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# Refugee Stereotyping Among Law Enforcement Officers in the States of Michigan and Texas and its Potential Effects on Refugee Policy

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Abstract

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MA, University of Maryland University College, 2014

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Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Terrorism Mediation and Peace

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Abstract

After the November 2015 Paris, France terror attacks when a terrorist posed as a refugee, the United States and other Western countries increased their concern regarding the flow of refugees into their countries. The United States admitted more than 84,000 refugees into the country from September 2015 through October 2016. The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore and comprehend the lived experiences of law enforcement officers from the states of Michigan and Texas and their attitudes and behaviors toward refugees in their state. The main research questions addressed the lived experiences of law enforcement officers in the states of Michigan and Texas relative to stereotyping and bias toward refugees resettled within the US and If there are, how they view refugees and the greatest influences on law enforcement officers' perceptions towards refugees. Implicit bias theory provided the theoretical framework for the study. Data were collected using purposeful sampling and semi-structured recorded interviews of 9 law enforcement officers from the states of Michigan and Texas. This study findings suggested law enforcement officers' early family experiences were related to stereotyping and bias toward refugees. The present research filled the gap in the literature by investigating if law enforcement officers have a stereotypical implicit bias toward refugees within the United States. The present study encourages positive social change through a qualitative prediction of law enforcement stereotypical implicit bias toward refugees.

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my mother and father who taught me the value of education.  I also dedicate this work to my wife for encouraging me not to give up on my dream of earning a doctoral degree.  I would also like to dedicate this work to my two children for their role in making my dream a reality.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

**Introduction**

The international refugee crisis caused national security concerns for Western European countries and the United States. The accurate or inaccurate linkages between refugees and terrorist actors have raised American citizens' awareness of security concerns for resettled refugees within the United States.

The present study investigated how law enforcement perceives refugees and what factors influence their malleability of stereotypes and inherent bias. The study analyzed narratives of law enforcement officers in the states of Michigan and Texas. The study provides insight into law enforcement lived experiences and feelings about all refugees resettled within the United States. The study draws from personal interviews with law enforcement officers' descriptions of their experiences with refugees. The study may be useful to expose law enforcement's unconscious perception of refugees resettled within the United States after the November 2015 Paris, France terrorist attacks. The findings provide a rich contextual understanding of the phenomena with a thematic analysis of law enforcement experiences and how those experiences contribute to the treatment of resettled refugees. The findings might be used to influence cultural diversity training among law enforcement.

In Chapter 1 of the study the researcher discusses how terrorism and the international refugee crisis may have conflated. The purpose of this study is to investigate if the Paris, France terrorist attacks and how the public discourse surrounding the attacks influence law enforcement's attitudes and outward behavior toward refugees. Specifically, the findings of the study will aid in the understanding of law enforcement and stereotypical implicit bias towards

refugees. This study investigated what factors influence law enforcement's behavior toward refugees and what contributes to their conduct with refugees. The use of Allport's implicit bias theory will provide the theoretical framework for the study.

## Background

Documentation of police officers' unconscious behavior or implicit bias presented in the literature (eg., James 2018; Spencer, Charbonneau, & Glaser, 2016) is not new. Most of the research focuses on police bias toward African Americans and Latinos. A few studies also examined refugee perceptions of police and police bias towards them (Chenane, Jawjeong, & Huey-Long Song, 2017; Wu, Smith & Sun 2013). The researcher was unable to locate research literature that explored the lived experiences of law enforcement officers' attitudes and behaviors toward refugees in the United States. A perceiver's attitude and outward behavior toward a person or social group may be associated with cognitive evaluative and or stereotypical associations. As expressed by van Nunspeet, Ellemers and Derks (2015) implicit bias is an automatic evaluative and/or stereotypical association about a person or social group. Devin (1989) suggested that implicit bias might be controlled through a deliberative process. Mackie and Hamilton (1993) asserted that during emotional arousal such as anxiety, intellectual resources are reduced and the capability of controlling implicit bias. High cognitive ability might influence the stereotypical development and modify behavior (Lick, Alter & Freeman, 2018; Ojanen, 2010). As expressed by Allport (1954), stereotypical development is a natural cognitive process. Other studies (Seate & Mastro, 2016; Smith & Mason, 2016) expressed that

environmental stimuli and cultural influences can shape a perceiver's behavior toward social groups.

Because of the Paris, attacks and the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) assertion that refugee security screening is not accurate, it caused 31 United States governors to express objections to the government resettling of refugees in their states. State governors from Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Wisconsin, and Wyoming (Fantz, & Brumfield, 2017) declined to accept Syrian refugees within their states until the accurate vetting of refugees could be confirmed.  The states argued that under the Tenth Amendment, they had the right to protect their citizens' interest against a potential threat from refugees (Fandl, 2017).  The state governors requested the federal government provide specific details of refugees scheduled for resettlement within their state.  As expressed by Fandl (2017), the federal government is required to notify states of pending resettlements within their state. However, the federal government is not required to provide personal information of each refugee to a state.  The United States Constitution Supremacy Clause is the "supreme law of the land" (Legal Information Institute, n.d.; Fandl, 2017) and prohibits states involvement in federal foreign affairs such as immigration and refugee resettlement.  The inherent state powers of immigration and refugee resettlement are limited to a state's authority to regulate if it does not exclusively discriminate and conflict with federal law (Fandl, 2017).

From September 2015 through October 2016, the United States government resettled 84,994 refugees nationwide (RPC, 2018). Refugees resettled within the United States are subject to abide by the laws of the state where they are relocated, including those enforced by state and local law enforcement officers. A study of American citizens suggests the public likeability of refugees was negatively affected by the exaggerated generalization of the social group (Tent Foundation, 2016). Because law enforcement officers often originate from the society they are sworn to protect, they are subject to the same social and cultural stimuli as non-law enforcement individuals. From October 2015 through September 2016 the states of Michigan and Texas resettled 4,258 and 7,802 (RPC, 2018) respectively, more than any other individual state.

### Problem Statement

Recent international incidents may have had a significant influence on the public's view of refugees as well as US law enforcement officers. One such incident occurred in November 2015 when a terrorist posed as a Syrian refugee to carry out attacks in Paris, France. The linkage between refugees and terrorist actors might form a refugee terrorist stereotype and influence the perceptions of refugees in general. As expressed by Allport (1954), stereotypes are evaluative categorizations placed on a social group to link characteristics of group behavior. The act of categorization can happen within the conscious and unconscious awareness of a perceiver. The relationship between implicit bias and a stereotype is malleable and may form favorable or unfavorable attitudes toward a social group (Gawronski & Payne 2010).

Law enforcement's stereotypical implicit bias is well documented in the literature as it relates to minorities, such as African Americans and Latinos. The researched literature suggests

the law enforcement's stereotypical implicit bias has produced discriminatory and prejudice actions towards social groups. The problem is there were no studies found in the research literature that have investigated the attitudes and behavior that law enforcement officers in the US have toward refugees. Because of the resettling of Syrian refugees, negative public likeability of refugees, and due to the political polarization of this issue, this issue has reached the forefront of public policy discourse.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore and comprehend the lived experiences of law enforcement officers from Michigan and Texas and their attitudes and behaviors toward refugees in their state. Michigan and Texas were selected due to the number of refugees, 4,258 and 7,802 (RPC, 2018), respectively, resettled from October 2015 through September 2016. From the 31 states that initially publicly refused to accept Syrian refugees, Michigan and Texas resettled the most overall refugees during the aforementioned period.

This study is based on implicit bias theory, which states that a perceiver may have unintentional mental associations towards a phenomenon. A perceiver's cognitive process might happen outside their awareness and ultimately influence judgement and decision making.

**Research Questions**

RQ1: Are there lived experiences of law enforcement officers in the states of Michigan and Texas relative to stereotyping and bias toward refugees resettled within the US?

RQ2: If there are [lived experiences], how do they view refugees and what might have the greatest influences on law enforcement officers' perceptions towards refugees?

## Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for the study is Allport's implicit bias theory. Through the implicit bias lens, the researcher investigated if state law enforcement officers have a stereotypical implicit bias that may influence their attitude and behavior toward refugees resettled within the United States. Implicit bias is the unintentional mental association towards a phenomenon (Allport, 1954).

In his seminal work, *The Nature of Prejudice*, Allport (1954) identified and described the human nature of Implicit Bias Theory and its effect on cognitive judgment and decision making. Allport argued that a perceiver's cognitive processes might happen outside of his or her awareness and ultimately influence judgment and decision making. There are diverse causes that can influence a perceiver's cognitive processes that might contribute to implicit bias. In this study, law enforcement officers' experiences with refugees will draw from their visuospatial, acoustic, or haptic interactions with a specific target social group and how it might influence implicit bias.

As expressed by Allport (1954) in defining implicit bias, humans have a natural tendency to characterize a person or social group based on known stereotypes. This is unlike explicit bias, whereby a person knowingly can express animus towards a person or social group. Implicit bias is the unconscious expression of attitudes and behaviors toward a person or social group. The unconscious expression of attitudes and behaviors toward a person or social group may or may

not have animus tendency. Allport (1954) expressed that humans categorize known stereotypes to help a perceiver make sense of the world around them. Further, Allport suggested that explicit and implicit bias might be the basis for prejudice, discrimination, and animus towards a person or social group. Fridell and Lim (2016) found that explicit and implicit bias in police officers may be dependent on an officer's perception, jurisdictions, and situation. Further, Fridell and Lim suggested that an officer's life experiences have a relationship with implicit bias and how they may respond to a person or social group.

There is a need to explore and understand how police officers' life experiences influence their attitudes and behaviors toward refugees. The rationale for the selection of Implicit Bias Theory is because police officers are inherent to society and subject to the same cognitive process as non-officers. The authority that police officers can exert on society must be administered without personal prejudice or discrimination. The study is relevant to explore how police officers perceive refugees. For this reason, Implicit Bias Theory provides a method to explore law enforcement view of a person or social group. Prior experience can determine outward behavior outside their conscious awareness (Kahn, Steele, McMahon, & Stewart, (n.d.). This study relates to the continual challenge to understand police officers' perception of a person or social group and the bias mechanisms that could influence their attitude and outward behavior.

**Nature of Study**

The nature of this study is qualitative. As expressed in Creswell (2009), a qualitative research study is suitable to understand social problems. van Manen (2014) expressed that a qualitative phenomenological study is suitable to understand the human experience.

