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Exploring Discretionary Practices of Civilian Police Officers During Traffic Stop While Working in a Military Community

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Walden University
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Abstract

Exploring Discretionary Practices of Civilian Police Officers During Traffic Stop While
Working in a Military Community

by

Lisa M. Tartt

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Criminal Justice

Walden University

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Abstract

The individuals who reside in military communities must abide by the rules of both the military and the civilian communities. When an individual is stopped for a traffic violation in a military community, their driver's license is requested but the military-affiliated personnel often present their military identification card also. Some may expect leniency due to their military affiliation while others do not. However, there are no studies covering police discretion in a military community during traffic stops. Using social stratification theory, the purpose of this study was to understand officers' perspectives on discretion during traffic stops and how their choices are made. During this qualitative single-subject case study, 17 police officers from four different jurisdictions surrounding a military base were interviewed based on the social stratification theory. The results of this analysis indicated that the police officers are given a limited amount of discretion which was supported by the written guidelines that suggested everyone is to be treated equally. The repeating themes that continued included discretionary decisions, policy guidelines enforcement, and the individual discretionary choices that officers make. Positive social changes dictated that impartiality is the equality of all regardless of gender, race, profession, or economic status.

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Dedication

To my beautiful daughter, Laryssa, awesome grandchildren, Camrun, Cecilia, Cecily, and my late mother Jean, for putting up with all the late nights and cancelled events to complete my schoolwork. For all the missed engagements and missed meals, you all have supported me since I started even when the road seemed extra-long and extremely bumpy. I thank you all for your patience, love, kindness, and support. I love you all very much.

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Table of Contents

List of Tables.....	v
Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study	1
Background.....	2
Problem Statement.....	5
Purpose of Study.....	6
Research Questions.....	8
Theoretical Framework.....	8
Nature of the Study.....	9
Definitions.....	9
Assumptions.....	10
General Methodological Assumptions.....	11
Theoretical Assumptions.....	12
Topical Assumptions.....	13
Scope and Delimitations.....	14
Limitations.....	14
Significance	15
Social Stratification Theory.....	16
Significance to Theory and Practice.....	17
Summary.....	18
Chapter 2: Literature Review.....	19
Literature Search Strategy.....	19

Theoretical Foundation.....	20
Social Stratification.....	20
Conceptual Framework.....	25
Literature Review Related to Key Variables and/or Concepts.....	26
Police Discretion.....	26
Police Discretion and Traffic Stops.....	31
Military Life.....	34
Summary and Conclusions.....	40
Chapter 3: Research Methodology.....	43
Research Design and Rationale.....	43
Research Questions.....	43
Case Study.....	44
Role of the Researcher.....	46
Methodology.....	48
Sample/Participants.....	50
Instrumentation.....	53
Data Analysis Plan.....	54
Issues of Trustworthiness.....	57
Summary.....	59
Chapter 4: Findings.....	61
Pilot Study.....	61

Setting.....	61
Demographics.....	63
Data Collection.....	65
Interviews.....	65
Policy Guidelines.....	67
Information Pertaining to Traffic Stops.....	67
Data Analysis.....	69
Research Methodology Applied to the Data Analysis.....	69
Interviews.....	69
Policy Guidelines.....	70
Information Pertaining to Traffic Stops.....	71
Presentation of Data and the Results of the Analysis.....	72
Evidence of Trustworthiness.....	73
Ethical Considerations.....	73
Results.....	74
Data Collection.....	74
Themes from the Interviews/ Research Question #1: What type of discretionary decisions are authorized by civilian police officers during traffic stops to personnel working in military communities.	76
Themes from the Policy Guidelines/Research Question #2: What are the policy guidelines/suggestions of discretion used by an officer when	

conducting traffic stops in a military community?.....	82
Themes from Interviews/ Research Question #3: What interview information is available from individual civilian police officers regarding discretion in traffic stops.....	85
Summary.....	92
Chapter 5: Discussion, Implications & Recommendations.....	94
Interpretation of the Findings.....	94
Limitations of the Study.....	95
Recommendations.....	96
Recommendations for Further Research.....	97
Implications.....	99
Conclusion.....	101
References.....	106

List of Tables

Table 1. Jurisdiction Demographics.....63

Table 2. Participant Demographics.....64

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Police discretion serves a purpose in law enforcement and controlling the manner in which the streets are patrolled. Without discretion, the courts would be full of individuals who could benefit from a second chance in place of a ticket and court appearance. With discretion in mind, police officers avoid issuing tickets if possible. Furthermore, officers spend time in court when a ticket is given because the officers must appear in court, which takes them away from their regular everyday duties. As such, law enforcement officials have an amount of discretion that can determine the style of policing that occurs in their jurisdictions according to their organizational guidelines (Miller, 2015).

Having police discretion serves the purpose of choosing to let minor law violations be excused. While maintaining justice and supporting the community in traffic stops, a police officer must decide what level of discretion to use when faced with possible dangers. Although discretion is a necessary part of police work, it is also the subject of many discussions (Beckett, 2016). Police officers that work in military communities have a dual role of protecting the community and supporting those who fight for our country. There is a limit as to how much discretion and which discretionary tactics can be used when stopping someone who is a military member. Policing is considered a moral responsibility that varies for each officer depending on their personal beliefs (Norberg, 2013). Every law enforcement agent must not only obey the rules of policing, but they must also police with morality and compassion in mind.

The following study examined the rules and regulations that were successfully used by civilian police officers that worked in military communities. A military community can consist of those who have an affiliation with the military such as retired individuals, active-duty personnel, and their family members. While a military community may seem safer than a regular neighborhood, crime exists everywhere. Minor crime violations and major problems occurs in a military community. Those communities depend on both the civilian and military police officers to keep order and control when incidents happen. Trust within the community is a vital part of policing. Whether they see the violation themselves or become aware of them by other means, the police can shape various outcomes in the criminal-justice process, including who is stopped, detained, and receives more involvement within the criminal justice system (Regoeczi & Kent, 2014).

Background

Selected articles pertaining to police discretion, military-affiliation, and traffic stops are described here. The keywords and phrases searched were *criminal justice, case studies, civilian police officers, military base, traffic stops, police discretion, military community, retirees, and qualitative design*. The databases used included: military services, criminal justice, Sage Journals Online, sociology, ProQuest Central, Psyc ARTICLES, and Nexis Uni.

1. Bartlett, L. & Vavrus, F. (2017), discussed case study research and how it is conducted based on the field of study.

2. Beverlin, M. (2012), provided information about traffic stops and discretionary choices.
3. Briggs, S.J. & Crew, B.K. (2013), informed us about police discretion during traffic stops and their impact on the public.
4. Johnson, L.A. (2013), offered information about the social stratification theory, its meaning, and how it can be used.
5. Merriam, S.B. (2009), supplied information about qualitative research and how it is implemented.
6. Neill-Harris, K.A., Resnick, S., Wilson-John, W.M., Miller-Stevens, K., Vandecar-Burdin, T. & Morris, J.C. (2016), presented information about transitioning military personnel and the civilian agencies they normally encounter.

Civilian police officers routinely make decisions with time constraints that have a great impact on an individual's personal liberties, including decisions to detain, arrest, and use force to gain compliance within their lawful orders (Noble, 2013). In a military community, the civilian police officers' decisions are weighed more heavily when it comes to issuing tickets instead of warnings to military-affiliated individuals. Regoeczi and Kent's (2014) police officer characteristics have an influence over their discretionary decisions. The trust between the civilian police officers and the citizens in a military community may differ regarding how the citizens perceives the police officers and the potential for preferential treatment to military personnel.

Research on police discretion has largely focused on explaining various arrests while little has been directed on the nonarrest decisions made within each public encounter (Schulenberg, 2015). Because it is not known if military-affiliation makes a difference when being stopped by a civilian police officer, the social stratification theory used focuses on the Soldier' individual backgrounds and eventually can lead to discretionary choices. Schulenberg's (2015) study used city-level data from 1980-1984 sought to examine how organizational limits on discretion affected the number of lethal force incidents. Schulenberg (2015) concluded that there are no single factors that are predictive of using discretion, but demeanor and disrespect to the officers are important elements when it comes to making decisions.

Perceptions of procedural justice following a brief interaction between police and the public appear to generate differential effects for encounter-specific and general outcomes (Lowrey, et al., 2016). Lowrey et al.'s (2016) experimental qualitative design study examined the effects of procedural justice and overaccommodation on specific attitudes towards a police officer in a simulated traffic stop video under three controlled conditions with 179 undergraduate students by completing a survey. Lowrey et al. (2016) concluded that participants felt obligated to obey the law and legal authorities and that procedural justice influences participants' trust of the authorities.

Making discretionary decisions on the spot can be a problem when everyone is not treated the same and the career of the military individuals are on the line. During a traffic stop, military-affiliated individuals may make it known that they are members of

the military by presenting an official military identification card. According to Lowery et al. (2016), disrespectful or unfair treatment can feel like banishment by the individual and communicates to the individual that they are not a valued member of the community. Whether tickets or warnings are issued, the officer is attempting to make the best decision given the information at hand.

While there is a certain level of discretion given to every civilian police officer, the time and place to use this discretion varies. The choices that are made by police officers are ones that they must be willing to affirm and substantiate if need be. The police shape multiple outcomes in the criminal-justice process, including who is stopped, detained, and ultimately who is arrested (Regoeczi & Kent, 2014).

Some military-affiliated individuals may assume that because of their occupation, they deserve to be treated differently than nonmilitary individuals. It is not known how civilian police officers who work in military communities feel towards the military-affiliated individuals or exercise discretion given to them. Making discretionary decisions on the spot can be a problem when individuals are treated according to personal appearance, profession, and perception of socioeconomic status.

Problem Statement

This dissertation is a qualitative exploratory case study of civilian police officer discretion related to traffic stops occurring in a midwestern military community where many present and former military individuals reside. According to Nowacki (2015), police discretion allows officers for flexibility to make minor decisions without

supervision and allows officers to decide what steps to take regarding traffic violations. Police discretion serves a purpose in the criminal-justice world, and it impacts the way streets are often patrolled. According to Noble (2013), the goal of discretionary decision making is to prevent an already overwhelmed criminal justice system and to allow officers the flexibility to alter some rules so no further actions within the criminal justice system are required.

The general problem of perceived favoritism is sought out when civilian police officers work where many military-affiliated individuals reside. The problem is that everyone in this military community has not been treated equally during traffic stops due to military affiliation resulting in a perception of favoritism towards specific individuals because of their profession. There was a misconception within the community in this study that the military was often given preferential treatment when being stopped for traffic violations by civilian police officers simply because of their professional status. Scholars have considered which personal characteristics of the driver affects the discretionary practices of the police officers' choice to stop individuals which include profession, type of vehicle, gender, and economic status (Farrell, 2015).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this exploratory qualitative case study was to add information to the research topic, to answer the research questions, to identify and explore the discretionary choices of police officers, and to contribute information about these discretionary practices used by civilian police officers working in one military

community. The desire for increased understanding as to why military-affiliated individuals are perceived to be treated differently and held to high regards by civilian police officers was needed. The best way to achieve these points of views was by interviewing only the civilian police officers who patrol these areas. This was important because the military culture is different from the civilian one as they are considered Veterans, a title which comes with a level of respect and community responsibility.

Another purpose for this study was to introduce the viewpoints regarding policing of military-affiliated individuals by interviewing police officers who have firsthand experience working with the military. The best way to achieve these points of views is by interviewing civilian police officers and not any military individuals. It was also to introduce new results regarding policing of military-affiliated individuals by interviewing police officers who have firsthand experience the with varying perspectives. Increased understanding of why the military-affiliated individuals may be held to such high regard by civilian police officers is also a purpose of this study.

There have been no studies regarding military-affiliated individuals and how they are perceived by civilian law enforcement personnel; therefore, this study is needed. Although findings from research with active-duty military families are likely to translate to Veteran families after discharge or retirement, research across military life should be considered vital (Borah, 2017). This study increased the knowledge of how and why military personnel are perceived to be treated a certain way by civilian police officers.

Participants included law enforcement personnel from four separate jurisdictions located in the vicinity of a Midwestern military base.

Research Questions

The research questions are open ended and designed to provide the most information regarding the topic and they are considered researchable.

Research Question 1 (RQ1)--Qualitative: What type of discretionary decisions are authorized by civilian police officers during traffic stops to the personnel working in military community.

Research Question 2 (RQ2)--Qualitative: What are the policy guidelines/suggestions of discretion used by a police officer when conducting traffic stops in a military community?

Research Question 3 (RQ3)--Qualitative: What interview information is available from each civilian police officer regarding their individual discretionary choices during traffic stops?

Theoretical Framework

Parsons and his partners Kingsley-Davis and Moore developed the functional theory of social stratification in 1945 (Hauhart, 2003). The definition was to differentiate the positions of those in society so that it would encourage the other members to improve and move to a hierarchy that provided more rewards and incentives. A study was conducted in 1947 exploring the perception of prestige and social standing related to various occupations as seen by the members of a community (Hauhart, 2003). Davis and

Moore (1945) found that occupational prestige was given by society to those individuals in certain higher-level positions.

Nature of the Study

The exploratory qualitative case study design was used because of its in-depth analysis of the subject. Case studies are usually researched as a qualitative resource (Elman et al., 2016). Every study regardless of the topic can be beneficial to that field of study if it reveals something unknown about that topic based on a chosen theory.

Tetnowski (2015) stated that when applied to the study of real-world problems, a case study approach presents multiple benefits over other research designs because of its use of several data sources. The best way to accomplish the desired results of the present study was by using an exploratory single case study design.

Definitions

Base/Post: Any military installation where the military personnel works, conducts training, and sometimes reside (Albright, 2018).

Civilian: A person who is not actively serving in any branch of the military (Doherty, 2016).

Civilian Police Officers: The regular police officers who are not serving in any capacity of the military (Doherty, 2016).

Dependents: Any person who has a spouse or parent serving or having served in the military (Albright, 2018).

Discretion: The given freedom to decide situations without guidance (Kidwell &

Kevoe-Feldman, 2018).

Military: Any person who is serving in the military regardless of branch of service which may include Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines and Coast Guards (Albright, 2018).

Military Community: A civilian community where many members of the military may reside whether active duty, reserve, or retired (Albright, 2018).

