stops by Four Police Departments in Demographically Distinct Communities.

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Abstract

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Demographically Distinct Communities.

by

Danielle Lessard

MS, Prairie View A&M University, 2008

BAAS, University of North Texas, 2002

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Criminal Justice

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Abstract

Most police departments in the southcentral region of the United States do not racially

represent the communities they serve. This lack of diversity has led some communities to

perceive law enforcement as racially biased. The purpose of this quantitative, non-

experimental, correlational, cross-sectional study was to assess the validity of this

perception based upon traffic stop data. Using representative bureaucracy theory, this

study examined the traffic stop summary data of four police departments in the

southcentral region of the U.S. for 2016-2019. The study aimed to determine if a police

department's racial demographics impacted the stop proportionately to the racial

representation of African Americans, Hispanics, Whites, and Asians in the community in

which the police department served. A comparative analysis used an independent *t*-test

and a bivariate Pearson correlation test to compare the data. The results indicated that in

most cases racial representation, or the lack thereof, within law enforcement impacted the

rate at which Africans Americans, Hispanics, Whites, and Asians were stopped. The

implications of this study for positive social change are that new policies or practices that

can ensure everyone in the community is being treated equally, regardless of the racial

demographics of the police department. Diversity within law enforcement is important

but just as important is the public's perception of law enforcement. If law enforcement is

perceived as racially biased, policing becomes unmanageable.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

Law enforcement officials in the United States are charged with maintaining order

and providing equal treatment to all individuals. It can be problematic for officers and

communities if each have a negative perception of the other. For example, Barthelemy et

al. (2016) found that the perception people have of the police is directly related to the

confidence they have in them to do their job. The lack of confidence most prevalent when

police in majority-White police departments serve in communities that are predominately

comprised of African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians (Barthelemy et al., 2016). This

lack of confidence stems from a lack of racial representation in policing, reinforcing a

perception of racial bias resulting in divisions between the institutions of law

enforcement and African American, Hispanic, and Asian communities (Baldwin, 2018).

While law enforcement may not perceive their actions or policing style as racially biased;

their actions may communicate a different story to the community. To assess racial bias

in law enforcement, I conducted a multi department study to examine if racial

representation in law enforcement in the southcentral region of the United States results

in racially proportionate traffic stops. Specifically, I compared police departments that

racially represented the communities that they served to police departments that did not

racially represent the communities that they served.

This study compared the differences in the number of traffic stops made of

African Americans, Hispanics, Asians, and non-Hispanic Whites (to be referred to as

Whites [noun] or White [adjective] for the duration of this dissertation) from 2016-2019

in the southcentral region of the United States. The study specifically analyzed the number of traffic stops, broken down by race, to their racial representation in the community, by departments that racially represented their communities to those that did not. I also assessed the reason the stop was made. The study attempted to determine if officers from departments that racially represented their communities stopped individuals proportionate to their racial representation in the community. As law enforcement attempts to repair the relationship they have with African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians, it is important to understand where and when disparities occur. This study's social implications could bring about positive changes in law enforcement in the southcentral region of the United States, including helping officers rebuild their relationship with the communities they serve. By rebuilding this relationship, the officer and the communities are safer, and crime becomes manageable.

Background of the Problem

American society might perceive that African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians commit more crime than Whites, but that is not true (Barlow & Barlow, 2002; Cooper, 2002). Cooper, (2002) found that Whites commit the most crime in America, but African Americans and Hispanics make up most of the U.S. jail and prison population. Some scholars assert that racial bias in policing plays a big part in this phenomenon. A poll conducted by the American Institute of Public Opinion in 2018 revealed that 60% of Americans aged 18 and older believed that racial bias in policing is widespread (Baldwin, 2018). I obtained data from four police departments in the southcentral region of the United States to accurately assess if law enforcement conducts racially proportionate

stops to the community they serve and if the racial demographics of a police department results in racially proportionate traffic stops. The police departments were chosen based upon the racial representation of the police department to the communities that they serve. To ensure an accurate assessment I obtained data from one large and one small police department that racially represented the communities they serve and one large and small police department that did not.

The History of Racial Bias in Policing

Racial bias in policing towards African Americans dates to the earliest forms of law enforcement known as the slave patrols. The slave patrols originated in the southern United States and their sole purpose was to capture runaway slaves and return them to their owners. During capture, it was not uncommon for the slave patrols to beat or kill the captured slave as this instilled fear in any other slaves that considered running away (Kappeler, 2014). The racial demographics of the slave patrol consisted of White males and as time went on, the slave patrols transitioned into modern day policing. The racial demographics of who polices and who are policed have remained largely the same (Kappeler, 2014).

Racial bias in policing, otherwise known as racial profiling, evolved from the 1700s as a proactive policing technique used to target a segment of the population perceived as potential criminals. This practice had a direct impact on the African American, Hispanic, and Asian communities (Potter, 2013). According to Potter, (2013) Whites associated African Americans with criminality, as such, racial profiling has been used as an oppressive form of control of African Americans (Barlow & Barlow, 2002).

According to Graziano & Gauthier, (2017) racial profiling impacts Hispanics as well, as associates them with criminality and illegal immigration. Furthermore, research found that Hispanics with a darker complexion and stronger Hispanic features tended to draw more police attention than their lighter counterparts who could pass as White (Graziano & Gauthier, 2017).

According to Baldwin, (2018) racial bias in policing is not the effort of a few corrupt police officers but rather a departmental occurrence that has damaged the way African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians perceive the police. Therefore, instead of seeing law enforcement as protectors of their community, police are viewed by many in minority groups as a legal entity primarily composed of White males charged with enforcing the law as they see fit. According to Barlow & Barlow, (2002) individual court cases have made identifying bias in policing practices difficult. In the court case, United States v. Arvizu, the supreme court held that officers could stop vehicles without a traffic violation. United States v. Sokolow (1989), United States v. Cortez (1981), and United States v. Brignoni-Ponce (1975) all uphold the idea that an officer may make an investigatory stop if the totality of the circumstances leads to a reasonable suspicion that criminal activity is afoot (Ioimo et al., 2007). These court cases support the assessment that racially biased policing practices can be acceptable under the right circumstances (Barlow & Barlow, 2002). These court cases were not meant to allow, mask, or encourage racial bias but rather to protect officers while doing their job. Regardless of an officer's race, society expects their decisions will be unbiased and fair when exercising their authority.

The literature continually reveals that despite public opinion, African Americans and Hispanics commit crime at an equal or less-than equal rate when compared to Whites, but they are more harshly policed (Harris, 2016). For example, Healy & Hannah-Jones, (2016) found that nationwide, African Americans are 31% more likely to be pulled over than Whites. Furthermore, Hispanics are arrested, detained, and incarcerated twice as much as Whites (Alcalá & Montoya, 2016). However, most claims of racial bias made by African Americans and Hispanics have been dismissed by law enforcement (Barlow & Barlow, 2002). According to Alcalá & Montoya, (2016) the only explanation can be racial bias, as everything else has been ruled out. Immigration enforcement by local police departments has magnified Hispanics as targets to a police inquiry, which has contributed to the already high number of Hispanics coming in contact with the police (Barboza et al., 2017). Researchers have confirmed the disparity among racial demographics in traffic stops but cannot determine with certainty the reasons involved by individual officers (Ioimo et al., 2007). This is because, over the years, racially biased policing has gone from being overtly expressed to being more subtle, making it harder to identify (Long & Joseph-Salisbury, 2018). Barboza et al. (2017) compared the perceptions of Hispanic and Asian Americans regarding their perception of law enforcement and found similarities. For example, Asians have a more positive view of law enforcement than Hispanics and African Americans but share a lack of trust in the police. Barboza et al. (2017) reported that Hispanics felt the police do not care about their community and do not provide them with adequate protection. Some of the reasons cited for these negative perceptions of the police were attributed to law enforcement's low

response time, minimal patrolling, and lack of investigation of crime in the Hispanic community. Asians' perceptions of the police were cultivated through their own experience along with the experiences of people that they know. Asians do not tend to attract law enforcement's attention and are viewed as a "model minority" compared to African Americans and Hispanics (Swaine et al., 2020; Graziano & Gauthier, 2017). Research supports the view that the more individuals of any race have contact with law enforcement, the more skewed they will view the police (Graziano & Gauthier, 2017). As I look at these three groups' statistics, my challenge was to explore or find the causes of this phenomenon.

According to Baldwin, (2018), the reason for the differences in policing practices between races can be explained by examining the American societal bias of African Americans and Hispanics. African Americans are associated by the dominant culture, which is White, with suspicion, violence, laziness, drug use, and distribution. Therefore, they are accustomed to being confronted with routine discriminatory and prejudicial treatment by some law enforcement due to their race and ethnicity (Jones, 2017). Hispanics are associated with drunkenness and with being illegal immigrants (Barboza et al., 2017). Asians are viewed in a more positive light and do not tend to suffer the same treatment as African Americans and Hispanics (Graziano & Gauthier, 2017).

According to Minhas and Walsh, (2018) and Baldwin, (2018) these attitudes and responses that go along with these stereotypes sometimes operate automatically when an officer encounters an African American, Hispanic, or Asian individual. Minhas and Walsh, (2018) and Baldwin, (2018) explained that this racial profiling can happen as a

result of the job as police officers spend most of their time dealing with crime, and therefore over time, they can begin to view members of the public of any race as untrustworthy and potentially hostile. However, this perception has had the most impact on African Americans because it has led to many high-profile homicides of African Americans by police (Minhas & Walsh, 2018).

A statistical analysis revealed that African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians are uncomfortable and often fearful of any interaction with law enforcement as some of these interactions are too often negative, unexpected, and include physical restraint or an altercation (Boyles, 2015; Barboza et al., 2017). Their fear is not unfounded as Barthelemy et al. (2016) and Fryer (2018) found that law enforcement uses deadly force hundreds and sometimes a thousand times each year, killing all races and ethnicities of Americans. For example, from 2016-2019, law enforcement killed between 922-1,004 people each year, and the percentage of African Americans each year ranged from 20-24% (Mapping Police Violence, 2020). Because the African American population in the United States is 13% of the total population, 24% suggests a reason for concern.

Hispanics trail right behind African Americans encompassing a disproportionate number of killings compared to their demographic representation in America (Swaine et al., 2020). According to Fryer, (2018) in 2015, a study revealed that African Americans are 3.5 times more likely to be shot by police than Whites. African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians account for half of the people killed by police. In 2015 Bakersfield, California ranked number one for the number of police shootings, followed by Oklahoma City ranked at number two, and Oakland, California ranked at number three (Mapping Police

Violence, 2015). The police departments that killed only African Americans in 2015 were St. Louis, Missouri; Atlanta, Georgia; Kansas City, Missouri; Cleveland, Ohio; and Baltimore, Maryland, to name a few (Mapping Police Violence, 2015). According to Bracey, (2014) racial bias influences who is considered a threat and who is not. Although police kill more Whites than other races, the percentage of African Americans killed by police is significant compared to the number of African Americans in the United States.

Historically, the officers involved in deadly force situations have not been held accountable for their actions (Bracey, 2014). For example, in 1991, the Rodney King beating took place where the community witnessed Los Angeles Police Officers beat an African American man. Many Americans saw the videotaped incident, and when the officers involved were found not guilty, this led to the Los Angeles riots (Bracey, 2014). Two more recent cases of African American men that have been the subject of police brutality are Michael Brown and Eric Garner. Captured on video, like the Rodney King beating, these officers were not criminally charged. An officer's usual defense for using deadly force in most situations is that they feared for their life. Fearing for one's life is different based on the perspective of the individual officer. Generally speaking, the penal code protects officers who choose to use deadly force, as the guidelines for using deadly force are exceptionally vague (Fryer, Jr, 2016).

Situations in law enforcement are fluid and unique to the officer and the citizen involved. Therefore, they do not have a clear-cut way of handling each encounter as it is dependent upon the officer's discretion and his or her training as to how each situation is handled. One officer might react to a situation completely different than another, and this

is where injustice can happen. Boyles, (2015) stated that officers are influenced by a

person's demeanor and physical appearance as to how they will handle a situation.

Society views young, black males, and darker-skinned Hispanics as deviant, suspicious,

and criminal and therefore this perception greatly influences judgments made by law

enforcement (Boyles, 2015; Barthelemy et al., 2016). Therefore, when African

Americans, Hispanics, and Asians encounter law enforcement, police officers are

typically on high alert due to their perception that there is potential for things to go wrong

quickly based on the race of the individual they are policing (Boyles, 2015).

Problem Statement

The southcentral region of the United States is becoming more diverse. However,

police departments in that region do not racially represent the communities that they

serve (Maciag, 2015). As a result, it is the perception of some communities that the lack

of racial representation among officers has led to racial bias, unjust prejudice, and an

abuse of police authority rather than a uniform application of the law. This perception has

created a lack of community trust in law enforcement (Boyles, 2015). Because law

enforcement relies on the community's trust, consent, and cooperation, when law

enforcement cannot achieve the community's trust, law enforcement has a problem.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine if officers from departments that

racially represent their communities stop individuals proportionate to their racial

representation in the community in the southcentral region of the United States.

Specifically, comparing police departments that racially represent the communities that

they serve to police departments that do not racially represent the communities that they serve. This study compared the differences in the number of traffic stops made of African Americans, Hispanics, Asians, and Whites from 2016-2019 in the southcentral United States.

The study attempted to determine if officers from departments that racially represent their communities stop individuals proportionate to their racial representation in the community in the southcentral region of the United States. This study was unique as it did not focus on a specific race but rather on the proportionality of traffic stops made of each race to their racial representation in that community. The results attempted to determine if the racial representation of a police department in the southcentral region of the United States results in racially proportionate traffic stops. The results of this study may bring about policy changes for the future.

Research Question

Research Question: Is racial representation in law enforcement and community demographics in the southcentral region of the United States associated with racially proportionate traffic stops?

H_0: There is an association between a police departments racial demographics and the community they serve and their stop proportionality of each race.

H_a: There is no association between a police departments racial demographics and the community they serve and their stop proportionality of each race.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical base for this study is the theory of representative bureaucracy. The theory of representative bureaucracy states that if a public workforce, in this case law enforcement, racially represents the community they serve, then that representation will ensure that everyone in the community is treated equally. The theory of representative bureaucracy has two parts: active representation and passive representation. Active representation is the belief that individuals, in this case, law enforcement that share the same race or ethnicity as the community that they serve will work for the betterment of those community members due to the shared experiences of that race (Bradbury & Kellough, 2010; Nix & Pickett, 2017). Passive representation is when a police department hires a particular race to match the racial makeup of the community that they serve (Kim, 1994; Todak et al., 2018). The organization includes racial or ethnic minorities and women, within its ranks (Bradbury & Kellough, 2010). For example, the person is Hispanic but may not help or promote Hispanics in the community that they serve (Todak et al., 2018).

This theory is the best framework to use as it provides the foundation and gives the study a direction to follow. Although police officers are public servants, charged with keeping all people safe regardless of race, gender, ethnicity, and nationality, a department's lack of diversity may impact their traffic stop proportionality rate. Representative bureaucracy theory supports the idea that if diversification is not reflected in law enforcement, then the type and quality of service provided, in this case traffic stops, will not be racially proportionate to the community they serve (Zimny, 2015).

When traffic stops are not made in a racially proportionate manner it is the perception of some that racial bias is the reason.

The perception of racial bias in policing has negatively impacted how law enforcement does their job (Nix & Pickett, 2017; Barthelemy et al., 2016). The negative impact creates additional hurdles for officers solving cases that involve African American, Hispanic, and Asian individuals. African American, Hispanic, and Asian communities may be reluctant to help law enforcement, making the officer's job more difficult. The representative bureaucracy theory was chosen as the research was directly related to racial representation and would assist with understanding the problem, as it exists today. The theory of representative bureaucracy is explored in-depth in Chapter 2.

Nature of the Study

This study was quantitative and non-experimental, and utilized a correlational, cross-sectional design with secondary data provided by police departments to address this study's research question. This research design was appropriate and consistent with the need to determine if there were any associations between a department's racial demographics, a community's racial demographics and their traffic stop proportionality. The independent variable in this study was the police departments racial demographics. In contrast, the dependent variables were the community demographics, the race of the person who was stopped for the traffic violation, and the reason the stop was made. A quantitative research design was chosen as opposed to a qualitative research design because a quantitative design enabled the collection of a large amount of numerical and categorical data to synthesize, which gave the study high reliability. A qualitative design

is best used for research questions requiring a more in-depth analysis of why something happened, not if it happened (Kumar, 2012).

