POLICE BRUTALITY: THE NEXUS BETWEEN HISTORICAL INJUSTICES, POLICE

CULTURE AND THE AFRICAN AMERICAN EXPERIENCE

by

Claude Maurice Rhone

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

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APPROVED BY:

Dr. Jared L. Perry, Committee Chair

Dr. Frederick W. Turner II, Committee Member

ABSTRACT

This study focused on the harassment, maltreatment, and brutality of African Americans by police officers. The recent widespread condemnation and social justice protests in response to incidents of police brutality point to historical injustices inherent to the culture of policing. Slavery provides the overarching backdrop; however, Jim Crow laws cultivated the structural adaptations necessary to fulfill segregation between African Americans and Whites. The American policing model, which evolved from slave patrols to public entities, continued as an apparatus in the marginalization and disenfranchisement of African Americans. The narrative of "defunding the police" suggests that the past's cultural proximity renders the current system inadequate to effectively police African Americans. The core argument in this dissertation is that despite changes in legislation, political policies, social behavior, and contemporary policing strategies steeped in professionalism and training, the incidents of police brutality in the African American community remain consistent. Research also misguidedly attributes police brutality of African Americans to training issues rather than the privilege of an unjust social structure. Using a qualitative case study approach to analyzing secondary and archival data, six themes emerged to answer the two research questions posed in this study, which were to determine (a) how race or ethnicity influence the interactions between members of the police force and the general public and (b) the current elements of the police culture in the U.S. that potentially influence discriminatory policing. This research contributes to the current knowledge base and provides broader scholarship on police brutality, the implications of historical injustices, ingrained police culture, and the implications toward gaining legitimacy within the African American community.

Keywords: police brutality, African American, historical injustices, police culture, black(s), white(s), majority, minority, ethnicity, race, indigenous, Hispanic

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to the victims of police brutality, their families, and the underappreciated hard-working men and women who volunteered or were drafted to conduct the task of internal investigations to weed out the undesirables who taint the badge.

Acknowledgements

I want to acknowledge my family and friends for their support, understanding, and patience during my absence with each class and writing assignment throughout this journey. To my children, Kymani and Chloe, this work establishes the framework to accomplish what you desire with hard work and perseverance.

To my coworkers, who exchanged tours, allowed me to get the homework completed, and proofread papers, expressed an unwavering belief that I will be an asset to the field of criminal justice and challenged me to remain focus during the numerous demonstrations and uncertainties presented by the Covid-19 pandemic. You collectively made this possible. For the naysayers, I would also like to thank you for providing the extra inspiration.

During the most challenging times with the topic, divine guidance was sought, which encouraged me to stay the course. My deceased grandmother's words also spurred me on; she continually told me as a child that "learning is an achievement no one can take from you once it is achieved."

Thank you, Dr. Jared L. Perry, Committee Chair and Dr. Frederick W. Turner II, Committee Member. The guidance and support provided were of immeasurable importance.

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List of Abbreviations

Black Lives Matter (BLM)

Field Training Officers (FTOs)

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS)

New York City Police Department (NYPD)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

The history of structural injustice in the United States severely disadvantaged African Americans. Structural injustice broadly refers to disempowerment embedded within the criminal justice system, specifically interactions with the police. An unbalanced social scale and racism are fundamental aspects of the U.S. governance activities (King, 2017). Contemporary and past research reveals that African Americans are harassed, stopped, searched, maltreated, arrested, and face the possibility of dying disproportionately during interactions with the police. According to Roberts (2017), policing African American spaces is an exercise in power lacking ministration and unconcerned with a just outcome. The political structure of the United States interacts to create the functional norms present in society. Chaney and Robertson (2013) suggested that the African American's introduction and indoctrination into American society were a function of social inequality inspired by legislative action and reinforced by civil agents of the state.

Background

Policing culture in the United States is constructed on four pillars. The first pillar is the organizational use of force model, which presupposes that an officer will use only the reasonable amount of force necessary to execute their duties. The second pillar is the personal survival will of officers to return home unharmed. The third pillar is acting out of explicit and implicit biases. The fourth pillar is societal, wherein citizens support an uncompromising exercise of law and order. Liveriero (2020) affirmed in compendious terms that, "in the non-ideal contexts of real-world democracies, we cannot expect powerful groups to be ready to let go of their positional power and of their unwarranted political advantages" (p. 810). The confluence of historical

injustices and police culture facilitates police brutality that unjustly shapes the African American experience. Ruffin (2020) stated that the contemporary African American experience with structural injustice suggests a ceaseless endeavor to remain collectively relevant but stymied in a continuous loop.

Responsibilities

The researcher's role was to serve as the sole investigator during the research process. This responsibility encompassed ensuring full cooperation between team members and the use of ethical procedures to obtain and analyze the data. The researcher's goal was to ensure the information collected complied with the routine and ethical approach. Stopping police brutality is the researcher's personal passion, as there is a need for improved methods of policing in the United States. Opportunities for change exist within the current issues regarding discriminatory policing practices that primarily target African American individuals. The researcher also ensured bias was limited when conducting research throughout the process of data collection and data analysis. Throughout this research, the researcher conducted deep reflection of their biases and potential opinions that could impact the analysis and presentation of the findings. Further information regarding the role of the researcher is provided in Chapter Three.

Problem Statement

Police brutality in the United States is not a new problem and is magnified by the social media and advances in video technology. Historically, video footage obtained from police or citizens was used by the judicature for its corroborative benefit (Gimbel, 2016). Garrett and Slobogin (2020) stated that law enforcement officers in the United States resort to force more frequently than in most developed countries with minimal liability. Currently, civil rights movements have sparked a worldwide response that is unwavering and unequivocal about their

position of eradicating police brutality. Police extrajudicial killings of African Americans by gunfire and outright viciousness have been ongoing for an inordinate amount of time (Adedoyin et al., 2019). The social movement on police brutality will be a watershed moment in history. Clayton (2018) asserted that the Civil Rights Movement and Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement are parallels in the perpetual struggle of African Americans to gain racial justice. The landscape in academia and policing in the United States faces a paradigm shift. Subbaraman (2020), an African American researcher, under harsh criticism, added his voice to rebuking police brutality and racial injustice. Discriminatory policing, which mostly targets African Americans, is a longstanding phenomenon (Adedoyin et al., 2019).

The level of violence and racial discrimination perpetrated against suspects by police officers is rising steadily. This trend is in direct conflict with the demand that police officers be committed to justice (Gimbel, 2016). Racial tensions are often the driving force behind such savagery. Race is a system that values and shapes opportunities based on skin color, and it is unfairly tailored to benefit some and exclude others. Racism has a negative impact on one's health in whatever form. Because of the COVID-19 outbreak, people are under a lot of stress, which makes police violence much more detrimental. Excessive use of force by police and unjustifiable killings are on the rise, resulting in some deaths. Because of its impact on vulnerable groups and the public health system, this violence increases public suspicion of law enforcement and the government as a whole (Subbaraman, 2020).

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this research was to improve the problem of police brutality in the African American community. Current and prior research overwhelmingly attributes police brutality of African Americans to improper training methodologies and the *bad apple*

metaphor rather than inculpate historical injustices, ingrained insular police culture, and police agencies' failure to regulate and sanction members' activities judiciously (Adedoyin et al., 2019; Clayton, 2018; Subbaraman, 2020). The most prevalent issues surrounding the policing of African Americans involve aggressive policing tactics and bias-based policing (Adedoyin et al., 2019). To ameliorate the turbulent relationship between African Americans and the police, police agencies should acknowledge the natural history of violence against African Americans and take the necessary steps to eliminate aggressive policing tactics. African Americans embracing police legitimacy is incumbent on the exercise of procedural justice by the police. It is essential to address the plight of African Americans, who are disproportionately the victims of police violence, a divisive national consciousness, and crimes in African American communities, which remain rampant due to fear and distrust of the police. The source of data for this study included (a) interviews with individuals effected by abusive policing practices across the United States; (b) focus groups with individuals effected by abusive policing communities across the United States; and (c) a survey questionnaire focusing on police culture and influences upon police violence and brutality. Secondary data from document analysis complemented the primary data.

Significance of the Study

Police brutality is rampant specifically against African-American suspects, or persons from other minority ethnic groups in the United States (Alang, 2018). According to Alang (2020), police brutality arises from a series of intricate social issues. Confronting those social issues requires thoughtful research and deliberate action towards change. In highlighting the dangers of becoming callous to police brutality, Alang (2018, citing Allan, 1834, as cited in Weld, 1839) warned about normalizing the agonizing cries of slaves. African Americans' views

on police brutality suggest a distinctive burden based on their experience. Further research is required to delve into ethical aspects of policing, political indifference, organizational policy, legislation, and reform. The current study reveals further insights into the victimization faced by African Americans from policing in their communities.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the current study:

RQ1. How does race or ethnicity influence the interactions between members of the police force and the general public?

RQ2. What are current elements of the police culture in the United States that potentially influence discriminatory policing?

Definitions

1. *Discriminatory Policing* - Discriminatory policing refers to continuing police brutality and racial injustice, which target primarily African Americans in the United States (Subbaraman, 2020).

2. *Police Culture* - In the United States, four widely accepted pillars support the functional model of policing: (a) fair and impartial policing; (b) the use of force model, which presupposes police officers use a reasonable amount of force to execute duties; (c) police legitimacy; and (c) societal support of an uncompromising exercise of law and order. However, in discussing the blue wall/blue code of silence culture in policing, Kutnjak Ivković et al. (2020) suggested that community stratification, pecuniary circumstances, and variation in governmental administration influence the moral compass of police organizations. It is common for marginalized communities experiencing epistemic injustices to have their reflexive political agency openly questioned, as they are denied

the fundamental right to be acknowledged and are subject to general sensitivity deficits (Liveriero, 2020).

3. *Structural Injustice* - Structural injustice refers to elements of political, social, and cultural disempowerment that are founded within criminal justice systems and identified through interactions with the police (King, 2017; Roberts, 2017). The idea of structural unfairness is well-known in modern political thought. For instance, unemployment and homelessness are referred to as instances of structural injustice, along with many other injustices that are ingrained in social, political, and economic institutions such as racism, misogyny, colonialism, and climate change. A rich intellectual history exists regarding the idea of structural injustice.

Summary

The problem addressed was that discriminatory policing practices target African Americans primarily in the United States (Subbaraman, 2020). The purpose of this project was to improve the problem of police brutality in the African American community. The guiding research questions focus on ethnicity's acute influence on police interactions, systemic and systematic elements of bias, and police culture in the United States. This study is important as it yielded information that can be used to reduce discriminatory policing practices and further support African Americans through a renewed understanding of political, organizational policy, legislation, and reform that creates systemic victimization and systematic elements of bias within the policing community. In Chapter Two, the researcher presents a review of the literature. The review of literature focuses on the key issues discussed throughout the purpose statement, including historical discriminatory policing to contextualize the problem as well as current issues regarding the U.S. policing system.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

In Chapter Two, the researcher provides insights into the framework of theories that support the approach taken in this study. This chapter also includes a discussion of related literature to not only provide some historical context but also present prevailing theories and their implications. The historical discussion may reveal important insights into the progression to where things stand today.

Theoretical Framework

Police brutality can be explained using various theories that address the occurrence of violence within society. One such philosophy is the conflict theory that can be traced from the times of Karl Marx and Wright Mills. The following theories are discussed in this section: (a) conflict theories, (b) general theory of crimes, (c) social learning theory, and (d) strain theory.

Conflict Theories

This theory dates back in time. According to Karl Marx (as cited in Lynch, 2018), society comprises the wealthy and the bourgeois, and their social difference can cause conflict within society. Wright Mills believed that the power elite class was responsible for making laws used to determine what is wrong and right (Anderson et al., 2016). Police brutality can be explained using conflict theory, which addresses how different social groups can result in conflict. For example, during the police action against crack cocaine in the 1980s, poor people were the main target because of their social status (Lynch, 2018). During this period, crack cocaine was associated with the urban poor, whereas pure cocaine was associated with the rich urban people. However, the government applied different and severe punishments against African Americans, in comparison to their White counterparts. The campaign often involved

very long sentences for the Blacks. The majority of the lawmakers were Whites, and they made

laws in their favor and at the same time punish the poor African Americans (Bonanno, 2015).

Conflict theories were used in the 1960s and the 1970s to explain clashes and conflicts between

different social groups (Kurtz & Upton, 2017). These theories were important because they were

used to unmask order, the law, and the application of authority during times of protests. Per the

conflict theory, the police do not use even-handed justice, but they blatantly violate the U.S.

Constitution through use of excessive force against the minority communities (Kurtz & Upton,

2017). The police continue to exercise illegal and unfair practices against minority communities.

The use of violence against the minority communities has led to a loss of trust in the law

enforcement agencies in the United States (Liveriero, 2020).

The minority communities have been the main target of the law enforcer's misconduct

(Bonanno, 2015). Understanding the main cause of the conflict between the poor and the rich

will allow the government to find a solution to this persistent problem. One of the examples of

instances where the police have clashed with the minorities is during the BLM movement (Kurtz

& Upton, 2017). The African Americans have been demonstrating against mass incarceration as

well as police brutality. In 2016, some of the protesters dissenting against a young African

American man's killing were arrested and aggressively prosecuted (Gottfredson, 2017). Conflict

theory helps explain how the police continue to violate the right of the people to hold peaceful

demonstrations (Anderson et al., 2016). Per conflict theory, authority and power conspire to

maintain political, social, and economic inequality. The proponents of the conflict theory believe

that there is no equality and fairness within society (Anderson et al., 2016). For example, the

courts, police, and correction centers usually favor the powerful majority group. In this regard, if

people who are not part of the mainstream society participate in social protests, they are viewed

as criminals. The police can opt to disrupt their peaceful demonstrations, which might end up becoming a violent confrontation between the police and the civilians (Anderson et al., 2016). As such, conflict theorists consider government agents and the police people who promote their interests to the detriment of the minority poor.

Strain Theory

Strain theory is another important theory that can be used to explain deviant behavior within society. Robert Merton, a sociologist and pioneer of this theory, explained that society encourages deviant behavior. According to Brezina (2017), society puts pressure on people, which makes them develop deviant behavior. For example, societal demands of good education and monetary wealth put pressure on minority communities who cannot afford quality education and good employment. Merton's theory of anomie is one of the strain theories that address how people tend to develop deviant behavior if they cannot meet the celebrated societal goals (Brezina, 2017). As such, structural impediments are the root cause of deviance within society. As people respond to these impediments, four deviant modes are likely to occur: ritualism, innovation, rebellion, and retreatism (Apaza, 2017). Police misconduct can be attributed to the anomic social structure where they are considered masculine, crime fighters, and noble (Gottfredson, 2017). As such, the police can end up using excessive force to prove their masculinity. These police officers are, however, limited by the lack of strong social structures within their department, making them develop deviant behavior. Monetary challenges can cause police to lack the technological improvements they require. As such, as police attempt to meet cultural expectations, they might end up developing deviant behavior (Bonanno, 2015). For example, police officers can use coercive interrogation tactics to get important information from a suspect. Corruption among police officers is caused by the societal pressure to be noble. The

perception of the police towards their department also influences their conduct. For example, police officers who consider their organization unfair can engage in misconduct (Bonanno, 2015). A police department can develop a subculture with norms, values, and definitions that promote deviant behavior. Police recruits are believed to acquire what is referred to as learned misconduct.

Social Learning Theory

Conceptualized by Albert Bandura, the social learning theory was first applied in 1977 (Apaza, 2017; Bonanno, 2015). Adopting a new culture certainly influences the conduct of the police. The new culture makes the police operate as outsiders who are not part of the community (Apaza, 2017). The peer influence of other police officers is considered one factor contributing to police misconduct. Social learning theory can be used to explain the deviant behavior of police officers. For example, new police recruits are subjected to rigid methods that characterize the police culture. The mentoring experiences of the recruits shape their behavior (Bonanno, 2015). For example, the recruited police officers are required to obey the organization's culture. Particularly, these recruits are sent to a training center where they are taught policing skills. These officers' training is mostly stereotypical, making them develop a certain belief about a certain cultural group, resulting in a belief that skin color is one factor that determines the propensity to commit crime among individuals.

General Theory of Crime

Hirschi and Gottfredson's developed the general theory of crime in 1990. This theory can also be used to explain the high police misconduct cases (Gottfredson, 2017). Per this theory, crime can be considered a combination of criminal opportunity and low or lack of self-control. Police officers who lack self-control are more likely to engage in violence because they do not

fear the possibility of long-term consequences. People who are likely to engage in criminal activities are mostly short-sighted, physical, insensitive, and impulsive. For example, police officers who engage in misconduct have a high level of impulsivity, particularly when dealing with people of color (Donner et al., 2017). Hence, Blacks are more likely to be stopped and searched by White officers due to the impulsive behavior of the police towards African Americans.

Related Literature

The contemporary accepted policing paradigm established itself on the foundation of power, politics, and safety. Policing power is derived from federal, state, local, tribal jurisdictions, and accepted legitimacy of the populace. According to Skogan and Meares (2004), police power is almost unrestrained; the officers should be ethical and exercise restraint. The political process is responsible for policy and resources in policing, which makes them inextricably bound. According to Martin (2018), policing is shaped by the relative political environment. Safety is securing the public from harm, a mandate of policing. Modern policing relies on an authoritarian approach and the ability to overawe confrontation with a projection of power (Tyler, 2017). The significance of intersectionality, as defined in extant research, is reflected in the unmanageable constituents of policing (Collins, 2015).

