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The Ferguson Effect on Police Officers' Culture and Perceptions in Local Police Departments

Rarkimm K. Fields

Walden University

Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

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Rarkimm K Fields

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Review Committee
Dr. Jessie Lee, Committee Chairperson,
Public Policy and Administration Faculty

Dr. Melanye Smith, Committee Member,
Public Policy and Administration Faculty

Dr. Daniel Jones, University Reviewer,
Public Policy and Administration Faculty

Chief Academic Officer
Eric Riedel, Ph.D.

Walden University
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Abstract

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by

Rarkimm K Fields

MS, University of Phoenix, 2007

BA, Brooklyn College, 2001

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Public Policy and Administration

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Abstract

The Ferguson effect is a recent hypothesis that suggests police officers have been influenced by negative media coverage of police conduct. The problem this study addressed is how policing continues to deal with perception, civil liability, and accountability issues related to police misconduct when interacting with Latino and African-American communities. The research was conducted to examine influence the Ferguson effect may have had on the culture and perceptions of police officers in local police departments. With a phenomenological qualitative approach, the research data were collected from interviews with 7 police officers across 3 police departments. The theoretical background of Merton's theory of unintended consequences offered insights into how law enforcement functions and the kinds of policies that affect police–civilian relations. Data was analyzed with NVivo 12 data analysis software. Four predominant themes emerged: (1) commitment to service, (2) police officers' perception of the media, (3) impact of the Ferguson Effect, and (4) attitudes toward civil liability. The research indicates that the officers shared a strong commitment to service as well as being satisfied overall with the police department where they work. In addition, the participants acknowledged the Ferguson effect but did not believe it prevented them from performing their sworn duties. With this research study, the police officers' voices can be added to the national debate regarding the Ferguson effect and their perception of its impact on their culture in local police departments, community engagement with minority citizens, and civil liability.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

The Ferguson effect suggests that police officers are aware of the negative media coverage surrounding their occupation and know that the public might record their conduct, causing them to be unwilling to perform their work to avoid accusations of excessive force or racial profiling (Rushin & Edwards, 2017; Wolfe & Nix, 2016). After an unexpected reduction in crime in the United States over the last 25 years, signs of a new wave have emerged (Mac Donald, 2015). This is a controversial concept indicating that police officers across the United States, particularly in major cities, have become less proactive in public safety efforts since the fatal police shooting of Michael Brown, August 2014 in Ferguson, Missouri (Martinez, 2015; Sutton, 2015). In 2015 there was an increase murders in most of the populous American cities such as Los Angeles (10%), Philadelphia (12%), New York City (5%) and Houston (23%) as well as Baltimore (63%), Washington, DC (54%), and Milwaukee (25%; (Rubenstein, 2016, p. 16). The rise in violent crime across major cities in the United States has caused some to blame the Ferguson effect (Pyrooz, et al., 2016). The observed association between increased murder crimes and Ferguson effect has placed community race relations and police interactions at the middle of public policy discussions like in the early 1990s following the beating of Rodney King (Weitzer, 2015).

With this qualitative phenomenological study, I sought to offer evidence-based findings that policymakers could apply in reforming not only law enforcement practices but the criminal justice structure as well. According to Weitzer (2015), the Ferguson

effect is a multidimensional issue that affects police officers. I sought to illustrate how the Ferguson effect influences police officers' perceptions and behaviors, causing them to not perform their duties as required, which could impact the culture in local police departments. The findings of the study may offer significant information from the viewpoint of police officers in the United States concerning the impact of the Ferguson effect on their culture in local police departments.

Background

Past years have been challenging for law enforcement. Numerous controversial police-involved lethal force events disseminated by social media have directed public attention toward police activities (Oppel, 2015), and there has been an increase in attacks against law enforcement officers in communities across the United States (Disis, 2014). Controversies pertaining to negatively-associated police activities such as stop and frisk and lethal force events that involve the police, as well as the means of control applied to civil unrest in various U.S. cities, have underscored the difficult circumstances for today's law enforcement officers (Mac Donald, 2015). Additionally, rising calls for more police oversight to reduce perceived individual rights abuses perpetrated by law enforcement officers (Harmon, 2009), coupled with an external review of officers involved in lethal force events (Terrill & Paoline, 2012), show how the work of police officers has become more difficult.

Several advocates of the Ferguson effect claimed that violent crime rates increased significantly in urban areas because of a lack of deliberate police activity (Wolfe & Nix, 2016), but this was before recent data on crime, leading to two tiers of

debate. Several critics of the theory questioned whether an upsurge in violent crimes took place, especially concerning homicides in some cities, post-Ferguson (Mac Donald, 2016). This segment of the discussion was initially fueled by the absence of national crime data for 2015. For those who were certain violent crime had increased, the second tier of discussion concerned tracing potential causes for such a rise and whether it could be associated with less proactive policing (Rushin & Edwards, 2017).

To provide more information in the debate on the Ferguson effect, the purpose of this study was to explore the human experience from the perceived Ferguson effect's impact on distrust, perceptions, and police culture in local departments. In this effort, I sought to assist people in better understanding the shared experiences of police officers, which may help improve trust between police officers' and the minority community.

Problem Statement

A series of high-profile shootings have sparked a national debate regarding the deadly use of force by police officers and their relationships with the citizens in the communities where they serve. Police officers have the legal authority to use physical and deadly force, when warranted, to fulfill their official responsibilities and duties as law enforcement agents (Otu, 2006). But researchers have indicated that tension and distrust between many in minority communities and police officers persist (Stewart, 2016; Forliti, 2016).

There is a problem with trust between the public and police officers regarding the determination of the reasonable use of force practices by police officers (Gaines & Kappeler, 2008). According to Katz (2014), broad cross-sections of the public have lost

trust in local law enforcement agencies due to their perception of biased investigations of deadly-force incidents such as the Eric Garner and Michael Brown cases that did not result in criminal charges by the grand jury. Due to police misconduct, lawsuits, and federally mandated reforms, civil litigation against police officers has increased over the last decade (Cron, Jahanian, Mohamedbhai & Rathod, 2014; Katz, 2014; Rappaport, 2016; Ross, 2013; Schwartz, 2014). For example, there have been at least four shooting incidents in which unarmed African-American males were killed that sparked a national debate on police brutality, lack of police accountability, policy implications, and the formulation of civil rights' activist groups such as the Black Lives Matter (BLM) Movement (Anderson, Reinsmith-Jones, & Brooks, 2016). The research problem this study addressed is how policing, as it has evolved, continues to deal with perception, civil liability, and accountability issues related to police misconduct when interacting with Latino and African-American communities. Despite extensive literature regarding police officers' behavior and work-related responsibilities, there is a gap in the literature on the consequences from the Ferguson effect.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the human experience on the perceived Ferguson effect's impact on public distrust and perceptions on police officers' culture in local departments. As such, this study sought to assist in the promotion of the understanding of the shared experiences of seven police officers that are of legal age (21 or older), with reference to how the Ferguson Effect has influenced their opinions, perceptions, and behaviors in the commission of their sworn duties.

Research Questions

This research explored the following questions:

Research Question 1: How has the Ferguson effect influenced the culture and perceptions of police officers in local departments?

Subquestion 2: What are police officers' perceptions of the Ferguson effect?

Subquestion 3: How do police officers stigmatized by the threat of civil liability action overcome their fears of the Ferguson effect to effectively perform their sworn duties?

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study, Merton's (1936) theory of unintended consequences, helped examine responses related to the consequences of the Ferguson effect. As a sociological theory, *unexpected consequences* refer to the potential unintended consequences that the fear of lawsuits and media scrutiny has had on law enforcement officer activities. From a theoretical viewpoint, unintended consequences offered insights into how law enforcement functions and the kinds of policies that affect police–civilian relations. The link to the research pertains to the impact that the use of the theory has on lawsuits brought against the law enforcement generally and individual law enforcement officers who take part in order–maintenance activities.

Nature of the Study

The approach selected for the study was qualitative investigation. When investigators distinguish qualities of congruence, membership, availability, and fairness for ethnically diverse individuals, qualitative research can assist in influencing societal

righteousness (Lyons et al., 2013). The current study also features a phenomenological

research design. A group of police officers from identified local police departments were

interviewed to understand their lived experience regarding the Ferguson effect to gain

insight into how it impacts them. The data from the interviews were analyzed, organized,

and coded for thematic concerns or trends to lead to a conclusive comprehension of the

impact of the Ferguson effect. The nature of the study allowed individuals subjected to

the Ferguson effect to express their sentiments and personal accounts of their lived

experiences. The study can lead to awareness of the perspective of the respondents,

which might encourage improved comprehension of the Ferguson effect and culminate in

the criminal justice system and policing reforms.

Definition of Terms

The literature reviewed in Chapter 2 form the foundation for the following

definitions of terms pertaining to this investigation.

Civil liability: Involves action initiated in public courts seeking private remedies

based on torts or contracts (Gifis, 1984).

Defendant: With respect to the current study, a superior or police officer

defending themselves against a lawsuit (Chiarlitti, 2016).

Indemnification: Financial and legal protection that the municipality provides to

law enforcement officers as well as other members of police agencies in case of a lawsuit

or the case of compensatory judgment issued against agency members (Schwartz, 2014).

Plaintiff: The person filing a lawsuit (Chiarlitti, 2016).

Depolicing: Increased anxiety among police officers that has reduced their proactiveness (Rushin, 2016).

Assumptions

An assumption exists among some individuals that police officers have become less proactive in their work because of the events associated with the Ferguson effect. According to some criminologists, analysts, and police leaders, the increased scrutiny of the law enforcement officers in the post-Ferguson period has led to depolicing or the decreased possibility that police officers would become involved in officer-initiated contacts with civilians as they fear reprisals over their actions (Frankel, 2015; Mac Donald, 2015; Oliver, 2015; Reese, 2014; Valencia, 2015; Wolfe & Nix, 2016). The Ferguson effect might have caused police officers to be wary that performing their duties proactively will escalate the risk of disciplinary sanctions, losing their pension, or job and/or legal actions instituted against them (Reese, 2014; Valencia, 2015). Additionally, Ferguson effect proponents claim that such fear exposes police officers to high risk as they have become unwilling to apply force even when faced with potentially lethal circumstances. This assumption fit the study in that I sought to uncover how the Ferguson effect may affect police officers by causing them to embrace a less proactive stance.

Scope and Delimitations

The scope of this qualitative study involved conducting a set number of interviews with police officers who may have felt they were victims of the Ferguson effect to determine how such incidents affected their duties. However, the Ferguson

effect is difficult to prove, and findings have been redundant while seeking to determine the role it plays in depolicing (Rosenfeld, 2015).

I chose this thematic focus due to the public outrage directed at law enforcement following a extrajudicial killings by police officers and the negative media publicity accorded to such cases, which has caused some officers to adopt a less proactive stance to avoid negative consequences. The way the Ferguson effect affects police officers should be determined, as it might repair relations between the police and civilians as well as decrease the escalating crime rate.

Limitations

There are two major limitations for this qualitative study. The first limitation pertains to multiple experiences of being racially profiled between myself and police officers from local police departments located in Brooklyn, NY and Lawrenceville, GA. The preceding statement is important because my viewpoint on the Ferguson effect may have influenced the outcomes of the study through the inclusion of personal prejudice and bias. The second limitation of the study is the generalizability of the findings for larger local police departments in metropolitan areas outside the scope of this study who have experiences with the Ferguson effect.

Significance of Study

This study addresses a gap in knowledge by focusing on the impact that the Ferguson effect has had on police officers as well as the level of distrust between police officers and African- and Latino-American citizens (see Babwin, 2016). Conducting this phenomenological research study is unique because it addressed an underresearched area

on police officers' views on civil litigation and depolicing (Ferdik, 2013; Rushin &

Edwards, 2017). Results could provide insights to effect positive social change by

building on existing scholarship on police reform initiatives. Furthermore, information

may also serve as a viable assessment mechanism to assist law enforcement leaders and

public administrators with the implementation of a course of action that deters police

misconduct.

Chapter Summary

The Ferguson effect is a controversial topic that has elicited debate among

scholars, police administrators, and media in recent years. There are numerous concerns

and issues as to whether it exists; whether it causes depolicing, especially when police

officers do not act proactively due to apprehension about negative media publicity, civil

liabilities, and even sackings; and whether it has led to the increase in crime across U.S.

cities. The proponents of the Ferguson effect feel that it exists and is to blame for the

rising U.S. crime wave. In contrast, opponents of the Ferguson effect feel that the

phenomenon does not exist, and that the recent U.S. crime wave has been triggered by

other factors such as unemployment. The next chapter presents a review of past literature

relevant to the current study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The Ferguson Effect is a multidimensional issue, that inexplicably affects police officers. This phenomenological qualitative study, sought to illustrate how the Ferguson Effect influences police officers' perceptions and behaviors, which could adversely affect the culture in local police departments. This chapter presents a review of related literature in the context of the study of scholars on current trends, debates, and contentions on law enforcement concepts. The *Ferguson effect* is a term coined by Doyle Sam Dotson III, the Chief of the St. Louis police force, to explain the increase in the murder rate of several U.S. cities, especially after the original Ferguson unrest. Since then scholars and researchers in sociology, criminal justice, law, and other relevant fields have developed literature to explain the existence or absence of the Ferguson effect. For example, researchers such as Stewart (2016) and Forliti (2016) indicate that there is a distrust between most of the minority groups and law enforcement. This distrust seems to have arisen due to the perceived disproportionate use of police force especially when dealing with the minority groups (Gaines & Kappeler, 2008).

To date, the Ferguson effect has only been advanced as a theory with supporters citing the relationship between public backlash at law enforcement in Ferguson and the increase in crime in major cities. There is also extensive literature on questions of the use of force by law enforcement, the relationship between law enforcement and minority groups and the apparent public injustices committed by law enforcement. Although the literature on the Ferguson Effect is considerable, there has been very little effort put into

empirical research. The theory being advanced is here is that when law enforcement is legitimate in its actions and uses proper police standards, there is a likelihood of citizens complying with the law. Conversely, law enforcement that legitimizes injustice is likely to create a rebellious citizenry (Mazerrole et al., 2013)

Some scholars and commentators have supported the existence of the Ferguson Effect (H. Mac Donald, 2015; see also Nix &Wolfe, 2015, 2016; Pyrooz et al., 2016; Ross, 2015; Wolfe & Nix, 2016). Scholars such as Wolfe & Nix (2015) have argued that increased public scrutiny has led to de-policing since police officers are afraid to engage criminals or suspects in certain situations for fear of public scrutiny. However, very few of these scholars and commentators have been able to provide conclusive proof of the existence of the phenomenon through the conduct of credible empirical research.

Literature Search Strategy

The information gathered on the topic of the Ferguson Effect was obtained by using various search engines and databases at Walden University Library such as Google Scholar, Political Science Complete, Oxford Criminology Bibliographies, ProQuest Criminal Justice, and Ebscohost. Additionally, current law enforcement, police, and criminal justice textbooks from Pearson Education, Oxford University Press, McGraw Hill Education, and Cengage Learning were also utilized for obtaining information for the study. The phrases and terms that were utilized for locating the information featured in the reviewed literature included: *Ferguson Effect, de-policing, police officer, civil liability, defendant, plaintiff, indemnification,*

Theory of Unintended Consequences

The theoretical rationale for this study sought to examine and provide a complete understanding of the consequences related to the alleged Ferguson Effect. As such, this study adopted Merton's (1936) theory of unintended consequences as the theoretical framework. The theory of unintended consequences gained prominence through Merton's work (1936), "The Unanticipated Consequences of Purposive Social Action," where he attempted to analyze systematically the issue of unintended consequences of deliberate actions aimed at causing social change. He stressed that the term "purposive action" focuses exclusively on 'behavior' as unique from ''conduct'; that is, with actions which involve motive and choices between different options.

According to Merton (1936), five potential causes of unintended consequences exist: ignorance, mistakes incurred during analysis of issues or adhering to behaviors that functioned previously, but are inapplicable to the existing scenario, immediate interests that override long-term interests, basic values that might outlaw certain actions and self-defeating prophesies or fearing consequences that compel individuals to seek solutions prior to the occurrence of problems. Norton (2008) noted the effect the theory exerted on criticisms directed at government programs and the economic implications that legislation has had on the steel industry in the United States. As a sociological theory, 'unexpected consequence' was used in the study to inform the investigator about the potential unintended consequences that the fear of lawsuits had on officer activities. The theory of unintended consequences offers crucial insights into law enforcement functions and the policies that affect police-civilian relations. The link to the research pertains to

the impact that the use of the theory has had on lawsuits brought against law enforcement and individual law enforcement officers who take part in order-maintenance activities.

Basic Concepts of Law Enforcement in United States

Law enforcement is significant for society; it constitutes the formal attempt to acquire compliance with set laws, regulations, and rules of that society. Without law enforcement, society would succumb to chaos and social discord (Kleinfield, 2014). The form of democracy practiced in the United States is representative and it emphasizes protection of individual liberties and freedoms. Therefore, its institutions should reflect the tenets on which the country was established. However, it is common for disagreements to occur on how the law should be enforced. In a historical sense, U.S. citizens have often questioned the actions of government officials. Citizens might not always concur with what takes place in prisons, jails, courtrooms, police stations or in the streets, and individuals can criticize government inactions (or actions) based on how the criminal justice system has been structured (Badger et al., 2014).

Law enforcement in the United States encompasses a myriad of agencies that consists of, but is not limited to, large federal agencies and police departments located in small towns. At the federal level, there are 65 agencies and another 27 offices of inspector general (http://www.discoverpolicing.org). Statistics from the Bureau of Justice in 2008 indicated that the FBI, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Federal Bureau of Prisons, and the U.S. Customs and Border Protection agency were the largest federal employers, employing over 15,000 full-time law enforcement agents. Federal officers' responsibilities and duties include criminal investigation and enforcement,

police response and patrol, corrections, security and protection, and court operations.

State and local law enforcement agencies have numbered at over 17,000 in the United

States with employees ranging from a single officer to agencies with over 30,000

(http://www.discoverpolicing.org). Local governments typically operate the municipal

police departments even though there are several types of law enforcement agencies. To

illustrate, state and local law enforcement agencies usually include state police/highway

patrol, deputy sheriffs, special jurisdiction police, and local police. For this study I

focused on local police officers that include county, tribal, municipal, and regional police

who receive their authority from local governments to investigate crimes, provide patrol,

and uphold laws of the jurisdiction (http://www.discoverpolicing.org).

The purpose of this section is to provide insight into the role of police officers at

the local level, offering information concerning the law enforcement field to understand

its activities and objectives. Law enforcement officers, commonly referred to as police

officers, focus on protecting the rights of citizens and their property. Police officers are

responsible with enforcing established laws, responding to calls for assistance, issuing

citations, making arrests. and testifying in court proceedings. Police officers are also

required to make traffic stops, respond to domestic disturbance calls, and administer first

aid if an injury occurs from a domestic dispute or traffic incident while waiting for

paramedics (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2017). A well-trained background is required to

make informed opinions regarding the field instead of opinions based on shallow

experience and knowledge. Informed individuals apply evidence and facts to support

their rationale and arguments for changes and making better decisions. Society requires

knowledgeable and informed citizens who understand the law enforcement field and how it affects social behavior (Badger et al., 2014).

Law enforcement in all its forms is legally mandated by the concept of police powers that constitute the lawful government authority to enact laws and regulations associated with public morals, welfare, safety, and health. Police powers are implemented by different government levels in the United States including the regulation and establishment of recreation and park areas, medical and health systems, monetary, regulatory systems, fire protection, transportation and highway systems, sewer and water systems, general assistance to the economically deprived as well as food processing. In other words, police officers give law enforcement officials the mandate to take action (Badger, 2014).

