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Perception of Racial Minorities and Police Officers Involving Use of Force

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Abstract

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MPhil, Walden University, 2022

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MA, University of Phoenix, 2010

BS, Paine College, 2001

Proposal Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Abstract

Although police training, codes of ethics, and use of force policies are in place at police departments, the problem is there is a lack of standardization involving use of force by police officers, which is triggering community concerns between police officers and racial minorities. The present study built on the work of Riter by exploring perceptions and lived experiences of racial minorities involving police officers' use of force based on fear, trust, and confidence. The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore whether lived experiences of racial minority citizens differ from police officers regarding use of force in a Southeastern state and how fear, trust, and confidence influence perceptions. Rawls' social justice theory was used as the theoretical framework. Data were collected via in-depth semi-structured interviews with 10 active police officers and 10 racial minority citizens. Data were analyzed for patterns and themes using inductive coding. Four emergent themes were identified as contributing factors that lead to perceptions both groups have about each other in terms of police use of force. Key results of this study were multifaceted in that both groups agreed on some points but mainly saw use of force differently. Fear, distrust, and lack of confidence in police influenced minorities' views that they were biased against them. Police officers' perceptions were that they used force when compelled to do so to gain control of an out-of-control situation. This study may lead to positive social change by providing information to police department leaders and policymakers to develop or modify policies regarding use of force and help build cooperative relationships with underrepresented communities and citizens.

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Dedication

First, I want to dedicate this dissertation to my mother, Gloria Esther Quinones who always instilled in me the importance of having an education. It is also dedicated to my sister, Sonia, Gloria, Norma, Lucy, Luz, Carmen, and my brother Luis. To my two deceased siblings: Maribel and Jose; may you rest in peace. You will never be forgotten!

To my children, Malik and Marquese, this is living proof that you can accomplish anything in life no matter what obstacles you may face. We all go through life not knowing what will be in front of us, but don't ever let anyone or anything stop you from accomplishing your goals. You got this! We got this!

To my three nieces, Shabeli, Suhaiti, and Kenia for always taking interest in my educational goals, looking up to me, and pursuing their educational goals.

To my loved ones who cheered me on when I was down and wanted to quit, but your words of encouragement meant the world to me and pushed me to accomplish this amazing goal. I love you and you will never be forgotten. THANK YOU!

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First and foremost, I want to thank God for allowing me this amazing opportunity to accomplish something that only less than 2 percent of people in this world have, a Ph.D., and without the strength he gave me to push forward, I would not be here today. I will forever be grateful for the ability to achieve this major accomplishment. To both of my sons, I thank you for being patient and supporting me without realizing it. You both made sure that I was left alone when I was up late at night trying to get to the finish line. I appreciate my oldest son, Malik for solving some of the technical issues I was having at times. I appreciate my youngest son, Marquese for making me laugh when I needed laughter to keep me from giving up, for running to get some food so I won't have to cook, and for having an interest in my study. I am also thankful for the rest of my family, friends, and colleagues who cheered me on. Special thanks to the participants and the community for helping me in varying ways to get here today. A big thank you to my accountability partner, Hamza Abdullah Maliki Khabir, for completing this journey with me and following up with me. I am thankful for having such an amazing team for my dissertation journey. I am forever appreciative of my dissertation committee members, Dr. Gregory Campbell (chair) and Dr. Marcel Kitisso (second committee member), for guiding me in the right direction. Dr. Campbell, your words "Where there is a way, the WILL follows" led me to where I am today. Done!

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

Recent use of force by police officers has caught the attention of citizens in the United States (US), specifically in a Southeastern state where racial minority citizens have been the target of excessive use of force and televised through the media. The killing of Michael Brown in 2014 and recent killings where police officers were involved in using excessive force on minorities drew attention to persistent racial differences in policing, especially disproportionate use of force against Black people (Menifield, et al., 2019).

Based on various department policies, police officers are given the authority to use varying levels of force in proportion to the level or threat or imminent danger. Varying degrees of force or excessive force can cause minorities to have issues with fear, trust, and confidence regarding police officers. Akinlabi (2019) said in practice, police use of force has important implications for both individuals involved and society at large. Shjarback (2016) said concern over excessive use of force and public perceptions can cause criminal behavior within communities if left unchecked. Also, the current social climate in the US has led to calls for reviews of police policies, practices, and relations with community members, especially people of color (e.g., Black Americans, Latina/o Americans, Asian Americans/ Pacific Islanders, and Native Americans) (Dukes et al., 2017).

Furthermore, once perceptions of the police are inculcated among citizens, it is challenging to change those beliefs and start building trust between law enforcement and

racial minorities (Wu et al., 2015). A possible reason for distrust of the police began during the early 1990s when law enforcement officers strived to control criminal activity by targeting racial minority citizens who live in economically deprived communities (Wu et al., 2015). The relationship between police officers and citizens they serve is important to protect individuals from harm and solve crimes; therefore, without investigating the perceptions of racial minority citizens and police officers involving use of force as well as fear, trust, and confidence, it will be impossible to bridge gaps between racial minority citizens and police officers.

This study may provide information to police departments and policy makers to develop or modify policies regarding use of force and build cooperative relationships with underrepresented communities and citizens. Results could also lead to explanations to better understand policies and procedures involving use of force and determine if lived experiences of racial minorities are influenced by fear, trust, and confidence. If this issue is left unresolved, it can lead to additional distrust that exists between racial minority citizens and police officers. Possible consequences of police distrust include lack of cooperation with police departments, increases in crime, and confrontations between police officers and citizens (Weitzer & Tuch, 2005).

This study was needed to explore perceptions and relationships involving racial minorities and police officers based on fear, trust, and confidence as they relate to excessive use of force in the Southeastern US. Riter (2019) examined perceptions that racial minority citizens and police officers have regarding use of force and tactics that law enforcement officers exercise during their employment in the Southeastern US. Many

racial minorities perceive race is a reason that officers may stop them. This chapter includes problem and purpose statements, the research question, theoretical and conceptual framework, nature and significance of the study, and the scope, limitations, and assumptions of this research.

Background

Racial minorities and police officers have a long history of mistrust between one another due to past and recent encounters involving excessive use of force on racial minority citizens and exposure of police misconduct. Racial minorities have alleged unfair treatment from police officers as it relates to use of force. Additionally, recent incidents involving racial minorities and police officers have led to conversations about police reform as they relate to use of force, as well as trust, fear, and confidence between police departments and citizens. Since 2012, there have been many highly publicized fatal interactions between police and civilians of color, including shootings and deaths by police officers of 18-year-old Michael Brown of Ferguson, 12-year-old Tamir Rice of Cleveland, and George Floyd in Minneapolis (Nadal et al., 2017).

Peck (2015) said the media impacts general perceptions and attitudes involving law enforcement practices. Inequality of treatment of racial minorities compared to Whites has been documented, and still, perceptions and adverse treatment have an influence on fear, trust, and confidence (Gerber & Jackson, 2017). Peck (2015) also examined the perceptions and attitude of the police across various racial and ethnic groups to determine if minorities perceived the police differently compared to whites.

Peck (2015) found racial minorities were more likely to hold negative perceptions and attitudes towards police officers compared to Whites.

Davis et al. (2018) said 6% of all racial minority drivers stopped by the police, and 33% report force was used against them and seemed excessive; however, police officers received no corrective action from their departments. Furthermore, Lafraniere and Lehren (2015) said Black and Hispanic citizens are far more likely to be detained for minor infractions as compared to White drivers. Subsequently, police stop minorities for relatively minor reasons or no reason at all, and in some cases, because of their skin color (Epp et al., 2014).

I explored whether fear, trust, and confidence influence perceptions of racial minorities involving police officers and use of force. There is a gap in the literature involving this topic whether fear, trust, and confidence influence the perceptions racial minorities have about police officers and police officers on racial minorities. This study includes research to explore perceptions and relationships involving racial minorities and police officers based on fear, trust, and confidence as it relates to excessive use of force in a Southeastern state. This study was needed to explore lived experiences of police officers and minorities regarding whether fear, trust, and confidence play a role in their perceptions of each other involving use of force.

Problem Statement

The situation or social issue that prompted me to undertake this study was the recent increase of excessive force and deaths of racial minorities at the hands of police officers throughout the US. According to Kahn et al. (2017), racial minorities,

particularly Black males, are often found to have disproportionate contact with the police. Additionally, suspect race has been shown to affect application of lethal and nonlethal force (Kahn et al., 2017). Although police training, codes of ethics, and use of force policies are in place at police departments, the problem is there is a lack of national standards involving use of force by police officers, which is triggering conflicts between police officers and racial minorities throughout the US. Consequently, this study should be of interest to all law enforcement agencies, police officers, and policymakers to explore perceptions of racial minorities regarding how they view use of force by police officers. Similarly, it is also important for racial minorities, community officials, and local leaders to understand perceptions of police officers regarding use of force. Consequently, it is important to understand both police officers and citizens regarding use of force to better understand trust, fear, and confidence between police departments and citizens.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore whether lived experiences of racial minorities differ from police officers regarding use of force in a Southeastern state and how fear, trust, and confidence influence perceptions of law enforcement agencies, police officers, and policymakers. The research design of this study is qualitative. This study was intended to understand perceptions of both police and racial minorities. I hope to recommend possible solutions that could include policies involving how police use excessive force to reduce incidents with racial minorities. The phenomenon of interest was excessive force incidents with racial minorities. The reason to explore this topic was

the problem that racial minorities are facing involving recent use of excessive force by police officers in the US. Understanding perceptions from both parties regarding use of force should be of interest to law enforcement agencies, police officers, and policymakers.

Research Question

RQ1: How are racial minorities' and police officers' perceptions and lived experiences regarding use of force influenced by fear, trust, and confidence in a Southeastern state?

Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

The theory that grounded this study was the social justice theory developed by John Rawls. Rawls (2009) The social justice principles acknowledges that citizens, including government officials and agencies fulfill their societal obligations by cooperating and receiving the basic benefits of fairness. For example, if two people of different races are pulled over for not stopping at a red light, then both should be given the same treatment. Both individuals should be treated equally unless there are different situations. Rawls asserted that citizens should have the same basic equal rights to get a sense of justice regardless of their circumstances or disadvantages. Rawls also explained that a social contract theory is an agreement between citizens and the government, in which citizens can receive the basic treatment of fairness from the government, and without such an agreement, it is impossible to uphold the rule of law. The social justice theory was used to answer how racial minorities and police officers' perceptions and lived experiences regarding use of force are influenced by fear, trust, and confidence in a

Southeastern state. I used the social justice theory and a phenomenological approach to explore lived experiences of police officers and racial minority citizens.

I used a hermeneutic phenomenological approach, which allowed me to understand participants' everyday lived experiences and explore perceptions of racial minorities and police officers involving use of force. This helped in terms of identifying if all racial minorities and police officers' perceptions regarding use of force are influenced by fear, trust, and confidence (Suddick et al., 2020). Rudestam and Newton (2015) said phenomenological research involves what the person experiences. This helped me to form empathy as a researcher when participants began to describe their experiences regarding the use of force.

The logical connection between the framework presented and the nature of my study include John Rawls' social justice theory, which has been used extensively in the criminal justice system to demonstrate that everyone deserves equal treatment and the opportunity to receive fair justice regardless of their circumstances (Robinson, 2010). This approach was useful to understand the perceptions of racial minorities and police officers when using force. Furthermore, applying this theory offered the opportunity to better understand trust, fear, and confidence as it relates to use of force, which seemed to be the most appropriate theory to use for this study. Additionally, a phenomenological approach in qualitative research involves lived experiences of individuals within a particular group. In this case, lived experiences of racial minorities on the use of force were considered to understand perceptions of racial minorities and police officers when

using force. Applying a phenomenological approach worked best for this study because it is an approach which involves supporting the study of individual experiences.

Nature of the Study

To address the research question in this qualitative study, I used a phenomenological design to study real-world situations, providing detailed information regarding participants and their experiences. A phenomenological design was chosen because it is qualitative research that involves lived experiences of individuals within a particular group and focuses on peoples' perceptions of the world. This qualitative study involved using a hermeneutic framework to capture life experiences of racial minorities and police officers as they relate to use of force in a southeastern state. Moustakas (1994) said in a qualitative study, research is typically conducted in environmental settings where people live and carry out their normal activities.

The research design and methodology guide how data were collected and analyzed. A purposeful sampling method was used to identify and recruit racial minority citizens and police officers of any race as participants. Creswell (2007) said data saturation can typically be reached with 25 participants. I interviewed 10 racial minority citizens and 10 police officers until saturation. In-depth and open-ended semi-structured interviews were conducted using a validated questionnaire developed by Riter Permission was obtained via email from Riter to modify and add questions to address fear, trust, and confidence (see Appendix C). Data analysis was conducted using inductive coding to find themes using responses from participants. Belotto (2018) said the coding process allows interpretation of large segments of text and portions of information in new ways.

Definitions

Lived experiences: Personal knowledge about the world gained through direct and firsthand involvement in everyday events rather than representations constructed by other people. It may also refer to knowledge of people gained from direct face-to-face interaction rather than through a technological medium (Chandler & Mundy, 2011)

Police: Body of officers representing the civil authority of government. Police typically are responsible for maintaining public order and safety, enforcing the law, and preventing, detecting, and investigating criminal activities. These functions are part of policing. Police are often also entrusted with various licensing and regulatory activities ("Police," 2011).

Use of force: Reasonable level of force used to control a situation. Law enforcement is trained to use various degrees of force used to effectively subdue individuals with minimal to no injuries. There is no precise definition of this term (National Institute of Justice [NIJ], 2015).

Perception: Impression or awareness that a person possesses that is based on experience or exposure to some stimuli (Donovan & Klahm, 2015).

Racial minorities: A group of people who are in the minority compared to a larger group or the rest of the population ("Racial Minorities," 2023).

Excessive Use of Force: Use of force greater than that which is reasonable and beyond what prudent law enforcement officers would use under those circumstances ("Use of Force," 2021).

Assumptions

Assumptions are needed in research to justify the phenomenon. This study was based on several assumptions. First, it was assumed that all participants had experienced use of force with police officers and were willing to discuss their lived experiences. Second, it was assumed all participants were truthful when answering my questions related to the social problem. Third, I assumed my research along with the interview process would be sufficient to address racial minorities and police officers' perceptions to provide an understanding of this topic. Lastly, I assumed that findings could be used to clearly explain how use of force can be influenced by fear, trust, and confidence.

Scope and Delimitations

This qualitative phenomenological study was designed to address perceptions of racial minority citizens and police officers in a Southeastern state pertaining to use of force as it relates to fear, trust, and confidence. This study includes interviews using a questionnaire with open-ended questions developed by Riter with permission to modify and add questions to address fear, trust, and confidence. This study involved 10 racial minority citizens and 10 police officers of any race involving their experience with use of force. I used purposive sampling during which participants were identified through demographic questions.

Lived experiences that occurred outside of one Southeastern state were not considered. I excluded any individuals who did were not 18 years of age, minority, an active police officer with three or more years of experience, and had experiences that

were not relevant in terms of the research question. A phenomenological approach was most appropriate to use for this study since this type of qualitative research is used to describe lived experiences within a particular group. Additionally, it assisted me in terms of identifying themes from participants. To understand perceptions of racial minority citizens and police officers regarding use of force as it relates to fear, trust, and confidence, the social justice theory was most appropriate for this study. Results of this study were generalized in order to conduct further research involving similar social problems.

Limitations

Qualitative research provides an opportunity to explore lived experiences involving a phenomenon. My research involved using the qualitative method to understand lived experiences of citizens rather than gathering numerical data. Queiros (2017) said the qualitative method can lead to limitations involving preparing interviews that can become time- consuming, in addition to lack of generalizable information. Another limitation involves credibility and reliability. Rudestam and Newton (2015) explained it is the researcher's responsibility of convincing oneself and one's audience that the findings are based on critical investigation (p. 131).

As a researcher, it is my role to remain neutral when conducting interviews because researchers must choose how to position themselves during interviews, becoming either listeners or cocreators of data (Sorsa et al, 2015). Bracketing involves setting aside knowledge and assumptions in order to focus on participant viewpoints, which helped minimize any biases I had (Sorsa et al, 2015). A challenge of this study was

that some police participants did not want to participate or disclose any information about use of force. Police officers' participants' race was identified using demographic questions.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant in that there have been several cases that reached national news where police officers were using excessive force on racial minorities, specifically Black males. As for example, the killing of Rayshard Brooks as he fled officers in a restaurant car park in Atlanta (McFadden, 2020). The research question addressed how racial minorities and police officers' perceptions and lived experiences regarding use of force are influenced by fear, trust, and confidence in a Southeastern state. This study will be used to help understand perceptions of racial minorities and police officers have involving excessive force. I attempted to provide insights to police departments who are experiencing concerns involving excessive use of force and recommend possible solutions.

Chapter 1 includes information on perceptions of racial minorities and police officers involving excessive use of force. This study involves understanding trust, fear, and confidence between police departments and minority citizens in a Southeastern state. Lived experiences of minority citizens as they relate to use of force should be of interest to law enforcement agencies, police officers, and policy makers. This information can help lead to changes to current policies or social change that can have a positive impact on citizens and communities. The framework for this study included a hermeneutic phenomenological approach which allowed me to further this study by understanding

participants' everyday lived experiences. Furthermore, I applied John Rawls' social justice theory of fairness to address these perceptions.

In Chapter 2, I synthesize literature regarding perceptions of racial minority citizens and police officers involving use of force as it relates to fear, trust, and confidence. I also address the research question to better understand if perceptions of racial minorities are influenced by these factors.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The problem is there is a lack of national standards involving use of force by police that is triggering community concerns between police officers and racial minorities throughout the US. The purpose of this study was to explore whether lived experiences of racial minorities differ from police officers regarding use of force in a Southeastern state and how fear, trust, and confidence influence perceptions of law enforcement agencies, police officers, and policy makers. There was a gap in literature involving this topic on whether fear, trust, and confidence influence the perceptions of racial minorities have about police officers and police officers on racial minorities. This study involved addressing research about this topic. The main concern is that there is a recent increase of instances of excessive force and deaths of minorities by police officers throughout the US. Kahn et al. (2017) said racial minorities, particularly Black males have disproportionately frequent contact with police.

Additionally, Kahn et al. (2017) said race has been shown to affect application of lethal and nonlethal force. Because of this concern, perceptions of racial minorities involving how they view police officers' use of force should be of interest to law enforcement agencies, police officers, and policymakers. It is also important for racial minorities, community officials, and local leaders to understand police officers' perceptions as they relate to use of force. If these concerns are not resolved, there will continue to be conflicts between police officers and racial minority citizens.

Dukes et al. (2017) said the current situation in the US calls for a review of police practices and relations with people of color (e.g., Black Americans, Latina/Americans, Asian Americans/ Pacific Islanders, and Native Americans). By exploring perceptions of minority citizens and police officers related to fear, trust, and confidence, this study can be used to address whether they influence perceptions racial minorities have about police officers and vice versa.

This chapter includes a review of literature search strategies and perceptions of racial minorities and police officers' use of force related to fear, trust, and confidence. Chapter 2 also includes a review of the social justice and social contract theories using a hermeneutic phenomenological approach. Additionally, lived experiences of minority citizens are addressed, followed by a summary.

Literature Search Strategy

As I retrieved peer-reviewed articles, books, published dissertations, and magazine articles through the Walden University Library to learn about police officers' use of force related to racial minorities. The following search engines were used: ProQuest, SAGE Journals, Academic Search Complete, Criminal Justice Database, and Google Scholar. Key terms were *use of force by police officers*, *police officers and law enforcement officers*, *racial disparity*, *racial minorities*, *ethnic*, *police officers' perceptions*, *bias in law enforcement*, *race*, and *use of force*.