Narrative Review

This study addressed police brutality through an examination of the police culture and the American experience of police brutality. The risk of being killed by the U.S. police is determined by key factors such as race-ethnicity, age, and sex, studies reveal (Hinton & Cook, 2021). African Americans have been the main victims of police brutality and mass incarceration in the history of the United States (Tyler, 2017). Police culture promotes violence, which is one

of the factors contributing to police brutality in the United States (Apaza, 2017). Much of the police training focuses on physical control strategies and the use of weapons. According to the experience of African Americans, as argued by Hinton and Cook (2021), racial bias is the main factor that has made them the main victims of police brutality. This prejudice is historical.

Historical Context

In describing the experience of people of African descent in the United States, the term Black and African American are used interchangeably. The Black experience in the United States began by way of subjugation. According to Chrisman (2013), Black slaves were first introduced to the United States in 1617 into a system of racialism that is still partially practiced. Black experience on the shores of the United States can be summed up as oppressive. Kelley (2019) suggested that the number of Black slaves transported to the North American continent is highly exaggerated; however, academics still view it as the beacon of slavery. The inherent structural inequities apparent in the African American experience are often dismissed in favor of perceived sublime American exceptionalism. The history of the relationship between the police and the Black community is rooted in suspicion.

Emancipation

Emancipation within the American framework of slavery did not produce the absolute redress envisioned. Kelley (2019) noted that the jubilation of emancipation was short-lived, and Blacks experienced great oppression with some residual traces still evident. The relegation of Blacks to a chaotic existence as stateless persons exposed them to racial animus, and their rights were trampled as political fodder. According to Kolchin (2015), the frames of emancipation are blurred between legislative actions and autonomy and further complicated by the Civil War. In the post-emancipation period, the United States was enmeshed in simultaneously rebuilding its infrastructure and integrating Blacks into society. Henricks and Brocket (2013), in discussing

how history is recalled, stated in compendious terms, "the mutability of the past is a central way people can diminish how it as a living effect on the present" (p. 183).

Reconstruction

The decade following the American Civil War was pivotal in shaping the Black experience. Black (2013) maintained that psychosocial reconstruction in the south was a fiasco as racial intolerance and terrorism increased against Blacks. Tangible reconstruction rebuilt the physical and structural elements complicit in the systemic dehumanization of Blacks. Pino and Witt (2020) attributed the diminution of Black mobility to the political aspirations of the 14th Amendment rather than maintaining the continuance of strict military governance to uphold the emancipation process. The post-racial ideations envisioned in reconstruction were not successful. Titus (2020) suggested that the inadequate exploration of the *Reconstruction Era* effectively distorts the lived reality and its ties to contemporary life. Members of the Black community have endured the worst of these issues.

Jim Crow Era

According to Hswen et al. (2020), the mobility of Blacks in the United States was impaired by legislation rooted in racism to maintain the dominant position of Whites. The Jim Crow Era in the United States constituted a virulent assault both physically, extra-legally, and legislatively on Black self-determination. Attentive to the repugnant nature of Jim Crow, Hall (2014) discussed the praxis of the *Green Book*, the manual Blacks used to maneuver the pathways of southern hostility safely. Reminiscent of the *Green Book* is also the talk that African American families have with their children regarding interactions with law enforcement. Erby (2021) defined the talk in the following manner: "It establishes guidelines to keep Black youth safe and alive, but it cannot stop agents of state power from surveilling or hurting Black people" (p. 27). The agents of Jim Crow rose from the ashes of the confederacy,

and unable to resurrect the vestiges of slavery, they acquired seats of structural power where they leveraged racism to reestablish dominance.

History of American Policing

Hinton and Cook (2021) maintained that the concept of American policing derived from the English system and was uniquely shaped by the *American Slave Patrols*. Brown (2019) also noted that the various regional aspects of American policing coalesced to shape the current format. American policing can be viewed broadly in Northern and Southern spheres within the context of slavery. According to Robinson (2017), the Slave Codes, Black Codes and Jim Crow Laws established the framework for police misconduct. The police are viewed historically as the implement for relegating Blacks to their perceived inferior status in the U.S. society. In defining the role of the police contemporaneously, Logan and Oakley (2017) outlined it as, "policing has a role that society has defined as legitimate and necessary in dealing with the ghetto, containing it and defending us against the hazard that it poses" (p. 1042), providing the premise upon which discriminatory policing of the Black community is propagated.

Mass criminalization of the minority Black Americans has been part of American history. Hinton and Cook (2021) used the existing historical literature to explain the history of criminalization and the incarceration of minority African Americans. According to Hinton and Cook, since the inception of policing, African Americans have been the main target of extreme forms of policing and confinement. For example, during the slavery period, African Americans were subjected to all forms of brutality by the law enforcers, which reoccurred during the period of the civil rights movement. Drayton (2019) examined how African Americans were the main target of the war against drugs in the United States using data collected from various interviews as well as observations. The involved participants were recruited using purposeful and snowball sampling. According to the Drayton, many African Americans suffered from mental issues due

to the drug penalties. Currently, there is an outcry from the general public because the police continue to use excessive force against African Americans, which has resulted in may deaths and severe injuries.

Contemporary Policing

The difference between modern and bygone policing is the shift from reactive to proactive strategies. According to Lum et al. (2020), current data on the effectiveness of proactive policing are unreliable and lack appropriate scholarship. The focus of policing is on victimless crimes with minimal results from solving crimes concerning victims of consequence. According to Tyler et al., (2015), the authority of the police has diminished through aggressive tactics, assessment of specific populations as dubious, and initiation of gratuitous interaction with African Americans. Policing is widely viewed as a profession governed by academic, practical, and ethical standards. In discussing a cornerstone of modern policing, as noted earlier, Loader (2014) suggested limitations to its application based on societal evolution. The undisputed fact is that policing is a function of state authority. It remains focused on proprietary rights and practices bias-based policing.

Broken Windows

Several authors (see Chappell et al., 2011; Ortigueira-Sánchez, 2017; Price, 2016; Ranasinghe, 2011; Ren et al., 2017; Schuck & Rabe-Hemp, 2017) credit the broken windows theory postulated by James Q. Wilson and George L. Kelling in 1982 for the shift to modern policing strategies. According to Ansfield (2020) the transformation of the Bronx from a predominantly Caucasian enclave to a mix of African American and Hispanic population coupled with the unfortunate burnings and degradation of the infrastructure during the 1970s provided the perfect urban dystopia for the broken windows theory. Dixon (1998) suggested that broken windows was always about racism and classism, which James Q. Wilson discussed quite

openly but was astute in not stating the obvious. However, a scathing critique of the New York City Police Department (NYPD) exercise of broken windows suggests that NYPD was practicing zero-tolerance policing and, in the process, creating an unsafe environment for disenfranchised people (Howell, 2016). The broken windows, as envisioned by J. Q. Wilson and Kelling (1982), have long been discarded, and hybrid strategies serve as functional interlopers. According to Braga et al. (2019), "The American public has grown progressively interested in attending to allegations of widespread, racially disparate policing practices" (p. 538). For citizens to trust the police, they require results, integrity, and respect. Americans pay a high premium for law enforcement services without objectively understanding what the returns will be, and minorities bear the brunt of financial responsibility for strict liability offenses (Friedman & Jánszky, 2020). It exacerbates the issues of discriminatory policing of the Black community.

Variables in Support of Police Brutality

The historical variables that support police brutality are more apparent than their baleful contemporaries. According to Unger (2020), police unions are large in size and influence; they help shape legislation, fight any notion of civilian review, maintain the resources for litigation, and mount media campaigns against victims of police malfeasance. Even though the influence of unions has diminished in other areas, they still occupy the seat of American power and are fueled by law-and-order politics. Levine (2016) defined the entrenched union position as both antagonistic and esoteric in scope. In discussing the variables of qualified immunity and indemnification, research suggests that because officers have no liability concerns, they are less likely to be prudent in their actions and more brutal (Carbado, 2016). Courts tend to view the officers' actions within an organizational prism rather than as a clear breach of constitutionality.

Even though officers are mandated to report and intervene in police corruption and misconduct, the *Blue Wall of Silence* remains pertinacious. Discussing police silence through the lens of the Blue Lives Matter proposition, Thomas and Tufts (2019) used the term *Blue Solidarity* to assert that protective formations not only run deeper than social support and hashtags but also permeate duty performance. Chatterjee and Ryan (2020) also suggested that the authoritarian imperative ascribed to policing provides no room for introspection into organizational or individual moral defects. Policing is not conducted in a vacuum; the political, organizational, and individual influences play a role. The role of the police culture then becomes a significant variable in maintaining police brutality. According to Wood et al. (2019), police culture is a sophisticated meshwork of bonds formed on organizational standing and personal attributes. Ergo, the individual officer cannot be separated from the organizational construct that is important to policing activities. Getty et al. (2014) conducted a study on the correlation between Field Training Officers (FTOs) and wrong doings by the rookies they indoctrinate. The researchers concluded that FTOs have a lasting, profound effect. The lives of police officers are intertwined intimately because of the perceived dangers associated with policing, and a high degree of trust and dependence develops professionally and interpersonally.

Police Criminality

According to Stinson (2015), historically, police brutality has been misperceived within the context of misconduct rather than overt criminality. The findings of internal investigations and government commissions over the years leaned heavily on improper behavior rather than criminalization. Harris (2014) suggested that misconduct and hardcore criminality are not mutually exclusive, and police officers involved in criminality are inclined to inflict brutality. Law enforcement officers make comparative distinctions between their illegal activities and those of the many offenders they encounter to justify their criminal activities (Westmarland &

Rowe, 2016). In discussing the cultural aspects of police brutality, Bleakley (2019) posited that those entities established to address police brutality are rebuffed with the notion of being oppugnant towards law enforcement. Sekhon (2019) expressed that "the police operate in a state of exception that maintains a relationship with law but cannot be restrained by it" (p. 1771). The ineffectiveness of legislation is systematic and enhances discriminatory policing.

Iniquitous Relationship Between Police and Prosecutors

Police officers and prosecutors work in partnership to fight crime and incarcerate perpetrators. Ross (2016) suggested that the credibility of American police and prosecutors is at a severe deficit and requires reformation. This inextricable relationship renders local prosecutor's incapable of being objective in prosecuting officers involved in criminal activity. According to Trivendi and Gonzalez Van Cleve (2020), the iniquitous relationship between the police and prosecutors is based on a structural polity that guerdons loyalty and punishes nonconformists. Police and prosecutor relationship controversies are inescapable, often relinquished to internal oversight, outside the purview of jurisprudence, and lack sufficient erudition for change (Green & Roiphe, 2017). According to Robertson (2018), reestablishing police and prosecutor legitimacy in cases where police officers are defendants requires the appointment of special prosecutors that undergo a rigorous scrutiny. This approach is suitable for eliminating the prevalent conflict-of-interest issues that may influence the outcome of such cases.

Hirschfield (2015) observed that, approximately 65 years ago, the American Civil Rights Movement took up the momentous challenge of resolving the long history of systemic oppression meted out to Blacks. Police brutality came to the forefront during the civil rights era to reinforce the state's power and reaffirm the inferior position of Blacks. Unfortunately, the goals of equality and justice were not achieved from that movement. Holmes (2020) opined that

as the subjects of injustice, African Americans were forced to find remediation which benefited everyone. People then were content to sit back and observe the brutality of slavery and all the other acts in-between, and similarly, people today are silent on police brutality. In 2013, the term "Black Lives Matter" became synonymous with addressing police brutality; the struggle with injustice continues for African Americans.

The perception of this issue from a racial point of view is a critical stumbling block to objectively addressing it. Polity and state subjugation are functions of American liberalism that supports police brutality (Hirschfield, 2015). According to Reinka and Leach (2017), views regarding police brutalizing Blacks and the ensuing public indignation are split along racial lines. Clayton (2018) posited that both the Civil Rights and BLM movements were summarily dismissed as radical and pugnacious. Avery and Ruggs (2020) suggested that Whites and African Americans respond differently to the deep-rooted issue of police brutality, Whites contextualize police brutality on African Americans as a matter of actions and consequences, whereas African Americans view it as a construct of their oppressive American experience. Every tactic employed by African Americans to address police brutality is deemed divisive. Kneeling athletes were branded as unpatriotic, and protestors painted with a broad brush as looters and anarchists. Because police brutality is a widespread problem throughout the United States, many of the victims have been African-Americans. Anti-Black racism campaigns against mostly White police agencies are a major reason for the high number of African American victims of police brutality. Other historically persecuted groups may have faced similar biases from the police.

Prevailing Thoughts

The African American experience in the United States has been fraught with volatile subjugation. According to Bazian (2020), "I Can't Breathe," the expressions of both Eric Garner and George Floyd in their final moments of life, points to a literal and figurative constriction by the system and its agents; it has been historically perpetrated predominantly on African Americans. Bolger (2014) suggested that force is used by all officers, and any variation is attributable to training methodologies. However, it was suggested that people adjust their lying eyes and disregard the body camera videos; the death of both men were blamed on underlying medical conditions and their failure to submit to police authority. The glaring hypocrisy is that police consistently rely on video footage to prosecute civilians, but in the case of police officers, it is suggested that the public view is distorted and out of context. According to Boykin et al. (2020), "Not only are Black people blamed for racism, but they are also disparaged for fighting against it or persevering in spite of it" (p. 778). This stance has rendered the fight against discriminatory policing practices very difficult.

The historical impact of structural racism on African Americans is at endemic levels with far-reaching consequences. Bryant-Davis et al. (2017) stated that African Americans may be susceptible to intergenerational trauma. The deadly force incidents involving African Americans are not declining. Carbado (2016) suggested that police brutality is predicated on proximity; the police can fabricate a reason to stop an African American based on stereotypes and equivocation. Cesario et al. (2018) found no corroborative information to suggest that African Americans are disproportionately targeted when it pertains to the use of lethal force. Chakraborty (2020) suggested that filing a grievance is unlikely to be successful due to officer indemnification in a culture of violence. This factor has greatly hampered the efforts to fight discriminatory policing practices against the Black community.

When African Americans join law enforcement, they do not escape the likelihood of police brutality (Bazian, 2020). Even though a higher number of African American officers are killed in a police-on-police confrontation with firearms, scholars ascribe the difference to a combination of variables (Charbonneau et al., 2017). Cowell et al. (2020) suggested that police brutality is influenced by individual, structural, and bias-based policing. Police organizations have taken on the essence of the military in training, equipment, and tactical execution (Coyne & Hall-Blanco, 2016). According to Delehanty et al. (2017), the 1033 government program that facilitates the transfer of military equipment to police organizations is a source of measure regarding police violence. Data from the National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS) suggest a link between race and the use of lethal force by police in 2016.

Where a person resides can determine what type of interaction they will have with the police. For example, Derickson (2016) used the location and socioeconomic background of Ferguson and policing practices to extrapolate the underlying circumstances that contributed to the death of Michael Brown. Police brutality is a source of mental health trauma for African Americans (DeVylder et al., 2020). Federal intervention is significant to how police organizations carry out their law enforcement function and provide oversight when necessary (Donnelly & Salvatore, 2019). According to Dukes and Gaither (2017), victims of police brutality have the burden of culpability heaped upon them and are demonized in the media. Police brutality is a fixture in U.S. society and shares a common thread in form and function (Dukes & Kahn, 2017). Usually, police officers are viewed as having conducted themselves appropriately within the confines of their mandate. It is often left to the victims of discriminatory policing to fight against the tide but without any real prospects of success.

Firearms discharge is the most lethal and contentious form of force used in incidents of police brutality directed at African Americans. Fagan and Campbell (2020) posited that the policing establishment outlines the standards of conduct necessary for the appropriate use of force and the recipients. Police use of deadly force involving African Americans is perceived as legitimate based on prior interactions (Gilbert & Ray, 2015). Police organizations that participate in police misconduct can request that federal oversight bodies provide recommendations, but no punitive sanctions are usually meted out against errant officers (Goh, 2020). African Americans consistently have a fractured relationship with the police, and all interactions are predicated on violence where the state is the transgressor (Graham et al., 2020). Police organizations have failed to curtail the brutality, which has become engrained in their culture and requires comprehensive rehabilitation (Hunt, 2021). It can even be argued that there is no real motivation on their part to tackle this issue.

Acknowledgement and Accountability

Justice is an elusive concept for African Americans. According to Hurwitz and Peffley (2010), structural influences have injected police brutality into criminal justice, and there is no easy way to undo the harm. African Americans have always been forced to fight for respectability in the U.S. society to benefit others who are unwilling to reciprocate on their behalf (Jugov & Ypi, 2019). Historically police officers have not been held responsible for their actions, giving them an image of invincibility and leaving victims disheartened and fearful of the system (Levine, 2016). People with internal knowledge of an established system can provide a unique perspective. Littrice (2021), armed with such knowledge, suggested that policing is rigged to the detriment of the disenfranchised; they must fight to enact significant reforms. Lyle and Esmail (2016) suggested that policing is eroding from the inside and the police are indistinguishable from the criminals. Police organizations use data to advance their interest and

conveniently purge information highlighting ineffectiveness. Rushin (2016) suggested the federal government use data to put policing organizations back on course. The ethnic composition of the United States requires that policing strengthens its focus on diversity and mends the broken relationship with minorities, specifically African Americans (Schlosser et al., 2015). Such an approach can result in positive relations between the police and the Black community.