Provost Marshal: The division of the military that regulates the military police and all the work within (Albright, 2018).

Retiree: A person who has served enough years in the military to retire and earn a pension (Custer, 2018).

Traffic Stop: When a citizen is stopped by a police officer for violating a traffic law (Kidwell & Kevoe-Feldman, 2018).

Assumptions

Assumptions can fall into the same category as theories or perceptions as they are individual thoughts that can be proven to be true or false. Research on what people do suggest substitute assumptions about fundamental topics, both by asking people for obvious accounts of learning, identity, and other topics and by revealing implied patterns in their behavior (Wortham, 2015). The activity of uncovering assumptions, providing counterexamples, and exploring alternatives requires a more nuance combination of techniques and habits drawn from both philosophy and realistic research (Wortham, 2015). There are many assumptions when it comes to military-affiliated personnel and how they are treated by civilian police officers.

General Methodological Assumptions

Farrelly (2013) maintained that qualitative methods can be the key to the complex study of humans from the perceptions of the population involved. There is an assumption that the case study methodology delved into the natural phenomenon of its topic. One advantage of qualitative methods in exploratory research is that the use of open-ended and probing questions gives participants the opportunity to respond in their own words, rather than forcing them to choose from fixed responses (Farrelly, 2013).

Qualitative research methods often collect data with open-ended questions and Developed findings via themes (Campbell, 2014). Research on what people do suggests alternative assumptions about fundamental topics, both by asking people for explicit accounts of learning, identity, and other topics, and by revealing indirect patterns in their behavior (Wortham, 2015). The qualitative research model was an exploratory research strategy.

I assumed that the purpose of an exploratory research strategy was to ensure saturation of all resources and to ensure that every possible avenue of explanation has been conducted to assist in giving validity to the study. Yin (2013) suggested that an exploratory research strategy of several sources of evidence is vital in case study as it assists in the construction of a chain of evidence that constructs validity and reliability. Case study research has grown in reputation as an effective methodology to use for investigating and understanding intricate issues in real-world settings (Harrison et al., 2017).

Case studies are sources of data for a new theory or theory testing (Elman et al., 2016). The basic research methodology was a classic, exploratory single case study with the military base being the focal point. Case studies are concerned with reaching fundamental implications that pertain only to the case or cases under direct investigation (Elman et al., 2016). I chose a qualitative case study because the information that was sought was sought by this type of study. The research strategy of data collection consisted of three or more types of data from various sources to establish the study results. This type of methodology approach allowed almost any subject to be studied and tested. Case study research often focuses on little-studied or hard-to-study subjects (Elman et al., 2016).

Theoretical Assumptions

Social stratification theory can be applied to all aspects of life that involved some form of power and privilege. Johnson (2013) stated that there is an assumption of the social stratification theory being a requirement for the health of society. Accordingly, I assumed that social stratification is natural in form and is a subpart of social inequality which the financial status of a person can easily dictate the status of the community. Yossef and Mesch (2016) confirmed that the social stratification theory predicted that the patterns of spatial and social stratification existed in society.

I also assumed that social stratification is inevitable and, in some cases, necessary (Johnson, 2013). Social stratification arose out of assent from most of the individuals in any given society to the acceptable hierarchy (Johnson, 2013). For many

years, individuals have been judged based on their social class. Once social stratification exists, values are often placed upon individuals' different features and functions within the society (Johnson, 2013). It is almost impossible for society not to categorize and assume individuals belonged to certain classes.

Topical Assumptions

This study topic is vital to the criminal-justice field because the police officers are often the first contact with potential offenders and without the community's support, it is assumed that many crimes may go unsolved. Assumptions about the purpose of research shape ideas about how to select cases for the study of causal (Elman et al., 2016.) Discretion given to police officers is not the same that is given to officers working in a military community. While this may be true, the kind and number of members in the community dictated how the discretion is used. Noble (2013) stated the nature of police work demands that a significant level of discretionary decision making is placed into the hands of what are most often the least well-trained and the least seasoned officers within that organization.

By discussing the aspects of military and civilian life experiences, the assumption that they were worlds apart can be better understood as a nonfact. The study advanced the scientific knowledge base by informing those in charge of the use of discretionary practices by individual police officers during traffic stops. For my study, I assumed that military-affiliated individuals received preferential treatment by civilian police officers during normal traffic stops. Shean (2013) stated that human psychology was based upon

the assumption that, as with all phenomena in the natural world, there were underlying causal mechanisms operating beneath the surface phenomena of actions and experiences, and these were observed directly or indirectly and are represented as law, like regularities. Assumptions are not true until they are proven to be so with evidence to support them. The chosen concepts were used to explain and understand the practices behind the organizational discretion within military communities that were held by the police officers working there.

Scope and Delimitations

The target population was civilian police officers working within the jurisdiction of a military base and who were authorized to use personal discretion during traffic stops. There was more than one military base located within the state where this study was conducted. One of the areas was selected because it is very close to the military base. The collected areas had 114 civilian police officers from the four jurisdictions, designated as Jurisdictions A (with 16 officers), B (with 42 officers), C (with 8 officers), and D (with 48 officers). I interviewed participants until saturation was reached. The specific aspects of this study included military history, law enforcement agents, and the community in which the officers worked as related to the issues of individual discretion.

Limitations

Limitations for qualitative research included the exploratory nature of this study, which limited the findings beyond the participants interviewed (Llopart, 2018). The limitations depended upon the answers to the guiding interview questions provided by the

participants. This study was limited by first receiving permission from individual police officers to serve as participants. Many qualitative studies depended upon the views of the individual researcher, which may be considered biased depending on personal perspectives. An unknown limitation regarding the design suggested that qualitative research is time-consuming and often difficult to implement. The limitations for this study ranged from the type of study design to the number of participants available to take part in it because of their individual work schedules.

Significance

The significance of the following study for the criminal justice field was to have a better understanding of the process of discretion in a military community by civilian police officers according to their training and guidelines. This study sought to fill a gap by providing constructive and applied contributions to the field of criminal justice by addressing the connection that two organizations (law enforcement and military) have with each other. Along with filling the gap in research of military personnel and traffic stops, contributions to the criminal justice field can include enforcement or change discretionary choices. The results of this study will allow future contributions of the understanding why and how the regard held for the military-affiliated is focused on their choice to serve their country.

The significance of a study should reflect on the extent of the contributions made by the study to improve overall understanding, make changes to a concept, or to endorse a new theory in a field of research (Maillard, 2013). What is not known is the procedures

of discretionary practices of civilian police officers working in a military community and why this preferential treatment may occur. The research of a 1960 study on discretion determined there are differences in every police interaction even though discretion is used at all levels of policing, and it is sometimes considered a gray area (Goldstein, 1960).

While discretionary decision making is a very important part of police work, it presents risks that can put lives in danger when conducting traffic stops within communities (Noble, 2013).

Social Stratification Theory

Social stratification theory is the belief that imbalanced allocation of power, status, and wealth exists in society today based on race, gender, culture, profession, and economic status (Kothemann, 2017). The social stratification theory can be applied to almost any area, regardless of the field. It is a form of categorizing individuals in society into groups based on class, social status, and power. Social stratification in society, suggested that there is a ranked structure that sets the limitations of social and community separation (Morgan, 2013).

The three independent factors of the theory are class, status, and power. Class consists of an economic position in society, while status consists of personal prestige or popularity. Power is the ability to get whatever is desired because of the influence of social honor. These components together form the social stratification theory. Wieviorka (2013) stated that the history of societies, in general, is that of the class struggle.

Significance to Theory and Practice

According to the social stratification theory, the organizations' policies and procedures depend upon rules and regulations that are then used as guidance for the officers when making daily choices. During traffic stops police officers have the choice to display this provided opportunity of discretion while maintaining the safety for all. Social stratification in policing grants police officers the possibility to act without supervision whenever there is a rapid decision needed. The theory aligned with the topic by the way officers use their discretionary practices.

Social stratification is based on status and the perception of economic class. The social stratification theory can be applied to almost any area or field. It is a form of categorizing individuals in society into groups based on perceived status. Social stratification in society, suggests that there is a ranked structure that sets the limits of social and community separation (Morgan, 2013).

Summary

This study is intended to highlight the experiences of the civilian police organizations that interact with military personnel daily. The civilian police officer's goal, of treating everyone the same in this community, is the preferred choice of policing. The sections in Chapter 1 are representative of the foundations of the study and what is to come in the other chapters. I included the basic information needed to replicate the study at all levels. Chapter 2 represents the literature review of topics regarding this study and the important aspects it embodied. The literature review discusses the many written forms of information that were used to represent the varying topics related to the present study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Public trust in law enforcement influences the amount and type of interactions the people have with the police, the level of support they have shown, and the extent of cooperation they gave (Wu, Sun & Hu, 2016). While maintaining justice and supporting the community during traffic stops, a civilian police officer must decide what level of force to use when faced with possible dangers. Regoeczi and Kent (2014) stated that observational studies suggest that an individual's demeanor toward the officer during police-citizen interactions significantly increased the likelihood of arrest. Of all the possible professions in the world, being a police officer is one of the most dangerous occupations a person can choose (Kurtzleben, 2014).

Many empirical studies in the United States supports a link between social class and perceptions of the police (Wu et al., 2016). In one study, social status and wealth determined the level of trust the individuals had in the police force (Wu et al., 2016). Prior research has proposed that many police officers simply want to work in a profession that is perceived as important and adventurous. Furthermore, race and ethnicity are long recognized as a critical stratification characteristic in influencing public perceptions of the police (Wu et al., 2016).

Literature Search Strategy

Some of the keywords used for searching includes *discretion, civilian police officers, traffic stops, post, triangulation research strategy, case study, military community, qualitative, base, and retiree*. The databases used includes military services,

criminal justice, SAGE Journals Online, sociology, ProQuest Central, Psyc ARTICLES, and Nexis Uni.

The keywords used and databases chosen were a process of picking the concepts related to the study. The keywords were the main topics of the study that had an explanation as to how they are connected to the overall study. The databases provided the most information needed to complete the study.

Theoretical Foundation

Social stratification theory's first detailed study appeared in 1929, studying the life of individuals in a small community (Mills, 1956). The social stratification theory can be applied to almost any area, regardless of the field. It is a form of categorizing individuals in society, by definition into groups based on class, social status, and power. Social stratification in society, by definition, suggests that there is a hierarchical structure that sets the boundaries of both social (status-based) and societal segments (Morgan, 2013).

Theories of stratification reached their heyday during the interwar period, proliferating over a vast number of disciplines (Wieser, 2018). Status and power were the two basic functions of the social stratification theory that allowed the model to be completed as it is known. Social stratification theory is the belief that unequal allocation of power, status, and wealth exists (Kothemann, 2017). The expectation of it being applied to almost any area of life is feasible.

Social Stratification

The three independent factors of the theory of social stratification are class, status, and power. Class consists of an economic position in society, while status consists of personal prestige or popularity. Power is the ability to get whatever is desired because of bestowed social honor. These components together form the social stratification theory. The results of these 3 factors combined indicated that a level of prestige developed using a score based on education, income, and occupation. Wieviorka (2013) stated that the history of societies, in general, is that of the class struggle, and while he is primarily interested in industrial societies, his mode of approach is equally valid for other societies as well.

Bryman et al. (1996) conducted a qualitative social stratification study of police leadership using 146 semi structured interviews seeking to understand how leadership styles affect the individual police officer. The results determined that inspiration, trust, communication, and empowerment were all aspects that helped shape the police officers to become more proficient in their official positions. While there were some negative aspects of leadership in Bryman et al.'s study, many police officers learned that it was still an experience of things known that would be an effective working tool. Furthermore, many officers were impressed with the leaders who were positive and took charge of certain situations without harm to others (Bryman et al., 1996).

Bramesfeld and Good (2015) conducted a qualitative social stratification study using a simulated game presented to 25 students by 16 staff members of a nonprofit agency. The purpose of the game of social life was to introduce social stratification

principles while evaluating the perception of poverty, power, education, and inequalities as seen by a younger generation. Another main purpose of the game was to explore a more in-depth view of the social stratification concept and how it affects the individual world. The results determined that the distribution of wealth and power often gave way to those who started as a part of the hierarchy while those who started poor usually ended the same way (Bramsfeld & Good, 2015).

Hyllengren et al. (2016) conducted a qualitative study using semi structured interviews of 23 military and police officers seeking to understand the leadership issues when handling stressful situations and the morality to make sensible decisions. Military and police officers are members of professional groups that are at risk of having to make morally difficult decisions as a regular part of their daily duties (Hyllengren et al., 2016). The results determined that each circumstance, and the moral issues involved, varied from leader to leader and from situation to situation. The ethical determination also depended upon how the decision would affect others in the organization.

Fink (2017) conducted a qualitative stratification study using social surveys exploring the relationship between crime and the perceptions of social class. The outcome determined that the relationship between social class and criminality was not clear or consistent. Fink (2017) also concluded that personal economics had a very important role in criminality as those who don't have were willing to do anything to become a member of those who are more fortunate.

Social Stratification Practice

Social stratification theory is the belief that imbalanced allocation of power, status, and wealth exists in society today based on race, gender, culture, and economic status (Kothemann, 2017). Social stratification theory, various studies, and research have been a very important part of literature and culture since 1945. Regardless of a qualitative or quantitative study, the topics varied for the use with subjects not intertwined with the criminal-justice field. Many theorists, sociologists, and researchers have used social stratification to define and better understand certain topics such as privilege, values, and power in varying relationships. The higher the social stratification position, the more important the power and achievement values (Kothemann, 2017).

Criminology and other related research on crime commonly addressed social class, but the influence of this in the context of criminality was not well understood in earlier times (Fink, 2017). While there was no absolute way in the early 1900s to know which social class was responsible for much of the crime, the changing statistics of crime made this prediction almost impossible. Fink (2017) stated that a primary focus of criminology research is trying to determine which social classes predicted the criminal involvement.

Social Stratification Theory and Practice

The theory suggested that the organizations' policies and procedures depended upon the rules and regulations that were used as guidance for the officers when making daily choices. During traffic stops police officers have no choice but to display this

provided level of discretion to maintain the safety of everyone. The theory aligns with the topic by the way officers used their discretion.