Furthermore, a qualitative phenomenological inquiry not only helps researchers understand participants' experiences, but it also helps the researcher gain experiences (van Manen, 2014) for what it is like to be a law enforcement officer. Law enforcement is challenged with the ethical and pragmatic response to enforce the public law that is free of stereotypical behavior.

As expressed by Creswell (2009) and Rubin and Rubin (2012), the researcher serves as the primary data collection tool for a phenomenological inquiry. Data collected from rich concrete narratives were analyzed for categories, themes, and concepts that would help to understand the study participants' experiences and what it means to be a law enforcement officer.

The design of this study used purposeful sampling and semi-structured interviews. Interviews are the cornerstone of qualitative research (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The researcher conducted personal interviews with law enforcement officers at a location of participants' choosing. Internet software such as Skype was not used in the absence of face to face interviews or telephone interviews. Telephone interviews were used to invoke detailed narratives of law enforcement experiences. Interview questions were specifically designed as open-ended to encourage a free flow of communication. The use of semi-structured interviews provided the researcher the opportunity for clarification and follow up questions. Clarification questions were central to understand the concepts of the participants' responses. By recognizing the concepts, the researcher was able to understand the lived experiences of state law enforcement officers and whether if stereotypical implicit bias exists. The uses of phenomenological research identified

constructs that influence state law enforcement officers' judgment. A clear expression of the thematic findings will justify current practices and the potential for new processes

## Definitions

*Implicit Biases: T*he automatic evaluative and/or stereotypical associations people make with their own and other groups" (van Nunspeet, Ellemers & Derks, 2015, p. 207)

*Phenomenological:* The attitude "to regard everything from the perspective of consciousness that is to look at all objects from the perspective of how they are experienced regardless of whether or not they actually are the way they are being experienced" (Giorgi, 2009 p. 87).

*Refugee:* A person living outside of their home country and is unable or unwilling to return due to persecution or fear of persecution because of race, religion, nationality, membership in a social group or political organization (Refugee Act, 1980).

*Stereotype:* An exaggerated belief associated with a category. "It functions to justify (rationalize) our conduct in relation to that category" (Allport, 1945, p. 191).

*Terrorist:* A person committed to incite violence, commit violence, cause death or serious bodily harm to further political, social, or religious goals.

## Assumptions

There was an assumption that study participants could articulate their experiences in concrete descriptions. Also, it was assumed descriptions presented were accurate as possible to a participant's lived experiences. As the researcher, there is an assumption that epoche or

bracketing personal experiences will not interfere with the analysis. Phenomenological research requires the researcher to understand the essence of the participants' lived experiences whether they share similar perceptions or not. Bracketing of personal experiences allows the researcher to focus on presented experiences. Giorgi (2009) asserted that it is critical in phenomenology research not to use past experiences to evaluate the present. The assumptions are necessary as they can affect the collection of the raw data, results of analysis and results of the study.

## Scope and Delimitations

In this study, the researcher investigated law enforcements' perception of refugees, specifically law enforcement officers within Michigan and Texas. The specific interest of this study is to understand law enforcement officers' perceptions of resettled refugees in America in the aftermath of the 2015 Paris, France terrorist attack. The results of the study contribute to an understanding of law enforcement's use of categorizations of a person or social group as a principal for implicit bias. While there might be advancements in understanding law enforcement officers' cognitive response to social groups, it is unclear how law enforcement experiences with refugees make them feel and how that feeling is attributed to how refugees are treated. The findings of the study might be transferable to bias based policing research for social groups such as African Americans and Latinos.

## Limitations

A limitation of the present study is that the findings will not represent the total population of law enforcement officers, rather the findings are restricted to the interviewed participants and

those only located in Michigan and Texas. Further research should extend to other departments

and agencies to determine how the findings of this study correlate with other states. The study

might have been impacted by participants' rationale for taking part in the study. Participation in

the study was voluntary and may have resulted in those participants knowingly proving

inaccurate information that may have an adverse effect on the findings. The researcher

acknowledges that other limitations may present themselves as outside the scope but relevant to

understanding officers' experiences with refugees.

## Significance

The study will recommend policies to encourage positive social change through a

qualitative prediction of law enforcement attitudes and behaviors toward refugees and identify

strategies to achieve social equality for refugees. The findings may inform law enforcement

within other Western countries regarding strategies how to identify and eradicate refugee

stereotypes and foster positive social change.

## Summary

Law enforcement's stereotypical implicit bias is well documented in the literature as it

relates to minorities such as African Americans and Latinos. However, there was no empirical

literature that discussed law enforcement's attitudes and behavior toward refugees resettled in the

United States. Because law enforcement officers might come from the communities in which

they service, their chronic and situational experiences are of interest to understand if they

influence attitudes and behaviors toward refugees.  In Chapter 2, the researcher will discuss the relevant literature that shaped the present study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

**Introduction**

Recent international incidents may have had a significant influence on the public's view of refugees as well as on US law enforcement officers.  One such incident occurred in November 2015 when a terrorist posed as a Syrian refugee to carry out attacks in Paris, France. The linkage between refugees and terrorist actors might form a refugee terrorist stereotype and influence the perceptions of refugees in general.  As expressed in Allport (1954) stereotypes are evaluative categorizations placed on a social group to link characteristics of group behavior.  The act of categorization can happen within the conscious and unconscious awareness of a perceiver. The relationship between implicit bias and a stereotype is malleable and may form favorable or unfavorable attitudes toward a social group (Gawronski & Payne, 2010).

Law enforcement's stereotypical implicit bias is well documented in the literature as it relates to minorities such as African Americans and Latinos.  The researched literature suggests the law enforcement's stereotypical implicit bias has produced discriminatory and prejudiced actions towards social groups.  The problem is there are no studies found in the research literature that have investigated the attitudes and behaviors that law enforcement officers in the US have toward refugees.  Because of the resettling of Syrian refugees, negative public likeability of refugees, and due to the political polarization of this issue, this issue has reached the forefront of public policy discourse.

The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore and comprehend the lived experiences of law enforcement officers from Michigan and Texas and their attitudes and behaviors toward refugees in their state. Michigan and Texas were selected due to the number of refugees, 4,258 and 7,802 (RPC, 2018), respectively, resettled from October 2015 through September 2016. From the 31 states that initially publicly refused to accept Syrian refugees, the states of Michigan and Texas resettled the most overall refugees during the aforementioned period.

Chapter 2 begins with background information on the United States' views regarding the refugee problem. There is a discussion about the refugee vetting process before they are resettled within the United States and problems associated with the process. The concept of stereotyping how they are developed and what influence they may have on implicit bias is discussed, as well as how illusory correlations might influence law enforcement's perceptions and outward behaviors toward refugees. Instruments of implicit bias measurement are discussed.

## Literature Search Strategy

The present study draws on newspaper articles, seminal scholarly research articles, and scholarly books to establish the relevance of the problem. The researcher began a search by reviewing newspaper articles related to the international refugee crisis and how European countries were dealing with terrorist security concerns from the flow of refugees entering their countries. The United States also shared similar European security concerns through political discourse in newspapers (Phillip, 2015; Harris, Sanger, & Herszenhorn, 2015; Ross, 2016). Using key terms found in newspaper articles such as terrorism, refugee, stereotype, implicit bias, law enforcement, police, and dehumanization in various combinations, the researcher was able to

gain insight into the scholarly research articles within the Walden online library and seminal books that discussed stereotypes and implicit bias prevalence with social groups.  The Walden online databases used to find information were Criminal Justice & Security, Psychology, and Public Policy & Administration.  While there is considerable information about law enforcements' perceived stereotypical implicit bias towards social groups, there was scarce information about how law enforcement understands refugee social groups and if a stereotypical implicit bias paradigm applies.  Due to the lack of information about law enforcement and their perceptions of refugees, the researcher drew from other scholarly work that examined law enforcement perceptions of different social groups such as African Americans and Latinos where stereotypical implicit bias may have been observed.

The literature discussed how decisions made outside the awareness of a perceiver and how it might influence their attitude and outward behavior towards a person or social group.  The literature suggests that a person might believe they have an egalitarian attitude toward a social group although emotional stimulation or reduced intellectual resources can influence stereotypical implicit bias (Mackie & Hamilton, 1993).  Some believe that implicit bias can be controlled if the perceiver is made aware of their bias (Divine, 1989).  The interaction between French police and refugees after the November 2015 Paris terrorist attacks (Welander, 2017) might have conflated refugees and terrorist actors.  While law enforcement in the United States hold an egalitarian attitude towards social groups, the literature suggests (James, 2018; Spencer, Charbonneau, & Glaser, 2016; Chenane, Jawjeong, & Huey-Long Song, 2017; Wu, Smith & Sun, 2013) that stereotypical implicit bias is pervasive in policing (Spencer, Charbonneau, & Glaser, 2016).  Law enforcement within the United States has a long history of stereotypical

implicit bias toward minorities (Durr, n.d.). Law enforcement attitudes and behaviors might influence refugee resettlement is relevant as the United States becomes more socially and culturally diverse.

## Theoretical Foundation

Gordon Allport's 1954 seminal work, *The Nature of Prejudice*, identified and described the human nature of Implicit Bias Theory and its effect on cognitive judgment and decision making. Allport suggested that a perceiver's cognitive processes might happen outside of their awareness and ultimately influence judgment and decision making. There are eclectic causes that can influence a perceiver's cognitive processes that might contribute to implicit bias. In this study, law enforcement officers' experiences with refugees drew from their visuospatial, acoustic, or haptic interactions with a specific target social group and how it might influence implicit bias.

While implicit bias and stereotypes can be positive or negative, they are dependent on how a perceiver encodes information about an individual or social group and their accessibility to coded information during the decision process. Based on the literature (Allport, 1954; Fridell & Lim, 2016; Levy, n.d.) there is an assumption that implicit bias theory affects a perceiver's unconscious judgment and decision-making processes. Eberhard, Esser and Haider (2017) further suggest through repeated exposure to an individual or social group, an implicit bias develops over time. As expressed by Eberhard et al. (2017) assertion, a perceiver uses implicit learning in a decision process that may strengthen unconscious bias towards a target individual or social group.