Salient Factors of Police Culture and Racially Biased Policing

The incidents of extrajudicial killings often lead to the rise of the BLM movement, wide-scale protests, and debates about the prevalence of systemic racism in American policing. There is a great divide in the United States on the subject of systemic racism. According to Brown (2019), U.S. policing and racism are inextricably bound. Some Americans tout the narrative of exceptionalism to dispel the notion that racism still exists. Lipsitz (2017) suggested that even though racism is still apparent in the United States, it is spoken of in discomfiting tones and expeditiously relegated to historical circumstances considered inconsequential to the current reality. African Americans and other minorities argue that structural racism is a permanent feature in their lives (Kutlaca et al., 2020)

Discourse and Allyship

The African American experience with racism and police brutality has been deplorable. However, substantive national discourse has been shunned. Nummi et al. (2019), Feagin (2014), and Morris (1984) suggested that, historically, Whites have extensively opposed the development of social justice reforms for African Americans. The contemporary response to racism, racially biased policing, and the resulting brutality is remarkably different from any other period in U.S. history. Kutlaca et al. (2020) discussed the formation of Allyship, positing that it is a double-edged proposition grounded in the expectations of the group(s) directly impacted and

those providing support. Worldwide support in response to the BLM movement has highlighted American structural domestic inequities like never before. According to Levine-Rasky and Ghaffar-Siddiqui (2020), the convergence of criticism and joint protest from all corners of society suggests a unified effort in addressing prejudice and bigotry. The concerted pressure from people from all racial backgrounds is necessary to force the relevant authorities into substantively addressing this issue.

Structural Context

According to Feagin (2014), African Americans state that the societal structures are inherently racist and deprive them of opportunities in favor of Whites. As a result, the institution of policing is biased and subjects Blacks to brutality, extrajudicial killings, and other inequities at disproportionate levels to other populations. According to Owusu-Bempah (2016), contemporary police maltreatment of African Americans is rooted in longstanding abasement and functional bias. The BLM movement, other community organizations, and people who support social justice reforms engage in protests and demand radical change to the treatment of African Americans by the police (Levine-Rasky & Ghaffar-Siddiqui, 2020). Some states and local entities have enacted legislation and initiated steps to curtail police misconduct (Owusu-Bempah, 2016). Weitzer (2015) suggested that the current crisis in policing provides an opportunity for catharsis; however, it is unlikely that any meaningful cultural shift will occur. Politicians with the ability to enact meaningful change disagree on the veracity of systemic racism.

Policing Misconduct Data

There are 17,985 police organizations in the United States, and there are varying degrees of data reporting to the federal government (Trivendi & Gonzalez Van Cleve, 2020). Huff et al. (2018) suggested that the organizational variables prevalent in officer misconduct are

underreporting and a lack of essential scholarship. Police officers' conduct is regulated by organizational procedures and laws, which may justify the use of force leading to misconduct. Trivendi and Gonzalez Van Cleve (2020) suggested that prosecutors facilitated misconduct in failing to prosecute officers who have been reported to them. How the African American community views police misconduct and legitimacy is a function of history of framing misconduct as unusual events.

Police Culture

Police culture is one of the main factors contributing to police brutality in the United States. Abrams (2020) indicated that these discriminatory practices are entrenched in the force and are passed down to new generations of officers. Abrams used studies of different psychologists to explain how police culture promotes brutality and how the aggressive behavior of the police can be stopped. Previously, police training has not focused on psychological training on how the police can handle members of the public (Abrams, 2020). For example, a large number of police officers have been relying on stereotypes to make their decisions (Brownhill, 2020). Police officers should develop psychological strategies that can prevent their confrontation with the general public. For example, they need to explain to a civilian why they stopped them and how such an act would promote the safety of other public members (Abrams, 2020). The use of force has made the members of the public lose trust in the police. Police culture also promotes implicit bias in policing, which leads to the discrimination of the American Africans when compared to Whites (Brownhill, 2020).

Various studies have revealed insights into the factors that influence police conduct (Brownhill, 2020; Legewie, 2016). Legewie (2016) used a quasi-experiment to determine how certain events affect the behavior of the police. For example, according to Legewie, police culture is influenced by some extreme incidents. Particularly, extremely violent incidences make

the police apply force against African Americans, as they consider violence as the only solution

to thwarting the violent behavior of this group. Violent local events tend to trigger

discriminatory responses on the part of the police. In this regard, the police should undergo

further training on how to handle extreme violence incidents (Legewie, 2016). Police culture

does not promote accountability and transparency, which has made the public to lose trust in the

police force. Police are usually guided by racial bias, lethal force, and a lack of independent

investigations, leading to the discrimination of the minority communities. The culture of

brutality has led to many shootings and deaths of African Americans (Legewie, 2016). The

police should conduct independent investigation and avoid racial bias against the minority

communities to curtail police brutality in the United States.

Historical Prerogatives

The discourse surrounding the United States' history whitewashed to suggest that the

Abolition of Slavery in 1865 remedied the impediments to African American progress and state

sanctioned brutality (Lemieux et al., 2020). Social movements have always attempted to balance

the scales of injustice from colonialism to the present day (Brownhill, 2020). According to

Ponton (2018), police are state tyrants, sanctioned to protect the privileged and sustain

stratification systems and ethnic inequities in a laissez-faire economy. Some literature suggests

that extensive police brutality in the United States happened in response to laborers refusing to

work (strike action) in the late-1800s through the mid-1900s. This deliberate prevarication

ignores the activities of the Slave Patrols, which research suggests operated for one and a half-

century and was preoccupied with the activities of African Americans (Hansen, 2019).

Cornelius (2020) suggested that colonialism, slavery, and BLM movement are entangled because

brutality was the modus operandi of oppressing the African diaspora and maintaining

Eurocentrism and American imperialism. The overall intent and practice of policing have not changed over the centuries.

Numbers Game

The legitimacy of the police is continuously questioned based on their sordid history. Sekhon (2019) suggested that the inherent flaws in policing are intentional. The police are vested with unlimited powers to take away a person's liberty and deprive them of life. The data on police brutality are fixed on the primary impact and underscore the larger secondary measures (Boyd, 2018). Police agencies self-regulate and often manipulate statistics to their advantage. Lemieux et al. (2020) suggested there are no reasonable means of assessing police brutality and gaining a proper understanding of the effects and implications. There is simply no way the privileged class can understand police brutality from their extended proximity. The structure of politics cements the relevant discord that sets out a law-and-order mentality that is difficult to engage on the ills of the police.

African Americans have experienced police brutality for a long time, which has made them change their attitude towards the police. Edwards et al. (2019) examined the risk of being killed through police brutality based on race-ethnicity, sex, and age. According to Edwards et al., one in every 1,000 African Americans believes the U.S. police might kill them. Many of the people killed by the police were between the ages of 20 years and 35 years, which indicates that young people have been the main target of the police brutality. In this article, Edwards et al. used data concerning police-related deaths to estimate the likelihood of being killed based on different social groups (Edwards et al., 2019). It is clear that people of color are more likely to be killed by the police when compared to the White majority group. Schwartz (2020) explained the first-hand experience of an African American in the United States. The researcher indicated that racism is the main cause of police brutality in the United States, and African Americans are

the main targets. For example, during demonstrations, African Americans suffer various types of brutality. According to Schwarz, the police tend to misuse power against the minority African Americans, such as George Floyd. African Americans continue to experience a high rate of police violence. For example, according to a report, of the 429 people were shot, 88 were African Americans (Schwartz, 2020). The rate of shooting a Black American was higher when compared to other ethnic groups. Finally, as stated in the article, racial brutality has become part of law enforcement in the United States.

Alang et al. (2021) conducted a study to investigate the experience of African Americans and how police brutality affects their well-being. They examined the relationship between police violence as well as poor health among African Americans. For example, according to the experiences of African Americans, fatal injuries tend to increase their mortality rates because they are more likely to succumb to these injuries (Alang et al. 2017 (Alang, 2021) (Alang, 2021)). Some adverse physiological responses tend to increase morbidity and incarcerations, enhancing their mental health issues (Alang et al., 2017). Public health researchers should develop a surveillance program that monitors police brutality to help understand the affected people's experiences. According to the participants in their study, police brutality goes beyond physical harm, as it also includes sexual and emotional violence (Alang et al., 2017). According to the experiences of African Americans, police brutality is one of the social determinants of health in the United States (Boyd, 2018).

Liberals and Conservatives

United States politics set the stage for legislation regarding criminal justice matters. Hooker (2016) explained that African Americans are ascribed to a status that is unreasonable and different from other communities. Whites have used the dynamics of protected space and state power to protect those spaces (Embrick & Moore, 2020). African Americans find themselves at

the mercy of citizens who use the police to carve out exclusive zones by criminalizing everyday activities. According to Flom (2019), the proximity of politics and policing is understated. Eckhouse (2019) prefaces the "Sister Souljah moment" as a critical political tool in disenfranchising African Americans. The complicity of the authorities and the majority communities on the issue of discriminatory policing is stark.

Social Movements

Social movements have always been the backbone in the fight against injustice in America. Skoy (2020) concluded that the actions of BLM pay dividends in police contact and a reduction in violent outcomes. Social movement protests can garner support based on inclusivity, relative strength, and the value of the movement (Wouters, 2018). Many of the protests against police violence led to an amplification of violence against protesters by the police. Adam-Troian et al. (2020) expressed that those police officers and protesters' violent reactions attempt to regain power over a loss of identity. The police and protestors are operating on the same dynamic of restitution. The path to ending police violence is situated between the tipping points of all or nothing. Other social movements, such as defund the police movement, have also aggravated the police violence even further towards the public (Wouters, 2018). The goal of the campaign is to reduce police-citizen violence by demilitarizing police forces and redistributing resources to mental health and social services professionals (Skoy, 2020).

Academia's Position

Over the years, policing has chosen the minimalist approach in collaborating with academia. McMichael (2016), in discussing police militarization, suggested that academics have liberally whitewashed the tyranny, material interest, and inherent bias in policing. American community policing has latched on to the broken windows theory of policing and, so far, remained fixated without consideration for other viable methods (Schwartz, 2020). However,

community policing literally replaced the broken windows philosophy of policing in much of the United States. Although the two may be similar in some ways, they are quite different. Buckler and Higgins (2014) expressed that dialogue on bias-based policing and procedural justice is inhibited by the belief among the police that particular crime-fighting strategies are effective with little regard for their impact on disenfranchised populations. There is documented evidence in academia, media, and social justice movements regarding police brutality; the failure of police institutions to work with stakeholders towards meaningful solutions is a national shame. In discussing the role of BLM, one scholar pointed to achievability, Black exceptionalism, and reflexivity coupled with little push back from African American intellectuals as the points of impotence (Szetela, 2019; Wouters, 2018). The coalescence of policing and academia should leverage knowledge and skills to the benefit of society.

Outlook

Equitable policing is a precursor to mending the virulent relationship between the police and African American communities. According to Schlosser et al. (2015), police legitimacy can only be realized through targeted reform strategies. African Americans appear resolute in their pursuit of police reform and regard for their rights. Lum and Nagin (2017) posited that a dynamic revamping of police culture at structural points is critical. Many African Americans believe that they must be afforded equal rights and justice espoused in the Preamble to the Declaration of Independence. Bell (2017) suggested that "bringing about cohesion and solidarity between the police, African American, and other poor communities will require a more aggressive infusion of deliberative participation in policing than most proposals demand" (p. 2143). Systemic racism must first be acknowledged, the necessary edification process applied, and the push for reconciliation strengthened.

Law Enforcement Culture

When a police officer decides to use force, their actions will vary depending on their personality type as well as based on the influence their ethnic or cultural background has on them (US Dep. Justice, 2016). The business culture reflects the attitudes and behaviors of its personnel while assessing the structure and mission of law enforcement institutions. Police officers' actions and attitudes are influenced by their level of authority and the rules and regulations that govern their work. Officers in the informal culture of police organizations are more concerned with shielding their colleagues from external and internal criticism than functioning according to procedural and ethical standards (Sim et al., 2013). Excessive use of force may be concealed, and individual policy interpretations might be made possible due to this network of protection, known as "The Good Old Boy Network" (May et al., 2018). Until recently, law enforcement agencies had a common practice of enforcing a code of silence and job protection. They contributed to the distrust of police officers among African Americans. Informal policing methods allowed excessive force as a control tool when dealing with civilians who were perceived as opponents or defiant of police authority (Sim et al., 2013; US Dep. Justice, 2016). These persons could jeopardize a police officer's safety. Officers' thinking was "us versus the bad guys," which led to disproportionate use of force in their job duties. To uphold their oaths of loyalty, police officers were obligated to remain silent when their fellow officers engaged in misconduct.

Stop Search Arrests

The increasing arrest rate suggests that stop and search is still an essential doorway into the justice system for certain offenses, particularly drug offenses. Stop and search led to more than one-third of all convictions for drug offenses in 2016/17, compared to only 3% of all arrests for other crimes (Trinkner et al., 2019). Although the increase in the number of arrests may

indicate a more focused application of the authorities, this development has created significant ethnic differences. For White, African American, and "mixed" people, the arrest rate was about 10% or 11% in the 5 years leading up to 2010/11 compared to only 8% for Asians and 13% for those classified as "other" (Kahn et al., 2016). This trend has since been reversed as stop and search usage has been curtailed. The arrest rate for Black individuals and the mixed group had risen to 22% and 20%, respectively, in 2016/17, compared to 16% for Asians and White persons and 15% for other ethnicities (Trinkner et al., 2019). Regarding drug searches, there was a similar pattern. After 2010/11, arrest rates for White, African-American mixed, and other groups averaged at 8%, with 6% for Asians, before rising to 20% for African Americans, 17% for diverse groups, 14% for Asians, and 12% of other groups (MacDonald & Braga, 2019).

Even though the increased arrest rates for Black people from stop searchers have offset a decrease in their stop-searches, due to factors such as activism against such acts, the decrease is not significant and still biased in favor of Whites. Between 2010–2011 and 2016–2017, White arrests decreased by 66%, whereas Black arrests decreased by 26% (Trinkner et al., 2019). The number of White people arrested in drug searches decreased by half (by 52 %), whereas the number of Black people incarcerated stayed consistent (6,846 in 2016/17 and 6,845 in 2010/11) (Kahn et al., 2016). When all arrests are accounted for, the full impact of these changes becomes apparent. Police activities that resulted in previous arrests are important as a comparative measure because they are considered part of the violent behavior. Stop and search was used in the arrest of over one-fifth of Black persons in 2016/17, and over three times the percentage of arrests of White people: 17% for Blacks contrasted with 9% for Asians, 8% for 'mixed,' 7% for 'other,' and 5% for Whites (Swencionis & Goff, 2017). Stop and search was used in the arrest of approximately a third of African-American people charged with drug offenses, about twice as

often as it was for White people: 57% for Blacks, 49% for Asians, 33% for 'mixed,' 31% for Whites, and 30% for 'other' (Buchanan & Goff, 2020). It is clear from these discrepancies that the overuse of stop and search by the police is due more to police decision-making and policy than to actual criminal activity.

Perceptions of Those at Low Socio-Economic Levels

Another possible reason why and how police brutality persists relates to the police experiences with African-Americans in society. Because most arrest attempts of Black suspects have resulted in police deaths or injury, police officers view every Black suspect as a threat (Harriot, 2016). Those who are youthful, poor, and non-dominant are more likely to be targeted by the police, according to sociological theory (Goff & Rau, 2020). An observational study revealed that police officers are more prone to use excessive force in areas with a high concentration of low-income inhabitants and a large minority population (Harriot, 2016). In the United States, police brutality is a sign of the racial and economic divides in society. The higher degree of the perceived threat that police face in low-income areas could lead them to believe that their safety is in jeopardy (Goff & Rau, 2020; Harriot, 2016).

Law Enforcement Resistance to the Civil Rights Movement

Police officers' policies and procedures directed by mayors or governors have been used in the past to suppress the rights of Black people in the Civil Rights Movement (Dumke, 2018). Local and state police officers have been shown to use excessive force against African-Americans, both in protest (such as the march from Alabama to Selma led by the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee on April 7, 1975) and in exercising their constitutional rights (such as when the state-controlled Arkansas National Guard prevented nine African-Americans from enrolling at Litton High School in Little Rock, Arkansas) (Hudson et al., 2019). There was a time when local police enforcement stepped up their efforts to thwart civil rights

movements even more aggressively than before and followed the trail leading to the Supreme Court's judgment in United States v. Price (383 U.S. 787 [1966]) (Dumke, 2018). When three civil rights activists were murdered in Pennsylvania in the spring of 1963 while on their way to register voters in the city, members of the Neshoba County Sheriff's Office and a law enforcement officer from Philadelphia, Mississippi, were found guilty by federal authorities (Goff, 2016).