A research study was conducted by Bayerl et al (2014), this exploratory qualitative social stratification study sought to clarify the diversity of professional perspectives on police culture by using semi-structured interviews of 166 police officers across eight European countries. The study results identified five perspectives on the police profession suggesting disparities in officer outlooks and the understanding of their profession.

Given the often-considerable variations in the political, economic, social, and legal conditions experienced by forces in different countries, it is not a surprise that police officers developed disparate perspectives on what it means to be a police professional (Bayerl et al., 2014). Civilian officers living in a military community can be contributed to the individual being a former military member or just being born and raised in that specific area. Bayerl et al. (2014), suggested that a closer look at how police forces operated and shaped their relationship with society, proposed that the perception of favoritism may be a problem.

Bouranta, Siskos, and Tsotsolas (2015), presented a qualitative social stratification study using a dyadic survey to measure the citizens' evaluation of police service quality and officer job satisfaction. The results indicated that while a numerous amount of police officers is unsatisfied with their jobs, the citizens are satisfied with the officers' performance. The ability of the police to decrease victimization rates, protect

human rights, to generate feelings of safety, and to respond to citizens' calls helped generate positive citizen feelings about the legitimacy of police as a law enforcement agency (Bouranta et al., 2015). The position of being a police officer is not to be taken lightly. Bouranta et al. (2015), indicated that the police approach to reducing crime and violence is based mainly on measures of subjective perceptions.

Another qualitative social stratification study conducted by Guclu and Can (2015), reviewed 642 cases regarding the information used to seeking behaviors of police officers who work in police stations. The results indicated that the number of years in policing and the roles in police stations were significantly correlated with the sources of information. The ability of police officers to serve the public was directly related to meeting their informational needs (Guclu and Can, 2015). The different subjects that a person is taught throughout a lifetime can be used as a guide for future behavior, whether positive or negative. All professionals in policing have different structures, roles, tasks, and informational needs as well as different resources, all of which are indispensable to maintaining the social order both within the department and within the community that is served (Guclu and Can, 2015).

Conceptual Framework

The framework for this study will focus around the social stratification theory. The social stratification theory, various studies, and research have been a very important part of literature and culture since 1945. Regardless of a qualitative or quantitative study, the topics varied for the use with subjects not intertwined within the criminal-justice

field. Many theorists, sociologists, and researchers have used social stratification to define and understand certain topics such as privilege, values, and power in varying associations. The higher the social stratification position, the more respect is anticipated to be given to them by others (Kothemann, 2017).

Literature Review Related to Key Variables and/or Concepts

Police Discretion

The police routinely encountered both non-criminal situations and serious public safety problems, both of which required discretionary judgment beyond the application of criminal law (Beckett, 2015). Having the responsibility to be the deciding factor in certain situations, caused some police officers to assume that this was a power owed to them because of the professional position held. Discretion is one of the best ideas designed for the criminal-justice field afforded to all officers regardless of individual status and title. Discretion allows a police officer to act on his or her own authority by being the deciding factor in certain situations without needing instruction from a higher consultant.

Discretion became more prevalent to policing in the late 1960s by social scientists who conducted an observational study through the American Bar Foundation (ABF) using three methods of collecting data (Goldstein, 1960). This was because the laws were not designed to fit every situation and therefore, police officers were required to make on the spot decisions without any supervisory guidance. Beckett (2016) stated that police discretion was not only important to the field of criminal justice, but it also explained general police behavior. The research of the 1960 study determined that discretion was

different in every situation even though it is used at every level of policing and was considered a gray area (Goldstein, 1960). The study results also suggested that police guidelines could not possibly cover every police encounter. Exercising a multi-faceted level of discretion is not an easy task for officers (Beckett, 2016).

Briggs and Crew (2013) conducted a qualitative study using surveys, sought to find out if the characteristics of the individuals who were stopped for a traffic violation warranted a discretionary search. Briggs and Crew (2013) stated traffic stops are an important factor in the formation of public attitudes about the police. Civilian police officers are given a tough job to do with little to no training in every environment and interaction with the public. Traffic stops that occurred frequently, initiated by the police, required a series of discretionary decisions by officers (Briggs & Crew, 2013). Many discretionary choices were based on normal police encounters and a sense of right and wrong.

Another qualitative study using both surveys and interviews was conducted by Bonner (2015), with 341 participants, sought to expand the knowledge of police decision-making behavior. Relatively little research attention has been paid to the process of the police decision (Bonner, 2015). Bonner explored the discretionary choices a civilian police officer may have during traffic stops while working in a military community. Bonner (2015) concluded that demeanor of the individual is more important than race when it came to citizens being arrested. Officers may feel that disrespectful offenders (regardless of offense type) are likely to be more of a risk and act accordingly to ensure

the situation remains under control once they depart (Bonner, 2015). There are many risks that came along with this type of authority and power.

Different Discretionary Uses

In the beginning, scholarly literature on policing focused mainly on administrative issues such as staffing levels and the extent to which police organizations complied with the policing standards (Goldstein, 1960). Discretion can be used in every situation and type of employment. While there are other reasons and ways where discretion can be used, in the police world, it is and always will be a must. While there are several uses for discretion, there are factors involved with its proper use.

Bonner (2015) conducted a qualitative study designed to expand the existing knowledge on police decision-making behavior in the field using six themes and data on police officers in the cities of Indianapolis and St. Petersburg. The study was based on observations between the police and regular citizens. In Indianapolis, 361 disputes were analyzed, while in St. Petersburg, there were 279. The results determined that police decision-making research focused on outcomes. While some officers consider race and ethnicity in their decision-making, it was not shown in their actions. Disrespect had a great influence on officers when it came to making decisions. The process of decision-making is useful because, in addition to expanding the knowledge of police behavior, it also guided police supervisors by detailing the motivations that guide certain police-citizen encounters (Bonner, 2015).

Buvik's (2016) qualitative study explored the decision-making factors that

influence police officers' use of discretion during nighttime settings. The results determined that police officers often ignore minor incidents such as disorderly conduct and other alcohol-related trivialities. Policing is infused with situations in which discretion is most important (Buvik, 2016). Prior research has found police officers have a level of discretion that varies from community to community and from state to state, depending upon the standard policy guidelines therein by using interviews and fieldwork. Police officers can give a person a second chance or force the individuals to have further contact within the criminal-justice system regardless of variables. Discretionary considerations depended on the situational variables, system variables and offender variables (Buvik, 2016).

Myhill and Johnson (2016) addressed the use of discretion by police officers when responding to domestic violence using data gathered from force systems, field observations, and classification of domestic violence calls for service during a 7-day timeframe through a qualitative study. Having established that discretion is not always used desirably, the pertinent question becomes “why?” (Myhill & Johnson, 2016). They determined that police officers used considerable discretion, leaving some cases thoroughly uninvestigated and under-recorded considering the definition of domestic violence was extremely broad. The issue of discretion remained pivotal to understanding the way police work is conducted (Myhill & Johnson, 2016).

Disparities in Discretionary Uses

A qualitative study using 37 jurisdictions sought to discover the disparities in

traffic stops among men and women violators using the data from crime reports, U.S. census data, and reports from the department of revenue was conducted by Farrell (2015). Scholars have devoted significant attention to measuring the degree to which a driver's characteristics affected police decisions to stop and sanction motorists (Farrell, 2015). Military-affiliation could be a determinant for receiving lenient treatment when being stopped for a traffic violation. Even though giving out traffic tickets prevented future accidents from occurring, the police officers used selective judgment when doing so and not to appease the citizen who was stopped. The results indicated that women received fewer tickets than men during traffic stops. Farrell (2015) stated that receiving a traffic citation represented the most frequent form of contact police have with members of the public.

Discretionary initiatives encouraged a stronger police response to low-level offending and had important consequences, including the flooding of US prisons and jails and the disproportionate incarceration of people of color (Beckett, 2016). Disparities in discretion are based upon the law enforcement agencies involved and the communities that they patrol. The environment had a great effect on how each area is patrolled by the way the police officers made their discretionary decisions.

A qualitative study about the longevity of traffic stops made by police officers and how the discretionary decisions to issue tickets were made was conducted by Wade (2015). The link that social stratification was with the research topic was based on the choices behind police officers making decisions when conducting traffic stops. The

results suggested that the time of day, and the race of the citizen determined how long the traffic stops lasted.

Police officer discretion is the alleged root of differential treatment among citizen groups during traffic stops (Wade, 2015). The civilian police officers ultimately decided who received a ticket and who got a warning based on the individual discretionary choices that the officers had. Police officers that had discretionary power at the lowest level accounted for the disparities during traffic stops. Wade (2015) stated that police-citizen interactions are important because of the impact they had on citizens.

Police Discretion and Traffic Stops

History of Traffic Stops

Traffic stops are important because of the way vehicles are driven, and streets are controlled by the police officers. Enforcement must be used to allow the traffic to go on safely for all. From the first court case about traffic in 1968 to the daily interactions with police officers, drivers have been required to obey the laws of the road. Police practice findings opened new ways of studying and understanding criminal-justice processes generally about police behavior (Beckett, 2015). The traffic stop has been one of the major ways in which the public meets the police. Police officers must decide which of those traffic stops deserve further contact within the criminal-justice system and which ones do not.

The traffic stop became more useful after the Terry v. Ohio court case of 1968, in

which officers had affirmed the legal right to stop and search a vehicle if there was a reasonable suspicion of a crime. Tillyer and Engel (2013) suggested that many police officers often focused on the race of the driver rather than any other characteristic when conducting traffic stops. Type of car, race of driver, neighborhood and time of day all had an impact on the reason behind being stopped for a traffic violation. Under the fourth amendment, police officers have a right to stop a vehicle as affirmed in the Supreme Court case of *Heien v. North Carolina* (Ngov, 2018).

What happened in an encounter may have had less to do with crime and law than with the demands of situational order, social etiquette, or the pressures of group size (Schulenberg, 2014). All police officers must make on the spot decisions when making traffic stops sometimes based only on instincts. Schlenberg (2014) affirmed that a common approach to understanding the factors that affect the use of discretion is viewing police action within the social structure of the situation at hand. There was an order throughout society, as for where some individuals made the rules as they were the ones with the most power and wealth.

Discrepancies in Police Discretion During Traffic Stops

Years of service in the criminal justice field provided an incomplete understanding of how experience motivates behavior in the traffic stop (Klahm and Tillyer, 2015). A major factor in why police officers gave tickets instead of warnings depended greatly upon the interaction with the person behind the wheel. Police officers and discretion during traffic stops are not one of necessity as it is geared towards keeping the public safe. The

discrepancies are based solely on the individual conduct of the driver. Studies have shown that police officers depended upon drivers to use the roads safely and upon the officer to enforce the laws of the road.

A qualitative single case study of police problem-solving techniques was conducted by Payne, Gallagher, and Eck (2013). The results suggested that crimes occurred differently in varying neighborhoods by varying individuals. There were many reasons that crime could be perpetrated, target concentrated, offender concentrated, persistent lack of guardianships, and other opportunity related explanations (Payne et al., 2013). The starting point for any problem-oriented policing strategy is to determine the exact nature of the problem (Payne et al., 2013). For police officers to be successful in their positions, they received some much-needed assistance from the public. Being a police officer allowed a person to have power simply because of the position that was held whether it was requested or not.

A qualitative survey study to determine if a college degree made a police officer better at the job than those who did not have a college degree was conducted by Gardiner (2015). The results determined that while many police agencies only require officers to have a high school diploma, the more education a police officer had, the greater the ability to receive incentives and above average salaries. While not everyone agreed that officers needed college degrees, popular policing strategies such as intelligence led policing, community policing, and problem-oriented policing required officers to interpret data, solve complex problems and perform a variety of other multifaceted tasks

in a professional and culturally sensitive manner (Gardiner, 2015). Police officers that obtained higher education were deemed to have a larger salary than those who did not and therefore would be more dedicated to moving up in the ranks. Despite the cost associated with higher salaries, previous research suggested that college educated officers saved the department money in other ways, such as fewer sick days, fewer on-the-job injuries and accidents, and fewer individual liability cases (Gardiner, 2015).

Military Life

Although military service members and their families face many of the same stressors as their civilian counterparts, they also experienced additional stressors related to being a part of a military family (Conforte, et al., (2017). Living in a military community means that the military individuals must abide by civilian rules and by military jurisdiction. This included every aspect of the law as well as all traffic violations. Even though some of the local police officers can easily recognize those who are military-affiliated, they themselves are usually connected to the military in some form. Being a former or present military member compelled those same officers to better understand the military way of life. Discretion is well applied when it comes to giving the military individuals a break during traffic violations.

A qualitative study using in-depth, semi-structured interviews of 11 military personnel seeking to understand the transition into civilian life and living among them was conducted by Brunger, Ogden, and Serrato (2013). The results determined that while some missed the military culture, financial security and the camaraderie, civilian living

was an adjustment that many were unprepared for. There was a sense of loss of identity that changed from being around the military to being “just a regular person” living among civilians (Brunger et al., 2013). While there is a level of structure in the military, this was not the case in the civilian communities. The adjustment that was needed took some time getting used to.

Military Living in a Civilian Community

The exploratory qualitative study surveying 17 police officers and 21 military individuals about their civilian interactions using interviews and job shadowing was conducted by Klein, Klein, Lande, Borders, and Whitacre (2015). Each encounter was reviewed on how civilians reacted to the military. The framework of the study was based on a “good stranger” concept that focused on gaining the trust of others who may not be in the same field of work or who may be known as civilians. The results determined that for the military, gaining the trust of the civilians goes a long way in being able to work and live beside each other. The various cultures that made up a military-community had limitations on every person living and working there (Klein et al., 2015).

A single case qualitative study, using surveys and interviews examining the relationship and challenges between the military and the communities in which they live by exploring the channels of communication and the need of the military members, was conducted by Neill-Harris et al. (2016). Both military organizations and local agencies were surveyed to determine the extent of the services that were provided to the military personnel. The results determined that some agencies had set limitations on assisting the

military because of funding issues. The military not only spoke a different language than the civilians, but they were also more experienced in handling certain situations (Neill-Harris et al., 2016). Another agency suggested that there was a lack of awareness of the services for the military members. Neill-Harris et al. (2016) stated that the local communities were committed to assisting the military individuals in whatever their needs were.