Fridell and Lim (2016) conducted a study to understand if police officers' use of force was consistent with implicit bias. Allport (1954) asserted that a key cause of implicit bias might be the automatic tendency to categorize an individual and social group. The categorization of individuals and social groups may be generally stereotyped to help a perceiver make sense of the familiar and unfamiliar. Fridell and Lim (2016) found that implicit bias might contribute to a police officer's decision to use force when there was a repeated behavior associated with an individual or social group. A threat response to an individual or social group may result in a quick reactionary response opposed to a non-threating stimulus (Ruisch, Cone, Shen, & Ferguson, 2018).

The dynamic environment in which law enforcement officers operate may increase the predictability of implicit bias decision strategies. As expressed by Mackie and Hamilton (1993) and Levy (n.d.), the predictability of implicit bias decision strategies is associated with anxiety and stressful emotional states of reduced intellectual resources. During a period of reduced intellectual resources, a perceiver may depend on lesser cognitive strategies during the decision process (Devine, 1989).

Because law enforcement officers may come from an environment in which they serve, understanding how they perceive and encode visual stimuli, social discourse, and physical interactions with refugees might be predictive of attitudes and outward behavior. Implicit bias theory provides the rationale to understand the human experience of being a law enforcement officer interacting with a social group. The present study focuses on the subtle or dramatic influences of the international refugee crisis and the Paris, France terror attacks that have

accurately or inaccurately linked refugees as terrorist actors.  Therefore, the focus of the research questions is on how law enforcement officers perceive refugees.


## Literature Review

### Refugees

The Tent Foundation (2016) conducted a multi-year study to track the international public perception of refugees.  The survey finding of 1,501 American participants suggests that the perception of refugees following the November 2015 Paris, France terrorist attack has negatively influenced their opinion of refugees.  In 2015 and 2016, thirty-eight percent of Americans surveyed expressed a negative attitude about refugees in contrast to thirteen percent with a positive attitude (Tent Foundation, 2016).  In 2016 and 2017 the survey found forty percent expressed negative attitudes while fourteen percent had a positive attitude about refugees (Tent Foundation, 2016).  While there is a general increased awareness of the refugee crisis within the United States, it is unclear how a specific population (law enforcement) view refugees.  The Tent Foundation's (2016) findings provide a general understanding of how Americans feel towards refugees.  As expressed by Connor and Krogstad (2018), in 2017 the United States decreased the number of refugees admitted for resettlement to a level before the adoption of the Refugee Act of 1980.  Connor and Krogstad suggest that the United States' annual refugees' resettlement ceiling for the fiscal year 2018 was set at 45,000, the lowest it has been for more than 35 years.  As expressed by Hartig (2018), the number of Americans that feel the United States does not have a responsibility to accept refugees has increased from February 2017 through May 2018.  As expressed by Blitz (2017), the reconfiguration of refugee policy

extends to the terror attacks of September 11, 2001, as there may be a concerted effort to conflate security with humanitarian efforts. The categorization of a social group such as refugees as a terrorist might influence behavior and judgment by a perceiver. Because law enforcement officers often originate from the society they are sworn to protect, they are subject to the same social and cultural stimuli as non-law enforcement individuals. Those perceivers in positions of authority such as a law enforcement officer may be influenced by thought outside of their intellectual awareness that would inform a stereotypical implicit bias toward a social group. Thus, the purpose of this qualitative study is to explore and comprehend the lived experiences of law enforcement officers from the states of Michigan and Texas relevant to stereotypical attitude and potential bias toward refugees.

**Stereotypes**

The word stereotype was first introduced into the psychological discipline by Walter Lippmann (Allport, 1952). Lippmann (1922) expressed that a stereotype is imaged in mind and held as truth by a perceiver. Lippman suggested that a person's perception of reality is informed by life experiences and those experiences shape mental images of social groups. Lippman further asserted that social stereotypes are a way for a perceiver to catalog social groups as a cognitive survival process.

Liberman, Woodward, and Kinzler (2017) conducted a study to examine the nature and origin of social schemes and if stereotypes are a consequence. Liberman et al. (2017) suggested that during early cognitive development, infants and children can perceive and categorize their social environment, thus suggesting that stereotypes are learned implicitly.

Devine (1989) suggested that stereotypes can be activated outside the awareness of the perceiver and might be controlled with adequate intellectual resources. Stereotype activation is when a perceiver associates a target social group or group member with a preconceived stereotype. Stereotype application is when a perceiver's behavior toward a person or social group is based on stereotypical beliefs. Bos and Stapel (2009) conducted a study to investigate if there are motivations for stereotyping. The authors found that fulfilling personal goals are salient for stereotype activation and application.

Nier, Bajaj, McLean, and Schwartz (n.d.) examined a perceiver's position of power and if it would influence the stereotypical process. The authors used correspondence bias to evaluate the psychological processes that might infer stereotypical beliefs about high and low-status social groups. The authors concluded that high-status perceivers might be predictive of a stereotypical process that influences behavior towards low-status groups. In other words, perceptions of a person in a position of authority can be predictive of stereotypical behavior towards social groups (Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002). While stereotypes can be positive or negative, the linguistic connotations might also influence its malleability.

Cauthen, Robinson, and Krauss (1971) expressed that the descriptive aspect of stereotypical language might manifest through social behavior toward a targeted group. The authors concluded that public opinion influences the inference of stereotypical language and the intensity in which the stereotypes might apply to a social group. As an example, the connotation of the term Syrian refugee might invoke empathy or fear. As expressed by Allport (1954), depending on a perceiver's frame of reference it can influence how they will react to presented information. The media provides perceivers with information that can influence the cognitive

process that supports social stereotypes (Atwell & Mastro, 2016).  As expressed by Thweatt (2005) the media representation of a social group can unconsciously influence relationships between social groups.

## Implicit Bias

Human beings are social animals capable of categorizing individuals into social groups. The categorization of social groups allows a perceiver to predict their environment quickly.  The act of categorization can happen within the conscious and unconscious awareness of a perceiver. Devine (1989) expressed that a perceiver will categorize a person into a group moments after seeing them.

Chen, Ross, and Murphy (n.d.) investigated perceiver category induction to predict possible response to an environmental stimulus.  The authors found a perceiver's implicit cognitive process integrates across multiple categories to decide in contrast to conscious, sophisticated intellectual strategies. Chen et al. (n.d.) assume that a perceiver's implicit cognitive process can provide an accurate response to environmental stimulus.

Payne, Vuletich, and Lundberg (2017) asserted that a perceiver's implicit bias is reflective of social categories. Payne et al. (2017) also assumed that a perceiver's social categories are shaped by exposure to an environmental stimulus.  In other words, Payne et al. (2017) suggested that implicit bias is a social phenomenon derived from a situational influence. Situational factors influence a perceiver's cognitive process (Kofman & Mather, 2017).  In contrast Rivers, Rees, Calanchini, and Sherman (2017) expressed that a perceiver's implicit bias includes cultural and socialization perceptions.

Gawronski and Bodenhausen (2017) argued that a perceiver's implicit bias is a byproduct of chronic and situational factors. The interrelationship between chronic and situational factors may not be severed because they reflect one another (Gawronski & Bodenhausen, 2017). Given that, law enforcement officers are products of the public domain and not exempt from chronic and situational factor.

**Implicit Bias Measures**

The Implicit Association Test (IAT) is a widely used instrument to measure police implicit bias (Cameron, Payne, & Knobe 2010; James, n.d.). The IAT was first introduced by Greenwald, McGhee, and Schwartz in 1998. Greenwald et al. (1998) developed the IAT to identify targeted discrimination. They conducted three test experiments designed to identify implicit discrimination of participant's stimuli response capabilities. Participants were instructed to categorize concepts when pressing corresponding computer keys. The researchers hypothesized that concepts and attributes that are strongly associated with a social group would be categorized quicker than weak associations. This is in line with (Mackie & Hamilton 1993) the assertion that implicit bias decisions require less intellectual resources and produce a quicker response. As expressed by Greenwald et al. (1998), White participants constantly associated White names with more pleasant qualities than Black names at a higher rate. As expressed by Arkes and Tetlock (2004) emotional elements not related to personal animus toward a social group can affect a participant's response time to IAT stimuli. Arkes and Tetlock (2004) expressed that priming may influence automatic association responses. Kawakami, Dovidio, and Dijksterhuis (2003) conducted a study to evaluate if social priming effected a person's attitude.

They concluded that participant may adapt attitudes and characteristic constant when socially primed. As expressed by Payne Cheng, Govorun, and Stewart (2005) unrelated events can influence judgement. Payne et al. (2005) introduced the affect misattribution procedure (AMP) as a method to measure implicit bias.

Affect Misattribution Procedure (AMP) measure works by presenting a participant with a prime image and followed by an ambiguous target image. Payne and collogues found that participant's perception of the target was influenced by the prime. Gawronski and Ye (2014) found similar results when the process was revered. The AMP reliability to identify implicit bias was noted in Bar-Anan and Nosek's (2012) study. They found that participants' acknowledgment of consciously rating the prime rather than the target effected the reliability and validity of the test. To test this assumption, Payne et al. (2013) conducted an additional study where participants complete a standard AMP implicit bias test and modified test, whereby participants were asked to rate the target without the use of a prime. They found a strong racial bias association with the standard AMP implicit bias test unlike in the modified test thus suggesting participant inability to control unconscious association. While the IAT and AMP provide some reliability of identifying implicit bias, they do not fully explain the influences that guide an individual's decision. As expressed by Allport (1954) stereotypical implicit bias has chronic and situational elements, whereby indirect measurement instruments are not suited to investigate the different attributes.

To understand the psychological introspective of an individual that is shaped over a lifetime, a comprehensive assessment of an individual's targeted narrative must be analyzed (Cervone, Shadel, & Jencius, 2001). Further, Cervone, et al. (2001) suggested that mapping an

individual's social environment in context to the targeted stimuli will bring into play different values and interpretation of a target. For this reason, a complementary approach to investigate if stereotypical implicit bias of US law enforcement is needed. Direct measurement will investigate law enforcement's independent experiences that have shaped their perception of refugees. While direct and indirect measures are not conclusive, they may offer complementary findings for the existence or nonexistence of stereotypical implicit bias. Because implicit bias measures such as IAT and AMP are dependent on time reaction responses or prime association, a direct measure of personal interview responses are needed. The interview responses may provide a comprehensive understanding of the experience and if contextual cues within an experience might shape perception.