I searched for articles that were published between 2018 and 2022. However, in some cases, older articles and publications were used because they included in-depth information regarding perceptions of racial minority citizens and police officers as they

related to the use of force. The search yielded over 100 articles, but when strung with other terms, such as perception and racial minority, it decreased to 70 hits. The articles used for this study highlight the topic on the use of force. Additionally, locating other articles that included fear, trust, and confidence with police officers' use of force was needed. After retrieving all the articles and information, I created a file and entered them in the file to manage.

Theoretical Foundation

Perceptions of racial minority citizens and police officers involving use of excessive force as it relates to fear, trust, and confidence were explained using John Rawls' social justice theory and social contract theory using a hermeneutic phenomenological approach.

Social Justice Theory

Rawls (1971) social justice theory emphasizes that citizens should have the same basic equal rights as moral persons and fellow citizens regardless of their circumstances or disadvantages. Social justice focuses on the advantages and disadvantages of society and how they should be distributed (Robinson, 2010). The issues that racial minorities experience with police officers using excessive force can be supported when there is the perception of a lived experience of unfair treatment by police officers. Rawls (2009) said principles of justice should be treated by what it means. Racial minorities should be treated equally unless there are differences in situations that occurred. For example, if two people of different races are pulled over for not stopping at a red light, they both should be given the same treatment.

Robinson (2010) said rational individuals agree on two fundamental principles of justice: equal liberty (everyone should have equal fundamental rights, including liberty of conscience, freedom of speech and gathering, freedom of expression, self-respect, right to personal integrity, right of property, and right to not being arrested arbitrarily) and social inequalities (income and welfare are considered only if they benefit the disadvantaged) (Ekmekci & Arda, 2015). Principles of justice imply citizens should be respected regardless of their circumstances or disadvantages, so if racial minority citizens are not treated fairly by police officers, they may react and begin to gain negative perceptions about use of force with police.

The social justice theory relates to the specific study approach and research questions to answer how racial minorities and police officers' perceptions and lived experiences on the use of force are influenced by fear, trust, and confidence. Rawls' social contract theory was used to understand expectations of citizens involving natural rights in society when confronted by police officers. Rawls (2009) said the social contract theory is an agreement between citizens and the government in which citizens are treated fairly by the government, and without this agreement, it is impossible to uphold the rule of law. Understanding rights of citizens and policies for police officers can help minimize abuse of power by this group in terms of use of force. Furthermore, citizens, specifically racial minorities, are not subjected to arbitrary government. Therefore, all government officials will better understand how perceptions of use of force are formed by racial minorities and influenced by fear, trust, and confidence.

Conceptual Framework

Hermeneutic Phenomenological Design

The conceptual framework for this study includes a hermeneutic phenomenological approach which will allow me to further this study by understanding each participant's everyday lived experiences to explore the perceptions of racial minority citizens and police officers' use of force. This will help identify if at all racial minorities and police officers' perceptions on the use of force are influenced by fear, trust, and confidence (Suddick et al., 2020). Rudestam and Newton (2015) implied that phenomenological research focuses on what the person experiences which will help me to form empathy as a researcher when racial minorities begin to describe their experiences regarding the use of force. Furthermore, generalizing and transferability of Riter (2019) findings is evidence that further research is needed and could be expanded with new context, population, and position (Ramsook, 2018).

The logical connection between the framework presented and the nature of my study include John Rawls' social justice theory, which has been used extensively in the criminal justice system to demonstrate that everyone deserves equal treatment and the opportunity to receive fair justice regardless of their circumstances (Robinson, 2010). This approach can be useful to understand the perceptions of racial minorities and police officers when using force. Furthermore, applying this theory offers the opportunity to understand better trust, fear, and confidence as it relates to use of force which seems to be the most appropriate theory to use for this study.

Literature Review

The perceptions of use of force differ often by racial minorities and police officers. Due to the increase of excessive use of force on racial minority citizens, deaths caused by police officers, there has been a call for change in police department policies and within the criminal justice system altogether. The purpose of this study was to explore whether the lived experiences of racial minorities differ from police officers regarding the use of force in a Southeastern state and how does fear, trust, and confidence influence perceptions of law enforcement agencies, police officers, and policy makers (here again). In this section, I will further explore literature on the history of policing and use of force in the United States, some of the issues with use of force, use of force incidents with racial minority citizens, and the perceptions of minorities and police officers use of force.

History of Policing in the US

The history of policing in the United States is known to develop from incidents of lived experiences that members of our society experienced with the police (Brown, 2019). To understand the historical foundation of how policing began in the United States, it is important to understand the meaning of policing. Policing can be defined as establishing a police-community partnership to aid in identifying, prioritizing, and resolving crime problems and maintaining law and order (Pandey, 2014). Policing is used to monitor activities, specifically crime by enforcing the laws to control unlawful events in a community.

In the US, policing emerged from the evolution of policing in England. The Metropolitan Police Act of 1829 set the stage to maintain law and order due to the ineffective policing of the watch system (Lyman, 1964). Brown (2019) said it was not until the eighteenth and nineteenth century that policing in the United States was influenced by London. While policing was evolving in the United States, a "watch "system was formed by a privately owned company who hired volunteer members of a society to work as officers to promote public safety and uphold the rule of law (Duss, 2020). These members of society main responsibility were to report any danger they saw; however, policing was not effective because volunteers were often caught being inattentive and not controlling crime (Potter, 2013). Additionally, there were major differences on how policing operated in the northern and southern states.

Policing from the Southern and Northern regions of the United States functioned differently and based their interaction with citizens differently. For example, northern regions wealthy businesses hired people to protect property and the transportations of goods to save money, while southern regions created a "slave patrol", an early form of policing in the United States to discipline runaway slaves and prevent them from gaining freedom (Waxman, 2017). The slave patrol team was noted for the first American police system that paved the way of how Blacks was going to experience policing in the United States (Waxman, 2017). Unfortunately, Blacks who became slaves and Blacks that were freed lived in fear as slave patrols operated with impunity in subjecting Blacks to stops, searches, physical beatings, detentions, re-enslavement, and lynching (Brown, 2019).

The first law enforcement agency in the United States was established in Boston, Massachusetts, in 1883 as urban cities were growing and crime rates were increasing. By the late 1800s, almost every major city in the country had formed a police force, including the development of the Department of Justice and the Department of Federal investigation (Duss, 2020). During the development of the law enforcement agencies, police officers could use force to uphold the law and maintain peace that was not influenced by politicians or by those who held economic power (Potter, 2013). Policing then became the source to prevent crime in the United States by using force to deter crime.

Today, there are more than 18,000 local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies in the Unites States and law enforcement officers play an important role in our communities (Dudd, 2020). Citizens respect our police officers but are no longer known to be protectors of our communities, instead are viewed as enforcers due to the increase of citizen police use of force experiences. Morin et al. (2017) reported that almost one-third of the public now view local police as serving an enforcer role instead of a protector role. Subsequently, public confidence and trust in law enforcement has also decreased since early 2000's, meanwhile citizens perceptions of police encounter will continue to vanish as police officers continue to practice military tactics to uphold the law. Fear in police officers is also on the rise as citizens specifically, from minorities who have experienced unfair treatment with police interaction. In the United States, Blacks who is categorized as a minority belong to a group that has historically experienced mistreatment at the hands of public safety officers (Clevinger et al., 2018).

History of Police Use of Force in the US

Since the first law enforcement agency was established in the 1800's, it is

assumed that the use of force by police officers were first used during the same time. To

better understand the use of force in the US, it is appropriate to define use of force as the

reasonable level of force used to control a situation. Law enforcement is trained in

various degrees of force used to effectively subdue an individual with minimal to no

injury to the suspect (National Institute of Justice, 2015). Similarly, excessive use of

force is defined as exceeding the minimum amount needed to achieve a given objective

(Blumberg, 2019). The term excessive can be anywhere from a grab to a push or shove to

deadly force (Worrall, 2014).

In early policing, between the 1800's and 1900's, use of force was used to uphold

the law and maintain peace within the community (Potter, 2013). Even during modern

policing, from the very beginning, it was recognized not only that minimal force should

be used, and only, when necessary, but that public trust in police reduces the need for

force (Chapman, 2012). Unfortunately, the use of force strategies that were used to

minimize and deter crime spiked up tension between the citizens in the community and

police officers (Theoharis, 2013).

It is the duty of every police department to employ, monitor and enforce the use

of force by police officers while keeping citizens safe. In the United States, use of force is

used and permitted as a self-defense tool or to secure safety within another person or

group (National Institute of Justice, 2015). However, when doing so, police officers must

know they must not violate someone's constitutional right against unreasonable searches,

seizures, and the use of force regardless of their race (Prenzler et al., 2013).

Unfortunately, police in minority communities in the United States are often resented,

distrusted, and feared, hindering their effectiveness due to the perception of police

officers using excessive force in these neighborhoods (Chapman, 2012). Additionally,

police use of excessive force can be severely harmful to a person's life and can have both

short and long-term physical, emotional and psychological effects on a person (Yakam,

2019). By contrast when use of force is used at a minimum, it protects citizens, public

and private property, and it supports the facts of how the government is moving in the

right direction of applying for effective police work in our communities (Chapman,

2012). However, even with effective police work the possibility of using force will

continue to exist because a shove or a push with a little force can constitute the use of

excessive force.

Issues of Police Officer Use of Force

The use of force by police officers has been an ongoing problem for decades,

specifically when racial bias is manifested by police officers. Racial bias starts early as

Black youth face detrimental stereotypes with which other youth do not have to contend

(Hall et al., 2016). Many researchers conducted studies that explained the continued

tensions between citizens and the public they serve (Mears et al., 2017). When police

officers must make split second decisions during an incident where a citizen may require

more than the minimum use of force, police officers could be accused of police

misconduct. Mears et al. (2017) said that humans are predisposed to make quick

decisions to think fast when they perceive risk. Conversely, Mears et al. (2017) said that

those who think slow is more likely not to make fast decisions and are more careful when there is no perceived risk. The predispositions could explain one reason why there was a spike in cases with police officer using excessive force on minorities.

Mears et al. (2017) further said racial bias has existed from racial disparity that occurred within the criminal justice system, more notably, with the recent shootings of unarmed black men that ended in fatalities throughout the US. A study was conducted to determine if police officers are more likely to kill Black suspects and the national vital statistics data indicated that 29.1% of persons killed by police in 2002 were Blacks, while the Blacks percentage of those killed by police by gunshot was 27.7%; therefore 95% of deaths that occurred by police officers were caused using excessive force on Blacks (Kleck, 2007).

Another issue with use of force by police officers is the lack of individual and police department accountability when using force. Accountability is defined as "subject to giving an account: answerable" and "capable of being accounted for: explainable" (Chu et al. (2016). This means when an individual is held accountable an explanation is given regarding their action or conduct in order to improve on their performance. Police encounter people every day, whether is by being a member of a society or a suspect. Therefore, it is important to hold police officers and police departments accountable for abusing the power they are given over citizens, but to do that internal control systems must be available, such as a national reporting system to report deadly force incidence.

Furthermore, another issue is the abuse of police powers using force and the effects it has on individuals. Akinlabi (2020) conducted a study to better understand and

prevent police abuse and the use of excessive force; and how the use of force variables influence trust in the police. When police conduct violates the law, it erodes public trust (Gerber & Jackson, 2017). Akinlabi (2020) said because police officers are entrusted employees of an organization who supposed to enforce the law then police officers should also be held accountable for abusing their powers on the citizens they serve. Based on this researcher's literature, abusing police powers by using excessive force on the citizens they serve has a negative effect on them and on the community. Whether individuals have direct or indirect encounter with use of force, it does have a long-lasting effect emotionally and physically. Additionally, those who heard or witnessed the negative encounter with the police will, too, be negatively impacted by it (Akinlabi, 2020). The findings of this study confirmed that police abuse and the use of excessive force have negative effect on trust in the police.

According to Chu et al. (2016) 'In the United States, civilian review boards were established in the 1950s, and a police auditor mechanism followed in the 1990s" (p. 108). As a result of lack of accountability of police officers and police department in the US on the use of force, the development of the Inspector General's Office in 2013 was an indication there are still challenges strengthening police accountability and improving police performance (Chu et al., 2016). A former member of the Inspector's General's Office expressed how police officers must be investigated for any wrongdoing of excessive force. To hold police officers accountable and to fairly enforce improving police performance, external agencies must be hired and have unlimited access of all police department records where use of force incidents were recorded (James, 2020).

When accountability is improved it will bring transparency, openness, equality, improved

interaction with citizens in the world that is governed by a powerful bureaucracy.

Furthermore, police use of force that leads to death of racial minority citizens,

specifically Black males are a representation of why their lives may not be of concern.

The loss of deaths of racial minority citizens and the concern that their lives are not

important can be seen when accountability of unlawful police practices is absent (Aymer,

2016, p. 369).

Racial minority citizens have experienced widespread attention of deaths caused

by police officers using excessive force in the US. The stop and Frisk policy was

implemented in New York City to deter crime. Practices such as the stop-and-frisk,

"pretext" stops, and broken window policing are all laws influenced by discriminatory

and racial practices (Smith, 2016). Researchers found in the phenomenon of police

brutality, the brutality more likely to be justified if the dominant group in society agrees

or feels the police action is warranted given the nature of the interaction (Jeffries et al.,

2011). Despite of the overwhelming number of minorities who have been shot and killed

by police officer's using excessive force, there continues to be an influx of incidents. The

increase of incidents has shaken up minority communities requesting police reform,

accountability, and a change to the practices on the use of force documented in police

department policies.

Since the late 1800s, police officers have had a continuous violent relationship

with racial minority citizens. From the beginning of the horrifying beating of 26 years old

Black man, Rodney King in 1991 brought this problem to the eyes and ears of public and

media attention. Mr. King was brutally beaten by several Los Angeles police officers after leading them to a high-speed chase and later died due to injuries he suffered (Watson, 2019). Racial data involving excessive use of force demonstrates a trend of unlawful police practices using power against racial minorities and inequality of excessive use of force (Rudovsky, 2020). For example, minorities, including Hispanics have experienced 10% of police use of excessive force, 80% involved Black males, and 9% involved Whites (Rudovsky, 2020). Furthermore, the ongoing trend of excessive use of force on racial minorities has led to riots, an increase of high-profile cases, a revisit to police department policies, policing practices, transparency and holding individuals accountable in the US. The trend of excessive force provides an opportunity to correct the power police officers have over racial minority citizens using force.

Segregation and discrimination continue to follow modern day society and even though Jim Crow laws no longer exist, racial minorities continue to experience unlawful arrests (Chama, 2019). When President Ronald Reagan's war on drugs was implemented targeting racial minorities in the 1980s, this led to assume that the lives of Blacks was going to be threatened (Chama, 2019). For example, the recent racial minorities citizen police encounters that led to the deaths of Black males have shown that unequal treatment of Blacks still exists today (Chama, 2019). Evidence of excessive use of force presented by live footage showed minorities lives are not valued as White lives (Hall et al., 2016). The continued police officer incidents involving racial minority citizens, the rise of the Black Lives Movement was established.

Black Lives Matter Movement

Black Lives Matter movement was organized in 2014 as a response to the shooting of Treyvon Martin, an unarmed black male who was killed by police officers. The BLM was established to stop racial inequality and to provide an opportunity for Blacks to articulate how their lives are not valued by the criminal justice system. The events in Ferguson, Missouri led to angry protests and confirmed that minority citizens lives are still threated by racism and white supremacy in the US (Fisher, 2016).

Since 2014, the BLM movement became well known throughout many cities and states, in which has been mostly supported by the public. Statistics indicate that "most Blacks (65%) express support for BLM movement: 41% strongly support it. In addition, 24% say they support it somewhat. Some 12% of Blacks say they oppose BLM (including 4% who strongly oppose it). Even so, Blacks have somewhat mixed views about the extent to which the BLM movement will be effective, in the long run, in helping Blacks achieve equality. Most (59%) think it will be effective, but only 20% think it will be very effective. About one-in-five (21%) say it will not be too effective or will not be effective at all in the long run" (PEW Research Center et al., 2016). Hall et al. (2016) examined a study where researchers found that racial minority citizens have been brutalized, degraded, and known to be less than human in the eyes of the American culture; therefore, a rise in public support of the BLM movement took place after the death of George Floyd.

Although, there are many other factors that contributes to deaths (i.e obesity, high blood pressure, diabetes, drug overdose) in racial minority communities, the use of

excessive force by police officers contributes to deaths as well. Since many incidents of police excessive use of force go unreported to the Federal Bureau of Investigations, the mortality rate of racial minority citizens in comparison to Whites will never be known (Gilbert et al., 2016).

Racial Minority Use of Force Incidents in the US

Racial minority citizens have experienced police officer excessive use of force for decades since the beginning of the 1800s when slave patrols were hired to discipline slaves and keep them from becoming free. Certainly, police officers must enforce the laws while at the same time having seconds to make a decision of keeping public citizens safe and themselves at the time; however, it is also important for the police to use the minimum level of force to each circumstance (Chapman, 2012). The recent incidents involving police use of excessive force on racial minority citizens has impacted the minority community by destructive riots because policing in the US was not working very well to provide racial equality. Within the past five to six years, there has been an increase of excessive use of force by police officers that ended the lives of unarmed Black males. The following cases are examples of male minorities who were brutalized by the police even though they did not resist the arrest. These cases shook up society and became controversial shooting in the US.

Black Males

Michael Brown, an unarmed 18-year-old Black male teenager who was walking in the street with his friend when a white police officer stopped his vehicle and confronted them to walk on the sidewalk. Brown and officer Wilson exchanged words

through the open window of the car, where Wilson discharged his gun twice. However, as both teenagers were attempting to leave, Officer Wilson pursue them, and Brown turned around to confront the Officer while holding his hands in the air. Officer Wilson then fired 12 shots and six of them hit Brown. The body of Michael Brown was left without any care for four hours (Berman, 2014).

Eric Garner, an unarmed Black male was approached by police officers in 2014 in New York. Police officers believed he was selling single cigarettes from packs without tax stamps. As the officers held Eric face down on the ground, Gardner stopped moving, the police called an ambulance, and Garner reportedly died of a heart attack on the way to the hospital. Researchers found that in the process of arresting him, an officer choked him, and he died after Garner repeated several times "I can't breathe" (Hayashi, 2015).

Elijah McClain, a 23-year-old young unarmed Black male from Aurora, Colorado was stopped as he was on his way home after a response to a 911 call about a "sketchy" individual. McClain was wearing headphones and a ski mask due to a medical condition he suffered from and did not respond or stopped when police called him. It was determined officers had no legal justification for stopping McClain based on the 911 call. McClain was then forced to the ground and restrained with multiple carotids holds that restricted blood flow to the brain and later died (Bellware, 2021).

Daniel Prude, a 41-year-old Black unarmed male, was killed when he was pinned down to the ground while he was handcuffed and hooted with a "spit hood" during a mental health crisis in Rochester, New York on March 30, 2020. At the time of the restraint, Prude was found to be in one of his mental health episodes and was walking

naked on the street. Experts reported the police officers failed to use tactics that is known to be used during a mental health crisis such as this one. A medical examiner eventually ruled Prude's death a homicide caused by "complications of asphyxia in the setting of physical restraint (Knowles, 2021).