Civilian Policing of Military Personnel

Military service reduces the likelihood of contact with the criminal-justice system (Teachman & Tedrow, 2016). Careers can be disrupted or ended if a crime is severe enough to have a military member incarcerated. If police officers choose to treat military members differently, then it is a personal and professional decision. Many military personnel do not want to be involved in the civilian criminal-justice system; this served as a deterrent not to break the law in any form. Regardless of any offense committed by a military member, the civilian and the military criminal-justice systems will be immersed in providing a solution.

The qualitative literature search study on driving difficulties of the military and veterans were conducted by Possis, Bui, Gavin, Leskela, Linardatos, Laughlin, and Strom (2014). Electronic databases were searched for veterans with anger issues, PTSD, aggression, and mood disorders. Possis et al. (2014) stated that although the military-affiliated may or may not have issues related to their experiences, they are aware of the laws. The results determined that these factors along with thrill-seeking and anxiety, were

significant and had a detrimental effect when a military member was being stopped for a traffic violation. Military members having problems with the civilian police officers resulted in social, legal, and personal consequences that affected their individual careers (Possis et al., 2014).

The qualitative study of police-citizen encounters with over 100 officers sought to understand how officers responded to citizens during regular interactions was conducted by Mastrofski, Jonathan-Zamir, Moyal, and Willis (2016). Police implemented great discretion in their dealings with the public, but most research on police discretion focused on forcible decision-making (Mastrofski et al., 2016). No matter the reason behind allowing civilian police officers a certain level of discretion, if the job gets done, then the purpose was filled. Police and other criminal-justice decision makers have been shown to make moral judgments that guided decisions about what to do with their “cliente” (Mastrofski et al., 2016). The civilian police organizations have a very similar structure to that of serving in the military.

A qualitative exploratory study of the crime in a military community based upon the presence of the base being a deciding factor on the crime rates was conducted by Hollis (2016). The data and incident reported that were reviewed came from the US Census Bureau and the local police department in North Carolina. Hollis (2016) stated that the military members moved around so much that it may be difficult for them to become a part of any certain community. The results determined that the presence of the military base located in a civilian community did not lower the crime rate, but instead

caused it to maintain as is. Hollis (2016) found higher crime statistics based on the type of crimes reported. The dynamics such as socio-economic status, gender, and race of the individuals living in or near the military community had a great effect on the crime rates researched (Hollis, 2016).

Civilian Police Traffic Stops of Military Personnel

Serving in the military is not conducive to engaging in criminal behavior (Teachman & Tedrow, 2016). While military members may meet law enforcement agencies, the reasons are either severe or minimal as there is no in-between. Military members would prefer to be treated differently because they served their country. However, there are no laws or rules that are just for the military individuals. Everyone is to be treated the same regardless of the type of offense. Individual police officers with discretionary power make the choices to separate them from others.

Pandya' (2016) conducted a cross-cultural qualitative study with 1,698 police officers about the stresses of being an officer, and the spiritual influences involved. The study results suggested that spirituality made a difference in how police officers viewed crime, and how criminals were eventually treated. Police officers were an important part of the criminal-justice system across varying locations (Pandya, 2016). With such responsibilities, a police officer must be trustworthy and willing to do whatever it took for the safety of others. The civilian police officers that worked in a military community worked under higher stress levels than those who did not. Morality and values played a very big part in patrolling and serving those in the communities. Pandya (2016)

concluded that there were several abstract and practical ways in which police officers dealt with crime, criminals, and the justice system.

A qualitative case study using empirical data on disparity and stereotyping during traffic stops were conducted by Kamalu (2016). The results recommended a reform of the laws along with sensitivity training and enhancement of police-to-community relations. Regardless of the community, police officers conducted traffic stops for many different reasons. Kamalu (2016) stated that traffic enforcement had posed a major constitutional problem for police departments and other law-enforcement agencies throughout the United States. The fourth amendment protect persons from being stopped or detained by the government without evidence of involvement in any type of criminal activity (Kamalu, 2016). Sometimes many military-affiliated individuals' only interaction with civilian law enforcement is through a traffic stop. Even though the fourth amendment prevented unreasonable search and seizure, they continued to occur in many neighborhoods in many states.

Summary and Conclusions

This study filled the gap of knowing that everyone is not treated the same regardless of their military experience or history. While discretion is prevalent, the civilian police officers' choice to give tickets and warnings is an individual aspect of policing and is regulated by the policy guidelines that are established within the state.

Briggs and Crew (2013) suggested that traffic stops are conducted because of a law violation committed by the offender, and not because of the misuse of police discretionary power. The choice that officers have behind giving tickets is based upon many different perceptions of the driver. Traffic stops are considered very important when it came to the public's attitude toward police officers (Briggs & Crew, 2013). Even though there are many aspects to consider for a specific traffic stop, the time of day and location are both just as prevalent as gender and race. The officer must be able to make rational and sound decisions when conducting traffic stops. Efforts to make decisions on valid criteria earned the trust of the community, while abuses of power through decision-making based on improper criteria devalued the trust of the community (Noble, 2013).

Police discretion determined whether a person received a warning instead of a ticket during a traffic violation (Regoeczi & Kent, 2014). This power was given to individual officers to maintain control of the public and to keep the criminal-justice system from being overwhelmed. Regoeczi and Kent (2014) stated that decision making by police officers and how they applied discretion are complex and challenging processes. Although discretion could be used in various situations, during normal public

contact was when it was most effective. Regoeczi and Kent (2014) suggested that racial dissimilarities along with gender differences were a major factor behind receiving tickets. Regardless of the personal characteristics of the driver, those who receive traffic tickets do so based on the police officer experience, circumstances, and atmosphere (Regoeczi & Kent, 2014).

Jaros (2014) suggested that the nature of police work, and the political and social context in which police officers' function, make it difficult to ensure that this power is not abused. The structure of power was eliminated when a police officer was involved in a traffic stop as he was understandably the person in command. During traffic stops, police officers had no set rules on which social class they were required to issue tickets instead of warnings. According to Miller (2015), police policy directed law enforcement officers to interfere with some people rather than others based on where they live or how they look as much as how they act or whether the police had specific information to suspect individuals of criminal activity.

Miller (2015) stated that law enforcement officials had discretion to determine the amount and style of policing that occurred in their jurisdiction. When a police officer decided to stop an individual for a traffic violation, the type of car driven demonstrated the status society perceived this person to hold. Schulenberg (2015) affirmed that arguably every police-citizen interaction involved the use of some form of social control. While discretion was a matter of choice for many police officers, some ruled by the operational standards of their jurisdiction instead of personal beliefs and feelings.

Miller (2015) stated that when it came to discretionary judgments by individual officers, policing, and the problems wherein were just a small part of the profession. Many military communities had both civilian and military police officers who were responsible for regular patrols. The fact that the driver was a military member was as important as any other characteristic. Although discretion was an unavoidable feature of police work, it was also the subject of significant controversy (Beckett, 2016). The police officers that worked in a military community were working under a higher stress level than those who did not. Ryan (2016) stated that when a police officer stopped and searched a vehicle based totally on a specific characteristic, it was a behavior that had been determined to be forbidden in most jurisdictions.

Chapter 3 discusses the methodology and the source of information on which this study was conducted. The methodology consists of the qualitative case study design that was the preferred method of study from which data were received. This allowed for more than one source of data to be used.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

This study was an exploratory qualitative case study. Qualitative research is a method of inquiry used predominately in the social sciences but also in other academic disciplines. Pathak et al. (2013) stated that qualitative research focuses on understanding a research topic by using a humanistic or uncompromising idea. Farrelly (2013) maintained that qualitative methods can be the answer to a multidimensional study of humans from the perceptions of the population it involves. Qualitative research has an impact on data collection, its analysis, and the explanation of the results (Pathak et al., 2013).

The purpose of this exploratory qualitative case study is to add information to the research topic, to answer the research questions, identify and explore the discretionary choices of police officers, and to contribute information about these discretionary practices used by civilian police officers working in one military community. The sections of this chapter include the research design in which this study was conducted, the methodology, and the participants. The instrumentation included the guiding interview questions which were the primary sources of information. I conclude with the data analysis section and the issues of trustworthiness.

Research Design and Rationale

Research Questions

The research questions were open ended and designed to provide the most information regarding the topic and they are considered researchable.

Research Question 1 (RQ1)--Qualitative: What type of discretionary decisions are authorized by civilian police officers during traffic stops to the personnel working in a military community.

Research Question 2 (RQ2)--Qualitative: What are the policy guidelines/suggestions of discretion used by a police officer when conducting traffic stops in a military community?

Research Question 3 (RQ3)--Qualitative: What interview information is available from each civilian police officer regarding their individual discretionary choices during traffic stops?

Case Study

Case studies are used as tools of causal implication (Elman et al., 2016). Shean (2013) stated that many human actions such as giving discretion, are assumed not only to be shaped from the but also, to be understood in relation to the accomplishment of specific aims and goals. The nature of this study was informative to the point of relating all the policies regarding traffic stops to giving out tickets and discretion among civilian police officers working in a military community. A case study is a credible, valid research design that simplifies the exploration of multifaceted issues (Harrison et al., 2017). The policies and procedures that guided discretionary behavior by civilian police officers are often more of a judgment call than anything else. This was important because the roles can be interchangeable to a certain extent.

Case studies are often used for the participants to tell their stories. Tsang (2013)

concluded that theory testing is a potential contribution of qualitative methods, which included case studies. Case studies to some may be considered investigative, which simply refers to the learner exploring self-discovery or learns something for themselves. Case studies bring an evaluation to life (Johnston, 2013). Case studies are aimed at providing a thorough analysis of the individuals in a study along with its setting.

Some qualitative researchers may be doubtful that authors steeped in statistical or set theory can help strengthen case study research (Elman et al., 2016). My research study provided a theoretical understanding of the social stratification theory and included the inductive process. This qualitative case study examined the decisions that were made by the civilian police officers that worked within a military community were examined. This was important because I explored a population of individuals who have never been explored before related to traffic stops: the military. To prove the reliability of the case study process and enable others to replicate it, the steps and procedures must be explicit and well documented in the final report (Singh, 2014).

Exploratory Single Case Study

An exploratory single case study is a qualitative design that investigates and describes a single person, group, or a situation to investigate what has not been studied about a topic (Allen, 2017). Exploratory case studies often require future research to be conducted because an exploratory study provides no conclusive evidence because it is constantly changing. This type of study lays the groundwork and can be referred to as an

initial study. Because this study is about a group of individuals, the exploratory case study examined the behavior of the members of the group.

This method was chosen because it allowed more than one type of data source to be used. By using more than one type, the study is more thorough and seen from different perspectives. Case study designs are useful in such disciplines where there are in-depth questions to be answered while evaluating the varying experiences told by the participants.

Gerkin et al. (2017) conducted a qualitative exploratory case study regarding restorative justice in a Midwestern city. The results suggested that while there were many challenges implementing the program, it was ultimately successful. The exploratory single case study allowed an exploration of the relationship between criminals and those who have the power to decide the punishments of the committed crimes.

Role of the Researcher

There are few preunderstandings and preconceptions that need to be set aside for the benefit of the study, and the researcher diligently tried to remain neutral in all aspects. The researcher is previously a member of the military but continued to live in a military community among other military-affiliated individuals and their families. Being a former military individual helped and hurt the researcher when it came to remaining neutral about the topic. It helped with understanding the fact that differences exist between the civilians and the military affiliated. It hurt because the need to remain neutral was difficult. The decision to conduct a research study using a case study strategy proved that

the more data used, the better the outcome and more in-depth the study would be. The purpose behind choosing this topic was to provide an insight into living in a military community as seen through the eyes of a civilian police officer that must work there.

The researcher's major responsibility is grounded around protecting the collected information while serving as the interviewer and interpreter. It was easy to maintain privacy as the researcher resided alone. One of the most important steps was having a working knowledge of the methodology, and this occurred slowly over time as it was initially misunderstood. It was up to the researcher to keep all information completely confidential and to always protect the participants. The researcher was to frame the information regarding understanding the phenomenon itself while avoiding the desire to provide a theoretical explanation (Tsang, 2013).

The researcher was said to be an effective instrument of the qualitative design, serving as the primary tool for gathering and extracting vital information. The researcher ensures each study is conducted without adding risk to the participants. The ability to contact, schedule, and gather all pertinent information is the responsibility of the researcher also. Exploring every nuance of this topic added validity to the results. Very little information about the civilian police officers was already known to the researcher, yet further review determined that there are aspects of the research that is unknown. Collins and Cooper (2014) suggested researchers that can build a safe and trustworthy environment are then responsible for the well-being of the participants.

Deciding to have a single or multiple case study designs along with the type,

such as exploratory or intrinsic, sets the stage for a well-developed plan as set by the researcher. The information gathered reflected upon the researcher, by the way it is shared with others. Each case study provided invaluable insights for scholars and researchers, and astounded the public at large (Rolls, 2015). The researcher confirmed that each participant understood the process and the way their comments were kept private by not using names or badge numbers and by keeping the information secure. The participants depended upon the researcher, to be honest, fair, and to maintain privacy when recording sensitive responses to the questions as this is also assured before asking any interview questions. The participants also expected truthfulness when repeating the pertinent information supplied.

Methodology

The chosen exploratory, qualitative, single subject, case study involved the researcher having local knowledge of the subject while the topic had an importance in the community being evaluated. Case studies examined situations separately and are often used by researchers to understand the qualities of what is being studied. They were also used because more than one type of data was preferred. Nilmanat and Kurniawan (2021), stated that case study research gave the researcher numerous paths of data to use and that was accomplished by having a flexible approach. This study used 3 types of data.

Qualitative methods are focused on methodology, the research methods and on techniques as well (Markovic & Alecchi, 2017). Qualitative research is a method of inquiry used mainly in the social sciences but also in other academic disciplines. Pathak

et al (2013) stated that qualitative research focused in understanding a research query as a humanistic or idealistic approach. Observations were also an important part of a qualitative study if being used. Farrelly (2013) maintained that qualitative methods can be the answer to a complex study of humans from the perspectives of the population it involves. Qualitative research can have a great impact on data collection, its analysis, and the interpretation of results (Pathak et al., 2013).