The law enforcement process is a formal one that is sanctioned in the United States by voters through elected government institutions (https://www.nhtsa.gov). Of the three government branches, the function of law enforcement is the duty of the executive arm, which includes the president, governors, and mayors. These officials, alongside their representatives, use government authority in appointing law enforcement officials as well as in the creation of general policies and philosophies under which they would operate. The other government branches also influence the capacity of law enforcement personnel to perform their duties. The legislative arm offers statutory authority under which law enforcement officials work. This authority features the legal right of using various levels of force for the achievement of law enforcement objectives and goals (https://www.nhtsa.gov). Moreover, it is the mandated use of such force that

distinguishes law enforcement personnel. Additionally, the legislative arm is formally

liable for defining behavior, which is regarded as criminal in a given jurisdiction. The

judicial arm of government examines law enforcement actions based on the existing rules

of civil and constitutional law, evidence, and criminal procedure (https://www.nhtsa.gov).

This review usually takes place in judicial proceedings including criminal and civil trials

in the suppression of evidence and initial hearings. Through the review process the

judicial arm establishes rules regarding how law enforcement might operate within a

given context—examples include the use of force and the interrogation rules

(https://www.nhtsa.gov).

Procedural Justice and the Ferguson Effect

Law enforcement officers may apply physical force to gain compliance and

overcome resistance from civilians; however, compliance through force or threats is

usually temporary (Ferdik, Wolfe, & Blasco, 2014). Although intimidation or application

of force might gain temporary adherence, it might also lead to civilian distrust and

resentment of law enforcement (Ferdik et al., 2014).

Procedural justice is focused on the interaction between the police, other legal

authorities, and the public. The features of these interactions determine how the public

perceive the police and their willingness to abide by the law (Rosenbaum et al., 2015).

There is a high probability for the community being involved in programs that prevent

crime when they perceive the police as procedurally just. In this regard, Gold and Bradley

(2013) have argued that the community need to see that they are being treated fairly

during their interaction with the police, otherwise, there are potentially dire consequences when the public ceases to perceive the legitimacy of the justice system.

When the law and police are perceived as legitimate, civilians have a higher likelihood of voluntarily obeying directives and adhering to legal regulations, even when law enforcement officers are unavailable to deter criminals (Mazerrole et al., 2013). Conversely, when law enforcement officers are perceived as illegitimate, civilians may defy laws more often and perceive the criminal justice system and the police with distrust. Another result of the police legitimacy and the process-driven model is the enhanced possibility that civilians will liaise with law enforcement officers by offering crime information as to their victimization (Gau, 2013).

For enhanced policing functions and well-being of the communities served by the police, it is important to have a good relationship between the police and the community. For over 25 years U.S. law enforcement agencies have considered community participation as a critical feature in solving the crimes (Wolfe & Nix, 2016). Researchers have identified procedural justice as an evidence-based and a cost-effective manner in which crime can be reduced (Gold & Bradlet, 2013). However, despite its effectiveness, the approach should not only focus on how people relate to the authority but also how they relate with one another (Meares, 2016)

Over the last 3 years, supporters of the police have continuously raised concerns regarding the Ferguson effect. According to Beckett (2016), the Ferguson effect is based on the deadly shooting of 18-year-old Michael Brown by police officer Darren Wilson in Ferguson, Missouri. The killing triggered protests and increased negative publicity by the

international media and third-person perceptions of crisis toward police legitimacy (Nix & Pickett, 2017). Supporters of the Ferguson effect argue that police officers have become afraid to execute their mandates and their legitimacy questioned (Gau, 2013). As such, it has been difficult to keep the community safe leading to increased crime because legitimacy is required for law enforcement work because it requires voluntary adherence from civilians rather than law enforcement officers achieving compliance via fear or force (Mazerolle, Antrobus, Bennett, & Tyler, 2013).

The increase in violent crime in most cities in the United States has also been attributed to the Ferguson effect (Wolfe & Nix, 2016). Incidents involving killings of Black Americans by police after the Michael Brown shooting have led to a public policy debate regarding the relationship between the police and the community race (Nix et al., 2017). The Ferguson effect suggests the police are aware of the negative publicity associated with their profession and are unable to act because of fear losing their job their unwillingness to serve decline as a strategy to avoid accusations of racial profiling or excessive use of force (Donald, 2016). The consequences of this depolicing act are that crime continues to rise involving robbery, murder, rape, or other high-profile crimes would continue to rise if the police were unwilling to enforce the law. The media and police intensify the consequences of de-policing by portraying the police as enemies more so due to personal or political agendas (Sutton, 2015). Towers et al. (2015) emphasize the sentiments indicating that research has linked highly publicized suicides, mass killings, as well as other violent events to the aggravation of other violence.

Depolicing Because of the Ferguson Effect

Some critics argue that a Ferguson Effect on policing has been in existence since numerous extensively publicized killings of unarmed Afro-Americans by White law enforcement officers (H. Mac Donald, 2015; see also Nix &Wolfe, 2015, 2016; Pyrooz et al., 2016; Ross, 2015). Many of these incidences were recorded on cell phone video and were disseminated on the internet, causing widespread police scrutiny. According to some criminologists, analysts, and police leaders, increased scrutiny of law enforcement officers in the post-Ferguson period has led to de-policing or the decreased possibility that police officers would not become involved in officer-initiated contacts with civilians as they feared reprisals over their actions (Frankel, 2015; H. Mac Donald, 2015; Oliver, 2015; Reese, 2014; Valencia, 2015; Wolfe & Nix, 2016). That is, the Ferguson Effect might have caused police officers to be wary that performing their duties proactively will escalate the risk of negative consequences. (Reese, 2014; Valencia, 2015). Additionally, Ferguson Effect proponents claim that such fear exposes police officers to high risk as they have become unwilling to apply force even when faced with potentially lethal circumstances. For instance, a Birmingham, Alabama law enforcement officer was assaulted with a pistol after a criminal seized his weapon, suggesting that many officers were acting cautiously because of negative publicity from the fourth estate. The officer claimed he was hesitant because he did not want to be in the media limelight (Valencia, 2015).

The incidences in Ferguson triggered a heated national debate involving politicians, scholars and journalists regarding as to whether the crime rates in the US

have escalated post-Ferguson, and, if that was the case, whether the increased rates of crime emanate from de-policing fueled by the Ferguson Effect (H. MacDonald, 2015; Pyrooz et al., 2016; Rosenfeld, 2016). The most comprehensive study on pre-and post-Ferguson crime rates to date has revealed that this might not be the case in that crime patterns across large US cities have not increased significantly (Pyrooz et al., 2016). However, analysts and investigators have discovered traces of de-policing among law enforcement officers. In particular, anecdotal evidence shows that de-policing takes place following negative media publicity concerning controversial law enforcement policies such as zero-tolerance policing, stop and frisk and application of lethal force events (H. Mac Donald, 2015; Oliver, 2015). In his qualitative evaluation of interview data gathered from law enforcement officers, Oliver (2015) discovered that law enforcement officers showed they were acting less proactively when civilian backlash arose following the implementation of controversial police practices and policies.

Studies that are more extensive have also unearthed traces of de-policing. Morgan and Pally (2016) investigated patterns in arrest and crime data in Baltimore from 2010 to 2015 — which enabled them to deliberate whether de-policing took place following the killing of Freddie Gray in Baltimore and Brown in Ferguson. The authors discovered that motor vehicle thefts, carjacking's, robberies, homicides, and shootings all escalated within the three months after the killing of Gray. In the same period arrests decreased by 30%. Indeed, the arrest of civilians had been trending downwards for eight months before the killing of Gray — which is consistent with the killing of Brown in Ferguson. Other reports have discovered de-policing traces in Chicago and North Charleston after the

death of Laquan McDonald and Walter Scott in the custody of law enforcement officers

(Arthur & Asher, 2016; Knapp, 2016).

Other studies, drawing upon survey data, show that law enforcement officers

might be unwilling to practice proactive policing within the post-Ferguson period. For

example, Nix and Wolfe (2015) examined a sheriff's division 6 months following

Ferguson and discovered that police officers who were demotivated because of negative

media coverage surrounding the law enforcement showed less self-legitimacy, i.e.,

confidence as to their authority as law enforcement officers.

Nix and Wolfe (2016) showed that post-Ferguson, a large number of police

officers reported feeling: (a) demotivated to practice proactive policing; (b) more

apprehensive regarding use of force even in scenarios that may require it; (c) policing had

been transformed into a more dangerous occupation; (d) their fellow officers had been

impacted negatively and (e) citizens' perceptions of the law enforcement had worsened.

Finally, Wolfe and Nix (2016) discovered that those police officers that felt they had

been unfavorably affected by negative media coverage in the months after Ferguson and

expressed the unwillingness to work jointly with the community. Overall, although

countrywide crime patterns might not have been affected by Ferguson, this iconic

incident and other similar ones have seemingly impacted law enforcement officers'

behaviors and attitudes negatively. If law enforcement officers have become less

proactive (Morgan & Pally, 2016; Nix &Wolfe, 2016) or more apprehensive over use of

lethal force post-Ferguson (Nix & Wolfe, 2016), then the quantity of events likely to

culminate in the application of excessive force by law enforcement officers might have been reduced.

Succinctly, if law enforcement officers are unwilling to stop pedestrians or drivers than they did in pre-Ferguson, then the number of civilian-police interactions might have reduced post-Ferguson. Because of this, the sheer quantity of opportunities for lethal force to occur might have reduced as well. For instance, *The Texas Tribune* gathered data on fatal and non-fatal various police shootings which took place in 36 cities in Texas from 2010 -2015. They discovered that 8% of the shootings took place because of traffic stops and 7% following suspicious activities (see https://apps.texastribune.org/unholstered). If such stops have decreased following Ferguson, then one might anticipate the number of civilians killed by law enforcement officers to have decreased within the post –Ferguson period as well.

Ferguson Effect on Police Department Culture

Some high-profile events that involve police use of excessive force in different cities across the United States and globally have gained extensive coverage from the media and demonstrated the significance of community-police relations. As a result, researchers have sought to understand the Ferguson Effect phenomenon and its impact on police officers' behavior, distrust, and willingness to engage with minority population due to increased media scrutiny. To date scant empirical attention has been directed on how events might negatively affect police officers. Utilizing survey data from 567 officers, Nix and Wolfe (2017) examined whether negative publicity perceptions have an adverse impact on the officer's feeling of self-legitimacy. The findings showed that

officers who were de-motivated due to negative publicity reported less self-legitimacy. However, the level which officers felt their occupation had become riskier due to negative media coverage had no significant perceptions as to self-legitimacy. These findings expand understanding of self-legitimacy as a concept and show that negative coverage surrounding law enforcement poses a rare challenge to the confidence of officers within their authority which may have essential implications to the community.

Willis et al. (2014) undertook a study to determine the perceptions of Afro-American police officers concerning how their presence is negatively and positively impacts local units. The findings from their study revealed that Afro-American officers still consider themselves targets in harsh work settings and with racial indifferences they felt that law enforcement institutions condone and practice racial profiling. Additionally, the respondents alleged that agencies do not put in more effort to end vice and that their lack of impetus is not recognized. Finally, these police officers strongly felt that their presence within the agencies had a positive effect regarding how police officers interact with Afro-Americans (Willis et al., 2014).

After an unexpected drop in crime was witnessed in the United States over the last 25 years, recently alarm bells have sounded warnings of a looming wave of crime again (Mac Donald, 2015; Martinez, 2015; Sutton, 2015). However, at this point the Ferguson Effect has solely been advanced through guesswork and anecdotal evidence. Although the Ferguson Effect on the rates of crime is an empirical question under research scrutiny, early indicators reveal that observing the relationship is not likely (Rosenfeld, 2015; Zimring, 2015). Indeed, such an effect on the rates of violent crime would be large if de-

policing has expanded extensively. Pertinently, the absence of empirical evidence concerning the Ferguson Effect on the rates of crime does not necessarily mean that the phenomenon is non-existent.

Rather, if de-policing has taken place in the post-Ferguson period, it might manifest in areas of police work that are not observable directly within indicators, including the rate of violent crime. For instance, working with the communities to tackle local issues constitutes an important element of policing. However, the frequent negative publicity accorded to incidents like that in Ferguson presents a social scenario whereby the legitimate nature of law enforcement is being questioned. A likelihood exists, that such a scenario might de-motivate some police officers to serve in law enforcement and, as a result, be unwilling to take part in community partnerships. Evidence of such Ferguson Effect repercussions would obviously affect public safety.

Accordingly, the current study assessed data from participants sampled from the sheriff's deputies within a southeastern metropolitan county to ascertain if participants' perceptions of negative publicity in the past few months were linked to their attitudes regarding collaborating with the community to address problems (Ungar-Sargon, 2014). In particular, the question: Does the "Ferguson Effect"— as illustrated by decreased motivation emanating from negative media coverage -- affect the police officers' willingness to collaborate the community and officer performance?

In this study, theoretically informed mechanisms, which tap into the perceptions of respondents regarding the latest negative coverage, as well as their willingness to work with the community alongside several multivariate regression equations, will be adopted.

Moreover, it is acknowledged that a direct link may be seen between the willingness to collaborate with the community and the Ferguson Effect could be an outcome of failure to account for other theoretical concepts (Nix & Wolfe, 2016). Recent work indicated a link between beneficial outcomes, self-legitimacy, and organizational justice in police agencies (e.g., commitment towards organizational goals) (Bradford & Quinton, 2014; Tankebe &Meško, 2015). These possible confounding impacts were controlled within the models.

The broader aim of the study was to offer empirical evidence regarding the debate surrounding the Ferguson Effect and de-policing. From our perspective, the implications of these effects – whether they are in existence and we fail to take action or whether they are imagined and we make quick policy decisions -- are far too serious to depend solely on conjecture. Front line decision-making theory indicates that bureaucrats might react to unfavorable changes to their professional setting through dissent, shirking, or utilizing discretionary authority in a manner that is not consistent with community expectations, norms, and rules (Tucker, 2015). Anecdotal evidence derived from different geographical locations and professional contexts support the view that public officials have ignored to post best performance indicators as a means of expressing workplace disagreement and dissatisfaction with policy (e.g., Tucker, 2015).

The recent and extensively publicized rise in violent crimes across many big cities in the United States has introduced de-policing into the national debate (Beckett, 2016). As previously stated, some have suggested that this increase in crime is a direct consequence of intense criticism directed at the law enforcement after the fatal shooting

of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, and the demise of Freddie Gray at the hands of

the Baltimore Police Department (Byers, 2014; Goodman & Baker, 2015; Harvey, 2015;

Mosendz, 2015). The argument emerges that 'the onslaught of anti-cop rhetoric'

demoralized police officers in the mentioned cities and countrywide, rendering officers

unwilling to perform their duties effectively.

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the hands of the Baltimore Police Department (Byers, 2014; Goodman & Baker, 2015;

Harvey, 2015; Mosendz, 2015). Criminal actors were strengthened by the lack of strong

law enforcement, resulting in increased cases of illegal habits (Mac Donald, 2015).

Critics have termed this suggestion "baseless" stating that de-policing allegations are

more ideological and evidence of political opportunism than legal policy concerns

(Coates, 2015). Despite the intense nature of the current public debate initial empirical

assessment has not supported the view that public criticism directed at police conduct has

resulted in increased crime and de-policing (Pyrooz, Decker, Wolfe, & Shjarback, 2015;

Rosenfeld, 2015; Wolfe & Nix, 2016).

Considered as the 'practice or pattern initiative, Section 14141 has emerged as the

US government's main mechanism for tackling claims of systemic police misconduct

(Childress, 2015). Since the law was incepted the Special Litigation Section of the

Department of Justice's (DOJ) Civil Rights Division has examined many practice or

pattern claims, ranging from allegations of biased policing and excessive application of force to contravention of seizure and search protocols as well as mishandling of evidence (Childress, 2015; Rushin, 2014).

The initial investigation approach of the DOJ typically features a comprehensive review of administrative data and department policies, evaluation of community viewpoints as well as observation of and interviews with department employees (DOJ, 2015). If the process shows a practice or pattern of illegal behavior, the DOJ possess the legal authority to file civil charges against the jurisdiction in a bid to tackle the claimed abuse (DOJ, 2015). In almost all such incidences jurisdictions experiencing threats of civil action have decided to negotiate settlements rather than fight DOJ findings through litigation (Childress, 2015; Rushin, 2014).

Even so, should the Ferguson Effect be explored systematically across the United States as allegations of de-policing as well as challenges to the police legitimacy idiosyncratic to specific cities? The heterogeneity in large cities in the United States presents the likelihood that exogenous aspects would be encountered differently. Social media has been pivotal in bringing the limelight to Ferguson and associated events (Wolfe & Nix, 2015), making it easy for incidences to be seen in one city and their effect to be experienced in others. In the two weeks following the shooting, *The Wall Street Journal* reported more than 7.8 million tweets through the #Ferguson hashtag, whereas *The New York Times* reported significant misinformation on social media regarding the shooting and the ensuing riots (Bilton, 2014; Zak, 2014). The impact of social media

might result in de-policing or erosion of the legitimacy of the law which in turn might escalate crime across the country.

Importantly, academics, law enforcement executives, and government leaders have attributed the apparent escalation in violent crimes across many US cities to the Ferguson Effect. Former FBI Director James Comey recently suggested that the Ferguson Effect has resulted in an escalation in crime within some cities (Schmidt & Apuzzo, 2015). Ironically, Director Comey was at the helm of the agency that is tasked with the responsibility of generating the Uniform Crime Reports within the US and he did not have full information on the crime to come to the conclusions he made.

Little empirical evidence coupled with extensive speculation regarding this question exists. A short paper investigated the rates of crime for St. Louis overtime and did not find significant evidence for the Ferguson Effect (Rosenfeld, 2015). Another analysis which explored year-by-year variations in homicide in 60 cities found an increase of 16% in 2015 from 2014 (Bialik, 2015). A Brennan Center for Justice Report recently released investigated homicide changes between 2014 and 2015 within 25 of the 30 largest cities in the United States and found that the overall rates of homicide escalated by 15% (Friedman, Fortier, Cullen, & James, 2015). While such studies show crucial insights into the US crime rates, they are either not extensive because of the quantity of cities or the quantity of types of crime incorporated within their analyses. These studies also lack the substantive theoretical rationale and sufficient data to enable anticipation that a Ferguson Effect might extend to our largest cities and types of crime other than of homicide.

Currently, the argument concerning the Ferguson Effect has been promulgated

without concrete proof by policy advocates and via social media, it seems to be a

pertinent issue. Indeed, searching the term "Ferguson Effect" produces around 84.5

million results on Google. Moreover, research has indicated that highly publicized

suicides, mass killings and other forms of violence appear to influence other violence via

a social contagion effect (Towers et al., 2015). This offers partial theoretical reasoning

for a possible Ferguson Effect on the rates of crime -- that is, social media –fueling social

contagion of violence.

This issue is important and thus empirical investigation is the next appropriate

step to advance the discussion. The Ferguson Effect suggests a testable research

hypothesis: negative coverage surrounding law enforcement is linked to officers'

unwillingness to perform their daily duties. The supposed outcome is the increase in

crime rates. However, prominent academics have already expressed serious concerns

about this Ferguson Effect argument. Zimring (2015) drew a conclusion to Mac Donald's

(2015) propositions:

> There are indeed increases in homicide in Baltimore, Maryland in
>
> the past few weeks and St. Louis, however, determining that a
>
> national crime wave is a premature conclusion. Rosenfeld (2015)
>
> recently presented the only empirical evidence to date concerning
>
> the Ferguson Effect by assessing the crime levels in St. Louis.
>
> According to the analysis, it can be concluded that the incidents in

Ferguson were not to blame for the drastic increase in crime rate in

St. Louis.