The most recent death caused by a police officer using excessive force was the killing of George Floyd on May 25, 2020. Mr. Floyd was pinned to the ground by a White officer who believed Mr. Floyd was using counterfeit money to buy cigarettes. There was an interaction that took place between Mr. Floyd and the officer, and Mr. Floyd became visible on the ground. Mr. Floyd repeatedly told officer he cannot breathe and begs for help. Two minutes later, the officer calls for the ambulance and Mr. Floyd was pronounced dead an hours later (Fitz-Gibbon, 2020)

These high-profile cases involved Black males encounters with police excessive use of force. In these cases, police officers were acquitted causing an uproar of the injustice for racial minority citizens (Wihbey & Kille, 2016).

Hispanic Males

In contrast to the shootings of Black males by police officers, Hispanic excessive use of force incidents is not highly publicized or get national attention. Since there are rooted differences in history and culture, this can explain why pockets of anger cropping up after cases involving Latinos have not grown to have a larger national impact (Rojas & Schmidt, 2016). The lack of publicity and the killings of Hispanics/Latino citizens has led to the destruction of their community. Police departments suffers from some of the bad apples of police officers and is the rapacious fruit of institutions like the Texas

Rangers that were sowed specifically to persecute Black and brown bodies and never care for people who looked different from them (Arce, 2020). The following cases are examples of Hispanics males who were killed by excessive use of force, but not highly publicized due to the lack of representation from community leaders who holds power like Rev. Al Sharpton and many others.

Gilbert Flores, 41-year-old Hispanic male in San Antonio, Texas, was shot and killed in in the hands of a police officer. The deputies were called to the scene after receiving a call from dispatch about a Flores being involved in a domestic dispute on August 28, 2015, At the time of the shooting, Mr. Flores was raising his hands in the air holding a knife and had stopped resisting. During the incident, the deputies did not have a body camera to determine exactly how the incident occurred, but a bystander recorded and reported that Flores had both arms raised and did not appear to be making threatening moves toward the deputies. The video went viral (Fernandez, 2015).

On July 3, 2016, Pedro Villanueva, an unarmed Hispanic 19-year-old male, was chased by an unmarked California Highway Patrol car for five miles. Villanueva made a U-turn back toward their direction, the officers opened fire while the car was in motion. A body camera was not available at the time of the incident because they were working undercover. Villanueva did not know he was a part of a sting to crackdown on illegal street racing. Villanueva was shot several times and died at the scene (Downs, 2016).

Raul Saavedra-Vargas, a 24-year-old unarmed Hispanic male, was shot and killed by police officers in Reno, Nevada as he drove the wrong way on a one-way street after it had been closed due to a local festival. Report indicated that Mr. Saavedra-Vargas was

driving drunk almost three times over the limit while the one-way street was full of pedestrians. Mr. Vargas then ran into a metal barricade after the police officer fired multiples times on both sides of the van. It was reported that Mr. Vargas had gotten into an argument with his girlfriend the same evening as the incident (Downs, 2016).

Vinson Ramos, 36-year-old Hispanic male was shot and killed by three police officers in Bell, California. Dispatch received a call about Ramos being in an altercation in a restaurant with his 8-month-old pregnant girlfriend. It was It was alleged that the police officers yelled out several times to Ramos to out the knife down. Ramos then came out the restaurant and asked the police officers to shoot him and then charged at the officers with a knife. Ramos was wielding a folding pocketknife and refused to comply when he was shot multiple times (Cota-Robles, 2016).

Antonio Zambrano-Montes, a 37-year-old Hispanic unarmed male was gunned down after running away from three officers in Pasco, Washington in 2015. Montes was alleged to be throwing rocks at traffic and at the officers. Video footage shows Montes at some point raising his arms before he is turned to them and gunned down. Pasco police department officers fired 17 shots at Montes after he ignored orders to stop throwing rocks and jogged across a busy intersection (Swaine et al., 2017).

Asian Males

Angelo Quinto, a 30-year-old-Asian male has died after police officers kneeled on his neck to subdue him during a mental health crisis in Antioch, California in 2020. Angelo Quinto was a navy veteran that had been "suffering from anxiety, depression, and paranoia for the previous few months" (Osei, 2021). When the police were called to the

scene during the mental health crises, officers asked his mother to step aside to place handcuffs on him. Quinto's mother reported within minutes, she saw the officer with his knee on Quinto's neck for almost five minutes (Osei, 2021).

Fong Lee, an Asian 19-year-old during a foot chase was shot eight times by Minneapolis Officer Jason Andersen, who claimed Lee was armed and had motioned to shoot him in 2006. Lee was riding bikes with friends near an elementary school when the officers approached the youth in their squad car. Police said a gun was found next to Lee's body, but his family questioned whether cops had planted it, saying they believed the teen was unarmed. The police officer was later fired by the Minneapolis Police Department (Fuchs, 2020).

Kuanchung Kao, a 33-year-old Asian male was shot and killed in Rohnert Park, California in 1997 by police officers. Reports alleged Kao got into a fight at a bar, allegedly in response to racial taunts from a group of white men. Kao who was upset was yelling and swinging a broomstick in the street in front of his house, and neighbors called the police. The police officer then shot Kao once in the chest and later claimed he felt threatened because Kao truck martial arts poses and hit the patrol car with a stick (Yamamoto, 2012).

The most recent, Christian Hall, a 19-year-old Asian male, was shot and killed by a state trooper police officer. State troopers responded to a call about a suicidal man, later identified as Hall, on the overpass and found him standing with a gun near the bridge. Troopers began speaking with Hall and ordered him to put the gun on the ground, which he did. As police continued speaking with him, he picked the gun back up and began

walking toward the troopers. He pointed the gun in their direction, and the police officer shot him (Scott, 2020).

These cases could have reached national attention of the media, policy makers and community leaders. Studies showed that race played a significant role in excessive use of force incidents in the US. Historically, research indicated that minorities were at a greater risk to be harmed during an encounter with an officer (Edwards et al., 2019). From 2010-2014, there were approximately 2, 285 deaths that resulted from excessive use of force by police officers (Buehler, 2017). The highest deaths caused by police officers were Black males with 1.7%, Hispanic males accounted for 2.8%, and White males were at the low 2.5%, which indicated that Black and Hispanic males were killed at a much higher rate than White males (Buehler, 2017). Americans believe that in the US, Asians do not encounter discrimination, if fact, studies showed that Asians deal with racism every day but at a lower percentage (Yoo et al., 2005). Asian males are more than 50 % less likely to be killed by police than are White men (Edwards et al., 2019). Black and Hispanic males are 50% more likely to have use of force interaction with the police (Fryer, 2019).

Racial Minority Use of Force Incidents in the Southeastern US

The increase of police use of force on racial minorities within the last ten years continues to attract the attention of government agencies, citizens, media, and policy makers. While the excessive use of force by police officers has killed many racial minority citizens across the US, the Southeastern US have experienced similar incidents that caused an outrage from Black communities to protest the streets of Atlanta. Almost

184 of Georgia citizens have been shot and killed by police officers from 2010 to 2015

from the back. The average age of Georgian Black citizens that were shot and killed was

29 years old and White Georgian citizens was 41 years old (Schrade & Pebbles, n.d.).

(Schrade and Pebbles (n.d.) said the population of Black citizens in Georgia were

more likely to be shot than Whites. 3% of Black Georgians were unarmed and shot, while

there were only 2% Whites that were unarmed and shot. 78% of police officers who shot

their guns were White making racial minority incidents rate twice that of Whites based on

the population figures and the investigation. The increase of police use of force incidents

in the Southeastern US has led to publicized police shootings in Atlanta, Georgia;

however, many police shootings continue to go undocumented and are not publicized

throughout the US. In Georgia, reporting to the Federal Bureau of investigations for local

agencies is optional, which makes it difficult to gather the correct data for racial minority

citizens. The following cases are examples of excessive use of force incidents in Atlanta,

Georgia involving racial minority citizens.

Atlanta, Georgia Use of Force Lived Experiences

Rashard Brooks, a 27-year-old Black unarmed male, was shot and killed in 2013

by Atlanta, Georgia police officers as he struggled with two officers before taking one of

the officer's Tasers. Brooks had fallen asleep in a vehicle parked in the drive-through

lane of a Wendy's. One of the police officers shot Brooks on the back as he fled the

scene. The GBI continued to conduct an independent investigation of this case (Georgia

Bureau of Investigations, 2020).

Olivio Diaz, a 47-year-old Hispanic male in Atlanta, was shot and killed in 2019 after beating an officer with a long wooden stick at a Roswell, GA gas station. It was reported that Diaz and a store clerk were in an altercation because Diaz would not pay for his items. The officer attempted to use his stun gun on Diaz and was unsuccessful. The officer eventually pulled out his gun and open fire on Diaz (Schrade and Pebbles, (n.d.).

Zhao Nan, a 45-year-old Asian male was shot and killed by police officers after they attempted to speak with him. Police were called to the scene after reporting Nan threatened to kill his neighbor. Zhao ignored the officers' commands and took cover behind a dumpster. He opened fire on the officers with a handgun. Both officers returned fire, striking Zhao at least once. Zhao was treated on scene, but later died at the hospital (Georgia Bureau of Investigations, 2020).

The increase of use of force by police officers involving racial minority citizens led the mayor of Atlanta, Georgia, Keisha Bottoms recommend changes on the use of force policy. In Atlanta, Georgia, the use of force by police officers has been amended since the shooting of Rayshard Brooks in 2020. Mayor, Bottoms of Atlanta, Georgia ordered for the police department to change the way officers use force on citizens minimizing the amount of power police officers have on citizens.

Prior to the shooting of Rayshard Brooks, it was policy to "use force" or "deadly force" to apprehend a suspected felon when the officer "reasonably believes that the suspect possesses a deadly weapon or any object, device, or instrument which, when used offensively against a person, is likely to or actually does result in serious bodily injury and when [the officer] reasonably believes that the suspect

poses an immediate threat of serious bodily injury to the officer or others." It also allows for deadly force when there's probable cause to believe the suspect had inflicted or threatened serious physical harm and his or her escape "would create a continuing danger of serious physical harm to any person" (Catts, 2020).

On August 3, 2020, a resolution for how the use of force was used by police officers was approved. The resolution approved was for the Atlanta Police Department to adopt the 8 Can't Wait principals and pursue the amendments to the departments standard operating procedures regarding use of force. The 8 Can't wait was a campaign that aimed to change police department policies relating to excessive force. Furthermore, the 8 Can't Wait referred to the eight minutes and 46 seconds the police officer had his knee on George Floyd's neck (Catts, 2020).

There is a wide range of police officers who have shot and killed racial minorities citizens using excessive force, and one can assume that US officers use force far more than those in other parts of the country. Currently, evidence shows racial minority citizens, specifically Blacks and Hispanics, are at risk of having experienced police encounter that could lead to deaths or have contact with the criminal justice system far more than Whites (Edwards et al., 2019). Furthermore, the recent increase of use of force incidents involving racial minority citizens plays a vital role in shaping perceptions of the police regarding the excessive use of force (Conkling, 2019).

Perceptions of Racial Minority Citizens Involving Use of Force

Racial minority citizens perception of the police was found to be more negative than White citizens. Peck (2015) examined 92 studies on the perceptions that racial

minority citizens have on police officers. The focus of the study was to provide an overview to determine if there is a difference on how racial minority citizens and police officers views one another. Peck (2015) said minorities, specifically African Americans were at a higher percentage than Whites and Hispanics, to hold negative perceptions about the police. Hispanics somewhat had a more positive perception of the police than Blacks, but a higher percentage of negative views than Whites (Peck, 2015).

Kyprianides et al. (2020) examined research involving 1, 581 scenarios broken into two studies on different uses of force by police officers since the increase of police power on racial minority citizens have expanded. The purpose of this study was to examine what contributed to how citizens accept police use of force and how judgments about police use of force are influenced by underlying perceptions of trust and legitimacy. In this study, use of force included, the use of a Taser, the discharge of a firearm, baton, and CS spray. Research also assessed the use of verbal and non-verbal use of force such as talking down and handcuff. The study concluded with occurrences involving use of force using tactical weapons that are less tolerated by citizens in comparison to occurrences involving non-verbal use of force. Study one indicated that contact made with different police devices did not influence trust and the validity of the weapons used, while study two trust was a major factor with how citizens perceived use of force by police officers (Kyprianides et al., 2020).

Hickman et al. (2015) said there is a gap between police officers and citizens perceptions of police officers use of force incidents. In fact, statistics shared by some police officials showed infrequent incidents of use of force against citizens. However,

statistics on the use of force incidents are not available, since many police departments do

not report such information (Hickman et al., 2015). Consequently, since many incidents

of police excessive use of force go unreported to the Federal Bureau of Investigations, the

amount of use of force incidents involving racial minority citizens in comparison to

Whites will never be known (Gilbert et al., 2016). While the National Institute of Justice

created a publication to inform the public about use of force incidents and their progress,

police department are hesitant to release use of force reports to the public because it

captures the attention of the media, policy makers, and criminal courts (Adams et al.,

1999). Furthermore, when departments fail to release the use of force reports to the

public, negative perceptions of the police increase (Klahm IV et al., 2014).

Additionally, Hagan and Shedd (2005) imply that encounters between police

officers and racial minority citizens build negative perceptions of racial inequality. While

Blacks are known to be intimidating to Whites, it is also important to point out that

Black history involving slavery in the United States could have contributed to how racial

minorities perceive police encounter. Hagan and Shedd (2005) said Blacks reported

negative perceptions of the police more so than Whites or Hispanics.

By contrast, Hispanics, who has less encounter with the police and are less prone

to participate in criminal activity than Blacks are more often than not at risk of

differential threat more so than Whites (Hagan & Shedd, 2005). Researchers who have

examined Hispanics perceptions of the police found that Hispanics, whether documented

or undocumented, if arrested and booked are subjected to be checked by an immigration

database, which threatens and place undocumented immigrants at risk of removal.

Furthermore, immigration agencies often use police officers as gatekeepers and are given the discretion to whom investigate and arrest (Simmons et al., 2018). When Hispanics see there is an increase of deportation of immigrants and an increase of police involvement with immigration, eventually they will create the perception that their contact with the police can and will lead to their removal from their community (Simmons et al., 2018). When a negative perception is created by Hispanics, documented or not, legal, or illegal, they begin to lose trust within the police and lessen their willingness to report crime or help solve crime (Simmons et al., 2018).

Theodore and Habans (2016) held the same opinion about the perceptions on police officer's involvement with immigrant and non-immigrant Hispanics. Theodore and Habans (2016) said many Hispanics fear police officers because they contribute to negative contact and increases the mistrust, they have of police officials. Similarly, police officers could be at a disadvantage to solving a crime and lowering urban crime rates because Hispanics will not willingly report crime, report they are victims of a crime or provide information that could help them since they fear this could spark an investigation for deportation (Theodore & Habans, 2016).

Similarly, Simmons et al. (2018) said Blacks are ahead of other racial minority citizens including Hispanics and Asians with having fewer positive perceptions about police officers. 66% of legal documented Hispanics citizens and 33% of Hispanics who were born in the United States fear deportation. They also fear the deportation of family members and friends (Simmons et al., 2018). However, Hispanics legal status or citizenship play a major role on the perceptions they have about police officers. The

study concluded overall that Hispanics do not trust the police and are apprehensive to reporting crime. Additionally, Hispanics, whether legal or illegal, most likely will not contact the police even if they are victims of a crime since they fear their immigration status will place them, family members, and friends on the radar (Simmons et al., 2018).

Hagan and Shedd (2005) said many young racial minority citizens have an unfavorable perception of the police because of the unfair treatment they have always received from the police and the judicial system. Young racial minority males are 21 times more likely to have died from police use of excessive force than that of young White males (Hall et al., 2016). Hall et al. (2016) said race of an individual has a greater risk of police racial bias than any other race.

Additionally, Hagan and Shedd (2005) said racial minority youths, especially Black and Hispanic students encounter unfair treatment from police officers more often than expected. Hagan and Shedd (2005) argued that Hispanic students perceived police contacts more negatively even though, they experience less contact with the police regularly.

A study conducted by several university researchers, on Black youth's perception on racial discrimination found their age contributed to their perceptions. Additionally, Black youths who were older and experienced more racism were more prone to report they are viewed negatively in the eyes of the general public. 200 Black youths ages 14 to 18 who lived and went to school in racially diversified part of the United States were included in this study (Seaton, 2009).

Studies have indicated that 5.2% of Black youths and 5.1% of Hispanics will more than likely have some kind of police encounter and experience threats or excessive force by police more than Whites. Consequently, racial minority youths are more incline to have police encounter with the police during a traffic stop, driving in an urban area, parked, or during an arrest (Davis, et al., 2018). Youths tend to formulate perceptions, either positive or negative depending on the police encounter during a situation (Davis, et al., 2018). Researchers concluded that racial minorities citizens prior perceptions of police encounter negatively influence the trust and treatment by police officers PEW Research Center et al. (2016).

The perceptions that Hispanics have regarding the police and how they are treated have gone without much attention for many years. Barrick (2014) shared that many studies have focused on the perceptions of African Americans and Whites regarding the police and very little on the perceptions of Hispanics. Research have indicated that Hispanics perceptions of police use of force and how the police treat them is an issue. Additionally, Hispanics direct encounters with the police, especially when asked questions about their immigration status do impact the perceptions they have of the police (Barrick, 2014). Barrick (2014) held an opinion that Hispanics positive perceptions of the police are at a higher percentage that of Blacks, but lower than Whites.

Furthermore, perceptions of the police formed by citizens consisted of how the police do their job and their overall performance of effective policing. Studies have shown citizens' perceptions of the police differ by race, age, and social status, in which can have an impact on investigations to solve crimes (Jefferies et al., 2011). Additionally,

language barriers can also cause problems on the relationship between the police and Hispanics and how one another perceives each other to be (Wu, 2014).

Perceptions of Police Officer Use of Force

It is known the United States has been experiencing the use of excessive force problems on racial minority citizens. Police officer's main responsibility is to ensure the safety of all citizens and to maintain law and order; therefore, police perceptions of individuals can be learned from the start of their police training. Traditionally, police department officials often leave lower-level police officers, especially younger police officers with the decision of when to use force (Klukkert et al., 2009). When police officers are given power to make those decisions, it can be perceived that racial minority citizens are more dangerous or criminally deviant than Whites, which can increase the use of force incidents and uproars within racial minority communities (Klukkert et al., 2009). Dukes et al. (2017) asserts that police must find ways to investigate and solve crimes without negative perceptions of the citizens they serve, while treating racial minority citizens equal as any other race.

Use of force by police officers can be used based on the perception of the police. A focus group was conducted in Germany consisting of police officers excessive use of force against citizens using a scenario of a police encounter with two young men in a stolen vehicle. Researchers found when police officers use force on citizens, it has to do with how they perceive the level of the situation to be. Moreover, how the situation is perceived by the police can also influence the justification for police use of force on the people they serve, whether legal or illegal (Klukkert et al., 2009).

Race is one of the characteristics that has an impact on the perception of police officers during contact with an individual and how they will be treated by the criminal justice system (James at al., 2013). Research has shown racial minority citizens are shot and killed by police officers at a faster pace during police training than whites. While this observation may be true, it can also influence the perception of police officers when engaging with racial minority citizens throughout different communities. James (2020) described research that has shown a significant difference on how police officers perceive different races when using excessive force. For example, if there is a large population of racial minority citizens, including Blacks and Hispanics in a community, then the police will have a greater chance to have the perception that racial minority citizens are violent, and this will influence police to use excessive force.