There are four main types of qualitative methodologies such as phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, and case study. Phenomenology consists of experiences and consciousness being studied. Phenomenology is based on how information is perceived by individuals. Phenomenology is a desire to understand the subjective experiences of living in the world (Gelling, 2014). Grounded theory involved a chosen real-life topic to be studied based on a theory. Grounded theory focused on firsthand information as the main source for the theory based on the data. Gelling (2014) suggested that grounded theory involves developing a theory based on data collection.

Ethnography is based on exploring cultures and cultural groups (Gelling, 2014). Ethnography focused mainly on historical family values. Ethnography also deals with the practices of judgment and individual beliefs. Case studies involve in-depth examination of a subject. The chosen exploratory, qualitative, single subject, case study involved the researcher having a local knowledge of the subject while the topic has an importance in the community being evaluated. Case studies examined situations separately and are often used by psychologists and psychiatrists to understand the aspects of what is being

studied. Taylor & Thomas-Gregory (2015) stated that case study research gave the researcher multiple avenues in which investigating a phenomenon is done by having a flexible approach.

Sample/Participants

Sample

Sample selection was purposive. A purposive sample is selected individuals chosen to participate because of the familiarity within the research topic (Denieffe, 2020). Even though Yin did not specifically identify an exact number to serve as a sufficient sample, five is said to be the norm. A total of 10-20 officers will be interviewed as the projection was initially for more because common themes may appear quickly. Officers from each of the 4 jurisdictions (A, B, C and D) will be interviewed to obtain all vital traffic information.

Palinkas et al., (2015), suggested that purposive sampling is widely used in qualitative research for the identification and selection of information-rich cases related to the phenomenon of interest. Categories of purposive strategies provided a set of recommendations for the use of single strategy designs (Palinkas et al., 2015). The size was chosen because the areas surrounding the military base consisted of nine small communities, and some jurisdictions have more officers than others, but the chosen ones are the closest.

Description of the Sample

The purposive sample of individuals included the civilian police officers that

worked near the military base. Those officers who volunteered to participate chose to do so by selecting to respond to an email with the words “I consent” and by signing a consent form before any interviews were conducted. There were no personal prerequisites as the study was gender and ethnicity neutral. The participants, however, had to be employed by the state as a police officer working in one of the chosen 4 jurisdictional areas. The amount of time on the job, gender, race, military-affiliation, and family history of police officers were irrelevant for participation.

Participants

The target population included civilian police officers working within the jurisdiction of the military base that were authorized to use personal discretion during traffic stops. There is more than one military base located within this state to choose the population from. One of the areas was selected because it was very close to the military base. The collected areas have 114 civilian police officers total from the four jurisdictions, designated as jurisdictions A-D. The participants are chosen because they are police officers in one of the four jurisdictions surrounding the military base. The chosen military communities were selected because of their locations, convenience, and familiarity to the researcher.

Procedures for Recruitment

The participants were civilian police officers that worked within the military-community. The way some participants must be interviewed depended upon the shift that was worked. Not all the participants would be interviewed during the daytime as many

police officers work evenings, overnight, and weekend shifts. Some of the officers were voluntary or part-time and their interviews were planned around their employment schedules.

Participants did not need to be screened according to the jurisdiction that was being patrolled. The interviews were conducted away from other people to avoid any interruptions and away from the four police jurisdictions. Interviews were held by telephone as a convenience to both the participants and the researcher. Keeping in mind that privacy was an important aspect of a study's success, questions did not include any potentially confidential information. The interview information answered all the research questions and moved beyond them.

Protection of Participants

While identifying the sample, the individuals are intentionally left anonymous and have a personal one on one interview by telephone. Before the interviews began, the participants expressed an understanding of the information that was given to them on the consent forms. Data notes were taken of the conversations, and interviews along with audio tapes using no names or badge numbers to identify each person. Each officer was then assigned a letter and number based upon which jurisdiction he/she belonged to.

Ethical Procedures

Complete privacy was assured to protect every participant as no interviews would take place in the presence of others. The information was kept in a double-locked location. The numbers and letters instead of names kept the individuals and their answers

to the interview questions from being known to those other than the researcher. The data was kept under double lock in a location known only to the researcher. Storing the information under lock and key prevented it from being found or tampered with by others. This study was not more than minimal risk. The answers provided information about the civilian police officers that was not known to exist regarding regular patrols in a military community. By ensuring that all the collected data was safe, secure, and with no identifying data, this protected the participants during the entire research process.

Instrumentation

Guiding Interview Questions

1. How important is discretion during traffic stops?
2. How often do the basic operating procedures of discretion apply in traffic stops?
3. Give me some examples to support the use of discretion?
4. How much time is given to each new civilian police officer for field training and reviewing of the guidelines regarding traffic stops?
5. At what point is an officer able to patrol on his/her own without a field training officer?
6. In your opinion, how often is discretion used during traffic stops?
7. Describe the informal guidelines regarding discretion during rush hours and nighttime hours.
8. When conducting traffic stops in a military community, what type of

discretion is used?

9. What mitigating circumstances in a traffic stop- warrant a ticket instead of a warning?
10. How much annual training is conducted on discretionary procedures?

Data Analysis Plan

The data sources that were used were individual interviews, policy guidelines and a field test supported by experts. The field test was used to clarify the guiding interview questions and ensured that they would answer the research questions. The individual interviews garnered most of the important information that was used to support the study results. The policy guidelines were the written suggestions that the police officers used to protect and serve their communities as suggested by the state regulations.

Interviews

The consent forms emailed, were reviewed by the participants at least 24 hours before any interviews took place. Explaining the purpose, topic, and importance to everyone was completed right before any questions were asked. Permission was received from each person, whether verbally, on videotape or by email, to participate, and the use of the collected information was applied to the results of the study as part of the research. Participants was contacted through a phone number or email printed on the consent form and information on the researcher was supplied by email at the participants' request.

Participants did not need to be screened according to the jurisdiction that was

being patrolled. The interviews were conducted away from other people to avoid any interruptions and away from the four police jurisdictions as to protect the identity of the participants or by telephone. Keeping in mind that privacy was an important aspect of the research success, questions did not include any potentially confidential personal information. Many of the police officer's personal experiences about traffic stops and the purpose behind choosing a career as a police officer was projected to also be answered.

Policy Guidelines

Several guidelines and rules were obtained from the four jurisdictions. The base has a military traffic coordinator who works with both civilians and military members as they both are now allowed to reside on the base and therefore drive there often. This includes behavior in the civilian community and having required driving training yearly. Some of these rules only apply to the military members. According to each state, the guidelines regarding discretion and traffic would vary from organization to organization.

Research Methodology Applied to the Data Analysis

The case study methodology applied to this study allowed for a more accurate analysis. The exploration and discovery of data via a qualitative research method often indicated that there was not much written about the participants or the topic of study (Campbell, 2014). This was a gap in literature that was captured during this study. Data analysis included reading and rereading the transcripts of the interviews to identify meaningful pieces of information that helped answer the research questions (Connelly, 2010). Any discrepant cases and unused information was discarded.

Interviews

The collected guiding interview questions' answers was analyzed by first assigning a number to each participant. The participants were grouped together by jurisdiction. The answers were then separated by themes and added to the other jurisdictions. Analyzing the results included comparing each jurisdiction to one another and determining how each answered the questions. The guiding interview questions collectively answered the research questions.

No personal information was included on any of the consent forms such as names, status, gender, ethnicity, addresses or badge numbers. Arranging the feedback from the interviews in a discreet manner ensured that all pertinent and relevant information was included along with any suggestions for future research studies. The use of the MAXQDA (qualitative data analysis software) program to help with coding, sorting and data analysis seemed the most logical choice. The research study being completed ensured all collected information was used as intended and was added as a valuable resource to enhance the results.

Field Test

Data collection was undertaken in a natural setting because qualitative methods sought to describe, explore, and understand phenomena from the perspective of the individual or group (Noble & Smith, 2013). The collected information from the experts served as guidance to enhance the guiding interview questions. The rules and regulations of policing dictated how certain circumstances were handled, however, there were other

circumstances that changed that pattern. This explained the difference when giving out tickets during traffic stops between the military and the civilians. What is not known is the scope of the procedures of discretionary practices by the individual. The experience of the experts was taken into consideration when choosing them to participate.

Policy Guidelines

The guidelines were to be received at selected interview locations from whichever jurisdiction agreed to supply them. The civilian police officers provided as much traffic information as possible without divulging any personal information. All the data received during one or more selected interviews, was used to support the results. The guidelines provided supported the rules and standards that the police officers used as a base for serving the communities. Police policy decisions have a tremendous impact on the public (Miller, 2015).

Issues of Trustworthiness

Not only is there an obligation to report truthfully for those who will be reading the study, but there is also personal integrity attached that determined the credibility of the researcher. The participants expected nothing but honesty and truthfulness when it came to repeating information that was given in privacy. Ellis-Barton (2016) suggested that ethical considerations can arise at any stage of the research project on a case-based approach. The researcher's experience had just as much to do with the questions as the questions themselves. Ethical behaviors in writing and reporting of study findings were

what gave credibility to the study. This credibility can be used to support future studies being conducted with the same topic but with different variables.

I adhered to the elements of trustworthiness. Credibility suggested that the interviewer was honest in what was reported and researched by using saturation techniques, while transferability allowed the study to be altered and reported in a different manner with varying subjects. Dependability gave way to the proof of the research by employing the data along with any written information such as the consent forms. Confirmability ensured that the researcher stayed unbiased, and the findings were a product of the collected information and not that of the researcher.

Summary

Wortham (2015) asserted that empirical research enriched by philosophical insights and methods combined tools from both traditions to clear away unproductive assumptions and advance our understandings of the human world. The types of data analyzed were the standard guidelines, the research questions as suggested by field-test experts, and the answers to the guiding interview questions. All forms of information were analyzed using the same software program, which was valuable when qualitative research studies were conducted, MAXQDA.

Data collection was undertaken in the natural setting because qualitative methods sought to describe, explore, and understand phenomena from the perspective of the individual or group (Noble & Smith, 2013). The study results provided a comprehensive description of the intersection between policies and individual decision making and official records of traffic stops as a measure of how police discretion was effective in a civilian police department operating in a military community. Data collection methods consisted of a purposive sampling of individuals who statistically represented a population, or a controlled experiment that reproduced in which variables were adjusted to examining the effect, or documentation of observations as with a case study (Campbell, 2014).

Chapter 4 includes the findings of the information provided through the interviews, field test, and the policy guidelines. This information set the path for future studies with these same variables, to be conducted and to allow other researchers to

conduct this same study. Each research question was answered by including the case study collected data.

Chapter 4. Findings

This chapter presents the results of the study. The results are presented based on the data that was collected using the exploratory research strategy of the qualitative case study methodology. The research strategy included collecting and analyzing three different types of data, interviews, policy guidelines, and a field test to collect as much information as possible. The study was conducted in a city near a military base in the Midwest that encompassed four surrounding law enforcement jurisdictions.

Pilot Study

The field test consisted of questions that were asked to a panel of criminal justice experts that were used during the interview process. These questions were given to the identified experts to look over and review beforehand to determine if they would garner enough information to answer the 3 research questions.

The interview questions focused on daily activities of those who the civilian police officers most often encountered, along with how the decisions were made regarding traffic violations. The first 3 questions concentrated on the background of the officers and their experience levels. Questions 4-6 focused on the community and those who were stopped for any traffic offenses. Questions 7-10 discussed the organizational structure and regulations regarding discretion when giving out traffic tickets. Qualitative research is focused on understanding a research enquiry as a humanistic or categorical approach (Pathak et al, 2013).

Setting

After explaining the purpose of the study, many of the participants wanted to be a part of it. The reason behind this, expressed by the participants, was because they wanted to know what their fellow coworkers thought and what the results of the study would be. Considering that the study was based around a small community, many of the people in the local community had a military background in some form. One of the personal conditions that influenced participation was the concept of camaraderie between the military and the local civilian police forces. Some of the participants expressed the fact that they would like to know if the results altered any behavior or policy changes.

Demographics

The following demographics are of the 4 jurisdictions in which officers were chosen to participate and their distance from the military base based upon their described code letters

Table 1

Jurisdiction Demographics

Jurisdictions	A	B	C	D	Total
No. of participants	5	5	5	2	17
Total no. of officers	44	16	8	46	114
Distance from mil. base	11 miles	2 miles	7.8 miles	9 miles	7.45 (avg)
Gender (M/F)	4/1	5/0	5/0	2/0	16/1

This next table represents the participants, their race, age, and time on the force. It will also show family history of military service and policing.

Table 2*Participant Demographics*

Officer	Gender	Race	Age	Hx of Military	Fam Hx of Police	Time as Officer
A1	Male	W	32	Yes	Yes	11 yrs.
A2	Female	Af Amer	30	No	No	8 yrs.
A3	Male	W	28	No	No	7 yrs.
A4	Male	W	45	Yes	Yes	15 yrs.
A5	Male	W	35	No	No	9 yrs.
B1	Male	W	41	Yes	No	13 yrs.
B2	Male	W	30	No	Yes	8 yrs.
B3	Male	W	34	Yes	Yes	12 yrs.
B4	Male	W	38	Yes	Yes	10 yrs.
B5	Male	W	52	No	Yes	26 yrs.
C1	Male	W	25	No	Yes	2 yrs.
C2	Male	Af Amer	57	Yes	Yes	16 yrs.
C3	Male	W	38	Yes	No	14 yrs.
C4	Male	W	32	Yes	Yes	11 yrs.
C5	Male	W	34	Yes	Yes	10 yrs.
D1	Male	W	30	Yes	Yes	8 yrs.

D2	Male	W	29	No	Yes	7 yrs.
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Data Collection

After thoroughly reviewing each jurisdictions' website, approval was acquired easily through email. A phone call with each participant was the simplest way to get an appointment for an interview. The interviews were conducted by meeting with the individual civilian police officers at the designated meeting place or by telephone call.

All pertinent and relevant information used for the study was included and used. The base traffic coordinator suggested that the military represented the country and must conduct themselves as professionally as possible on and off duty even though no Soldiers from the military base were a part of this study. All the information obtained was maintained and kept away from others including the consent forms. The MAXQDA program assisted with coding, sorting, and data analysis. The data that were analyzed and collected were used as intended. After all the preliminaries were completed, the interviews began, and the audio tape player was started.