**Law Enforcement Stereotypical Implicit Bias**

Kahn et al. (n.d.) conducted a study to investigate how police biases influence the use of force towards a social group. They concluded that stereotypes might influence behavior toward social groups. Predictively, police stereotypical behavior can be based on a perceiver's threat. Police are specifically situated within society to interact with various social groups such as refugees, the economically advantaged and disadvantaged, various political affiliations, mentally impaired, and criminal elements to name a few. Because police are subject to contact with the various element of society they might develop and rely on stereotypical implicit bias during the decision process. Smith and Alpert (2007) expressed that unconscious bias toward social groups might involve an illusory correlation.

Mackie and Hamilton (1993) expressed that outside the awareness of a perceiver, illusory correlation can influence an observer's relationship between a target group. Mackie and Hamilton (1993) proposed two distinct illusory correlations for a perceiver's perception: distinctiveness-based illusory correlations represent the overestimation of infrequent events, a generalization of a phenomenon whereby acting as the starting point for stereotype formation.  In other words, a perceiver's chronic beliefs committed to memory are correlated with information to enhance beliefs.  The new information associated with a perceiver's belief can be represented more in memory than information not associated with chronic beliefs.  The perceiver relates relevant information with chronic belief in developing and perpetuating stereotypical implicit bias.

The expectancy-based illusory correlation draws on existing stereotypes and new information to formulate a decision (Mackie and Hamilton, 1993) about a social group. Expectancy-based illusory correlation might bias a perceiver's judgment due to a misperception of a target group, based on an existing stereotype (Mackie & Hamilton, 1993).  Explicitly a perceiver is unable to separate stereotypical thinking from contradictory new information.

As an example, the United States defines a refugee as a person living outside of their home country and is unable or unwilling to return due to persecution or fear of persecution because of race, religion, nationality, membership in a social group or political organization (Refugee Act, 1980).  The events about the Paris terror attack perpetrators and refugee status might conflate law enforcement officers' perceptions of refugees, thus leading them to be unable to separate new information from prior memory.

What Mackie and Hamilton (1993) found constant across both possibilities of illusory correlation is the amount of intellectual resources available at the time of decision. As expressed by Devine (1989), during information overload a perceiver will draw from simplistic strategies at the time of decision. Mackie and Hamilton (1993) asserted that a condition that influences information processing such as anxiety might affect the amount of intellectual resources available. Patterson, Chung, and Swan (2012) expressed that police are subject to anxiety because of preforming day to day duties.

In this study, the researcher investigated if law enforcement has formulated implicit bias stereotypes about refuges resettled within the United Sates. The individual experiences of day to day interaction and challenges of law enforcement duties may establish patterns of behavior that influence a target population. Law enforcement's cognitive process to evaluate and respond to individual and events are reflective of chronic and situational interaction with their environment. The complementary aspects of direct and indirect implicit bias tools of measurement may not disentangle perception from behavior. The present study investigates the experiences that contribute to law enforcement behavior towards a target social group.

## Summary and Conclusion

The November 2015 Paris, France terrorist attack has influenced public opinion of refugees and how they are perceived by American citizens. Influences such as the Paris, France terror attacks can have a broad effect on how society perceives and categorizes a refugee. Because law enforcement officers often originate from the society they are sworn to protect, they are subject to the same social and cultural stimuli that can influence thought outside of their

intellectual awareness that might lead to stereotypical implicit bias toward a person or social group.

The literature suggests stereotypes are learned implicitly at an early age, committed to memory and are accessible during the decision process. Devine (1989) suggested that chronic memory decision making requires fewer intellectual resources and is considered a simplistic decision strategy. A perceiver's chronic relationship with a stereotype might be represented during the decision process. Overall, a perceiver's perception of a person or social group is based learned events. This is consistent with Gawronski and Bodenhausan's (2017) finding that chronic and situational factors are used during the decision process.

Allport (1954) also suggested that a person's decisions are based on a perceiver's perception of past events and their current situation. Devine (1989) suggests that the relationship between the chronic and situational decisions are not equally valued. During time of information overload a perceiver will draw from simplistic strategies during the decision process. The dynamic environment in which law enforcement officers operate may increase the predictability of implicit bias decision strategies. As expressed by Mackie and Hamilton (1993) and Levy (n.d.) the predictability of implicit bias decision strategies is associated with anxiety and stressful emotional states of reduced intellectual resources. Authority and social positioning (Nier, et al. n.d.; Fiske et al. (2002) may also be predictive of stereotypical implicit bias of a person or social group.

Thus, the literature suggests that law enforcement have a stereotypical implicit bias towards minorities such as African Americans and Latinos. This study will extend the

knowledge of law enforcements perception of minorities, specifically refugees resettled within the United States.

In Chapter 2, the researcher discussed how terrorist and refugee might have conflated American citizen's general attitude towards refugees. The researcher also discussed how stereotypical bias might influence outward behavior in law enforcement toward social groups. Indirect implicit bias measures IAT and AMP are widely used to determine the implicit bias. While the IAT and AMP provide some reliability of identifying implicit bias, they do not fully explain the influences that guide an individual's decision, whereby indirect measurement instruments are not used in this study.

In Chapter 3, the researcher discusses the rational and design of the study and how the methodology is supportive of phenomenological research and its findings. A phenomenological study seeks to explore and understand a participant's perception of a phenomena from their perspective and what it means to be them while experiencing the phenomena. Conducting interviews with law enforcement officers provided concrete data to fill the gap in understanding how minorities, specifically refugees, are perceived. The study findings might be transferable to other minority groups such as African Americans and Latinos.

Chapter 3: Research Method

**Introduction**

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore and comprehend the lived experiences of law enforcement officers from the states of Michigan and Texas and their attitudes and behaviors toward refugees in their state.  The states of Michigan and Texas were selected due to the number of refugees, 4,258 and 7,802 (RPC, 2018), respectively, resettled from October 2015 through September 2016.  From the 31 states that initially publicly refused to accept Syrian refugees, the states of Michigan and Texas resettled the most overall refugees during the aforementioned period.

In this chapter, the researcher provides the design and rationale for the study and how the sample was selected. The researcher will discuss examples and how ethical issues are addressed in accordance with Walden policy.  Additionally, the researcher will outline how trustworthiness of findings was addressed.

**Research Design and Rationale**

**Research Questions**

RQ1: Are there lived experiences of law enforcement officers in the states of Michigan and Texas relative to stereotyping and bias toward refugees resettled within the US?

RQ2: If there are [lived experiences], how do they view refugees and what might have the greatest influences on law enforcement officers' perception towards refugees?

## Central Concept / Phenomenon of the Study

The study phenomenon is the lived experiences of law enforcement officers from the states of Michigan and Texas. The design of the study used purposeful sampling and semi-structured interviews of law enforcement officers in Michigan and Texas. Michigan and Texas were chosen because of the 31 states that initially refused to accept Syrian refugees. Michigan and Texas resettled 4,258 and 7,802, respectfully, of the total refugees relocated to the United States from October 2015 through September 2016 (RPC, 2018).

## Research Tradition

Interviews are the cornerstone of qualitative research (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The researcher conducted personal interviews with state law enforcement officers at a location of participants' choosing. Internet software such as Skype was not used. Interview questions were designed specifically for this study to be open-ended to encourage a free flow of communication. The use of a semi-structured interview provided the researcher the opportunity for clarification and follow up questions. Clarification questions are central to understand the concepts of the participants' responses. By recognizing the concepts, the researcher was able to understand the lived experiences of state law enforcement and if stereotypes exist. The uses of phenomenological research identified the phenomenon and constructs that influence state law enforcement officers' judgment.

**Rationale for the Research Tradition**

The rationale for selecting phenomenology is drawn from its roots in philosophy, the study of human existence (van Manen, 2016). A phenomenology tradition tries to understand the essence of being human. While there are similarities, van Manen (2016) asserted a delineation between philosophy and phenomenology. Philosophy is interested in the developing theories to explain human behavior in contrast to phenomenology whereby interest lay in understanding the human experience. The present study seeks to understand law enforcement concrete experiences with refugees. Also, phenomenological research is supportive of empirical findings for a qualitative enquire (Giorgi, 2009). Giorgi provides concrete steps for analysis of empirical qualitative data. Broome (2014) found Giorgi's method to be useful to understand police officers' concrete experiences with the use of deadly force.

**Role of the Researcher**

For this study, a Walden University PhD candidate conducted research about law enforcement's lived experiences with refugees. The researcher explained to the participants why understanding law enforcement's everyday encounters with refugees is of interest for this study. The researcher familiarized himself with organizational and professional norms of the participants so not to offend or display disrespect. Also, the researcher ensured that participants understood that the research would be conducted with full transparency. Participants were advised that they may end the interview at any time, withdraw from the study, and review their interview transcript upon request. The researcher's role is to ensure that participant responses did not stray from the meaning of enquiry. As expressed by Giorgi (2009) the interviewer might

have to direct the participant to refocus on the meaning of the interview. This is not to be confused with leading participates to respond in a way that biased the data. Open ended questions were presented to the interviewee in such a manner that provided meaningful discourse that didn't negatively affect the participant or bias the data. This was best accomplished by establishing positive rapport with participants before, during and after the interview process. As the researcher and the interviewer for this study, the researcher had no professional relationship with potential participants nor any bias toward the phenomenon.

The researcher addressed ethical issues such as participant privacy with an interview consent form. The researcher requested that potential participants sign a Walden University Intuitional Review Board (IRB) approved consent form. The researcher developed, submitted and received approval of an IRB interview consent form that outlined in plain language the nature of the study, how participants' comments would be used in the research, and their option to withdraw from the study. The consent form also outlined how a participant's personal identifying information would be protected to include organization anonymity.

**Methodology**

The sample for this study was taken from the population of law enforcement officers from the states of Michigan and Texas. The sampling strategy for this study was criterion based purposeful sampling. A criterion-based sampling strategy aligned with participants that had experience in the phenomenon and were able to provide a meaningful discussion of their interaction with refugees. Participants were also required to meet the following criterion; employed as a sworn officer within the state of Michigan or Texas during September 2015

through October 2016, must have interacted within the line of duty with one or more refugees during the before mentioned dates, and must be a volunteer for the  study.