This research study compared four police departments in the southcentral region of the United States from 2016-2019. The study analyzed three components: the number of traffic stops made of each race compared to their racial representation in the community, the number of traffic stops made of each race compared to the racial representation of the police department, and the reason why the stop was made. Two of the police departments had 100 or more sworn officers and, for this study, were referred to as large departments. One racially represented their community, and the other did not. The other two police departments had less than 100 sworn officers and, for this study, were referred to as small departments. One racially represented their community, and the other one did not. The decision to choose different size police departments was to provide a robust and unbiased data set that can be generalized to other police departments in the southcentral region of the United States. The study was limited because of time constraints and accessibility.

The anticipated outcome of this study was to determine if officers from departments that racially represent their communities stop individuals proportionate to their racial representation in the community in the southcentral region of the United States. Obtaining this information can help determine if racial bias appears to be linked to a police department's racial representation compared to the community that they serve. This study may also provide law enforcement in the southcentral region of the United States with the best course of action to bridge the gap between them and the African

American, Hispanic, and Asian communities. The results of this study can bring about policy changes for the future.

Definitions

In the following section, I provide definitions for applicable terms related to the study.

African Americans: an American of African and especially of Black African descent ("Definition of African American", 2021)

Black: of or relating to any of various population groups of especially African ancestry often considered as having dark pigmentation of the skin but in fact having a wide range of skin colors ("Definition of Black", 2021)

Hispanic: of, relating to, or being a person of Latin American descent and especially of Cuban, Mexican, or Puerto Rican origin living in the U.S. ("Definition of Hispanic", 2020)

Asian: a native or inhabitant of Asia ("Definition of Asian", 2021)

White: of or relating to a group of people having European ancestry, classified according to physical traits (such as light skin pigmentation) ("Definition of White", 2021).

Racially biased policing: Police practices that intentionally use prejudiced judgments based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, economic status, religious beliefs, or age (Fridell, 2001).

Bias-based policing: "practices by individual officers, supervisors, managerial practices, and departmental programs, both intentional and nonintentional, that

incorporate prejudicial judgments based on sex, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, economic status, religious beliefs, or age that are inappropriately applied (Ioimo et al., 2007)."

Racially Biased Behavior: refers to a difference in a person's behavior that is attributable to the race or ethnicity of another person (Fridell, 2001).

Racial profiling: Any situation in which a police officer or a police agency takes action against a person or suspect in a crime solely based on that person's race (Barlow & Barlow, 2002 p. 352).

Community policing: is to include the community as an active participant in the policing process (Demirkol & Nalla, 2017).

Police culture: is defined as "a set of widely shared outlooks that are formed as adaptations to a working environment characterized by uncertainty, danger, and coercive authority and that serves to manage the strains that originate in this work environment (Demirkol & Nalla, 2017)."

Slave patrols: Groups of White men who were responsible for capturing and punishing slaves who attempted to flee their owners (Hansen, 2019).

Slave: a person held in servitude as the chattel of another ("Definition of Slave", 2021).

Implicit Bias: is defined as subtle and largely unconscious or semiconscious attitudes that influence behavior (James, 2017).

Assumptions

I assumed that the racial demographical data I obtained was accurate and up to date. I also assumed that the data that was collected by the police departments was accurate and dependable. It was further assumed that each police department's records, which included transferring the data to the public reference system, was accurate and complete. Additionally, I assumed that the police departments have rules and regulations related to record keeping that they must follow to ensure accurate information has been reported. Ensuring this information is accurate is essential to provide a reliable and valid study. It was also assumed that the police departments in the study fit the study's demographic criteria, such as being racially representative of the community and not racially representative of the community. The concluding assumption was that I identified, managed, minimized, or eliminated my individual biases.

Scope and Delimitations

The null hypothesis for this study was that there is no association between a police departments racial demographics and the community they serve, and their traffic stop proportionality of each race. The scope of this quantitative study involved comparing secondary traffic stop data from four police departments in the southcentral region of the United States for the years of 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019. The two police departments, with over 100 officers, were from cities responsible for an average population of 100,000 people. One racially represented the community they served, and the other did not. One of the communities was majority White, and the other was majority Hispanic. The next two of the four police departments had less than 100 sworn

officers and were responsible for an average population of 7,500 people. One of the departments racially represented the community they served, and the other one did not. Both the communities that these departments serve were majority White. However, one of the communities had more Hispanics than African Americans and the other community had more African Americans than Hispanics. All the communities had a low Asian population.

The study focused on race, racial representation in the police department to that of the community, and the reason that an individual was stopped. The study sample and results obtained can be generalized to law enforcement in the southcentral region of the United States. This subject matter fills a gap in the current literature regarding the importance, or lack thereof, of racial representation in law enforcement and its relation to racially proportionate traffic stops. The results of this study, aimed to determine if officers from departments that racially represent their communities stop individuals proportionate to their racial representation in the community. Obtaining this information can guide and direct decisions made in law enforcement, leading to changes in policies, hiring practices, or training involving racial representation in law enforcement.

The study used the representative bureaucracy theory as it was the most relevant theory because it focuses on all types of people being represented in government. The theory proposes that if people in government represent the population in the communities they preside over, then everyone's interest will be considered when decisions are made. The critical race theory was considered but not chosen because it focuses on racism and not racial representation. The critical race theory proposes that racism is interwoven into

American culture, which has led to negative perceptions of African Americans,

Hispanics, and Asians by the dominant culture. These perceptions have led to

misconceptions that have forced African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians to find

another way to represent themselves. Therefore, the application of the critical race theory

to this study was not appropriate.

Limitations

The study was limited to four communities and four police departments in the

southcentral region of the United States. The study was also limited to traffic stops made

during 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019; feasibility; and funding. The data obtained was

secondary data kept in the ordinary course of business by the four police departments.

The data was limited to the honesty and accuracy of the person recording the traffic stops.

The traffic stops data's accuracy included the individual officer's ability to accurately

record the reason for the stop and the driver's race. I did not influence the collection of

data, as this study was a statistical analysis based on the received numbers. The data sets

were cross-checked with each state's certification for law enforcement agency's records

to ensure the information was accurate. The data was public record and was obtained

through an open records request. The data was limited to the information that was

available and included in the public records request. Anyone can access these records

through the open records act and run the same analysis to verify this study's conclusions.

One limitation of secondary data is that the information and data may not be accurate

because it was obtained from someone other than myself.

The conclusions drawn from this study are not generalizable to other police departments in other parts of the United States. Another limitation was not knowing the underlining reason for the stop. For example, an officer may stop someone for a burned-out headlight, but during the investigation, charges the driver criminally for no driver's license. Although, the data from the study can be used to examine other aspects of traffic stops made in the southcentral region of the United States, such as comparing White police officers' actions to Hispanic or African American officers' actions or comparing the outcomes of Hispanic officers dealing with Hispanics or White officers dealing with Whites to determine if those outcomes are significantly different from those of someone of the opposite race. Due to time constraints these other topics were not addressed.

Significance

The United States is becoming more diverse; however, most police departments in the southcentral region of the United States do not racially represent their communities (Wu, 2013). This lack of diversity has led to the perception of some that law enforcement is racially biased towards African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians. This perception has created a great divide between law enforcement and African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians. This divide has contributed to African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians having lower levels of trust and confidence in the police than Whites (Wang et al., 2019& Davis & Block, 2018).

The study aimed to determine if officers from departments that racially represent their communities stop individuals proportionate to their racial representation in the community. This research attempts to fill a gap in the literature by determining if the

public's perception of racial bias by law enforcement in the southcentral region of the United States has merit. Determining if departments stop individuals proportionate to their racial representation in the community is significant because it provides valuable information that can explain the perception of racial bias in policing and yet determine if police departments' racial representation to the communities they serve, matters. Identifying if officers stop individuals proportionately or disproportionately to their racial representation in the community in the southcentral region of the United States may lead to changes in the hiring practices, processes, policies, and procedures or the retraining of officers. These changes can lead to positive social changes that can bridge the gap between law enforcement and African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians.

Summary

Chapter 1 introduced the problem and the study's background, which included a comprehensive look at essential areas that the study addresses. The history of racial bias in policing provided insight into when, where, and how racial bias has impacted African Americans, Whites, Hispanics, and Asians. The statement of the problem as it relates to the research question, the research question, along with the null hypothesis and the alternative hypothesis were then discussed. The theoretical framework that was used and why it was chosen as opposed to another theory was addressed and a discussion of the nature of the study along with the definitions of terms for clarification were provided. My assumptions, the scope and the delimitations, limitations, and the significance of the study were then followed up by a summary.

Chapter 2 provides an exhaustive literature review along with the search strategy used to find the literature. The exhaustive literature review includes policing in America from how it started to what it has become. The community's perception of the police and how this impacts the way law enforcement does their job. Also discussed is law enforcement's perception of their colleagues' practices and how that might impact the way they enforce the law. The differences in perception from the view of African American, Hispanic, and Asian police officers as opposed to White officers is addressed including how these perceptions have created a divide between law enforcement and the communities that they serve. Police brutality, its occurrence, and how this behavior has led communities to perceive that the police are racially biased is addressed. I also discuss implicit bias, what it is, and how it plays a part in officers' decisions when interacting with the public, and how these decisions can be perceived as racially biased. Furthermore, I discuss the power of officer discretion, what it is, what it means, and how it has contributed to the perception or reality of racial bias by officers. Lastly, I address the research on the importance of community policing, what it is, and how it can be implemented into every police department in the United States.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The study aimed to determine if officers from departments that racially represent their communities stop individuals proportionate to their racial representation in the community in the southcentral region of the United States. Identifying if law enforcement stops individuals proportionate to their racial representation in the community can help identify and explain why some may perceive law enforcement as racially biased and if that perception has merit. The perception of racial bias has created a divide between law enforcement and African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians, which has created significant hurdles for police to do their job effectively.

The perception of racial bias, previously referred to as racial profiling, results from officer discretion (Kahn, 2019). Determining if officer discretion is used to selectively stop individuals is critical in determining the perception or reality of racial bias in policing. An exhaustive review of the current literature was necessary to determine if racial bias has been deemed a perception by some or if it is a reality for African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians. The literature review highlights previous research that centers around law enforcement and their application of the law towards African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians in America. The previous research provided insight as to why some African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians perceive the police as racially biased.

Literature Search Strategy

This study's literature search strategy included the use of SAGE Premier, the Walden Library databases, ProQuest Central, Political Science Complete, and the Criminal Justice Database. The search terms associated with the study included the following: *officers' perspective of racial profiling, officer's perspective of racially biased policing, African American officers* and *racial profiling, biased based policing* and *racially biased policing, representative bureaucracy theory, Hispanics perception of racial profiling,* and *African Americans perception of racial profiling*. Many of the articles used to complete the study were selected because they provided details relevant to the research topic.

Theoretical Foundation

The perception or reality of racial bias in policing has been an ongoing complaint made by African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians for decades (Kappeler, 2014). This phenomenon may date to the historical fabric of the creation of law enforcement and the slave patrols (Jones, 2017). Others might say that it is merely an excuse made by persons who continue to break the law. To make sense of it all and truly come to a clear understanding of the perception or reality of racial bias and its relation to racial representation in law enforcement, the use of the representative bureaucracy theory is essential. Representative bureaucracy theory states that people of the same background, race, and ethnicity will have a greater understanding and advocate for others like them (Todak et al., 2018).

An individual's race is a deliberate social construct in America, and racism is not irrational but serves a purpose (Bracey, 2014). In 1944, J. Donald Kingsley published a book titled *Representative Bureaucracy* in which he wrote to advocate for all classes of people to be represented in government. Dr. Kingsley was highly educated and had a wealth of experience working in the public sectors of governments worldwide and as a government professor in higher education. It was upon this foundation that, in 1974, political scientist Samuel Krislov wrote a book also titled *Representative Bureaucracy* in which he developed a framework to explain and incorporate representative bureaucracy specifically regarding the application to race and ethnicity (Kim, 1994). In 1968, Frederick C. Mosher argued bureaucracy could be represented in two ways: through active representation and through passive representation (Bradbury & Kellough, 2010; Todak et al., 2018). Active representation is when employees, in this case, police officers, of Hispanic decent for example, use their status in the police department to promote the interests of Hispanics (Kim, 1994; Todak et al., 2018). Active representation "implies that bureaucrats will act, either consciously or unconsciously, to see that the interests of individuals who share their group identities are not overlooked when policy relevant decisions are made" (Bradbury & Kellough, 2010, p. 158). Passive representation is when a police department hires a certain race to match the racial representation of the community that they serve (Kim, 1994; Todak et al., 2018). The organization includes individuals from specified groups, such as racial or ethnic minorities and women, within its ranks (Bradbury & Kellough, 2010). For example, the person is Hispanic but may not help or promote Hispanics in the community that they serve (Todak et al., 2018). Each

serves a purpose, and both make representative bureaucracy theory what it is. Mixed results have come from studies applying representative bureaucracy theory in law enforcement. Some advocate for passive racial representation as they believe it works where others have deemed it ineffective in decreasing the perception or reality of racial bias. Also, some researchers pose that passive representation eventually proceeds to active representation.

Asian and African American officers, when questioned about diversification in law enforcement, stated that they felt it was more about departments looking the part rather than actual change within the system (Todak et al., 2018). However, according to Miles-Johnson, (2019) if departments diversify their officers and place them in communities that racially identify with them, the quality of law enforcement services will improve. It is also presumed that the officer will be more proactive in community engagement and less likely to engage in misconduct (Miles-Johnson, 2019).

Numerous studies have been conducted over the years regarding racially biased policing. Most of these studies attempted to determine if law enforcement officers racially profiled and, if so, how they racially profiled from the community's perspective. This study is unique as it gathered data from police departments in the southcentral region of the United States. Two police departments racially represented the communities they served, and two police departments did not racially represent the communities they served. The study compared four police departments traffic stop data from 2016-2019. The data from the two police departments that racially represented their communities were compared to the two police departments that did not racially represent their

communities. The hope was to determine if officers stopped individuals proportionate to their racial representation in the community in the southcentral region of the United States. The study specifically focused on the number of Hispanics, African Americans, Asians, and Whites that were stopped and compared them to the community's racial demographics and the racial demographics of the police department. The study also identified the main reasons individuals were stopped and compared the departments to determine any similarities or differences in the way each department stopped individuals within their community.

The Formulation of Policing in America

Policing in America started as a very informal organization composed of volunteers from the community who would be on the watch to warn the community of impending danger. However, in places such as the southern United States policing took on a different form. The objective was to keep the community safe but specifically from runaway slaves. Therefore, the history of policing in the United States did not come about to control crime but rather to control the behavior and mobility of slaves and Indians (Jones, 2017; Baldwin, 2018; Boyles, 2015). According to the literature, groups of volunteers consisting of White ancestry were created in the north, south, east, and west of America to maintain control of their communities (McNeeley & Grothoff, 2015; Baldwin, 2018). In the mid-1600s, the south developed slave codes to ensure that once caught slaves were returned to their rightful owner (Jones, 2017; Jones, 2016; Campbell, 2017). These codes were vague laws created to ensnare African Americans back into slavery (Campbell, 2017; Jones, 2017). The enactment of the Jim Crow Laws was

another way for Whites to control African Americans (Jones, 2017; Jones, 2016; Campbell, 2017). These laws allowed law enforcement and any other White person to surveil, scrutinize, accuse, harass, and control African Americans (Boyles, 2015; Campbell, 2017; Jones, 2016). This use of law enforcement was a way for Whites to continue to get free labor for their farms and to intimidate and control African Americans' behavior and movements (Boyles, 2015; Jones, 2016). Since the government allowed and supported these laws, most African Americans did not trust law enforcement and were afraid of the police and their power (Baldwin, 2018; Boyles, 2015).

As America's population grew, so did disorder and an around the clock, professional police force was implemented. The police force was composed of full-time paid White male officers. The officers were governed by rules and regulations, and supported by, and accountable to, the community they served. Crime control of all was not the goal but rather social order and protection from the dangerous individuals who were either poor, foreign immigrants, or free Blacks. According to Potter, (2013) these individuals were responsible for most of the crime. This perception led to law enforcement implementing proactive policing tactics, which has had a devastating impact on African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians and has fueled their perception that police are racially biased (Potter, 2013).