Interviews

The interview data consisted of 17 interviews, various written traffic guidelines, and any jurisdiction traffic information presented by all four areas with varying information. The interviews were the first form of data to be collected. The study was started by interviewing five civilian police officers from three of the departments around the military base and only two individuals from a fourth jurisdiction. This was because

study saturation was reached at 15 and then 2 additional interviews were conducted to ensure completion.

The interviews were the most important data collection method; this was where most of the needed information was obtained. Many of the reviewed interview questions led to information regarding other discretion and police topics such as personal experiences with certain individuals in the community and the atmosphere in which they work. The study results provided a comprehensive description of the intersection between policies and individual decision making along with official records of traffic stops as a measure of how police discretion was operational in a civilian police department operating in a military community.

The consent forms were given out to each participant after IRB approval was obtained (01-02-22-0275507), which led to be reviewed by participants before any interviews began. Explaining the purpose, topic, and importance to everyone was done right before any questions were asked. Permission was received from each person, whether verbally on videotaped or through email, to participate and the use of the collected information was applied to the results of the study as part of the research. Participants were contacted through a phone number or email and information on me as researcher was given to each interviewee.

Participants did not need to be screened according to the jurisdiction that was being patrolled. Using the data collection methods, information was gathered as promptly as possible. The interviews were conducted away from other people to avoid any

interruptions and away from the four police jurisdictions. Interviews were held at a local bookstore that was central to all the jurisdictions or over the telephone. Keeping in mind that privacy was an important aspect of study success, questions did not include any potentially confidential information. The interview information answered all the research questions and moved beyond them. Many of the officers added professional information about traffic stop experiences and the purpose behind choosing a career as a police officer.

Policy Guidelines

The guidelines were received at any select interview from whichever officer agreed to supply them. No civilian police officer denied supplying the requested written guidelines if asked. The civilian police officers gave as much traffic information as possible without divulging any personal or confidential information. All the data was received during one or more selected interviews.

Several guidelines and rules were obtained from the military base provost marshal. The base had a military traffic coordinator who worked with both civilians and military members as they both are now allowed to reside on the base and therefore drive there more often. This included behavior in the civilian community and having required driving training yearly. Some of these rules only applied to the military members. According to each state, the guidelines regarding discretion and traffic varied from organization to organization.

Information Pertaining to Traffic Stops

Information about traffic stops was requested from the base military police. Traffic citations have been rising in this area since the calendar year 2012 according to the provost marshal. Due to the military being a government agency with high privacy issues, there was a limited amount of information that could be shared. A thorough review of all the supplied policy guidelines including vehicle searches, traffic stops, and discretion, was requested from the 4 jurisdictions and analyzed. Data collection was accepted in an ordinary setting, because qualitative methods sought to explore and understand the phenomena from the perspective of the individual or group (Noble & Smith, 2013).

Research on police behavior implied that discretion is important to police decision making (Nowacki, 2015). The rules and regulations of policing dictated how certain circumstances were to be handled, however, there were other circumstances that changed this pattern. This explained the difference when issuing tickets during traffic stops among the military and the civilian community members. Law enforcement organizations wrote guidelines that were simply suggestions that were respected by the police officers and many of the supervisors. Police policy decisions had a considerable influence on the public (Miller, 2015).

What is not known about this topic is the scope of the procedures of discretionary practices by the individual civilian police officers working in a military community when they stop military-affiliated citizens for a traffic violation. One jurisdiction explained that

some of the requested information is available online and is believed to be public record. The chosen participants answered all the guiding research questions adequately.

Data Analysis

Research Methodology Applied to the Data Analysis

The case study methodology applied to this study allowed for a more accurate analysis. The exploration and discovery of data through a qualitative research method often indicated that there was not much written about the participants or the topic of study (Campbell, 2014). This was a gap in literature that was captured during this study. Data analysis included reading and rereading the transcripts of the interviews to identify vital sections of information that helped answer all the research questions (Connelly, 2010).

The analysis of the collected data was sorted into categories using the MAXQDA system, which created a simpler way in which to interpret the information. It grouped the answers to the interview questions by each of the jurisdictions which gave credit to the overall results. MAXQDA increased the processing of the data analysis and allowed the themes to emerge. As the themes emerged, the number of participants was smaller as the themes started to repeat.

Interviews

The consent forms were emailed and reviewed by the participants at least 24 hours before any interviews took place. Explaining the purpose, topic, and importance to everyone was completed right before any questions were asked. Permission was received

from each person, whether verbally, on videotape or by email, to participate, and to use the collected information which was applied to the results of the study as part of the research. Participants were contacted through a phone number or email printed on the consent form and information on the researcher was supplied by email at the participants' request.

No personal information was included on any of the consent forms such as names, status, gender, ethnicity, addresses or badge numbers. Arranging the feedback from the interviews in a discreet manner ensured that all pertinent and relevant information was included along with any suggestions for future research studies. The use of the MAXQDA (qualitative data analysis software) program to help with coding, sorting and data analysis was the most logical choice. The research study being completed ensured all collected information was used as intended and was added as a valuable resource to enhance the results.

Each officer was given a coded letter and number that corresponded with his or her jurisdiction. All information was sorted by themes, and coding measures were applied accordingly. While sorting, all pertinent and relevant information was included. Anything not significant was discarded. The information was kept locked in a secure place. The MAXQDA program was used to help with coding, sorting, and data analysis. The analysis findings and conclusions were reported appropriately.

Policy Guidelines

The guidelines were received at selected interview locations from whichever

jurisdiction agreed to supply them. The civilian police officers gave as much traffic information as possible without divulging any personal information. All the data received during one or more selected interviews, was used to support the results. Police policy decisions had a tremendous impact on the public (Miller, 2015). The policy guidelines provided supported the rules and standards that the police officers used as a base for serving the communities.

Several guidelines and rules were obtained from the four jurisdictions. According to each state, the guidelines regarding discretion and traffic varied from organization to organization. The police guidelines were a vital asset that aided in whatever direction the research took within the case study design. The policy guidelines were analyzed for this purpose and date of review noted. They supplied a better understanding for the researcher, officers, and the public explaining in simple terms what aspects of policing are maintained by guidelines.

The guidelines and police records that were used supported and added pertinent information for the researcher, such as traffic enforcement rules “25.0 motor vehicle stops,” “27.0 ride-along program,” “4.8 police officer code of conduct,” “5.32 search of motor vehicles,” “5.33 arrest and search of persons,” “6.2 traffic enforcement,” and “6.3 contact with violators” (KACP, 2013). All these policies were read, understood, analyzed, and compared to each other based on the topics.

Information Pertaining to Traffic Stops

The raw data was analyzed for each jurisdiction, and it required assistance from a computer program that kept the information sorted and categorized properly. Open coding was the preferred method for organizing and analyzing the raw data. Separating the answers to the guiding interview questions by section, gave each area of a different code that kept the information from getting mixed up. The information was then given codes so that it would be clear what data belonged to which jurisdiction. Even though names were not used, the individuals were identified by a letter and a number according to their individual jurisdiction and sequence to which they were interviewed.

Presentation of Data and the Results of the Analysis

The collected guiding interview questions' answers were analyzed by first assigning a number to each participant. The participants were grouped together by jurisdiction. The answers were then separated by themes and added to the other jurisdictions. Analyzing the results included comparing each jurisdiction to one another and determining how each participant answered the questions. The guiding interview questions collectively answered all the research questions.

The policy guidelines were analyzed by comparing each jurisdictions' changes to the policies given by the state. Even though they have the power to change and update the policies to fit their individual areas, some of the chiefs did not change them. This resulted in the jurisdictions having some of the same standards when it came to protecting their respective communities.

The traffic information was the same with every jurisdiction in how tickets of

military-affiliated people were reported. All the traffic information was gathered by the base provost marshal if it was serious enough to be reported. The situations were analyzed as no names, ranks, or races were provided. Only genders and ages were known. The overall census showed traffic violations never worsened but remained steady across the board.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were the avoidance of activities that will harm individuals or the environment. This study was not more than minimum risk. This study did not examine a vulnerable population. Complete discretion and anonymity were used to protect privacy along with verbal or written consent from each participant. Steps that were used to protect the participants included not using names or badge numbers when dictating the information that was given. The individuals were identified by gender and age and given a code number and letter.

Keeping the information along with identities under double lock and key was one way to ensure the information was secure. Specific names to identify those who had been interviewed was not to be used in any way. No one outside of the researcher had access to the data. While there was a risk with almost anything, the risk for this study was extremely minimal. Data will be kept for a total of 7 years. The challenge for qualitative researchers was to present a consistent representation of the data, which could be “extensive and messy” and the need to make sense of diverse viewpoints or complex

issues (Noble & Smith, 2013). The ethical considerations gave the sample population involved complete anonymity.

Results

Data Collection

Data collection was often undertaken in a natural setting, because qualitative methods sought to describe, explore, and understand the phenomena from perspectives of varying individuals (Noble & Smith, 2013). The data sources that used were individual interviews, policy guidelines and a field test supported by experts. The field test was used to clarify the guiding interview questions and ensure that they answered the research questions. The individual interviews garnered most of the important information that was used to support the study results. The policy guidelines were the written suggestions that the police officers used to protect and serve their communities as suggested by state regulations. After the interviews were complete, the participants were thanked for their time and given a minimal incentive for participating. They were instructed to provide an email address if they are interested in viewing the completed study.

Interviews

The interviews were the most important data collection method; this is where most of the needed information is gathered. Many of the reviewed interview questions lead to information regarding other discretionary and police topics such as personal experiences with the public. The study results provided a comprehensive description of the intersection between policies and individual decision making and official records of

traffic stops as a measure of how police discretion is operational in a civilian police department operating in a military community.

Policy Guidelines

The policy guidelines were analyzed by comparing each jurisdiction's changes to the policies given by the state. Even though they had the power to change and update the policies to fit their areas, some of the chiefs did not want to change them. This resulted in the jurisdictions having the same standards when it came to protecting their respective communities. The information from the guidelines were analyzed and used to garner additional questions from the participants.

Field Test

The field test served as the guiding resource for creating the interview questions. The field test consisted of questions that were asked and reviewed by a panel of 3 criminal justice experts, which during the interview process, assisted in answering the research questions. The experts were 1 criminal justice professional and 2 criminal justice professors. The experience of the experts was taken into consideration when choosing them to participate. These questions were given to the identified experts to review beforehand to determine if they garnered the type of information needed to answer the 3 research questions. The collected information from the experts served as guidance to enhance the guiding interview questions.

Themes from the Interviews/ Research Question #1: What type of discretionary decisions are authorized by civilian police officers during traffic stops to personnel working in military communities?

Discretionary Choices

There were varying types of discretion that was used during regular traffic stops for police officers working in a military community. Officer B3 stated, “discretion can play a lot with how a traffic stop plays out.” There are two different types of warnings, verbal and written. The written warnings often came with a fee that the driver must pay.

According to officer B1, if the officers stopped someone for a traffic violation, before reaching the car, they already know whether this person is going to receive a ticket or warning. This was based on the current violation committed. After talking to the driver and trying to understand the reasons behind the stops, one of the main decisions for a ticket was based upon the driver’s attitude and demeanor towards the officer. According to officer A5, “the military folks were always cordial and respectful whether they receive a ticket or not.”

Receiving a traffic ticket that must be paid depended on the type of violation committed. Drivers receiving tickets given when the speed is 25 miles over the speed limit must appear in court. According to officer D2, “there were certain violations that are mandated by a court appearance and other things are required to be paid according to our guidelines.” Officer B1 stated, “officers try to give out written warnings and verbal

warnings instead of actual fine tickets.” Contrary to what people may believe, police officers in this area do not have monthly traffic quotas, as stated by officer B3. They do not receive extra pay for writing tickets, nor do they have a certain amount of tickets that must be written regularly, confirmed by officer C3.

From time to time, the state allocated a certain amount of money for the officers to perform mandated traffic stops. This is when the officers set up in a location to stop every car that comes through that area, checking for valid registrations and drivers’ licenses. Officer A1 stated, “this type of stop is usually conducted on or around a long holiday weekend.” This information is posted in the local newspapers beforehand to make the public aware and to give them the chance to avoid that area. Posting the location, date, and time is a state requirement before the stops can be scheduled.

Officer A3 stated, “the officers enjoyed having discretion because every encounter with a community member is different and cannot be depicted by set guidelines.” While discretion was a measure of personal choice, the rules were there as guidelines to be used for reference purposes. The officers had a choice to abide by strict rules or use their own given level of discretion.

Given a choice, discretion was more preferred than having set guidelines for each interaction with others. “Although we police officers often go by the rules involving encounters with the public, it is good to know that we have the discretion to make choices based on the current circumstances, especially when it came to giving the military tickets,” said officer A1. Officer B2 stated that “we understand that for a military person

to receive a ticket may very well mean more to their careers than it would mean to a person who is not in the military.”

Officer B3 confirmed that the officers liked having the freedom to choose who gets a ticket or warning based upon each situation. There were varying reasons behind issuing tickets such as driver demeanor and type of offense. If the driver was offensive and impolite in any manner, the chance of receiving a ticket was much greater. Officer D1 stated that “driver attitude makes a very big difference” when it comes to receiving a traffic ticket. The type of offense is a close second for many officers. Officer A1 stated, “I do not enjoy giving out tickets, but I do enjoy the interaction with the community members just to let them know that the police are not all bad guys.” With the interviews being audio taped and notes taken, this made it easier to refer to what information each person articulated.

Discretion was granted from the state in written form as a policy guideline based on the professionalism that was expected of the officers. While there was discretion available, there were some instances that instantly took that choice away. Officer B4 stated that “not having discretion makes this job much more difficult.” The officers stated that police discretion was important because every situation deserved to be analyzed before deciding what final actions to take. It was a given right to the police officers to entrust them to always do the right thing and to treat everyone equally. The terrible experiences were few and far between. Officer A3 stated that “you remember the awful experiences because they stick out more than the good ones and they are extremely rare.”