Due to a homogenous population, a large sample size might not be needed (Mason, 2010) for a law enforcement community.  In this study the researcher identified nine of the suggested ten participants, four from the state of Michigan and five from the state of Texas.  As expressed by Reynolds, Fitzgerald, and Hicks (2018), a sample size above 10 to 25 participants will provide data saturation.  Reynolds and colleagues conducted a phenomenological study using interviews with of law enforcement officers.

The researcher used their Walden University email account to contact the public affairs office for police departments within the states of Michigan and Texas and asked for their assistance with this study.  The email request specified a need for volunteers at police departments or agencies that have at least 50 sworn officers employed and have a known refugee community population.  Additionally, the initial inquiry requested the names and contact email information for the potential volunteers that have had interacted with refugees in an official capacity between September 2015 and October 2016.  The researcher selected the first five names received from each state that matched the participant criterion.  The researcher contacted the study volunteers via Walden email and provided them with the scope of the study and asked if they would like to be involved in the study.  The invitation outlined the reason for the study, participant responsibilities in the study, how their information would be used and their time requirement for the study.  Because the researcher conducted a qualitative phenomenological study, the researcher informed potential participants that interviews would be recorded and transcribed for thematic analysis.  The study invitation also stated they would have the

opportunity to review the transcript at any point. Also, they were under no obligation to remain in the study if they felt uncomfortable with subject material or other obligations precluded them from remaining as an active participant in the study. The researcher also expressed, if they decided to take part in the study, an IRB approved consent form would be emailed to them for their signature.

Participants for this study were from an exclusive population: Police officers that have interacted with refugees while in the performance of their duties. In a qualitative phenomenological study, the researcher is interested in uncovering meaningful data that will inform the research question. A qualitative phenomenological research study probes meaningful descriptions of life experiences and how those experiences were lived by the perceiver. The results of the theoretical analysis will aid to understand the lived experiences of police officers' interaction with refugees.

**Data Analysis Plan**

For this study, the researcher used two cycle coding to analyze the raw data transcripts. As expressed by Saldana (2014), Vivo coding is useful to extract actual words used by the participant during the interview. Further, Vivo coding helps to expose common language used to describe lived experiences and understand the cultural nuance of the law enforcement officers' vernacular. Finally, the selected coding method added to the trustworthiness of the study findings. Other researchers will be able to analyze the study transcripts and duplicate the process arriving at their own unique findings whereby adding to the body of knowledge of law enforcements' perception of refugees within the United States. For this study, data analysis

software was not used.  Raw data was transcribed, and an analysis of the date was conducted by the researcher.  Discrepant raw data was not used during the data analysis, although the concise explanation was referenced in the procedural section of the study why the data was not used. The discrepant data would not be destroyed and would receive the same ethical and privacy considerations as other materials associated with the study.

## Issues of Trustworthiness

This qualitative phenomenological study used Guba's model for trustworthiness found in Shenton (2004).  Shenton (2004) described the four-point model to add trustworthiness to research, and they include; credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.  For the study, all participants were required to sign a consent form that outlined the study and how their information will be used.  Also, the consent form detailed the researcher's and the participants' responsibilities within the study.  The consent form expressed how a participant may exit the study and how their recorded responses will be handled.

## Credibility

Credibility for the study was addressed by establishing early contact with police departments or agencies prior to the interviews.  The researcher contacted study participant via Walden email account and provide them with the scope of the study and ask if they have any questions that the research may answer.  There were no on-site visits to meet with participants. As expressed by Shenton (2004) a researcher must find a balance between rapport buildings,

becoming a nuisance to participants, and becoming emotionally connected to participants thus decrease study impartiality.  The researcher established the correct balance of rapport with participants, so they felt comfortable during the interview process.

The researcher used triangulation of participants' comments to verify similarities in responses to interview questions.  As a part of a data collection process, the researcher did not refer to open source documents such as court records, newspaper articles, or police records that may collaborate participants' oral responses to interview questions.

Member checking of interview transcripts by participants was used.  The research offered participants to review their interview transcript, and only one participant agreed to member checking.  Member checking of interview transcripts allow the participant to verify data and clarify responses prior to the data analysis.  The researcher remained in in close communication with my Committee Chair during this study.  The committee chair acted as a debriefing mechanism to identify any flaw in the study and act as a sounding board during the reflective process.

**Transferability**

Transferability was addressed by providing a rich description of the phenomenon so other researchers might have a deeper understanding of the study.  A qualitative study finding is determined in the context of an environment whereby data is received and analyzed.  Duplicating the context of a study environment is difficult and perhaps impossible.

To address transferability, the researcher provided rich description of the phenomenon and provide clear boundaries of the study such as; identify study participants, any limitations in

the study, how the data was extracted, duration of the study, number of participants in the study, how may interviews were conducted and for how long. Providing a rich concrete description of the study provides other researchers the information needed to determine if the study findings align with their enquiry.

## Dependability

Transferability is closely associated with dependability of research finding. As expressed by Shenton (2004), dependability requires a rich concrete description of the study method and boundaries. To address dependability, the researcher provided concrete details of the study so other researchers may conduct a similar study, even if not arriving at the same conclusion as this study. Arriving at different conclusions will not discredit a qualitative study rather they will extend the knowledge of the phenomenon.

## Confirmability

Confirmability was addressed by reflective notes of interviews, and step-by-step decisions relating to the study. Reflective notes will provide a compressive audit-trail throughout the whole study.

## Ethical Procedures

Ethical concerns were addressed in compliance with Walden policy. At no point during the study were participants encouraged to respond to questions that would make them uncomfortable or coerce them to remain in the study. There were no participants that decided to

leave the study early, but the researcher must respect and protect their right to do so and protect their privacy. Raw data collected for this study will be safeguarded against unauthorized access. All material was kept under locked key in a security cabinet within the researcher's home office when not being used. Also, the researcher assigned pseudo names to each of the participants to ensure the anonymity of the participants. Finally, the researcher adhered to Walden University and IRB guidelines for the protection of study material to include the destruction of study materials. The present study did not take place within the researcher's work environment. Participants in this study are not associated with researcher's place of employment.

## Summary

In Chapter 3, the researcher discussed the research design and rationale for selecting a qualitative phenomenological study, as well as the researcher's role in protecting the participants from psychological and physical harm. Also outlined were ethical considerations that were addressed throughout the study, and how the safeguarding and destruction of study materials must be in accordance with Walden University and IRB guidance. The nature of a phenomenological study finding may not extend to the larger population. The coding methods selected were supportive of a qualitative phenomenological study. Chapter 4 will outline the findings from the qualitative interviews conducted.

Chapter 4: Results

**Introduction**

The international refugee crisis caused national security concerns for Western European countries and the United States. The accurate or inaccurate linkage between refugees and terrorist actors has raised American citizens' awareness of security concerns for resettled refugees within the United States. Recent international incidents may have had a significant influence on the public perception of refugees. Because members of law enforcement are a part of the public at large, their perceptions of refugees are of interest due to their authority to enforce the law of the United States without bias. The purpose of this study was to explore and comprehend the lived experiences of law enforcement officers from the states of Michigan and Texas and their attitudes and behaviors toward refugees in their state.

In this chapter, the researcher discusses how participants' experiences may have influenced their responses to interview questions. The demographics of participants are briefly reviewed to include the number of participants, data collection method, and analysis. Finally, the researcher presents a discussion of the study results.


**Settings**

The researcher was not aware of any personal or organizational conditions that may have influenced study participants. The study participants did not reveal any conditions that would have influenced their participation or responses to interview questions.

**Sample**

The researcher contacted 27 law enforcement departments and agencies via email or telephone within the states of Michigan and Texas.  On departments' and agencies' websites, an email address was not always available.  In those situations, the researcher telephoned the departments and agencies as the initial contact and followed up with the email study invitations. The sourcing of study participants returned nine individuals willing to participate in the study. The study participants included eight males and one female.  There were four participants from the state of Michigan and five participants from the state of Texas.  Sworn law enforcement participants had no less than 10-years of service.

**Data Collection**

Over five months (April 2019 through August 2019) the researcher contacted 27 law enforcement departments or agencies within the states of Michigan and Texas seeking volunteers to participate in this study.  The researcher used email or telephone for initial contact and interaction with law enforcement officers.  There was no variation in the original data collection plan detailed in Chapter 3.  There were nine study participants taken from the contacted law enforcement officers in the states of Michigan and Texas, four and five, respectively.

The researcher conducted telephone interviews and acted as the primary collection tool. The researcher addressed the participants' privacy; pseudonyms were assigned to all study participants to ensure privacy was maintained.  Participants selected a time and location they felt comfortable and safe with to complete the telephone interview.  During the telephone interviews,

the researcher was in a private location, whereby an unauthorized individual could not overhear the participants' comments.

The researcher developed an interview guidebook for the study. The guidebook contained six semi-structured open-ended interview questions (see Appendix B). The interview questions were designed in a manner to evoke a thoughtful response from each participant. The study participants acknowledged a Walden University IRB approved consent form (see Appendix A). The researcher received the acknowledged consent forms via email attachments. The researcher scheduled telephone interviews for 90 minutes, and none of the interviews lasted more than 30 minutes. Participant responses to the interview questions were digitally recorded and transcribed for later analysis. After the initial transcription, the researcher compared the audio recording two additional times to ensure accuracy. No follow up interviews were conducted. Data saturation was considered after the ninth interview, when it became apparent that no new information was collected. Data saturation is when new data collection ceases to be necessary since it would not alter the understanding of the research phenomenon.

An unusual circumstance that may have influenced a participant's agreement to participate in the survey and the responses of those interviewed was the immigration issues at the U.S. Mexico border. The immigration issue was in the news during the same time as the researcher conducted the interviews. Currently, the U.S. has experienced an unprecedented influx of individuals attempting illegal border crossings at the southern U.S. border. As expressed by David (2016), most of those attempting illegal border crossings are from Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador, the so-called Northern Triangle. The violence, social unrest, and economic living conditions in the Northern Triangle are comparable with the refugee

situation in Europe (David 2016). As expressed by Kos-Stanii (2018), the U.S. is treating the individuals departing the Northern Triangle and attempting illegal border crossings at the southern U.S. border as a transnational immigration security threat and not a humanitarian refugee crisis.