Although slave ownership is illegal, and African Americans have been able to live freely in America since the 1960s, their perception of law enforcement has remained unshaken (Jones, 2017; Baldwin, 2018). The enactment of pretextual stops, stop and frisk, and zero-tolerance policing targeted low-income communities inhabited by

Hispanics, African Americans, and Asians (Boyles, 2015; Campbell, 2017; Jones, 2016). These policies and police tactics confirmed to them that their perceptions of racially biased policing have remained the same (McManus et al., 2019; Baldwin, 2018). Based upon the history of laws directed toward African Americans and Hispanics and law enforcement's position to enforce these laws, it is only natural that their faith, hope, and trust in the police is dangerously low (Boyles, 2015; Jones, 2016). Most Hispanics and African Americans do not feel that law enforcement is there to help them but rather to hurt them, and the fear they express is valid (Boyles, 2015). Therefore, the history of policing in America is significant when determining if law enforcement conducts racially proportionate traffic stops.

Law enforcement officers are extended a great deal of discretion when making their ultimate decision, which usually is based on what is best for the community. The community serves as an active participant in maintaining order and solving crime. Without that participation, policing would not be effective ("Importance of Police-Community Relationships and Resources for Further Reading", n.d.).

As the literature demonstrates, there is a perpetuated perception in America that African Americans and Hispanics are dangerous criminals (Baldwin, 2018; Davis & Block, 2018; Campbell, 2017). Some Whites believe that African Americans are violent and responsible for most violent crimes (Shjarback, 2018; Campbell, 2017; Jones, 2016). This perception has led to some officers overreacting to situations when African Americans and Hispanics are involved, resulting in unnecessary homicides (Baldwin, 2018; Comey, 2015). A literature review revealed that White officers are more likely to

enforce the law more aggressively when dealing with an African American or Hispanic than African American or Hispanic officers in the same situation (Wang et al., 2019). A suggested way to decrease racial profiling and police brutality complaints is to hire more African American, Hispanic, and Asian officers. However, this tactic would only work if the number of African American, Hispanic, and Asian officers were equal to or greater than the number of White officers within that department (Nicholson-Crotty et al., 2017). The current body of knowledge supports the idea that the police department's racial composition to the community they serve impacts the rate at which the use of force is used, but only when the suspect is the same race as the officer (Shjarback, 2018). In America, African Americans and Hispanics make up more than half of the prison and jail population despite only accounting for 32% of the general U.S. population (Baldwin, 2018). African Americans are incarcerated 6 times more than Whites, which gives the public the perception that African Americans commit more crime than Whites (Smith & Merolla, 2019; Shjarback, 2018; Ioimo et al., 2007). Most research regarding racial bias in law enforcement has focused on the African American population and has failed to include the Hispanic population (Todak et al., 2018). The population of Hispanics in the U.S. is growing, and to date, they are the largest of the minority groups (Weitzer & Brunson, 2015; Todak et al., 2018). Like African Americans, some Hispanics tend to fear law enforcement due to their own bad experiences or that of their friends and family (Todak et al., 2018; Weitzer & Brunson, 2015). Research shows that African Americans and Hispanics are significantly more likely than any other race to know someone who has been the victim of racially biased policing or unwarranted police stops (Weitzer &

Brunson, 2015). The literature review has yielded that Hispanics' trail right behind

African Americans in their experiences with law enforcement harassment mostly

centered around their immigration status (Todak et al., 2018). According to Weitzer &

Brunson, (2015) approximately 6 million Hispanics reside in the U.S. illegally; therefore,

it is not implausible for law enforcement to question a Hispanic individual's residential

status. African Americans and Asians do not draw the same attention from law

enforcement as Hispanics. Researchers attribute this difference to the historical reason for

each race entering the country (Weitzer & Brunson, 2015). Historically, Hispanics and

Asians have flocked to the U.S. for a better life, whereas African Americans were

forcefully brought to the U.S. and made to be slaves.

The current body of knowledge concerning racial representation in law

enforcement revealed that African Americans and Hispanics each represent 12% of law

enforcement officers in the United States. Asians represent 3%; individuals that fall into

the "other race" category represent 2% and Whites represent the remaining 73% of our

police force in America (Todak et al., 2018). According to Weitzer & Brunson, (2015)

Whites make up 63% of the U.S. population, Hispanics account for 17%, African

Americans account for 13%, and Asians make up 5%. Therefore, the percentage of each

minority group compared to the U.S. general population is not bad; however, the

percentages are not representative when looking at each police department individually.

An example of this would be a police department that serves a large population of

Hispanics but only have a handful of Hispanic officers (Brown & Frank, 2006; Todak et

al., 2018). If police departments employ more officers that represent the community they

serve, then the quality of policing and the image the public holds of officers will improve (Brown & Frank, 2006; Miles-Johnson, 2019). The assumption is made that African American, Hispanic, and Asian officer will police African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians differently than White officers. However, there is very little research to support that claim. Though African American, Hispanic, and Asian officers may not police African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians differently, research indicates that just by their presence on the force, African American, Hispanic, and Asian communities are more receptive and respond better to them. Since law enforcement has made it their goal to employ more African American, Hispanic, and Asian officers, the number of African American, Hispanic, and Asian officers is steadily rising. However, police departments still struggle to recruit a representative number of African American, Hispanic, and Asian officers (Brown & Frank, 2006). One of the reasons for this is that African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians are not interested in pursuing a career in law enforcement due to a lack of family support, negative experiences with law enforcement, and racism that is perceived to be constant in the career (Cashmore, 2001). The more diverse law enforcement becomes, the less likely African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians will tolerate racist police practices, which will change law enforcement culture for the better (Brown & Frank, 2006). The literature review demonstrates that most Whites' views of African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians have not changed much over the years but are expressed through the support of harsh criminal justice policies targeted at African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians. This change in expression is termed "modern racism." Therefore, the general majority public, which is White, tends to agree with an officer's

decision to use force when the individual is African American, Hispanic, or Asian and has a previous criminal history (Smith & Merolla, 2019). There is also an echoing continuum from Whites that if African Americans, regardless of age or mental health status, follow the officer's directives, they would not end up injured or dead (Baldwin, 2018). The more officers are seen abusing their powers against African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians, the more all races will question law enforcement decisions (Nix & Pickett, 2017). Officers do not always treat everyone the same, and the officer sets the tone of each encounter depending on the level of respect or disrespect he or she displays.

If an officer is disrespectful using swear words and name calling, the individual stopped of any race will likely mirror that behavior (Novich & Hunt, 2016). The same is said if the officer treats the individual with respect regardless if the individual is getting a ticket or being arrested. Officers treat individuals who reside in disadvantaged communities regardless of their race, with more haste and hostility than individuals that reside in non-disadvantaged communities (Weitzer & Brunson, 2015; Kennedy & Birch, 2018; Shjarback, 2018). An officer's conduct within the community can change that person's perception of the police to positive or negative (Novich & Hunt, 2016; Kearns, 2018; Weitzer & Brunson, 2015).

Racial Profiling Officer Bias

The current body of knowledge of racial profiling revealed that racial profiling against any race has been an acceptable, proactive form of policing in America for decades (Glover, 2007; Thomsen, 2010; Barlow & Barlow, 2002; Wilson et al., 2015). Racial bias in policing has been an issue since the integration of a policing system in

America partly because law enforcement was initially created to ensure that African and Indian slaves did not flee their owners. Since then, law enforcement has evolved into an authority that protects all. However, it is the perception of some that law enforcement does not equally protect African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians as they do Whites (Novich & Hunt, 2016 Comey, 2015; Weitzer & Brunson, 2015). Police departments from all corners of the country battle racially biased policing practices even in America's most liberal cities (Harris, 2016). Despite efforts to eliminate racial profiling in policing, it continues to be an unspoken tool used, which has impacted the relationship law enforcement has with African American, Hispanic, and Asian communities (Jones, 2017). According to Ioimo et al. (2007), "Texas is one of the states that created a law that makes racial profiling illegal." However, supreme court cases such as United States v. Arvizu (2002), United States v. Sokolow (1989), United States v. Cortez (1981), and United States v. Brignoni-Ponce (1975) "allow officers to conduct investigatory stops if the totality of the circumstances leads to a reasonable suspicion that criminal activity is afoot (Ioimo et al., 2007, p. 273)." The law is vague, providing the officer with much discretion, which does not help prevent racially biased policing practices (Kennedy & Birch, 2018; Jones, 2016; Demirkol & Nalla, 2017; Campbell, 2017). Instead, it creates a pathway for some officers to continue racially biased policing practices and has made it harder to distinguish and identify the officer's motivation for the stop (Ioimo et al., 2007).

The literature review revealed that some African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians view the police as unprofessional, unethical, biased, untruthful, and unlawful (Weitzer & Brunson, 2015; Novich & Hunt, 2016; Comey, 2015). When individuals do

not respect law enforcement's position in the community, a mutual relationship cannot coexist (Novich & Hunt, 2016; Kearns, 2018). In 2015 a survey was conducted, and it unveiled that 37% of Americans believed that law enforcement exercises racially biased policing practices (Novich & Hunt, 2016). Another survey was conducted that showed 56% of Whites believe that racial profiling is a common practice in law enforcement (Barlow & Barlow, 2002). Because law enforcement has the right to follow, confront, question, and ask to search anyone without evidence that a crime has occurred or is going to occur, some African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians feel these practices disproportionately target them (Weitzer & Brunson, 2015; Novich & Hunt, 2016; Carbado, 2016; Campbell, 2017).

The supreme court does not consider these actions a violation of a person's Fourth Amendment rights (Carbado, 2016). However, these investigatory practices allow officers to use their discretion as to whom they want to investigate, which has contributed to racial profiling and use of force complaints (Weitzer & Brunson, 2015; Carbado, 2016; Ioimo et al., 2007). For example, the case of Graham v. Connor says the use of force by police "must be judged from the perspective of a reasonable officer on the scene, rather than with the 20/20 vision of hindsight (Healy & Hannah-Jones, 2016, p. 8)." The law is vague and allows for multiple interpretations as it hinges on the perspective of a reasonable officer (Jones, 2016).

African Americans are at the highest risk of being shot by police officers during police-initiated traffic or pedestrian stops (Fryer, 2018). Officers need not prove that individuals did anything threatening that caused them to respond with deadly force

(Smith & Merolla, 2019). The law allows for perception to be the foundation when an officer decides to use force. The officer's perception is derived from their implicit biases and training (Jones, 2016). Implicit bias is defined as subtle and mostly unconscious or semiconscious attitudes that influence behavior (James, 2017). Brown & Frank, (2006) reported that "individuals are predisposed to act on cultural expectations related to race and ethnicity (p.100)." Therefore, if one of the officer's implicit bias is that African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians are dangerous and pose an immediate threat, then their reaction to respond with lethal force is perceived as a rational decision. Also, individuals determine their support for or against an officer that decided to use deadly force based upon the individual's criminal history, their level of racial prejudice, and the individual's race. Throughout history, the public has seen snippets of injustice based on what the media portrays (Smith & Merolla, 2019). Now days, social media has become a platform for anyone to share information. Most Americans own a cell phone with the capability of recording video. The ability to record video and upload it in seconds to a social media platform has enabled the public to share information as freely as possible. These two tools have created a way for people to police the police. Having access to this quick form of sharing information, the country has seen the murder of Alton Sterling (2016), Philando Castile (2016) and Walter Scott (2015), and most recently, George Floyd (2020) and has been able to replay it as many times as they want (Baldwin, 2018). It is not just the American people that share these incidents, but the media magnifies them to gain higher ratings even though these police practices do not indicate the norm in law enforcement (Nix et al., 2017). For example, "police make contact with over 40 million

people a year and use force in 2% of those encounters (Nix & Pickett, 2017, p. 26)."

Research indicates that one incident can significantly impact how people view the police, especially if they have never had contact with law enforcement. For individuals with negative experiences with law enforcement, these incidents magnify their already deep-seated views and add to their hostility (Weitzer & Brunson, 2015). However, since someone is always filming, it would be good if law enforcement took advantage of this viral tool by treating an uncooperative or disrespectful person fairly and respectfully. Viral videos of that behavior would begin to restore the public's faith in law enforcement (Nix et al., 2017). The popular viral videos that are cycling have discouraged officers from doing their job as they fear that they will be the next officer in the spotlight. This reaction is both damaging to policing and public safety (Nix & Pickett, 2017). Although police brutality has happened to all races across the country, African Americans have experienced it at much higher rates than Whites. The literature review has yielded that African Americans and Hispanics are 50% more likely to experience some form of force than any other race in an officer's company. Asians are less likely than Hispanics and African Americans to experience the use of force by officers, but the percentages are still higher than Whites (Fryer, Jr, 2016). Compared with other minorities, African Americans have been affected the most by police use of force (Fryer, 2018). The rate at which police shoot an unarmed African American is unsettling to the public and has outraged the African American community (Davis & Block, 2018; Fryer, 2018). The homicides of Trayvon Martin (2012), Michael Brown (2014), Freddie Gray (2015), Eric Garner (2014), Tamir Rice (2014), Samuel Du Bose (2015), Walter Scott (2015), Rekia Boyd

(2012), Philando Castille (2016), Stephen Clarke (2013) and most recently George Floyd

(2020) paint an egregious picture of police violence against African Americans (Smith &

Merolla, 2019; Fryer, Jr, 2016; Baldwin, 2018). The decision to use deadly force is not a

decision made at the moment but rather is a calculated decision made by the officer

(Davis & Block, 2018). This decision is made in the subconscious sphere, which is

influenced by implicit bias (Harris, 2016). In 2015, 102 unarmed African Americans

were murdered by law enforcement in America (Fryer, 2018; Jones, 2017). Of those 102

victims, only 12 officers were indicted, and only 2 were convicted of a crime (Jones,

2017). In cases where officers are indicted, they benefit from a much shorter stay in

prison than the general public (Davis & Block, 2018; Baldwin, 2018). In 2016, 233

African Americans and 160 Hispanics were the victims of homicide by police. At the

time, African Americans accounted for 12.6% of the population, and Hispanics accounted

for 16.3%. The percentage of homicides of African Americans 24% and Hispanics 17%

compared to their representation in the population showed an overrepresentation of

homicides by police for both races (Davis & Block, 2018). It is events such as these that

have caused Americans to take a serious look at the injustice that is happening to African

Americans and Hispanics in the criminal justice system and the role that officer

discretion has played (McManus et al., 2019).

Implicit Bias

Officers are afforded much discretion in doing their job, and often this discretion

is based on their experiences both as an officer and an individual along with their training

(Carbado, 2016; Nix et al., 2017; Demirkol & Nalla, 2017). Officer bias is identified as

an additional component that impacts an officer's decision-making authority (Ioimo et al., 2007; Shjarback et al., 2017). The current body of knowledge of implicit bias describes it as a cogitative mechanism that operates outside an individual's awareness, influencing their attitudes and behaviors (Kahn, 2019; James, 2017).

These biases are a compilation of an array of subjects such as height, weight, education, class, race, age, and gender preference (Campbell, 2017; Kahn, 2019). Everyone has implicit biases about or toward someone or something, and there is no way to name all the biases that people can have. However, a law enforcement officer's implicit bias can influence when and how they want to enforce the law and whom they want to enforce it upon (Demirkol & Nalla, 2017). This range of freedom of discretion is how some officers can use racially biased policing practices without being noticed (Jones, 2017). According to Barlow & Barlow, (2002) Whren V. United States allows police officers to stop anyone they want on a minor traffic violation. If followed by an officer long enough, anyone will likely commit a minor traffic violation and be stopped. According to Kahn, (2019) discretion comes with abuse risks, which can lead to discretionary outcomes, which can be perceived by the community as racially biased policing. Jones, (2017) stated that the officers that allow their prejudices to dictate their discretion when doing their job have given all law enforcement a bad reputation and has further tainted their relationship with African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians.