The lack of trust and confidence in police toward certain individuals or groups also impacts police perception about racial minority citizens when using force. When trust is not expressed by the police, negative perceptions begin to formulate about certain members of society (Miles-Johnson & Pickering, 2018). Likewise, when racial minority citizens lack trust in police, they perceive police officers to be negative with the notion that the police will not treat them equal. The attitude of police officer's and racial minority citizens can influence how they respond to each other, in which can also influence the perceptions of both parties even individuals who live outside of the US.

Miles-Johnson and Pickering (2018) said police officers' perceptions of trust in people from diverse groups may be influenced by former positive or negative encounters. Police trust in racial minority citizens does not solely come from the interactions they

have or from police culture but can come from unethical or ethical decisions they make during a situation (Miles-Johnson & Pickering, 2018). The relationship between both parties must be one of respect and trust for effective policing and for racial minority citizens to feel safe and protected by the police. If police officers treat citizens with respect, perform their duties according to police department policies, the police will be respected and trusted. Additionally, citizens will have confidence in the police to serve, protect, and treat them equally (Donner et al., 2015).

Summary

As articulated in Chapter 2, use of force by police officers has been an issue in the US, and nearly all recent use of excessive force incidents has been perpetrated against racial minority citizens, making it difficult to trust and have confidence in police officers who are supposed to serve and protect them. The growing number of racial minority citizens deaths caused by police officers has led to pressure on law enforcement agencies, police officers, and policy makers throughout the US. This chapter include a literature review on use of force, specifically excessive use of force on racial minority citizens in the US including incidents that took place in the Southeast.

This chapter also included a literature review involving perceptions racial minority citizens and police have regarding police use of force. Lived experiences of participants were described using the social justice and contract theories. I used a hermeneutic phenomenological approach to understand participants' everyday lived experiences and perceptions of racial minorities involving police officer use of force. I helped identify whether racial minorities and police officers' perceptions regarding use of

force were influenced by fear, trust, and confidence. Chapter 3 contains information

describing my methodological approach. Chapter 3 includes the research design,

participant selection practices, sample size, instrumentation, data collection procedures,

data analysis plan, ethical issues, and issues with trustworthiness.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

I used a phenomenological research approach to describe lived experiences of racial minority citizens and police officers involving use of force as it relates to fear, trust, and confidence in a Southeastern state. The purpose of this study was to explore whether the lived experiences of racial minorities differ from police officers regarding the use of force in a Southeastern state and how fear, trust, and confidence influence perceptions of law enforcement agencies, police officers, and policy makers. This chapter includes the research question, role of the researcher, ethical issues, methodological approach, instrumentation, data analysis, research design, validity, reliability, and a summary.

Research Design and Rationale

Research Question

RQ1: How are racial minorities' and police officers' perceptions and lived experiences regarding use of force influenced by fear, trust, and confidence in a Southeastern state?

Phenomenological Research

I used a hermeneutic phenomenological approach, which allowed me to understand participants' everyday lived experiences and explore perceptions of racial minorities and police officers involving use of force. The central phenomenon of this study was the recent increase of excessive force and deaths of racial minorities by police officers throughout the US.

Rudestam and Newton (2015) said the hermeneutic phenomenological research design is not limited to in-person interviews. Sources of data can include self-reported documents or other literature such as news accounts or published articles. The results of my data analysis became the second data point. I did not use statistics involving use of force in a Southeastern state as a third data point for triangulation because data were not readily available. This approach helped me to understand if racial minorities' and police officers' perceptions regarding use of force are influenced by fear, trust, and confidence.

Rudestam and Newton (2015) said phenomenological research involves what participants experience. This helped me form empathy when participants began to describe their experiences involving use of force. Furthermore, the phenomenological approach involves lived experiences of individuals within a particular group. In this case, lived experiences of racial minorities regarding use of force were addressed to understand perceptions of racial minorities and police officers. Applying a phenomenological approach worked best because it is an approach supporting the study of individual experiences.

Role of the Researcher

My role as the researcher was to be objective. My role was to engage with and be sensitive and respectful toward participants, which helped with quality of research data and depth of interviews. As the researcher, I recruited participants, interviewed them using a questionnaire, actively listened, and recorded their lived experiences to understand this phenomenon. Burkholder (2016) said researchers should be aware of their facial expressions and body language in order to not present any implicit biases toward

participants. Rudestam and Newton (2015) said it is the researcher's responsibility to convince oneself and one's audiences that findings are based on critical investigations (p. 131). I disclosed the social problem I explored and the purpose of this study to all participants. As a scholar-practitioner, I had no previous personal or professional working relationships with police officers or minority participants in this study. As a researcher, I eliminated bias by using a bracketing technique during the interview process to set aside my knowledge and assumptions and focus on participants' viewpoints.

Methodology

In this qualitative study, I used a phenomenological design to explore racial minorities' and police officers' perceptions and lived experiences involving use of force related to fear, trust, and confidence. Rudestam and Newton (2015) said phenomenology involves addressing how people describe their experience. Moustakas (1994) said in a qualitative study, research is typically conducted in environmental settings where people live and carry out normal activities. The choice of research method is determined by the nature of the research question (O'Sullivan et al., 2017; Ravitch & Carl, 2016). If the research question is exploratory and involves in-depth information about a problem, the appropriate research method is qualitative (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008; O'Sullivan et al., 2017; Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Lived experiences of participants can be used to address if fear, trust, and confidence influence their perceptions as they relate to use of force. Therefore, the most appropriate method to use was the qualitative method.

Participant Selection

First, approval from the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB) was required. Upon IRB approval (12-3-21-0625733), the recruitment process began. I created two different social media posts and shared them on Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn to target racial minority citizens and police officers. All participants were adults, minorities, and resided in a county in a Southeastern state. For police officers, all participants were adults, sworn police officers, and worked as police officers in the county. To confirm participants met inclusion criteria, criteria were included in social media recruitment posts (see Appendix A). For participants who replied to social media posts via email, I immediately replied and provided informed consent form electronically via email. Upon receiving an email with the words "I consent" from each participant, I shared interview questions and scheduled interviews at participants' convenience according to their personal and work schedules. After the first seven interviews for each group, data saturation was reached because subsequent participants no longer revealed new information.

I used a purposeful sampling technique for recruitment of police officer participants. The purposeful sampling technique allows the researcher to identify and select individuals or groups of individuals who are knowledgeable about or experienced with a phenomenon of interest (Palinkas et al., 2015). A convenience sampling method to identify racial minority participants was considered as a secondary method of recruitment, but was not needed, as all participants were recruited though the primary method of social media.

My sample included 20 participants after which saturation was achieved. Creswell (2007) said data saturation can typically be reached with as many as 25 participants. Saturation can be defined by the amount of quality information a researcher needs to provide a detailed and clearer picture about a certain topic (Mason, 2010). The justification for this can be noted by the research work of Riter (2019), where he used a phenomenological hermeneutic strategy, to understand the perceptions held by racial minority citizens and law enforcement officers in a Southeastern state, concerning police use of force. Because this study builds on the research of Riter who used 20 participants for his investigation, I chose a sample size of 20 participants. Rudestam and Newton (2007) said a suggested sample size for phenomenological research should range between five and 30 participants, which was within my sample size range.

Instrumentation

The instrument used for data collection was from previously published research by Riter (2019). I used and modified interview questions developed by Riter (see Appendix B). The modifications to the interview questions aligned with my research question. Permission to modify and add questions to the to address fear, trust, and confidence was requested via email and permission to use the instrument was given by Riter (see Appendix C).

Face-to-face and phone interviews were conducted depending on the participants preference due to COVID-19 and participants personal and work schedule. The interviews with police officers and racial minority participants were conducted utilizing in-depth, semi-structured, open-ended questions developed by Riter. Minority citizens

who confirmed to participate in this study consisted of Blacks and Hispanics only. No other participants from other ethnic backgrounds responded to the social media posting. Police officers who confirmed to participate in this study were Black, White, Hispanic, and Asian. To ensure that all participants were asked the same questions, each set of interview questions were electronically emailed to the correct participants prior to the interview since my population were from two different groups. The identities of the participants were not obtained. Participants names were coded using the pseudonyms C1, C2, and C3.

Interviews were recorded by me using an audio-tape recorder and stored away in a locked file cabinet. The interviews were manually transcribed by me onto a narrative text using word document, which was one of the most critical components of interviewing (Moser and Korstjens (2018). Phenomenological interviews are centered on the plausibility of experience as opposed to the actuality of it (Cypress, 2018). Interviewing was the most appropriate tool because my study used a phenomenology method, which focused on exploring in-depth human experience with interest phenomenon (Patton, 2015). The semi-structured interview gave participants enough time and flexibility to expand their answers and provide detailed information (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). When interviewing, it was my role to remain neutral to not have an influence on the participant's answer; therefore, I used bracketing to set aside my knowledge and assumptions to focus on participants viewpoints, which helped minimize any bias I might have had.

The results of my data analysis were a data point to provide transferability and helped further generalize the results of Riter's study. The interviews from two different population groups were my primary data points. I did not use statistics for use of force within a Southeastern state as the third data point for triangulation since the data were not readily available.

Procedure for Data Collection

Once approved by IRB and the recruitment process was completed, I sent the Informed Consent form securely via electronic email (see Appendix D). The Informed Consent included the purpose of the study, criteria, their right to volunteer and withdraw from the interview at any time and that their information will be kept confidential. Participants who wished to reach out to participate in this study, contact information was attached; in return I sent an invitation for an interview to those who met the criteria. Once participants agreed to participate and replied with "I consent", an interview was scheduled at their convenience. The interview process took approximately 30-45 minutes consisting of demographical and use of force questions to guide the interview. Each participant was given the opportunity to review their responses before exiting the interview.

Recording, transcribing, and taking notes of interviews helped the researcher minimize biases and produce credible findings (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Before the interview process, I asked each participant if they agree to audio-taping the interview using a recorder to transcribe the interviews and confirm the credibility of the data. All the participants agreed to be audio-recorded; therefore, detailed notes were not necessary,

but some notes were taken to ensure accuracy of some of the information provided by them that was not easily understood. Also, participants were explained that participation in the study was voluntary and confidential and if they did not want to continue with the interview after it began, they can withdraw without penalty. No names were obtained for confidentiality. Participants were coded as C1, C2, and C3.

Data Analysis

As a researcher, I reviewed the data to seek a coding strategy to determine themes and patterns that may emerge from transcription. Transcription of interviews helped the researcher to have a rich understanding of what transpired during interviews and captured exactly what each participant said (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Urquhart (2013) said that the emergence of data is how the coding is created in the research to assist with analysis. According to Rubin and Rubin (2012), coding is one of the first key elements of qualitative data analysis and interpretation. This study used inductive coding to find themes using the responses from the participants. Inductive coding is data extracted from the responses (Stake, 2010). Belotto (2018) said the coding process allows the interpretation of large segments of text and portions of information in new ways. Descriptive coding was used as a second cycle coding to further knowledge and interpretation of information collected using field notes (Saldana, 2009).

Issues of Trustworthiness

For a quality qualitative study, I explored trustworthiness which is equally important as it is in a quantitative study (Shenton, 2004). To achieve trust, I set ground rules and expectations of the interviews and remain consistent throughout the process

until saturation. Trustworthiness, credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the data in qualitative research are essential to establish Lincoln and Guba (1985). Credibility is the process of revealing what exactly happened in the field (Shenton, 2004), while reliability should be found at the start of research and should remain throughout the study (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Credibility develops when a researcher uses triangulation strategy, member check in, peer debriefing, or observation (Shenton, 2004). Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Shenton (2004) said triangulation is using many sources of data collection to check inconsistencies. My intent was to use statistical data from the websites of the Sheriff's office to cross reference for any inconsistencies and to provide credible data; however, the data was not available. Through peer review with my committee member, credibility and consistency was established by receiving professional advice.

Transferability occurs when there is evidence that further research is needed and could be expanded with new context, population, and position (Ramsook, 2018). Generalizing and transferability of Riter's (2019) findings provided evidence and detailed information about the phenomenon of interest. This was an opportunity to generalize information that was provided by each participant. Using a purposeful sampling method allowed participants to provide deep knowledge of the phenomenon to determine themes. The use of purposeful sampling also allowed participants to engage in a study that consisted of results they contributed to. This was in line with my selected phenomenological approach.

Dependability requires consistency, whereas confirmability requires neutrality Moser and Korstjens (2018). Dependability is also important for trustworthiness in qualitative research because it depends on the study to be both accurate and consistent (Ellis, 2019). I used an audit trail to determine how data were collected and what interpretations were made (Ellis, 2019). This technique was used to achieve dependability and conformability. Codes were used throughout the data analysis to assess reliability. Reliability was used to make sure my research is consistent, and the appropriate approach was applied and used in this qualitative research (Rose & Johnson, 2020).

Ethical Consideration

Walden University IRB committee obtained notice of my plan to conduct this study and permitted to proceed with data collection. Phone or email contact with participants were made upon approval to discuss the conditions of this study. Participants were emailed the informed consent that provided an overview of their rights and the opportunity to ask questions. The informed consent method provided the following: the purpose of the study, the process of the study, their privacy as participants, voluntary nature of engaging in this study, and contact information. Creswell (2007) stated that a researcher should explain the purpose of a study to participants to gain their trust. To achieve trust and to keep participants information confidential, their names and employer were masked. Creswell (2007) added that names of participants should not be used to enhance their privacy and confidentiality. Before the interview began, the participants were asked if they read and understood the informed consent they were emailed. All the participants said yes; however, to confirm participants understood the informed consent, I

provided an overview of their rights and all participants agreed. All participants were 18 years of age and older, current police officers, racial minority citizens, and were residents in my county, which is in a Southeastern state. After the completion of the research, all contact information, data, and study analysis were secured and kept on an encrypted flash drive and locked in a file cabinet. All data is kept and protected for at least 5 years as required by Walden University. At the end of the 5 years, I will destroy all electronic data and all information documented on paper using a shredder. Finally, each participant was informed that a summary with the study's results will be provided.

Summary

Chapter 3 included an overview of the research process, which included the research design and rationale to address the research question. Research procedures, selection of participants, data collection procedures, data analysis, and issues of trustworthiness were also addressed in this chapter. Participants in this study had opportunities to contribute to this research by providing their lived experiences involving police use of force as it relates to fear, trust, and confidence. Chapter 4 includes results in accordance with the protocol explained in Chapter 3.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The central phenomenon of this study was the recent increase in the use of fatal excessive force by police officers against racial minorities throughout the US. The purpose of this study is to explore whether the lived experiences of racial minorities differ from police officers regarding use of force in a Southeastern state and how fear, trust, and confidence influence perceptions. One aim was to document participants' perspectives regarding use of force in terms of trust, confidence, and fear to understand how these emotions influenced minority citizens' perceptions of police officers in particular as well as law enforcement agencies and policymakers in general. Another aim was to determine whether lived experiences involving force among racial minorities and police officers differed.

The research question was: How are racial minorities and police officers' perceptions and lived experiences involving use of force influenced by fear, trust, and confidence in a Southeastern state?

This chapter includes the setting, demographics, data collection, data analysis, evidence of trustworthiness, results, and a summary). The term Black is used for African Americans and the term White is used for Caucasians, except in cases with participant direct quotes that referred to African Americans or Caucasians.

Setting

The research settings were in-depth one-on-one semi-structured interviews. They were conducted either as face-to-face interviews in a private and secure room at my place of work to maintain confidentiality or over the phone at participants' requests due to Coronavirus concerns. No unusual events took place which would have unduly influenced results.

Demographics

There were 10 participants each in the two groups (minority citizens and police officers). Participant pseudonyms were assigned to correspond directly to each participant's age. That is, Participant 1, C1 was the youngest citizen at age 25, and C10 was the oldest citizen at 73 (see Table 1). Similarly, Officer 1, P1 was the youngest police officer at age 27 and P10 was the oldest officer at age 63 (see Table 2).

Seven minority citizens who were interviewed for this study were men and the remaining three were women. Table 1 shows that five of the men were Black, one was Black-Hispanic, and one self-described as Latino. Two of the three women were Black, and one was Hispanic. The sample of minority citizens in this study was strongly skewed toward urban communities; only C6 resided in suburbs. C1 is in his 20s. C2 is in his 30s. C3-8 are in their 40s. C9 is in his 50s. C10 is in his 70s.

Table 1

Citizen Demographics

Citizen	Age in Years	Community	Race	Gender
1	25	Urban	Black-Hispanic	Male
2	34	Urban	Spanish Latino	Male
3	39	Urban	Black	Male

4	40	Urban	Black	Male
5	42	Urban	Black	Female
6	46	Suburban	Black	Female
7	47	Urban	Hispanic	Female
8	48	Urban	Black	Male
9	55	Urban	Black	Male
10	73	Urban	Black	Male

All 10 of police officers who were interviewed for this study were men. Table 2 shows that five officers were Black, three were White, one was Hispanic, and one was Southeast Asian. They were divided by type of community. Five officers lived in urban areas, one lived in suburbia, two lived in rural settings, and two officers did not provide the information. Years of policing experience averaged 16 years with a range of 34 years (minimum = 3 years, maximum = 37 years).

Table 2

Police Officer Demographics

Officer	Age	Race	Community	Years as Police Officer
1	27	Southeast Asian	Urban	3
2	30	Hispanic	Semi-rural	5
3	30	Black	Urban	10
4	31	White	Urban	8
5	36	Black	*	7
6	42	Black	Urban	20
7	50	Black	Suburban	25
8	58	White	Rural	37
9	59	Black	Urban	15
10	63	White	-	24

Note. *Recording could not be transcribed. Community refers to the community that the officer lives in.

Data Collection

After Walden University IRB permission was secured, I recruited participants. I created two social media posts and shared them on Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn to target racial minority citizens and police officers in a county in a Southeastern state. All minority participants in the study were adults and resided in a county in a Southeastern state. All police officers were adults, sworn police officers, and worked as police officers in this area. To confirm participants met inclusion criteria, these criteria were included in social media recruitment posts (see Appendix A). To participants who replied to social media posts via email, I immediately replied and provided informed consent procedures electronically via email. Upon receiving emails with the words "I consent" from each participant, I shared interview questions and scheduled interviews at participants' convenience based on their personal and work schedules. No unusual circumstances were encountered during data collection.

Interviews were by phone or face-to-face depending on participants' preference given Coronavirus concerns. I conducted nine phone interviews (six with minority participants and three with police officers), from my office, which is a secure location where conversation cannot be overheard. I asked each participant who was interviewed by phone to be in a secure area where they could be interviewed without being overheard. I conducted 11 face-to-face interviews, four with minority participants in the secure conference room in the school where I work and seven with police officers in a secure office at the local sheriff's department. Body language data were not collected during

face-to-face interviews. Due to participants' schedules, interviews were conducted over a

6-week period from December 2021 to March 2022. Interviews lasted 25 to 45 minutes.

At the start of interviews, each participant agreed to be recorded. All participants

had a good attitude before, during, and after interviews and cooperated fully. Minority

participants in this study were open, sincere, and honest as they shared their lived

experiences involving police encounters. I felt that five police officers were open,

sincere, and honest about their experiences with excessive force and how they perceived

use of force. However, five police officers were not completely open, sincere, or honest

about their experiences with minorities and excessive use of force, including treating

minorities and Whites equally regardless of their circumstances. No participant was

uncomfortable at any time. There was no deviation from procedures described in Chapter

3, and no unusual events took place which would have unduly influenced results.