The media's portrayal and social discourse of unauthorized border crossings as a transnational terrorist threat from the U.S. southern border may have helped to form a perception of refugees as an archetypal enemy. The media and politicians may have considered their self-interests and agendas to conflate illegal border crossings and terrorist threats (Pacheco, 2015). The current U.S. administration has suggested that these individuals may be a potential threat to national security (Villazor & Johnson, 2019). Thus, some potential and actual study participants confused immigrants with refugees. Individuals meeting the subject of this study were defined in Chapter 1; "a refugee is a person living outside of their home country and is unable or unwilling to return due to persecution or fear of persecution because of race, religion, nationality, membership in a social group or political organization" (Refugee Act, 1980). Refugee status is designated by the United Nation High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The UNHCR works with displaced individuals and the international community to legally resettle a person in their home country or a new country. Participants may have conflated or not understood the difference between an individual designated as a refugee by the UNHCR and an individual entering the U. S. illegally at the U.S. southern border. On several occasions, the researcher reiterated the difference between illegal immigration and legal refugee status. On more than one occasion, the researcher read the refugee definition detailed within Chapter 1.

A pilot study was not conducted because the researcher was directly interested in how law enforcement interpreted their lived experiences, attitude and behavior toward refugees in their state. Participation in this study was voluntary and there was no reimbursement, payment, or other incentives for participating in the study.

**Data Analysis**

Vivo coding was used to identify themes and categories located within the data. Vivo coding should not be confused with NVivo software coding, as Vivo analysis requires the researcher to conduct hand-coding of interview transcripts. As expressed by Saldana (2016), Vivo coding is used to enhance or deepen the understanding of study participants' accrual experiences. Data were collected using recorded semi-structured interviews and the researcher's notes from the interviews.

The researcher transcribed verbatim the recorded interviews into a Word document. As required in Vivo coding, the researcher used the verbatim principle, explained by Saldana (2016) to capture a participant's expression of concepts and terms unique to their experiences. The verbatim principle required the researcher to code the data by identifying relevant words, phrases, or sentences that have meaning for the study and inform the research questions. The researcher coded and recoded each transcript. Coded material was entered in an Excel spreadsheet and placed into categories by how they related among participants' transcripts. A single word or phrase was used to capture the essence of the coded material. The essence of the categories was used as themes to develop the results of the study. As an example, multicultural, grew up around, up bring, and diversity was grouped to create a family theme for the category.

Before coding, the researcher engaged in epoche or bracketing personal experiences. The epoche or bracketing process ensures that the researcher's personal experiences do not interfere with the analysis. In phenomenology research, the researcher must understand the essence of a participant's lived experiences, such as whether they share similar perceptions or not. Bracketing of personal experiences allowed the researcher to focus on presented experiences. Giorgi (2009) asserted that it is critical in phenomenology research not to use past experiences to evaluate the present. The assumptions are necessary as they can affect the results of the analysis and results of the study.

Before coding could take place, the researcher underwent data immersion. The researcher read and re-read the transcripts multiple times. As part of the epoch or bracketing process, the researcher listened to the recorded interviews and read the interview notes. Data immersion was necessary to capture the nuance of audible voice inflection of participants. Hand coding was used to identify themes and categories within the data. Through an iterative analysis process, four themes emerged from the interviews, as shown in Table 1. Themes for this study were developed from participants' interview transcripts. Words and phrases from the interviews were used to develop the themes and categories. The six interview questions organized the themes and categories. The interview questions were used to inform the two research questions. The research questions for this study were RQ1: Are there lived experiences of law enforcement officers in the states of Michigan and Texas relative to stereotyping and bias toward refugees resettled within the US?, and RQ2: If there are [lived experiences], how do they view refugees, and what might have the greatest influences on law enforcement officers' perceptions towards refugees?

Table 1

*Themes and Categories from Interviews*

| Themes | Categories |
| --- | --- |
| Community or Comment to Service | Embracing of all different types of cultures<br>Intermingling |
| Family | Multicultural<br>Grew up around refugees<br>Up bring<br>Diversity |
| Professional | View them as victims of crimes<br>Language and vocabulary<br>Passion and compassion |
| Law enforcement perception of media | Untrusting<br>Skeptical<br>Suspicious<br>Exploit people |

### Theme 1: Community or Commitment to Service

For the first theme, five participants used words or phrases that suggest their community or commitment to service may influence how they view a refugee. In the interviews, the participants discussed how doing their job was an important part of what they do. The participants were concerned with helping refugees assimilate into their new surroundings. The participants were not concerned with an individual's social or economic status; rather, they were embracing all different types of culture. Participant One stated, "Becoming more involved with the Mosque, Indian Temples may go a long away to set a positive goal toward welcoming folks

for different countries." Participate Eight used the following words, "I believe you get what you put out." In another response, participant Seven suggested, "Some refugees came here with a negative impression of law enforcement, I need to make these folks believe I am here to help them." The participants suggested, during interaction with a refugee, it is their behavior that will determine an officer's perception. Participant Two stated that "I form the opinion from person to person not culture to culture." Some participants felt refugees are a part of the community even if they are not from U.S. Participant Four stated, "Let me take care of you and give you the help you need, even though you are not from this country, let me give you a hand." Community and commitment to service was a common theme that emerged from the participant interviews.

**Theme 2: Family**

For the second theme, nine participants in the study used words or phrases that suggest the family was the most influential in the formation of stereotypical implicit bias of refugees. Participants may have learned stereotypes implicitly during early cognitive development and the socialization of inculcated family values. Some of the participants felt being in a military family and living overseas informed their perception of refugees. The military family environment and the accessibility to different cultures internationally at an early age may encourage diversity of thought and inform refugee perceptions. Participant One shared, "I grew up in a military family…I have lived internationally, so from that perspective, growing up among different cultures is kind of normal for me…Growing up internationally gave me a healthy opinion of refugees." Participants echoed these types of comments. Participant Two identified themselves as coming from a multicultural family and shared the comments, "Well my family is

multicultural and embracing of all types of cultures, which I thought was much to my advantage…grew up around refugees most of my life." Participant Three remarked, "My up bring and teachings of treating people the way I would want to be treated…Treating people equally and fairly, play a contributing roll in how I view or treat a refugee." Participant Four expressed, "my family and friends did not discriminate against refugee." Participant Five commented that family was a positive influence in stating, "My family was a positive response." The views offered by participant Seven suggested an in-group family connection during a perceiver's early cognitive years. Participant Seven remarked, "My dad was a State Trooper in Miami Florida, so I heard through him about the Cuban boatlift, so I had some idea of what a refugee was from him telling me about what happen at work that day." Participant Eight added, "As a young man growing up, I would have to say that my family and community initially influenced me." Participant Nine added that "family" was the most influential in forming a perception of a refugee. Law enforcement officers are a product of the community they serve. The same environmental stimuli may influence them as the general public such as family, community, professional experiences, and the media's representation of a refugee. The chronic memories of inculcated family values may have a greater prediction of a participants' perception, attitude, and outward behavior toward a refugee.

The researcher analyzed the study participants' narrative descriptions and found two out of nine of the participants had interacted with refugees early in life during their cognitive development years. All the study participants expressed that their family had the greatest influence on how they perceived a refugee. The researcher confirmed participants' assertions that the family had the greatest influence on their perception of a refugee when asking a

clarifying question to all the participants: Between family, community, job, and media, which

has the greatest influence over your perception of a refugee?  The researcher found from

participants in this study that family has the greatest prediction of informing their perception of

refugees.

The researcher found that participants' inculcated family values were a primary predictor

of a participant's attitude and outward behavior toward refugees.  Participants may view other

elements such as community and professional interaction as secondary to the family influence on

their perception of refugees.  This study is in line with River et al. (2017) assertion that family

inculcated values are indicative of stereotypical implicit bias.

**Theme 3: Professional**

For the third theme, eight participants in the study used words or phrases that suggest that

professionalism may have influenced how they perceive a refugee.  Participants may have

viewed a refugee as a victim due to their interactions.  Participant One remarked, "I saw backlash

from folks, US citizen…some of my interaction with her was through victim interviewing…I

think in the role of a potential victim in terms of offenders."  The researcher's reflective analysis

of the participants' comments suggests that refugees may be viewed as victims.  The

participants' interaction with refugees in the role of a victim may shape their perception of

refugees.  Participant Seven commented, "Things must be really bad where they are."

Participants in this study may have determined that refugees resettled in the U.S. are victims of a

circumstance that was outside of their control.  As such, they may not be perceived as a criminal.

Participant Six asserted, "You deal with them as sort of a humanitarian crisis, so you deal with

them a little different than someone that broke into a house." Participant's interactions with a refugee may shape their professional perception of them. Participant Eight expressed, "Refugees are not criminals."

Participants may perceive a refugee as being in a place of a disadvantage as a result of a language barrier presented in their new environment. Participants' repeated comments suggested their professional acoustic interactions with refugees influenced how they perceive refugees. Participant One remarked, "I had to go through an interpreter for her native language." Participants may have viewed a language barrier as an expected consequence of interaction with refugees. Participants Two shared these comments:

> For me at the time, it was the language barrier, and that would have been with a regular traffic stop. The thing about that is, you never know if someone is pulling your leg, or they don't speak English to avoid getting out of a ticket.

Refugees not speaking American English is a common misconception that may lead participants to form stereotypical implicit bias of a communication barrier. Participants echoed the language barrier comments during interviews

Participants felt compassion to assist a refugee to adapt to their new environment. Participants gave the researcher the perception that they had a real passion for assisting a refugee because refugees are in a difficult situation at no fault of their own. Participant One shared:

Our city is really involved in projecting a positive support infrastructure for folks

immigrating from other countries. We have made a dedicated approach to reaching out

and trying to be welcoming and make this interaction acceptable to them or

understanding to them.

Participant Two commented, "I understand what it was like to be around somebody that

was different" Participant Three remarked:

I feel obligated to go the extra mile to help them…I kind a feel obligated and compelled

to help them. I have a compassion to protect and serve regardless of a person's

nationality or if they are from this country or not. I just remembered feeling like kind a

sorry for her because she had no family here.

### Theme 4: Law Enforcement Perception of Media

For theme four, nine participants used words and phrases that indicated their mistrust,

skepticism, and suspicions on how the media exploits a refugee for their interest. Participant

One commented, "What I fear from the media is, they are quick to attack nationally with acts of

violence…The media is, to some degree, in my opinion, is skewed." Participant Two shared this

comment about the media:

I don't care partially the way the media portrays a lot of different cultures because of their

over sensationalism. The media can put their own personal spin on the story based on what

their perception is or their overall viewpoint.