Rosenfeld (2015) also stated that without comprehensive and credible evidence, "warning about the Ferguson Effect or other putative causes would be unwarranted" (p. 4). In short, the discussion surrounding the Ferguson Effect seems ready for empirical scrutiny instead of academic shouting on social media. Doing so would require a focus on numerous issues (Badger, 2014). Firstly, it is necessary to consider how the Ferguson Effect can be operationalized. One means of doing so is exploring patterns in crime rates prior to and after incidents such as the death of Michael Brown - an approach as that adopted by Rosenfeld (2015).

This requires a complex strategy that can explore aggregate-level changes in the crime rate. Expounding on Rosenfield's research, it is argued that individual-level views of the press concerning law enforcement might reduce officers' motivation in performing their duties. Simply put, some officers might feel that being a police officer is a no-win scenario -- if not all they do pleases the public how can they be motivated to perform their duties? Therefore, it might be necessary to operationalize the Ferguson Effect in officer surveys by asking them about the extent to which they believe recent negative coverage has undermined their motivation. Secondly, we should consider the likelihood that the Ferguson Effect might manifest within policing areas not immediately linked to official indicators such as the rate of crime (Weitzer, 2015).

In particular, community partnership is important to effective policing strategies. The extent to which police officers demonstrate the willingness to collaborate with

members of the community thus has a vital correlation to positive outcomes for the

community at-large (Wolfe & Nix, 2016). Community pride, decreased feelings of fear,

and lower rates of crime are indicative. For those police officers who feel demotivated to

be serving in the police force due to negative media coverage, we might expect them to

be unwilling to participate in community partnership (Jenkins, 2015). The only means of

determining whether a Ferguson Effect of that nature exists is to ask the officers

themselves.

Police Use of Excessive Force

The application of excessive force by police officers constitutes a central role of

law enforcement (Dooley & Rydberg, 2014). The mandate of using force is necessary

and essential for police officers to discharge their duties efficiently, particularly when

people present a lethal or serious threat to other citizens or officers. Despite its important

purpose, application of force emerges as the most controversial elements of police work.

The beliefs of citizens that police officers are applying excessive or lethal force can

rapidly erode the legitimacy of police (Terrill, 2014; Fradella, 2014) and can lead to far-

reaching implications -- from civil disorder and loss of life to civil judgments and

criminal prosecution (Besbris, Faber, Rich, & Sharkey, 2015).

To illustrate the intensity of this situation, Chaney and Robertson (2013) observe

that in a survey involving around 1,010 Blacks 978 non-Hispanic Whites indicated that

89 % of Blacks and 8 % of the Whites considered the criminal justice system to be biased

against Blacks. The Justice Department released a preliminary report showing that among

the approximated 45million Americans who had interacted with the police, slightly more

than half had indicated that police had handled them with force (Malanga, 2015). A

survey by the Bureau of Justice Statistics on Police-Public Contact Survey further

showed that on average, 273 out of 100,000 blacks experienced police force every week

compared to 76 whites 100,000. Further, 14% of blacks and 6.9% of whites experienced

force during street stops (Scutti, 2016).

These circumstances continue to break the police- citizen relationship. Since

police depend on public cooperation and support to function efficiently, i.e., serving as

witnesses, helping with investigations and reporting a crime, public perceptions of police

officers as illegitimate could prove detrimental to divisions and their attempts towards

public safety and crime control (White & Fradella, 2016). The controversial

circumstances surrounding the police application of force alongside the associated

concerns of legitimacy have emerged again in the last few years (Mazerolle et al.

(2013b). In the past year and a half, several high-profile killings of citizens from minority

communities by the police were witnessed.

According to Revesz (2017), the Washington Post database recorded that already

963 people had been shot and killed by police in the first five weeks of 2017. If the trend

continues, it is projected in calendar year 2016, will record more deaths caused by police

officer involved shootings, than in the previous year. Whitcomb (2017) emphasizes this

by alluding that police have killed 492 people in the first half of 2017 in the United

States. The trend is bound to make the numbers reach 1,000 incidents for the third

consecutive year. This list includes Walter Scott in Charlestown, South Carolina, Tamir

Rice in Cleveland, Ohio, Eric Garner in Staten Island, New York, Philando Castile in

Falcon Heights, Minnesota, and Alton Sterling in Baton Rouge, Louisiana (Wolfe & Nix, 2016). These incidences have pushed American police officers further into the public limelight, spurring debate from academics, civil right activists and justice system professionals alike on subjects such as police officer body-worn cameras, minority representation within law enforcement, training and use of excessive force (Ross, 2013).

Furthermore, protestors' calls and demand for change, eerily resembling those expressed in the 1960s, have been voiced in recent protests in US cities, some of which have degenerated into violence. However, such wide-brushed criticisms directed at the police are not fair. Thus law enforcement agencies have made significant strides through the years to correct some of their previous wrongdoings; much ground has been covered (White & Fradella, 2016).

A study undertaken by Vaughn and Lim (2014) to test the relationship between neighborhood characteristics and police use of force discovered that officers applied lethal force on suspects within crime-infested neighborhoods and areas having a significant level of concentrated disadvantage. This association prevailed after controlling for the suspect and officer characteristics alongside situational factors, for instance, suspect resistance. However, it is unclear, why the context of neighborhood tends to affect extreme police behavior. Another study by Mulvey and White (2014) found that police officers had a likelihood of using excessive force including teasers, OC spray, and batons on mentally challenged suspects than those who are not mentally challenged. Additionally, Mulvey and White's (2014) study discovered that police officers had a higher likelihood of using force on suspects who try to resist authority.

Through the testing of police respondents in state-of-the-art simulators that resemble those utilized by law enforcement agencies within the US and across the globe for lethal force judgment as well as decision-making training, James et al. (2013) conducted several experiments in which 80 police officers from the Spokane Police Department (a midsized agency made up of 289 sworn officers) were tested on lethal force decision making and judgment via simulated scenarios. These tests were undertaken in the Simulated Hazardous Operational Tasks laboratory at Washington State University. Respondents reacted to the roughly equal quantity of situations involving Afro-American (41%) and White (59%) suspects, and in those categories, roughly equal numbers of suspects were unarmed (44%) and armed (56%) (James et al., 2013).

The experiments revealed that the respondents significantly took *longer* to shoot armed Afro-American suspects compared to White armed suspects in lethal force scenarios. Holding other variables constant, police officers took averagely 200 milliseconds longer to shoot armed Afro-American suspects as compared to White suspects. When assessing shooting errors, they discovered that police officers were unlikely to shoot unarmed Afro-American suspects compared to unarmed White suspects, again holding the situation constant. Police officers were slightly more than three times more unlikely to shoot unarmed Afro-American suspects than they would on unarmed White suspects (James et al., 2013).

A poll conducted recently by Gallup discovered that public trust in the police force has slumped to the lowest levels it has been in the past 22 years (Jones, 2015). Notably, the lowest ranking before this was in the federal trial that involved four police

officers implicated in the Rodney King case. A different poll, undertaken jointly by *ABC News* and the *Washington Post*, discovered that during the one-year commemoration of the Ferguson events, Whites in the US were more likely to suggest that the law enforcement is treating Afro-Americans unfairly compared to others than in previous years (James et al., 2016). While many within law enforcement would concur that police officers ought to be held responsible for their actions, currently, the situation is such that each use of lethal force -- especially against minority individuals -- appears to be considered unwarranted until proven otherwise.

Nevertheless, following the incidences in Ferguson, there are strong reasons to anticipate that deadly shootings would trend either downward or upward. The two possibilities are in line with competing suggestions that have risen after the Ferguson period. The first suggestion is that citizens have demonstrated significant willingness to question police authority and defy orders (H. Mac Donald, 2015; Rosenfeld, 2015). The second is that officers are currently unlikely to embrace proactive policing, as they fear reprisals over their actions. (H. Mac Donald, 2015; Nix & Wolfe, 2016; Valencia, 2015). If de-policing has indeed taken place post-Ferguson, one might anticipate the application of lethal force by police officers to decrease because there might be fewer encounters involving officers and those that would challenge their authority (Mac Donald, 2016; Rushin & Edwards, 2017).

However, if the public has become more willing to exercise defiance against the police, one might anticipate the application of excessive force by the police officers to escalate. Therefore, both competing narratives result in opposite hypotheses regarding

post-Ferguson patterns regarding police use of force (Rushin & Edwards, 2017). Unfortunately not much information is available regarding the extent to which civilians are shot dead by police officers in the United States because of the absence of relevant government data (Bialik, 2016; Nix, Campbell, Byers, & Alpert, 2017; Planty et al., 2015; Williams, Bowman, & Jung, 2016). Although the use of lethal force by police officers has often been a major concern in the US, data quality and availability issues complicate the process of examining long-term national patterns in civilians killed by police officers (Alpert, 2015a, 2015b).

Studies undertaken in the past few years have indicated that extant research utilizing data obtained from the National Vital Statistics System (NVSS), Supplemental Homicide Report (SHR) and the Uniform Crime Report's (UCR) is limited in terms of value, as such data does not report extensively about the number of civilians shot dead by police officers annually. A study undertaken by Williams et al. (2016) discovered that contrasted against crowdsourcing data, determined that the NVSS and the SHR omit reporting about 30-45% of deaths arising from the use of lethal force by police officers. Some media houses, including *The Guardian* and *The Washington Post,* started gathering detailed information on police lethal force cases in 2015, whereas crowdsourcing websites including fatalencounters.org and killedbypolice.net (KBP) have gathered data dating back to 2013. Studies undertaken in the recent years agree that such alternative sources of data are more reliable and inclusive compared to data gathered by the NVSS and the UCR (Legewie & Fagan, 2016; Planty et al., 2015; Williams et al., 2016).

Therefore, they can offer a crucial platform for investigating patterns in police lethal force events.

In reflecting upon the possible effect of the unprecedented changes on deadly shootings by the police officers, we draw upon the idea of "environmental jolts" from organizational theory. Environmental jolts are unprecedented and sudden events that are difficult to expect and whose effects are potentially inimical and disruptive (Planty et al., 2015). Ferguson emerges as the classic scenario for environmental jolts based on its effect on not only communities and agencies within the Ferguson area, but also police-community relations and policing in the US in general (Wolfe & Nix, 2016).

Given the above assertions, it can be posited that two explanatory frameworks -- namely the de-policing hypothesis and defiance theory — might prove pivotal in offering explanations on how environmental jolts as that of the fatal shooting of Michael Brown may influence countrywide patterns in the use of lethal force by the police (Rushin & Edwards, 2017). Numerous high-profile lethal force cases in the past few years have featured White police officers and unarmed Afro-American citizens. An analysis undertaken recently by *The Washington Post* on deadly police shootings data revealed that even though Afro-American civilians were more unlikely than their White counterparts to have attacked other civilians or police officers, they were two times more than likely to have been unarmed before being gunned down by police officers (Nix et al., 2017).

The emergence of groups such as Mapping Police Violence (MPV) and BLM can be viewed as a reaction to the perceived discriminatory cases. For instance, MPV has

stated on its website that police officers are killing Afro-American civilians at high rates. Additionally, activists from such groups and the fourth estate have posited that police application of lethal force is not controlled and that civilians who have succumbed to police bullets have escalated in the last 36 months (refer to mappingpoliceviolence.org). Specifically, MPV has stated that extrajudicial killings have increased since Ferguson, whereas *The Washington Post* revealed that deadly shootings perpetrated by police officers had risen by 6% in the first 24 weeks of 2016 than the first 24 weeks of 2015 (Kindy et al., 2016).

Overall, organizations, including BLM and MPV, are heading the post-Ferguson challenge to police legitimacy within the US. Widespread public outrage and, in certain cities, violent riots might undermine the bonds that civilians enjoy with the law enforcement officers (Wolfe & McLean, 2016), which might, in turn, lead to violence and defiance directed at police officers. If so, law enforcement-citizen encounters during the post-Ferguson period might be more likely to lead to lethal force because of civilians' increased willingness to violently resist and defy police officers (Wolfe & McLean, 2016).

Accountability for Police Misconduct

Recently, George Mason University's Center for Evidence-Based Crime Policy has unveiled a study project of four parts regarding what should be known as well as what is known about body-worn cameras (Lum, Koper, Merola, Scherer, & Reioux, 2015). Investigators at the Center undertook a systematic review of available and ongoing investigations appropriate to body-worn cameras as the initial phase in designing an

evidence-based study agenda as well as to ensure that research responded too civilian and police needs. The investigators found 12 current empirical studies on body-worn cameras (BWCs) as well as 30 ongoing research studies. They mapped 42 studies based on the addressed research questions and discovered that extensive research, which has been undertaken or is underway, pertains to the effect of body-worn cameras on the quality of citizen –officer interactions as determined by officer application of lethal force and civilian complaints. Additionally, they found that fewer studies have explored the correlation between body-worn cameras and civilian contentment with police interactions or the correlation between body-worn cameras and community perceptions and attitudes of the law enforcement officers alongside their legitimacy.

Notably, BWCs started gaining attention in 2013. However, widespread interest escalated drastically in 2014 after extensively publicized police application of lethal force encounters. The technology is somewhat new. Thus scholarly literature on body-worn cameras is scanty to date. Considering this fact, a significant portion of the lobbying for extensive implementation of body-worn cameras is dependent on the scarce research of different quality levels as well as anecdotal evidence. Even within randomized controlled trials (RCTs) exploring the effect of BWCs, caution while interpreting results should be observed because of administrative, political, and technical challenges (Sousa, Coldren, Rodriguez, & Braga, 2016). Nevertheless, numerous studies have investigated the effect of body-worn cameras on implementation issues, civilians and police personnel perceptions and police work.

Ariel, Farrar, and Sutherland (2015) reported results of a randomized controlled trial in Rialto, California, for a period of 1year. The Rialto study discovered considerable declines in the use of lethal force events for shifts using BWCs. Moreover, civilian complaints against the law enforcement division reduced significantly following the unveiling of body-worn cameras. In the year that followed Ariel et al. (2016) investigated whether BWCs could serve as a deterrent against police use of lethal force or a deterrent against suspects' instigation of forceful encounters. Researchers discovered that in shifts using cameras wherein police officers followed protocol, police application of force dropped by 37% over camera-free shifts.

Investigators concluded that the integration of cameras alongside early warnings creates the feeling that the incident is being videotaped, thus improving the conduct of the participants. However, in shifts wherein police officers utilized their discretion concerning whether to switch on the body-worn cameras, police application of force increased by 71% than in shifts without cameras. Speculating as to why the application of force rose the investigators inferred: "the selective activation of cameras by police is a corollary to situations that are already escalating in aggression . . . activating a camera during a tense situation may serve to increase the aggression of the citizen/suspect (and thus the officer)" (Ariel et al., 2016).

Jennings, Lynch, and Fridell (2015) also undertook a randomized controlled experimental design for examining the effect of body-worn cameras on police application of lethal force and civilian complaints in Orlando, Florida. In the one-year implementation phase, police officers who were randomly assigned to wear body-worn

cameras had a lower prevalence of application of force events and civilian complaints than non–body worn camera police officers did.

Jennings et al. (2015) also found that while the prevalence for application of force incidences had decreased significantly for BWC police officers, the overall quantity of application of force events and civilian complaints decreased for non-BWC and BWC police officers in the period of implementing BWCs compared with the years preceding the implementation. This shows that the positive effect of body-worn cameras might transcend those reported by the police officers assigned to put them on.

Hedberg, Katz, and Choate (2016) investigated data from two settings in Phoenix, Arizona (one as a control and the other who were assigned BWCs) to approximate two measures of BWCs effectiveness in decreasing problematic citizen-police encounters. Using data derived from over 44,000 events in two settings, they approximated the impact of being allocated a body-worn camera --but not necessarily utilizing it --on decreasing resistance and complaints linked to events and the impact of body-worn cameras if they were utilized with total compliance.

The existence of a body-worn camera has generated a decrease in complaints of around 62%, indicating that when body-worn cameras are used as recommended many complaints against police officers would cease, as police officers, alongside those they encounter, can behave differently if a body-worn camera is available, regardless of whether it is active (Hedberg et al., 2016). However, the investigators also discovered low rates of compliance in body-worn camera activation with the gadgets, being activated in a paltry 32% of events, mostly involving violent offenses and domestic violence. Had

officers adhered to department policy, the investigators estimate that complaints would have decreased by 96%. Moreover, the investigators discovered that body-worn cameras did not serve as antecedents to the quantity of arrests that police officers made, and the activation and presence of body-worn cameras do not have a huge effect on suspects defying arrest.

Morrow, Katz, and Choate (2016) investigated the impact of pre-and post body worn camera deployment on several outcomes associated with conviction and prosecution of intimate partner violence (IPV) offenders. They discovered that, unlike post-test non-camera events, post-test body-worn camera scenarios had a higher likelihood of resulting in arrests, have legal action instituted and have lawsuits continued. Additionally, post-test body-worn camera cases had a higher likelihood of leading to guilty pleas and guilty verdicts when the cases proceeded to trial.

In a bid to investigate the effect of video on civilian perceptions of police shootings, Culhane et al. (2016) conducted a comparison of citizens' opinions of whether shootings were justifiable homicides prior to and following the killing of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri. Within pre- and post-studies respondents heard, read the transcript or watched a video detailing a real police shooting. Results from the first study (pre-shooting of Michael Brown) showed that civilians who could see or hear the event through body-worn camera video feed had a higher likelihood of perceiving the shooting justified as compared to those reading transcripts of the incident. However, video evidence for the same police shooting in the second study generated the highest civilian perceptions of unjustifiable shootings and audio evidence generated the least response.

Therefore, it seems that the context wherein the video is used can affect civilian

perceptions.

Other studies also investigated the effect of body-worn cameras with research

designs, which did not use RCTs. For instance, research in the Mesa, Arizona law

enforcement division reported fewer civilian complaints as well as the application of

lethal force events following the implementation of body-worn cameras as compared to

non-body worn camera police officers. Moreover, the study in Phoenix, Arizona found

reductions in civilian complaints about police officers wearing body-worn cameras and

an effect on domestic violence case processing following the implementation of BWC

(Katz, Choate, Ready, & Nuño, 2014).

A few studies have also investigated perceptions of citizens or police officers

regarding body-worn cameras. Jennings, Fridell, and Lynch (2014) reported outcomes of

a preliminary study of Orlando, Florida law enforcement' perceptions regarding the

possible effect of body-worn cameras prior to the introduction of the technology in the

division, finding that law enforcement officers generally supported the use of body-worn

cameras. In a follow-up study, Jennings et al. (2015) discovered that 12 months following

the implementation of body-worn cameras, 3 out of 4 police officers assigned body-worn

cameras felt that all law enforcement officers within the agency ought to wear them, and

a large number of law enforcement officers believed that body-worn cameras might help

in improving report writing, evidence collection alongside other process-associated

outcomes. However, the Orlando police officers were skeptical concerning the effect of

body-worn cameras on citizen or officer behavior.

Gaub, Chaote, Todak, Katz, and White (2016) also investigated officers'

perceptions of body-worn cameras before, after deployment, and in three police divisions

(Spokane, WA, Tempe AZ, and Phoenix). Pre-deployment results indicated that police

officers in the three divisions felt that body-worn cameras possess evidentiary value.

Other pre-deployment study questions concerning overall perceptions, general

perceptions, ease of use, comfort, familiarity, police officer conduct and citizen reaction.

Post-deployment study questions discovered that Phoenix police officers harbored

negative perceptions regarding body-worn cameras.

Tempe law enforcement had positive perceptions, whereas their counterparts in

Spokane fell in-between. Timing alongside implementation might account for the

variations. Phoenix investigated officers in 2013 when body-worn camera technology

was still new and the prosecutors were not acquainted with how to handle BWC footage.

Spokane and Tempe examined police officers in 2015, when body-worn cameras were

more prevalent, research projects were ongoing, federal funding existed and

evidence.com enabled more seamless exchange of video footage. Additionally, Tempe

line police officers were engaged in an 18-month planning effort as well as the

implementation process, thus easing the acceptance of BWCs for line police officers.