Implicit biases begin to form in childhood, along with morals and values (Miles-Johnson, 2019). Implicit bias operates in an individual's subconscious and impacts how a person interacts, reacts, and makes daily decisions (Harris, 2016). Implicit bias

contributes to racism and racial prejudices, which have shown to be more prominent in law enforcement than in broader society (Minhas & Walsh, 2018). Therefore, understanding an officer's decision requires considering the influences of an officer's implicit bias. Police officers have an immense amount of power, and their decisions can destroy a person's life (Minhas & Walsh, 2018; Carbado, 2016; Demirkol & Nalla, 2017).

Officers come out of the police academy with their implicit biases and then form professional attitudes based on the police culture and their work experience (Miles-Johnson, 2019; Comey, 2015). This combination of attitudes, experience, and stereotypes influence how an officer acts or reacts to situations (Comey, 2015; Kahn, 2019; Baldwin, 2018). When some officers are exposed to African Americans, Hispanics and Asians, their reactions are often influenced and activated by their implicit biases, influencing their decision-making authority (Minhas & Walsh, 2018; Baldwin, 2018). For example, stereotypes that African American men are threatening and aggressive may cause the officer to respond to them more aggressively than if the person were White (Baldwin, 2018; Long & Joseph-Salisbury, 2018; Nix et al., 2017). These implicit biases can cause an officer to make assumptions and decisions, leading to unequal treatment of African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians because they unconsciously think that they do not deserve to be respected (Nix et al., 2017; Harris, 2016).

It has been reported that some officers assume that African Americans are likely to not have the proper documentation on them or have another pending factor that would lead police to further investigation more so than with other races (Cashmore, 2001; Comey, 2015). This assumption derives from implicit biases which causes an officer to

ignore Whites doing the same thing as African Americans, Hispanics, or Asians, which is a threat to community safety and African American's, Hispanic's, and Asian's civil liberties (Harris, 2016; Jones, 2016). Research has proven that race is a primary factor when officers conduct investigatory stops. During these stops, the officer is searching for what they believe that individual has in their possession, such as drugs, guns, etc. to make an arrest (Weitzer & Brunson, 2015). Although most White officers are not intentionally racist, scrutinizing African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians shows work productivity, as it will likely result in further investigation or arrest (Cashmore, 2001; Campbell, 2017). Since implicit biases are a cognitive, subconscious process that is not motivated by an intentional dislike or discrimination towards another, the officer will not see their actions as wrong, perpetuating African Americans, Hispanics, and Asian's perception of racial bias in policing (Peck, 2015; Kahn, 2019). These misconceptions, stereotypes, and prejudice have unwittingly impacted African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians' interactions with law enforcement more than Whites (Harris, 2016).

As the literature demonstrates, it was not until after the 2014 shooting of Michael Brown in Ferguson that law enforcement began to pay more attention to implicit bias and how it impacts the way an officer does his or her job (James, 2017). During an investigation, the Department of Justice determined that 90% of the individuals Ferguson, Missouri officers targeted and contacted were African American and that targeting African Americans was a common practice within that police department (Healy & Hannah-Jones, 2016; Campbell, 2017).

Implicit bias can be changed based on the police officer's environmental factors and exposure to the things they have a bias about (James, 2017). However, it is only until an individual is willing to take an in-depth look at themselves that implicit biases can change (Kahn, 2019; Zimny, 2015). This change takes a conscious effort by individuals to rewire their brains (Harris, 2016). If an individual is willing to change their embedded thoughts, ideas, and misconceptions of others different from themselves; this can mean the difference between life and death for the officer or the public, and it can mean a threat to the community's democratic freedoms and equality (James, 2017; Carbado, 2016; Harris, 2016). It is essential to recognize that certain unconscious biases exist so that departments can offer implicit bias training instead of cultural awareness training (Baldwin, 2018). Racially biased policing practices are not strictly due to a lack of cultural awareness but rather an issue with perpetuated misconceptions that have led to implicit bias, which have plagued law enforcement for generations. The goal of training officers about implicit bias and the history of racism in law enforcement is not meant to change the officer's attitude but rather to provide knowledge so that they can understand and communicate more effectively with the African American, Hispanic, and Asian communities (Zimny, 2015; Carr & Maxwell, 2017).

Racial and implicit bias in policing is not limited to law enforcement officers imposing it on the community, but it also involves the community members imposing it on the police. Community members have their own implicit biases, and most officers have to manage it. These biases can be from personal experiences with law enforcement, or they can be ingrained without justification. Therefore, when an officer acts in an

unprofessional manner, it further confirms to that person or community that law enforcement cannot be trusted, which makes a community partnership impossible (Barthelemy et al., 2016).

According to Barthelemy et al. (2016), history and experience have taught African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians that the police cannot be trusted. Their instinct is to avoid any interaction with law enforcement, which creates an incredible challenge for officers trying to incorporate community policing in their districts (Barthelemy et al., 2016; Bracey, 2014). According to Demirkol & Nalla, (2017) once law enforcement builds a relationship with African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians, their initiatives to fight crime will result in better community help and support. Law enforcement must take the lead if these changes are to transpire (Barthelemy et al., 2016; Bracey, 2014). Building this relationship will require the police to be transparent and open to communicating and collaborating with the communities they serve. It will require law enforcement to listen, be compassionate and understand the perceptions, experiences, and expectations that the community has for law enforcement (McManus et al., 2019).

Communities Perception of Biased Based Policing

Perception is defined as an individual's unique way of understanding or interpreting the world around them ("Perception | Definition of Perception by Lexico", 2020). Perception is based on a person's schema formed throughout their life and is impacted by their experiences, childhood, upbringing, and interactions with the world (Bates et al., 2015). Everyone has different experiences, upbringings, and interactions with the world, making each person's perception unique. Therefore, a person's perception

is their reality and should not be dismissed but instead should be understood. How individuals perceive situations is crucial as it often proceeds a reaction (Wang et al., 2019). When analyzing how a community perceives law enforcement, it is vital to understand the general factors that shape each person's perception of law enforcement. Factors such as if they view law enforcement as fair and just, how much they fear crime, their overall confidence in the police to do their job, and any interaction they have had with the police (Nadal et al., 2017; Bates et al., 2015).

Law enforcement is trained to respond to situations in a particular manner. Officers work in high stress situations and are required to act fast sometimes without the ability to think but instead to react (Kennedy & Birch, 2018; Harris, 2016). Officers base their decisions on their training and experience (Comey, 2015). Since the public does not understand the intricacies, strategies, and techniques of their training and experience, they often perceive the police as unfair (Barlow & Barlow, 2002; Bates et al., 2015; Kennedy & Birch, 2018). The community also basis their perception of the police on how well the police have treated them during encounters (Graziano & Gauthier, 2017; Davis & Block, 2018; Kearns, 2018; Bates et al., 2015). The public's perception has shown to be based on the community's satisfaction with the legal system, which influences their confidence level in the police (Graziano & Gauthier, 2017; Davis & Block, 2018; Kearns, 2018). A person's confidence in the police is firmly based upon the amount of contact they have had with the police and their experiences during those contacts (Lee et al., 2017). The same can be said regarding the officer's perception of the community they serve (Davis & Block, 2018; Bates et al., 2015; Kennedy & Birch, 2018).

It is the perception of most African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians that they experience higher levels of police misconduct and bias then Whites (Graziano & Gauthier, 2017). This perception has created an enormous barrier that currently divides police and most African American, Hispanic, and Asian communities (Davis & Block, 2018). Fifty-eight percent of Americans believe that African Americans will not receive fair treatment by the police, and 38% believe that Whites are treated far better than African Americans (Nix et al., 2017). The literature has determined that a community's perception of the police is shaped by their race, ethnicity, personal experiences, neighborhood characteristics, law enforcement's use of excessive force, and criminal activity in their community (Barthelemy et al., 2016). However, the only factor that has shown to consistently impact the way an individual views law enforcement is how they have been treated in their interactions with the police. If, in those interactions, the police were respectful and fair, that far outweighed an officer's race, the diversity of their police department, or the reason for the contact and demographics (Kearns, 2018; Davis & Block, 2018; Wang et al., 2019).

The literature review is clear that law enforcement needs the support and cooperation of the African American, Hispanic, and Asian communities for them to be able to do their job effectively (Bates et al., 2015; Kearns, 2018). Therefore, officers assigned to serve and protect minority communities need to understand and be willing to go the extra mile to earn the trust of that community (Kearns, 2018). Officers can achieve this in many ways; however, all of them boil down to law enforcements quality of contact with the community (Kearns, 2018; Davis & Block, 2018; Wang et al., 2019). It is the

interactions that individuals have with the police that shapes their perception of the police and can be used to change an individual's mind from negative to positive (Nix et al., 2017; Kearns, 2018). At times this may require the officer to be the bigger person. For example, if an officer conducts a traffic stop, and the individual has an attitude, the officer should use their de-escalation skills to remain calm and control the situation. If the officer takes the time to talk with the individual, they will likely complete the traffic stop without incident (Nix et al., 2017). Examples such as these make a positive impression on the community and, in turn, the community will respect and cooperate with law enforcement in the future (Bates et al., 2015; Kearns, 2018). However, what tends to happen during traffic stops is the officer feeds off the individual, so if they disrespect the officer, then the officer responds with disrespect. The situation goes from verbal to physical in a matter of minutes. When officers allow the individual to take control of the situation, both parties are at risk of injury or death. The negative perception of law enforcement the community holds is reaffirmed (Nix et al., 2017). The community needs to feel they are treated in an unbiased, respectful manner and that the police act with true motives (Kearns, 2018; Bates et al., 2015). When the community is treated fairly and respectfully, they perceive the police as just and are less likely to complain about racial bias or racial profiling (Nix et al., 2017; Kearns, 2018).

It is not just how the community perceives the police, but how the police view the community is equally important (Davis & Block, 2018; Bates et al., 2015). How the police perceive the communities they serve directly influences their self-image and the degree of interaction they are willing to have with those communities (Barthelemy et al.,

2016; Kearns, 2018). An officer's perception is formed based on their fears and prejudices, which can and has caused them to misinterpret a situation as hostile when in fact, it was not (Comey, 2015; Davis & Block, 2018). The negative media coverage discourages some officers from engaging with the community and doing their job in general, which threatens public safety (Nix et al., 2017). Another factor affecting an officer's perception and comfortability with the community is how satisfied they are with their department and their career (Carr & Maxwell, 2017). Officers that are happy in their career, support community policing and its ability to reduce crime (Barthelemy et al., 2016; Carr & Maxwell, 2017).

Racial Differences in the Perception of Law Enforcement

The literature review revealed that Whites hold the highest level of trust in the police, followed by Hispanics, and that African Americans hold the lowest level of trust (Wang et al., 2019). Hispanics and Asians share similar views of the police; however, their attitude regarding the police is like that of African Americans as opposed to Whites (McNeeley & Grothoff, 2015). Whites tend to have a more favorable view of the police because most of them receive fair and unbiased treatment by officers, and their contact is significantly less than African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians (Carbado, 2016; McNeeley & Grothoff, 2015; Nix et al., 2017). Trust and confidence in the police decreases each time an individual has contact with law enforcement (Wang et al., 2019). Statistically, African Americans and Hispanics have more contact with law enforcement than Whites regardless of the geographic location (Barboza et al., 2017). This fact communicates to African Americans and Hispanics that the police are out to get them

(Davis & Block, 2018; Carbado, 2016). They have more contact with the police because of over policing and not because of increased criminal activity (Baldwin, 2018; Harris, 2016). If White communities were policed at the same rate as African American and Hispanic communities, there is a high probability that the police would find crime (Baldwin, 2018). Studies consistently show that people of all races use and sell illegal drugs at remarkably similar rates, yet African Americans and Hispanics fill jails and prisons in the United States on drug charges in higher numbers than Whites (Harris, 2016; Baldwin, 2018). Over policing of African American and Hispanic communities is another reason some African Americans and Hispanics lack trust and fear law enforcement (Davis & Block, 2018).

Police Officers Perception of Racial Profiling and Racial Bias

Considering the officer's view of racial profiling or biased based policing is fundamental when attempting to combat the problem (Davis & Block, 2018). Therefore, it is necessary to discuss previous studies that have been done to understand if racial profiling is a real or perceived problem. A study regarding police officers' views on racial profiling in a small town in Texas revealed that racial profiling in the form of the "out of place" doctrine occurs in their department. Racial profiling is justified in its use due to the way officers are using it and therefore is an acceptable tool in policing. The "out of place" doctrine is when a White or African American individual is in an area that is not one that they fit (Glover, 2007). An example of this would be a White individual driving an expensive vehicle in a known drug area at 2AM. That person would stand out to law enforcement as someone that does not belong there and needs to be investigated

(Campbell, 2017). Another study, conducted by Thomsen (2010), focused on profiling in general and its use in police practices. An individual's race was not the central factor, but police used situational factors, behavioral characteristics, and clothing. A combination of characteristics such as body language, area, clothing, and behavior would bring the officer to conclude that the person is suspicious and needs further investigation (Thomsen, 2010).

The department of criminal justice conducted a study in Virginia that involved over 30 police departments and focused on biased policing practices from the officer's perspective. The study revealed that most Virginia police departments offer training in the academy and otherwise that address biased policing practices. Sixty-eight percent of respondents reported that their department enforced policies against biased policing practices. However, 20% of the respondents reported that biased policing is practiced in their department, and 25. 9% reported that they believe biased policing is practiced in other Virginia police departments (Ioimo et al., 2007). A study was conducted regarding the implicit, and explicit racial biases officers have towards African Americans from the officer's perspective. The study determined that the amount of sleep an officer received before his shift was a major contributing factor that impacted the officer's bias towards African Americans and weapons. If an officer was sleep deprived, they were more likely to be suspicious of African Americans assuming they had a weapon (James, 2017).

A study was done in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, regarding African American police officers' perception of their encounters with police when they were off duty and out of uniform. This study, specifically, wanted to know if the officers felt that they had been

racially profiled. The study results indicated that police officers are still practicing racial profiling. "Sixty-nine percent of the officers that responded to the survey believed that they had been stopped due to racial profiling at some point in their lives (Barlow & Barlow, 2002, p. 345)." This information, gathered from police officers, is significant because they understand an officer's job. They know things that the general public is not privy too and still concluded that they had been victims of racial profiling while out of uniform (Barlow & Barlow, 2002).

A study was conducted in Texas that provided information regarding racial disparities in the issuance of traffic citations in policing. The results indicated that most Texas racial profiling regions issued traffic citations in a racially disparate manner (Jones, 2016). Another study, conducted by Wilson et al. (2015), focused on the views and perceptions of African American officers and their presence, be it positive or negative, within their department. The study indicated that African American officers in that department felt that racial profiling was prevalent and condoned by administrators. Their presence did not appear to stop or decrease officers from racial profiling (Wilson et al., 2015). Instead, according to Cashmore, (2001) racism in policing, even in the presence of African American, Hispanic, and Asian officers, is widespread. "Crime control theory is based on race and criminal suspicion (Campbell, 2017, p. 4)." African American police officers have two options: they can align with their White coworkers or disassociate themselves from the police culture altogether. There are negative consequences to either choice (Dukes, 2018). If a minority police officer stands against racism or racist behavior, they risk being ousted by their counterparts; this leads to losing

backup from other officers if they need assistance, which can mean life or death, or they can lose or quit their job. Trust is a huge factor between officers, and recruits are tested to determine if they are trustworthy. According to Cashmore, (2001) officers will use racist slurs, comments, and behaviors as part of this testing period.

A study regarding White privilege and the subconscious actions and reactions of White people regarding White privilege in policing was conducted. According to Harris, (2016) there is not a question that biased based policing exists but rather how rampant it is and how to tame it through mindfulness and implicit bias training. Harris, (2016) explained how Whites do not think of race, and their race has no bearing in their everyday lives as it does for African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians. Whiteness is the freedom to do things without others having a negative preconceived assumption that their motives or actions are inherently wrong. Whiteness is a privilege that Whites benefit from, and most do not realize their privilege as it is something that they have always known. Offering mindfulness training teaches the officer to think about the way they are thinking and why. Mindfulness training gives the officers power over their decisions and causes them to think before acting instead of reacting. A study conducted by Cornell University revealed that people are more likely to perceive that African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians have weapons when they do not, resulting from their implicit biases (Harris, 2016). The best way to improve the disparities in traffic stops, and one of the suggestions was to hire more African American, Hispanic, and Asian officers. It is assumed that African American and Hispanic officers will police individuals that share their racial descent fairly, reasonably, and differently from White officers. However, the

study results indicated that minority representation did not improve the disparities in traffic stops or arrest outcomes. It was suggested that the reason that there was not a difference in the way African American, Hispanic, and Asian officers policed their own was due to the pressure to fit in with their White counterparts; however, this has not been officially proven (Shjarback et al., 2017). Therefore, hiring more African American, Hispanic, and Asian officers will not decrease racial profiling or racial bias complaints unless the number of African American, Hispanic, and Asian officers is equal to or more than the majority (Wang et al., 2019).