Participant Three remarked, "I don't trust the media." Participant Four stated, "The media has not informed my perception of refugees." Participant Five added, "The media didn't influence my perception about the refugees." Participant Seven remarked, "It is just a propaganda machine." Participant Eight stated, "The media focused on all the negatives." Participant Nine suggested, "The media distorts things for their benefit, so I tend not to rely on their perspective."

Unlike Atwell and Mastro (2016), who expressed that the media has influence over a person's perception and how the connotation of the messaging influences it, the researcher found that participants' frame of reference may influence how they react to media messaging. The researcher's analysis of the participants' responses suggests that the media has a neutral effect on the perception of refugees. The participants' neutral perception of the media may be supportive of inculcated family values.

**Evidence of Trustworthiness**

In this study, the researcher maintained the strategies detailed in Chapter 3. The internal validity of the study findings is addressed through the triangulation of data. The researcher gained participants that were not limited to a single department or agency. Study participants were sourced across the states of Michigan and Texas. Through the triangulation of participants' responses to interview questions, the researcher was able to ensure the validity of findings. Also, the participants in the study were voluntary and given the opportunity to refuse involvement in the study. The use of voluntary participants in the study helped to ensure that data collection would provide genuine responses to interview questions. The researcher informed participants that there is no reimbursement or payment for being in the study.

To address the creditability of the study, the researcher described the study to the participants in detail. The researcher answered participants' questions about the use of their comments, their responsibility, and the safeguard of their privacy. Through early discussions with the participants, the researcher was able to establish rapport before scheduling interviews. The rapport between the researcher and participants help the researcher to rephrase questions which allowed the participants to express a thoughtful expression of their experiences. The establishment of rapport between the researcher and participants helped the researcher gain a deeper understanding of participants' responses to interview questions. Participants, in the study, acknowledge an IRB Walden consent form before their participation. The consent form outlined in plain language the nature of the study, how participants' comments would be used, and their option to withdraw from the study. During the interview process, the researcher used follow up questions for clarification of participants' expression of concepts and to uncover potential falsehoods in their responses. At no point did participants offer secondary information to support their comments. Member checking of interview transcripts by participants was used. Member checking of interview transcripts allow the participant to verify data and clarify responses prior to the data analysis. The researcher offered participants the opportunity to review their interview transcript, and only one participant agreed to member checking. The researcher remained in close communication with their dissertation Committee Chair. The researcher used the Committee Chair for a debriefing mechanism to identify flaws in the study and act as a sounding board during the reflective process. The Committee Chair provided a fresh

perspective to the researcher. A fresh perspective during the reflective process helped to ensure validity throughout the data analysis, whereby contributed to the finding and results.

The transferability plan detailed in Chapter 3 of this study was unchanged. External validity was addressed through a detailed description of the study boundaries. The researcher provided a concrete description of the phenomenon. There were nine participants interviewed for this study. The duration of the participants' telephone interviews did not last more than 30 minutes. The researcher maintained an accurate count of participants in the study. The researcher maintained an accurate and rich description of the study process so other researchers may be informed of the scope and limitations. In this study, the results are not extrapolated across all law enforcement departments or agencies. Instead, they serve as a starting point for similar studies employing the same boundaries. The rich description in this study assists other researchers in arriving at their unique findings, whereby adding to the body of knowledge of law enforcements' perception of refugees within the United States.

There were no adjustments to the original dependability strategies detailed in Chapter 3. Finally, the researcher did not deviate from the confirmability strategies detailed in Chapter 3. The researcher developed reflective notes throughout the research process. The reflective notes served as a comprehensive audit trail and guided the decision and processes to reach the study findings.

**Results**

There were two research questions for this study. The following is the first question: RQ1: Are there lived experiences of law enforcement officers in the states of Michigan and Texas relative to stereotyping and bias toward refugees resettled within the United States?

The researcher suggests that there are lived experiences relative to stereotyping and bias toward refugees resettled within the United States. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Several of the participants suggested that social values learned early and supported over their lifetime had shaped their view of refugees. Participants' early childhood experiences such as exposure to cultural elements that are unique from their own may encourage diversity of thought. A review of the data suggests that an active military member, being raised in a military family, and living abroad may have provided the experiences supportive of positive stereotypical implicit bias toward refugees. For example, Participant One shared the following, "I grew up in a military family…I have lived internationally…so I have lived in England, I lived in Greece." Participant Two expressed, "I grew up around refugees most of my life…I was used to being around different cultures and understanding."

The data also suggests that military association and living abroad were not the only lived experiences relevant to stereotypical implicit bias. An analysis of the data suggests inculcated family values may have influenced how participants responded to refugees. A family grounded in faith and a belief of treating people as they would like to be treated may influence perception. Also, a multicultural family unit may influence different life perspectives and different ways of

doing things.  Having a shared experience may also influence stereotypical implicit bias towards

a person or social group.  A shared experience may inform an in-group dynamic whereby

members of the group feel a responsibility to other members within the group. For example,

Participant One commented:

> I would say a lot of my viewpoints are fairly well established and set in terms of the
>
> issues.  I think a lot of it has come from family and the upbringing that I had and that
>
> whole thing.

> Participant Two asserted, "Well my family is multicultural, so there you go", while

Participant Three explained, "A faith-based family…just my up bring… treating people the way

you would want to be treated."  Participant Four expressed, "my family and friends don't

discriminate at all with refugees."  Participant Six suggested, "at one point my parents were

refugees."  Participant Seven expressed that his father was a sworn law enforcement officer, "so

I kind a heard through him."  Participant Eight stated, "I was raised in church, I was taught at an

early age to treat everyone the way you would like to be treated."  Participant Nine stated, "I was

a refugee."

Stereotypical implicit bias may be a consequence of chronic and situational factors.

Situational factors such as the personal experiences of witnessing refugee subjected to verbal

abuse by non-refugees is an example.  Also, an officer witnessed an individual fleeing their

home country in search of safety in the U.S.  In another situation, participants' experienced

refugees in episodes of domestic violence.  In this study, participants may view refugees as

victims.  Participant One stated the following, "I see where they are receiving some backlash

from folks, U.S. citizen…people making racial or some type of remark towards them."

Participant three added, "They were also victims of intimate partner violence with a

spouse…compassion for them because they are in an abusive relationship." Participant Four

expressed, "when our president came out there and let things get so bad like refugee and

immigrant into our country, like it is a bad thing." Participant Five asserted, "thank GOD that I

was there at that time to help." Participant seven explained, "they were running for their lives."

Participant Eight expressed, "refugees are not criminals."

The following is the second research question:

RQ2: If there are [lived experiences], how do they view refugees and what might have the

greatest influences on law enforcement officers' perception toward refugees?

The findings suggest that participants view refugees as victims. What may have the

greatest influences on participants' perception toward refugees may be chronic and situational

factors. The researcher's analysis of the data suggests that participants' chronic and situational

experiences early in life and reinforced had the greatest influence. In this study the researcher

found family to have the greatest influences on participant perception of refugees. Stereotypical

implicit bias may be positive or negative and may be contingent on a person's chronic and

situational experiences. The researcher also found that the media had a neutral influence on the

study participants' perceptions of refugees. Participants in this study shared similar perceptions

of the media and how they portray refugees. Participant One stated, "the media to some degree

in my opinion is skewed…I would not put a lot of stock into the media presenting thing."

Participant Two expressed, "The media does not influence me. The media can put their own

personal spin on the story based on what their perception is or their overall viewpoint." Participant Three expressed, "I don't really trust the media." Participant Four expressed, "the media has not informed my perception of refugees." Participant Five stated, "the media didn't influence my perception about the refugee." Participant Seven commented, "the perception the media gave me of a refugee was one-hundred percent inaccurate to what I saw boots on the ground." Participant Eight stated, "the media focused on all the negatives." Participant Nine suggested, "the media distorts things for their benefit, so I tend not to relay on their perspective." Participants' explicit responses suggest there is no media influence over their cognitive decision-making process relevant to refugees.

## Summary

The results of this study suggest that participants are a product of the public domain and not exempt from chronic and situational factors that can influence stereotypical implicit bias. Participants' cognitive process of categorization of information about an individual or social group is inherent. The results show that the family may be a factor with the greatest influence over participants' perception towards refugees. Job experiences may also contribute to law enforcement's stereotypical implicit bias toward refugee. Participants viewed refugees as victims and their encounters with them as positive. While the media acts as a conduit for information and influence for the public, participants' viewed the media as not a source of influence as it relates to stereotypical implicit bias toward refugees. In Chapter 5 the researcher discusses the findings of the study and how they extend the current knowledge as it relates to peer-reviewed literature described in Chapter 2.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

**Introduction**

The purpose of the study was to explore and comprehend the lived experiences of law enforcement officers from the states of Michigan and Texas and their attitudes and behaviors toward refugees. This study investigated what factors may influence law enforcement officers' attitude and behavior toward refugees. The use of Allport's implicit bias theory provided the theoretical framework for the study. The nature of the study was qualitative. As expressed in Creswell (2009), a qualitative research study is suitable to understand social problems. The researcher found that early family experiences may have the greatest influence on how law enforcement officers perceive refugees. Law enforcement officers are a product of the community they serve, and as such may be influenced by the same environmental stimuli as the general public. Environmental stimuli that may influence law enforcement officers are family, community, professional experiences. The researcher found that participants' inculcated family values were a primary predictor of law enforcement officers in the states of Michigan and Texas and their attitudes and outward behaviors toward refugees.

**Interpretation of Findings**

The researcher's findings helped to fill the gap in the literature, specifically understanding how law enforcement officers perceive refugees. The researcher investigated the lived experiences of law enforcement officers from the states of Michigan and Texas, and their attitude and behavior toward refugees in the United States. The participants in the study

provided detailed descriptions of personal experiences that influenced their perception of refugees.