While in 2013 Phoenix, law enforcement officers had only second-hand information,

gossip, or word of mouth to inform their beliefs regarding body-worn cameras, as more

divisions deployed body-worn cameras, Spokane and Tempe police officers benefitted

from the diffused innovation.

Smykla, Crow, Crichlow, and Snyder (2016) examined police officer leadership to determine how they perceive body-worn cameras. Half of the participants supported the adoption of the technology within their divisions and a half or more felt that body-worn cameras would decrease frivolous complaints against police officers and improve the behavior of civilians, but only around one out of five believed that cameras would affect the behavior of police officers. Police leadership also voiced some concerns regarding the rights of civilians, but few showed concern about the privacy of officers. The participants were jittery about public support for body-worn cameras as well as media access to body worn camera videos, with two-thirds contending that the public is supportive of the adoption of body-worn cameras because society distrusts law enforcement and three in five felt the media would utilize video to embarrass police officers.

Sousa, Miethe, and Sakiyama (2015) undertook a countrywide survey on how the public perceives body-worn cameras in the United States and discovered support for adoption of the technology. A large number of participants were supportive of the required application of body-worn cameras and believed that the gadgets would improve the behavior of officers while decreasing civilian complaints. Sousa et al. (2015) also found that many participants agreed that civilians' trust in as well as relationships with law enforcement would improve with BWCs implementation. Unfortunately, support for body-worn cameras was not based on the respondents' demographic characteristics. However, the significant support for body-worn cameras across different groups should be taken into account. Residents and constituents across diverse communities might hold

favorable views about police using body-worn cameras; however, they might also hold diverse reasons for the support. Such variations might be clear of gender, race, and age.

Police Officers' Willingness to Engage in Community Partnership

Policing transcends law enforcement; an important aspect of police work is taking part in community partnerships to tackle local issues. The President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing (2015) proposed, among other issues, an increase in community engagement as a means of restoring and improving legitimacy and trust in the public's eyes.

Organizational Justice

The first possible candidate as the correlate of willingness to work with the community is police officer perceptions regarding organizational justice. The organizational justice framework has been accorded an increasing quantity of attention from police investigators in the past few years. Bradford, Quinton, Myhill, and Porter (2014), posited that higher perceived organizational justice among police officers was linked to increased identification with the agency as well as adherence to procedures (Towers et al., 2015). Similarly, Bradford and Quinton (2014) showed that perceived organizational justice was linked to greater commitment towards agency goals and minimal cynicism among police officers. This is a crucial finding since less cynical police officers are, perhaps, also unlikely to withdraw from the public due to the alleged Ferguson Effect.

In another study, Myhill and Bradford (2013) found that police officers with higher evaluations of organizational justice had perceptions favorable regarding

community policing. This is an important finding for the current study as it indicates that organizational justice might be a major correlate of willingness to be involved in community partnerships. Likewise, police officers have perceptions that are more positive when they feel their agency handles them based on organizational justice (Myhill & Bradford, 2013). Research has even revealed that commitment towards procedural justice in citizen interactions is a partial product of the officers' attitudes towards organizational justice (Tankebe, 2014b). Importantly, research has also indicated that organizational justice is linked to self-legitimacy among police officers (Bradford & Quinton, 2014; Tankebe, 2014b; Tankebe & Meško, 2015).

Civil Litigation

The term *civil litigation* implies a legal tussle involving two or multiple parties, which seek specific performance or money damages instead of criminal sanctions. A lawyer that specializes in civil litigations is called a trial lawyer or a litigator.

Civil Litigation as it Relates to Deterrent Effects of Lawsuits

Insurance theory cautions use of moral hazards - the insurance propensity of reducing the incentive of the insured to avert harm. For instance, regarding the purchase of police liability policies, activists allege that law enforcement officers do not have a shield that holds them back from egregious conduct (Rappaport, 2016). Implicit in such thinking is the assumption that tort liability threats would eliminate indemnification via insurance and serve as a deterrent to police misbehavior by making police officers internalize costs of harms perpetuated by them. Liability insurance neutralizes or dilutes deterrence by shifting the liability risks from municipalities to the insurers. Given the

forms of grave damages police misbehavior can inflict, the likelihood of under-deterrence presents serious issues.

Moral hazards are just the beginning. When insurers assume liability risks, they also develop the financial incentives of reducing the risks through prevention of losses. Through the reduction of risk, insurers reduce their payouts based on the liability policies, thus increasing profits. An efficient mechanism for preventing losses can also assist insurers to compete for business through the provision of lower premiums. Simply put, insurers writing police liability insurance might rake in profits by decreasing police misconduct. Their contractual relations with municipalities provide them with the influence and means required to initiate such insured move-to-control municipalities. Indeed, the insurers might be in a better position than the local governments to initiate police conduct reforms (Jeffries, 2013). Unlike government regulators, insurers might have superior data that traverses many law enforcement agencies. If insurers employ the loss-prevention mechanisms at their disposal, they can reintroduce or increase the deterrent effects of constitutional tort laws.

In a bid to incentivize proactive reforms within the law enforcement and fight police misconduct Congress passed 42 U.S.C. § 14141. The law empowers the US Attorney General to oversee structural reform litigation against law enforcement divisions involved in practice or pattern of unconstitutional conduct. While the passage of the law was initially praised by academicians, many have questioned the DOJ's commitment to effectively administer the measure. Based on this Rushin (2014) conducted a mixed method study to examine how the Department of Justice has utilized

its powers in initiating structural police reforms. The study found that the DOJ has under-enforced § 14141, partially because of limited resources that hinder the agency from following up reported cases arising from systemic misconduct. Additionally, the study found that the Department of Justice unevenly enforced the law enforcement misconduct statute 42 U.S.C. § 14141 over time (Rushin, 2014). Rushin's (2014) analysis also discovered that changes in internal policies and leadership affected the DOJ's application of structural police reforms. According to Rushin (2014), in some instances where systemic police misbehavior existed, a phenomenon called "political spillover" prevented the DOJ from turning towards structural police reforms.

A study by Schwartz (2014) on police indemnification found that law enforcement officers are often indemnified. In the period of the study, governments paid about 99.98% of the money that plaintiffs recovered in legal suits over alleged civil rights violation by police officers. Additionally, the study found that police officers did not satisfy punitive damage awards filed against them and nearly did not contribute anything to judgments or settlements - even in a case where indemnification was barred by policy or law and even where police officers were prosecuted, sacked, or disciplined for their behavior. Indeed, given considerable indemnification of municipal and individual liability for constitutional torts that police officers commit (Schwartz, 2014), an insight into how insurers control police risks is important to any persuasive theory of civil deterrence of police misbehavior. Notably, insurers change uncertain, vague liability exposures into well-ingrained policies that are supported by differentiated premiums as

well as coverage denial threats. That constitutes a significant portion of how civil liability serves as a deterrence to misconduct within insured jurisdictions.

Deterrence theory infers that in the contemplation of criminal acts individuals consider the potential legal penalties as well as the possibility that they would be captured (Akers & Sellers, 2013, p. 15). If individuals discover they are under surveillance and that their actions are being recorded they will see a higher possibility of being apprehended because of their illegal activities, resulting in guaranteed legal penalties. In light of this, body-worn cameras ought to not only keep law enforcement officers dutiful, but also the public. On the basis of this theory civilians need to think twice prior to submission of cavalier or false testimonies if they understand their submissions are being recorded verbatim and that chances of tweaking or recanting testimonies in the future will not exist. Simultaneously, law enforcement officer's ought to assess potential causes or reasonable suspicions, for instance, conducting recorded stop-and-frisk searches. With recorded actions, the two parties ought to conduct themselves within socially acceptable behaviors, without unprovoked hostilities. No rational civilian interacting with law enforcement officers should spontaneously become violent or attempt to escape. This implies that body-worn cameras become a kind of social control.

A study by Eitle et al. (2014) analyzed the correlation between police and organizational factors and police misbehavior using data obtained from the new National Police Misconduct Statistics and Reporting Project (2009–2010). The use of the dataset enabled the researchers to determine police misconduct with greater depth and breadth compared to past studies. Their negative binomial regression assessment of 497 city

police divisions showed the following organizational characteristics — in terms of service training, the presence of full-time internal affairs, and organizational size — salient in forecasting police misconduct. According to Eitle et al. (2014), the violent crime rate constitutes the sole environmental variable that serves as an antecedent of police misconduct. These outcomes not only explain the significance of organizational structures in influencing law enforcement officer misconduct, but they also suggest that police departments have the capacity of instituting organizational changes at their disposal, which assist in attenuating the occurrence of police misbehavior (Eitle et al., 2014).

Civil Litigation as it Relates to Community-Oriented Policing

The use of deadly force has elicited significant civil liability suits underscoring allegations of excessive force and criminal prosecution cases (Ross, 2013). Based on the Baton Rouge Area Violence Elimination (BRAVE) Project (a group violence reduction strategy). Barthelemy et al. (2016) conducted a study using focus groups and surveys among residents and police officers within the area of the targeted intervention to locate their perception of leaders, law enforcement, and crime within their community. The study found that community members and law enforcement agreed on what the problems are but disagreed on who should take responsibility and the means of best solving them. Follow-up surveys and focus groups have been administered to determine whether residents in the target area have changed their perceptions of law enforcement (Barthelemy et al., 2016).

A study by White et al. (2016) investigated police legitimacy as an obligation to trust and obey in the police. Their study found that while 'obey and trust' loaded together within factor analysis, trust also loaded with the procedural justice items, showing that it cannot be regarded as a fully separated construct. Johnson et al. (2014) posited that incorporating trust as the conceptual part of legitimacy, when it was closely connected to procedural justice, amounted to the creation of a tautologically redundant argument.

The conventional media, biased in police favor and with little information, usually reported on events of misconduct while they were too prominent to overlook the narrative from the law enforcement officers (Morelli, 2015). However, with the entry and proliferation of mobile technology law enforcement has no monopoly on information and have certain foregone control over their narratives as civilians have started filming and sharing experiences with police (Brown, 2015).

A recent study conducted by Weitzer (2015) found that highly publicised video recordings of violent civilian-police encounters might have a cumulative impact, where reactions towards a video or incident can prime a person's perception of the following encounter or video. In another study, Maguire et al. (2016) investigated the effect of exposure to negative and/or positive civilian and police encounters on the process-based model using global as well as encounter-specific mechanisms. They discovered that exposure towards one police-civilian encounter influenced perception towards the specific police officer involved in the encounter more strongly than to police officers in general.

According to Simonson (2016) 'cop watching' features the observation and recording of various forms of encounters that range from violent arrests to mundane traffic stops and usually features visual/ audio documentation. A study by Schaefer and Steinmetz (2014) found that cop-watching achieved three things ranging from tracking daily events to exposing misconduct and challenging conventional narrative advanced by the law enforcement officers. With respect to crime deterrence, studies by Dymnicki (2014) and Lösel, Stemmler, & Bender (2013) found that positive parenting serves as an antidote to antisocial and criminal behaviors. In another study, Tabara & Chabay (2013) found that positive social ties constitute the negative indicators of criminal behavior and delinquency.

A study by Gill et al. (2014) investigated the type of correlation between independent variables (unemployment compensation, and homeownership, years of education, living conditions, and police patrols) and the dependent variable (violent crime rate). The data that was utilized came from the Uniform Crime Reporting Program vetted by Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and it focused on the cities of Pittsburgh, Los Angeles, Kansas City, Boston, Philadelphia, Indianapolis, and Washington. The study found that the police patrol rates were negative and significantly related to violent crime rates, particularly homicide levels at the state and city levels. Additionally, the study found that increases in police officer numbers had a positive relationship with crime rates. However, studies by Kleck and Barnes (2014) and Weisburd, Hinkle, Braga, and Wooditch (2015) found that increases in the number of law enforcement officers did not have any significant impact on the reduction of crime.

A comparative study of the Newark Foot Patrol Program and the Flint Foot Patrol Experiment by Andresen & Malleson (2014) found that police patrols had no impact on crime in Newark, but the experiment in Flint discovered that police patrols reduced crime rates by 9%. Moreover, the Flint experiment discovered that civilians felt a sense of overwhelming contentment with law enforcement services. Of the civilians in Flint, 33% also knew law enforcement officers by names and 50% could identify beat officers.

Studies by Rosenfeld, Deckard, and Blackburn (2014) and Hart and Miethe (2015) discovered that 100% more directed patrols by law enforcement agencies generated less hot spot crimes. Haberman et al. (2016) used a population sample of 630 participants selected randomly in violent crime suburbs of Philadelphia, PA to investigate contentment with the law enforcement in areas that are prone to violent crimes. The study found that being fearful of violent crime, perceiving higher social discord or greater procedural injustice, being more literate, or being younger all intertwine to reduce contentment with law enforcement officers within crime hot spots.

Finally, a study by Ratcliffe et al. (2011) found that there was no change in civilians' views of procedural justice following the separate implementation of an offender-focused strategy, problem-oriented policing or foot patrols during an evaluation of hot spot policing. Regardless of benefits associated with crime control, if procedural justice correlates with hotspot civilians' contentment with law enforcement officers, then police divisions seeking to enhance community-police partnerships will be remiss to merely decrease crime using any necessary means and overlook the likelihood of applying more procedurally accepted strategies.

Civil Liability

Civil liability can be defined as the potential responsibility for paying damages or court-enforcements in lawsuits, as determined from criminal *liability*, which implies open to punishment for crimes. Kreag (2015) analyzed qualitative empirical research on the use of genetic surveillance for law enforcement purposes. The study found that while local DNA databases are an ideal tool for solving crimes, they produce harms that are overlooked. These harms are undermining police legitimacy, dignity interests, threatening privacy and exacerbation of racial inequities. Since law enforcement institutions are yet to internalize such harms, the self-imposed regulations, which currently prevent law enforcement's use of local DNA database, are not sufficient (Kreag, 2015).

Rappaport (2016) discussed how private liability insurers regulate public police by assessing and describing the contemporary liability insurance marketplace and the effects on police behavior. In the discussion, Rappaport focuses on how insurers play a conventionally governmental regulatory role while they work to control risk. Insurers get law enforcement agencies to amend or adopt written divisional policies on topics such as the use of lethal force alongside strip searches, how to transform the way officers are trained and to sack problematic officers.

One key implication from Rappaport's findings is that states might control the law enforcement officers by controlling insurance. From this perspective the author suggests that numerous legal reforms which might decrease police misbehavior should be considered, including making it mandatory for all municipalities to buy insurance coverage, banning non-deductible policies which might decrease municipal care,

alongside a condition requiring small municipalities to pool their resources and risks before purchasing insurance on commercial markets. Rappaport (2016) further asserts that liability insurance is indispensable to any program that is designed for reefing i.e. Law enforcement.

According to Rappaport (2016), numerous reasons exist for one to question the impact of insurance on police misbehavior. Firstly, one cannot dismiss the likelihood that significant portions of insurers are not attentive to the prevention of loss. Some of the interviewed experts in Rappaport's discussion alleged that while numerous pools were serious about controlling municipal risks, others were merely "country-club pools" and had become "routine." Additionally, they claimed that the pools were not particularly sophisticated. Secondly, skepticism is premised on the view that not all loss preventions to the insurance firm culminates in loss preventions to the society.

If insurers refuse to renew or cover municipalities because their police agencies are bad risks-leaving municipalities bare and the officers of the agencies continue committing misconduct, the insurance firms have reduced their liabilities, but have not decreased social loss. There could be a gap between prevention of liability (what insurers want) and prevention of loss (what societies want). In particular, it is possible that "blue walls of silence"-the refusal of several police officers to report on wrongdoings of their colleagues escalates social loss yet reduces liabilities by depriving complainants of the evidence required to mount a strong case. One is worried that the incentives of insurers might point in wrong directions (Rappaport, 2016).

An analysis conducted by the US Census (2015) on police shooting data found that those of color perceived police use of force and misconduct differently than White people. Additionally, studies by Swaine et al. (2015) and Mapping Police Violence (2015) found that, unlike 61 unarmed White people killed by the law enforcement officers in 2015, 105 unarmed Black Americans were killed. When focused on a 13.2% Afro-American population contrasted against a 77% White American population (US Census, 2015), clearly law enforcement officers killed a larger number of unarmed Black Americans than Whites in the United States (Swaine et al., 2015; Mapping Police Violence, 2015). Another study conducted by the BBC (2015) found that unarmed Black Americans were thrice more likely to be gunned down by the police than their unarmed White counterparts.

A study by Miller (2015) found that black male police officers utilized lethal force at a rate that resembled that of their White counterparts, with Hispanic male police officers representing the fewest cases of lethal force use. Although depending on the real data of unarmed people murdered by police officers in the US, Miller (2015) cannot dispute the reality of the quantity of unarmed Blacks death counted annually. Another study by Nix et al. (2015), to measured procedural fairness and status recognition mechanisms, finding that civilians had a higher likelihood of perceiving a higher contentment with law enforcement when the officers actively adopted these approaches.

According to *The Guardian* (2015), in contrast to the quantity of law enforcement officers implicated killings within the United States compared to other nationalities, both Wales and England, with a total population of about 56.9 million, have reported 55 lethal

police shootings in the past 24 years. However, within the first 24 days of 2015 59

individuals died in the hands of the law enforcement officers within the United States, a

country with 316.1 million people (Lartey, 2015). Germany, having 80.7 million people,

has experienced 15 deadly police shootings of persons from different races through 2010

and 2011, whereas the United States experienced 19 unarmed Blacks killed within the

first half of 2015 (Lartey, 2015). Statistics indicating these extreme findings are

disconcerting when nothing has been initiated to halt the police killing phenomena within

the United States as compared to other countries (Juzwiak & Chan, 2014).

Civil Liability as it Relates to Perception Liability

The correlation between deadly force and administrative policy has been explored

extensively within policing literature. In a bid to fill the gap pertaining to the application

of less-lethal force, Terrill (2013) undertook a study with data obtained from a national

multiagency use of force project by focusing on those charged with the application of the

organizational use of force policy at the street level. In so doing, patrol officers ($N = 990$)

from three agencies, each differing based on policy direction. Each was examined

concerning how far they feel the policy of their agency provides proper forms of

restrictiveness and guidance.

The findings reveal several policy effects. Law enforcement officers, particularly

within a division that utilizes a loosely combined non-linear model, are more unlikely to

feel their agency policies provide enough guidance as to when to apply force and when to

not. However, the findings also indicate that police officers do not wish to be constrained

tightly by a linear policy model. Such findings indicate that leaders of agencies might

want to consider a linear-based design which offers some policy guidance levels, but not so excessive that there is over-restriction of force (Terrill & Paoline, 2013).

Due to numerous publicized deaths caused by police officers over the past two years, the public has intensified pressure on law enforcement officers for accountability and transparency. The employment of BWCs has been the suggested solution. However, there is no extensive quantitative research concerning the effects of body cameras on the police, their interactions, and the community. As such, Berdjis (2016) conducted an explorative study to investigate the possible fiscal effect of BWCs by examining the correlation between costs associated with BWC programs and yearly totals of civil financial liability pay out arising from police misconduct lawsuits in Oakland, California between 2003 and 2015. The effect of the BWC program on police officer assault was also investigated. While the hypothesis showed that costs of BWC program would be warranted because of decreasing annual civil liability settlements, the results showed that no impact existed.

However, there was a considerable reduction in overall assaults on law enforcement officers. Thus, while financial cost-benefit arguments cannot be made on the basis of existing data, officer safety tends to be enhanced significantly by BWCs which could consequently decrease workmen's compensation, healthcare costs and missed work-related costs. However, because of the scarce data and absence of control variables, the current study is solely explorative. Thus no clear cost-benefit conclusions on the basis of the study alone should be reached.