Research reflects that racial bias in policing causes institutional racism that impacts African American, Hispanic, and Asian officers and makes them feel like outsiders. For example, a study conducted in 2013 revealed that over half of the African American officers in the study reported that White officers were more likely to be given better assignments and promotions. Nineteen percent of the Hispanic officers and 1% of the White officers in the study agreed with their statement. Hispanic officers reported a similar complaint that their department favored White officers' career advancement over Hispanic officers' career advancement. Diversification in law enforcement can create a perceived level playing field for minorities. Diversification can also reduce racial tension and display a fair and just legal system to the communities they serve (Todak et al., 2018). However, researchers have determined that officers of different races do not police differently and that their decision to arrest an individual had no bearing on their race (Brown & Frank, 2006). Diversification is essential but having the correct field officer assigned to train recruits shows a more significant impact on the success or failure of the

recruits policing profession (Miles-Johnson, T. 2019). The commonality from all these studies is that law enforcement officers use profiling as a tool; some admit it is based on race, while others mask it to focus on other factors.

Community Policing

The literature demonstrates that in the 1960s, community policing became a tool used to reduce crime and community disorder (Demirkol & Nalla, 2017). Community policing is best described as when the officer and the community form a relationship and collaborate to solve and reduce crime (Demirkol & Nalla, 2017; Kearns, 2018). Community policing has been deemed the best way for law enforcement to reduce tensions, promote information sharing, and build mutual trust and confidence with their communities (McNeeley & Grothoff, 2015). Research demonstrates that some factors contribute to an officer's willingness to participate in community policing. Some of those factors include an officer's age, race, and gender. It is suggested that any policies or procedures that could be viewed as racially biased should not be used as a policing tool in African American, Hispanic, and Asian communities. Using racially biased tools will add to the growing racial tension and create further disdain for law enforcement (Demirkol & Nalla, 2017; McNeeley & Grothoff, 2015).

Neighborhood tension is an obstacle that law enforcement must counteract through community policing. Steps should be taken to address racial tension. These steps could improve law enforcement's perceptions about African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians and facilitate police in building bonds with these communities through community policing (McNeeley & Grothoff, 2015). The most critical step law

enforcement can take to form relationships with the communities they serve is to acknowledge law enforcements part in the history of racism and oppression of African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians (Davis & Block, 2018). Community policing takes on many different forms and is tailored to each community's needs (Kearns, 2018). For example, adding a citizen review board and making the complaint process known to citizens will help dispel mistrust. Also, assigning African American, Hispanic, and Asian officers to areas that are predominantly African American, Hispanic, and Asian could help reframe the community's perception of law enforcement. African American, Hispanic, and Asian officers may recognize critical issues affecting those communities, making them feel more comfortable with law enforcement, which would improve communication between the two (McNeeley & Grothoff, 2015). There is also an assumption that officers who share the same race or ethnicity will be more compassionate in community policing strategies and less likely to be authoritative and formal in their encounters with the public (Brown & Frank, 2006). Some believe that if law enforcement does not racially represent the community they serve, then community policing may not be successful (Jones, 2017). However, research has shown that adding African American, Hispanic, and Asian officers to communities that have a high rate of African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians does not improve the public's perception of racially biased policing practices. The same conclusion was met regarding hiring more African American, Hispanic, and Asian officers (Shjarback et al., 2017). The public's perception is created by various things that law enforcement does, and an individual's experience with law enforcement overshadows any other preceding factors, including race

(McNeeley & Grothoff, 2015). Law enforcement's ability to effectively do their job is tied to the public's evaluation of their performance. A pressing issue shared in most African American, Hispanic, and Asian communities is the use of force practices by law enforcement (Carbado, 2016). Some police departments have changed their use of force policy and procedures through objective policing, implementing policies, and developing training that improves interactions with African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians. These changes have led to ensuring that officers police fairly and compassionately in all neighborhoods (Wang et al., 2019). Effective policing is directly related to the quality of the relationship that law enforcement has with its communities (Nalla et al., 2016).

It is just as important to understand and consider the officer's perception of racial profiling and racially biased policing to understand the community's perception. An officer's perception of the communities that they serve is based on several factors. As with any career, the happier individuals are with their career, the more care, thought, and effort they put into their career (Carr & Maxwell, 2017). When an officer feels that his or her department treats him or her with respect and values his work, the officer is less likely to engage in behaviors that would bring shame to the department and more likely to treat the community fairly and respectfully (Carr & Maxwell, 2017; Dukes, 2018). An officer's perception of the community that they serve determines their policing style and overall morale. An officer's morale impacts their self-worth and overall job performance (Nix & Pickett, 2017). Therefore, when officers police communities of people that hold negative views of them, this can cause the officer to become distrustful towards the

public and confirm any implicit bias they currently hold (McNeeley & Grothoff, 2015; Nalla et al., 201; Davis & Block, 2018).

Law enforcement must engage the community by being polite, going out of their way to help someone, and showing a specific interest in the community. Law enforcement's job is easier when the community is involved. Officers are more comfortable and less likely to be aggressive and use excessive force when they know the community they serve (Zimny, 2015). When the community trusts law enforcement, they are more likely to obey the law and help in any way that they can to keep their community safe (Demirkol & Nalla, 2017). It is trust that needs to be built, and that can only start by building a relationship, getting to know the people that live in the community, and understanding their lives. Through this knowledge, the officer will understand the community's habits and what is normal and abnormal for that community. When law enforcement takes the time to understand the people they protect, their policing ability is more effective, and the community's perception of law enforcement is likely to improve.

Police organizations recognize that community members play a critical role as they are the primary source of neighborhood disorder information. For community policing to be effective, the officer must be willing to adapt to a different policing way. Some officers are not able to adjust from their traditional policing style to effective community policing. Community policing requires the officer to utilize excellent communication skills and listen to the community's needs (Demirkol & Nalla, 2017). Therefore, law enforcement has to repair the relationships they have with the

communities they serve if they are to do their job efficiently (Nalla et al., 2016). For community policing to work as designed, the public needs to trust the officers patrolling their neighborhoods, and the police need to trust the community residents (Carr & Maxwell, 2017). Evidence of the keen ability to solve community problems directly relates to the partnership between law enforcement and its community (Nalla et al., 2016). Partnering with the community opens a communication line that enables law enforcement to solve a crime and address social order (Lee et al., 2017). When officers form a relationship with the community, several things happen; the community feels that the officer has their best interest at heart, and their negative view of law enforcement changes. There is mutual respect shown, the officer's professionalism is a non-issue, and the level of fear felt by both parties decreases (Kearns, 2018; Jones, 2016).

Summary

Chapter 2 introduced the literature review and the search strategies used to obtain the literature. The theoretical foundation was explained and analyzed in its application to the study. There are sections throughout the literature review that identified the specific focus of the data. These sections included policing in America, racial profiling and officer bias, racial differences in the perception of law enforcement, police officer perception of racial profiling and racial bias, implicit bias, and community policing. The sections collaboratively addressed and explained racially biased policing and its consequences. Chapter 3 provides the research design and the various statistical analysis that were used to test the data.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The results of this study aimed to determine if officers from departments that racially represented their communities stopped individuals proportionate to their racial representation in the community in the southcentral region of the United States. In this chapter, I address the research topic, design, rationale, methodology, and provide a summary. The perception or reality of racial bias in law enforcement is an ever-present issue that has caused division and public unrest between African Americans, Hispanics, Asians, and the police. Identifying whether a department's racial representation impacts the number of traffic stops made of each race to that of their community representation can help determine if racial bias is more of a person's perception than a reality. If racial bias appears to be linked to the racial representation of the police department, then in that case, the study may assist police departments in the southcentral region of the United States in determining what changes, if any, they need to make. The results of this study can lead to changes in the hiring practices, processes, policies, and procedures or the retraining of officers in the southcentral region of the United States. These changes can lead to positive social changes that can bridge the gap between law enforcement and African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians.

Research Design & Rational

The study used a quantitative, non-experimental, correlational, cross-sectional design utilizing secondary data to address the research question. When accessing a large amount of data, quantitative research was the best option. Quantitative research enables

researchers to collect a large amount of numerical and categorical data and synthesize it, which gives the study high reliability (Kumar, 2012). Non-experimental research lacks manipulating an independent variable but instead measures variables as they occur (Price et al., 2020). A correlational design investigates whether there is a relationship between two or more variables (Kumar, 2012).

A non-experimental correlational design provided the best results. Since the data was collected all at once and not multiple times, a cross-sectional design was warranted. A cross-sectional study design gathers data at one specific time, compares two or more preexisting groups of people, and presents an overall view of the issue studied (Kumar, 2012). An advantage of a cross-sectional design is that large samples provide a comparative analysis between variables (Chaple et al., 2016). Quantitative secondary data enables the researcher to collect and count data to explain what is observed (Wagenaar et al., 2010). Secondary data is data that has already been collected and categorized by an outside source (Kumar, 2012).

Should the study find that police departments in the southcentral region of the U.S. that do not racially represent the community they serve conduct traffic stops in racially disproportionate ways, this can lead to an assumption that racially biased policing practices might be the reason. There are two types of variables in this study, independent and dependent. An independent variable is a variable that is expected to cause the dependent variable. In contrast, the dependent variables are the variables that the researcher wants to explain (Frankfort-Nachmias et al., 2015). The independent variable in this study was the police departments racial demographics. In contrast, the dependent

variables are the community racial demographics, the race of the individual stopped, and the reason the stop was made.

This study aimed to determine the effect the independent variable (the police department racial demographics) has on the dependent variables (the community racial demographics, the race of the individual stopped and the reason the stop was made). Evaluating if officers stop individuals proportionate to their racial representation in the community can inform law enforcement and the community if racial bias is a justified perception or reality. Based upon the theory of representative bureaucracy, creating a department of officers who racially represent the community they serve would change the community's perception of law enforcement and how traffic stops are conducted. Active representative bureaucracy states that people of the same background, race, and ethnicity will have a greater understanding and would become an advocate for them (Todak et al., 2018). Therefore, there is an understanding that one has with people that share the same backgrounds or ethnicities. With that understanding comes discretionary decisions that officers may choose to make that impact if an officer stops an individual or not. The study sought to identify whether officers stop individuals proportionate to their racial representation in the community in the southcentral region of the United States and therefore racial bias would be a perception and not a reality. This conclusion would relate to the concept of passive representative bureaucracy theory, which states that representation alone does not ensure the support of others like them.

Methodology

The population of interest was four police departments in the southcentral region of the United States and their communities. Two of the police departments had more than 100 sworn officers, and for this study, were considered large while the other two police departments had less than 100 sworn officers and were considered small. One of the large and small police departments racially represented the community they served while the other large and small police departments did not. The data from the two large police departments were compared to one another, and the data from the two small police departments were compared to one another. The data collection method was secondary traffic stop data for the years 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019. The traffic stop records were public record and were available upon request. The study focused on the race of the individual stopped, the racial demographics of the police department, the racial demographics of the community and the reason the stop was made and excluded any other attributing factors.

I chose the purposive sampling strategy because it allowed me to gather data from selective police departments. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling design where the researcher chooses a particular group or subset to study (Kumar, 2012). The use of a non-probability sampling design is appropriate when the number of "elements in a population is unknown or cannot be individually identified (Kumar, 2012, p. 206)." Purposive sampling is best suited for studies that will provide the study's needed information (Kumar, 2012). The police departments were chosen based upon their racial demographics in comparison to the community they served while also considering the

number of sworn officers at those departments. This type of sampling was the best method to use for this study as it allowed me to choose the departments that matched the study's objective while also being both time and cost-effective (Barratt & Shantikumar, 2018).

The study conducted a comparative analysis using independent t-tests and a bivariate Pearson correlation test. A t-test analyzes the number of traffic stops made of each race compared to their racial representation in the community along with the number of traffic stops made of each race compared to the police departments racial demographics. The study also identified the reasons individuals were stopped. A comparative analysis shows how variables are alike or different. A bivariate Pearson correlation test was used to determine if there was a significant relationship between the racial demographics of a police department to the stop rate of each race.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation and Data Collection

The utilization of secondary data to conduct research eliminated the need for obtaining informed consent and only required consent from the Walden University IRB. Once the study was approved by the IRB I contacted the police departments and each state's certification agency for law enforcement, requesting their traffic stop data for 2016-2019. The identification of the police departments was hidden to protect and prevent any undue harm that may come from the results of the study.

Data Analysis Plan

I used the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) software. The independent t-test and the bivariate Pearson correlation test were used to decipher the

data. The independent variable was the police departments racial demographics, and the dependent variables were the race of the individual stopped, the reason the stop was made and the community racial demographics. The data was logged and grouped in an excel document and the process of testing the data to determine a significant difference between the variables began.

Threats to Validity

There is no way to ensure 100% accurate, reliable data collection, no matter which data collection method is used (Kumar, 2012). "Validity is defined as the degree to which the chosen instrument used has measured what it was set out to measure (Kumar, 2012, p. 178)." Secondary data is considered the most reliable data as it eliminates researcher bias which is a concern when using primary data. Some problems identified when using secondary data is the availability of the data, the quality, and the format of the data. The data's validity from one source to the next might differ (Kumar, 2012). The data from the chosen police departments for 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019 may not have been available, and other years might have had to be chosen. Lastly, the format of the data requested had to be pliable to be organized for this study. Establishing a quantitative research study's validity using secondary data relies on concurrent validity. Concurrent validity is administering two separate tests on the same sets of data. If the tests present similar results, then the research is considered valid (Kumar, 2012).

There are three types of validity in quantitative research studies, face and content validity, concurrent and predictive validity, and construct validity. Face and content validity are based on the instrument used and its logical link between the research

question and the objectives of the study. The link's establishment is referred to as face validity, while the instrument's assessment is referred to as content validity. Predictive, concurrent, and construct validity are used when a scale is developed for the study and are used to determine if the instrument used is valid (Kumar, 2012). This study used a scale and instrument that was previously developed and used numerous times in previous studies, which has proven its reliability.

External Validity

External validity is defined as the ability to apply the same study; in this case, police departments outside of the United States southcentral region and produce the same or similar results. For example, the study's conclusions would be true if given to another population at another time. According to Trochim, (2020), there are three significant threats to external validity which is people, places, and time. It could be argued that the study's results are only relevant to the police departments in the study and that surrounding community. Another argument might be that this study's results are limited to police departments in the southcentral region of the United States and would not represent law enforcement as a whole. Another argument might be that members of each racial group do not violate traffic laws at the same rate. Traffic violators may not be residents of the community or that the available driving population may not represent the community's racial demographics. All factors considered this study is meant to be replicated.

Internal Validity

Internal validity is when the instrument measures what it is supposed to measure, ensuring that the right statistical tests are chosen to measure the data accurately. Several statistical tests are used in research and understanding the significance of each test and choosing the one that will provide the most accurate results is vital in any study (Glen, 2015). The *t*-test along with the bivariate Pearson correlation test was used to fulfill the objective of the study. The study's objective was to determine if officers stopped individuals proportionate to their racial representation in the community in the southcentral region of the United States. A *t*-test is a testing tool to determine if there is a significant difference between the means of two groups, which allows testing of an assumption applicable to a population (Glen, 2021). This study's categories were race (African American, Hispanic, Asian, and White) both in the communities and the police departments and the reason why each individual was stopped (minor traffic infraction, etc.). Simultaneously, the numerical data was the number of officers of each race in the police department and the number of individuals of each race in the community.

Statistical Conclusion Validity

Statistical conclusion validity is only concerned with if the conclusions drawn from a statistical test are accurate and reliable based on the data analyzed (Glen, 2015). Some threats can lead to incorrect conclusions and being aware and recognizing them can avoid an invalid study conclusion. Some of the threats include the researcher assuming a conclusion and conducting multiple tests until the data shows that conclusion. Also, not following protocol or procedures when collecting and analyzing the data, using unreliable

measures, allowing random irrelevancies to distract from the prescribed data set and the purpose of the research (Glen, 2015).