Military Community

The military base had been in existence in this area since 1861. Over the years, the name, function, and the purpose had changed. The things that remained the same were the training of the troops and the support of the local military communities. According to officer A2, “this community may be small, but there was still a fair amount of crimes committed here.” Even though there may be many troops training and living on the base, there were just as many not living on base but still in the local area. Some Veterans had chosen to retire there rather than move on after leaving the military. The community now is diverse, with individuals from all areas of the United States. Officer C3 stated, “I’m a strong supporter of our military; I always will be,” regarding to how he perceived the military in this community.

There were many members of the community that had a family member or who know someone that was affiliated with the military and the base. Officer A4 stated, “almost everyone in this community is affiliated with the military somehow, or they know someone who is.” Whether it is from working on base as a civilian or having retired from the military years ago, the community was made up of those who understand and appreciate the military way of life. Officer B1 stated, “I gave a great amount of leeway to those troops who were in this area temporarily for their training.” The local community supported not only the military-affiliated individuals and their family members but also the local police officers, the firemen, the healthcare workers, the

clergy, and the teachers. Officer D1, stated “I once gave a ticket to a pastor of one of the churches here in town. He took it to the chief and the chief made me tear it up”.

Officer A2 stated, “it is nice to have the military living here; the area just seems safer with their presence.” The community appreciated the military presence. The civilian portion of this community understood that if the base closed, it would be detrimental to the economy and safety here. Officer B3 stated, “if it came down to it, the military who were no longer serving, would voluntarily step up whenever needed,” when referring to any emergencies in this community. Even though the community here was so diverse, there were many establishments and individuals who paid special attention to the military individuals as a way of thanking them for their service by offering discount services.

According to officer C5, “the military has a bearing about them that lets you know who they are.” Although it is easy to determine who the soldiers are, “the community is a better place to live because of the high regard for those who are presently serving and those who have previously served this country”, according to officer D2. This was a reason behind why many of the officers working here choose to be more lenient to the military-affiliated individuals during traffic stops.

Traffic Stops

The information that was recorded during traffic stops was vital to the outcome of every stop as it was used to determine if the driver warranted a certain type of ticket. The speeding tickets given here often ranged from \$50-\$165 depending on how much over the speed limit the driver was going. Each officer had his choice in writing citations

where they needed to be paid and how much each person was to pay. In some areas, points were added to driver's licenses when speeding occurred more than once in a fairly short period of time. The officers also gave drivers the choice of attending an educational driver's course that prevented points from being added however the ticket would still have to be paid in full. No matter what the driver chose, the cost was about the same.

"We all know the many ways to determine if someone is a part of the military or not," stated officer D2. The military family members often let the police officers know their status when they are stopped. The ways include uniforms, out of state license plates, out of state driver's licenses, haircuts, and even personal demeanors. The males, as well as the females, have standards in which their grooming is recognizable. "The demeanors were more professional and respectful," stated officer A4. Officer C4 stated, "I can tell who the military were because they were more professional, and I tried to be more lenient on the military because they chose to fight for our freedom." Even though the law stated that everyone was to be treated fairly, the police officers had discretion to give tickets and warnings to whomever they chose.

The policy guidelines for one jurisdiction stated that traffic stops can be conducted on any motorized vehicle. This also included bicycles, horses, and four wheelers. Officer B5 stated that he "tried to pull over someone for a routine stop while the guy was driving a four-wheeler." The person decided to run, and the officer eventually found out that the person was driving intoxicated. Trying to avoid a DUI was ultimately the reason the individual fled. Officer A1 stated, "there were some instances

where the guidelines gave us no choice to ticket or arrest, and this was one of them”.

Officer C5 stated, “There were some things in the written guidelines that say we don’t have to arrest individuals for DUIs (driving under the influence) in a car because it says we ‘may’ but on horseback or bicycle we have no choice in the matter but to arrest that person because the guidelines state ‘we shall’ arrest”.

When a military person was suspected to be behind the wheel, an officer will take that into consideration. Before approaching the car, many officers state that they already know if this person is receiving a ticket, or a warning and that military status made a difference. According to officer B2, “I usually gave the military the benefit of the doubt.” Officer B1 stated, “the military has enough to worry about without me giving them an expensive ticket to pay”.

While speeding may be the ultimate reason behind a traffic stop, there were other, more serious reasons for a traffic stop. People were stopped for reckless driving, not wearing a seatbelt, running stop signs, and for making wrong turns. Officer B3 stated, “I always stopped people for not using their turn signals; it was one of my pet peeves”. Officer C1 stated, “if the driver was portraying bad judgment and showing a safety hazard to others, they got pulled over”. Regardless of the reason behind a stop, the officer ultimately had the discretion to pull someone over within reason.

Themes from the Policy Guidelines/ Research Question #2: What are the policy guidelines/suggestions of discretion used by an officer when conducting traffic stops in a military community?

Discretion Policy Guidelines

The policy guidelines regarding discretion used by the police officers depended upon the violation committed. Given a choice between having discretionary choices versus following set rules, all the questioned officers wanted to have individual discretion. The freedom to choose who to give a ticket to gave them more control over their daily operations. Officer B3 stated, "It is an unwritten rule for all the officers who have set individuals whom they will not give tickets to such as other police officers, hospital workers, firemen, and clergy." Everything that they do while patrolling was reinforced by each chief, who required them to treat others as fair as possible across the board regardless of race or gender. The chiefs were undoubtedly supported every decision that the officers made if they were following the guidelines and performing in the best interest of the department and jurisdiction.

Individual Organizational Guidelines

The state had many generic guidelines that were written and given to each jurisdiction to review and alter to fit their individual communities. This prevented the old laws that remained on the books such as it being against the law to walk down the street with an ice cream cone in your pocket. This was because people used to steal horses and leer them away with ice cream. The changes were approved and then put into effect. The state code of conduct stated that police officers must conduct themselves in a certain manner while representing their department on and off duty (General Order 4.8, 2017).

The guidelines were reviewed and updated regularly as needed by each chief of

that specific jurisdiction. Almost every section of police work had a written guideline for review and guidance; many were suggestions only. Some of the guidelines were available for review by the public on the state website. Each policy had standards along with a purpose, definition of key words, and suggested procedures regarding that topic. The purpose of the traffic enforcement guideline were to provide a safer driving environment for the community by correcting the violators and reducing the number of vehicle accidents (General Order 6.2, 2017).

State Requirements

According to the state written guidelines, discretion was more sensibly required because there could be written scenarios for every possible police encounter. The training for police recruits had been increasing over the years to incorporate more issues. It was now set at 23 weeks. The state put trust in its officers to always conduct themselves in a professional manner. The officers preferred this and often lived up to their positive reputations in this community. The chiefs had stated that all the officers were taught to treat those of the public like they would want to be treated or like they would want one of their family members to be treated. Because of this, there had been very few issues regarding complaints against the officers and the way they treat the public. While every officer had the discretion to police however, they deem fit, they all agree that keeping the community safe and taking care of the military were top priorities.

Annual Training Requirements

According to the guidelines, each officer completed at least 40 hours a year

in training to maintain certifications. That training was suggested by the chiefs and then chosen by a need's assessment evaluation. Because the four agencies were so close together, their training sometimes was conducted with each other. There had been times where the civilian police officers also trained with the military police officers on the military base. This training happened at least once a year. The annual training included training that supported all the collective certifications. The yearly training also was approved by the department of criminal justice and the state law enforcement counsel.

Whenever there was an overwhelming need for assistance, a fellow agency was available to assist in any way possible, as they are located so close together. Each officer spent at least 3.5 months with a police training officer (PTO) before patrolling alone. The training must constantly change year by year, and some had nothing to do with traffic stops, such as antiterrorism, but it was all very useful material. The state patrol was also available if needed as they had an office in this same county. One smaller jurisdiction had another taking the emergency phone calls on the weekends regularly, as there were not enough officers employed there for that department.

Themes from Interviews/ Research Question #3: What interview information is available from individual civilian police officers regarding discretion in traffic stops?

Pertinent Interview Information

During traffic stops, the police officers used all pertinent information from the

driver to determine if a ticket was warranted. The information from the dispatch was also a determining factor. Many stopped individuals were a part of the military, whether current or previously. When they were stopped, their military identification cards often accompanied any requested documents the police officers asked for. Officer D1 stated, "When someone who is military-affiliated gave me their military ID, I gave it back because it doesn't have the information on it that I required." The officers took this as a sign that the individual wanted them to know that the person was a part of the military force and expected leniency because of this fact.

Fifteen out of the 17 interviewed police officers say they gave the military a break because they were military. Unless the offense was extremely dangerous for the public, it was often forgiven. Officer A1 stated, "I stopped a Soldier who had two purple hearts and a bronze star. He was a decorated hero, and, in my opinion, it would be egregious to write a war hero like that a traffic ticket." Officer C5 stated, "The military wanted you to know that they were military-affiliated because they were proud of their service."

Some officers say because they had family members who were military, they understood the military way of life. Some had even served in the military as well. The officers knew that being a police officer was like being a Soldier. Both were doing it to help others, and it was not a position that anyone could take lightly. Many of the police officers, who did not serve in the military, expressed a desire to but stated it was a missed opportunity.

The remaining two interviewees suggested that the military should know better and are setting a bad example for the rest of the community. “All the police officers appreciated the sacrifice that the military has chosen to endure, and they, therefore, want to repay them by not giving them traffic tickets,” stated officer D1. Others understood that receiving a traffic ticket could be detrimental for some military members when the ticket reaches their chain of command. Officer C5 stated that he “liked to give warnings instead of tickets just to enforce the law without having the driver pay for it.” Officer B1 also stated, “I advised many drivers to attend traffic school to avoid having points against their driving records.” Officer C3 stated, “The biggest factor for me during a traffic stop was how the person treated me. If they were rude, then I had no reason to give them a break.”

The military family members were not just spouses and minor children; they also included adult children between the ages of 18 to 23 and parents of the Soldiers who held a military identification card. Officer C4 stated, “If a person was driving in a manner that was unsafe to others on the road, they would get a ticket regardless of their status or who they were.” These family members were subject to being stopped for traffic violations just like any other citizen. While on base, the active-duty Soldiers were responsible for the welfare and behavior of their own family members. If there were any potential criminal issues, family members were barred from coming onto the military base for a selected period depending upon the infraction committed. Officer C2 stated, “The military was strong, and they fight and shoot but at the end of the day, they are all still

humans, and they had some of the same issues that everyone else had, which included having family members that do not always do the right thing.”

Military-Affiliation and Traffic Tickets

Several officers have discussed how many family members wears their Soldier's rank and expect special favors when they were being stopped. Therefore, when someone military-affiliated was stopped, the police officer knew. Officer A4 stated, "I understood the reasoning behind the military giving us their ID cards; it was almost always expected even though we did not ask for it." Prior military members who still had a connection with the base continued to do this also, even though they were no longer members of the military, but were Veterans. According to officer B3, "Almost all the officers who worked here were prior military or were currently serving in the reserves in some form."

It was an unspoken courtesy that many seemed to think they deserved after spending time in the military, and that is why the military identification card was presented along with the driver's license. Sometimes it was given if the driver was cordial to the officer. According to officer A1, "I think we needed more compassion in our jobs instead of just dealing with the traffic issues and moving on." Other times the offense was such that it cannot warrant a leaner punishment. According to officer B1, "up to 25 miles an hour over the speed limit was an automatic misdemeanor the driver was also required to appear in court." Officer B5 stated, "Every officer had a set number of miles over the speed limit that they allowed" before choosing to stop a driver. Officer A3 stated, "If a person is driving faster than I am, he was stopped."

The police officers that had a military-affiliation or who had previously served their country knew that the military had control over every aspect of a Soldier's life. A ticket would be detrimental and possibly career ending for some Soldiers. Officer B2 stated, "We don't want to get anybody in any more trouble with the government than they already were when they received a speeding ticket." Police officers agreed that this was not wanted and was avoided as much as possible. They often take that into consideration when conducting traffic stops with military-affiliated individuals.

Military-affiliation was seen by some as a privilege. Those individuals living in this community love and support their military members. They would be devastated if the base in this community were closed. It is known here that when the military individuals were out in their uniforms, they received respect and honor from everyone. When in restaurants their meals were almost always paid for by someone else who appreciated the military presence and understood the life of a Soldier. All the military individuals there knew how important they were to this community. Officer A2 stated, "I love serving this community, especially with the military being a part of it."

Traffic Stop Reasoning

The policy on traffic stops suggested that there were four reasons to stop a person. The police officer must have a reasonable suspicion wrongdoing is occurring, probable cause to believe that a moving violation has occurred, or probable cause that a person in that vehicle has committed a crime or have consensual contact with an already-stopped vehicle. Depending on the type of stop initiated, the officer moved forward with the next

step, which would be to remove occupants from the vehicle or to check the license plates. There were many circumstances that followed the decision to stop and several outcomes that can occur because of that traffic stop

Drivers' Attitudes

The attitude of the drivers set the stage for receiving a ticket that must be paid. Officer C3 stated, "I have had individuals try to cry their way out of receiving tickets, mainly female drivers." Some drivers did not realize that they are driving fast or over the speed limit. The police officers had been trained to treat the public like they would want themselves or their family members to be treated. This was a rule that the officers often worked and patrol by. Officers were willing to work with each driver, depending on the circumstances of the traffic stop. One officer admitted to giving several tickets to the same person because he was so disrespectful and belligerent.

Military-Affiliation

According to officer B1, the police "can easily recognize who the military individuals were" simply by looking at their registrations. The active-duty members were exempt from paying for a complete yearly registration if their car is registered in this state. Officers B3 and C4 stated that the military had a professional demeanor about them. They often respond to officers with a "sir" or "ma'am." Some of them had out of state driver's licenses, and the others had military haircuts or up do hairstyles that showed they were members of the military. While many of the police officers had family members that were military-affiliated, the officers viewed the military as brothers in arms

and a part of a cultural background that only they could understand. The officers viewed the military as a similar profession to being a police officer or fireman.

Most of those who were interviewed not only had great respect for military personnel, but they also felt as if they needed to look out for them. That simply reverted to giving them a break when it came to giving out traffic tickets and warnings. The officers seemed to think the military deserved this special treatment because of the life that they were living or have lived. While 14 out of the 17 officers interviewed felt this way, the remaining 3 noted that the military should be held to a higher standard and should know better than to break the law by speeding. When stopping the military, the officers admitted that they had often been given a military identification card along with the requested driver's license. This sometimes happened, even when it was not asked of the drivers.