Ready and Young's (2015) experiment alongside Ariel, Farrar, and Sutherland's

(2015) field trial mainly focused on police conduct. Police use of force and civilian

complaints served as the proxy for choices police officers have to act. This cannot

effectively represent another subject being recorded through body-worn cameras- the

public. The theoretical basis of the study, deterrence, and social control theory applies to

the public and the police and, because of this, it is imperative to examine assaults on law

enforcement officers. Apart from the possible danger that law enforcement officers

experience every day, there are financial costs to assaulting law enforcement officers

resembling those from police liability, court settlements and judgments.

The International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), in collaboration with

the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), gathered data from 18 police agencies on reported

injuries in a period of 12 months. During that year, 1295 injuries were reported. Each

event led to an average of 4.5 days of missed work and 3.5 days utilized for

rehabilitation. This resulted in 5938 days of missed work from injuries (IACP & BJS,

2013). According to a 10-hour working day this translates to 59,380 working hours lost.

Utilizing a national mean annual entry-level salary of 40,000 dollars, the estimated

overall cost for lost hours from injuries within the study stood at $1,211,352" (IACP &

BJS, 2013).

This includes overtime expenses for police officers covering additional medical

care charges and shifts, the overall costs from the 5938 injuries exceeded 3 million

dollars (IACP & BJS, 2013). This constitutes an expensive average for harming police

officers. The report by the National Law Enforcement Memorial Fund (2016) has already

shown the rise in officer fatalities. Police work remains a dangerous occupation. If body-worn cameras may reduce the quantity of assaults on law enforcement officers this should have an influence linked to fiscal expenses from missed working time to medical fees to the compensation of workers, which could potentially reduce cities' financial expenditures.

Methods for police oversight exist in the United States; they are criminal/civil/legal, external, and internal oversight (Chiarlitti, 2016). Internal police oversight refers to the review undertaken by agency personnel by the agency itself and it emanates from complaints filed by civilians or agency members. A civilian review board comprised of members of the community undertakes external police oversight. The final technique for police oversight takes place within two ways. The first approach of criminal/civil/legal oversight occurs when police officers engage in conduct that does not meet specific constitutional thresholds.

As a result, evidence in possession of the police officer cannot be allowed to be incorporated into the trial (Chiarlitti, 2016). This oversight is catered for by invoking the Fourth Amendment exclusionary rule. The exclusionary rule demands that evidence captured illegally cannot be utilized in trials (Chiarlitti, 2016). The second technique of legal oversight occurs when lawsuits are filed against officers and their superiors and agencies in a bid to hold the officers civilly liable for their actions. Legal oversight of the law enforcement is accompanied by significant costs in resources and time for the agency, notwithstanding the stress for involved officers (Chiarlitti, 2016).

Evidence exists to posit that fear arising out of libelous claims against law enforcement officers might affect their behavior towards law enforcement (Ferdick, 2013). However, what is unclear is whether fear triggered by municipal lawsuits affects how they work. A troubling pattern for law enforcement administrators and agencies is the rise in litigation. Alongside increments in monetary awards in police misconduct litigations (Chiarlitti, 2016). A report released by the Comptroller of the City of New York (2013) offers details concerning the increased civil claims against law enforcement officers. In the fiscal year 2012, 5,601 lawsuits were filed against the law enforcement officers, translating to a 22% rise compared to 4584 lawsuits filed in the fiscal year 2011 (Moore, 2012).

An article in *The Wall Street Journal* (Elinson & Frosch, 2015) noted that based on the public recorded data for 2014, the ten cities in the United States that had the largest police divisions paid out 248.7 million dollars in judgments and settlements. This quantity denotes a 48% rise over the 168.3 million dollars paid in 2010 (Elinson & Frosch, 2015). It is also worth noting that not all divisions involved indicated rises in police misconduct, the present scrutiny that law enforcement officers are being subjected to tends to influence the resolution of lawsuits (Elinson & Frosch, 2015). While such data addresses the effect of significant costs to law enforcement agencies, questions still linger regarding the effect on the professional reputation of police officers and how they work.

De-policing (Oliver, 2015) is interesting both from the practitioner's perspective as to how law enforcement officers' approach their duties and it is causing troubles from a perspective of academicians as to the effect de-policing might potentially have on the

justice system. While the interests in citing de-policing as the phenomenon might be considered purely academic, the implications on how justice is administered might prove significant and might affect whole communities (Oliver, 2015). De-policing occurs in numerous ways. For instance, law enforcement officers who have been subjected to lawsuits decide they would not engage in discretionary scenarios that might yield other lawsuits. Police officers can fail to take actions because of racial profiling concerns or negative encounters (Oliver, 2015).

Ferdick (2013) undertook a qualitative study that involved 23 law enforcement officers from a 300-police officer agency within the southeastern United States to gain perspective on civil liability by law enforcement officers who had vast experience with the practice. Participants for the study were acquired through a purposive sampling of law enforcement officers recruited by Assistant Deputy Chief and Assistant Chief. In-depth semi-structured interviews were undertaken using open-ended questions that were based on created guides, which reflected previous surveys as well as proactive policing methods with the analysis of resulting qualitative data completed using Atlas.Ti analysis software (Ferdick, 2013). Thirty total topical areas were located from the interviews through the analysis software that was ultimately restricted to four major categories of concern (Ferdick, 2013).

The four groups of concern identified were positive elements of civil liabilities, defense mechanisms against civil liabilities, consequences, and perceived risk (Ferdick, 2013). The category of perceived risk featured subcategories of perceived risk-college studentslinked to officers' concern while dealing with undergraduate students who often

engaged the police in violent confrontations. Perceived risk-technology and media which involved the notion that media provides negatively–biased accounts of police tasks as well as the increase of smartphone-kind of gadgets that can record events that involve the police. Perceived risk from insufficient training featured the view that the training afforded to the officers was insufficient for preparing them for on-the-street encounters and perceived-risk complacency and inexperience involved the concern that inexperienced police officers are at higher risk of facing legal suits compared to their tenured peers (Ferdick, 2013).

The category of consequences and featured subcategories for self-confidence loss and passion towards the job on the basis of an officer's individual experience with civil litigation or hearing narratives from other police officers on their experiences handling lawsuits and occupational apprehensiveness, whereby officers fail to act for fears of possible lawsuits and support loss/professional isolation that could potentially stem from other police officers not willing to associate with an individual that is being charged (Ferdick, 2013).

The category of defense mechanisms against liability featured subcategories depending on guidelines that many police officers considered a crucial element in shielding law enforcement officers from possible liabilities and procedural defense measures comprised of courtesy summonses that officers use instead of arrests; registering assets in the name of their spouse to prevent seizure of valuables in the event of losing lawsuits and membership within police unions that offers professional liability insurance (Ferdick, 2013). The final category of positive elements of liability featured the

subcategories of accountability, wherein some officers showed that holding police

officers civilly liable for their conduct constituted a necessary constitutional protection

for the public and was necessary for nurturing the law enforcement profession, as well as

developing top-notch police officers (Ferdick, 2013).

The study undertaken by Ferdick (2013) denoted a different method than other

empirical researchers investigated in police civil liability literature. All other consulted

studies on the subject employed quantitative methods that put emphasis on statistical data

and there was scarce narrative suggesting officer perceptions. In interviewing the law

enforcement officers individually, Ferdick (2013) depended on qualitative mechanisms to

gain "worldview interpretations regarding how liability not only influences their personal

lives, but their occupational lives as well." The strength of qualitative approach within

the case was shown in numerous instances in Ferdick's study. He stated that in the course

of the interviews many interviewees became emotional while debating how civil liability

had affected their lives and those of their colleagues. This worldview helped in

underscoring the individual feelings of law enforcement officers that might have been

overlooked in a study that used only quantitative methods.

A current project, which tracks lawsuits filed against the law enforcement and

which relates to officer-involved shootings is the Statistics Help Officer Tactics (SHOT).

This is a multi-faceted project of Pace University, which seeks to create a national

database for police-shooting events with strong emphasis on incident, officer, and suspect

(Arslan & Farkas, 2015). The database features officer-involved shootings from the year

2000. The SHOT project presents a diverse approach to collecting data from open

sources, and it evaluates and tabulates data within a specified database variable set. The database does not only expand the quantity of variables that investigate the police decision-making behaviors in a lethal encounter, but it gathers data on nationwide shooting events. Lawsuits constitute one major variable within the data set. SHOT's study focuses on the quantity of lawsuits filed by families who lost their next of kin in the police shooting events. According to the SHOT database, 243 lawsuits exist, with many of the lawsuits being filed in California, New York, and Illinois (Arslan & Farkas, 2015).

Chapter Summary

The goal of the literature review was to obtain, review, and evaluate existing materials pertaining to the Ferguson Effect phenomenon and its effect on Police Officers' Culture and Perception in Local Police Departments. It has emerged that some sectors of the media, government, and the public differ in their reasons for rejection or acceptance of the theory. Moreover, the theory has become highly politicized and is a debatable issue among government officials. The aspect of procedural justice has also been identified as significant since the public safety can significantly be influenced by the manner in which the community perceive procedural justice. The community must receive fair treatment from the police, otherwise, their perception of the legitimacy of the justice system and law enforcement will be justifiably negative. Despite differing levels of recognized legitimacy, extensive literature determined more data was required to draw a scholarly conclusion.

Conclusion

From the reviewed studies, it is ascertained that various members of the law enforcement perceive lawsuits differently. Factors, which include law enforcement discipline, agency size, rank, and tenure, have an effect on police officers' attitude with respect to civil liability and lawsuits (Ferdik, 2013, Schwartz, 2014). The absence of accurate information also seems to be a major issue that further increases concerns. A review of the literature examining the concerns and attitudes of physicians and psychologists might assist in further refining and direct the current study. Most notable within the reviewed literature on police officers' perceptions toward lawsuits is that the quantity of studies is significantly dated (Chiarlitti, 2016).

Several changes within policing including stringent operational policies that usually restricts police officers' discretion and within numerous agencies a transition towards community-oriented policing, essentially escalating police officer discretion, has taken place, as many of the studies were undertaken since most of these studies were conducted. To come up with a more comprehensive assessment of the issue to efficiently inform current law enforcement professionals it is imperative to consider such changes and revisit the subject to offer an informed and prompt research about the issue. From a research viewpoint, it is worth noting that one study (Ferdick, 2013) in the reviewed literature involved qualitative analysis. All the studies indicate the need for further research on the topic from different aspects. Specifically, the lack of qualitative research, observed within the studies reviewed regarding the real-world experience of actual respondents in policing as it pertains to civil liability and lawsuits.

Combined recent commentary, theory and past research concerning body-worn cameras led us to hypothesize that community members' view of the possible benefits associated with body-worn cameras will be influenced by interaction quantity, age, gender, and race, coupled with privacy and crime concerns as well as perceptions5 of police performance and procedural justice (Smykla, Crow, Crichlow, and Snyder, 2016). In particular, it could be predicted that non-White, male, or younger participants would perceive many benefits associated with body-worn cameras, although the effects were expected to be indirect. It was hypothesized that members of the community with more positive attitudes of procedural justice and police performance would not perceive many benefits from body-worn cameras.

Recent demands to equip law enforcement officers with body-worn cameras have emanated from incidents perceived by civilians as police misconduct or application of excess force. Thus, it appears likely that members of the community who feel that law enforcement is working within the precincts of law will not see the need for these gadgets and hence apprehend little benefit from body-worn cameras. Additionally, we anticipate that members of the community who cite major concern concerning crime will see many potential benefits linked to body-worn cameras. Finally, members of the community who expressed concerns regarding privacy issues associated with body cameras would unlikely see benefits of using the technology.

Building upon the reviewed literature the analytical focus is extended beyond outcomes of individual police-civilian experiences, testing the hypothesis that greater perceived procedural justice in collaboration with legal subordinates would be linked to

higher support among criminal justice workers, both law enforcement officers and non-law enforcement alike, for policing reforms, which extend the due process model of criminal justice. Moreover, studies exploring the Ferguson Effect assume that there is a correlation between increased crime and decreased police productivity and that one should complement the other (Morgan & Pally, 2016; Nix &Wolfe, 2016).

Additionally, even though an increase in violent crime might be blamed on a decrease in proactive policing, this study posits that the debate becomes complex when the two factors conflate (Oliver, 2015). An increase in violent crimes is unnecessary for de-policing to occur and withdrawing police presence might or might not be illustrated by an increase in violent crime or homicide rates (Rosenfeld, 2015). This situation is particularly true within smaller jurisdictions, which regularly have minimal homicide rates. Because of this the study seeks to analyze police productivity data on its merit to determine de-policing practices and sentiments, regardless of links to crime even though crime statistics are introduced for consideration as a connected variable for purposes of comparison.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The aim of this qualitative, phenomenological research study was to explore, evaluate, and analyze the lived experiences of police officers who may have experienced the Ferguson effect. Chapter 3 presents a discussion of the research approach to gather and analyze the data. Therefore, a phenomenological qualitative research methodology was selected to generate and analyze data for answering the research questions and meeting the research objectives (Henning, Van Rensburg, & Smit, 2004). The qualitative methodology was the most relevant for this study because the topic needed an approach that would allow for a narrative rather than statistical data. In this chapter, I will further outline the research design and rationale, research questions, methodology, and other factors related to the research method. This research was designed to answer research questions related to the Ferguson effect.

Research Design and Rationale

I determined a qualitative methodology would be ideal because it does not involve controlling variables, which allows for unlimited and natural thematic concerns that the researcher wishes to locate (Henning et al., 2004). Qualitative research constitutes a form of inquiry that uses various data collection methods to conduct a realistic assessment of data based on the view that reality is a social construction (Johnson & Christensen, 2010). Qualitative investigation involves interpretive tasks that makes the world more visible to the researcher (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011), who is intimately involved in the process, which was a criterion for the institutions focused on in this study. The data produced by a

qualitative investigation conveys motives, actions, and views of the people and setting (Myers, 2009). This technique was preferred for the current study because it provided a description and better understanding of participants' experiences on the topic of study (see Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

The form of the research questions determines the kind of research techniques, methodology, and design for a study (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). Additionally, the problem that investigators are examining should determine the research design as well as research methods (Kane & O'Reilly-de Brun, 2001). The research design indicates how the research objectives will be obtained through procedures and sources of data (Bak, 2004). When undertaking a research study, a few critical questions should be considered: (a) which method will be used? (b), what is the duration of the study?, and (c) what method will be used for analysis and interpretation of data? (Punch, 2009). As outlined in the following chapters, these components have informed the strategic plan used in this study to generate the data that seeks to answer the research questions.

Research Questions

In the current study, the phenomenon of Ferguson effect was scrutinized to assess what impact, if any, it has on police officers' perceptions and whether it has led to depolicing that influences the culture in identified local police departments. In light of the body of research on the Ferguson effect and the perceived gaps in its impact as causes of depolicing, the following research questions were formulated to guide this study:

Research Question 1: How has the Ferguson effect influenced the culture and perceptions of police officers in local departments?

Subquestion 2: What are police officers' perceptions of the Ferguson effect?

Subquestion 3: How do police officers stigmatized by the threat of civil liability action overcome their fears of the Ferguson effect to effectively perform their sworn duties?

Research Tradition

The tradition chosen for the study was a qualitative research method. A qualitative research investigation involves the narrative viewpoint of a phenomenon rather than the statistical data analysis used in quantitative research investigations (Cannella, 2015). Qualitative research studies involve data analysis, instrumentation, and sampling perspectives that are usually the opposite of viewpoints held by people undertaking more conventional inquiry (Rudestam & Newton, 2015). Qualitative research has transitioned into a field that features simplified, clear, and networked information with perspectives of groups of individuals who have been overlooked, which supports more equitable knowledge that can lead to justice (Cannella, 2015). There are five qualitative research inquiry designs: phenomenology, case study, ethnography, grounded theory, and narrative (Rudestam et al., 2015). In the current study, a phenomenological design was employed.

The definition of phenomenology is obtained from philosophy and a framework for research that offers a humanistic point of view (Roberts, 2013). A phenomenological research inquiry is aimed at describing lived experiences, and the focus is on determining how only individuals who have encountered the phenomenon could convey its effect to those who have not encountered it (Roberts, 2013). A phenomenological research

technique provides an option other than the conventional cause-and-effect model of a quantitative research study as well as humane subjectivity alongside finding meanings of lived experience (Gee, Loewenthal, & Cayne, 2013). By obtaining descriptions of lived experiences, phenomenology can unravel the important meaning of the phenomena being investigated instead of forming abstract theories concerning the phenomena through quantification methods (Gee et al., 2013).

Design Rationale

My rationale for choosing a qualitative research technique with a phenomenological method was letting police officers to be heard concerning the influence of the Ferguson effect and whether the phenomenon has any effect on the police officers' culture and perceptions in local police departments. Undertaking a qualitative research study helps understand how individuals live in the real-world settings (Yin, 2016). Statistics or numbers gathered do not often tell the whole narrative concerning a phenomenon (Patton, 2015).

A phenomenological qualitative research investigation afforded the respondents of this study a chance to describe their lived experiences concerning the Ferguson effect and to share how it has influenced their work. Qualitative research generally refers to the contextualized investigation of theories, classifications, populations, and people through artifacts, observations, and interviews (Lyons et al., 2013). The results from this kind of investigation enable the collection of research that might be useful in the reformation of not only police protocols but the greater criminal justice system as well.

Role of the Researcher

A qualitative inquiry is personal because of the phenomenon being examined with the researcher as the instrument to measure the collected data in the study (Patton, 2015). When using a phenomenological design, it is important for the researcher to immerse themselves (Patton, 2015). A qualitative investigator should have some attributes to conduct the study, including caring about data, understanding the topic being investigated, posing good questions, and listening (Yin, 2016). The goal is to set high thresholds and practice the traits on exemplary levels.

My role as the investigator included, but was not restricted to, being a good listener. I conducted semistructured interviews with the respondents, which made it essential to be engaged to gather all data they shared. Part of being a keen listener is being observant (Yin, 2016). Identifying changes in the disposition of the interviewee may go a long way in averting inadvertent harm that might emerge due to a line of questioning. In posing relevant questions in the interview sessions to collect appropriate data, avoiding redundant questions that did not generate any crucial information to the research study was important in decreasing the duration of every interview (Yin, 2016). Additionally, it was imperative to pose open-ended questions in interviews. Open-ended questions enable interviewees to recount their narratives in their words without appearing as though the interviewer is speaking through them or misinterpreting what they say, and they help generate in-depth information on feelings, perceptions, and experiences (Patton, 2015).

In this study, I played the role of the expert on the phenomenon of the Ferguson effect, which was important because to answer questions concerning the Ferguson effect and the significance of the study as well as authenticate my role as the investigator with respondents. In addition, the investigator's aptitude for multicultural compassion, empathy, interpersonal competence, skills, training, experience, background, and how they take part in examination and fieldwork increase the credibility of study results (Patton, 2015). I care about the information gathered and ensured that the information is relevant to maintain the integrity of the study. Being less familiar with the collected data could have unintentionally harmed the respondents (Yin, 2016). Research data needs attention to its security because field notes are irreplaceable (Yin, 2016).

Investigators should be able to multitask while undertaking research (Yin, 2016). There were instances when I was required to undertake two functions concurrently to gather all the data under dissemination and to save time. My final role as the investigator in the study was to persevere until the completion of the task. Several unforeseen challenges can arise when handling human respondents who, at a given time, could experience an emergency beyond the investigator's control. However, it was important to focus on the importance of the research.

Ethical Concerns

Whenever a researcher plans to conduct a study, numerous ethical issues should be considered before commencing. When a study features human beings, the risks of causing unexpected harm is usually a likelihood, and the researcher must consider all pertinent factors (Yin, 2016). Though certain exceptions exist, many studies that feature

humans as respondents require the institutional review board's approval before undertaking the research (Yin, 2016). Once the researcher as determined that the methodology would not affect the respondents, then all respondents should read and fill out the informed consent forms with my IRB approval #02-27-18-0500496.