Ethical Procedures

To ensure that the data collection procedures were ethically sound, this study's data collection process was sent to the Walden University's IRB members for review. Ethical is defined as "in accordance with principals of conduct that are considered correct (Kumar, 2012, p. 242)." The secondary data set used for this study consisted of public records. Although the traffic stop data was public record it cannot be obtained by searching the Internet. It was only available upon request per the public records law. Therefore, there were no required agreements or permissions needed to access the data.

Since the use of secondary data for this study did not involve the interaction, participation, or recruitment of research participants, the primary ethical concerns were if the data was adequate and relevant to the study. There were no concerns regarding anonymity or confidentiality as the information obtained did not include identifiable information such as the person's name, address, phone number, or date of birth. Another ethical concern that was considered was researcher ethical bias. Researcher ethical bias is when the researcher manipulates the study or results instead of reporting the actual findings (Kumar, 2012). The study could be manipulated by me, the researcher if I used an inappropriate research methodology, reported incorrect results, or used the data for other purposes than for the intended purpose. To ensure that the study was not tainted by my bias, the police departments were chosen based upon their racial demographics to that of their community. The data from each police department was crosschecked with the

data from each state's law enforcement certification agency to ensure that the data was accurate.

I was the only one accessing the data; however, since it is made publicly available upon request, anyone can obtain it. The data was stored on two separate flash drives and kept in two separate secure password-protected locations during the study. Once the study was completed the data and the study results were saved on a flash drive and will be kept for five years in a password protected safe before being destroyed. No one other than myself has access to the data.

Summary

Chapter 3 provided an in-depth detail of how the study was conducted and what methodology was used, and why. The rationale as to why the study was needed and how it will add to the current research regarding racial representation and the perception or reality of racial bias in law enforcement. The importance of validity and the threats that can tarnish the study. Lastly, the statistical conclusion and the ethical procedures that were adhered to for a successful, reliable, and valid study outcome. Chapter 4 discusses in detail the data collection process and results. Visual aids are provided to explain the results of the study and enable the reader to identify any key similarities or differences between variables.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to analyze the results of the statistical analysis to determine if there was an association between the racial demographics of a police department to the racial demographics of a community, and the proportionality of traffic stops. Traffic stops are the most common interaction law enforcement has with the community and often frames an individual's perceptions based upon those interactions. The analysis centered on the following research question and hypothesis:

Research Question: Is racial representation in law enforcement and community demographics in the southcentral region of the United States associated with racially proportionate traffic stops?

Ho: There is no association between a police departments racial demographics to the community they serve and their stop proportionality of each race.

Ha: There is an association between a police departments racial demographics to the community they serve and their stop proportionality of each race.

This chapter summarizes the study variables and the results by comparing the study's chosen police departments racial demographics to the racial demographics of the communities they served and their stop rate of each race. The results are discussed, graphed, and charted to show each component studied.

Data Collection

The study sample consisted of four police departments in the southcentral region of the United States. I used various search engines online to locate police departments

that fit the study's objective. The objective was to analyze traffic stops of four police departments in the southcentral region of the United States. Two of the police departments racially represented the community that they served, and two police departments did not. Determining which police departments would be the best fit for this study was incumbent upon the information that was available to the public and garnered online. Two of the departments had more than 100 sworn officers, one of the departments racially represented the community they served, and the other did not. The other two departments had less than 100 sworn officers, one of the departments racially represented the community they served, and the other did not. I completed the open records request online through each police departments website. Two of the police departments made obtaining the data difficult, and two provided the data without hesitation. The data received from all the departments was traffic stop summary data and not raw traffic stop data. This was problematic as summary data is not specific enough to use the Pearson chi-squared statistical analysis test as originally planned. Not having this information only enabled me to use the *t*-test and a bivariate Pearson correlation test to answer the research question. According to the police departments in this study, raw traffic stop data was not collected and evaluated and the race of the individual stopped was not recorded until 2019, making it unavailable for me to obtain. The data received from the departments in the study for 2016, 2017, and 2018 was voluntarily collected and therefore did not have a set standard of what information was to be reported. When there is not a standard in place that all departments must follow, then the information garnered may not be reported or what is reported may not be accurate.

The racial demographic data of the communities in this study were obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau's website. The official census is conducted every 10 years and the years needed for this study fell between the official dates. Therefore, the data for this study was an estimate of the racial demographic population for 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019 provided by the U.S. Census Bureau. The police departments' racial demographic data was obtained from each state's certification for law enforcement agency. According to each state's certification for law enforcement agency, this data is updated annually and is current. For confidentiality, the police departments in this study were identified by number. Police Departments 1 and 2 did not racially represent the communities they served, and Police Departments 3 and 4 did racially represent the communities they served.

The study focused on each police department's traffic stops for 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2019. The study compared the number of traffic stops made of Whites, African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians to their racial representation in the community and in the police department. Any other races such as mixed race or Native American race were not included in the study. The data was analyzed and compared to answer the research question. Another focus of the study was to evaluate how many individuals of each race were stopped annually, and why. Although the data for the reason the stop was made was provided, it was not broken down by the stop or by race, but by categories. The categories represented the reasons an individual was stopped. These categories were (a) violation of the law other than traffic, (b) preexisting knowledge such as a warrant, (c) moving traffic violation, and (d) vehicle traffic violation. I was unable to analyze this

data in depth using a statistical test because the data was limited to these four reasons and was not associated with an individual's race. Therefore, the data was graphed and compared to the other departments to determine if there were similarities or differences between the reasons law enforcement stopped individuals. The outcome of the reason for the stop data can be used to speculate and assume that one race may be subject to a certain type of stop when compared to another but cannot be statistically supported. Before comparing the data sets, I crosschecked the summary data provided by the police departments to the summary data provided by each state's certification for law enforcement's agency's records to ensure a valid data set.

Obtaining traffic stop records from Department 1 was quick and smooth. The police chief was forthcoming regarding the lack of racial representation in his department and said that he is trying to get more Hispanics and African Americans on the force. The data available was summary data for 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019, and it matched the data obtained by their state's certification agency for law enforcement. However, securing traffic stop records from Departments 2, 3, and 4 was difficult and required a firm approach. Department 3 and 4's attorney mailed me a certified letter requesting more information. I called and emailed stating the same request as before only also letting the departments know that their state certification department for law enforcement's agency ensured me that they would have these records available upon request. It was not until then, that I received the records. Police Department 3 was the most challenging department to obtain information. I had to contact their records department, county clerk, and police chief before receiving the data. Their 2018 traffic stop summary data did not

match the data that their state's law enforcement certification agency had, and the data

that the state's certification for law enforcement agency had did not mathematically add

up. For example, the total number of stops made for all races was less than the number of

stops made for one race. Since the data did not match or add up I did not use this

departments traffic stop summary data for 2018. I contacted their state's certification for

law enforcement agency and notified them of the discrepancy.

Once I collected all the data, it was organized in an excel document by name and

years. Within each year, the four police departments were listed along with their police

department's racial demographics, racial demographics of the community they serve, total

traffic stops made, total traffic stops made of each race, and the reason the stop was

made. I created additional variables that provided the percentages of each race in the

community, the percentage of traffic stops made of each race, and the percentages of

officers of each race. The reason the stop was made was not broken down by race but

rather by number based on the total number of stops made by that department annually.

Not all the departments had data for, why the stop was made, especially for 2016 and

2017, so the analysis only included the years that the departments collected.

Results

The study set out to provide an answer to the research question, "is racial

representation in law enforcement and community demographics in the southcentral

region of the United States associated with racially proportionate traffic stops?" To

answer this question with the data provided I sorted and grouped the data by department

for 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019 in an excel document and in SPSS. Once the data was

grouped by police department name, each year was analyzed in depth. It was determined

that all four years of data for each department would be averaged together since the data

was relatively similar. There were no major changes with the racial demographics of the

community, the racial demographics of the police department or the number of stops

made of each race. I created bar charts for each department showing the community

racial demographics to the police department's racial demographics to the number of

stops made of each race by each department. A separate bar chart was created that

included all four departments showing the reason the stops were made making it easy to

identify if there were any similarities or differences among departments. I created a table

that listed all four departments and their average numbers and percentages of the data.

Another table was created that included all the departments, their data and their traffic

stop differentials. A comparison of the means t-test of the departments stop rate that

racially represented their community to the ones that did not was conducted. This

analysis was done to determine the mean standard deviation of the variables, while also

evaluating if there showed to be a significant difference between the departments and

their stop rate. A bivariant Pearson correlational analysis using SPSS was conducted to

identify any relationship between variables. The study showed that based upon the traffic

stop data every department in the study stopped at least one race disproportionate to their

racial representation in the community. The races that were disproportionately stopped

also happened to be the minority race in that community.

Police Department 1 had less than 100 sworn officers and was 86% White, 5%

African American, 9% Hispanic and 0% Asian. The community they served was 24%

White, 24% African American, 51% Hispanic, and 4% percent Asian. The police stopped Whites 18% of the time, African Americans 45% of the time, Hispanics 37% of the time, and Asians 8% of the time. African Americans, Hispanics and Asians were significantly lacking in their racial representation within the department to the community they served. When analyzing the data based upon the racial representation of the police department compared to the racial representation of the community and their stop proportionality rate of each race; the data indicated that Whites were the only race that were stopped proportionately to their community representation. For example, the community was 24% White, and the police stopped Whites 18% of the time. These percentages are relatively similar as opposed to African Americans that represented 24% of the community, and the police stopped them 45% of the time. Also, Asians represented 4% of the community but were stopped 8% of the time. However, when analyzing Hispanics, they represented 51% of the community but were only stopped 37% of the time.

Figure 1

Police Department 1
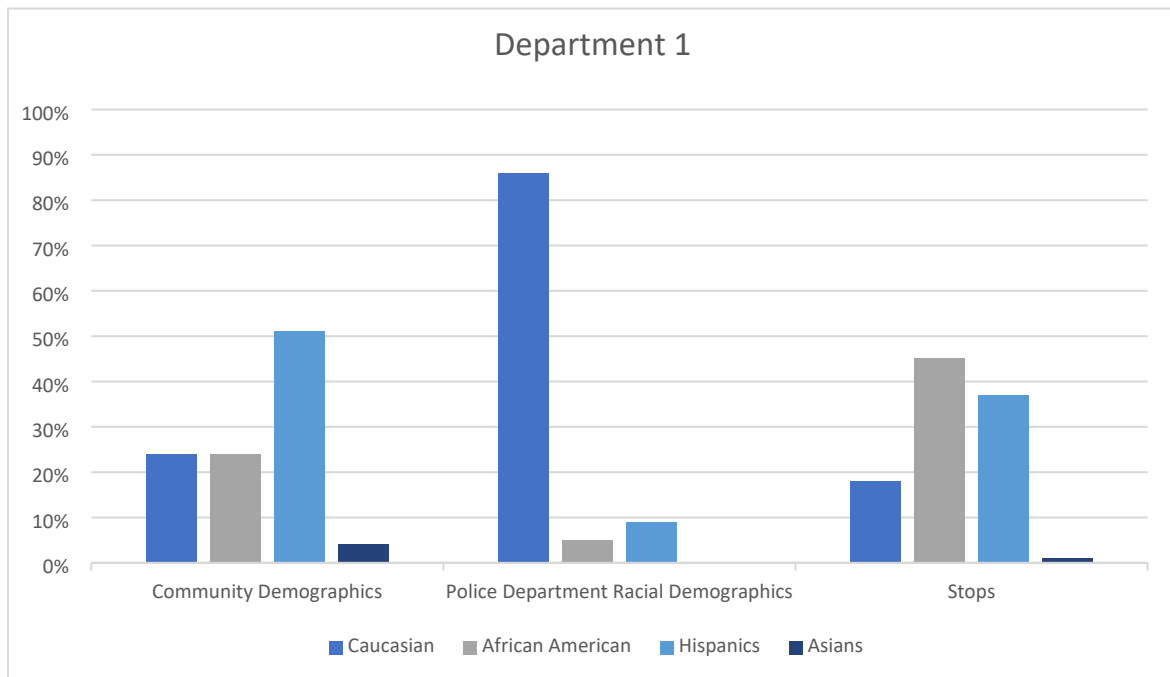
Police Department 2 had more than 100 sworn officers, 78% White, 10% African American, 12% Hispanic, and 0% Asian. The department's community was 44% White, 22% African American, 32% Hispanic, and 2% Asian. The police stopped Whites 47% of the time, African Americans 26% of the time, Hispanics 26% of the time, and Asians 8% of the time. Analyzing the police department's racial demographics to the stop rate of each race the data indicated that officers proportionally stopped Whites, African Americans, and Hispanics to their community representation. Asians were shown to be disproportionately stopped twice as much as their community representation.

Figure 2

Police Department 2
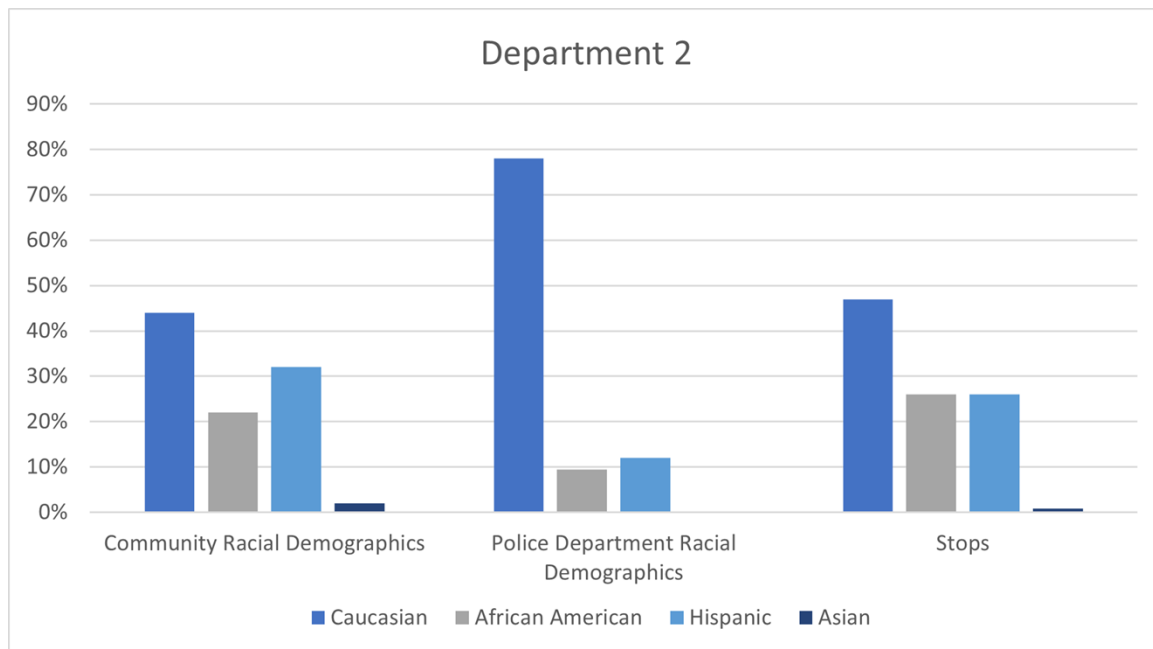
Police Department 3 had less than 100 sworn police officers, was 85% White**,** 8%

African American, 11% Hispanic, and 0% Asian. The department's community was 90%

White, 1% African American, 4% Hispanic, and 4% Asian. The police stopped Whites

49% of the time, African Americans 11% of the time, Hispanics 37% of the time, and

Asians 3% of the time. The data showed that the police disproportionately stopped

African Americans compared to their racial representation in the community and despite

their racial representation in the department. For example, the department was 8%