Data Analysis

After each interview was complete, I manually transcribed it into a narrative text

as a Word document. The process I used to move inductively from coded units to larger

representations including categories and themes began with the transcription process as

my first opportunity to immerse myself in the data. At that time, I began the process of

identifying initial codes (Saldaña, 2013). However, I read each transcription multiple

times and continued to code until every passage was coded. As coding appeared to be

reaching saturation, I began the process of reducing the data by collapsing codes into

mid-level categories or subthemes (Saldaña, 2013 and Table 3). Subthemes were then

collapsed into themes to portray the meanings that participants gave to their experiences.

I reviewed and revised as necessary to develop an accurate representation of lived experiences.

A brief description of each theme, its accompanying subthemes, and descriptors are provided on Table 3. The first theme, Experiential Sources, lays the foundation by providing information on the nature of minority citizens' exposure to the use of force and excessive force by the police. Its first subtheme pertains to direct, personal experience with police force. The second two subthemes pertain to indirect experience with police force. The second theme, Prevailing Perception of Police, had four subthemes. The first described minorities' general perceptions of police. The second-fourth subthemes addressed trust, confidence, and fear, respectively. The third theme, Imbalanced Use of Force, also has three subthemes. The first subtheme pertains to minority perceptions of police attitude. The second two subthemes pertain to minority perceptions of police behavior. The fourth theme, Preparation to Handle Encounters with Minorities, has two subthemes that refer to minority perceptions of the adequacy of police de-escalation techniques and of police training, respectively.

Detailed explanations are presented in the Results section by theme and subtheme in a 'point-counterpoint' framework. That is, first the perspectives of the minority citizens in this study are presented as a fundamental 'point.' Second, citizen perspectives are followed by officer perspectives as a 'counterpoint' as they emerged from interviews (i.e., not all citizen themes had officer counterpoints). Counterpoint narratives from the police officers are further classified as confirming or disconfirming the citizens'

perspectives. There were no discrepant cases per se because perspectives were factored into the analysis as agreeing or disagreeing with others in the database.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness was established at the start of the study with careful development of methods and maintained throughout. Primarily data collection during interviews was appropriately neutral because I am a minority woman. As a minority and because of my bracketing efforts, I maintained an open mind about both groups which allowed me to exclude my beliefs, opinions, and stereotypes. I also remained aware of my facial expressions and body language during interviews to exclude nonverbal biases toward my participants. Finally, I set aside my knowledge and assumptions and based analysis solely on my participants' viewpoints and lived experiences of the phenomenon of interest.

I employed further strategies to ensure trustworthiness through credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability. Credibility was established through member checking and reflexivity. I used member checking by emailing each participant their transcript to check its accuracy, edit as needed, and approve. All participants verified that their transcripts were accurate and did not make changes. I used reflexivity to review my own preconceived notions about race relationships between police officers and minority citizens to bracket these off from interviews. The findings are based solely on participants' experiences and the meaning of their experiences described in their own words. I established dependability by using the approved methodological procedures in Chapter 3 and by reviewing the codes exhaustively to ensure that the same themes

emerged. I established transferability by providing detailed descriptions of the study

purpose and methods of data collection and analysis.

Figure 1

Summary of Themes and Subthemes

Theme	Subtheme	Description	Number of References
Experiential Sources	Direct Personal Experience	Force manifested as abrupt discourse, imbalanced discourse, rudeness, dismissive attitude, authoritarian	34
	Indirect Experience through Media Exposure	Exposure to force was primarily through media, media recreates trauma over and over via repeated media coverage of episodes of police force	17
	Black Lives Matter	BLM exerted little or no influence because nothing new, BLM changed from humanitarian to political organization	38
Prevailing Perceptions Of Police	General Perceptions	More negative than positive, police assume minorities are guilty, nuisance, arrogant, above the law, trigger-happy, police taught to be racist, superior, cookie-cutter profiling	14
	Trust	Consensus of distrust, mistrust because police don't trust minorities, abuse their authority	59
	Confidence	Confident, not confident, conditional confidence, confident in police if not personally threatening	12
	Fear	Afraid of uncertainty, afraid of consequences with racist officers, Unafraid if not perceived as threatening, alert rather than afraid, startled by aggression when complying	48
Imbalanced Use of Force	Officer Aggression Because of Race	Verbal abuse, police rudeness, dismissive, arrogant, superior attitude, verbal intimidation, micro-aggressions	11
	More Force Against Minorities	See minority males as threats, as more aggressive, police fearful of minorities, police see all minority males as criminals, ignorant, threatening, aggressive	11
	Officers Victimize Black	White privilege, White parents teach their children to be racist against Blacks, racist-taught children grow up to join judicial system.	29

	Men more than White Men	White officers think Black lives have less value, White officers do not respect or trust Blacks; White officers fear Blacks and Black anger, White officers misunderstand Black anger. White officers sustain fewer repercussions for abusing Blacks	
Preparation to handle encounters with minorities	Adequacy of de-escalation techniques	Inadequate, unrealistic, trainers without real-world experience on the streets, officers disregard training, training	11
	Adequacy of training to deal with aggressive behavior	Training cannot erase racism, inadequate training on aggressive behavior, especially across different races, training unrealistic, trainers lack real-world experience, officers disregard training,	60

Transferability was underscored by candid discussions that showed strong consensus when cross-referenced. After the first seven interviews in each group, data saturation occurred because subsequent participants no longer revealed new information. Finally, I established confirmability because my expertise in criminal justice allowed me to interpret participants' lived experiences as a subject matter expert and by allowing participants to review the preliminary themes, which they verified as an accurate synopsis of their perceptions. I further established confirmability based on converging evidence that this qualitative study was credible, and its findings were dependable and transferable.

Results

This section is divided into six sub-sections sections. The first three sub-sections address the main behavior in this research: police use of force. The first describes current use of force policies among police agencies. The second lists the officer's definitions of excessive force. The third highlights officer perceptions of conditions that justify force.

The fourth, fifth and sixth sub-sections present evidence for the themes in a point-counterpoint format. Minority citizen perspectives are presented first as fundamental 'points.' Officer perspectives follow as 'counterpoints' as available and were classified as confirming or disconfirming (non-confirming) the citizens' perspectives.

Current Policies on Use of Force

This section highlights current policies on law enforcement's use of force to set the groundwork for the perspectives offered in the rest of this chapter. Officer 9 provided the most detail:

We have a five-step use of force policy. You must go through these steps because it is the force pyramid. Level one is officer presence on-site. Level two is verbal commands, which is communicating with the suspect, giving directions, telling them to back up or move over here. Level three is what we call self-help techniques. That's when we will physically make contact with the suspect (either screening or guiding). Level four is our weapons, which include Tasers, pepper spray, etc. Now we are physically interacting with that person in an aggressive manner. Level five is deadly force. It is the actual discharge of your weapon.

Officer 4 similarly described the force continuum as 1) officer presence, 2) verbal commands (talking), 3) soft hand control (fighting moves, handcuffs), 4) hard hand control (baton and Taser), and 5) deadly force. Officer 10 has the longest experience as a police officer and noted the force pyramid (as did most of the officers), qualifying use as "It depends on what the situation calls for. You never go to the gun first. First you want to talk to him. Sometimes people just want somebody to vent to. We have Tasers now

and Fronius batons. Use of a Taser stops all kinds of arguments and fights." Officer 8's

description provides some notion of the flood of thoughts and considerations that an

officer experiences during the escalation of force:

They are different levels. I mean, you're talking about the hand-on-hand. Then a little

twist of the arm to bring them behind to handcuff them. Or do you have to escalate that to

a Taser? Or do you have to escalate that to something more to gain control or, and then,

unfortunately, the ultimate use of force is the death of the deadly force? It just depends on

the level necessary to gain control of that situation.

Officer 1 said, "Our current use of force policy is whatever means necessary to affect an

arrest, if reasonable." Officer 2 said that his agency's policy is that force can only be used

if a person reasonably believes that force is necessary to prevent death or bodily injury

but added, "But use of force is open to the discretion of the officer." Officer 3 invoked

reciprocity when he said: "We have the option of using any amount of force above what

the offender's using."

Officer Definitions of Excessive Force

The officers' main definition of excessive force (Table 4) was force beyond that

needed to control a situation. Half of the officers used the word unnecessary (Officer 1)

or implied it (Officer 3, 4, 8, 9). Officer 6 defined it as the amount of force extended after

a subdued subject is no longer a threat. Officer 2 and 10 differed from the others by

defining it as force that was necessary to contain a situation. The most experienced,

Officer 10 said that the level of force applied is commensurate with the suspect's

behavior and added the caveat that resistance and non-compliance increases the use of

force.

Figure 2

Definition of Excessive Force

Officer	Definition of Excessive Force
1	Unnecessary. For each encounter, you have to go hands on. Use of force is different. But when I would find it is unnecessary force, it is just plain simple, unnecessary force that wouldn't be unreasonable for a reasonable situation.
2	Excessive force means force that is necessary to gain compliance or control of a particular situation, especially a dangerous situation.
3	Use more force than was needed to take a person into custody or to control a situation
4	When a person in any position of authority uses more force than necessary to gain compliance
5	I'll say any force that is beyond policy.
6	Excessive force means the amount of force extended after a subject has already been subdued to the point that they are no longer a threat. Anything that comes after the subject is deemed to not be a threat anymore that will be considered to be excessive.
7	An officer goes outside the necessary reasoning to control a suspect or reasoning and obstacles outside the necessary reasoning to control the situation
8	Excessive force would be the limit of force, above what is reasonable to use.
9	When the amount of force exceeds what is necessary to get the situation under control.
10	We have to assess the situation to use the amount of force that's needed only to stop or detain or apprehend a suspect. Once he starts resisting and fighting, then you stop. Once they stop, you just finish the apprehension or the arrest. You stop aggression, we stop.

Officer Perceptions of Conditions that Justify Use of Force and Excessive Force

The officers justified force in terms of reciprocity: When a suspect used excessive

force, an officer was justified in using excessive force reciprocally. One justification was

using force reciprocally to gain control of a situation that had gotten out of control

because suspects were using force or excessive force, although these "situations" were

not specifically defined. Officer 2 justified force "when all means to gain compliance have been exhausted and force that is necessary to gain compliance or to control dangerous situations." Officer 3 characterized it as the need to "contain the situation that is out of control." A second justification was using force reciprocally because the "situation" involved direct threats to human safety. Half of the officers justified the use of excessive force to protect oneself or others because a suspect was using force that threatened human safety in material ways. Officer 6 justified it when "other lives are in jeopardy." Officer 7 echoed the sentiments, saying excessive force was justified "When there's an immediate threat [as in] danger to life or danger to the public or towards the officer [who] feels threatened for their own life." On this latter point, Officer 4 justified force when it was "immediately necessary to prevent unlawful force by somebody trying to hurt me." Officer 9 added the caveat that the situation must involve certain criteria: "Once excessive force gets the situation under control, is within the law, and is within policy, it can be justified, but it has to have to meet certain criteria or an opportunity and ability for you to use force. You can use force when there is an imminent threat or jeopardy for you to justify using force."

Officer 9 said:

The use of force needs to be explained publicly on television from law enforcement, not from a lawyer in a courtroom, so that everybody has an understanding of what the term use of force is. This is so they can understand the law enforcement officer mentality and why he's acting a certain way.

Theme 1: Experiential Sources

This section addressed the first theme, Experiential Sources, by portraying the

nature of minority citizens' exposure to the use of force and excessive force by the police,

followed by police perspectives on their personal and coworkers' use of force. Minority

citizens' perspectives provided evidence of three subthemes of sources of exposure to

force. The first was direct personal experience. The second was indirect experience

through the media. The third was the influence of Black Lives Matter. This section shows

that the main exposure to police force among the minority citizens in this study was

indirect experience through the media.

Direct Personal Experience

This subtheme reflected direct exposure to police force. All 10 citizens said they

had not experienced excessive use of force personally or directly (Table 5). C10

characterized his experience was "negative" rather than forceful. He said, "Early in my

life, I had some interactions with police, and they were all negative." C 2's recollections

of a police encounter that was characterized by abrupt, rude, and authoritarian discourse

reflected most of the citizens' personal experiences with police force. C 2:

> It was maybe not excessive force, but excessive authority. In my early 20s,
>
> I was heading home from work at 1 o'clock in the morning. A state trooper
>
> pulled me over. There was nothing physical. However, he had somebody
>
> already pulled over in the breakdown lane. I was in the lane to his left and
>
> tried merging over to give him some space. But I couldn't because there
>
> was traffic to my left. When I passed him, I wasn't as far off to the left as I

could have been. Immediately I almost saw him full sprint to his cruiser

and rush to pull me over. I asked what I was getting pulled over for. He

didn't respond to me. He asked for my license and registration. He asked

me if I had anything in the vehicle, it I was drinking or had weapons. I told

him none. I was coming out of work. He asked me, 'Where specifically do

you work?' I said I'd rather not answer that question. I again asked what

he was pulling me over for and rudely he said. 'Give me your

registration.' Again, I asked what I was getting pulled over for and he said,

'It's on your citation. You can read it if you want. You have the right to an

appeal.' As I was inquiring about the point of the citation, he just walked

away. So, I think it was more abuse. Given the fact that he had a badge, he

can brush me off, and there's not really, anything I can do or say about it.

C 8's description of his experience with police also generally excluded the use of

force in lieu of rude and dismissive discourse:

There have been very few [incidents of force used against me by a police

officer]. While working, I was encountered by a police officer when I was

stopped in traffic so the buses can come out. He was in his vehicle, and he

told me get out of the street. So, I got out of the street. I didn't want any

confrontation. Another time, I got lost in Harrisburg and got pulled over

by two undercover white police officers who asked me what I was doing. I

guess they figured I was trying to buy drugs or something. I told them that

I was lost and that I was a teacher just coming out of basketball practice or

whatever. They didn't have any weapons drawn or anything. Pretty casual

conversation as to who I was. I didn't understand but I didn't have

anything in it. So, I didn't see why that would be a problem and they

eventually let me go.

Counterpoint: police perspective on minorities' direct experience with police

force. The majority of officers said they treated minorities with respect, disconfirming

the citizens' evidence of rude and dismissive discourse. Officer 5 said he treats minorities

fairly. "With everybody I approach, I try to treat them fair and give them respect."

Officer 6 also uses the golden rule: "I talk to people the way they would want to be

treated, like the way I want to be treated." Officer 10 treats minorities "with respect" for

pragmatic reasons: "If you come off with an attitude, they're not going to cooperate with

you." Officer 3 said, "We treat everyone the same" and added the caveat that "Wherever

we have to use force to take control of the situation, after that we'll go back to being

polite." Like many of the officers, Officer 4 was mindful of treating minorities with

respect because of current racial sensitivities: "With everything going on, I tend to

interact carefully because I don't want to be labeled as that cop that is after the Black

guy."

Eight of the 10 officers also denied witnessing coworkers use excessive force on

minorities. Officer 1 pointed out that, if such a situation occurred, an officer has a duty to

intervene. "If you think your coworker is using excessive force, you can report it, and

stop them. If that doesn't work, you can report it just like any citizen can. We have checks

and balances for all this."

Indirect Experience through Media Exposure

This subtheme reflected citizens' indirect exposure to police force through the media. The minority citizens in this study had many lived experiences in common. A strong common experience was indirect exposure to police force through formal and informal media spotlights. C 8 said his experience was mainly from "watching television or whatever and seeing how a lot of unarmed Black people can get killed by the police." C10 emphasized the widespread influence of the media and pointed out that we are living "in this modern age. Everyone has cell phones equipped with cameras. Things can be documented like never before." C10 did not question whether media coverage exacerbated negative attitudes, exaggerated the true frequency of excessive force by repeated broadcasts of a few isolated incidents, or reflected the accurate reality of widespread long-term police brutality. His perspective was the latter: Society has "to realize that these things have been happening to Blacks all the time." C9 attributed general attitudes about police among minority citizens to media exposure but allowed for a reciprocal influence: "The news, television, and movies also contribute to the perceptions that people have in general and not just the perceptions that we have of officers, but the perceptions that officers have of us also." C6 is a Black woman living in suburbia. Her perspectives derived from several sources. She declared frankly that she has never had any negative interactions with police and thus lacks direct experience with force. On the other hand, she has indirect experience with force through the media: "From what I've seen on the news and in society, it is hard for me to trust police as a woman. I don't trust them enough for my safety in a situation as a colored woman versus

somebody else not being colored." She also had indirect experience with force based on the word of a White police officer whom she dated briefly. "Him and I would have discussions about racism. He said he knew a lot of White police officers who were very prejudiced. So, this coming from a White law officer who I used to date, I know that's the thought process: fear and hate." **Counterpoint: police perspectives on citizen experience gained indirectly through the media.** Officer perspectives reinforced or confirmed the evidence that citizens' perceptions of police force were primarily gained from indirect experience. Officer 6 pointed out that the media strongly influences how the public perceives police force, and confirmed that the lived experiences with police among the minority citizens in this study excluded force and excessive force:

> The issue is how things are perceived [depends on] what people see on in the media, and because it is shown over and over and over. A lot of people who don't like the police have never had an encounter with the police. But they've heard about this or that story that somebody told whether it be true or not. They see these incidents on TV. Now they hate everybody, but they've never had an interaction with the police.

Officer 9, a Black man in his late 50s, described the media as, at best, misinforming public understanding of police officers and, at worst, inflaming it:

> Public perceptions of the use of force among police are driven by the media. The media only shows negative police actions as opposed to positive police actions. For example, civil rights marches with Martin Luther King included many Whites. You don't see that point. You only see

where everybody is supposed to be group of bad angry Black people. *The*

media fuels that fire. I hold the media responsible for that.

BLM

Along with the media, the BLM movement is a second type

of indirect exposure. The BLM subtheme reflected a strong shared experience among the

minority citizens in this study: The BLM movement has exerted little influence on their

attitudes about police force. Nine of ten citizens said that the BLM organization did not

matter to them. C1 said, "No, I don't think that movement has any influence on my

perception towards police officers, mainly due to that being hijacked by White liberals

and forgot." Similarly, C3 said, "It hasn't changed anything. I feel the same way with

Black Lives Matter or without them." C4 said. "Black Lives didn't have any influence. I

felt this way before." C6's views were also uninfluenced by BLM, but she commended

them for exposing the abuses of power.

C6 said:

They don't influence my perception whatsoever. I already knew this before I even

knew Black Lives Matter even existed. I commend them for the work they're

doing. To get it known out there to our community of people of color, so they see

and let the world know how unfairly we're being treated. It's nothing that we don't

already know.

C10, the oldest citizen in this study, described how the organization changed for

the worst during its short lifespan and engendered disrespect in him because:

Black Lives Matter went from an activist group to a political group. That's important. Instead of representing the falsely accused and mistreated, now it's all about raising money and starting chapters but do a whole lot of nothing. The Innocence Project is more effective than Black Lives Matter because the Innocence Project [has] over the last few years consistently gotten people out of jail who've been falsely accused and incarcerated for years. So Black Lives Matter, to me, it's almost like the NAACP. I have no regard, no real respect for them.

C2, one of the youngest minority citizens in this study, also changed his mind about BLM over the course of its short lifespan. His reasoning was that the organization gives minorities an excuse to flout their responsibilities for knowing the laws. C2 said:

I'm torn. At first, I thought Black Lives Matter was a very good thing, very useful in enhancing the Black voice. Then I changed my position. Black Lives Matter movement diminishes the responsibility of us as human beings, just always wants to give an excuse instead of taking responsibility. I know George Floyd was a useful use of Black Lives Matter. If an officer is asking you to do something, and you don't want to abide by what he's asking you, that's going to create the small problem that trickles into a huge problem that's on you. You could have just listened, just identified yourself. It didn't have to get to that point. More now than in the beginning, Black Lives Matter is kind of that excuse versus that responsibility. There's a difference when a police officer has to use force and when he uses force unnecessarily.