Methodology

The sample for this qualitative phenomenological study was seven law enforcement officers who may have not felt that the Ferguson effect has impacted them. Phenomenological studies often involve locating and identifying respondents who have encountered the phenomena being examined (Rudestam et al., 2015). Unlike quantitative studies, qualitative investigations typically feature smaller quantities of research respondents. For the current research technique, small sample sizes are used, which helps to pay attention to individual encounters (Roberts, 2013; Smith, Flower, & Larkin, 2009). Smaller sample sizes also satisfy the needs of phenomenological investigations, while larger sample sizes can overwhelm the researcher with information (Roberts, 2013). However, there is no common technique that qualitative researchers use to determine the same size (Patton, 2015; Yin, 2016).

A sample size of seven law enforcement officers was identified based on what I was seeking to determine, reasons for conducting the study, and what will render the study credible and valid to other investigators. The size of the sample in interpretative phenomenological analysis is marked by homogeneity and purpose (Croston, 2014). The homogeneity of the sample in terms of characteristics is defined by the subject matter. Respondents other than the population denote different points of view. Consequently, the

study findings of this genre offer an insight into the phenomenon itself and will not result in generalizations.

Semistructured interviews were conducted for several reasons. Face-to-face interviews yield even higher response rates and involve nonverbal forms of communication to capture the underlying qualities of the phenomenon under investigation. Semistructured interviews also helped to answer the research questions; they are based on personal accounts and the interviewee's willingness thus can be used to gather information based on personal experiences. Interviews can be conducted on many respondents who can answer the exact same questions. The diversity of opinions yields multiple voices, which can address the subject being investigated.

Research Participants

I used several social media platforms such as Facebook and LinkedIn as well as local government websites to locate the respondents. Criteria were established and applied through random sampling techniques to ensure all participants are adults, have served and are still serving in local law enforcement, and have encountered the impacts of the Ferguson effect. The strategy for locating respondents in the study included identifying police officers employed in local police departments across major cities in the United States through LinkedIn and Facebook profiles. Potential participants were given pertinent information concerning the study like the topic of the research and how it impacts law enforcement officers. The criteria for eligibility to engage in the research center on potential subject self-identification as police officers are adults and feel that they are subject to the Ferguson effect.

Instrumentation

In qualitative phenomenological studies the investigator is the instrument who would be utilized in the study for posing questions, listening, observing, and taking notes. For qualitative researchers the human observer constitutes the choice of instrument. Given this, qualitative investigators emphasize improvement of human observations and make no allegations for the instrument's validity and reliability in a rational manner (Rudestam et al., 2015). As Yin (2016) posits the chosen research instrument constitutes a data gathering tool. In the proposed study, the researcher will be the research instrument for collecting information. As such, all the interview questions will be asked and answered through structured face-to-face interviews via Skype.

Data Analysis Plan

After conducting all interviews and observation activities, I will approach the data analysis process by studying the qualitative data procedures outlined by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2013) and Vaismoradi, Jones, Turunen, and Snelgrove (2016). Miles et al. (2013) highlights the need for full disclosure of steps and techniques conducted to prove rigor of the study conducted. Vaismoradi, Jones, Turunen, and Snelgrove (2016) observe that some investigators fail to analyze their data completely resulting in thematic concerns that are unclear and that the accuracy of the data analysis process may not be evaluated properly. Following the transcription processes, which will be verified by listening to the recordings against the transcripts and uploaded into Nvivo 12, qualitative data analysis software (QDAS) for theme identification and coding purposes will be used. In that the Nvivo software has an intuitive user interface and is

ideal for large datasets to aid with the organization, memo writing, and coding of all data collected (QSR International, 2017). Moreover, utilization of Nvivo 12 will enable the arrangement and analysis of unstructured information to make optimum decisions, while working systematically to ensure that nothing was omitted from the uploaded data.

Issues of Trustworthiness

To ascertain the credibility of the proposed research study, data collected will undergo the process of triangulation. According to Patton (2015), a qualitative analysis is aimed at understanding the qualitative data that has been gathered by providing applicably noteworthy results, answering the key questions surrounding the research study, ascertaining thematic concerns and discovering trends. In view of this, data triangulation implies the investigator will obtain the findings from one research participant and contrast them against the findings of others in a bid to confirm the conclusions drawn.

According to Yin (2016), the goal of triangulation is to locate a minimum of about three techniques of validating or confirming a conclusion, a portion of data or a method. Credibility of this study will be confirmed by locating the main thematic concerns of each research participant's feedback to all the interview questions. If the thematic concerns that I identified for the first respondent is aligned with most, if not all, research participants, it would add validity and authenticity to the results. According to Patton (2015), qualitative source triangulation involves the investigation of the balanced nature of various databases within the same approach. The previous paragraph locates the internal validity of the research study because the researcher will use triangulation as the

tool for establishing validity and credibility of the research study. However, the researcher will use transferability as the external validity tool for doing the same. According to Yin (2016), transferability features a faintly weaker assertion that may exist with logical simplification, as transferability identifies the uniqueness of the restricted circumstances within a personalized qualitative study.

Chapter Summary

This qualitative, phenomenological research study has sought to investigate, analyze and scrutinize the lived experiences of police officers who have been impacted by the Ferguson Effect. The research study desires to confirm what impact, if any, the Ferguson Effect has on officers who have experienced it concerning their outlooks, opinions, demeanors. The objective of the phenomenological research is to get to the bottom of the individuals' lived experience of the phenomena, while uncovering and describing the phenomena (Yüksel et al., 2015). A smaller number of research participants are featured in qualitative research studies as compared to quantitative research studies that are characterized by larger population samples. For this research technique, small sample sizes are utilized. Smith et al. (2009) posits "because the method has undergone evolution sample sizes have become smaller for researchers to focus on individuals' experiences" (Roberts, 2013). According to Yin (2016), this is a customary technique that qualitative researchers should adopt in determining the quantity of research participants that ought to be incorporated in that the standard sample size of the qualitative study is non-existent.

In a qualitative research study from a phenomenological perspective, the investigator constitutes the tool be utilized in the study to take notes, observe, listen, and pose questions. "The instrument of choice for the qualitative investigator is the human observer. In view of this, qualitative investigators put special emphasis on modifying human observation and make no allegations for the validity and reliability of the instrument within the rationalistic sense" (Rudestam et al., 2015). According to Berg (2012), the gathering of qualitative data ought to be done in a structure of arranging, coding, and organizing that has been established before the commencement of data collection. The latter is important because qualitative investigators assemble a huge quantity of data in the data collection stage of the study. Thus failure to put a plan in place before gathering data might be extremely expensive and jeopardize results. "If you wait until data have actually been collected to consider how they are to be organized for analysis, serious issues might emerge" (Berg, 2012).

Vaismoradi, Jones, Turunen, and Snelgrove (2016) argue that a thematic concern refers to a means of organizing common ideas in the data and assists in answering research questions. Aronson (1994) observes that a thematic concern may be divided into sub-thematic concerns to allow a comprehensive understanding of data. Vaismoradi et al. (2016) observe that some investigators fail to analyze their data completely, thus resulting in thematic concerns that are unclear and the accuracy of the data analysis process may not be evaluated properly. Vaismoradi et al. (2016) assert that the process of qualitative data analysis is considered iterative. Thus the investigator should repeat numerous steps to obtain high-quality findings from the data. For these reasons, I

deployed the four stages of qualitative analysis as outlined by Vaismoradi et al. (2016).

The first stage was initialization, the second stage was construction, the third,

constructions and the fourth stage, finalization.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The aim of this phenomenological qualitative research study was to explore the lived experiences of seven police officers regarding influences on their perceptions, demeanor, or opinions as a result of the Ferguson effect. The objective of phenomenological research is to understand the lived experiences of encounters with a phenomenon while assimilating and defining the phenomenon (Yuksel & Yildirim, 2015). The research was focused on how the Ferguson effect influences police officers' perceptions and behaviors, resulting in an inability to perform their duties as required, which could affect the culture in local police departments. I recruited seven participants for the study who are police officers of varying rank across three police departments in the Midwest and Southeastern United States.

The results were similar to previous research related to the Ferguson effect in varying ways to be described in this chapter. All seven participants were aware of the critical lens surrounding their occupation and were willing to respond to the research questions. The primary research question for this study was: How has the Ferguson effect influenced the culture and perceptions of police officers in local departments? To assist with answering the primary research question, two subquestions were developed: (a) What are police officers' perceptions of the Ferguson effect? and (b) How do police officers who are stigmatized by the threat of civil liability action overcome fears of the Ferguson effect to effectively perform their sworn duties?

In this chapter, I will discuss the number of research participants, the demographics of participants, and the data collection method. Furthermore, Chapter 4 will also include a discussion of the data analysis process and the resulting emergent themes. Lastly, a summary will provide the answers to the primary research question as well as the subquestions.

Setting

I sought to use purposive sampling, but snowball sampling was used to collect data because I worked with the departments' information liaisons who selected the participants to be interviewed and scheduled the in-depth interviews with seven police officers of varying rank across three police departments in the Midwest and Southeastern United States. The law enforcement agencies included a local police department in Mississippi, a sheriff's department in Florida, and a public school system police department in Georgia. The interviews were completed through Skype videoconferencing and e-mail and took place between April 3, 2018 and April 23, 2018. No organizational conditions were present that affected participants during the interview process or that would alter the interpretation of the study results.

Demographics

Table 1

Demographic Data

Age	Sex	Ethnicity	Rank	Years of service
29	Male	Caucasian	Field training officer/Patrol deputy	6
46	Male	Caucasian	Lieutenant	17
26	Male	African American	Police officer	3
27	Female	Caucasian	Detective/corporal	4.5
42	Male	African American	Detective/corporal	9
46	Male	African American	Sergeant	23
44	Female	African American	Student resource officer	17.5

The sample population consisted of seven active duty police officers who worked within three local police departments in the Midwest and Southeastern United States. All eligible participants were 21 years of age or older. Seven volunteered to participate in this research study, and there were three initial participants who elected not to participate and were not included in the collection of data or final study. Outlined in Table 1, of the seven participants that elected to participate, five were male and two were female. Four self-identified as African American (3 males and 1 female) of non-Hispanic ethnicity and three self-identified as Caucasian (2 males and 1 female) and of non-Hispanic ethnicity. Four of the participant's ages ranged from 40-49, one participant age ranged from 30-35, and two between the ages of 25-29, for an average age range of 37 and 11.3 years of service for the collective participants. The rank and duty position of the participants

varied due to the differences in the police departments in which they worked. The roles included, but were not limited to, field training officer (patrol deputy), police officer, student resource officer, detective/corporal, sergeant, and lieutenant.

Data Collection

In qualitative inquiry, the researcher serves as the primary instrument for data collection and analysis. For this phenomenological study, I developed a questionnaire to conduct the semistructured interviews. In keeping with established protocol, no interviews were conducted until a signed participation and consent form was received. I e-mailed each eligible participant a consent and participation form in which the required documents delineated the research study specifics.

After receiving the signed consent form by the qualified participants that elected to participate, I worked with the departments' information liaisons who selected the participants to be interviewed. Data collection was composed of seven interviews for which I e-mailed each of the interviewees a copy of the interview questionnaire to review along with their confidential personal identification name. A semistructured interview protocol outlined the open-ended interview questions posed to participants (see Appendix A) and was given to eligible participants for review and endorsement. After completion of the interview questionnaire, the department information liaisons who selected the participants coordinated convenient interview dates and times with me. The interviews with the seven research participants were completed via Skype and were between 30-45 minutes.

Each interview was digitally recorded using a voice recorder application and was transcribed verbatim using TEMI software and manual transcription. The collected data was stored in the Cloud and on an external hard drive that is password protected. Moreover, all signed consent and participation forms, along with demographic information, have been stored in a locked and secured area to be maintained for the required 5-year period. I made no modifications from the data collection plan detailed in Chapter 3. In addition, no circumstances were deemed unusual in the data collection process of this research study.

Data Analysis

The intention of qualitative analysis is to discover patterns, emerging themes, and to interpret the qualitative data collected to answer research questions and provide noteworthy results (Patton, 2015). Hence, NVivo 12 data analysis software was used to analyze the collected data obtained through interviews because it helps code and organize data (Rudestam et al, 2015). The work of Moustakas (1994), who is considered a founder of phenomenological research, also served as a guide for data collection and analysis. The data analysis method included the following steps:

1. Evaluating and describing the encounter per response.

2. Notating all comments deemed relevant from participants.

3. Ignoring redundant or excess comments, which left only relevant material to be sorted.

4. Organizing and sorting relevant material and placing into themes for coding.

5. Coding themes were combined for explanation of experience of participants and supported with citations from transcribed text.

6. Organizing varying points of view of the participants were harnessed to highlight the accounts of their personal experiences.

7. Explicating the cores and denotations of participants' experiences were developed and are functional. (Rudestam et al., 2015)

The analysis did not yield any disparate cases from the data collected via interviews. Four themes emerged with the assistance of NVivo 12 data analysis software by way of word clouds and queries: (a) commitment to service, (b) police officers' perception of the media, (b) impact of the Ferguson effect, and (c) attitudes toward civil liability. Each theme will be discussed in the Results section.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Evidence of trustworthiness regarding the collection of data for analysis of my phenomenological qualitative study was established by credibility, dependability, conformability, and transferability. As the primary instrument of the study, emphasis was placed on consistency, as illustrated by asking the interviewees the same questions and in the same order that was outlined in the interview protocol. Because the research was based on first-hand information from the research population, it was imperative that the data collected was reliable and credible. Moreover, credibility was established in my research study by distinguishing the primary themes that emerged from the participants' feedback related to each research question and was detailed in Chapter 1.

The dependability of the research method was constructed on the success of previous qualitative studies using a phenomenological design. The study also included a reliable number of respondents to make the research credible. A reiterative process to code and recode collected data was followed to also ensure reliability to support the dependability of research study. To assist with conformability of research study, reflexivity principles were put into practice. The term *reflexivity* is a purposeful guiding tool in which a researcher can systematically adhere to knowledge construction while introspecting at every step of process (Patton, 2015). By way of example, being reflexive required me to acknowledge that I am an African-American male, and I have experienced multiple incidences of racial profiling by police officers in Brooklyn, NY and Lawrenceville, GA. Considering these facts, unintended bias could have occurred during any process of organization, coding, analysis, and interpretation of collected data. Therefore, I implemented an appraisal strategy to evaluate the research process and documented each step for further assessment of the collected data for every part of this study.

Lastly, the study is transferable and sets the basis of future studies on issues related to the Ferguson effect and BLM. Generalized findings were not sought with this research project but primary data that is dependable and transferable to other fields. The study also applied pertinent and basic consideration in recruitment of respondent, collecting data, and data handling. Other researchers could repeat the study and the findings would be consistent, as the respondent data is available, and the analysis follows the set procedures. These steps allowed for confirmability by recognizing any

contradicting findings, which has ensured that the study findings accurately show the

participants' responses.

Results

The seven interviews were imported into NVivo 12 software for coding and

visualization. To ensure a thorough analysis of data, every line of text was examined for

relevance, and each line deemed relevant was allocated a descriptive label. This process

was replicated three times until all the data was labeled and categorized together. The

labels in each category were further assessed to identify the theme that emerged. There

were four predominant themes: (a) commitment to service, (b) police officers' perception

of the media, (c) impact of the Ferguson effect, and (d) attitudes toward civil liability.

The next section will detail how my results aided in answering the primary research

question and the two subset questions.

Primary Research Question

The central question researched was: How has the Ferguson Effect influenced the

culture and perceptions of police officers in local departments? In response to this

question, I asked participants what their work means to them as well as their overall

satisfaction with the local police department in which they work. Each participant

provided candid feedback about values, attitudes, goals, and practices that characterizes

the organization in which they work. Most of the participants shared the identified themes

of commitment to service, challenges faced by police officers due to perceptions of the

media, the impact of the Ferguson effect, and attitudes toward civil liability. The top 100

words occurring in the interviews are shown on Figure 1. From Figure1, it can be

observed in Table 2 the most frequent words were police, training, people, media and

enforcement. Other frequent words were black, department, law, and Ferguson.

Figure 1. Wordcloud of top 100 words.

Table 2

Top 10 Words from Interviews

Word	Frequency
Training	123
Police	111
People	107
Media	96
Right	94
Officers	93
Law	91
Black	81
Job	80
Enforcement	78

Table 2 shows the top 10 most frequent words in the interviews. The results in

Table 2 are consistent with the results on Figure 1. Most of the conversations in the

interviews were focused around these keywords. Through an iterative analysis process,

four themes emerged from the interviews. The themes are illustrated on Table 3 together

with the categories. The themes are discussed in detail in subsequent sections to bring out

the experiences of police officers.

Table 3

Themes from the Interviews

Themes	Category
Commitment to service	Roles and responsibilities
	Leadership
	Location
	Training received from department
	Overall job satisfaction
Police officers' perception of the media	Attitude towards police officers
	Substandard racial attitudes
	Disconnect between officers and policy makers
	Inaccurate reporting by media
Impact of Ferguson effect	Being hesitant on the job
	Increased police accountability
	No impact on work
	Avoid use of violence
	All lives are important
	Attitude towards Black Live Matter
Attitudes toward civil liability	Qualified immunity
	Adherence to training guidelines
	Police department support
	Threat of legal suits against officers

Emergent Theme 1: Commitment to Service

The primary research question of the study was focused on how the Ferguson

effect has influenced the culture and perceptions of police officers in local police

departments. From the research, it is clear from the police officer's role and

responsibilities, views on leadership, training received from department and job

satisfaction has had a positive impact on the police officers perception of culture within

the local department's that they work. As such, a theme arose regarding commitment to

service, as all seven of the research participants shared a strong commitment to service

and a positive view of the police departments in which they worked (see table 1).

Participant 1 shared with me that, "I am extremely satisfied with the Sheriff's Office in

Florida that I am employed with. We are a large agency, which has ample funding and

more than required training and plenty of opportunities". Participant 2 stated:

> Overall, I have a great bit of satisfaction. I feel really good about our department.
>
> I feel like we are not perfect; we have issues that we can continue to work on, and
>
> I feel like we do our best to work on them, but overall, I'm very pleased with
>
> where we are.

Participant 3 shared with me that:

> Grand scheme, my work means service. Being able to provide a service to
>
> someone in need, once all the smoke clears, when I meet my maker, I would be
>
> able to say that I lived a life of servitude and I was a selfless person during my
>
> time here on earth.

Participant 3 went on to state "I would give it a 5 out of 10. We are not the best

department, but things could always be worse. I will say that our department always has

good intentions in the actions taken or the policies created". Participant 4 shared with me

> I like my police department, because I work with a lot of great people. However,
>
> on the flipside, I also work with many cops. That is a specific personality type and
>
> I work with a bunch of Alpha males. It is the kind of personality you almost must
>
> have, at least the majority, so there is a lot of clashing heads. At the end of the

day, you do come together and realize that you have a common goal. So, I would

say I would rather be here than any other department, but it's tough working for a

police department. Because, you have a whole lot of type-A personalities and you

are around each other anywhere from eight to twelve hours a day, every day.

Participant 5 shared:

I enjoy it and a lot of the people that I work with now, and even myself did not

think that I would be here as long as I have been here. I am fortunate to be under

the leadership of our Chief of Police and what he brings to this police department.

He encourages and inspires the other officers to maintain and go forth and be

more community oriented and open. That is why I am here, the community. This

department allows me to love on the community.

Participant 6 iterated:

I am extremely satisfied. If I weren't, I would not still be here. For me, it is a

platform to help people and serve the community. I am aware that be being a

police officer is community service and this gives me an opportunity to interact

with young people and do things in the community to improve relationships.