African American served a community that was 1% African American and stopped

African Americans 11% of the time. Also, Hispanics were stopped 9 times (37%) their

racial representation in the community even though Hispanics represented 11% of the

police department. Therefore, according to the data, officers disproportionately stopped Hispanics and African Americans regardless of their racial representation in the police department. In contrast, officers stopped Whites 41% less than their community racial representation.
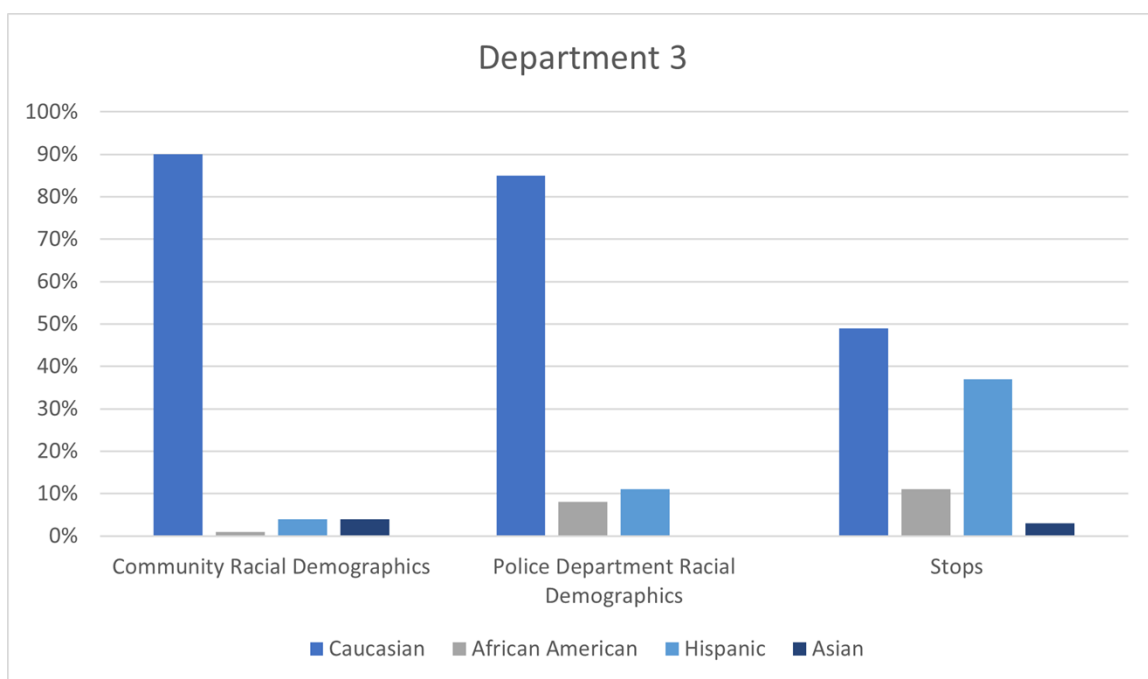
Figure 3

Police Department 3

Police Department 4 had more than 100 sworn officers, was 9% White, 4% African American, 91% Hispanic, and 0% Asian. The department served a community that was 10% White, 6% African American, 84% Hispanic, and 3% Asian. The department stopped Whites 55% of the time, African Americans 7% of the time, Hispanics 43% of the time, and Asians 4% of the time. The data showed that although the

department racially represented the community that they served, Whites were

disproportionately stopped. For example, the police department was 9% White, the

community was 10% White, but they stopped Whites 55% of the time. Despite the police

department racially representing the community that they serve they did not stop

individuals proportionate to their racial representation in the community. Another

example is that the department was 91% Hispanic, served an 84% Hispanic community,

but stopped Hispanics 43% of the time. The data indicated that Hispanics were stopped

41% less than their community representation and Whites were stopped 5 times (55%)

more than their community representation. However, this department showed that they

stopped African Americans and Asians proportionate to their community representation.

Figure 4

Police Department 4
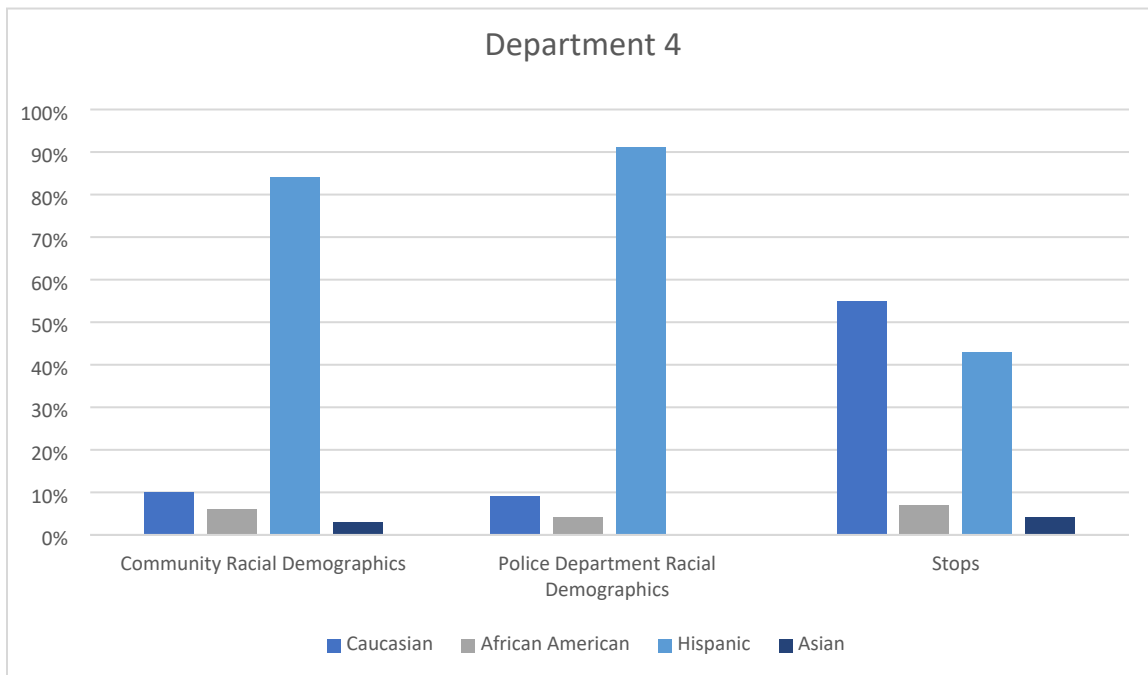
Table 1 below provides the numbers and the percentages for all the departments together. Presenting the data in this format allows for an easy-to-read observation of the study's variables. The number of individuals of each race in the community to that of their racial representation in the police department. The number of each race that is stopped compared to their racial representation in the community. Based upon this chart Department 2 is the only department that comes close to stopping individuals proportionate to their racial representation in the community.

Table 1

Demographics and Traffic Stops

Race, by Department	Community Demographics (*n* & %)	Police Department Demographics (*n* & %)	Stops (*n* & %)
Department 1			
White	1,494	19	226
	24%	86%	18%
African American	1,493	1	551
	24%	5%	45%
Hispanic	3,182	2	457
	51%	9%	37%
Asian	27	0	10
	4%	0%	8%
Department 2			
White	57,996	155	5,350
	44%	78%	47%
African American	28,641	19	2,941
	22%	10%	26%
Hispanic	42,752	24	2,889
	32%	12%	26%
Asian	2,645	0	98
	2%	0%	8%
Department 3			
White	8,127	45	5,443
	90%	85%	49%
African American	15	4	1,230
	1%	8%	11%
Hispanic	358	6	4,187
	4%	11%	37%
Asian	352	0	368
	4%	0%	3%
Department 4			
White	14,661	19	14,903
	10%	9%	55%
African American	943	1	198
	6%	4%	7%
Hispanic	119,571	192	11,415
	84%	91%	43%
Asian	3,751	0	120
	3%	0%	4%

Notes. The data analyzed to calculate the average number of stops for Department 3 does not include the stops made for 2018 because the data provided did not mathematically add up. The community demographics will not equal 100% because the data excludes all other races except White, African American, Hispanic, and Asian.

Table 2 provides the number and percentage of the racial demographics of each community and the number and percentage of individuals of each race stopped. It provides the statistical difference and gives a general idea of the trends in the data. The difference column indicates the percentage difference in the stops of each race for each department to that of their community representation. A negative number indicates the deficit (less than) in the percentage of stops of that race to their community representation. For example, Department 1 stopped Whites 25% less than their community representation. A positive number indicates that they stopped individuals more than their community representation. For example, Department 2 stopped Asians 300% more than their community representation.

Table 2

Demographic Stop Differentials

Race, by Department	Community Demographics (*n* & %)	Stops (*n* & %)	Difference, in %
Department 1			
White	1,494 24%	226 18%	-25%
African American	1,493 24%	551 45%	88%
Hispanic	3,182 51%	457 37%	-27%
Asian	27 4%	10 8%	100%
Department 2			
White	57,996 44%	5,350 47%	7%
African American	28,641 22%	2,941 26%	18%
Hispanic	42,752 32%	2,889 26%	-19%
Asian	2,645 2%	98 8%	300%
Department 3			
White	8,127 90%	5,443 49%	-46%
African American	15 1%	1,230 11%	1000%
Hispanic	358 4%	4,187 37%	825%
Asian	352 4%	368 3%	-25%
Department 4			
White	14,661 10%	14,903 55%	450%
African American	943 6%	198 7%	17%
Hispanic	119,571 84%	11,415 43%	-49%
Asian	3,751 3%	120 4%	33%

Note. The data analyzed to calculate the average number of stops for Department 3 does not include the stops made for 2018 because the data provided did not mathematically add up. The community demographics will not equal 100% because the data excludes all other races except White, African American, Hispanic, and Asian.

Table 3 compares the mean total of stops of Whites, African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians in communities where the police department does not racially represent the community to departments that do racially represent their community. Analyzing the mean column for each race stopped, shows that on average when the department racially represents the community they serve more Whites, Hispanics and Asians are stopped. On average when the department does not racially represent the community they serve Whites, Hispanics and Asians are stopped less but African Americans are stopped more. The t-test below determines if this mean score just happened by chance in this data set or if this difference exists in the population. It also determines which hypothesis is correct. The H_0: There is no association between a police departments racial demographics to the community they serve and their stop proportionality of each race. H_a: There is an association between a police departments racial demographics to the community they serve and their stop proportionality of each race.

Table 3

Stop Proportionality

Stops by Race	Police Department	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Number of C Stopped	PD Does Not Racially Represent Community	2787.75	2830.669	1000.793
	PD Does Racially Represent Community	10848.57	5849.091	2210.749
Number of AA Stopped	PD Does Not Racially Represent Community	1746.00	1354.555	478.907
	PD Does Racially Represent Community	640.14	622.393	235.242
Number of H Stopped	PD Does Not Racially Represent Community	1672.50	1465.035	517.968
	PD Does Racially Represent Community	8317.00	4877.528	1843.532
Number of A Stopped	PD Does Not Racially Represent Community	53.88	52.914	18.708
	PD Does Racially Represent Community	239.57	140.963	53.279

When determining which hypothesis is correct it depends on the race of people being discussed as this data indicates it varies depending on race. For Hispanics and African Americans, the alternative hypothesis is correct however when evaluating Asians and Whites the null hypothesis shows to be correct. The p-value for number of African Americans stopped is .004 which is less than the alpha value of .05 and therefore the variances are significantly different. This means that on average when departments do not racially represent their community that African Americans are stopped more than when the departments racially represent their community. This can also be said for Hispanics as the p-value for them is .005 which is less than the alpha value of .05. The p-value for the number of Whites stopped is .052 which is more than the alpha value of .05 and therefore the variances are not significantly different. What this means is that on average whether a department racially represents their community or not Whites are not stopped any more or less. However, Asians p-value is .039 which is more than .05 and therefore the variances are not significantly different.

Table 4

Significance

Number stopped by race	Equal Variance Assumed	F	Sig.	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
							Lower	Upper
White	Yes	4.570	.052	13	.004	-8060.821	-13074.164	-3047.479
	No			8.408	.010	-8060.821	-13609.891	-2511.751
African American	Yes	11.840	.004	13	.070	1105.857	-101.877	2313.592
	No			10.100	.065	1105.857	-81.413	2293.127
Hispanic	Yes	11.297	.005	13	.003	-6644.500	-10539.563	-2749.437
	No			6.948	.011	-6644.500	-11179.492	-2109.508
Asian	Yes	5.276	.039	13	.004	-185.696	-301.238	-70.155
	No			7.473	.012	-185.696	-317.527	-53.866

A bivariate Pearson correlation analysis was conducted that included all the departments in the study to determine if the race of an officer was related to how many of each race was stopped. When testing for a relationship between the number of White officers to the number of Whites, African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians stopped the only correlation that showed to have a significant relationship was the number of White officers to the number of African Americans stopped. The Pearson correlation was .939 and the significance value was .000. Therefore, even though other races had been stopped disproportionate to their community representation in the data set the only race on average to significantly be impacted were African Americans. Therefore, both in the *t*-test and the Pearson correlation test the data indicates that the race most impacted by racial representation in law enforcement are African Americans. This conclusion provides evidence that supports the need for racial representation in law enforcement

specially to ensure African Americans are stopped proportionate to their racial

representation in the community. This study provides a perspective that addresses racial

representation in both large and small police departments in the southcentral region of the

United States. Therefore, although the study is limited to the southcentral region it is not

limited based upon the size of the department so the results can be applied to all police

departments in that region.

Table 5

White Officers and Stops of African Americans

		Number of W Officers	Number of AA Stopped
Number of W Officers	Pearson Correlation	1	.939**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	15	15
Number of AA Stopped	Pearson Correlation	.939**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	15	15

Note. W=White, AA=African American.

Reason for the Stop

All four police departments provided at least 1 year between 2016-2019 of data

for "the reason for the stop." The reasons for the stop provided by each department were

similar from year to year and therefore were averaged together to provide one percentage

for each category for each department. The data the police departments collected did not

include the individuals race but only how many people in the community were stopped

for one of the four reasons explained in the following sentences. The departments

classified the stops based on four reasons. The reasons included 1) violation of the law

other than traffic, 2) preexisting knowledge, 3) moving traffic violation, and 4) vehicle traffic violation. A moving violation was defined as a vehicle in motion that violates traffic law. Some examples of moving violations are speeding, running a stop sign or red light, and drunk driving. A vehicle traffic violation was defined as a non-moving traffic violation usually related to parking or faulty equipment. A violation of the law other than traffic is just as it states, and preexisting knowledge would be if an individual had a warrant.

Between 2017-2019, on average Police Department 1, stopped individuals 74% of the time for moving traffic violations, 17% of the time for vehicle traffic violations, 7% of the time for a violation of the law other than traffic, and 1% of the time for preexisting knowledge. The department did not provide the reason the stop was made for 2016. Between 2016-2019 Police Department 2 on average stopped individual's 80% of the time for a moving traffic violation, 18% of the time for a vehicle traffic violation, 1% of the time for a violation of the law other than traffic, and less than 1% of the time for preexisting knowledge.

For 2019 police department three on average stopped individuals' 82% of the time for a moving traffic violation, 13% of the time for a vehicle traffic violation, 4% of the time for a violation of the law other than traffic, and less than 1% of the time for preexisting knowledge. This department's total number of stops and reasons the stops were made were inconsistent for 2018 with the data the state certification for law enforcement agency provided. The data did not mathematically add up, and therefore 2018 traffic stop data was not included in the analysis. For the years 2016 and 2017, the

reason the stop was made was not part of the department's record keeping. From 2016-2019 Police Department 4 on average stopped individuals 76% of the time for a moving traffic violation, 21% of the time for a vehicle traffic violation, 3% of the time for a violation of the law other than traffic, and 0% of the time for preexisting knowledge.