Federal Policy as Motivating Factor to Police Brutality against African Americans

At the time when police officers used policies and procedures to suppress Civil Rights Movement, the federal government implemented policies that increased the physical presence of police officers in areas where a large number of African-American people lived (Trinkner et al., 2019). This action led to an increased number of Black individuals becoming involved in the criminal justice system (Education Week, 2014). When New York City police shot and killed a 15-year-old unarmed Black child 1 week after President Johnson enacted the Civil Rights Act of 1964, it prompted the Harlem rebellion and a wave of subsequent unrest that summer, forcing President Johnson to declare a "War on Crime" (Fisher et al., 2017). The 1965 Law Enforcement Assistance Act and the 1968 Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act were essential tools in the fight against crime. The Justice Assistance Grant Program was established by both bills to distribute federal monies to local law enforcement organizations (Education Week, 2014; Fisher et al., 2017). Programs such as this one have led to increased policing in poorer and more racially diverse communities due to increased policing in regions with higher crime rates.

The Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986 also increased federal penalties for drug crimes, making them harsher for drugs that Black people were more likely to consume. Cocaine usage was reported by 13% of White adults over the age of 12 in the National Household Survey on

Drug Abuse in 1993compared to only 9.5% of Black and Latino adults over the same age range

(Fitzgerald et al., 2015). According to the same poll, 3.4% of Black and 2.0% of Hispanic

persons over the age of 12 reported ever using crack cocaine. In comparison, only 1.6% of

White people admitted to using the processed version. Although crack cocaine weighed only

five grams and powder cocaine weighed 500 grams, the Anti-Drug Abuse Act mandated a 5-year

minimum sentence for anyone in possession of either substance (Albert, 2020). Crack and

powder cocaine have different effects on the body because of their dissimilar processing methods

and because processed crack is absorbed faster. Still, the 1986 100:1 weight ratio in the

punishment thresholds for crack and powder is difficult to justify based on observable indicators

of social harm (Fitzgerald et al., 2015). Congress did not reduce the disparity between crack and

pelletized cocaine sentencing until it passed the Fair Sentencing Act of 2010 despite numerous

suggestions from U.S. Sentencing Commission to raise the crack quantity thresholds, and to do

so, Congress did not act to minimize the inequity until then (Albert, 2020; Fitzgerald et al.,

2015).

Perceptions of Suspicion-Case Study

Lowery (2016) conducted a study using a technique known as "priming," which involves

images of crime being subconsciously shown to students and police officers. Afterward, she

displayed a White and a Black face to the audience. According to Lowery (2016), both students

and police officers were more drawn to the faces of people of color. The researcher conducted a

follow-up study in which they reevaluated law enforcement. Some were predisposed to criminal

activity, whereas others had no prior knowledge. An image of a suspect, either African

American or White, was then shown to the officers to choose the culprit from a lineup of other

people of the same race as the one they had just seen to test their memorization skills. A few

defendants had more stereotypically African American or Afrocentric traits, whereas others had

more stereotypically White or Eurocentric characteristics in both the Black and White suspect lineups. Also known as "colorblindness," this phenomenon occurs when people of the same racial or ethnicity (e.g., African-Americans) have facial features that are more commonly associated with White people than with Black people (e.g., darker skin tone) (Goff, 2016). Contrarily, others have features that are more widely associated with White people (in the same way as the stereotype of a White face for instance, lighter tone of the skin) (Goff, 2016; Lowery, 2016). Officers who saw a Black suspect were more likely to mistakenly identify a criminal with more stereotypically African-American features in a lineup. Officers who saw a White suspect, on the other hand, were less likely to identify an individual with less traditional White characteristics. A more stereotypical African-American or Afrocentric (less Eurocentric) visage was associated with the crime when officers were thinking about the problem of crime and criminality (Lowery, 2016).

Reasons for Ending Police Brutality

The amount of violence inflicted by police on suspects has been noted as a great concern resulting in premature death of most of the suspects. This outcome is contrary to the requirement that those who serve in police forces are committed to justice (Buchanan & Goff, 2019). This brutality, in most cases, is fueled by racial elements. Racism is a system that assigns value and shapes opportunity that is unfairly designed to benefit some and alienating others based on their skin color. The system "saps the power of the whole society by squandering of human resources," which represents the American legacy of racism (Trinkner et al., 2016, p. 125). All forms of racism harm one's health. People are under a lot of stress because of the COVID-19 outbreak, making police violence much more harmful. A growing number of incidents of excessive police force and unjustified killings have been documented, some of which have resulted in fatalities. This violence exacerbates distrust in law enforcement and the government

as a whole because of its effect on vulnerable communities and the public health system

(Buchanan & Goff, 2019; Trinkner et al., 2016). Political violence against individuals and their

communities has a disparate racial impact that is insidiously viral and highly demoralizing

regardless of ethnicity/race, LGBTQ, age, or sexuality (Trinkner et al., 2016; Walker & Katz,

2017). The recent deaths of Breonna Taylor, a Black woman and EMT in Louisville who was

shot and killed in her home due to misidentification by the law enforcement, and George Floyd, a

Black man in Minneapolis, highlight how the cards are stacked against African-Americans

people (Buchanan & Goff, 2019). These injustices echo Eric Garner's last words, "I can't

breathe," which were echoed by many others before him, including Floyd (Goff & Buchanan,

2020). This undercurrent of heinous wrongdoing looms large.

It is not always permissible and justifiable for officers to use force while on duty. A

firearm, for instance, is only permitted when an officer is either protecting themselves or another

person's life. Officer misconduct and police brutality are two terms used by the courts to

describe the use of excessive force by police officers (Buchanan & Goff, 2019). When a police

officer shoots a suspect, the officer's judgment that they are in imminent danger is supported by

the presence of a weapon. Unarmed Black men have been shot by law enforcement officers who

felt intimidated or feared for their lives, yet police officers have reported that they fired their

weapons because they were frightened or afraid (Goff & Buchanan, 2020). Based on how they

acted, the victims were judged. When law enforcement officers stopped, detained, or arrested

people who were aggressive or under the influence of drink or narcotics, they were viewed as

undesirable and in need of control. Such offenders were frequently subjected to disciplinary

measures by law enforcement. Substantial data indicate the negative impacts of adverse opinions

of Blacks (Buchanan & Goff, 2019; Goff & Buchanan, 2020). Included in these unfavorable

ideas on Blacks are the preconceptions that adherents are aggressive and are innately criminal deviants, which accounts for the racial discrepancies in court system results when contrasting them to other groups in the United States. Psychological research shows that categorizing Black people as aggressive and antagonistic can impact how people interpret, draw conclusions, and perceive information about the group (Buchanan & Goff, 2019; Trinkner et al., 2016). This implicit connection between Blacks and lawlessness may impact how and why law enforcement professionals respond and engage when facing possible criminal contact with Blacks. The shooting of Black male suspects by police officers is more frequently due to a misreading of the facts, rather than because of their ethnicity (Buchanan & Goff, 2019).

Summary

Racism has remained a critical part of U.S. policing because the police continue to exhibit racial bias. The decision of the law enforcement is always influenced by race and class. For example, African Americans have been the victims of racial bias and racial injustices. These racial injustices exist even today because the minority communities have been the main victims of police brutality and arrest. The emphasis on crime control using force is considered one of the main factors contributing to the burgeoning of social unrest and crime rates. The use of excessive force is rare, but the main victims have been the minority communities, making it a contentious topic in the history of the United States. Justice has been applied unequally, which explains why African Americans have been subjected to mass incarceration and prolonged sentencing compared to their White counterparts. For example, during mass incarceration, crack cocaine was associated with the urban poor, whereas pure cocaine was associated with the rich urban people. However, the government applied different severe punishments against African Americans. Much of the police training focuses on physical control strategies and weapons.

Based on the experiences of African Americans, racial bias is the main factor that has made them be the main victims of police brutality.

One theory applicable to police brutality is the conflict theory, which can be traced from the times of Karl Marx and Wright Mills. Conflict theories were used in the 1960s and the 1970s to explain clashes and conflicts between different social groups. These theories were important because they were used to unmask order, the law, and the application of authority during times of protests. Per conflict theory, authority and power conspire to maintain political, social, and economic inequality. Strain theory is another important theory that can be used to explain deviant behavior within society. According to Robert Merton, society puts pressure on people, which makes them develop deviant behavior (Brezina, 2017). As such, structural impediments are the root cause of deviance within society. For example, police misconduct can be attributed to the anomic social structure where they are considered masculine, crime fighters, and noble. In this regard, the demands placed on police are high, making them engage in deviant behavior. The social learning theory helps explain the deviant behavior among the police officers that contribute to police brutality. For instance, police officers are exposed to stereotypical learning, which influences their decision-making. Stereotypic learning makes the police associate certain cultural groups with criminal activities, which is why African Americans have been the main victims of police brutality. In this regard, the U.S. government should review the training process of the police officers to ensure they do not acquire negative behavior that triggers police violence.

Police violence against African Americans remains ingrained in the structural mechanisms of American life. B. L. Wilson and Wolfer (2020) viewed institutions of worship as the ultimate arbitrators. Police organizations and their partners in politics attempt to blame

African Americas for their victimization. Police officers require a higher level of functioning to meet the demands of the unpredictable variables inherent to the profession (Preddy et al., 2019). According to Engel et al. (2020), the sheer amount of police agencies and their autonomous nature will make reform challenging. Douglass (2017) noted that consent decrees are a significant pathway towards reformation because it has the force of the Federal Court. The inflexibility of police supervisors renders them unfit to be a catalyst in organizational overhaul (Haake et al., 2015). These systemic failures are critical to the continuation of discriminatory policing.

Policing in the United States changed dramatically over the last 50 years. According to Filstad and Karp (2020), the importance of police culture is neglected due to negative connotations. Police agencies, by nature, are challenging; however, they have internalized the external criticism and are functioning on the premise of garbage in garbage out. Competence is required to meet the challenges in modern policing (den Heyer, 2013). Since their inception, police officers have played by their own rules. However, their disparate impact necessitates change. "Social and political forces also contributed to the shifting focus of law enforcement strategies" (Russell, 1997, p. 576). The citizenry demands trust and legitimacy from their police officers because they operate independently and inflict irreparable harm. According to Sunshine and Tyler (2003), there are conflicting viewpoints about police brutality, but the open and closed stories of victimization are incredibly compelling. Eradicating brutality from policing must involve transparency and full stakeholder participation (Shapiro, 2017). African American communities, spurred by the recent social justice movement, are no longer content with the police operating as an occupying force. According to Braga et al. (2019), "African Americans are overrepresented in every stage of contact with the criminal justice system, among those

arrested, sentenced, on probation, in prison, and put to death" (p. 538). However, they are not as influential when it comes to the formulation of the laws and policies used in these systems.

In Chapter Three, the researcher discusses the study's methodology. This study involved qualitative methods to evaluate and validate the research objective. The design, research questions, procedure, and participants involved in the study are also discussed in Chapter Three. The chapter concludes with discussions on evaluated interviews, data collection, and findings presentation, validating the study's objective.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

The researcher used qualitative research methods to generate data to validate the theoretical underpinnings of the topic: "Police Brutality- The Nexus Between Historical Injustices, Police Culture and the African-American Experience." Qualitative research can be defined as an approach to studying the nature of phenomena by integrating the quality, different mechanisms of manifestations, and their context or the different perspectives that are prevalent, but without including their range, frequency, and place in an objectively established sequence of cause and effect (Busetto et al., 2020). This methodology is used to resolve questions about experiences, meaning, and perspective, from the point of view of the participants in a study (Hammarberg et al., 2016). This methodology was quite suitable for the subject matter of this research because the issues of discriminatory policing and the subsequent brutality that members of minority communities have faced can only be analyzed from their perspectives. Typically, data generated via qualitative research methods cannot be counted or measured (Hammarberg et al., 2016). The data used in qualitative research are generally in a narrative format rather than numerical values (Busetto et al., 2020). In this study, the analysis of data from the qualitative research involved coding using NVivo.

Design

Qualitative methodology was best suited for this research. According to Hammarberg et al. (2016), though it is possible to generate research on the numbers behind police brutality, the credibility of such numbers would be an issue of the low to no levels of trust among minority communities, civil rights organizations, and the government. Members of the Black and other minority communities are highly likely to dispute the numbers presented in government reports,

and the government is unlikely to validate the numbers presented by these communities or even

civil rights organizations (Jameel et al., 2018). The issue investigated in the current study is

polarizing in several ways, requiring an exploration of perspectives. This factor made qualitative

methods approaches the most suitable for this research. Qualitative research methodologies

differ from data collection methods (Jameel et al., 2018). The methods refer to various

mechanisms of data collection such as focus groups (group discussions in small numbers),

semistructured interviews, and surveys (Hammarberg et al., 2016). Other techniques include in-

depth interviews and evaluation of texts and documents such as government reports, media

publications, and websites (Hammarberg et al., 2016). Group discussions help reveal people's

beliefs, attitudes, and conceptualization of normative comportment. Semistructured interviews

are useful when the researcher intends to generate perceptions on a fixated subject matter. When

using qualitative methods, researchers use informants to source background information or the

institutional perceptions of the research topic (Hammarberg et al., 2016).

Qualitative research methods also integrate in-depth interviews to create a more

comprehensive understanding of a condition, experience, or occurrence from an individual's

point of view (Jameel et al., 2018). When using qualitative research methods, print sources or

documents are useful for demarcating the extent of the extant literature on distributed or private

knowledge (Hammarberg et al., 2016). Qualitative research methods are useful when some of

the research questions cannot be accurately responded to using data generated by quantitative

research methods (Busetto et al., 2020). Qualitative research methods are required to establish

the reasons for certain patterns, particularly where they are not easy to perceive or are surprising.

Qualitative research methods encompass multiple designs, including ethnography,

phenomenology, grounded theory, narrative and discourse inquiry, descriptive, and case studies

(Busetto et al., 2020; Hammarberg et al., 2016; Jameel et al., 2018; Nigatu, 2009; Sutton & Zubin, 2015; Thorne, 2000). For the current study, the researcher adopted a narrative research design.

Elicited qualitative research data are generated by the researcher's participation or guidance, whereas extant qualitative research data are generated without the participation or guidance of the researcher (Jameel et al., 2018). The researcher relied on extant qualitative data to generate findings and contextualize the issues that arose from the research topic. The goal of sampling in qualitative research is to create a sample that enables the researcher to comprehend the social process under investigation (Nigatu, 2009). Purposive sampling entails deliberately targeting a particular demographic or source of information because the data provided are useful in attaining the objectives of the study or answering the research questions (Nigatu, 2009; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime [UNODC], 2004). The researcher used the purposive sampling technique to recruit participants who provided individual perspectives and experiences pertinent to the research topic. The sample size should be adequate to answer the research questions; the researcher can deem the sample size to be adequate if no new themes are noticeable (Nigatu, 2009). In the current study, the researcher relied on the snowball purposive sampling technique (see Jameel et al., 2018; Nigatu, 2009). It was the most effective sampling technique for this type of qualitative research.

Research Questions

The research questions that guided this study are as follows:

RQ1. How does race or ethnicity influence the interactions between members of the police force and the general public?

RQ2. What are current elements of the police culture in the U.S. that potentially influence discriminatory policing?

Participants

The researcher used a qualitative approach to collect data regarding discriminatory policing and brutality that members of minority communities face through their perspectives and as reported by previous data collection through document analysis. The data collected, both secondary and primary, aligned to discriminatory policing and racial and ethnic influences between members of the police and the general public in the United States. Participants from the community, law enforcement officers and organizations, and government agencies were included in the sampling process by using snowball purposive sampling approach. With assessments from different agencies, a sample size of 44 participants was sufficient to ensure data saturation (Nowell et al., 2017). The source of data for this study included (a) interviews with individuals effected by abusive policing communities across the United States; (b) focus groups with individuals effected by abusive policing communities across the United States; and (c) survey questionnaire focusing on police culture and influences upon police violence and brutality. The use of secondary data from document analysis helped compliment the primary data.

Procedures

Before the start of the data collection process, the researcher obtained Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval. After obtaining IRB approval, the process of participant recruitment began. The researcher emailed an informed consent detailing the purpose of the study, the significance of the study, possible risks, and the role of the participants to the potential participants, who were expected to append a wet signature as an indication of willingness to participate in the study. Recruitment of participants ensued using a snowball purposive sampling

approach to obtain the required number of participants ($n = 44$), or until reaching saturation was achieved. Next, the researcher began the process of data collection using interviews, focus groups, and survey questionnaire. The procedures of data analysis began following a thematic approach. The qualitative content analysis approach included the identification of textual information through transcription and coding procedures. The coding procedures included initial coding, development of categories from codes, and the development of themes based upon the identified textual information. The researcher used NVivo software to discover richer insights in this qualitative research. The key themes identified are presented in Chapter Four and discussed further in Chapter Five.