Participant 7 noted:

Work to me is something that I enjoy. I love what I do. This is my passion. I

mean, I wake up in the morning and I do not do it for the pay. This is something

that I look forward to doing. I feel like I benefit from it as a person. As for my

department, I feel like overall they do a good job. I mean they make sure that we

have the tools that we need to do our job and make sure that we are getting the

training to stay diverse of culture and everything that we need to get everything done. Overall, we are doing good; they try to keep us out there and be proactive versus reactive. So, for the most part we do a good job; they look out for us and we try to make sure that we stand out and do a good job for our superiors.

Emergent Theme 2: Police Officers Perception of the media

To address the 2nd sub-research question, what are police officers' perceptions of the Ferguson Effect? Challenges faced by police officers theme emerged from the interviews. Specifically, the role the media has played. There is a general complaint from the public about police officers on the way they carry out their work. Majority of the participants believe this has brought deteriorating relations between the public and the police. Although the police engage in carrying out their duties as outlined, they are seen as if they are against the public. Participant 1 shared the belief that "the public is trusted over law enforcement. And kind of what you said, added scrutiny of law enforcement, more playing up in the media". Participant 1 went on to share

I mean, the media is good for some things, but I think they dramatize a lot of things. Whether they do not have something else to talk about, so they have to make law enforcement seem bad. I mean, it does affect me but not day to day. I am going to work later today, and I am not going to stress out about it, but it is something to think about. I personally do not get bothered when somebody films me, so it is not a thing; I just assume that everyone is filming me all the time, so it is no different. There are bad law enforcement officers, but there are bad doctors, bad lawyers, bad everybody. However, it seems more recently they are taking a

small population of law enforcement officers and make it sound like we are all

doing these things, which sucks because it is not true.

Participant 2 commented:

I'm far from perfect, but whenever I make a decision to do something, it is based

on what I feel like is morally right and legally holds me and my department to the

highest integrity. So, it does not bother me, if you are videotaping or if you are

accusing me or whatever. The reality is there is going to be people that just do not

like law enforcement and that is never going to change, no matter what we did.

Participant 2 went on to state:

I believe the media is going to treat officers in whatever fashion makes money. If

it sells more news, more papers, more whatever it is. That is their job, to

sensationalize things and it does not matter what I think, what really matters is

what society thinks. And when society gets to the point where they are tired of

either thing, exaggerated or a particular group being scrutinized in order to make

money, they will let them know, whether it be by not making sales or whatever,

and then they will change. They are not going to continue to do something that

does not sell and right now it sells, so that is what they are going to do.

Participant 3 shared with me that "right now, dogging police sells. So, that's how I

view… they're going to do whatever drives their ratings. So, I don't trust the media, to be

honest, I don't trust much of the public that I serve". Participant 4 mentioned

The media has a different goal than police departments today. The media's goal is

to increase their viewer number, it's business. Business always goes back to

money, and the way they make their money is to have more viewers. The media is going to report what is fun and exciting. Sometimes what is exciting is not the whole truth, sometimes what is exciting is more of the truth than the public needs to know. At the end of the day, you cannot really fault the media, because they are doing their job. That would be like someone faulting me because I wrote three tickets.

Participant 5 added:

At the end of the day, people want to read, people want to see, mostly, I am not going to say all, want to see negativity, and they know what is going to sell. They know what people are going to see, they know what is going to run the ratings up. So, I feel like they are going to take every opportunity that they can to make something be, just a little bit more than what it really is, in order to get that extra rating. A lot of the times, and this in defense of the media, they are not given all the information and they have to just go with what they assume. Sometimes that assumption is what causes the distance and confusion between law enforcement and the media.

Participant 6 shared:

Depends on what the incident or the big story is. I think that with the media, majority of the time or a lot of the time, it is all about what is going to create the biggest story. You may have heard about the police officer in Florida that allegedly, did not respond to the school shooting. But then, several weeks later you did not hear much about a police officer that did respond and apprehend a

suspect. In my opinion, it is all about what brings the biggest story, what brings

the most viewers.

Participant 7 stated:

The media can be our friends, the media can be helpful and harmful. I know that

is not the intention, you want us, and we want to be transparent, we want

everything out there. However, at the same time it is like if there is something

negative and that is not the goal and we do not want that, but if it is something

negative, then it seems like it is replayed and replayed, because they want it out

there.

Emergent Theme 3: Impact of the Ferguson Effect

The 2nd sub research question was, what are police officers' perceptions of the

Ferguson Effect? The research findings for the third identified theme has shown divided

results on the impact of the Ferguson effect among different officers. All seven

participants acknowledge awareness of the Ferguson Effect; in fact, participants 3 and 4

shared with me that "the Ferguson Effect has been present during their entire law

enforcement career". The research suggests, despite the awareness of the Ferguson

Effect, majority of the participants do not believe it affects how they discharge their

mandates and how they respond to events. Participant 1 said

I am not more hesitant, and I think a lot of people do not know, especially on

traffic stops or you get suspicious people at night time, it is hard to tell who you

are dealing with. So, I do not know if you ever drive behind, or if you are just

driving at night and you look at the car ahead of you, you cannot tell who they are

or what they look like. So, the idea that white deputies are stopping black citizens,

just for the hell of it, I do not see how that is possible at night time. You cannot

tell who is in front of you, maybe during the day, you might be able to. So, I think

that goes out of the window, but there are times that I go to park after dark and

people are not supposed to be there, and I make contact with them.

Participant 2 shared:

No, I am not hesitant. Do I believe that there may be some officers that are,

specifically maybe younger officers? Yeah, but I am not sure that it is necessarily

related to race. It may be related to the unknown or the insecurities about how you

address people and what you can and cannot do.

Participant 3 intimated:

From my experience, the Ferguson effect means to me is, basically, officers

having to second guess themselves, when they only have seconds to make

decisions in the first place. It is creating an environment of hesitancy in doing

your job and taking action. Kind of like, what you spoke on earlier, proactive

policing is going down.

Participant 4 recalled:

I remember when I was on patrol, especially towards the end, we were told we

had some burglaries in the area. Like in our more residential areas, we were

having a lot of auto burglaries and the information was passed from the

investigation division, that they were being done by young black males. So, it was

put out, when you see a black male, get out and talk to him. Because of personal

experience, I cannot classify every black male as somebody that is going out and robbing people. So, when I heard that we needed to get out and interview any young black male that we saw walking or whatever, I could not do it. It had nothing to do with me fearing them, it had everything to do with, you cannot do that because it is totally unfair to the person. It is like, I am going to get out with you because you are black, you cannot do that, that is how you make people feel like they are less than human. Sorry, you cannot walk out here because your skin is the wrong color, if you are white, I would not bother you. But, since you are black, let me see what is inside of your backpack, like you cannot do that.

Participant 5 shared:

I am not hesitant at all. I think that the Ferguson incident just allowed people to do what they wanted to do anyway and that is to feel a type of way towards the police. In all the incidents that happened, that are similar to it, it was just more of what they needed to feel like they were supposed to feel anyway. However, to answer your question on how it affects me or how do I feel about it, it is unfortunate, but it does not affect how I do my job. It does bring to me awareness as far as community relations.

Participant 6 iterated:

I am not hesitant. I am going to use the amount of force necessary, regardless of the situation. When you start, second-guessing yourself and not depending or relying on your training, that is when you put yourself in harm's way. You or someone else can be hurt.

Participant 7 stated:

> No, I am not hesitant to use force if it is warranted. I am not going to sit there and
> say, well let me think, should I do this? When you are hesitant, you are more
> subject to get yourself or somebody else hurt. I am not going to mess around and
> end up being killed because I am second-guessing myself, like wait a minute, let
> me think. So, no!

Emergent Theme 4: Attitudes Toward Civil Liability

The 3rd sub research question, how do police officers stigmatized by the threat of
civil liability action overcome their fear of the Ferguson Effect in order to effectively
perform their sworn duties? The findings from the research suggests there is a general
awareness of civil liability among the police officers and a strong emphasis on adhering
to training guidelines. All seven participants acknowledged that behavior that falls
outside of department's standard operating procedures could open them up to personal
civil liability action. Participant 1 shared with me:

> We have lawyers who are there to protect us. Law enforcement officers have
> certain immunities based on what we are doing, if we are doing it in good faith.
> So, I know for the most part, that will cover me. We always get told that,
> basically, we have an umbrella coverage, it is how they put it and if you do
> something off the wall crazy and you step outside of that umbrella, you are pretty
> much screwed, and we are not going to cover you. Like, if you go on a shooting
> rampage or something like that. I know that pretty much everything that I do is
> within the policy and I kind of have to because I am showing newer officers how

to do things. So, if anything I am more conservative. There is a lot of things that

we could do that is totally legal, like there is so many reasons to pull cars over but

I would say some is pettier than others. So, I try to make sure everything that I do

is conservative and if there is anything questionable, I just let it go because I want

everything to be kosher.

Participant 2 reported:

No, I mean I am not apprehensive about civil liability. I think it is a relative term

that we all must be concerned with; I mean obviously, we always have to be

concerned about our safety. You are always going to be concerned about,

someone maybe suing us, or things of that nature and it is a sad reality of what we

do. Nevertheless, I believe in fate, I believe in as long as you are doing what you

perceive as being the right thing or at least that is the only way to put it. As long

as you are doing the right thing and you are not violating someone's rights or

anything, the threat of a lawsuit or the threat of some kind comes with the

territory. I have been threatened many times and that is just the reality of things.

Participant 3 shared:

I will be honest with you, I take a pretty grim approach to the fact that I do not

have a fear of it, because you cannot sue a dead man. So, civil liability is not the

worst thing that can happen. I could have died in whatever situation caused the

civil liability suit. So, in law enforcement there is a grim joke, "you would rather

be judged by twelve, than be carried by six". In some audiences, that is a horrible

thing to say, but on the flip side, when it is your life, would you rather be on a

jury stand or would you rather be in a casket? I have never faced a personal civil liability situation. I do not really have any experience with civil liability or even the threat of it. I am sure it will come. They say, you are going to get sued at least once in your career, so I am sure it is coming. I have had guns pointed in my area or even guns around. I have been through that before, so I can speak on that. But, as far as taking an action and I am going to sue you over that, I do not have any experience with that. So, I cannot really say, but right now, I do not have any reservations when in it comes to civil liability. In my mind, I got PBA, the police benevolent association, that is where their attorneys come in and fight on our behalf, it the situation arises. Right now, my trust is in them, if I ever get in that situation, I am going to call the number on my card and my attorney is going to show up. If I follow our department's policies, the city attorney has to fight for me, that is where my faith is right now, but I have never been in that situation.

Participant 4 added:

Civil liability is terrifying. To think that I can get into a shooting and be found not guilty criminally but found guilty civilly is terrifying. It is confusing for officers because it does happen, thankfully not too much, so it is scary. There is a nationwide organization that is super prevalent in the South and it's called PBA, which stands for the Police Benevolent Association. I will not step foot in my patrol car without making sure that it is renewed and up-to-date. That helps a little bit, just in case the city attorneys do not follow you into the civil courtroom, which a lot of times, they will not. With PBA, if you pay your membership and

you are in good standing, they will give you a lawyer and you pay for it. They

will bring that lawyer to help and at least you will have a bit of counsel, so at the

end of the day, it is terrifying because we do not make a lot of money. We do not

do this for the money, a lot of officers must have second or even third jobs, just to

make sure that they can provide for their families at night. And so, the thought of

going to a job, just so that you can pay for your job and the consequences of your

job, is really scary, especially if you have a family.

Participant 5 said:

As long as I continue to do what the police department has put in black and white

for me to do. And if, I do my job and I fall within the parameters of our general

orders, then I do not have to worry about the liability that is coming from

anywhere else. So, as long as I am doing my job and I am doing it like I was

trained to do, and I have the best interests of the community at heart, in my heart

and I do not go out second-guessing my moves, when it comes down to serving

and protecting, my department is going to have my back, as long as I am out here

doing what they say I am supposed to be doing.

Participant 6 mentioned:

I do not really have any concerns about civil liabilities. I am a firm believer that if

you do your job, the way it is supposed to be done, then you do not have to worry.

If the law enforcement officer is not acting accordingly under the departmental

policy and procedures, then they should be held liable or accountable.

Participant 7 shared, 'I really do not want to answer that question, but they should not be going out of their training in the first place".

Other Findings

Other findings pertinent to the research question focused on how the Ferguson Effect influenced perceptions of police officers in local departments. Consistent with the framework applied in this study, the researcher used Merton's Theory of Unintended Consequences (1936) as a lens to view the participants when asked about their viewpoint on the BLM movement. Most of the participants communicated acceptance towards the formation of the civil rights petition. Moreover, most of them stated support of BLM, although it should cease to be associated with violence and instead focus on bringing people together in terms of co-existing. Participant 1 ruminated

> To be honest with you, I am not a huge fan. I have done research on them, and if you look at the definition of a domestic terrorist organization, they use violence and things like that to try to get people to put fear in them, to get them to do certain things based on the political motivations and things like that, which is the definition of domestic terrorism. So, some of the things that they have done, I would say qualify. Do I think that they should be officially labeled as a terrorist organization? Not really yet, but you see some of their people saying that they are wanting cops to die, and they are rioting and smashing police cars to try to get certain things to happen. Do I think there are people in that organization who are trying to do the right thing and try to have a better relationship between law enforcement and the black population? Yes, I do, I think there is good people in

every movement, even in terrorist organizations. I think there are good people that

may have been bought in with the wrong people, but I think overall, they are

going about it in the wrong way. I know law enforcement in general is not a fan.

The problem is, as you know, obviously we want everyone to be equal and things

like that. But I feel like sometimes we have movements, like that, they are not

trying to be equal.

Participant 2 shared:

I think the vast majority of the people who were a part of BLM, their hearts were

in the right spot. I think it truly felt like they were doing something positive for

their community. Do I believe that everyone felt that way? No, I think there was

some agendas, that was placed in there, whether it began there or whether it's

kind of intermingled itself within it, I do not know. But I do know that were some

people that could care less about what is right and wrong. It is about

accomplishing whatever their agenda is, and that does not matter if it is Black,

White, Hispanic, or Asian. When we get to a point in our lives, our society, when

we can stop worrying about the little check as to are you black, white or whatever

because we are all brothers.

Participant 3 mentioned:

I joined the force, when the uprising of the BLM movement was kind of at its

peak. Throughout the academy, there were maybe five shootings, while I was in

the academy. So, trying to balance between being a young black guy, knowing

what it is like to grow up black, knowing what it like to see the police from the

black eyes and how we perceive them. And then, jumping over to becoming a cop and now seeing it from that side. I think one of your questions was like; do you hesitate seeing a suspicious male or a suspicious person because of their color? Do you hesitate to talk to them? For a while, I felt guilty about doing my job even when I know it does not look right from my side as a cop. But I can also see how from his side, he does not feel like he is doing anything wrong. So, why am I getting out to talk to him, so for a while I felt guilty about doing my job. Then, I get back to work and feel even more stupid, because there is a burglar in that area. We possibly just let the person walk off, because I did not want to talk to him because he is black, or I did not want to deal with that issue of arguing with him about I am stopping him because he is black.

Participant 4 iterated:

So, I am not, as up to speed as I should be with BLM. It has absolutely a ton to do with the fact that I am white, I am not going to sugarcoat that. The Black Lives Matter movement, I think had great intention, but just like any other special interest group, once they get spit at, you can only get spit on so many times before you start spitting back at people. I think the Black Lives Matter movement lost their purpose. They lost their intended vision and they became something that was very violent. I do not know where the Black Lives Matter movement is right now, I assume they have gone back down because we are not having as many issues with them. Granted, the Black Lives Matter movement did not get too intense where I am, we had like one protest and I blocked the street for it. I am always

going to support someone's right to protest an injustice. I think it was a good idea, a valid argument, but I do not know if they went about it the right way. Maybe, the humble beginnings if that would have kept going, but then who knows, they might not have been heard. So, it is difficult for me to comment on this one because I am not super in touch with it.

Participant 5 stated:

Oh boy, that ol' Black Lives Matter, you know what, all lives matter. Black lives, they matter, as well as all lives matter. I know that we must take care of home, black lives do matter, but we cannot say that black lives matter when it comes down to the police. Just as I told you, I am probably one of the few people that you are going to talk to, that is full-circle with all of this. Because, I have lost a brother in 2013, to the streets and gun violence, in the early 1990's, I lost a stepbrother that served in the Navy to gun violence in the streets. Now, I am in law enforcement, and when I went to the same neighborhood that my brother was killed in and he lived in and was asking questions, and nobody knew anything. That made me feel some type of way, like some people will never experience that sitting behind a desk and typing, and with their own opinion. They have never dealt with some of the things that I have dealt with to make an all in all judgement of or a statement behind something when you have a personal experience to add to a situation to make a statement about. What I mean by that is, it goes right back to what I said, all lives matter, black lives matter, black lives should matter to us. So, if it is not important to us, you cannot expect for somebody else to respect it

and to honor it if we are not doing it ourselves. It does not make it right, some incidents that we have encountered or know about, should definitely be investigated, as they seem questionable. At the end of the day, we must take care of each other. We cannot expect, somebody or people to care about us, if we are not caring about each other.

Participant 6 shared:

I am in support of the Black Lives Matter movement. I think that they do some good things on highlighting these incidents, where some of these minorities or young black men have been killed at the hands of police officers. The only thing that I would want to see Black Lives Matter do is, maybe become more involved with the black youth, before they are dead or before they have gone down the wrong path. Many, many, many black males are not finishing school. I think some of these programs should focus on that as well, if they are not and may be preventing them from getting into situations such as the Michael Brown incident, things like that. Now do not get me wrong, we need them to be reactive and hold people accountable. However, we must also do more, especially if we are going to hold others accountable; we must hold ourselves accountable as well. We have to be more proactive and try to prevent some of these things from occurring; we have to educate our youth as well.

Participant 7 noted:

To me, as far as Black Lives Matter, do not get me wrong or misunderstand me, but all lives matter to me. It does not matter if you are black, white, purple, or

yellow, it does not matter…gender, sex, or anything, so I really do not have an

opinion when it comes to that because I am standing for all lives.

Summary

The chapter concentrated on the presented results for this study. The interview

questions posed to participants were derived from the theory of unintended consequences,

which was closely connected to the primary research question. As such, one central

research question and three subquestions served as the guide for this study. Data

collection was completed by way of semi-structured interviews that were conducted over

the Internet utilizing Skype and a standard voice recorder app. Following this, NVivo 12,

a data analysis software program, was utilized to store, code, evaluate and interpret the

information gathered by interviews (Rudestam et al., 2015). I applied data analysis steps

that were consistent with Moustakas' principles, who is considered a pioneer in

phenomenological research, to scrutinize all interviews administered. As a result, four

themes materialized in responding to the research questions.

The four themes include commitment to service, police officers' perception of the

media, impact of the Ferguson Effect, and attitude towards civil liability. The four themes

are all related to the need to have an established method to improve the relationship

between the police and the minority community. The initial theme to emerge in the study

was a commitment to service. All seven of the participants shared a strong commitment

to service, as well as being satisfied overall with the police department where they work.

The second theme developed for the study was police officers' perception of the

media. Majority of the participants believe that, the media as a major influencer of the

public is supposed to undertake the role of bringing together the public and the police. The media is seen by the police department as deteriorating the relationship that exists by sensationalized reporting on minority suspects that may not be factually accurate. Police officers are an important part of the society and play crucial roles in enforcing law and order. Without their presence, the society would experience several cases of disorder such as violence and an increase in crimes. In such cases, the research shows that there is need for support from the community and media on achieving a just and orderly society. When undertaking their responsibility, the officers have been focusing on establishing better relations with the media so that they may create the right relationship and promote their work without any form of bias.

The third theme that emerged in the study was the impact of the Ferguson Effect. All seven participants accept the fact the Ferguson Effect exists, so much so, that participants 3 and 4 advised me "the Ferguson Effect has been present during their entire law enforcement career". The findings indicate, despite their perception of the Ferguson Effect, majority of the participants do not believe it affects how they discharge their mandates in the commission of their sworn duties. When carrying out their roles and responsibilities, the police understand that there is a major distrust between them and the minority communities in America.