C7 was the sole participant who said The Black Lives Matter movement changed how she thought about police officers "because I have a son who is half Hispanic and half African American. Based on his size and build, he can look intimidating. So, it makes me a little worrisome when he goes out somewhere." C7 said:

> I feel that [police officers are] being looked at a little bit more under the microscope since the Black Lives movement started, whereas before they weren't. [Now] they're being held a little bit more accountable for their actions, which is always a positive thing. And it's created more initiative, such as the use of body cameras, so that they can determine whether the police officer is acting accordingly, which is also very good. Has it decreased the number of incidents? I don't think it has, but hopefully in the near future, it will decrease police brutality incidents.

Counterpoint: police perspectives on the influence of BLM on citizens.
Officer perspectives generally disconfirmed citizens' perceptions that the Black Lives Matter movement failed to influence their perspectives of police force; however, there were a few confirmatory comments. Officer 4, a 34-year-old White officer, candidly acknowledged the tension between police and minorities as he asserted that the BLM intensified that tension. He said:

> The relationship between African Americans and police is marked by high tensions, which include racism, White privilege, and the perception of police brutality. I feel like the Black Lives Matter movement increases the tension instead of trying to bridge the gap for good officers. This creates a strain and fear

for law enforcement to interact without being called racist. So, frequently, if we're

working, it's often said, 'Don't use any force. We don't need another Michael

Brown and George Floyd incident.' I agree with the movement but it's not

bridging a gap. It's causing more of a stir. They feel one way and they don't want

to hear anything else.

Officer 8, a 58-year-old White officer, also said that BLM influences citizens

against police but acknowledged that they are not the only ones. He said:

There are several movements that use their platform to influence people. I believe

Black Lives Matter does have a lot of influence on people. And I do believe that

they potentially use their platform against police officers, not just BLM but

several groups like that. The biggest agenda is the media. The media,

unfortunately, creates controversy. They'll stir the pot as long as they can keep

things stirred up. Unfortunately, it is a tool that they use to divide citizens from

law enforcement and divide the whole entire country.

Officer 5, a 36-year-old Black officer, agreed that "BLM influences how racial

minority citizens, specifically Blacks, think about police." He said influence was exerted

in how their articles are titled and how they point fingers at law enforcement as a whole

instead of singling out the unlawful officers who use excessive force. That lumps all

officers into one category, which is inaccurate. "BLM kind of makes it hard."

Some officers disagreed and provided evidence that confirmed the citizens' views

of BLM. As a 30-year-old Hispanic, Officer 2 said:

The Black Lives Matter movement has created more accountability for police officers, when dealing with issues, especially of force and excessive force, because of recent [scenarios] that have been publicized. There have always been issues of force or deadly force that never reached publicity until recent times with videos and cameras.

Theme 2: Prevailing Perceptions of Police

The evidence presented above suggested that minority citizens in this study lacked direct experience with police force and were primarily influenced by media exposure. This section presents evidence that characterizes the Prevailing Perceptions of Police theme as less positive and more negative via four subthemes: general perceptions, trust, confidence, and fear (see Table 5). For example, C2 felt trust and confidence without fear. C5 felt the same but only conditionally. C3 and 10 feared and distrusted the police and did not feel confident in them. Others reported combinations, such as C6, who trusted the police but also feared and felt insecure about them.

Table 3

Perceptions of Police among Minority Citizens in this Study

Citizen	Personal Experience with Excessive Force, Ever Arrested	Trust Police	Confident in Police	Fear Police
1	No, No	No	Yes	Yes
2	No, No	Yes	Yes	No
3	No, No	No	No	Yes
4	No, No	Yes*	No	Yes
5	No, No	Yes*	Yes*	No
6	No, No	Yes	No	Yes*
7	No, No	Yes	Yes	Yes*
8	No, No	Yes*	Yes	Yes
9	No, Yes	No	Yes	Yes
10	No, Yes	No	No	Yes*

Note. *Conditionally.

General Perceptions

Table 5 shows that none of the minority citizens in this study had direct personal experience with excessive force and only the two oldest citizens had been arrested years ago. None the less, the minority citizens in this study voiced general perceptions of police as less positive and more negative. C1, a 25-year-old Black-Hispanic man, considers police to be a "general nuisance to society" because "police in general have a trigger-happy mentality." C6's general perception of police officers was superiority: "They are above the citizens and want to take the law into their own hands." C5 echoed the same sentiments in a different way: "They have a superior attitude when they put on the uniform. They become arrogant and bolder." C7 allowed that there were both good and bad officers but accused racist officers of profiling: "There are good officers that take an oath to serve their communities. And there are other officers that first start off that way but somehow change their minds, put their personal beliefs into every situation, and categorize people by cookie-cutter based on race and gender." C2 also allowed for both and ended voicing a recurring concern among many of the minority citizens in this study:

> I can't give you a firm answer. You have your good apples. You have your bad apples. You have people who do their job right and people who do their job wrong. The culture of the department really matters. No matter where you go in this world, there's always going to be some fear of having the wrong police officer pull you over.

By contrast, C10 voiced strong views that police are purposely enculturated into racism against minorities. He prefaced his reasoning by saying that he wrote a paper on this during his graduate studies. C10 said:

> The reason why [I mistrust the police] is because when White policeman goes to the police academy, they play with them, and their prejudices based upon the dislike for Blacks. So therefore, whenever they come out, when they get their badge, they *automatically* have this racist view of Blacks. It is displayed in the way that we are treated like men, especially. Most policemen are not familiar with the fine print portion of the US Constitution. Their main purpose is to find something to take a minority to jail. They will trump charges. They will pilot the charges so that when this person goes to jail, goes to court, we're automatically assumed by a judge to be guilty. From an early age, I've always noticed and experienced that it was a vast discrepancy between the way I was treated as a Black man. It's been a tenuous experience, to say the least.

Trust

This subtheme reflects a consensus that minority citizens distrust the police. Table 5 showed that four actively distrusted the police, three trusted the police under specific conditions only, and three citizens trusted the police. Basically, minority citizens in this study either do not trust police at all or trust them conditionally in specific circumstances. C2 gave the benefit of the doubt "I think the majority don't try to use their authority." But C6's lived experiences were truer for several of the minority citizens in this study: "I don't truly trust law enforcement just in general." C10 said:

No, I've never had a reason to trust police. From an early age, I've always taken an avoidance attitude with police, so I don't have any encounters with them. After going into the military and on leave, I was stopped by a White highway patrol officer who didn't like the fact that my car was almost a race car or that I was driving it. He told me, 'I'll give the ticket.' I said, 'Look, I'm on the way to Vietnam. I don't care about anything you say. If you put me in jail, the army is going to come get me anyway and you won't have profited anything.' But he said, 'Well, I'll give the ticket to your parents.' You can't get my parents for something I did so he let me go. He was really mad because I said if you want to put me in jail, do it, because it doesn't mean anything to me. Later on, it would be called profiling.

C6 conceded that the interview question about trust was "a difficult question" but opted for distrust. Even allowing that "I don't trust too many people in general," she said, "I don't trust police officers because they don't trust me due to my race. I don't trust them to be fair." She described a time when a White man hit her car. The accident was his fault. But the attending police "were truly trying to side with him" although she quickly defused the situation once they realized that "I knew some parts of the law and my rights."

The citizens' lived experiences with trusting the police included conditional trust. C4 was one of the participants who reported conditional trust: "I trust them if somebody's broken into my house on Airbnb." C9 also reported conditional trust based on race: "For the most part, yes, I trust police officers in general here. However, I do not totally trust

White officers, as I have not had a good experience with them over time. I just avoid those situations."

C2 has changed his views of police over time, reporting that he trusts the police more now than he did as a youth. Yet it was not that he trusts the police more. He said:

That's a tough question. At my age, I trust the police a little bit more, given the education and the maturity level. At a young age, I don't want to say trained, but you have the history from family members that's always fear. People would say negative things about them. The police have the authority. It was more implemented: Please be careful. Now with my education and maturity, I trust them a little bit more only for the simple fact that [I know now that I am] able to learn how to defend yourself, learn how to talk respectfully to somebody, and know I can file for an appeal. Before I was like, 'Oh, you got a ticket, you have to pay it, and there's nothing you can really do.' Now, it's more like, they won't do that to the people who know more versus the people who know less.

Counterpoint: police perspectives on levels of citizens' trust of police. Twice as many officers said Black males mistrust the police as trust them so the officers confirmed the citizens' perspectives. Officer 7 was blunt: "The majority of Black males don't trust the police. That's one of the reasons why, as an officer, it's your job to try to reconfirm or reaffirm to them that 'I'm not here to be against you. I'm here to help you.'" Officer 2 put it this way: "There is clearly a sense of mistrust to the police from Black and minority males. But mistrust also comes, not just from males, but also come from the community as a whole." Officer 4, who is a 31-year-old White officer, agrees that

minorities distrust the police. He started police work about the time the Michael Brown incident took place and was working when the George Floyd incident took place. "When interacting with Black males, Black females, I frequently encounter the term 'Hands up! Don't shoot!' or 'I can't breathe!' when I walk by. That's all the way down to the elementary school level because I teach a [Unnamed] Program and [hear this] walking down the hallway." Officer 8's story about a Black man developing tentative trust in a police officer hint at reasons why Black men distrust police officers. He said:

> I've always learned to get respect, you got to give respect. I'll tell you a little story about a gentleman years ago. He was a Black male. I was driving him to another facility. We had a long ride, and we were talking. He says, 'You haven't treated me like other police officers have been. You've been nice to me.' I said, 'Well, you chose to do something in your life that you know you have consequences. There's no reason for me to treat you bad.' Just because you're in the backseat of my [patrol] car does not mean you're a bad guy. You made a bad choice. I have no right to treat you anything but good. Now I may not invite you over to my Thanksgiving dinner. But I can't say that you're a bad person.

Confidence

Minority citizens in this study were divided on the topic of feeling confident about the police. Table 5 shows that five citizens were confident about the police, one was confident in specific circumstances, and four citizens were not confident in the police. Some of their perspectives on trust contradicted their feelings of insecurity. Four citizens flatly denied confidence. C10 said, "No! I have no confidence in policemen at all

because systemic racism is real. When policemen come on the scene, and I've seen this, the Black person has been automatically [identified as] guilty until found innocent." C6 also lacked confidence in the police because of the several times she called the police about situations she witnessed in her majority-White neighborhood. He said, "but because I'm Black, they I look at me like the crazy person in the neighborhood complaining of something that they could arrest that person. Yet my White neighbor complaining about the same thing, then they do something."

Other citizens felt confident. Citizen 1 was confident that the police would come if they were needed. C7 said they were "pretty confident that they will come in and assist and help when needed." Remaining citizens expressed conditional confidence. C5 said her confidence depended on the situation: "I do have confidence in the police that they would come and help if I needed them" but it was because, as a Black woman, "I don't think I appear threatening or as a threat." C9's confidence was also conditional:

> Overall, I would say yes, in general, I do have confidence that if I needed
> assistance, I could get it. But in the last few years, racism has just escalated.
> When I was arrested, sadly enough, I was the one who called the police. The
> White officer was the one who said, 'Well, you know, you're a big guy. So, you
> know, you're probably the aggressor here. That's why I was actually arrested.'

Fear

This subtheme emerged from divergent interpretations. The minority citizens in this study either felt fear or did not feel fear during their encounters with police. Table 5 showed that five citizens feared the police, three feared them in specific circumstances,

and two citizens did not fear the police. C3 felt fearful because "I know what can happen to me as a Black male. I don't like the police at all. Seeing things that happen around me makes me fearful of the police a lot. I try to stay away from them." C1 felt fearful because of the certainty of outcome: "You can kind of expect the worst when dealing with them." In contrast, C7 felt fearful because of the uncertainty of outcome: "You don't know what type of police officer you're going to encounter if you get stopped. There's always going to be that one person that will always deviate from what they're supposed to do." C6 also feared police encounters because of uncertainty. She described incidents such as minor speeding or walking out of an expensive store and seeing an officer. C6 said:

> I freeze up for a moment. I'm fearful that they might be one of those really racist [officers] and something might happen. We don't trust because we see someone whose innocent pulled over just because of the color of their skin. There's no fair treatment. I am definitely fearful. Are they going to stop me because I'm a Black female who just walked out of this expensive store? To answer your question, I don't trust them. I have a fear problem.

Other participants did not feel fear during encounters with police. C9 had the same reasons as C7 but did not call it fear: "I do not think fear influences my perception as much as my experiences. There is fear that [the officer] also could be having a bad day or, or just being racist." C5 denied fear in lieu of alertness: "I'm not afraid or fearful of the police. However, my awareness is raised as a Black mom raising a Black son not to be afraid of the police." C10 also denied fear in lieu of apprehension: "It is not fear. I

don't fear anyone or anything. But I am cautious because all of the different incidences make me really apprehensive about all policemen. I always try to stay within the confines of the law so that I don't get stuck."

Finally, C2 reported a lack of fear because, like C10, he is law-abiding. Moreover, he counsels all citizens to take personal responsibility. "I'm older now. I have my kids. I say, speak up for yourself, educate yourself, know what the laws are, what you shouldn't be doing, what you do have to have (an inspection, sticker and insurance) because if you get pulled over and have all these things, then you can start alluding to abuse of authority or abuse of force."

Counterpoint: police perspectives on viewing minorities as threats. The above evidence on the influence of trust versus distrust, confidence versus doubt, and fear included references to the idea that Police officers generally see minorities as threats. Officers were asked this question directly during their interviews. The officers unequivocally denied viewing of minorities as threats. They showed 100% consensus, thus disconfirming the citizens' views, such as Officer 10's reply, "No, I've never felt them to be a threat."

Theme 3: Imbalanced Use of Force

The third theme, imbalanced use of force, portrays minority perceptions of police attitudes about minorities and behavior towards them in three subthemes. These are followed by police perspectives on their personal attitudes about and behaviors towards minorities.

Officer Aggression against Minorities Because of Race

None of the minority citizens in this study reported personal experiences with excessive force from the police. For example, C5 characterized her experiences with police as "really good." Yet the subtheme that emerged from their comments about officers' use of aggression because of race was that officers used force that typically manifested as verbal abuse. C1 phrased it mildly was "There were micro aggressions." Verbal abuse manifested as disregard for the citizen's viewpoints. C2, a 34-year-old Latino man, noted that the officer who stopped him late one night as he was going home from work "didn't really even have any regard for what I had to say." C9, who is a 55-year-old Black man, experienced similar disregard, this time ironically because it was triggered by his calm compliance. C9 said:

In [city name removed], there was something called Rolling Thunder where officers set up roadblocks on side streets to catch drunk drivers. They normally set up white lights to see the people inside the vehicle. As I was driving home alone, I was stopped and asked for my driver's license and registration, which were provided. As the other officer was returning my license and registration, out of nowhere a young White officer appeared and started yelling at me to turn the lights on. Just imagine, I was trying to totally comply, and the other officer starts like yelling like I'm doing something wrong. This really rattled me. The issue was that my headlights were set to automatic, but the bright lights that the police officers were using caused my lights to actually turn off. The [original] officer

who was handling the situation went to another vehicle. I drove away angry,

frustrated, and just felt like that was a very negative change there.

C2 also had an experience with an officer's use of force by being rude,

dismissive: and arrogant, that is, verbal abuse because of his race. C2 said:

The other example an aggressive stop was when the officer found out that I was

Spanish. He was rough from the beginning. I was on a motorcycle. There was a

vehicle that hadn't let a pedestrian cross but stopped abruptly when the driver saw

the police officer. Anybody who rides motorcycles knows that you cannot stop

the same way on a motorcycle that you can in car, which has better braking

power. I had to swerve to try to stop, which created a little squeal of my tires. The

police officer immediately told me to pull over. So, I pull over. I take off my

helmet. He immediately said, 'Stay on the motorcycle.' I said, 'If shutting off my

motorcycle, I have to get off it.' But he didn't let me talk. He took my license,

looked at my information, sized me up and down, and started asking me again if I

had any weapons. I'm like, 'Listen, I'm on a motorcycle. I can conceal a weapon

in here, but it's kind of ridiculous.' Now you're asking me about weapons, like

they didn't even correlate. It was a White male who saw that I was Spanish, in my

opinion and [decided] 'Screw this guy.' Gave me my ticket and I was on my way.

He also told to tow my motorcycle, which again, he wouldn't have had any reason

for, but I did anyway. So that's another kind of like abuse of authority.

Similarly, C7 experienced "verbally abusive sort of speak in regard to a speeding

incident." C3 commented, "All White officers know how to talk to a minority is 'Sit

down. Shut up. We're not talking to you.' I just know they go look out for the minority."

When C4 was young, he was stopped "for no reason because of the neighborhood I'm staying in. It's a drill area. So, if they see you, they arrest you. They stopped me because of my race."

As a Black woman C5 had a different experience. C5 said, "Fortunately, I personally did not appear as threatening. So, the police officer, who was White, stopped me. He was somewhat friendly during the traffic stop. I was given a warning for speeding and went on about my way."

More Police Force against Minorities

This subtheme pertained to whether the citizens view police as using more force against minorities than against Whites. The citizen consensus was yes. C3 said that when it comes to Whites, the police are polite, calm, and "here to help. But when it comes to the Blacks, they don't." C10 said: "the preconceived notion that we are all, to some degree, ignorant and we are all criminals" and as such, police "come with guns drawn and put hands on a Black male. However, in the same situation with a White man, officers will simply walk right up on him." C5 5 had the same view: "White people see Black males as threats, more threatening and aggressive" compared to Whites whom they do not necessarily see as threatening. C7 also said police see Blacks as threats: "From what I've seen, they see minority, mostly males, Hispanic or African American, as a threat. For some reason, they just basically assume that they're all going to be aggressive in every situation." C9 attributed greater police force against minority males to officers' fear of minorities, which he based on his experiences with media exposure. He said:

It is like police officers have fear, which causes adrenalin to increase, which
results in unnecessary aggression. You can just watch the news and can see they
charge the Black man. Whereas a White person could run, and either they're going
to keep running and chase him or he's going to get away, or they're going to shoot
him in the leg.

C2 thought that greater police force stemmed from an imbalance of power, and
specifically. He said:

When a police officer feels insecure, they don't have control of the situation, or
they're intimidated. They'll try to de-escalate that. Otherwise, if a police officer
feels like he has full control over the situation, that's when more of use of force
will come out.

C6 disagreed, claiming that greater police use of force against minorities stems
from history and because police want legal permission to exert unfair authority over
minorities and said:

It goes back to decades ago. With slavery and outside of slavery when Blacks
were free, White law officers [have] always been brutal to Blacks. And that's been
going back from history, you're talking about over 50 or 60 years. And from my
knowledge and knowing a lot of white supremacists got to law enforcement,
because they wanted to have that actual authority to do what they do to persons of
color."

Officer Victimization of Black Men Versus White Men

This subtheme pertained to views on whether White police officers victimize minority men or Black men more than they victimize White men. The consensus was again nearly complete: Yes. However, most of the minority citizens in this study had different reasons for their perspective. The views of the sole outlier on this question are presented at the end of this section.