The Researcher's Role

As the examinee for this study, the researcher was the sole investigator in the research process. As the principal investigator, the researcher had the ultimate responsibility of ensuring that as a person, and where applicable, the research team fully complied with the university's regulations on research policies and procedures, including the regulations on how to obtain informed consent where necessary (Human Research Protection Office [HRPO], 2018). The principal investigator can be a staff member or a student at the university but should only conduct the research within the set scope or guidelines of the institution (HRPO, 2018). As the principal investigator for this doctoral research project, the researcher was responsible for conducting objective research to produce autonomous and high-quality data that can be represented as a valid thesis (see Washington University in St. Louis, 2021). This role involves creating and managing the study design, including its integrity (Washington University in St. Louis, 2021). It also includes conducting the research, reporting key findings, and detailing any collaboration that facilitated the completion of the thesis. The investigator is responsible for

ensuring that the research complies with the university policies and procedures and federal regulations (Washington University in St. Louis, 2021). In the current study, the researcher upheld such standards in coordination with the relevant department at their school and any other university central administration staff member as required.

When using qualitative methods, researchers use various approaches available for collecting data such as interviews, document analysis, data from focus groups, and field observations (Chenail, 2011). Although qualitative research of this nature relies on secondary information obtained through discovery-based inquiries, most researchers develop research questions based on the context of their present study (Chenail, 2011). Many challenges are inherent to qualitative research, such as instrumentation rigor and elimination of researcher prejudices (Chenail, 2011). These challenges can affect the quality of the research data and findings if they are not managed appropriately, which can lead to the disqualification of such studies by the IRB (Chenail, 2011). Biases can arise in situations where the researcher is not adequately prepared to conduct the research, their ability to analyze the data is impaired by physical and mental conditions such as fatigue, or has some affinity/interest in the matter under investigation (Chenail, 2011). Researchers using qualitative methods can overcome the abovementioned challenges by conducting pilot studies, and or interviewing the investigators prior to their active involvement in the research (Chenail, 2011). In the current study, the researcher conducted a pilot study to enhance the possibilities of overcoming the challenges that are intrinsic to using qualitative research methods.

Instruments

The researcher gathered the research data for this study and triangulated this information using a survey, interviews, a focus group, and document analysis. The instruments used to

collect data from primary sources included a survey questionnaire, interview protocol, and focus group questions. These researcher-developed instruments are included in Appendix A, Appendix B, and Appendix C, respectively. The three instruments comprised open-ended questions in alignment with the designated qualitative research methodology. The researcher developed these instruments based on the reviewed literature and the two research questions. Surveys served as precursors for the questions that guided the interviews and the focus group. To warrant the credibility of the instruments, a field test preceded the main study to collect valuable information to improve the study instruments (see Chesebro & Borisoff, 2007). The field test informed the omission of vague or inappropriate questions and the addition of more relevant ones to the three study instruments.

Data Collection

The sources of data for this study included (a) interviews with individuals effected by abusive policing communities across the United States; (b) focus groups with individuals effected by abusive policing communities across the United States; and (c) survey questionnaire focusing on police culture and influences upon police violence and brutality. The researcher designed the survey questionnaire. The main objective of using qualitative methods is to generate a description of the experiences of the demographic under study (Orb et al., 2001; Sanjari et al., 2014), which was the guiding principle of this research. Qualitative research methods enable researchers to gain understanding of the thought processes and emotion of the study's subjects (Sutton & Zubin, 2015) and comprehend the meaning that individuals or communities attach to their experiences. Qualitative research methods do not involve an inquiry about how many people behave in a certain way, but rather why these people behave in this manner (Sutton & Zubin, 2015). The objective of qualitative research is to unearth information

about how people feel and think about the circumstances in which they find themselves, rather than the validity of these thoughts or emotions (Thorne, 2000).

The primary goal of a qualitative researcher is to protect the study participants and their data (Sutton & Zubin, 2015). Data generated via techniques such as interviews and focus groups can be recorded in audio or video format, or be handwritten (Sutton & Zubin, 2015). For data collected via audio or video recordings, strict transliteration of the data before the analysis process is necessary (Sutton & Zubin, 2015). Field notes recorded during interviews are important for providing contextual information such as the comportment of the interviewees, the environmental dispositions, and any nonverbal cues that are not captured in the recordings. The information generated using field notes can be important for data analysis (Sutton & Zubin, 2015). In this section, the approaches to data collection for this study are discussed.

Interviews

Interviews can be in handwritten, audio, and/or visual recording formats. When the interviews are recorded in audiovisual formats, the data should be transcribed to facilitate the data analysis process (Sutton & Zubin, 2015). It is possible to hire professional transcribers or use transcription editing software if the research budget is adequate enough (Sutton & Zubin, 2015; Thorne, 2000). However, for this research, the researcher personally transcribed the data from the interviews recorded in audio format. It is important to transcribe the data from the audio files verbatim, even if the resultant text is rather unintelligible (Sutton & Zubin, 2015). After completing the process of transcription, the researcher listened to the recordings while going through the transcribed text to ensure that the information was captured accurately. Interviews can be structured (Gill et al., 2008). Structured interviews are almost similar to oral questionnaires; they are characterized by predesigned questions and invariability, and do not

include off-the-cuff follow-up questions based on the responses of the participants (Gill et al.,

2008). Interviews can also be unstructured, where the researcher engages in open-ended

discussions that are guided by the participants' willingness to express their perspectives and

experiences (Jameel et al., 2018). Alternatively, interviews can be semistructured (Jameel et al.,

2018). In this case, although the interview is still quite open-ended, the researcher facilitates the

process through a set of questions that direct the interview process in a predetermined manner.

The fact that most of the questions are predetermined does not necessarily preclude the

researcher from asking any other relevant questions that become pertinent as the interview

progresses (Jameel et al., 2018). Because the researcher relied on extant qualitative research data

to complete this research paper, they evaluated the usefulness of data from structured,

unstructured, and semistructured interviews. Interviews are useful when a researcher wants to

explore the perspectives, experiences, and beliefs of people or communities on a particular

subject or issue (Gill et al., 2008). They provide a more in-depth perspective on social

phenomena and are useful where there is scant knowledge about a topic of research or where a

deeper inquiry is warranted. These aspects are precisely why an analysis of interviews was an

essential mechanism of collecting data for this research dissertation.

Surveys

The researcher also used surveys to collect data on the research topic. The goal of

surveys, as used in qualitative research studies, is to investigate the diversity of a research

subject within a given population, rather than the frequencies and average occurrence of a

research topic (Jansen, 2010). Surveys are used in qualitative studies to investigate the meaning

and experiences of individuals or communities (Jansen, 2010). The goal of the questions used

for the surveys a for this research was to unearth the stories, perspectives, and experiences of the

participants (see Deakin University, 2021). Ideally, the questions should be open-ended.

Surveys can be done physically, over a telephone call, or online (Deakin University, 2021).

Surveys can be used as precursors for the questions to be investigated through other techniques

such as interviews (Deakin University, 2021). Typically, qualitative surveys gather data using a

question-answer format. However, researchers can also collect data through surveys by

observing the interactions of people (Jansen, 2010). The data generated from online surveys are

often already reduced to writing, which eliminates the need for transcription, and they are mostly

collected from a very large demographic base (Deakin University, 2021). However, where the

data from the surveys are collected in oral format, they should be transcribed (Deakin University,

2021). Researchers should also be cautious about the factors that can affect the validity of the

data collected using the survey techniques such as the lack of environmental or behavioral

context of the participants (Deakin University, 2021). This issue is particularly prevalent for

surveys not done in person.

Focus Groups

Focus groups are another common and critical technique of data collection when using

qualitative research methods. In this approach, a collective of persons with a shared experience

gather to discuss a specific topical issue; they are typically organized for research purposes (Gill

et al., 2008). Focus groups incorporate information generated by interviewing between six and

12 people at the same time (Gill et al., 2008; Jameel et al., 2018; UNODC, 2004). This data

collection method enables the researcher to generate pertinent information on the interactions,

associations, and common responses of group participants who share a similar experience

(Jameel et al., 2018). The focus group composition does not necessarily have to adhere to strict

rules on the characteristics of the participants such as gender, age, and other behavioral or

dispositional factors because the data are usually influenced by different characteristics of the participants regardless of such measures (Gill et al., 2008). The researcher can integrate the effect of the demographic mix using observations on how the group interacts before the research session (Gill et al., 2008). The data generated for qualitative research through focus groups can be handwritten or recorded in audiovisual formats. In instances where the data are in recorded in audiovisual formats, transcription of the data is needed to enable their accurate interpretation during the data analysis process (Sutton & Zubin, 2015). The researcher is required to critically analyze the transcripts of a focus group session (Gill et al., 2008). It is possible to hire professional transcribers or use transcription editing software if the research budget is adequate (Sutton & Zubin, 2015; Thorne, 2000).

For this research, the researcher personally transcribed the data from the focus groups that were recorded in audio format. The data from the audio recordings should be transcribed as precisely as they are while avoiding unnecessary translation of the data, which could greatly affect the accuracy of the information presented in the research (Sutton & Zubin, 2015). The researcher should listen to the audio files while going through the transcription to ensure that the data are accurately transcribed. Transcribing data from focus groups is quite challenging considering that the files contain multiple voices (Sutton & Zubin, 2015). Clearly tagging the voices of the different participants is important to facilitate an accurate analysis of the data.

Document Analysis

This qualitative research study also relied on existing research literature on the topic investigated to support the primary data obtained. This technique of data collection requires the researcher to interpret the content of documents to provide a voice and meaning to the nuances of a research topic (Research Methodology in Education [RME], 2016). In the current study, the

researcher used the MAXQDA 2022 computer application for data assessment. Document analysis refers to a systematic process of assessing both print and digital material for research purposes (Bowen, 2009). It involves data collection, analysis, and interpretation with the objective of deriving meaning and understanding from the content (Bowen, 2009). This analytical procedure entails discovering, selecting, appraising, and digesting the data contained in the documents (Bowen, 2009). The type of information generated is referred to as secondary data (UNODC, 2004). The types of documents that can be used can be categorized as public records, personal documents, and physical evidence such as flyers or posters (RME, 2016). Other sources include existing statistical data, relevant policy texts and documents, research reports (whether published or unpublished), and media reports (particularly those done by credible media establishments; Bowen, 2009; UNODC, 2004). Information from diaries, letters, photographs, video and audio recordings, official documents or reports such as medical records, minutes, and digital files can also be used (Bowen, 2009; Deakin University, 2021).

Documents are particularly important for historical research (Deakin University, 2021). Secondary data collection entails examining archived documents, examining hospital or any other official records, watching videos, listening to audio recordings, perusing diaries letters, and any reviewing other relevant documents (Deakin University, 2021). There is no limitation on the number of documents a researcher can use, but the quality of the data collected from the documents is more important than its quantity (RME, 2016). One of the key advantages of using this qualitative data collection technique is that the data are almost always readily available and easy to access (Deakin University, 2021). The researcher relied on several of the abovementioned sources in generating data for this research paper because they are critical sources of credible and valid literature or evidence for the research.

The information generated through the document analysis technique of data collection can be used alongside other data to answer the research questions in a process known as triangulation (Bowen, 2009; Deakin University, 2021). This approach involves the integration collected data with the evidence that is generated by multiple other sources to corroborate and validate the data (Bowen, 2009). However, this goal does not preclude the use of this secondary data collection technique alone (Bowen, 2009). Document analysis also limits the possibilities of the researcher influencing the data or findings based on their biases or other relevant factors (Deakin University, 2021). Researchers should be aware of some of the limitations of data generated through document analysis (Deakin University, 2021). For instance, some records may not bear all the critical information required for research because they were never meant for research (Deakin University, 2021). Other limitations include privacy and copyright issues and the effect of translated documents on the quality of the data collected (Deakin University, 2021). The data collected through document analysis are examined by coding and or theming them (RME, 2016). Researchers use important themes, categories, and illustrations to analyze the data generated (Bowen, 2009). The researcher used this qualitative research data collection technique for this research study because it readily yielded quality and credible data.

Data Analysis

The main objective of qualitative research methods is to project the voices of the study participants to a larger audience (Sutton & Zubin, 2015). Therefore, during the process of data analysis, researchers should endeavor to represent the sentiments of the participants as accurately as possible (Sutton & Zubin, 2015). Researchers can begin to contextualize the data they generate in the field by juxtaposing the perspective of the participants against one another. This approach enables them to identify new perspectives being shared or determine whether they are

approaching a saturation point (Sutton & Zubin, 2015). As a result, the researcher to not only get what is being narrated, but potentially what a participant is not disclosing. A key technique of data interpretation and analysis is coding (Jameel et al., 2018; Nigatu, 2009; Sutton & Zubin, 2015). Coding refers to the process of singling out the topics, issues, similarities, and differences in the data generated from the narrations by the study's participants (Sutton & Zubin, 2015). It is the process of marking the data with a term that describes, summarizes, and categorizes them (Jameel et al., 2018). Coding can be based on a description of the salient characteristics of the data, the topical issues that emerge from the data, or the researcher's analysis and interpretation of the data (Jameel et al., 2018). Coding involves the organization of various sections of the data into themes (Jameel et al., 2018).

Theming is the other technique that researchers use to analyze and interpret qualitative data (Nigatu, 2009; Sutton & Zubin, 2015). It involves correlating the data from one or more sources to present the findings of the research in an articulate and comprehensible manner. Another viable approach to data examination when using qualitative methods is the constant comparative analysis technique. This method was first developed for use in the grounded theory methodology (Thorne, 2000). It entails a comparison between one piece and set of data with others to identify the similarities or differences that exist (Thorne, 2000). This process enables the researcher to distinguish common patterns and themes of the experiences of different people under similar circumstances. It also facilitates processes such as naturalistic inquiries, thematic analysis, and interpretive description to help conceptualize human phenomena in the context in which the experiences occur (Thorne, 2000). Existing or emerging theories can be used to examine the data that have been collected through qualitative research methods (Sutton & Zubin, 2015; Thorne, 2000).

Another technique of analyzing data generated through qualitative research methods is the phenomenological approach (Thorne, 2000). Rather than seeking patterns and commonalities in the data on human experiences, this approach enables the researcher to unearth the underlying structures of these experiences (Thorne, 2000). This approach highlights the depth and details of these human experiences. When using phenomenological approaches to data analysis, the researcher should alienate all previous preconceptions or theories (Thorne, 2000). The idea is to reason inductively using the data that have been collected to create entirely new mechanisms of conceptualizing the subject matter under investigation.

An inductive approach to data analysis is useful when the design of the research is based primarily on qualitative methodologies (Nigatu, 2009). Inductive analysis involves the use of an emergent framework to group the data and establish the relationships between them (Nigatu, 2009; Thorne, 2000). The process of qualitative data analysis can be summarized into five key stages: (a) data organization, (b) framework identification (whether exploratory or explanatory), (c) sorting the data within the framework (e.g., coding), (d) conducting a descriptive analysis process, and (e) a second order analysis process, which is meant to validate the initial findings (Nigatu, 2009). The researcher adhered to this process while analyzing the data.

Trustworthiness

Credibility

Credibility is the ability of the researcher to demonstrate confidence in the methods used to gather and collect data (Stahl & King, 2020). This criterion of trustworthiness helps demonstrate how data represent participants' experiences based upon the methods and approaches used by the researcher (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). The critical threat to credibility is the misrepresentation of data (Nowell et al., 2017), which refers to how the researcher

demonstrates the participants' perceptions (Grant & Lincoln, 2021). Therefore, researchers should ensure credibility to discuss how participants' experiences are represented clearly through the data analysis approaches.

Threats to credibility include researcher bias, qualitative data collection methodology, and sampling strategies (Grant & Lincoln, 2021). Researchers can address credibility threats through the approaches used in analyzing data. For example, in a qualitative research study, the researcher may gather participants' reflections through interviews or focus groups. The researcher would then analyze the data using a coding procedure. The coding procedures should allow the researcher to accurately represent the participant's reflections. A method for addressing this threat to credibility is ensuring that the data are clearly and thoroughly analyzed following previous methods for thematic representation.

Dependability and Confirmability

Dependability refers to the ability of the findings to be reflected in different contexts or across different time periods (Stahl & King, 2020). The researcher should consider how the study's findings accurately represent the participant's reflections in this setting, the data collection methods, and how these align with the guiding research questions and the purpose of the study. The data collection methods should be aligned with the qualitative research and the research design chosen. For this purpose, the researcher should also ensure that the approaches used to collect data align with the ideal methods used for data analysis. The chosen data collection method should follow this approach to gathering participants' perceptions through a qualitative textual method, such as semi structured interviews or a focus group approach.

Confirmability refers to the ability of future researchers to confirm the study findings following the methodologies employed (Stahl & King, 2020). Threats to confirmability include

the study design, sampling, and data collection and analysis methods (Stahl & King, 2020). For example, if a researcher is using a qualitative textual approach, such as thematic analysis, they should provide a detailed codebook and audit trail for future researchers (Nowell et al., 2017). The codebook and audit trail ensures other researchers gain a detailed understanding of how the researcher developed the findings based on the participants' perspectives (Nowell et al., 2017).

Transferability

In qualitative research, transferability refers to the ability of the sending findings to be generalized beyond the original sample size for a broader population (Stahl & King, 2020). Transferability is often limited due to a specific focus on the participants' reflections or experiences. Threats to transferability may include study design, data collection, and analysis, as well as sampling strategy (Nowell et al., 2017). A threat to transferability is a sampling strategy. The sampling strategy should include a clear discussion of inclusion and exclusion criteria to demonstrate the specific population and sample that the findings may be generalized after the findings are discussed (Nowell et al., 2017). The researcher should address the threat to sampling strategy by possibly including different data sources, such as semi structured interviews, a focus group, or open-ended questionnaires. Qualitative researchers who employ multiple forms of data collection are more likely to extend the transferability of findings and mitigate potential threats to this issue of trustworthiness (Nowell et al., 2017).