The fourth theme that developed was police officers' attitude towards civil liability. The findings from the research demonstrate that there is a general recognition of civil liability among the police officers and a strong emphasis to abide by departmental training guidelines. All seven participants recognize that behavior that does not comply

with the department's standard operating procedures could subject them to personal civil liability action.

Lastly, other findings pertaining to the central research question on how the Ferguson Effect influenced the culture and perceptions of police officers in local departments materialized. Given that, the Theory of Unintended Consequences framework served as a guide to ascertain the participant's perspective on BLM. Majority of the participants have shown acceptance towards the formation of the civil rights petition. What is more, most of them support BLM, but believe it should halt any association with violence towards law enforcement and re-center its attention on bringing people together in terms of co-existing.

In this chapter, the demographics, setting, method of data collection, method of data analysis, evidence of trustworthiness, data analysis results, and a summary was explained. In Chapter 5, details of the interpretation of research findings, the limitations of the study, implications for positive social change, recommendations on future research, and a conclusion will be provided. In addition, the final chapter will include a comprehensive summation of completed dissertation.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The objective for this phenomenological qualitative research study was to investigate the shared lived experiences of a sample of seven law enforcement officers who are of legal age (21 or older) with reference to how the Ferguson effect has influenced their perception, opinions, and behavior in performing their sworn duties. This fit with the aim of phenomenological research, which is to discern the important parts of an individual's lived experience related to the phenomenon while defining the identified phenomenon (Yuksel et al., 2015). Conducting this phenomenological research study was unique because it addressed an underresearched area on police officers' views on civil litigation and depolicing (Ferdik, 2013; Rushin & Edwards, 2017). Results could provide insights to effect positive social change by building on existing scholarship on police reform initiatives.

A combination of social media outlets, such as Linkedin and Facebook, was used to assist with participant eligibility and identification. As such, 10 eligible participants across three police departments located the Midwest and Southeastern United States were considered. Three eligible participants elected not to move forward after initial contact, leaving seven volunteers (five men and two women) willing to participate and share their lived experiences with the Ferguson effect. After signed consent forms were received, each participant's interview was completed through Skype and took place between April 3, 2018–April 23, 2018, with the interviews averaging 36 minutes.

Discussion

This phenomenological qualitative research study was administered to fill a gap in knowledge on current literature related to the Ferguson effect by focusing on the police officer's point of view. As such, this chapter will cover the major findings discovered as it relates to literature on the influence of the Ferguson effect on police officers in local police departments. Moreover, a discussion that connects this research study with the theoretical framework, limitations of the study, future research areas, and a summary will be included. This chapter also encompasses discussion and future research opportunities to assist with answering the following research questions:

Research Question 1: How has the Ferguson effect influenced the culture and perceptions of police officers in local departments?

Subquestion 2: What are police officers' perceptions of the Ferguson effect?

Subquestion 3: How do police officers stigmatized by the threat of civil liability action overcome their fears of the Ferguson effect to effectively perform their sworn duties?

The Ferguson effect has been an issue in American society due to the negative media coverage scrutinizing policing tactics, racial profiling, and excessive force incidents between police officers and Black/Latino males. For this reason, it has become difficult for them to carry out their sworn duties with certain segments of the population, resulting in the police becoming less proactive in public safety efforts, as they fear subjection to negative media scrutiny. The research has provided an opportunity for police officers to share their views on various issues related to the Ferguson effect as well

as look at previous studies on police use of excessive force, cases of racial profiling, and public perception on police work.

The results can be used as evidence to reform the law enforcement practices related to the under-researched area of police officer's views on civil litigation and depolicing (Ferdik, 2013; Rushin & Edwards, 2017) in local police departments. The findings have shown that the Ferguson effect has influenced police officers' perceptions but not their behavior on how they perform their duties. Despite their perception of the Ferguson effect, most participants did not believe it affects how they follow mandates for their sworn duties.

The goal of qualitative analysis is to deduce the qualitative data collected into patterns for themes to emerge so that pertinent questions related to the research study are answered, providing results that are noteworthy (Patton, 2015). I used NVivo 12 data analysis software to organize, analyze, and code the data collected from participant interviews, and four prominent themes emerged: (a) commitment to service, (b) perception of the media, (c) impact of the Ferguson effect, and (d) attitude towards civil liability.

Interpretations of the Findings

To probe the perceptions of the seven law enforcement officers, all of whom are 21 or older, related to the Ferguson effect impact on opinions and behavior in the commission of their sworn duties, this phenomenological qualitative research study was designed to answer one central research question and two subquestions. Four prominent themes were identified to include commitment to service, police officers' perception of

the media, impact of the Ferguson effect, and attitude toward civil liability, to answer the research questions. The four themes to be expounded upon in subsequent sections are all related to the need to have an established method to improve the trust between the police and the minority community.

I adopted Merton's (1936) theory of unintended consequences to interpret the findings from this research study. The concept of unexpected consequence informed me about the potential unintended consequences that the fear of lawsuits and media scrutiny has had on law enforcement officer activities. In the upcoming section, an interpretation of the results from this lens with the primary and three subset research questions will be detailed.

Primary Research Question

The central research question was: How has the Ferguson effect influenced the culture and perceptions of police officers in local departments? Culture in local police departments represents the way activities are done as well as the interactions that occur between certain groups. The findings for the primary research question revealed that all seven of the participants shared a strong commitment to service as well as being satisfied overall with the police department where they work. This is significant, because Theme 1 confirms and supports previous findings from Morin, Parker, Stepler, and Mercer (2017), who examined police officers' perceptions, attitudes, and experiences in local police departments nationally. The findings are also consistent with Merton's (1936) theory of unintended consequences, which was originally used to analyze the issue of unintended consequences of deliberate actions aimed at causing social change.

This study's conclusion is that the Ferguson effect has had a major effect on the culture and perception of police officers in local police departments, with respect to how the police interact with the public as well as how they are perceived to carry out their duties. First, the police became more conscious of their surrounding when carrying out their duties. This has affected how they carry out their duties both positively and negatively. For instance, police officers must fully understand departmental policies and procedures governing each action before they apply enhanced law enforcement methods or tactics. Additionally, if they are not ready to take an action regarding their sworn duties, it may become controversial or considered depolicing.

At the local police department, some of the police felt that they do not have the support of the public in carrying out their duties. The finding suggests these perceptions are more likely to occur when there is difference in race. To illustrate, some Caucasian officers felt apprehensive when enforcing law among Black/Latino males in local communities. Although they would undertake their duties, they were resigned to the fact that applying their duties would subject them to being called racist or other derogatory terms. The findings from this research ensure that the police officers' difficulty is addressed in relation to the Ferguson effect, and training was identified as an important component to address the issues facing police officers. Due to the Ferguson effect, the local police departments acknowledged the importance of regular training among officers in adapting to various changes experienced in society.

Interpretation of Subquestion 2

Research has suggested that law enforcement officers were acting less proactively when civilian backlash arose following the implementation of controversial police practices and policies (Oliver, 2015). For example, Nix and Wolfe (2016) showed that post-Ferguson, a large number of police officers reported feeling: (a) demotivated to practice proactive policing, (b) more apprehensive regarding use of force even in scenarios that may require it, (c) policing had been transformed into a more dangerous occupation, (d) their fellow officers had been impacted negatively, and (e) citizens' perceptions of the law enforcement had worsened. The police officers that felt they had been unfavorably affected by negative media coverage in the months after Ferguson and expressed the unwillingness to work jointly with the community (Nix & Wolfe, 2016).

Results from this study confirm and extend on what is known regarding the Ferguson effect impact on police officers' culture and perceptions in local police departments. The findings indicated that most of the participants believe that the negative media scrutiny has brought deteriorating relations between the public and the police. Although the police engage in carrying out their duties as outlined, they may be seen as against the public through the lens of the media. Moreover, all seven participants acknowledge awareness of the Ferguson effect, and the research suggests that despite the awareness of the Ferguson effect, most participants did not believe it affects how they work and how they respond to events.

Interpretation of Subquestion 3

Civil liability can be defined as the potential responsibility for paying damages or court-enforcements in lawsuits, as determined from criminal liability, which implies open to punishment for crimes. Research has suggested that perceived risk is important to consider with civil liability by law enforcement officers (Ferdick, 2013). Perceived risk relates to how the media can provide negatively-biased accounts of police tasks with the increase of smartphone technology that can record events that involve the police. Perceived risk from insufficient training featured the view that the training afforded to the officers was insufficient for preparing them for on-the-street encounters and perceived-risk complacency and inexperience involved the concern that inexperienced police officers are at higher risk of facing legal suits compared to their tenured peers (Ferdick, 2013).

Another important concept related to civil liability is indemnification. Schwartz (2014) found that law enforcement officers are often indemnified. In the period of the study, governments paid about 99.98% of the money that plaintiffs recovered in legal suits over alleged civil rights violation by police officers. Additionally, police officers did not satisfy punitive damage awards filed against them and did not contribute anything to judgments or settlements, even in a case where indemnification was barred by policy or law and even where police officers were prosecuted, sacked, or disciplined for their behavior (Schwartz, 2014).

Similar to Ferdick (2013) and Schwartz (2014), the results from this study confirm and extend on existing knowledge with respect to the Ferguson effect's impact

on police officers' culture and perceptions in local police departments. The findings

suggest that there is a general awareness of civil liability among the police officers and an

emphasis on adhering to training guidelines. All seven participants acknowledged that

behavior that falls outside of department's standard operating procedures could open

them up to personal civil liability action. As a result of the Ferguson effect, there have

been numerous concerns when police officers fail to act proactively due to apprehension

about negative media publicity, civil liabilities, and even sackings. Because of this fact,

all participants have been engaging in training activities so that they can be

knowledgeable and compliant with all departmental policies and procedures. This has

helped them learn how to undertake any action that may negate civil liability action and

overcome their fears of the Ferguson effect in order to effectively perform their sworn

duties.

Interpretation of Other Findings

Even more, other findings pertaining to the central research question on how the

Ferguson effect influenced the culture and perceptions of police officers in local

departments materialized. The theory of unintended consequences framework served as a

guide to ascertain the participant's perspective on BLM. This element of the phenomenon

was not a theme identified in the literature, which may be directly related to the lack of

research on police officers' perceptions of the BLM as an unintended consequence of the

Ferguson Effect. From the research findings, majority of the participants have shown

acceptance towards the formation of the civil rights petition. What is more, most of them

support BLM but believe it should halt any association with violence toward law enforcement and re-center its attention on bringing people together in terms of coexisting.

Limitations of the Study

I identified two possible limitations regarding the trustworthiness of this study that became apparent during its completion. The initial possible limitation would have been my personal viewpoint of police officers based on multiple racial profiling incidents experienced. As such, personal bias, opinions, and feelings could have negatively affected data collection and analysis of data skewing the research findings. I overcame this possible limitation by creating and implementing a research strategy that included a varied use of social media outlets to identify research participants, working with the police department's public information officer to secure the seven qualified participants. Informed consent was secured by signed documents exchanged through email, after which each eligible volunteer was emailed an interview questionnaire, upon receipt of completed questionnaire scheduled a convenient interview date and time that was completed via Skype. Following this, NVIVO 12 and TEMI software was utilized to code, sort, organize, transcribe verbatim and analyze collected data from interviews. Patterns and themes emerged from analysis of collected data, of which those identified were reported on in this study.

The second possible limitation to the trustworthiness of this phenomenological qualitative research study could be any participant bias that was not communicated with me the researcher. Each participant appeared to be receptive to the interview questions posed and candid in their responses. The study, tried to obtain the police officers point of

view regarding the Ferguson Effect, therefore the potential for an undisclosed agenda could be possible although unlikely. I can verify that each participant was of legal age, 21 or older and answered the questions outlined in the interview questionnaire, matching the recorded information and handwritten responses received and substantiated against notes taken during each interview session.

Recommendations

The objective of this phenomenological qualitative research study was to explore the lived experiences of seven police officers to understand if any influences on their perceptions, demeanor, or opinions related to the Ferguson Effect impacted police officer culture within local police departments. The findings from this research study support previous studies on the Ferguson Effect phenomenon and assert that it has had a positive and negative impact on police officer culture in the identified local police departments discussed. Recommendations for future study may include a qualitative phenomenological or focused ethnographic approach to ascertain the Ferguson Effects impact on the culture and perceptions of police officers in larger metropolitan police departments where the sample size is greater. A second recommendation for future research would be a qualitative inquiry into police officers' perceptions of BLM as an unintended consequence. This would allow investigators to identify if any implicit bias exist and does it lead to de-policing action or unwillingness to work jointly with the community.

Implications for Positive Social Change

With this research study, noteworthy implications for positive social change presented itself. Notably, the introduction of the police officer's voice in the national debate regarding the Ferguson Effect and their perception of its impact on their culture in local police departments, community engagement with minority citizens, and civil liability. The findings confirmed that police officers acknowledge the existence of the Ferguson Effect and a distrust between law enforcement and the minority public exists. The problem needs to be addressed and local police departments are addressing the distrust that is present through continuous training of its law enforcement officers and procedural justice initiatives.

To illustrate, some police departments have mandated training on cultural competence, racial/implicit bias and community-oriented policing tactics. Furthermore, from a societal perspective the results from this study could serve as a tool to identify the structural disparity of the administration of justice by law enforcement towards the minority citizenry. More importantly, build upon existing scholarship on police reform initiatives so, police administrators, public policy makers, academic scholars, the media, and the citizenry at large can work collaboratively to improve trust and to enforce the Rule of Law equally.

Conclusion

The Ferguson effect exists, highlighting a continued distrust between law enforcement and Black/Latino males through the lens of increased media scrutiny. Resulting in a legitimacy crisis within local police departments, especially on issues

relating to racial bias and the administration of justice in minority communities. Despite this fact, the study shows the participants share a strong commitment to service and overall satisfaction with their police department. Therefore, to fully understand and ascertain the Ferguson Effect's impact on police officers' culture and perceptions in local police departments, it was necessary to attain police officer's viewpoints on the phenomenon. Deducing the lived or shared experiences of seven law enforcement officers, each of whom were 21 years of age or older and worked in three different police departments in the Midwest and southeastern regions of the United States was paramount.

That is to say, the findings from this phenomenological qualitative research study confirms and extends on previous research findings from Ferdik (2013), Nix & Wolfe (2016), Oliver (2015), and Schwartz (2014). Specifically, the findings found that, majority of the participants believe, that the negative media scrutiny has brought deteriorating relations between the public and the police. Although the police carry out their duties as outlined, they are portrayed as if they are against the public through the lens of the media. Moreover, all seven participants acknowledge awareness of the Ferguson Effect, and the research suggests, despite the awareness of the Ferguson Effect, majority of the participants do not believe it affects how they discharge their mandates and how they respond to events.

Moreover, the findings from the research also suggests there is a general awareness of civil liability among the police officers and a strong emphasis on adhering to training guidelines. All seven participants acknowledged that behavior that falls

outside of department's standard operating procedures could open them up to personal

civil liability action. As a result, of the Ferguson Effect, there has been numerous

concerns and issues particularly when police officers fail to act proactively, due to

apprehension about negative media publicity, civil liabilities, and even sackings. Because

of this fact, all participants have been engaging in training activities so that they can be

knowledgeable and compliant with all departmental policies and procedures. This has

helped them learn how to undertake any action that may negate civil liability action and

overcome their fears of the Ferguson Effect in order to effectively perform their sworn

duties.

Owing to this fact, the results from this study allows for recommendations for

future study which may include a qualitative phenomenological or focused ethnographic

approach to ascertain the Ferguson Effects impact on the culture and perceptions of

police officers in larger metropolitan police departments where the sample size is greater.

A second recommendation for future research would be a qualitative inquiry into police

officers' perceptions of BLM as an unintended consequence. This would allow

investigators to identify if any implicit bias exist and does it lead to de-policing action or

unwillingness to work jointly with the community. As these are mere suggestions,

chapter 2 highlights a wealth of literature in which a researcher can review and pursue

future research opportunities.

Lastly, with this research study, noteworthy implications for positive social

change presented itself. Notably, the introduction of the police officer's voice in the

national debate regarding the Ferguson Effect and their perception of its impact on their

culture in local police departments, community engagement with minority citizens, and civil liability. The police officers view point suggest that the Ferguson effect has in most cases influenced how officer take action especially when enforcing laws on the minority communities. The local police department culture should be influenced by organizational and procedural justice initiatives spearheaded by police administrators to improve trust with minority communities in which they work.

In addition, continuous training that addresses use of lethal or excessive force tactics, racial/implicit bias in policing and civil liability should be mandatory training in taking any action of law enforcement. Other interventions such as mandatory use of body cameras during officer-civilian encounters and the use of dashboard cameras during traffic stops can improve the negative reputation officers have been experienced due to the Ferguson effect. Recorded evidence involving police-civilian interactions can help to improve the officers' accountability in enforcing nonbiased civilian engagement and protect them from being accused falsely of racial bias where none may have existed in the wake of media reporting and scrutiny. Misconduct among officers should also be discouraged and each officer encouraged being accountable for his or her actions. The civilian as part of the affected party also need to cooperate with officers to produce public safety.

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Appendix A: Interview Questions

The Ferguson Effect on Police Officers' Culture and Perceptions in Local Police

Departments

Research Study Interview Questions

Instructions: Please answer the following questions as thoroughly as possible and to the best of your ability and recollection.

A brief synopsis of my study is, there continues to be distrust between minority citizens and police officers in the wake of high-profile shootings of unarmed African-Males by police officers (Michael Brown, LaQuan McDonald, Philando Castile etc). As such, a national debate is ongoing regarding police officers deadly use of force and the subsequent reaction such as increased media scrutiny and civil liability actions against police officers. As a result, crime in certain areas has increased, causing some to suggest proactive policing is on decline and de-policing actions are occurring due to police officers fear of sensationalized media or the threat of being sued for completing their duties (Ferguson Effect). The current literature on the Ferguson Effect is primarily Quantitative and from the perspective of the citizens affected. My focus is to glean shared experiences from police officers that may or may not have experienced the Ferguson Effect impact on the commission of their duties. Attaining your feedback is essential to rebuilding the trust between law enforcement and the minority communities that you serve.

The Ferguson Effect hypothesis posits that police officers are aware of the negative media coverage surrounding their occupation, know that the public might record their conduct and thus become unwilling to perform their work in a bid to avoid accusations of excessive force or racial profiling (Rushin & Edwards, 2017).

Research Question
- RQ1: How has the Ferguson Effect influenced the culture and perceptions of police officers in local departments?

Probing Question #1:
1. Describe the location/neighborhood of regular patrol assignments (inner city, suburbs, rural area?

Follow-up question – Have you worked in this type of environment for your entire career?

Probing Question #2
1. Talk about a typical day at work. What does it look like?

2. What does your work mean to you?

3. Tell me about your overall satisfaction with the local department in which you work?

4. How do you feel about the training that you receive from your department to do your job?

5. Tell me what you dislike about your job?

Sub Q2: What are police officers' perceptions of the Ferguson Effect?

6. What does the Ferguson effect mean to you?

7. How do you perceive the media treats police officers?

8. Do you perceive that encounters with Black and/or Latino have become more intense?

9. Are you hesitant to stop and question suspicious people of a particular race, even when warranted?
10. Are you more cautious to use force, even when appropriate?

Probing Question #3
What is your current viewpoint on the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement?

SubQ3: How do police officers' stigmatized by the threat of civil liability action overcome their fears of the Ferguson Effect in order to effectively perform their sworn duties?

1. What significant fears in respect to the threat of civil liability action do you have regarding your safety in the completion of daily duties of policing?

2. Describe any apprehension that you may have towards personal civil liability?