The researcher confirmed Lippman's (1922) assertion that a person's life experiences shape mental images of social groups. As expressed by River et al. (2017), culture and human interaction are indicative of stereotypical implicit bias. A person's images of social groups may be used to inform stereotypical implicit bias before and during the cognitive decision-making process. This researcher suggests that family values may guide perception or stereotypical implicit bias towards refugees. Participants' military experiences, traveling overseas, and living with other cultures may have influenced how participants perceived and developed a stereotypical implicit bias toward refugees. The researcher's findings are not in line with Nier et al. (n.d.) finding that a perceiver's position of power is predictive of stereotypical implicit bias. The researcher found that participants expressed characteristics inherent in providing public service void of a refugee's social status. The researcher found that participants may hold a stereotypical implicit bias toward refugees as victims.

Cauthen, Robinson, and Krauss (1971) asserted that language presented by the media influences stereotypical implicit bias toward targeted groups. As expressed by Allport (1954), depending on a perceiver's frame of reference, it can influence how a perceiver may react to the presented information. In contradiction to Thweatt (2005), participants in this study suggested that the media's representation of refugees is less than accurate and communicate contradictions of chronic and situational experiences.

**Limitations of the Study**

A limitation of this study is that the findings will not represent the total population of law enforcement officers. The study findings are restrictive to a small sample of participants. The researcher acknowledges the limitation of the small sample size and its effectiveness to extrapolate findings across a larger domain. The extrapolation of findings was not the principal determinant of the present study. The researcher strived to understand the lived experiences of law enforcement officers in the states of Michigan and Texas relative to stereotypical implicit bias. Also, if they are, what may be the greatest influence. The researcher achieved an understanding of participants' lived experiences and perception of refugees. Understanding how the lived experiences of study participants' influenced perception may provide valuable information to extend the knowledge of stereotypical implicit bias. The study sample size was impacted by a participant's rational to take part in the study. The inherently social phenomenon of illegal immigration on the U.S. southern border and legal refugee status may have conflated into a politically unpopular topic.

**Recommendations**

Law enforcement officers are members of the society in which they serve. For this reason, the same chronic and situational influences may help to shape an officer's stereotypical implicit bias as other citizens. Stereotypical implicit bias is naturally occurring. The researcher suggests that future researchers use these findings to conduct qualitative studies in other geographical areas in the U.S. and the international community. The unique cultural environment of other geographical areas may prove interesting to see if the same themes emerge.

The researcher recommends that other researchers conduct studies with a larger sample size, and with specific demographic information. Researchers may consider demographic information such as gender, age, political association, level of education, and cultural ethnicity.

Based on the findings, law enforcement departments and agencies may consider investing in cultural diversity training for both officers and their family members. Within a multicultural society, law enforcement officers' family values may differ depending on their experiences, level of education, cultural norms, and political association. The degree that family values extend beyond officers' immediate environment may influence the perception of refugees. The researcher's findings suggest that an officer's family experiences are likely to bias their opinion of refugees. What this means is participants lived experiences may affect the quality of interaction between officer and refugee. This type of interaction will either reinforce positive stereotypical implicit bias or encourage negative attitude and behavior toward refugees. Law enforcement departments and agencies may make efforts to hire and retain officers with lived experiences that are in line with desired attitudes and behaviors.

Law enforcement departments and agencies may invest in cultural awareness training that starts at the academy level and builds on officers' perceptions of refugees. Understanding officers' perceptions of a refugee while undergoing cultural awareness training will assist the officers in visualizing their bias and prepare them to handle diverse situations involving refugees. Cultural awareness training may reinforce positive preconceived perceptions of refugees while assisting an officer in understanding what they are feeling. Law enforcement departments and agencies may influence officer recruits and current officers' perceptions of refugees through socialization. Law enforcement departments and agencies may consider exposing recruits to

refugees in an early positive setting. Early positive exposure to refugees may help to dispel a negative perception of refugees, whereby shaping a positive social image. Law enforcement departments and agencies may also consider requiring current officers to undergo recurring cultural awareness training. Cultural awareness training found beneficial may extend across departments, agencies, and the international community. Cultural awareness training is a way to identify damaging stereotypical implicit bias and control its adverse effects on refugees.

The researcher's findings suggest the family influences may be predictive of stereotypical implicit bias in law enforcement offices. Law enforcement officers are members of the communities they serve, and their attitudes and behavior extend outside of the family and affect a wider community, specifically refugees resettled in the U.S. The management of the family dynamic through law enforcement cultural diversity training may help the wider community to break the cycle of damaging stereotypical implicit bias and positively affect social change.

Study participants' expressed skepticism, suspicion, and lack of trust of the media. The participants did not express how they received their news information. There are many different sources of news outlets that may provide favorable or contradictory information that can influence participants' perception of refugees. Participants' that are technically savvy may have used social media sites and Apps. Less savvy participants may have used local or 24-hour international television news sources. Newspapers and magazines may also be a source of information that may have influenced participants' perception of refugees. In either case, departments and agencies should provide media education training to officers. Media education training would inform officers about the media's messaging and how it may influence an officer's perception of refugees. Law enforcement departments and agencies should be aware of

the conscious and unconscious influences that the media's messaging may have on officers' cognitive decision making. As expressed by Cozine (2016), the media may exploit or frame ideals in newscast and print that may benefit their ratings.

Departments and agencies may also expand their community and commitment to service for refugees by investing in a diversity messaging initiative. Participants expressed how language was a barrier to providing services to refugees. In one situation, it was difficult for a participant to communicate with a refugee to let them know of services available to them. In another, a refugee was subject to intimate partner violence. The officers had difficulty expressing to a refugee what service was available to assist them. Law enforcement departments and agencies may partner with news outlets to develop a media campaign to deliver information on available social services. Media campaign information should be delivered in different languages to accommodate various refugee communities.

## Implications

The findings of this study underpin policies to encourage positive social change through a qualitative prediction of law enforcements' behavior toward refugees and identify strategies for social equality. The findings may inform law enforcement within the United States and other Western countries how to identify and eradicate refugee stereotypical implicit bias and foster positive social change. At the individual, family, and organizational levels, law enforcement may be positively impacted through a diversity of interpersonal interaction with other cultures. Cultural appreciation through professional and personal interaction may extend into societal/policy development. Law enforcement departments and agencies may promote funding

programs that extend the exchange of police officers nationally and internationally. Theoretically, an international program that promotes mutual understanding of cultural richness and diversity will improve relationships between law enforcement and refugees.

## Conclusion

The researcher's findings helped to fill the gap in the literature by investigating if law enforcement officers have a stereotypical implicit bias toward refugees within the United States. This research study confirmed that law enforcement officers in the states of Michigan and Texas do have a stereotypical implicit bias toward refugees. Whether law enforcement stereotypical implicit bias is positive or negative, dependents on their unique lived experiences. The researcher demonstrated that human beings perspective gained in early life experiences may carry forward in later decision-making processes. Law enforcement's lived experiences are irreversible and remain a part of the cognitive decision-making process. The researcher provided an analysis of what it means to be a law enforcement officer and how lived experiences are drawn upon when interacting with refugees. The researcher's findings may be used with law enforcement departments and agencies to assist in the development of training programs. Cultural awareness training found beneficial may extend across other departments, agencies, and the international community. Cultural awareness training is a way to identify damaging stereotypical implicit bias and control its adverse effects on refugees. Finally, the researcher's findings encourage positive social change through a qualitative prediction of law enforcement stereotypical implicit bias toward refugees.

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Appendix A Consent Form

You are invited to take part in a research study about law enforcement perception of refugees resettled within the United States.  The researcher is inviting law enforcement officers that during the course of their duties have interacted with a refugee between October 2015 and September 2016 to be in the study.  Officers interested in being a part of this study should contact the researcher.  This form is part of a process called "informed consent" to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether to take part.

This study is being conducted by a researcher, who is a doctoral candidate at Walden University.

Background Information: The purpose of this study is to assess law enforcement officers' experiences with refugees from the states of Michigan and Texas.  The states of Michigan and Texas were selected due to the number of refugees, 4,258 and 7,802 (RPC, 2018), respectively, resettled from October 2015 through September 2016.

Procedures: If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to participate in the following:

• You will be asked to participate in an audio recorded telephone interview that will not last for more than 90 minutes but may end sooner depending on your responses.

• You will be asked to respond to 6 questions.

• You may be asked to participate in a follow up interview to clarify information or respond to follow-up questions.

• You may be asked to review the transcript of the audio recorded interview for accuracy and clarity.

Here are some sample questions:

 • Can you tell me about a time you interacted with a refuge in the performance of official duties?

• Can you tell me how your community may have influenced your perception of refugees?

 • Can you tell me how your family may have influenced your perception of refugees?

Voluntary Nature of the Study: This study is voluntary. You are free to accept or turn down the invitation. If you decide to be in the study now, you can still change your mind later. You may stop at any time.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study: Being in this type of study involves some risk of the minor discomforts that can be encountered in daily life, such as becoming upset thinking about past experiences.  Being in this study would not pose any risk to your safety or wellbeing. If during the interview, a participant reveals criminal activity or child/elder abuse that has not been appropriately reported, the researcher may be responsible to notify authorities in accordance with state and federal law.  The researcher is not a mandated reporter of criminal behavior to appropriate authorities.

The study will underpin policies to encourage positive social change through a qualitative prediction of law enforcement perceptions toward refugees and identify strategies to strengthen social equality.

Payment: Participation in this study is voluntary and there is no reimbursement or payment.

Privacy: Reports coming out of this study will not share the identities of individual participants. Details that might identify participants, such as the location of the study, also will not be shared. The researcher will not use your personal information for any purpose outside of this research project. Data will be kept secure by password protection and secured in a lock cabinet. All participants, departments, and agencies will be assigned pseudo names to protect privacy.  Password for computer and data files will not be the same. Data will be kept for a period of at least 5 years, as required by the university.  As required by Walden University, at the end of this required time all data will be destroyed.

Contacts and Questions: You may ask any questions you have now.  If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call the Research Participant Advocate at Walden University.

Please print or save this consent form for your records

Obtaining Your Consent

If you feel you understand the study well enough to make a decision about it participating, please indicate your consent by replying to this email with the word, "I consent."

Appendix B Interview Questions

1. Can you tell me about a time you interacted with a refuge in performance of official duties?
2. Can you tell me how your community may have influenced your perception of a refugee?
3. Can you tell me how your family may have influenced your perception of a refugee?
4. Can you tell me how your on-the-job experiences may have influenced your perception of a refugees?
5. During the performance of official duties, please describe what you were feeling and thinking when you interacted with a refugee.
6. Can you tell me how the media, if at all, influenced your perception of a refugee?