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Ethical Considerations

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Ethical issues occur in any type of research. Ethics entails engaging in proper research conduct and avoiding generating damage in the process (Orb et al., 2001). It necessitates the application of the recommended ethical principles throughout the research process. The ethical issues that arise when using qualitative research methods are characterized differently compared

to when using quantitative methods; they are more delicate and understated (Orb et al., 2001). Although ethical issues emerging out of a qualitative research process are limited, it is still important for researchers to be prepared to cope with the unpredictability of qualitative research methods. Researchers using qualitative methods should be conscious of how they gain access to community groups and should consider the willingness of people to share their experiences (Orb et al., 2001). For instance, because qualitative research tends to take place in the routine environments of the study participants, the researcher should be aware of the ethical issues that can originate as a direct consequence of such a factor. Other key aspects that can result in ethical concerns include the sources of funding for the research and the resultant conflict-of-interest issues, how appropriate the research and methodological design is, and how the researcher reports the data that have been generated by the research (Orb et al., 2001; Peters, 2021; Sanjari et al., 2014).

The use of deception to generate data for the research is considered an ethical violation (Orb et al., 2001). If the investigator decided to follow police officers as they were working to observe the possible differences in their interactions with the majority and minority communities without disclosing the precise nature of their activities to all the parties concerned, this would constitute an ethical violation. When using qualitative research methods, researchers should seek informed consent from the participants where appropriate and maintain the recommended confidentiality standards (Orb et al., 2001). Researchers should avoid biases in the process of data generation and analysis and in reporting the definitive outcomes of the research (Orb et al., 2001).

The relationship between the researcher and participants of the study is also significant in qualitative research (Sanjari et al., 2014). Qualitative research methods are used to characterize

phenomena from the study subjects' perspectives. The data used for qualitative research are generated using techniques such as interviews and observations (Orb et al., 2001). This process requires the researcher to listen carefully to the subjects and/or observe them in their natural habitats. Therefore, a researcher should avoid any prejudices in collecting and interpreting the data generated and endeavor to establish a cordial relationship with the participants to inculcate a level of trust. The latter approach ensures that the subjects are encouraged to disclose the information that is critical to the research. The use of qualitative methods enables the researcher to collect and analyze data from an emic perspective (Peters, 2021). Although this research project did not involve spending time in the communities under investigation, it was still important for me to respect some of the confidentiality issues that pertain to disclosing some of the intimate details about the communities under investigation.

The generation of data for this research paper did not necessitate the signing of informed consent forms by the study participants because the researcher mostly relied on secondary data. However, other confidentiality considerations such as using pseudonyms to disguise the identities of the sources of the data collected were still pertinent (see Peters, 2021; Sanjari et al., 2014). Potential conflict-of-interest issues should be disclosed (Orb et al., 2001; Peters, 2021). Some conflict-of-interest issues can be resolved by formulating an effective study design (Peters, 2021). Researchers can develop objective study designs to resolve some of the ethical issues that arise out of using qualitative research methods (Sanjari et al., 2014) to curtail the influence of extraneous factors on the credibility of the study. Researchers should be conscious of their reasons for conducting a study to eliminate the possibility of personal inclinations influencing the outcome of their research (Sanjari et al., 2014). As a doctoral degree student conducting independent research for the partial fulfillment of their course requirements, the researcher had

limited, if any, conflicts of interest issues to report for this study. The researcher believes that the study design eliminated the chances of prejudice in generating or interpreting data for completing this research dissertation.

The researcher is considered to be an instrument in qualitative research (Orb et al., 2001; Peters, 2021). Thus, the influence of the researcher on the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data is a critical consideration. Researchers using qualitative methods can be prejudiced by their interest in a subject matter (Peters, 2021). Other factors that can make a researcher biased include gender, race, age, language, marital status. The demeanor and disposition of the researcher could also have an impact on their ability to gain access to information (Peters, 2021) because of how they are likely to be perceived in the communities in which they intend to conduct the research. This factor could be precluded from this research project as the researcher primarily relied on secondary data. It is recommended that researchers keep journals to create a comparison that enables them to evaluate whether their personal disposition could have influenced the data collection process (Peters, 2021). It is also advisable for researchers to be reflective, both before and during the research process, to articulate their subjective positions on the research subject (Sutton & Zubin, 2015). This approach enables them to disclose their biases and provide context for the research. Even though ethical issues can affect qualitative studies, the researcher was fully aware of their interests in this study and was committed to ensuring that no ethical issues affected the data collection process or the findings of this research work.

Different approaches are recommended to including copyrighted material belonging to third parties in a doctoral research thesis. It is important to obtain copyright permissions for the use of images, tables, and other materials presented as part of a doctoral dissertation thesis. This guideline applies for thesis that is published both in print and online versions (Tampere

University Library, 2021). It is important for a researcher to know the requirements for copyright permissions when using third parties' works in a thesis (University of Pittsburgh, 2021). Adhering to the requirements on obtaining copyright permissions where necessary enables researchers to avoid last-minute bottlenecks and hiccups when they should be focusing on other critical issues. Some jurisdictions provide for the reproduction of limited quantities of copyrighted work under a concept of fair use for critical review or analysis, without the permission of the copyright holder(s), provided that the researcher cites the sources accordingly (Goldsmiths University of London, 2021). The appropriating party is also required not tamper with, alter, or crop images or other figurative resource materials in the process of reusing them (Goldsmiths University of London, 2021).

These guidelines were critical for completing this research thesis, which was heavily reliant on qualitative methods to generate the required data. Most resource materials disclose the requirements for copyrights transfer within the provisions on their copyright pages (Tampere University Library, 2021). Where it is explicitly stated that the right to use the article, whether for the print or electronic version of the doctoral thesis, is retained by the author, a researcher is not required to request permission to use such a reference material (Tampere University Library, 2021). Copyrights on academic or other literature include the right for the copyright holder(s) to distribute them (Goldsmiths University of London, 2021). When such works are reused in subsequent research works that are distributed for consumption, their content is consumed without the owner of the copyright enjoying the set benefits, which is why most academic or other literature have a requirement for reuse permissions. Alternatively, some reference materials include provisions for researchers to request for permissions for reuse via designated link services or by email (Tampere University Library, 2021). The applicable mechanisms for

obtaining the necessary permissions are often provided for within the reference materials. The researcher relied on materials that have provisions for reproduction of their content without requiring any permissions because the process can be tedious and prolonged. This kind of drawn-out process did not bode well for the time limitations afforded for this research thesis. If an investigator finds that a reference material is of critical essence but requires them to obtain permission for its use, they will endeavor to get it.

For instance, most journal articles have links to predesigned and automated forms that can be used to request permission for reusing the copyrighted content on their abstract pages (University of Pittsburgh, 2021). These links usually prompt the permission seeker to input some basic information about themselves and a price for the reuse of the material. A license for the reuse is promptly issued to a compliant researcher, permitting them to print or save the material for presentation whenever necessary. The permission licenses, for the reference materials that require a reuse permission, which were used to generate data for this research paper, are included in the appendices. Researchers can use reference materials such as books, journals, other texts, illustrations, and more without obtaining the permissions if they fall under the fair dealing concept or do not require that permissions for reuse are obtained (Goldsmiths University of London, 2021). In most jurisdictions, a different standard is used for the reuse of academic or other literature for examination purposes (Goldsmiths University of London, 2021). The researcher presumed this factor would validate the use of secondary data obtained through qualitative methods for this research.

Summary

The methodology used to generate data to answer the research questions for this study was qualitative. Qualitative research methods are used to resolve questions about experiences,

meanings, and perspectives from the point of view of the participants of a study. Data generated via qualitative research methods cannot be counted or measured. In qualitative research, the data used are generally in a narrative format rather than numerical values. This methodology was suitable for the subject matter of this research because the issues of discriminatory policing and the subsequent brutality that members of minority communities have faced can only be analyzed from their perspectives. Because the issue investigated in this study is very polarizing in several ways and varying perspectives were important to obtain, qualitative research was the most suitable for this dissertation. The data collection methods or techniques include focus groups, interviews, informants, evaluation of texts and documents such as government reports, and media publications. Print sources or documents are useful for demarcating the extent of extant literature on distributed or private knowledge.

The research approach for this study was a narrative research design. Data generated through qualitative research methodologies can be elicited or extant. Elicited qualitative research data are generated by the researcher's participation or guidance, whereas extant qualitative research data are generated without the participation or guidance of the researcher. The researcher used the purposive sampling technique to identify information-rich extant resource materials to generate data on individual perspectives and experiences that were pertinent to the research topic. The particular sampling method chosen was the snowball purposive sampling technique because it was most effective for this type of qualitative research paper. In this chapter, the researcher also evaluated the need for permissions while conducting research and provided clear outlines of how to meet the requirements. The researcher clarified their role as the main investigator for this research and addressed the ethical issues that may have arose. The four data collection techniques used to generate data for this research were (a)

interviews, (b) focus groups, (c) survey questionnaire, and (d) document analysis. The researcher ensured that the interviews, focus groups, and surveys met the universally acceptable standards stipulated in research literature before integrating the data into the findings of this study.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

Overview

The purpose of this research was to improve the problem of police brutality in the African American community. Current and prior research overwhelmingly attributes police brutality of African Americans to improper training methodologies and the 'bad apple' metaphor rather than inculpate historical injustices, ingrained insular police culture, and police agencies' failure to regulate and sanction members' activities judiciously (Adedoyin et al., 2019; Clayton, 2018; Subbaraman, 2020). Two research questions guided this study. RQ1 focused on how race or ethnicity influence the interactions between members of the police force and the general public. RQ2 focused on the elements within the police culture that influence discriminatory policing in the United States. In this chapter, the results of the study are presented. The chapter is organized as follows: (a) summary statistics, (b) results, and (c) chapter summary.

Summary Statistics of the Sample

In terms of age, the participants were distributed into the following age categories: (a) 18–24, (b) 25–34, (c) 35–44, (d) 45–54, (e) 55–64, and (f) above 64. The 35–44 age category had the highest number of participants ($n = 15$), followed by the 18–24 age category. The 25–34 and 45–54 age categories had equal representation of seven participants each. The 55–64 age category only had five participants. The >64 age category had the lowest number of participants ($n = 2$). Overall, most participants were younger to middle-aged adults with ages ranging between 18 and 44 years ($n = 30$). In terms of gender, the number of male participants was equal to the number of female participants ($n = 22$). These summary statistics of the sample are shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Sample Summary Statistics

Characteristic	No. of participants
Age Group	
18–24	8
25–34	7
35–44	15
45–54	7
55–64	5
Above 64	2
Gender	
Male	22
Female	22

Results

Research Question 1

RQ1 was as follows: How does race or ethnicity influence the interactions between members of the police force and the general public? Three themes emerged for this research questions.

Theme 1: Police Brutality Mistreatment, and Over-Policing are More Common Among Racial Minorities

Twelve participants contributed to this theme. All participants expressed that policy brutality and mistreatment were more prevalent in African American communities. Police officers are more hostile when dealing with the African American community compared to when dealing with other races, such as Whites, as people of color are targeted by law enforcement without reason or proof of criminal activity. Participants described that African Americans are treated brutally by police due to their race because law enforcement officers across the country has been exposed for their blatant racism against African Americans. Some participants also indicated that there is over-policing in neighborhoods predominantly inhabited by racial

minorities. According to the participants, over-policing of certain races or ethnicities is a major issue that can increase the mistrust of police and heighten tensions between law enforcement and communities of color. One participant highlighted that the over-policing of Black neighborhoods creates a cycle that perpetuates itself, often leading to discriminatory policing by the police against the African American communities. Nine participants confirmed through their responses that race does not influence police brutality against minorities. Some participants indicated that race does not affect their interactions with the police. This theme has three subthemes, which are described in the following subsections.

Police Brutality and Mistreatment Are More Prevalent in African American Communities. Twelve participants contributed to this subtheme. The participants described that police brutality and mistreatment were more prevalent in African American communities. The police use an aggressive approach towards people of color and in a certain neighborhood. The participants also highlighted that police officers are more hostile when dealing with the African American community. Race has always definitely come into play when one walks into a public setting with police present as an African American. Other races feel safer around police officers, whereas African Americans feel tense and uncomfortable around them. African Americans have often been killed like dogs in the street on general traffic stops. Most participants described that African Americans are treated brutally by police due to their race because law enforcement across the country has been exposed for their blatant racism. As reported by the participants, the citizens often complain about police brutality only to be silenced by that very police force despite FBI investigations exposing how the culture of racism bleeds into the way the police respond to and use force when dealing with African Americans.

Race and ethnicity play a significant role in police brutality. P27 reported having to be mindful of how and what to communicate to avoid an altercation with the police due to her skin color, stating, "Race and ethnicity plays a significant role as I have ensured that I am aware of different groups level of communication dos and don'ts." P28 reported that because of police brutality the African American people have developed fear, as there are more injustices done upon Black people, making them understand that when interacting with police they may be discriminated against: "In my interactions with police, due to seeing injustices done upon Black people, I can't help but have fear when interacting with police knowing I may be discriminated against." Surprisingly, P38 indicated that Black officers often treat minorities harsher than their White counterparts, as the race or ethnicity of the police officer or agent in addition plays a significant part in the interactions with members of the police force: "I believe the race or ethnicity of the police officer or agent in addition to my race plays a significant part with my interactions with members of the police force."

P40 felt that ethnicity plays a significant role in the police force as, in one instance, a police officer may interact differently with a specific ethnicity because of stereotypes placed around the ethnic group. P40 said, "I feel that ethnicity does play a role in the police." As reported by P44, police brutality was manifest in the aggressive approach towards people of African Americans, and a certain neighborhood: "the aggressive approach towards people of color, & in a certain neighborhood." According to P1, African Americans are being treated unfairly, as brutality is the American way towards Blacks: "I considered being treated unfairly as brutality. It's just the American way." One participant revealed that African Americans are considered being treated unfairly, as brutality has always been the order of the day for these minority groups in the United States because it is just the American way, as reported by P10.

P17 indicated that police officers are more hostile when dealing with the African American community as other races felt safer around police officers, whereas African Americans felt tense and uncomfortable around police officers for the fear of being brutally treated and discriminated against by the police. P17 said, "As seen numerous times, police officers are more hostile when dealing with the African American community." According to P18, "they kill us like dogs in the street on general traffic stops."

P19 described police brutality by reporting that African American men and women are oftentimes targeted by law enforcement without reason or proof of criminal activity because they are not able to defend themselves, as no one cares about them because of their skin color: "Often men and women of color are targeted by law enforcement without reasoning or proof of criminal activity." Similar to P19, P22 stated that some police officers treat all African Americans the same and, in a manner, as if they did something wrong, as they expect African Americans to remain silent when talking and not speak up for themselves: "The officers expect you to just stay silent and not raise your voice when they start to raise their voice." P25 confirmed that African Americans are treated brutally by police due to their race because often law enforcement across the country has been exposed for their blatant racism. FBI investigations have exposed how the culture of racism bleeds into the way the police respond to and use force when dealing with African Americans. According to P25,

> I think African Americans are treated brutally by police due to their race because time and time again law enforcement across the country has been exposed for their blatant racism. Oftentimes times the citizens complain about police brutality only to be silenced by that very police force. FBI investigations have exposed how the culture of racism bleeds into the way the police respond to and utilized force when dealing with African

Americans, as if the very color of their skin requires deadly force to be applied even

when no violence or force is used against officers. Even the act of fleeing from police

has led to the death of multiple Black people over the years.

P25 also reported that, at times, Black officers exercise greater forms of brutality against other

Black people in an attempt to fit into the police culture. However, there is an extreme response

from police whenever there is a call for accountability from the citizens they are supposed to

serve:

I have noticed an extreme response from police whenever there is a call for

accountability from the citizens they are supposed to serve, you often see the minority

groups adopt the majority group's opinions or behaviors in an effort to be seen as one of

them. a recent example of this could be the Tyre Nichols case in Memphis. During the

George Floyd protests, I saw videos of Black officers pulling the hair of and trying to

harm Black women in the crowd. The protester called him out for attempting to harm her

and asked him why.

Race Does Not Influence Police Brutality Against Minorities. Participants described

that race has no impact on police brutality against African Americans. Some participants

showed equal interaction with the police regardless of race or ethnicity, as they had never

encountered unfavorable situations with the police. P8 reported not having encountered police

brutality, stating, "Honestly, I have never encountered a bad situation with police. Always tries

to avoid them." P14 reported that race did not affect their relationship with the police: "doesn't

affect me." On the same note, P16 indicated that race or ethnicity had no influences on the

interaction with the police force, stating, "Zero— I don't believe race or ethnicity has any

influences on my interaction with the police force."