Figure 5

Reason for the Stop for all Departments
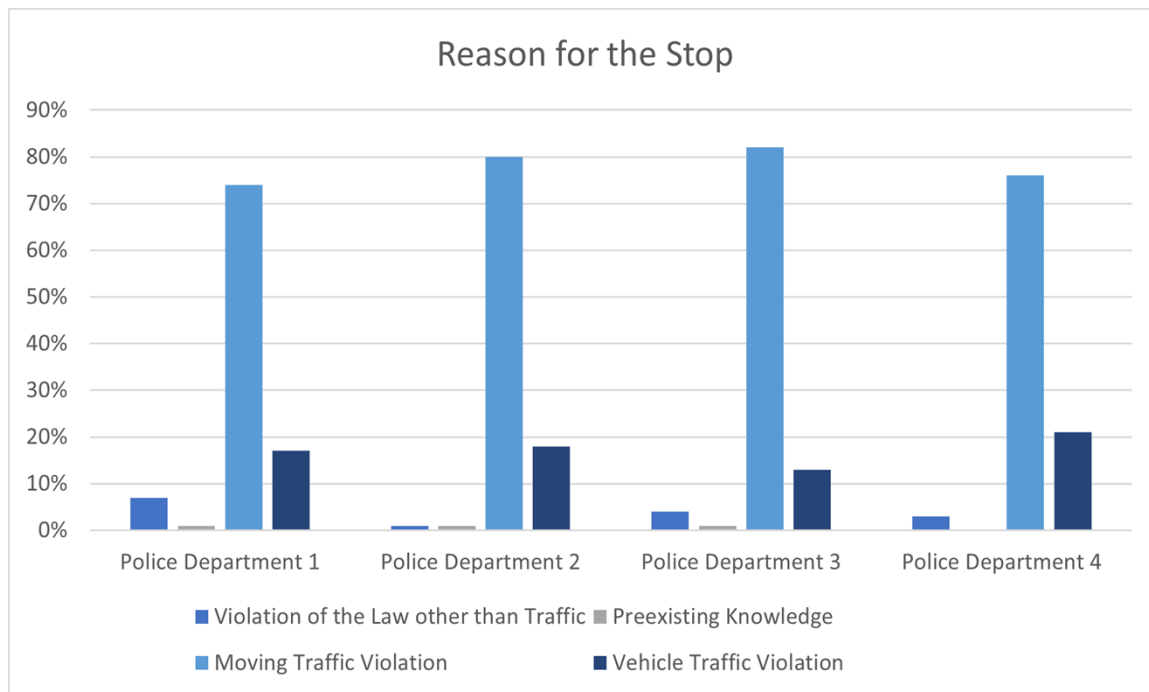
No matter the department's size, racial demographics, or community, all four

police departments were consistent in their overall percentages when examining the

reason for the stop. The police departments stopped most individuals for a moving traffic

violation, followed by a vehicle traffic violation. The study set out to ultimately

determine if racial representation in law enforcement in the southcentral region of the

United States results in racially proportionate traffic stops. Based on this data set, it can

be concluded that in most cases racial representation or the lack thereof within law

enforcement impacts the stop proportionality rate either negatively or positively of

Whites, Africans Americans, and Hispanics. It also indicates that the race most impacted

by a lack of racial representation within a police department in the southcentral region of

the U.S. are African Americans. The stop proportionality rate of Asians to their

community representation could not be explained using the representative bureaucracy theory. There was no way to assess departments that had Asian representation to those that did not and their stop proportionality rate because the departments in this study did not have Asian representation. Although the departments were chosen based upon their racial representation to that of the community they served not one department showed to stop every race proportionate to their community representation. The data does indicate that on average when there is a large number of any race in the department that, that race is stopped significantly less than their racial representation in the community. This conclusion supports active representative bureaucracy theory. Also having a proportionate number of a certain race in the department on average does not guarantee that traffic stops will be racially proportionate. This conclusion supports passive representative bureaucracy theory.

Summary

Chapter 4 provided the results of the study followed by bar graphs that broke down each department by their racial demographics both in the police department and the community and the stop rate of each race. The departments were charted together to show their differences and similarities. An explanation of the results of the *t*-test and the Pearson correlation test were charted and discussed. A chart was also created that showed the disparities in traffic stops of all the departments and the results were explained. Chapter 5 summarizes the results presented in Chapter 4, then interprets the results as it relates to representative bureaucracy theory. The statistical limitations of the study, and

implications that may come from the results could provide for policy development and

future research potential.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The lack of diversity in law enforcement in the southcentral region of the United States has led some to believe that law enforcement is racially biased. This perception has created division between law enforcement and the communities that they serve. For law enforcement to do their job effectively, they need to have the communities trust and support. In a review of the existing literature, I found a limited number of studies on this research topic in the southcentral region of the United States. In this chapter, I focus on the overall analysis of the study. First, the chapter will summarize the results presented in Chapter 4, then interpret the findings, address statistical limitations, and discuss implications the study may provide for policy development or future research.

Summary of Results

In doing this study, I found that police departments could not provide transparency to the public. Every department in the study stopped at least one race disproportionate to their community representation. The races that were disproportionately stopped also were the minority race in that community. The difficulty in getting the data implied that the police department knew this was the case. African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians have a low level of trust in law enforcement, and some of the reasons for that has been because they feel that law enforcement is unfair and unjust in how they do their job. This study found that this lack of trust may have merit. If law enforcement in the southcentral region of the United States is to bridge the gap between them, African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians, they should start by being

transparent in their daily enforcement and application of the law. Additionally, the

difficulty it took to obtain the summary data with an open records request that is upheld

by law, communicates a far bigger problem. Law enforcement cannot fix a problem that

they are not willing to acknowledge they have. The police department that openly

welcomed the study and provided their data likely knew that their department would

show a discrepancy in their traffic stop data but chose to be transparent anyway. The

actions of this department are how all law enforcement should respond. They admitted

that they knew they lacked racial representation within their department, but they were

still willing to share the data despite the potential negative results that may come of it.

This response communicates to the public that they are open to feedback and possible

change. Departments that are transparent with the public show a willingness to accept

whatever may transpire instead of pretending that racial bias or the appearance of it does

not exist. This study sought out to determine if racial representation within the police

department impacts how traffic stops are conducted. These departments were chosen to

show how any race that is the minority race in that community can be subject to unfair

police practices.

Interpretation of Findings

To determine if representative bureaucracy theory can explain the results of this

data analysis, each police department had to be evaluated separately. After the individual

critique then an accumulative critique was necessary. Police Department 1 was

predominantly White, and Whites were stopped less than their racial representation in the

community. Therefore, according to the data, active representative bureaucracy is at

work. The premise of active representative bureaucracy theory is that each race looks out for their race because of the similarities and shared experiences of that race (Bradbury & Kellough, 2010; Nix & Pickett, 2017). When looking at African Americans and their stop rate, it can be assumed that the percentage of African American officers in the department is either not high enough to substantiate a difference in stop proportionality or that passive representative bureaucracy is at work. Passive representative bureaucracy is when a police department hires a certain race, in this case African Americans, to match the racial representation of the community that they serve (Kim, 1994; Todak et al., 2018). The person is African American but may not help or promote African Americans in the community that they serve (Todak et al., 2018). Analyzing Hispanics and their racial representation in the department to their stop rate, it appeared that active representation was at work. There were almost double the percentage of Hispanic officers than there were African American officers, and it appeared to positively impact the stop proportionality of Hispanics. The community is predominantly Hispanic (51%) yet Hispanics were stopped less than African Americans who accounted for 24% of the community. Asians represented 4% of the community, 0% in the department, but were stopped 8% of the time. There was no Asian representation in the department so there was no way to evaluate if the presence of Asian officers would positively impact their stop proportionality. However, it appears that the more racial representation of any race within the department, the closer the department is to racially proportionately stopping individuals in the community. It can be assumed that implicit bias might be responsible for the disproportionality of stops of races that do not have an equivalent racial

representation within the department which can explain why African Americans and Asians are stopped twice as much as their representation in the community.

Police Department 2 did not racially represent the community they served but the data showed that there were enough of a percentage of officers that were White, African American and Hispanic to positively impact the rate at which each race was stopped and to indicate that active representative bureaucracy is at work. For example, the department was 12% Hispanic, the community was 32% Hispanic, and Hispanics were stopped by the police 26% of the time. The percentages of stops to community representation are relatively similar and the stop rate is below the percentage of their racial representation. The department was 78% White, serving a community that is 44% White, and stopped Whites 48% of the time. The percentages of stop proportionality to community representation are relatively similar and the same similarity is shown for African Americans. African Americans account for 10% of the department, 22% of the community and are stopped 26% of the time. However, when evaluating the stop proportionality of Asians to their community representation the data indicated that Asians were stopped 4 times their community representation. It can only be speculated that the stop disproportionality is due to the lack of Asian representation in the department. The community was 2% Asian, had 0% of Asian officers but Asians were stopped 8% of the time. Active representative bureaucracy theory can explain the stop proportionality for Whites, African Americans, and Hispanics. The absence of Asian officers can be the reason Asians were disproportionately stopped. However, the presence of Asian officers does not guarantee a better stop proportionality rate as passive representative bureaucracy

might be at work. Further research would need to be conduct specifically of departments that have Asian officers to determine if their presence would impact the stop rate of Asians or if passive representative bureaucracy would be the result.

On average, Police Department 3 was 85% White, served a community that was 90% White and stopped Whites 49% of the time. Active representative bureaucracy appears to be the result of the lack of stops made of Whites. The department was 8% African American, served a 1% African American community and stopped African Americans 11% of the time. The number of African American officers does not positively impact the stop rate of African Americans and can be explained through the application of passive representative bureaucracy. On average, the department was 11% Hispanic and served a 4% Hispanic community but stopped Hispanics 37% of the time. The explanation of this outcome is that of passive representative bureaucracy. Passive representative bureaucracy theory says that organizations, in this case, police departments, hire a certain race, in this case, Hispanics, to match the racial makeup of the community that they serve (Kim, 1994; Todak et al., 2018). However, that is it, they visually look the part, but they do not promote this race's well-being. Essentially, they go with the flow. Therefore, according to the data, officers disproportionately stopped Hispanics and African Americans regardless of their racial representation in the police department. An article in the literature review by Wang et al., (2019) supports this outcome as it states that hiring more African American, Hispanic, and Asian officers will not decrease racial profiling unless the number of African American, Hispanic, and Asian officers is equal to or more than the majority.

This department sets itself apart from the first 2 departments as with Department 1 and 2 the more the department racially represented the community the more likely each race was stopped proportionate to their community representation. In contrast, officers stopped Whites 41% less than their racial representation in the community. Active representative bureaucracy theory can explain White officers choosing not to stop Whites as much as other races. The absence of Asian officers did not appear to negatively impact the stop proportionality of Asians. The department stopped Asians equivalent to their community representation even though there were no Asian Officers. Again, this department sets itself apart from the first two as with the first two departments' Asians were not represented in the department and were disproportionately stopped giving the appearance that if there were Asian officers, Asians may not be disproportionately stopped. The application of active nor passive representative bureaucracy cannot explain this outcome.

On average, Police Department 4 was 9% White, served a community that was 10% White but stopped Whites 55% of the time. On average, the police department was 91% Hispanic and served a community that was 84% Hispanic but stopped Hispanics 43% of the time. Active representative bureaucracy theory can explain Hispanic officers choosing not to stop Hispanics as much as other races. However, police stopping Whites at a grossly disproportionate rate can be explained through passive representative bureaucracy. There might not be enough White officers to positively impact the stop rate of Whites if racial representation is the reason. There are just enough Whites to represent their racial representation in the community. It might be assumed that the lack of racial

representation of Whites in the department has resulted in implicit bias, which if not channeled could result in racially biased policing practices.

The department is 1% African American, serving a community that is 6% African American and stopping African Americans 7% of the time. The stop proportionality is similar to their community representation and might be explained through active representative bureaucracy. Lastly Asians are not represented in the department, but their lack of representation did not negatively impact their stop proportionality rate. The community was 3% Asian and stopped Asians 4% of the time. The stop proportionality of African Americans and Asians is proportionate to their representation in the community. Although the stop proportionality rate can be explained utilizing active representative bureaucracy theory neither active nor passive representative bureaucracy can explain the proportional stops of Asians.

It is the assumption of some that law enforcement is racially biased, and it can also be assumed that implicit bias is the premise. This study sought out to identify if this assumption was fact or fiction. The researcher could not sort the raw data and come to a conclusion, which might have led to a better understanding of why some African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians have this perception. However, with the traffic stop summary data, it can be concluded that in most cases racial representation or the lack thereof within law enforcement impacts the stop proportionality rate of Africans Americans and Hispanics the more than Whites and Asians. The experience of conducting this study implied a couple important things. One, law enforcement in the southcentral region of the United States is not as transparent as they claim to be with how

they conduct their business. Two, the agencies in place in the southcentral region of the United States responsible for holding police departments accountable are grossly lacking in their ability to keep accurate records. Therefore, it could be assumed that the records are inaccurate because there is no delicacy or accountability of how the records are kept. If the data is not reliable, then any research into law enforcement in this region will be called into question.

Statistical Limitations and Implications for the Study

This study was conducted in the southcentral region of the United States and does not apply to other regions. This is not to say that the same study conducted elsewhere would not reveal the same results, but it is to say that the results of this study do not represent all law enforcement in the United States. There are hundreds of police departments in the southcentral region of the United States, and this study only captured 4. It could be that the results are limited to the specific police departments in this study and not to other police departments in that region. Further research would need to be completed to determine the specificity and relativity of this study's implications.

The study data is limited to the accuracy of the organizations that collected it. The traffic stop summary data was provided by the police departments and each state's licensing agency for law enforcement in the southcentral region of the United States. The geographical data was obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau's website.

Additional research is needed using this study's model in other regions of the United States to collectively and accurately access the data to determine if police departments across the country share a similar record keeping practice or if it is unique to

this study. The research would also assess and determine the level of transparency or lack thereof among the other agencies in other regions of the United States. It is then that I would be able to definitively provide a valid and reliable response to the research question that would provide broad implications that would apply to law enforcement in the United States as a whole.

By identifying if racial representation is connected to racially proportionate traffic stops, this study identified a couple potential reasons the public may lack confidence in law enforcement to do their job effectively. As discussed in Chapter 1, the lack of confidence in law enforcement to unbiasedly do their job has led to and created division between them and African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians. Law enforcement comes into contact with the public and the communities they serve most of the time through traffic stops. These stops should not be a way for the department to generate revenue, harass a particular race, or display power and authority but rather to enforce laws that have been put in place for the community's safety and security. As discussed, earlier perception is an individual's reality and if the public perceives that officers are disproportionality stopping one race over another, they will likely perceive that officers are biased. The results of this study can serve to bring about positive social change in law enforcement rather than add to the stigma that already exists. Educating officers on implicit bias, what it is, and what theirs are so that they can identify when they are making decisions based upon those thoughts might cause the stop proportionality rate to be more proportionate. Implementing better record keeping and providing transparency to the public can lead to a possible change in the perception some have of law enforcement.

If this perception can be changed to see law enforcement in a more positive light, then the lack of confidence the public has in law enforcement can be restored.

Recommendations

Implications for future research regarding racial representation in law enforcement and traffic stop proportionality is needed to determine if this study is unique to the specific departments or to the southcentral region of the United States. Determining if these practices are common among police departments in the U.S. is critical. Further research might indicate that racial representation in law enforcement impacts traffic stop proportionately in other departments outside of this study's region or that their record keeping practices are similar to that of the departments in this study. If law enforcement is going to attempt to repair their relationship with the African American, Hispanic, and Asian communities they need to know where to begin. There is no way to track, access or evaluate a police departments practices if there is not a set standard of record keeping for them to operate. It is not enough for departments to submit a summary of random data to give the appearance transparency. Law enforcement needs to be held accountable for the data that they record to ensure its accuracy and validity. There needs to be specific data that is collected so that researchers such as myself will be able to accurately evaluate and definitely be able to answer any research question posed.

The implications of this study show that racial representation in law enforcement is important and that the perception of racial bias in law enforcement has merit. The results of this study can be used to support the need for more racial representation in law enforcement in the southcentral region of the United States. If racial representation

cannot be achieved, then the department should consider requiring implicit bias training for new recruits and annually for seasoned officers. Since implicit biases are acquired in the subconscious and influence decisions made in the moment requiring training to understand and recognize those thoughts and ideas may be enough to positively impact traffic stop proportionality.

Conclusion

This study is not meant to add to the negativity and already tense scrutiny law enforcement is under but rather to bring about positive social change by educating the public and law enforcement. Using the results of this study to inform law enforcement of the importance of good record keeping and transparency might employ systems to be put in place to ensure record legitimacy in the future. Educating the public and law enforcement of the intricacies of implicit bias and how it impacts not just law enforcement but the community and ultimately the way in which policing is conducted would help to positively change the minds of many. To bridge the gap law enforcement has with African American, Hispanic, and Asian communities it will require law enforcement to have an open mind and willingness to understand how their actions could be perceived as racially biased. The incorporation of implicit bias training rather than cultural diversity training may improve the stop proportionality rate in their communities which might positively change the way in which the communities view law enforcement. If the community's perception of law enforcement can be changed from negative to positive community poling may be more successful and policing African American,

Hispanic, and Asian communities would be safer for the community and law

enforcement.

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