C10 was unequivocal that White officers victimize Black men more than they victimize White men. His reasoning was based on racism that is intentionally instilled in children from an early age who then grow up to become police officers and other individuals employed with the justice system in order to exercise their racism more widely. C10 said:

Racism is inherent. I truly believe that. Children of all ethnicities play at a daycare center together because they don't recognize race. But once they get into preschool, they have been somehow taught about race. Most times, parents teach White kids that we are criminals that were bad. That child inherently goes forth in law enforcement especially because that is the one that they can really display that inherent racism. They not only go into enforcement, but the justice system and the legal system also. Even public attorneys don't really pursue any kind of legal representation for a minority. All they want to do is get a plea. And the reason for that is because they have such a caseload that they don't have their more investigative powers or no will to investigate. So, it's the same way with

policemen: When they come on the scene involving two different races, the minority is the one who is generally seen as being the culprit.

C9 agreed that minority males are victimized more often but had a different perspective on why and said:

Yes, I do believe that Black males are victimized far more often than White males. In my opinion, it is because officers think that a Black male's life does not have the same value as a White person. There's a lack of respect and trust on both sides also see the same images of racism injustice that I see. And they know that treating that Black person badly will have fewer repercussions than a White person.

C3 also agreed that minority males are victimized more often but had yet different perspective on why: It was due to fear because officers do not understand Black anger: He said:

I think they just fear us. They don't know how to take us. So, when it comes to the Whites, they could deal with them better because they know White folks are not that angry. Black folks, we angry but we not that type of angry. We're not going to shoot at you because you mess with us. We are angry because we do want the same respect you get, and we want the same thing.

C6 agreed but had yet another perspective. He said, "I believe Black males are more victimized, not because of what they were [doing], but because of the color of the skin. It goes to that White privilege. There's no fair treatment, has never been fair treatment. I don't think it's going to be any anytime soon." However, Black women are

not immune to victimization. C6 and her female friend, who was an attorney, were driving in her friend's Mercedes. An officer pulled them over and fired several accusatory questions at the attorney, such as whose car it was, what she did for work to afford a Mercedes, etc.

By contrast, sole outlier C2 pointed out that victimization can be self-imposed. C2 said:

> The reason why we - Black, Spanish – are victimized is because we allow ourselves to be victims. If somebody gives you an excuse as to why something happened, you tend to run with it instead of taking responsibility. Whether it's Spanish, whether it's Black, that's doing a disservice to your own people. Instead of taking responsibility and renewing your inspection sticker, it reduces the fact of easily able to just come up with an excuse and say, All the reason why he pulled me over was because I was Black. Instead of saying, damn, I should have gotten my inspection done on time. Then he wouldn't have pulled me over.

Counterpoint: police perspectives on officer aggression, more force, and victimization because of race. Evidence presented above for the theme of imbalanced use of force showed that the majority of the citizens agreed that police use more force against Blacks because of race. During their interviews, the officers were asked a variety of questions designed to glean their level of prejudice or racial bias. This section shows that, although the officers tended to be divided, the officers generally disconfirmed the citizens' perceptions. Half of the officers disagreed that Blacks sustain more police force

than Whites, more officers disagreed than agreed that Blacks were more aggressive than

Whites, and the majority of officers denied racial bias.

For example, the officers were divided on whether minorities, and particularly

Blacks, sustained more police force. Officer 2 spoke for the officers who agreed with the

citizens' perceptions and attributed force to lack of cultural exposure. He said:

> Minorities and Blacks are more likely to experience use of force. Often it is
>
> because officers are not trained to deal with certain minority groups. You know,
>
> Hispanic males and Black males are usually loud, you know, not loud, but they're
>
> very expressive of themselves. And some people might perceive that way of
>
> speaking as aggressive when it's not, it's just their nature.

Officer 8 felt that the belief that Blacks sustain the more police force was the

general public perception because of the media. He said:

> "More attention is brought to Black neighborhoods because the news media is
>
> really focusing on those types of situations. So that's what people see most. So, if
>
> I had to pick, I'm going to bet it's the Black community due to the media."

Officer 4 spoke for the officers who disagreed with citizens' perspectives. He

said: "I feel like [police aggression is] just equally spread out. I don't think it's motivated

through law enforcement, 'Hey, we're going to go get this guy today.' We don't

discriminate on what color, gender, race, height, and any of that. At least in my opinion, I

don't." Officer 5 concurred and said: "I believe all races receive the same type of force."

On the subject of whether the officer's thought Blacks were more aggressive than

Whites, 7 officers disagreed that Blacks were more aggressive because everyone is

capable of becoming aggressive and aggression depends on the situation, location, and circumstances. For example, Officer 4 said, "I don't think that minorities are more aggressive in any. I feel like everyone can be just as aggressive as they need to be. It's about equal." Officer 6 considered the role of location, and circumstances and pointed out his experiences with aggressive Whites and said:

That depends on the area. Inner city, probably. If you were somewhere more heavily populated with more Whites than bros, even in those areas (though people don't see it), they're pretty aggressive toward the police. From my experience, you get the same aggression in an area that was majority White. It's just not seen as much or talked about as much. Black and White aggression is about the same.

Only three of the 10 officers thought Blacks were more aggressive than Whites. Officer 9 said:

Blacks carry past aggression that stemmed from civil rights that stemmed from unfair justice systems and witnessing unfair justice towards Blacks as opposed to towards Whites. There's a more aggressive because they have anger that they want to express, but it has been suppressed by society and by the government. So, it's going to boil over out there. You have to take that into consideration. They are young, they are angry, and they want to be heard.

Officer 7, who is a 50-year-old Black officer, thought that the fear that people feel when interacting with the police differs by race, and that dictates levels of compliance or aggression. His views of Blacks as more aggressive than Whites were equivocal as he weighed many contributing and competing influences: "Minorities are more aggressive

than Whites, in my opinion, because I guess they feel like they have a right to ask questions. Yes, you can say there's a privilege there." But he added, "Blacks have more fear. More Blacks have probably tried to run instead of trying to be aggressive." Then he mentioned the role of the media in influencing Black perspectives: "African American aggression is coming from what they've seen or heard from others. The other races don't feel that way."

A related interview question was the extent to which police officers are biased against minorities. Nine of the 10 officers denied bias. Officer 10 said, "I don't see black, white, green yellow, or another color." Officer 7 said, "Well, I try to live with no bias. I try to understand that the life of each person I encounter is different." Officer 8 said, "I treat all citizens equally, regardless of their race. I treat people as I want to be treated in general." Only Officer 4 conceded to bias by saying that everyone is biased as a function of how they were raised and thus what they were familiar with: "Everyone has an unconscious bias about everybody they look at. Within a quick glance, you can judge somebody by their skin color, their gender, how old they are. You can try to guess their socioeconomic status."

On the other hand, when asked if they thought minorities understood that police officers were authorized to use force, when necessary, 8 of the 10 said yes, they understand. Officer 8 said yes: "Most people are educated to know that if they don't comply, noncompliance is going to take something to another level." Officer 5 said yes and no: "I believe they understand, some more than others. There's a gray area." Outlier Officer 1 said no: "I will say they don't understand, and they need to."

Theme 4: Preparation to Handle Encounters with Minorities

The fourth theme, Preparation to Handle Encounters with Minorities, portrays minority perceptions of police de-escalation and training techniques as inadequate; in the views of some, woefully inadequate.

Adequacy of De-escalation Techniques

There are a variety of de-escalation techniques. They include being empathetic, non-judgmental, respectful of personal space, using a neutral tone and body language, remaining calm without over-reacting, ignoring challenging questions, and setting clear boundaries (Price & Baker, 2012). About half of the minority citizens in this study thought officers' de-escalation techniques needed improvement. C1: "No, I don't think they do a good job at that." C3 thought that "they do not do a good job of talking a situation down, not at all. That's why they need more training." C4: "No. No, they don't do a good job in de-escalating. We just had a person that got shot at the show by police and they covered it up." C5 felt that officers should receive constant training on how to de-escalate different situations, to use Tasers or pepper spray or rubber bullets, and "not always being aggressive and pulling for the gun."

Others were equivocal. C3 said, "They may or may not do a good job" and the reason was that "they feel we are all aggressive. So, they always come at us with guns drawn or Tasers out. It's just they don't know how to take us. But that's the way we talk." C8 attributed reasonable de-escalation techniques to race: "They do a better job of de-escalating situations if you're White. Just the other day in North Augusta, guys were shooting in broad daylight in the middle of the streets. The police just took them into

custody instead of killing them. I'm not certain how that situation would have turned out had they been a minority." C10 also thought de-escalation was racial: more likely for Whites:

> There is no de-escalation training that I can see because a stop, especially for Black males, can go from zero to 101. Once they get out of their cars, they come with a feeling that they endanger officers' safety. They're the ones with the guns and the badges, yet [their fear] is still there. So, there is no de-escalation in situations, especially involving minorities.

C9 had a balanced perspective, calling for de-escalation methods for both officers and minority citizens.

> It's a two-way street. Officers need to do much better at understanding the people they are sworn to serve. Black males react to a lack of trust for police officers and the entire criminal justice system, which is immensely biased against minorities, especially Black, when it comes to de-escalate. It's all about how people communicate with each other. Black people have got to learn how to meet those officers where they are, and officers have got to work to be in right now. De-escalation is harder to be realized.

Counterpoint: police perspectives on de-escalation. Officer perspectives on de-escalation focused on preliminary techniques of presence and non-contact persuasion. Thus, they disconfirmed the citizens' perspectives that police need more de-escalation training. The first level of de-escalation is police presence. This works frequently because people do not want to go to jail. Officer 1 gave an example of a domestic disturbance call

with all the hallmarks of becoming dangerous. The husband was hitting the wife. "Our

presence means business, so I think that prevented him from going further. That's just one

example. There are many others."

The second level of de-escalation is Verbal Judo. Officers emphasized the use of

Verbal Judo as the primary tool in de-escalation. Officer 6 described it as calmly

explaining the consequences of actions. The aim is to reason with them "so that they can

think about what they're doing. Often, they will understand and back down even though

they're in the wrong." Officer 2 described a domestic disturbance call in which a family

member was threatening another family member with a knife. The officers on the scene

used verbal commands. The outcome was that the situation was defused, and the arrest

was made without anyone injured. Officer 7 has de-escalated many incidents with Verbal

Judo:

> There was one situation where I had to do a pitch on a suspect with seven
>
> different charges, including obstruction of law enforcement officers, because he
>
> got into an altercation with seven different officers. I saw the guy, and I mean,
>
> this was a huge guy. I knew physically, I probably couldn't bring the guy down by
>
> myself. Knowing that, I used what they consider Verbal Judo to do what I needed
>
> to do, and that was to arrest.

Officer 8 also uses Verbal Judo regularly. He often worked extra duty in

establishments where they sold alcohol.

> I used it all the time. I could very well convince someone that's intoxicated, just
>
> by talking to him to say, 'Hey, man, you gotta go.' I used calmness of being able

to talk to somebody so many times, probably hundreds of times. I'm just a talker. I
used that technique to try to calm the situation. It's not for me to judge you, right?
I'm here to perform a duty as far as the law is concerned. I don't take personal in
anything,

Officer 3 also de-escalates with calm discourse: "There was a Taser incident. Let's
say you pull it out but then let the person know that now we are just taking you into
custody. Most of the time, people will comply. Some people just don't want to go to jail."

Adequacy of Training to Deal with Aggressive Behavior

Minority citizens in this study were asked to comment on the adequacy of
officers' training based on officer behavior they had witnessed directly and indirectly.
The consensus was that officers needed more and better training.

C9's perspective provided an important foundation for comments in support of
this subtheme. "If officers receive training, I think does not supersede their perceptions.
Racism gets embedded over time. Officers probably attend training as a requirement. But
it's very hard to unlearn racist behavior in my opinion." C4 conceded that, "They train
well, but they don't use it. They use aggressive, aggressive tactics on us, a Black male
like myself." C3 agreed: They can have a lot more training when it comes to dealing with
minorities because, when it comes to us, they don't respect us at all."

C2 said training was inadequate because there was not enough of it and the
training that was available was unrealistic and taught by ill-equipped trainers. However,
he ended up deciding more training was still a good idea:

They are not trained enough. The trainings are unrealistic. Many training

programs for de-escalation are trained by people who are never in a real position

to de-escalate a real situation. It's kind of fluff. A lot of things don't happen the

way these police officers are being trained at police academies. So, when it comes

down to the real world, they're not going to use it. It's based on the culture of the

department. It's not holding police officers accountable. We're going to send you

for a full day training. You know, police officers don't want to sit there all day.

But he might rethink it the next time he actually gets into a situation let me try to

de-escalate this.

C7 called for more officer training on a number of fronts:

Diversity trainings would be definitely beneficial to make their presence more

visible in the minority communities, establish relationships, and raise cultural

awareness. With mental health issues on the rise, they need to learn how to de-

escalate situations more appropriately. I definitely would like to see improvement

in less encounters of police brutality.

Counterpoint: police perspectives on adequacy of training. The officers

disagreed that their training was inadequate, and several comments addressed the

difficulty of training for the real-world realities, especially of situations that require force.

Officer 6 said, "Every year we have 40-60 hours of training and train year-round. Use of

Force training is mandatory every year." Moreover, there is a variety of trainings

available. Officer 6: "We take different classes on all ethnic backgrounds." Officer 9 also

addressed a breadth of training as he pointed out that not only does any person have a

basic human right to protect themselves, "as a law enforcement officer, you're given

additional responsibilities and training of only utilizing the highest level of force, which

is deadly force, to save a life. Again, it must be justified." Officer 9 feels that his training

has been adequate for the job of responding to a situation. "The situation is not color-

based. It is not racially based. I have the right mentality and the proper training to work in

any environment, whether it is a Black community or White community." A big

challenge is reality. Officer 6:

While everything is good on paper in a classroom, the real-life interaction is

something different. People harp on training, training, training but they can't

suggest what kind. You can give a man a million dollars' worth of training. But

when an incident happens, what's inside you is going to take over. Fear is in there.

You can't teach fear. You can't teach courage. These things are unteachable. This

is stuff that you have to learn yourself. Training can't change who you are inside,

how you feel inside, which you know if you're scared.

Officer 9 thought it was timely and critical for the public to understand the nature

of police training.

They don't understand we have to go through steps and meet certain criteria to

utilize the equipment that we carry all the way to the point that everything we

carry has to be used on us so that we understand the effect on citizens. We are

shocked with Tasers. We get pepper sprayed. We are beat with batons. We have it

all done to us in training so that we understand what happens and what a person's

mindset is when it's happening to them. The Fear Factor, the panic, the loss of

control, the loss of freedom, so you better understand what you're doing when

using a level of force on a citizen. The public need to be made aware of that.

Summary

The purpose of this qualitative hermeneutic phenomenology was to document the

lived experiences of the use of force and excessive force from the perspectives of two

groups of individuals, racial minority citizens and police officers, residing in a

Southeastern state in the United States. Ten members of minority races and 10 police

officers were interviewed either by phone or face-to-face. The answer to the research

question (How are racial minorities and police officers' perceptions and lived experiences

on the use of force influenced by fear, trust, and confidence in a Southeastern state?) was multi-faceted. Racial minorities and police officers agreed on some points but mainly saw the use of force differently. Minorities' perceptions of police force were largely based on personal experiences with rude, dismissive officers and of excessive force largely based on media exposure. Fear, distrust, and lack of confidence in police influenced minority citizens to view police officers as strongly and dependably biased against them. Police officers' perceptions were that they used force when compelled to do so to gain control of an out-of-control situations and/or to save a life, had the authority to use a level of force above that used by suspects to control the situation, and treated minorities with respect and fairness.

Current policies for the use of force among police agencies involve a 5-step escalation of force. The officers' main definition of excessive force was force beyond what is needed to achieve or maintain control of a situation. Officers justified excessive force when confronted with direct threats to human lives. Officers are authorized to use one level of force above that used by suspects and perceived that most citizens understand this.

Four themes arose from the participants' perspectives. The first theme, Experiential Sources, showed that the minority citizens in this study lacked personal experience with police force, were mainly exposed to excessive force through media coverage, and that their views of law enforcement were unaffected by Black Lives Matter. In counterpoint, police thought that they treated minorities with respect, that

minorities gained their negative impressions of police unfairly through the media, and disconfirmed citizens' dismissal of BLM influences.

The second theme, Prevailing Perception of Police, had four subthemes. Minorities' general perceptions were that police were arrogant and biased against monitories; as such, the minority citizens in this study distrusted the police but were divided on their fear of them and their confidence in them. In counterpoint, officers confirmed citizens' fear and mistrust but were in full consensus that they did not view minorities as threats.

The third theme, Imbalanced Use of Force, also has three subthemes. The minority citizens in this study described officers' use of aggression because of race typically manifested as verbal abuse, micro aggressions, and other arrogant behaviors on the part of the officers. Further, citizens agreed that police use more force against minorities than against Whites and that White police officers intentionally victimize minority and Black men more than they victimize White men. In counterpoint, the officers generally disconfirmed the citizens' perceptions. Half of the officers disagreed that Blacks sustain more police force than Whites, more officers disagreed than agreed that Blacks were more aggressive than Whites, and the majority of officers denied racial bias. When asked if they thought minorities understood that police officers were authorized to use force, when necessary, 8 of the 10 said yes; minorities were not asked the same question.

The fourth theme, Preparation to Handle Encounters with Minorities, has two subthemes. The minority citizens in this study perceived police de-escalation techniques

and training to be inadequate, in some cases woefully so. The consensus was that officers needed more and better training, especially in techniques for dealing specifically with the unique needs of minorities. In counterpoint, officer perspectives disconfirmed the citizens' perspectives that police need more de-escalation training, citing an emphasis on preliminary techniques of presence and the non-contact persuasion of Verbal Judo as primary de-escalation tools. Officers cited a list of trainings, which included giving every officer direct personal experience in every level of force except deadly force, but also conceded that it was hard to train for some of the realities of police work.

Chapter 5 includes an introduction, interpretation of the findings, limitations of the study, recommendations, implications, and conclusions.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore whether lived experiences of racial minorities differ from police officers regarding use of force in a Southeastern state and how fear, trust, and confidence influence perceptions of law enforcement agencies, police officers, and policymakers. The problem was the recent increase in excessive force and deaths of racial minorities at the hands of police officers and lack of national standards involving use of force by officers that triggered community concerns about interactions between this group and racial minority citizens throughout the US. According to Kahn et al., 2017) racial minorities, particularly Black males, have disproportionate contact with the police. My study addressed the gap in literature involving whether fear, trust, and confidence influence perceptions racial minority citizens have about police officers and vice versa. Also, my study built on the work of Riter by exploring perceptions and relationships between racial minorities and police officers based on fear, trust, and confidence as they relate to excessive use of force in a Southeastern state. Furthermore, results indicated that police officers treated everyone fairly and equally from their perspectives; however, this was contrary to racial minority citizens' perspectives that there were immense imbalances in terms of use of force. Chapter 4 includes an in-depth analysis of findings of my study, which could lead to social change for police departments developing or modifying policies regarding use of force and building cooperative relationships with underrepresented communities and citizens.

Chapter 5 contains an introduction, including a summary of the study, interpretations of findings, limitations of the study, recommendations for further research, implications for social change, and conclusions.

Interpretations of the Findings

Through data analysis presented in Chapter 4, four critical themes and subthemes were derived from participants' perspectives that are contributing factors to their lived experiences: (a) experiential sources, (b) prevailing perceptions of police (four subthemes), (c) imbalanced use of force (three subthemes), and (c) preparation to handle encounters with minorities (two subthemes). Interview questions approved by the IRB drew involved lived experiences of racial minorities and police officers regarding their perceptions of use of force. I obtained qualitative data from in-depth one-on-one semi-structured interviews. Yin (2014) said the qualitative methodology allows for the study of a phenomenon via open-ended questions.