Over-Policing in Neighborhoods Predominantly Inhabited by Minorities. Six participants contributed to this subtheme. All participants described that over-policing in neighborhoods was predominantly within the areas inhabited by minorities. The participants reported that police training, over-policing in minority communities, use of force, and biases were based on brutality towards African Americans, as the over-policing of Black neighborhoods creates a never-ending cycle that often leads to discriminatory policing. The participants also revealed that over-policing of certain races or ethnicities is a major issue that can lead to greater mistrust of police and heightened tensions between law enforcement and communities of color. According to the participants, police have used the statistics showing that disadvantaged communities produce many mischievous individuals, with nothing constructive to occupy their time. These individuals often cause trouble amongst themselves or others. The police use this information as an excuse to harass the African Americans. The participants also opined that African Americans who are low-income are more predisposed to unfavorable interactions with police. Police patrol low-income neighborhoods more often than higher income areas.

P22 reported increased policing around African American neighborhoods due to the perceptions that they are prone to making mistakes and engaging in criminality. There is police training around their neighborhoods, highlighting over-policing in minority communities, use of force, and biases against African Americans. P25 also indicated that the over-policing of Black neighborhoods creates a cycle that perpetuates itself, which often leads to discriminatory policing:

First, they arrest minorities for low-level offenses, which introduce them to the system

and limit their access to the job market. Either that very system molds the affected party

to become bigger criminals or the lack of job access forces recidivism and elevates the criminality.

P33 reported that over-policing of certain races or ethnicities is a major issue that can lead to greater mistrust of police and heightened tensions between law enforcement and communities of color, sharing, "Over policing of certain races or ethnicities is a major issue which can lead to greater mistrust." P4 indicated that police perceive that disadvantaged communities include many mischievous individuals with nothing constructive to occupy their time and, thus, these individuals often cause trouble amongst themselves or others: "Statistics have shown where disadvantaged communities produce a lot of mischievous individuals." However, P4 also reported that White communities have all they needed to sustain themselves and in such an environment, there is no need for excessive policing:

> See the White communities have all that's needed to sustain itself and, in such environment, there isn't a need for excessive policing however disadvantaged communities are still in need of more than excessive police. Proper education and fair job opportunities are some of the few things that can help make a change that we all can one day be proud of

Theme Two: Police Generally Exhibit a Negative Attitude Towards Blacks

Four participants contributed to this theme. These participants described that police have generally exhibited negative attitudes towards African Americans or Blacks in the United States. The participants reported that police look down upon Blacks or African Americans as race negatively influences their interactions with members of the police force, and African Americans have been treated as less human. Two participants also revealed negative attitudes towards African Americans. One element of the police is their attitude towards African Americans. Two

participants maintained that police officers sometimes feel threatened by the Blacks. Officers need to stop feeling threatened by the African American community and focus on building trust to facilitate structural changes. P25 reported that the African American race negatively influences their interactions with members of the police force, indicating that they often feel that African American women are disregarded or brushed off by the police officers: "I think my race negatively influences my interactions with members of the police force. I often feel my concerns as an African American woman are disregarded or brushed off."

Another element is the police belief that African Americans' lives are worth less than those of White people as well as the belief that African Americans are expendable. P17 said, "Another element is their belief that African Americans lives are worth less than White people, and the belief that we're expendable." Echoing P17's response, P6 noted that just thinking that being Black makes one less of a person, allows atrocious behavior by some members of the police force: "Thinking that because you are Black makes you less of a person allows for atrocious behavior by some members of the police force." On the same note, P39 reported that African Americans have been treated as less than human, and this ideology permeates every police department across the United States.

Two participants revealed negative police attitudes towards African Americans. According to P17, "One element is their attitude towards African Americans and how we're perceived." P15 also reported that the mindset that they have when encountering a different race may also have an impact on how police deal with African Americans, stating, "The mindset that they have when encountering a different race. What they see on TV and music videos of violence and rage. It's assumed that how in their word's blacks are all the time."

Two participants indicated that police officers feel threatened by Blacks. Participants believe that law enforcement is scared of the people they are meant to protect. As reported by P19, if the police feel threatened by African Americans, they are likely to do regrettable things including the use of force and brutality, which may end in the killing of Blacks: "I believe that law enforcement is scared of the people whom they are meant to protect. Being an officer of course isn't an easy job, and because of past events they've gotten an awful rep with the people." In this regard, P27 reported that officers need to stop feeling threatened by the African American community and focus on building trust to facilitate structural changes where officers can now feel safe not only with their colleagues but also with the African American community: "Officers need to stop feeling threatened by the African American community and focus on building trust to facilitate structural changes."

Theme Three: Racial Profiling, Negative Stereotyping, and Implicit Bias Against Minorities

The interaction between police officers and members of the public, as evidenced by participants' responses in this study, sometimes results in racial profiling, stereotyping, and implicit bias against racial minorities. Thus, race most likely has an influence on how the police treat members of the public when they interact with them, and individuals from racial minorities are likely to be racially profiled and stereotyped negatively. This theme received support from several participants. The subthemes under this theme are discussed in the following subsections.

Police Officers Exhibit Implicit Bias Against Racial Minorities. Implicit bias advanced by police officers is one of the main factors the participants mentioned contributes to discriminatory policing especially against racial minorities. The participants contended that some police officers exhibit implicit bias, which makes them mistreat racial minorities. For

instance, P2 narrated an experience where a Hispanic police woman talked to him in an inhumane way as if she was about to arrest him for merely starting his car:

> Race and ethnicity have significantly influenced my interactions with the police. These kinds of interactions can vary widely but I think that a lot of police have implicit bias, these biases make them interact with African Americans in an inhumane way at times. An example of this would be there was a police car parked at the corner of a block. I did not realize on that block there was police activity turning to drive down the block that officer a Hispanic woman spoke to be in such a manner as if she was about to arrest me for turning my car on the block.

Another participant, P4, described how police officers constantly brutalize African Americans, yet the same level of force is not used against individuals from other races. This participant believed that the use brutal force against African Americans by the police is a result of implicit bias. The following statement illustrates P4's views regarding how implicit bias contributes towards discriminatory policing against African Americans:

> African Americans are constantly brutalized by police. Every day you see instances where African Americans are killed but when the same action is used by other races the same deadly force is not necessary. Police use deadly force when dealing with African American Children, I believe because of implicit bias. They do not see our children as their children or relatives or empathize with them. African Americans have faced disproportionate levels of violence and mistreatment by police. There was just an incident of a maybe 8-year-old boy, while waiting in the car for his mom who was in a meeting with her attorney the boy opened the door and peed and the officer spoke to the child's

parent, the parent scolded the child and told him that was illegal, but the child was still arrested and charged at 8 years old.

Based on responses from certain participants, implicit bias against certain races is a deeper problem and stems from institutional factors and historical racism. A combination of these systemic factors contributed towards residential segregation and economic disparities with racial minorities being on the lower ranks of the economic ladder. According to P28, police officers assume that racial minorities such as African Americans are thugs and exhibit violent behaviors: "Police officers struggle with discarding their personal prejudice against races of all types, especially Black people because we are assumed to be thugs, violent, and angry." P4 also held a similar perspective: "I'd say that they are some level of bias towards a certain race and ethnicity when encountered by the police force." However, P28 argued that these implicit biases are sometimes difficult to erase because most racial minorities reside in high-crime areas: "Unfortunately, Certain neighborhoods in the U.S. are filled with poor living conditions, liquor stores, etc. that breed violent behavior among many other things."

Racial Profiling of Racial Minorities. The participants reported racial profiling of minorities as a common practice when police officers interact with members of the public. For instance, P3 described how racial profiling adversely affects his interactions with the police: "It highly affects my interactions with members of the police force. Given the ongoing brutality and racial Profiling." According to P43, race has become one of the key factors used by the police to identify potential criminals and to determine the appropriate action to take: "Race has become one of the defining factors the police force uses to determine appropriate actions to a hostile situation." Racial profiling against minorities mainly affects African Americans. According to

P27, it is common for police officers to wrongfully arrest African Americans who fit the description of a particular suspect:

> There is a stereotype with African Americans where they are guilty by the color of their skin or they fit the description of a suspect. We have seen this where officers wrongfully arrest someone because they fit the description. Most recently the teen who was sent to put out trash and was placed in handcuffs because he fit the description of the alleged suspect.

Racial profiling advanced by police officers is manifested through stop-and-frisk operations where a majority of those stopped are racial minorities, particularly African Americans. P5 lamented how over-policing is conducted on African Americans. According to P5, police base their decision to particularly target African Americans during stop-and-frisk operations on incorrect statistics about Blacks being most likely than any other race to offend: "Stop and frisk ... incorrect statistics implying African Americans more likely to carry firearms/ weapons. Encourages over policing on blacks." P32 also described how police officers unfairly target African Americans during stop and frisk operations, especially if they (the African Americans) drive expensive cars: "Driving while Black is a real thing and being in an expensive BMW or Benz makes it worse. The treatment is … 'Who does this uppity nigger think they are!?'" P19 also described how police officers disproportionately target African Americans simply because they dress, walk, or talk in a particular way: "Racial profiling, workers of law enforcement have stopped young Black men and women for dressing a specific way, walking, talking, or even hanging out with each other not knowing their educational/job status."

This racial profiling likely results from implicit biases the police hold against racial minorities. According to P35, there is a common belief among police officers that African

Americans have a greater likelihood of committing crimes compared to individuals from other races. As a result, individuals from the African American community are more likely to be arrested simply because of their skin color. P35 made statements such as, "The belief that blacks are the 'usual suspects'" and "The belief that blacks have to prove that they are not guilty. The practice of painting a race with a broad brush." Similar sentiments were shared by P10, who claimed police officers believe African Americans are more likely to commit crimes than members of other races. For this reason, the police enforce greater punishment to African Americans for committing (or being suspected to have committed) crimes similar to those committed by members of other races: "The belief that Black people are more dangerous or likely to commit crimes definitely influences and the failure of many police departments to enforce punishment that matches the crimes committed by members of other races."

Participants' responses revealed that it is a norm in the police department to assume African Americans are inferior and more likely to commit criminal offenses. As such, they are more likely to be targeted as potential criminals even in situations where they the victims. P4 narrated an experience where the police turned against an African American family that had called in for assistance:

At this point, it almost starting to seems as though it is second nature for police officers to assume to treat African Americans as though they're less than. There's this level of aggression towards African Americans when dealing with law enforcement agencies that almost always result in bias outcome. I've personally seen a Black family called for police assistance and when the officers arrived, they detained the Blacks who actually are the ones seeking help against another race.

The responses from some participants, however, indicated an overlap between police effort to identify criminals based on personal attributes and what would be termed as discriminatory policing. Although police officers' use of personal attributes such as behavior and appearance is not inherently discriminatory, the practice can turn out to be racially discriminatory if individuals are singled out based on solely on their race. Considering preexisting biases and prejudices in the policing culture, profiling of potential suspects may lead to the police unfairly targeting members of a certain race. These sentiments were made by P28:

> In order for police officers to do their jobs I understand that they must try their best to identify suspects based on body language and how a person looks. This way of locating suspects crosses into discriminatory territory because personal prejudices can influence judgment of potential suspects.

Racial Stereotyping of African Americans. Implicit bias entrenched in the police department against Blacks and other racial minorities stems from the general racial stereotypes the society constructs regarding people of certain races. The participants believed that some of the negative stereotypes attached to certain racial minorities are used by the police to unfairly target those minorities. For instance, P20 cited the misconception that African Americans are violent and aggressive as one of the negative stereotypes that members of the police force use to preemptively act aggressively and brutally towards African Americans: "I think stereotyping is what largely facilitates police brutality. There exists a misconception that Black people are aggressive and violent by nature, causing members of the police force to either act out of fear for their own life." P30 also believed his African American race significantly influenced his interactions with the police, particularly due to the negative stereotypes the society constructs of his race, which are picked up by the police and used as identifiers of potential criminals: "I

would say that my race influences my interactions with members of the police force mostly through stereotypes they may have of young men of my skin color." Other participants who held similar views included P25 and P38. P25 described his experiences of negative stereotyping of himself and people who look like him in his neighborhood: "I feel they view all people who look like me and live in my neighborhood as perpetrators or potential perpetrators." P38 called for the removal of stigma and negative stereotypes placed behind certain races: "We need the stigma behind a specific race and past labels placed on them be removed."

Research Question 2

RQ2 was as follows: What are current elements of the police culture in the U.S. that potentially influence discriminatory policing? This research question was intended to identify the current aspects of the police culture in the United States that influence discriminatory policing. The findings for RQ2 revealed several factors in the U.S. policing culture that potentially influence discriminatory policing, particularly against racial minorities. These factors emerged as key themes from the qualitative data after a rigorous thematic analysis process.

Theme Four: Superiority Complex and the 'Us-vs-Them' Mentality in the Police Department

Interview Findings. One of the major factors contributing to discriminatory policing in the United States is the disconnect between members of the police department and the general public. Consistent with the findings of this study, this disconnect manifests in the forms of the 'us-vs-them' mentality and superiority complex on the part of police officers. The 'us-vs-them' mentality is a culture entrenched within the police department where police officers view themselves separate from the members of the general public. Per the findings of this study, some members of the police department also exhibit superiority complex where they perceive themselves with an exaggerated sense of entitlement in their interactions with members of the

general public. A detailed discussion of these two forms of rigid disconnect between the police

and members of the public is conducted in the sub-sections that follow.

     The 'Us-vs-Them' Culture. The 'us-vs-them' mentality, according to participants, is

entrenched in the police department, where police officers perceive a stark division between

themselves and members of the general public they serve. This perceived division forms a basis

for discriminatory policing, especially when the members of public being served do not belong

to the same race as the police officers. Considering that a majority of police officers are of

Caucasian origin, an 'us-vs-them' mentality would contribute to discriminatory policing

especially against racial minorities who are obviously underrepresented in the police department.

P20 made these sentiments, stating, "Outside of racism, I think the out-grouping that the police

force inspires (us vs. them) is what contributes to discriminatory policing." P3 also emphasized

the same, indicating the us-vs-them culture in the police department forms a basis for

discriminatory policing, especially on racial grounds:

> I think most not all but most police have a Us vs. them mentality. I believe that from the
>
> environment police work is always not where they come from or where they can relate to,
>
> so they show ethnic and racial bias amongst the community in which they police.

     P21 also believed there is an 'us-vs-them' culture in the police department, which

promotes discriminatory policing, especially against racial minorities: "I believe that there is a

savior complex and hierarchical power dynamic created. In these structures, there is an 'us'

versus 'them' mindset that is generated between the police force and the minority communities

they "protect and serve." Holding similar views, P23 clarified that the 'us-vs-them' mentality

designed to promote solidarity among police officers may unintentionally create an adversarial

view of the community, particularly in neighborhoods inhabited by racial minorities:

Us vs. Them Mentality: Police culture often fosters a sense of solidarity among officers, which can lead to an "us vs. them" mentality. This can result in an adversarial view of the community, particularly in neighborhoods with high crime rates or minority populations.

P39 offered another dimension through which the 'us-vs-them' mentality may potentially contribute to discriminatory policing. According to P39, such a culture creates an environment where officers lie to cover up for the mistakes of their fellow officers:

The us against them culture in policing creates an atmosphere where police officers lie and provide cover for their fellow officers. Police Departments provide further cover through rules and regulations which give the perception of accountability, the fact is police are unable to "police themselves." Unions have developed funds, attorney representation, and a history of lies to cover every situation their members are confronted with.

Superiority Complex. Responses from several participants revealed that most police officers exhibit an exaggerated sense of entitlement and dominance particularly over members of the general public. According to the participants, this mentality has potential to result in discriminatory policing where people perceived to be in the lower power ranks, typically members of the public, are mistreated. According to P9, superiority complex among police officers is manifested through "abuse of power from some," especially when they believe they are above the law. P11 also mentioned that the belief among some police officers that they are authoritative figures induces "prejudice, biasness, and close-mindedness" in their interactions with members of the general public. P15 also argued that superiority complex among police officers may sometimes drive them to treat members of the public based on how or where they

live: "The systematic tradition of this and that are inferior to them may lead to lack of respect

based on how and where you live."

To further demonstrate how superiority complex among police officers may contribute to

discriminatory policing, the participants contended that the sense of entitlement makes most

officers the main aggressors in their interactions with members of the public. For instance, P26

mentioned that police officers with superiority complex are normally the main aggressors as they

attempt to project or maintain their dominance when interacting with members of the public:

"Cops are supposed to protect and serve a lot of the times I see videos or in person scenarios

where the officers are the main aggressors trying to either match energy or maintain their

dominance at the moment." P40 also held similar views, saying, "I feel that some officers don't

like to be proven wrong by the person they are talking to." As P40 indicated, most police

officers with superiority complex will try all means possible to prove themselves right and the

other person wrong even when they are innocent.

Theme Five: Deviant Behavior and Lack of Accountability Among Members of the Police

Interview Findings. Fifteen participants contributed to this theme. The participants

confirmed that deviant behaviors and a lack of accountability by the members of the police

department as contributing factors to discriminatory policing. The participants also highlighted

that failing to punish bad police officers encourages police brutality. According to the

participants, failing to punish police officers allows the bad officers to hide their negative

behaviors. These police officers are limited by the lack of strong social structures within their

department, making them develop deviant behavior, as they can use coercive interrogation tactics

to get important information from a suspect. Corruption among police officers is caused by the

societal pressure to be noble. Some participants suggested that police officers should lose their

certification and be dismissed after being found guilty of corruption and misconduct. Participants also mentioned that a lack of accountability on the part of police officers contributes to increased discriminatory policing by the police officers. Three subthemes emerged under this theme and are discussed below.