Summary

After discussing the initial purpose behind the study with the participants, there was no doubt that the officers were being held in high regard within this community. Each officer knew that they had individuals working with them that always did the right thing and would undoubtedly uphold the law. The community was aware of whom many of the officers and deputies were even when they were not wearing uniforms. The state did an excellent job of teaching and relaying the importance of community respect and confidence to each officer during the required 16 weeks of official training. This training increased in time to include many important aspects that were previously not taught.

The officers in these 4 areas had other positions within the community other than the obvious. These communities were close-knit, and the police officers had many activities that involved those who lived there, including the children. The positive answers to many of the research questions regarding giving out tickets and warnings were to be expected as the military had a positive influence over almost everyone living here. “Many police officers had a family history of being a part of the military,” stated officer C4. If not being a military family member, then a part of the police force was in the family history. This explained a great deal when it came to leniency for the military affiliated.

The police officers overall admitted to giving a member of the military a break simply because they were who they were, and their profession warranted it. Officer D1 admitted that “the military members had a lot on their plates and giving them a break now

and then made the difference in them having a good day or a bad day.” The police officers understood the difficulty in being deployed and being separated from immediate family, sometimes more than once. If the base was not located within this community, the camaraderie would remain focused on helping each other and having high regard for those who had served and those who currently serve. Not only do they serve and protect for their country, but also for the community that they chose to live in.

Chapter 5 discussed the implications and recommendations of this study. The further research section sets the path for additional studies to be conducted regarding military and civilian police officers. Military individuals, their way of life and how they are treated by the civilian community, is an interesting part of life that should be explored more in-depth.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Implications, Recommendations

This exploratory single case study focused on the behavior and discretionary practices of the civilian police officers who worked in a community where many military-affiliated individuals chose to live. The literature used for this dissertation was from several sources with varied topics. This study was completed because there was a need to understand the specifics of life and discretion in a military community as lived by a civilian police officer regarding discretion. The study focused on the three forms of data that was used to answer the research questions. By using more than one type of data, the answers to the questions are more credible as the traffic data and policy guidelines supported the interview information. However, the interviews were the primary source of information as the participants answered the interview questions and provided further involuntary information about life in this chosen community.

Interpretation of the Findings

The results of this study showed how civilian police officers reacted to military members and nonmilitary members. Depending on the type of violation, the officers can work an 8-hour shift without giving out any tickets or warnings. The safety of the community was the most important factor. The important factor behind speeding tickets was to prevent accidents and maintain safe roads. Sometimes military affiliation mattered to the officers, and sometimes it did not. That decision was dependent on the officer and that officer's view on why the speeding occurred.

This study found that there were police officers who did not want to give out any

tickets regardless of whomever they pull over. They would, however, pull over drivers and let them know what they were doing wrong. There were also officers who understood the discretion available to them but preferred to go strictly by the book. Many of the participants in this study were committed to treating everyone the same. There may be a time when a person did not receive a ticket but certainly deserved one. Giving the officers the discretion gave them the opportunity to make decisions on their own.

Limitations of the Study

In the case of this study, limitations were those things that prevented the study from happening and being finished with the expectations that were anticipated. Those limitations were very few and far between. The limitation of officers' working hours that was given showed no effect on the outcome of the study or its results. The limitations did not restrict any aspect of the study.

Limitations for qualitative research include the exploratory nature of the study. Another limitation was the inability to generalize the findings beyond the participants. Many qualitative studies depend upon the views of the individual researcher which could be deemed as bias. Not only was being biased an issue, but this type of research is also time consuming and often difficult to emulate. There were limitations in what one can see through the technology that could affect how data was analyzed (Merriam, 2015). All sources of data in a qualitative research study has advantages and disadvantages.

One other limitation to this study was the number of individuals in the local area

to serve as participants. Even though there were multiple local law enforcement agencies, the individuals who worked there were difficult to interview as they always had busy schedules so therefore some interviews had to be conducted on weekends and after regular duty hours. This caused a slow start for the interviewing process. Eventually the process of interviewing improved and moved much faster than expected. All the participants were then interviewed at their convenience. Limitations for any study varies from the type of study design to those who will be a part of it. In my study, getting to the true point of the research topic by interviewing those individuals involved with varying perspectives supported the main purpose of this study.

Recommendations

For the future practice of discretion in policing, there can be a much needed conversation about traffic stops and giving out tickets. While police officers already have a level of discretion during traffic stops, being equal across the board based on certain circumstances would make discretion easier to implement. When assessing discretionary decision-making, the underlying measures were examined and used by the officer in their individual decision-making process (Noble, 2013).

Another recommendation for practice would be for civilian police officers to be able to work with the military police officers at regular intervals and not just for yearly training. Whether it would cause a change depends upon the individual choices of all the officers. According to Noble (2013), the goal of discretionary decision making is to allow

officers the flexibility to mitigate narrowly defined laws with justice, fairness, and using their common sense.

Recommendations for Further Research

There were so many different aspects involved in a military community that can be studied. Just to name a few, the differences between the way the civilian police officers and the military police officers patrolled, the way the military police officers treated the civilians, and the camaraderie among both departments and how they can successfully work together for the same common goal. The information gathered could not only be used for the study but also as a need's improvement assessment for training in the future for the various police organizations and newly assigned officers.

Military-affiliation fell into the other category that had yet to be researched. This was a gap in literature that could be beneficial to the pending studies of police discretion. Policing spreads several important social resources across communities, as well as imposing certain burdens of the prevention of crime (Miller, 2015). To continue the same path as this study, for the future, instead of interviewing the police officers, maybe some of those military individuals could be interviewed as to why they chose to present their military identification cards when they are stopped. The study can include expectations when doing so and if there is a moment of disappointment when it does not make a difference. The ideas for this study can be broken down in more in-depth concepts such as gender, age groups, educational level, and possibly race.

The military-affiliated individuals were a different group of individuals who had yet to be profiled and studied. They had a different mindset of values, integrity, and respect according to what was taught as a military member. Designing the study around everyday life and experiences of civilian police officers' conduct during traffic stops in a military community was how most of the vital information was gathered. Their demeanors gave insight into how each interaction at traffic stops were usually handled by the officers. How each civilian police officer reacted and responded to the same situation was a point of reference for information regarding peer pressure and backgrounds.

As a future recommendation, more studies should be conducted in various military neighborhoods. Hopefully this research will generate a discussion about policing and the military community and the camaraderie that is involved. The military and the police officers regardless of what type of police, have some aspects of their careers in common. By having more studies geared towards the military, there could be a better understanding of the military way of life.

Regardless of the topic, the knowledge of the results would benefit both the military and civilian populations. Another aspect for future research is to better understand how organizations work together such as military police with civilian police and military physicians working with civilian physicians just to get a comparison of the two and to comprehend the process of networking. This would be a teaching moment for both organizations. Future research would dictate how and what patrolling aspects made a difference in the military communities for all involved.

According to each state, the guidelines regarding discretion varied from organization to organization. The results of this study would be used as an example as to how discretion worked and how important it was to allow all police officers the opportunity to make simple, low-level decisions without supervision. This would ensure that the courts and the county jails were not overcrowded with individuals who may not need to be there. The police officers in this study had a high regard for the military as many of them have served themselves. The military shared that camaraderie with the police force and there was a connection between the two.

Implications

One practical implication that resulted from this research was to provide information about an area of police practice that may be based on hearsay or anecdotal events. The police officers and the military both belong to structured organizations that have similar policy guidelines according to the specific protection and experiences that they are committed to performing as part of their professions. When decisions were made without supervisors or others present, officers enjoy a position of control and individual discretion was inevitably applied (Regoeczi & Kent, 2014). The thought that military individuals may be given a break or a warning during traffic stops because of who they were and what they do was a practical implication.

The practical implication suggested that while there were guidelines that dealt with how to speak to and treat citizens, there were also actual ways that it is done. If the treatment was fair across the board, the guidelines could be challenged as they were not

mandatory. If they were not interpreted negatively, those responsible have no problem with the officers making those choices. It was assumed that in a few communities surrounding a military base, a person could be given preferential treatment by civilian police officers simply because the individual has a military background or is related to a family member of the military. The fact was that most of the civilian police officers that work in this community do treat the military-affiliated differently and a little better than the regular citizens because of who they are and what they represent. The police officers here showed their comfort, honor, and enthusiasm about being around military-affiliated individuals.

Conclusion

One important theme that originated from the interviews, policy guidelines and the traffic information was given by the officers themselves. The first research question that discussed the type of discretion given to each person during a regular traffic stop was purely based on individual police officer choices. While the driver's attitude was a vital aspect of choosing to give a ticket, many of the police officers saw discretion as the deciding factor. The main three choices were to give the driver a verbal warning, a written citation (which comes with a fee), or a recorded warning.

Research question 2 discussed the written policy and guidelines for police officer individual discretionary choices. This state had very generic guidelines regarding police officer discretion during traffic stops. The state policies were solely based on the discretion of each county chief of police regarding that specific area. The generic guidelines are to treat everyone the same regardless of gender, race, or ethnicity. Chiefs had suggested treating everyone as they would want to be treated no matter the public position or profession. The goal was to be respectful and cordial to everyone.

The 3rd research question involved personal work experiences by the civilian police officers during traffic stops and other instances where discretion was used. A police officer can have several encounters throughout a normal 8-hour shift. Some encounters can be with the same person. One theme that kept being reinforced regarding giving out written citations was the attitude of the driver. That was the number-one

reason why many tickets were written. The police officers made it clear that there is no quota or extra pay for giving out tickets.

Many of the officers in these four jurisdictions had other working positions within the community besides being a police officer. The communities were close-knit, and the police officers have activities that involved the residents who live there including the children. The positive answers to many of the research questions regarding giving out tickets and warnings were to be expected, as the military influenced almost everyone living there. Many of the officers interviewed have a family member that is or was a member of the military. If not a military family member, then a member of the police force was in the family history. This explains a great deal when it comes to leniency for the service members.

The police officers overall admitted to giving members of the military a break because they are who they are. One officer admitted that the military members had a lot on their plates and giving them, a break now and then may make the difference in them having a good day or bad day. The police officers understood the difficulty in being deployed and being separated from immediate family members, sometimes more than once. Because the base was located within this community, the camaraderie remained focused on helping each other and having a high regard for those who have served and those who currently serve. Not only because they served and protected their country, but also for the community that they chose to live in.

Singh (2014) suggested that the case study approach combined data collection

methods such as documents, archives, interviews, questionnaires, and observations. The research strategy afforded the chance to use three different types of data to achieve the desired goal of answering all the research questions. The case study style being the most appropriate had delivered more than enough information for the research study by answering the questions and giving insight to the future of civilian policing in this military community. To prove the reliability of the case study process and enable others to duplicate it, the steps and procedures were to be clearly unambiguous and well documented in the results (Singh, 2014).

A look at the standard operating procedures of the local police agencies and their discretionary rules were an added reference to the study. Analysis inevitably involved subjective choices, and it was important to document what was done and why, so a clear audit trail could be provided. Sorting through the information and deciding what was to be used for the study was a part of the analyzation of the evidence process. This was the part of the case study design that warranted the most attention because the information that was vital could easily be overlooked and too much irrelevant information could cause the validity of the study to get lost.

The civilian police force was a tight-knit community similar to the military, however, it operated under totally different principles. Many individuals mimicked what some of their peers often did about being lenient during traffic stops. Basing whether a person received a ticket versus a warning could be decided depended upon the individual's prior driving history. The leadership style of police officers is what prepared

the officers for working on solo missions and having to deal with disgruntled and unhappy citizens who have been stopped for traffic violations.

In-depth consideration of the policies and procedures that guided the civilian police officers that works in military communities could answer some of the questions as to “why” certain actions dictated certain responses. These rules were what the policing aspect was based upon when it came to discretion and individual police values.

Literature reviews along with the Internet searches offered pertinent information to the researcher that had already been discovered. It helped support the topic at hand by reviewing previous information that was similar. This information added credibility to the study.

According to the collected sources of data, the military base and all the Soldiers past, present, and future were vital to the success of this military community. The police departments and most of those who resided here looked to the military as respectable and honorable individuals. Some think that they deserved to have leniency every so often even during traffic stops. The results of the study showed that many police officers’ high regard for the military individuals warranted them a break whenever possible. Even though it was not written that the military must be treated differently, it occurred very often.

The results of this study can be used to understand how police officers in military communities use their discretion. Even though there was a reference to discretionary choices regarding issues of traffic control in the written guidelines, not every specific

instance is mentioned and most of it is based upon individual circumstances. Discretion, as said before, was based on the officer and how each situation was viewed from that officer's perspective. With that in mind, the choices that were made could not be deemed correct or incorrect according to guidance. In situations where there were no set policies, common police instincts prevailed.

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Appendix A. Jurisdiction Demographics

Table 1

Jurisdictions	A	B	C	D	Total
No. of participants	5	5	5	2	17
Total of officers	42	16	8	46	112
Distance from base	11 miles	2 miles	7.8 miles	9 miles	7.45 (avg)
Gender (M/F)	4/1	5/0	5/0	2/0	16/1

Appendix B

Officer	Gender	Race	Age	Hx of Military	Fam Hx of Police	Time as Officer
A1	Male	Cau	32	Yes	Yes	11 yrs.
A2	Female	Af Amer	30	No	No	8 yrs.
A3	Male	Cau	28	No	No	7 yrs.
A4	Male	Cau	45	Yes	Yes	15 yrs.
A5	Male	Cau	35	No	No	9 yrs.
B1	Male	Cau	41	Yes	No	13 yrs.
B2	Male	Cau	30	No	Yes	8 yrs.
B3	Male	Cau	34	Yes	Yes	12 yrs.
B4	Male	Cau	38	Yes	Yes	10 yrs.
B5	Male	Cau	52	No	Yes	26 yrs.
C1	Male	Cau	25	No	Yes	2 yrs.
C2	Male	Af Amer	57	Yes	Yes	16 yrs.
C3	Male	Cau	38	Yes	No	14 yrs.
C4	Male	Cau	32	Yes	Yes	11 yrs.
C5	Male	Cau	34	Yes	Yes	10 yrs.
D1	Male	Cau	30	Yes	Yes	8 yrs.
D2	Male	Cau	29	No	Yes	7 yrs.