Interviewing racial minority citizens allowed me to gain primary knowledge involving participants' lived experiences with police encounters and understand their points of view on perceptions they have regarding police use of force. Similarly, I aimed to understand participants' lived experiences involving interactions with racial minority citizens. Additionally, I was able to increase my knowledge of perceptions they have about racial minority citizens regarding use of force based on information each participant presented.

Furthermore, minority respondents were deemed to be open and honest because their responses were detailed and involved emotional statements. The subset of officers

who were interviewed outside of the sheriff's office showed considerable candor. I perceived five police officers who were interviewed at the sheriff's office were not as forthcoming due to where interviews took place.

This study contributed to previous and current studies involving police officers' use of force against racial minority citizens. My study mainly involved whether racial minorities' and police officers' perceptions and lived experiences regarding use of force were influenced by fear, trust, and confidence in a county in a Southeastern state. Police officers are given the authority to use different levels of force; however, different degrees of force or excessive force can cause minorities to have issues with fear, mistrust, and lack of confidence. Both groups agreed on some points but mainly saw use of force differently. Fear and distrust in police influenced minorities perception of police use of force, but confidence did not. Racial minority citizens' perceptions involving police use of force are based solely on indirect experience and media exposure. By contrast, police officers' perceptions were that they used force when compelled to do so to gain control of out-of-control situations and/or save a life while treating minorities with respect and fairness. In Chapter 1, use of force was defined as reasonable level of force used to control a situation. Excessive use of force is defined as use of for greater than that which a reasonable and prudent law enforcement officer would use under the circumstances. Two out of 10 police officers defined excessive force differently as force necessary to contain a situation.

Experiential Sources

Racial minority citizens' claims involving use of force and excessive force were not based on direct personal experience with police officers but indirect experience through media exposure. Nine out of 10 minorities confirmed they were exposed to excessive force through the media. C8 said his experience mainly involved "watching television or whatever and seeing how a lot of unarmed Black people can get killed by the police." When I questioned racial minorities to describe a time they were stopped or arrested by a police officer and use of force or excessive force was used, all 10 participants said they had not experienced excessive use of force personally or directly (see Table 5). Two racial minority participants were arrested but did not experience use of force or excessive force.

When I questioned police officers about their experiences involving using excessive force on racial minority citizens, they said they treated minorities fairly and with respect. This led me to assume that they had used excessive force. Officers had different perspectives from minority citizens as they related to excessive force. As expected, eight police officers denied witnessing any of their coworkers using excessive force on minority citizens and said they had the obligation to intervene and report such incidents.

When racial minorities were questioned about how the BLM movement influenced their perceptions of police officers and use of force, nine out of 10 participants said they were not influenced by the movement even though they were exposed to the abuse of power by police officers through the media. In the literature review, Black

Americans had somewhat mixed views involving the extent to which BLM will be effective. C7 was the only participant who said the BLM movement changed how she thought about police officers. C7 said, "because I have a son who is half Hispanic and half African American, based on his size and build, he can look intimidating".

By contrast, when police officers were asked the same question, three out of 10 police officers disagreed that BLM influence racial minority citizens' perception about police use of force. Officer 2 was the only participant who provided evidence on recently publicized cases of police use of excessive force on minorities and said, "The Black Lives Matter movement has created more accountability for police officers".

Response made by both groups were led to believe that excessive force by police officers were not used as frequently and as unnecessarily during an interaction, which contradicted the need for this study. Dukes et al. (2017) said the current situation in the US called for a review of police practices, and relations with community members, especially regarding people of color. Racial minority participants who had police interactions did not provide any evidence involving any activity where use of force or excessive force was used by police officers but provided evidence of indirect experience of excessive force through the media. Minority participants said they felt police officers were rude, dismissive, and arrogant. Police officers agreed with minority citizens perceptions of the police were primarily gained through indirect experience, especially through the media. The results were consistent with the responses provided by each participant in this study.

Prevailing Perceptions of Police

Most minority participants' perceptions of the police were more negative than positive via the emergence of four subthemes: general perceptions, trust, confidence, and fear as indicated in Chapter 4. As discussed in Chapter 2 and confirmed by participants in this study, racial minority citizens' perception of the police was found to be more negative than Whites and more negative than positive. Peck (2015) said minorities, specifically, African Americans were at a higher percentage than Whites and Hispanics, hold negative perceptions about the police. Peck (2015) also said, Hispanics have a higher percentage of positive perception of the police than Blacks, but a higher percentage of negative views than Whites. Hagan and Shedd (2005) said, encounters between police officers and racial minority citizens build negative perceptions of racial inequality, which contributed to the negative perceptions of the police.

In subtheme one, the general perception of racial minority participants was more negative than positive. For example, C1, a 25-year-old Black-Hispanic man, considers police to be a "general nuisance to society" because "police, in general, have a trigger-happy mentality.", which is consistent with previous research from Smith (2016) that racial minority citizens have experienced widespread attention of deaths caused by police officers using excessive force in the US. The remaining participants described their general perception of the police to be above the law, police are taught to be racist, superior attitude, and have cookie-cutter profiling.

It was mentioned in subtheme 2, that racial minority perceptions showed most of the citizens had unique combinations of perspectives involving trust, confidence, and

fear. Interview responses revealed that racial minority citizens mainly do not trust the police or trusted them conditionally in specific circumstances. I discovered distrust in police influenced the perception racial minority citizens have about police use of force. In the literature review, public trust was discussed. When police conduct violates the law, it erodes public trust (Gerber & Jackson, 2017). Consistent with and confirmed by previous research in this study, police abuse and the use of excessive force have a negative effect on trust in the police (Akinlabi, 2016). Trust was found to be a major factor on how citizens perceived the use of force by police officers (Kyprianides et al., 2020). I found four minority participants actively distrusted the police, three trusted the police under specific conditions only, and three citizens trusted the police. Police perspectives on levels of citizens' trust in police, it was agreed by most of the officers that racial minority citizens, specifically Black males distrust the police.

As shown for subtheme three, there were five citizens that were confident about the police, one who was confident in specific circumstances, and four citizens who were not confident in the police. In the literature review, I identified the lack of trust and confidence in the police towards certain individuals or groups had an impact on police perception of racial minority citizens when using force. I determined confidence was not a strong contributing factor on having an influence on racial minority citizens' perception of police use of force. Police participants were not asked the same question.

In subtheme four, racial minority citizens feared the police or did not fear the police during a police encounter. Table five showed five citizens feared the police, three feared them in specific circumstances, and two citizens did not fear the police. I identified

fear to have an influence on how racial minority citizens perceive police use of force. Fear in police is on the rise among citizens, specifically among minorities who experienced unfair treatment during police interactions. Furthermore, as stated in chapter 2, the attitudes of police officers and racial minority citizens have an influence on how they respond to each other, which can also influence the perceptions of both parties. By contrast, the evidence presented on the influences of trust versus distrust, confidence versus doubt, and fear, included references to the idea that police officers generally see minorities as threats. Police officers disagreed with their views of police viewing minorities as threats. All police participants agreed, and Officer 10's reply, was "No, I've never felt them to be a threat."

Imbalance Use of Force

Three subthemes emerged from the imbalance use of force and portrays minority perceptions of police attitudes about minorities and behavior towards them (see Chapter 4). Findings are followed by police perspectives on their personal attitudes about minorities and behaviors towards them.

I found that subtheme one that emerged from their comments about officers' use of aggression *because of race* was that officers used force that typically manifested as verbal abuse and not from direct experience with use of force. None of the minority citizens in this study had any personal experiences with excessive force from the police; therefore, it contradicted the notion of an imbalance use of force. C1 phrased it mildly "There were micro aggressions." Verbal abuse manifested as disregard for the citizen's viewpoints. Consistent with the findings of theme one (Experiential Sources), it is

contrary to research in the literature review. In Chapter 2, data that involved excessive use of force among racial minorities demonstrated a trend of unlawful police practices using power against minorities disproportionally (Rudovsky, 2020). In subtheme two, to whether the citizens viewed the police as using more force against minorities than against Whites, interview responses revealed that police encounter through media exposure or through another indirect experience had a negative impact on how they viewed police use of force on minority citizens. Most participants shared similar viewpoints, and only one participant shared a different view and said, "greater police use of force against minorities stems from history when Blacks were freed.", which was confirmed in Chapter 2.

The final subtheme pertained to whether White police officers victimized minority men or Black males more than they victimized White males. In subtheme two, over half of racial minority participants believed minorities, especially Black males were treated unfairly more than White men; however, most of the participants shared different reasons for the way they felt. Participants' opinions included: "racism is taught as a child", "Black male lives do not have the same value as Whites", and "police do not understand Black anger." One participant shared that it is "self-imposed." Furthermore, the ongoing trend of excessive use of force on racial minorities led to riots, an increase of high-profile cases, a revisit to police department policies, improvement in policing, transparency, and holding individuals accountable in the US as referenced in the literature review. By contrast, racial minority perspectives, on subthemes discussed above, police officers during their interview, expressed their opinion and were led to

believe use of force was not generally used on racial minority citizens and indirect

experiences through the media mainly developed their perception of the police. The

police participants disagreed that police aggression was *because of race*, that Blacks

experienced more force than Whites, and White police officers victimized minority men

more than White men because they felt they treated everyone fairly and with respect.

Preparation to Handle Encounters with Minorities

Two themes arose from preparation to handle encounters with minorities when

racial minority participants were asked how they perceive police officers doing a good

job of de-escalating a situation with minorities during a police encounter and how well

they believe police officers are trained to handle minorities? In Chapter 4, I identified a

variety of de-escalation techniques that are used by police officers to keep a situation

from escalating. Interview responses revealed that racial minority participants perceived

police de-escalation techniques and training to be inadequate, and in some cases woefully

so. About half of minority participants agreed and felt police officer's de-escalation

techniques and training needed improvement, especially in techniques to better handle the

unique needs of minorities. One could assume this could be the result of what they have

seen and heard from the media that involved use of force by police. Most police

participants disagreed with their perspective about police needing more de-escalating

training because it was inadequate. Police participants emphasized using the first level of

de-escalating technique, which is police presence, and said, it frequently works to

maintain a situation in control. Police participants said they receive different levels of

trainings that gives every officer direct personal experience on every level of force, except deadly force.

Limitations of the Study

There were several potential limitations to the trustworthiness of the study. The first was the study's methodology. Since I used a qualitative method, the results were limited to the sample population included in this study. Therefore, preparing, and scheduling interviews due to Covid-19, personal and work schedules took longer than intended. Because I still agree that qualitative research was the most appropriate methodology to use for my study, qualitative research cannot be generalized.

The second limitation was the credibility and reliability of this study. Early on this researcher felt that the credibility and reliability were going to be major limitations of this study; however, after completion, these factors were not as prevalent because the participants were eager and forthcoming.

Recommendations

Future studies should focus on human contact and relationship-building to improve the perceptions of police officers and racial minorities on the use of force. Minority participants identified more and better training, especially in techniques for dealing specifically with the unique needs of minorities was needed. Therefore, if police departments focus on history as it relates to the negative impact of policing, then it could lead to an overall culture change. This recommendation could help strengthen the relationship between police and minority communities to better handle some of the

unique set of needs that minorities struggle with such as mental disorders or anger that stem from over the years related to unfair treatment.

Another research focus is diversity training. This training could allow police officers to better understand the communities they are obligated to serve.

A researcher could locate police departments that have implemented one or both aforementioned training to determine whether or not they yielded positive outcomes.

Implications

This study focused on social change by exploring the perceptions of racial minority citizens and police officers' use of force involving fear, trust, and confidence in a Southeastern state. The potential social change implications of this study may provide information to police departments and policymakers to develop or modify policies on the use of force and build a cooperative relationship with underrepresented communities and citizens. The results could also help explain how to better understand the policies and procedures on the use of force and may determine if lived experiences of racial minorities are influenced by fear, mistrust, and lack of confidence. Additionally, more police officers must understand majority of minority citizens mistrust them, including minority officers. If this is left unresolved, it can lead to additional distrust that exists between racial minority citizens and police officers. For example, some of the possible consequences of police distrust can lead to a lack of cooperation with police departments, an increase in crime, and confrontations between police officers and citizens (Weitzer & Touch, 2005).

The qualitative methodology for phenomenological research resulted in findings built on the work of Riter (2019) and supported by previous and current research. The modified replication of the instrument used for this study supported the validity of the research that yielded similar outcomes on police use of force. Police officers are obligated to serve the citizens in each community regardless of their disadvantages and circumstances, and how the police carry out their responsibilities is what will determine the outcome of their relationship including their perceptions.

Conclusion

This qualitative research study explored the perceptions of ten racial minority citizens and 10 police officers on the use of force involving fear, mistrust, and lack of confidence in a Southeastern state. This study allowed me to better understand each participant's lived experiences and the perceptions they have of each other firsthand. Both group participants were able to provide their candid opinions and perspectives on the issues surrounding police use of force. Furthermore, racial minorities and police officers agreed on some points, but had different perspectives on the use of force overall. For example, racial minority perspectives were that BLM did not influence their perceptions of police force. By contrast, police officers disagreed and acknowledged the toxic impact of BLM diversely influenced minorities. My study established the answer to the research question on how the perceptions and lived experiences of racial minority citizens and police officers on the use of force are influenced by fear, mistrust, and lack of confidence. The results of this study showed fear, mistrust and lack of confidence in the police influenced minorities conditionally. Minority participants were afraid of

getting stopped, afraid of bad and racist cops, and if they encounter one it would be a

problem. The evidence presented in Chapter 4, on the influences of trust versus distrust,

confidence versus doubt, and fear included references to the idea that police officers

generally saw minorities as threats.

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Appendix A: Social Media Posts

Research Study on Use of Force

Participants Needed

Hello, I am a doctoral candidate at Walden University seeking participants for my study. You are invited to take part in a research study focusing on perceptions of racial minorities and police officers on use of force as it relates to fear, trust, and confidence. The researcher is inviting anyone who is a racial minority and live in Richmond County, Georgia to participate in the study. Walden University's approval number for this study is 12-3-21-0625733 and it expires on December 2, 2022

Research Study on Use of Force

Participants Needed

Hello, I am a doctoral candidate at Walden University seeking participants for my study. You are invited to take part in a research study focusing on perceptions of racial minorities and police officers on the use of force as it relates to fear, trust, and confidence. The researcher is inviting anyone currently active as a police officer for at least three years, lives in Richmond County, Georgia, and who has daily contact with racial minorities to participate in the study. Walden University's approval number for this study is 12-03-21-0625733 and it expires on December 2, 2022

Appendix B: Interview Questions

<u>Questionnaire for Police Officers</u>

Please do your best to provide detailed responses to help complete my study successfully

1. What is your age?
    a. 18-28
    b. 29-39
    c. 40-50
    d. 51-61
    e. Over 62

2. Please specify your race/ethnicity
    a. White
    b. Hispanic
    c. Black/African American
    d. Asian
    e. Native American
    f. Other, please specify_____

3. Describe the community you live in
    a. City/Urban
    b. Rural
    c. Other, please specify_____

4. What is your gender?
    a. Male
    b. Female
    c. Other, please specify_____

5. How long have you been employed as a police officer?

6. How do you define excessive force?

7. When do you believe force can be completely justified?

8. What are your experiences with using excessive force on racial minority citizens?

9. When you used force, including excessive force, was the black male or minority male unarmed and or aggressive toward you? Please explain

10. Describe a time you used de-escalating techniques to keep you from using force.

11. Describe if you perceive racial minorities as a threat? If so, how?

12. Can you explain if you believe racial minority citizens understand that police officers are permitted to use force against them, when making an arrest or controlling the actions of a citizen to preserve the peace?

13. How do you feel working within a black community or racially minority community who are a different race from you?

14. What group of citizens are more likely to receive some type of force from the police in your opinion?

15. Describe whether you believe racial minority males/black males trust the police to be fair during their experience with you.

16. How do you feel about police officers discharging their gun or using a higher level of force on any citizen if they feel threatened?

17. Describe any bias you may have in any way toward another race.

18. What are your experiences of any complaint(s) file against you for using force/excessive force on a racial minority male/black unarmed male?

19. What are your experiences of any complaint(s) filed against you for using force/excessive force on a white unarmed male?

20. Describe a time you ever observed a co-worker who is a police officer or your partner using excessive force of any type against a person of a black/racial minority community.

21. How do you or other police officers treat black males or racial minority citizens during an encounter in your opinion?

22. What is your current use of force policy in Georgia and within your department?

23. Based upon your experience, do you believe minorities are more aggressive towards law enforcement than Whites in your opinion?

24. How are minorities more aggressive than Whites in your opinion?

25. How does Black Lives Matter movement influence the perception of racial minority citizens about police officers and their use of force?

26. Describe your experience(s) of when you treated racial minority citizens equally regardless of race.

27. What is your perception of the citizens you serve?

28. Can you tell me if you rather work with police officers of your own race instead of another race?

Questionnaire for Racial Minority Citizens
(Please circle your response)

1. What is your age?
   a. 18-28
   b. 29-39
   c. 40-50
   d. 51-61
   e. Over 62

2. Please specify your race/ethnicity
   a. White
   b. Hispanic
   c. Black/African American
   d. Asian
   e. Native American
   f. Other, please specify
3. Describe the community you live in
   a. City/Urban
   b. Rural
   c. Other, please specify_____

4. What is your gender?
   a. Male
   b. Female
   c. Other, please specify_____

5. What are your experiences with police encounters?

6. Describe a time you were stopped or arrested by a police officer and use of force or excessive force was used.

7. Describe the weapon(s) on your possession when you were stopped or Arrested, if any.

8. What race was the police officer who arrested you?
   a. White
   b. Black
   c. Hispanic
   d. Asian
   e. Other, please specify_____

9. Do you trust the police, if so, how and when?

10. Please describe how fear influences your perceptions of police?

11. Please describe if you have confidence in the police to help you if you needed?

12. Describe the relationship between Richmond County police and
    the community where you live?

13. What is your perception of police officers?

14. How do police officers use more force against Black unarmed males as
    opposed to White unarmed males?

15. Describe your experience(s) a time where the police officer was aggressive towards
    you during your stop or arrest because of your race.

16. Can you explain how you feel about police officers doing a good job of de-escalating
a situation when confronted with aggressive behavior from black males or racial minority
males?

17. Can you explain why you believe or do not believe black males are victimized more than white males by police officers?

18. How does Black Lives Matter movement influence your perception about police officers and their use of force?

19. Describe your opinion about how well police officers are trained to deal with the aggressive behavior that comes from black males or racially minority males?

20. What suggestion do you have that could help improve the relationship between police officers and racial minorities, specifically black males in your community?

21. Is there anything else you would like to tell me?

      I simply ask that you answer each question honestly and without fear of being identified. All responses will be kept confidential and will not be shared with anyone besides my colleagues and my professor for coursework purposes. All responses will remain in a secured file until my dissertation is complete, then the file will be destroyed.

Sincerely, I am
Linda Hester,
PhD Candidate Walden University

Appendix C: Email for Permission to Use Questionnaire and Approval

Linda Hester
Thu 6/10/2021 12:20 PM

Hello,

My name is Linda Hester, and I am currently a doctoral student at Walden University. The purpose of this email is to inquire about (or ask for permission to use and modify the instrument you used for your research) the questionnaire you have used for your research. Are you the original developer or did you use someone else's? My research topic is Exploring the Perceptions of Racial Minority Citizens and Police officers related to Fear Trust and Confidence.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Thanks,
Linda Hester

Response Giving Approval

Bill Riter
Wed 6/16/2021 8:32 AM
To: Linda Hester

Ms. Hester,
I made up the questions and you are free to use them. Good luck with your study.

-Bill Riter, PhD