    Lack of Accountability on the Part of Officers. Eleven participants contributed to this subtheme, indicating that the lack of accountability in most police brutality cases over the decades allows police to feel they can do anything to Black or Hispanic people, which contributes to increased police brutality to African Americans. Per the participants, police culture does not promote accountability and transparency, which has made the public members lose trust in the police force. Police are usually guided by racial bias, lethal force, and a lack of independent investigations, leading to the discrimination of minority communities as much of the brutality is institutionalized. P24 reported that a lack of accountability in most police brutality cases contributes to increased police brutality against African Americans in the United States:

> The lack of accountability in most police brutality cases over the decades allows police to feel they can do anything to Black or Hispanic people. Much of the brutality is institutionalized. I'm reminded of Freddy Gray's "rough ride" in Baltimore and the "taking a man down" i.e. the sodomizing with a plunger of Abner Louima in New York City. The use of those terms meant that those actions had happened often enough before to have names other officers would understand. Hence, institutionalized.

Some participants claimed that police culture has a brotherhood mentality that makes it difficult to hold officers accountable for their brutality and wrongs done against minority people. P29 indicated that such cases can be demonstrated when police officers are given leave or a day off for a murder committed against the minority: "Police culture has a 'brotherhood' that does

not hold their officers accountable in displays of racism. This is shown when a cop is given paid leave for murder against a minority."

P39 indicated that the culture of 'us against them' in policing creates an atmosphere where police officers lie and provide cover for their fellow officers. Police departments provide further cover through rules and regulations that give the perception of accountability. According to P39, police unions have also developed funds and attorney representation to protect their members despite the history of lies in every situation. This protection contributes to increased police brutality because they know they can still get away with it:

> The us against them culture in policing creates an atmosphere where police officers lie and provide cover for their fellow officers. Police Departments provide further cover through rules and regulations which give the perception of accountability; the fact is police are unable to "police themselves." Unions have developed funds, attorney representation, and a history of lies to cover every situation their members are confronted with.

P24 noted that a lack of accountability led to increased police brutality as it has become acceptable: "As mentioned in my answer to question 2 the lack of accountability. Police brutality toward African Americans is accepted and acceptable. It is part of the institutional racism that exists in the United States.''

Participants also revealed that the police do not hold each other accountable for racist actions. According to P29, when an officer commits a racist action and is defended, that tells all other officers that it is okay to commit the said action again. When police officers are not held accountable, they are more likely to be brutal whenever dealing with African American people. P29 shared the following:

Cops do not hold each other liable for their actions which only uphold the racism that

some of them exhibit. When an officer commits a racist action and is defended, that sends

a notion to all other officers, believing that it is okay to commit said action again.

P21 reported that there are other cases where White male assailants are taken into custody, unharmed, after massive acts of violence, whereas African Americans are seriously harmed through police brutality. These injustices facilitate police brutality mainly due to a lack of accountability on the part of the criminal justice system. Examples of police brutality against African Americans are the assassinations of Fred Hampton and members of the Black Panther Party, Eric Garner and Breonna Taylor, which went unaccounted for by the police department. The deaths of these individuals were either under the intimidation of and hand of or even within police custody. P21 shared the following:

The assassinations of Fred Hampton and members of the Black Panther Party are

examples that come up immediately for me in addition to Sandra Bland, Eric Garner, and

Breonna Taylor. The deaths of these individuals were either under the intimidation of,

hands of, or within the custody of police and law enforcement unprovoked. And there are

other cases where White male assailants are taken into custody, again, unharmed, after

massive acts of violence. These injustices facilitate police brutality mainly due a lack of

accountability on the part of the criminal justice system.

Some participants, such as P28, mentioned that historical injustices such as court rulings letting police officers walk free after wrongfully injuring or killing Black people lead to the continuation of the wrongdoings: "When behavior isn't course corrected at the root of training officers, there can be no aid to the injustices ongoing today." Similar to P28, P35 revealed, "In general, before George Floyd's killing many African American males were unjustly killed by

police officers without consequences: hence many officers are empowered to create their system of justice."

Some recommendations suggested by the participants include more community policing and mental health training. The participants also recommended protections against officers who speak out against injustices or other issues. A further suggestion is implementing implicit bias training, accountability, and transparency among police officers to reduce cases of police brutality. P2 indicated, "There should also be protections against officers who speak out against injustices or other issues. The police color that needs to be changed would be implementing implicit biased training, accountability and transparency, more community policing and mental health training."

Two participants also suggested promoting accountability and transparency among the police officers by prosecuting police officers. P23 reported, "Accountability and Transparency." P24 reported, "Accountability. If more police are prosecuted and convicted for their actions the others will be more hesitant about engaging in similar actions."

P25 and 35 reiterated that more accountability actions should be prioritized by the police department to increase accountability and transparency. P25 said, "I think there needs to be increased accountability and transparency. There needs to be oversight that isn't directly tied to the law enforcement agency." P35 reported the need to enhance more accountability by the police department: "More accountability." P38 also confirmed that accountability is paramount to reducing police brutality against African Americans: "We need to begin first and foremost with 'accountability.' I feel the African American community needs to hold themselves accountable, and our police held accountable as well."

Police Officers Covering up for Their Fellow Officers Encourage Police Brutality.

Five participants contributed to this subtheme by reporting that police hide the truth concerning police brutality by covering up for their fellow police officers, which c increases the rate of police brutality against African Americans. Such police covering up of brutality creates an environment where police will get away with their brutality against African Americans making it a continuous trend. P39 reported,

> The us against them culture in policing creates an atmosphere where police officers lie and provide cover for their fellow officers. Police Departments provide further cover through rules and regulations which give the perception of accountability; the fact is police are unable to "police themselves." Unions have developed funds, attorney representation, and a history of lies to cover every situation their members are confronted with

Two participants recommended protections against officers who speak out against injustices or other issues and honest officers to stop protecting dishonest officers to decrease cases of police brutality. According to P2, there should be protection for honest police officers who decide to tell the truth concerning brutality committed by their fellow police officers in the field against minorities: "There should also be protections against officers who speak out against injustices or other issues." P4 suggested each person be held accountable for their actions whether in the law enforcement department or not, and indicated the need for more honest officers to stop protecting dishonest officers:

> Each individual should be held accountable for his or her actions whether you are law enforcement or not. And finally, if the justice system stops failing us the people, good policing will follow. Also, we need more honest officers to stop protecting dishonest

officers, in doing so I can guarantee more trust for good police officers from all

communities

Failure to Punish Bad Police Officers Encourages Police Brutality. Four participants

contributed to this subtheme. The participants identified that failing to punish bad police officers

could encourage other officers to continue with actions of brutality against minority African

Americans. As a result, this failure to punish police officers responsible for brutality could make

other police officers think that their actions are excusable, thus perfecting in hiding their gross

misconduct on duty. P10 reiterated that failing to punish bad officers in the police force would

encourage police brutality against African Americans. The punishment of the police officers

should be sufficient to deter others from committing brutality against African Americans:

> The "Mike Brown, Tamir Rice, Sandra Bland, and Caron Nazario" cases are all perfect
>
> examples of how failure to appropriately punish bad officers lets other officers think that
>
> their gross behavior is excusable or worthy of nothing more than a slap on the wrist. The
>
> bad officers have also perfected hiding their gross behavior.

Other punishments that should be given to brutal police officers, as reported by P38 and P39,

included firing bad cops to avoid the escalation of actions of brutality and taking away police

officers' certification: "Police officers should lose their certification and be unable to work in

policing after being found guilty of corruption and misconduct."

Focus Group Findings.

Lack of Police Accountability. Consistent with the interview findings, focus group

findings also highlighted that one element in the police culture is a lack of accountability on the

part of some members of the police department. In most cases, the lack of accountability allows

police officers who commit criminal offenses such as brutalizing innocent civilians to go

unpunished. This culture further encourages them to continue their brutality against citizens, especially racial minorities. One participant made these observations, stating:

> And as far as me, I see it from the penal system or as a corrections officer, I see how, as the young lady said, you have two people with similar charges and how minorities are heavily sentence double, then not minorities.

Another participant lamented how police officers can break the law and go unpunished:

> Yes, it's all done with the blue wall of silence because we went to fail when it comes to the police because even though they break the law and it's seen and it's known they still get away with it and we're still victims, even though we're correct. Like I live in the time and age of the killing of Kenneth Chamberlain, which happened right around the corner from my house.

Theme Six: Jim Crow Laws and Slavery as Historical Root Causes of Police Brutality

Interview Findings. All participants contributed to this theme. The participants' historical slavery paved the way for police brutality and discrimination against African Americans. According to the participants, even though people of all races, religions, creeds, genders and sexual identities have joined the police force, most police forces are still made up of predominantly White males, who are usually in positions of authority. The participants also confirmed that the law was changed to favor the slave master who now bears titles and roles of authority with modern titles, such as judge, officer of all ranks, and various military ranks, which contributes to increased racial discrimination in policing. The participants also revealed that Jim Crow laws creating injustice and racial segregation for African Americans enhanced racial discrimination. Per the participants, the Jim Crow laws and the War on Drugs contributed to racial segregation. These facilitate brutality because they all targeted minority communities and

resulted in unjust treatment, mass incarceration, and harsh sentencing of African Americans, contributing to discriminatory policing by the police departments. Some participants highlighted that historically systemic racism and injustices form the basis for police brutality against African Americans, as the police force is historically rooted in racism. The following subthemes emerged during thematic analysis.

Jim Crow Laws Creating Injustices and Racial Segregation for African Americans. Four participants contributed to this subtheme. The participants indicated that Jim Crow laws are aligned with racial segregation, as they facilitate police brutality because they all targeted minority communities and resulted in unjust treatment, mass incarceration, and harsh sentencing. The participants highlighted that structural racism, which refers to the historical, cultural, and institutional practices that systematically advantage White people while disadvantaging African Americans, has been identified as a contributing factor to police brutality against Black people.

According to P23, historical practices, such as slavery, Jim Crow segregation, and racial violence, have left a legacy of mistrust and inequality in many communities of color: "This history has created a backdrop against which contemporary interactions with the police are viewed, often with skepticism and fear." Some participants reported that historical injustices linked to the legacy of slavery and Jim Crow laws, the Civil Rights Movement and police response, racial profiling, mass incarceration, the lack of accountability, and implicit bias contributed to police brutality against African Americans. P23 stated that historical racism is a contributing factor to police brutality towards African Americans: "Some historical injustices goes back to … Legacy of Slavery and Jim Crow, Civil Rights Movement and Police Response, Racial Profiling, Mass Incarceration, Lack of Accountability, Implicit Bias, War." P22 reported that racial segregation has been associated with Jim Crow laws, which created injustices towards

African Americans by aligning the laws and policies against minority communities, resulting in harsh treatment and mass incarceration by the police. P22 said, "Racial segregation, Jim Crow laws, war on drugs. These facilitate brutality because they all targeted minority communities and resulted in harsh unjust treatment, mass incarceration, and harsh sentencing."

The participants also highlighted two forms of structural racism that historically facilitated police brutality including slave codes and Black codes, which were particularly enforced in the South. Jim Crow laws would be the third factor that contributed to the mass incarceration of African American communities, as reported by P20: "Two forms of structural racism that historically facilitated police brutality are slave codes and Black codes, which were particularly enforced in the South. Jim Crow would be the third which contributed to mass incarceration."

Some participants revealed that, historically, police forces have been used to enforce discriminatory laws and practices, particularly in communities of color. This trend has led to a strained relationship between law enforcement and these communities, making interactions more prone to conflict. P23 indicated that historical racial profiling, which was the practice of targeting individuals based on their race or ethnicity rather than evidence of criminal behavior, was a manifestation of structural racism. This practice can result in unwarranted stops, searches, and arrests of Black people, increasing the likelihood of violent encounters with the police. According to P23, the structural elements of the criminal justice system can make it challenging to hold police officers accountable for misconduct or excessive use of force, as this lack of accountability can foster a culture of impunity, where officers believe they can act without consequences, resulting in increased police brutality. P23 stated, "Criminal justice system can

make it challenging to hold police officers accountable for misconduct or excessive use of force."

The findings indicated most participants perceived mass criminalization of the minority Black Americans as being part of American history, and Jim Crow laws promoted racial segregation of the Black minority communities in the United States. According to the participants, since the beginning of policing, African Americans have been the main target of extreme forms of policing and confinement. During the historical slavery period, African Americans were subjected to all forms of brutality by law enforcers. As reported by the participants, many African Americans suffered from mental issues due to the drug penalties as stated by Jim Crow laws targeting African Americans who were maltreated by police with mass incarceration. There is an outcry from the general public because the police continue to use excessive force against African Americans, which, in most cases, has resulted in death for many and severe injuries to many more Black communities.

Historical Systemic Racism and Injustices forming the Basis for Police Brutality.
Ten participants contributed to this subtheme. The participants' historical injustice, including systemic racism, forms the basis of police brutality in the United States against the African American communities. The participants reported that during Black enslavement, overseers were common enforcers in addition to the police force, who were known to be members of the KKK who used brutal force against slaves. The police have adopted such practices against African-American communities, especially during patrolling and protection operations. This trend indicates that slavery as a sociocultural framework for race and race politics compounds the perception of power/superiority to the construct of Black inferiority. According to the participants, the police force was historically rooted in racism and segregation, depicting

centuries of slavery and Jim Crow that the police force used to keep Black Americans as slaves.

P20 indicated that historical systemic racism and injustice contributed to increased police

brutality against African Americans in the United States:

> The police force is historically rooted in racism. Throughout the centuries of slavery and
>
> Jim Crow, the police force was used to not only keep Black Americans and slaves in
>
> "check," but also to enforce both slave and Black codes throughout the nation.

Historical systemic racism and injustices have been exhibited by White police and White men

who commit heinous crimes against Black people for a longer time without retribution. This

factor highlights the modern slavery of Black people by the police who use brutality against

African American citizens, as reported by P21: "This country has seen White police officers and

White men commit heinous crimes against Black and Brown people for over 400 years."

Two participants revealed that historical events show the brutal treatment of African

Americans by the police due to their race. According to P38, history books document the hosing

of African Americans, senseless beatings for routine traffic stops and unfair traffic stops, and

harsher sentencing and punishment for crimes committed by African Americans including death

sentencing:

> Events stemming back to the Civil Rights era dictated the brutal treatment of African
>
> Americans by the police due to their race. History books document the hosing of African
>
> Americans, and senseless beatings for routine traffic stops. Unfair traffic stops and
>
> searches and harsher sentencing and punishment for crimes.

P39 alluded to a rich history of police brutality solely based on race with African Americans

bearing that burden, contributing to increased police brutality. P39 reported that police officers

brutalized African Americans without fear of being punished: "The United States has a rich

history of police brutality solely based on race with African Americans bearing that burden. From slave patrols, and civil rights to George Floyd police officers brutalized African Americans without fear of being punished."

The participants confirmed that historical injustices have played a role in facilitating police brutality, as they have contributed to the development of systemic issues within law enforcement. These injustices and their effects on policing include slavery and segregation, the War on Drugs, racial profiling, and stop and frisk. Slavery and segregation were the framework for how police interacted with Black and brown people. Per P2 and P24, the War on Drugs targeted communities of color, leading to mass incarcerations, and stop and frisk was another way for certain police officers to profile Black and brown people then, a trend that has continued to the date of police brutality against African American people:

> Slavery, Jim Crow laws and institutionalized racism. One can draw a direct line from the White men who were slave patrollers, charged with looking for and bringing back escaped enslaved persons to police charged with maintaining a status quo based on White supremacy.

Four participants agreed that history, both past and present, shows numerous examples of police brutality with no regard for life, as police officers treat Black people less than others because of the historical perception that Blacks are inferior to the Whites or that African Americans have always been treated more harshly in terms of imprisonment or sentencing. P41 highlighted, "History both past and present show numerous examples of police brutality with no regard to life." P1 revealed that America has a culture that is built on racism and divisiveness contributing to police brutality: "America's history period! Racism is built into the American psyche. This is what America is. It's a culture that's built on racism and divisiveness, and it will

forever exist here." Similar to P41, P6 indicated police officers treat Black people as inferior because of the historical perception that Blacks are not equal to Whites:

> From history then till now in the South you have to be extra careful when driving in Certain States. Blacks or African Americans as they call us have always been treated Harsher when it comes to getting Locked up or Sentencing.

Historical Slavery Paving the Way for Police Brutality and Discrimination on African Americans. Six participants contributed to this subtheme. All six participants reported that the historical slavery of Blacks opened the door for police brutality and racial discrimination against African Americans in the United States. The participants noted that, historically, police forces were used to tame runaway slaves with the use of force and brutality and were most times staffed by White supremacists who perceived Backs as their property. Such historical treatment of Black slaves by the then police force paved the way for police brutality and increased discrimination by treating African Americans as slaves and the use of force. P25 noted that even as people across all races, religions, creeds, gender, and sexual identity collaborate, most police forces are still made up of predominantly White males, who are usually in positions of authority and use such positions to brutalize African Americans:

> Originally these police forces were used to catch runaway slaves and were often staffed by White supremacists who saw black people as property. While this was many years ago and police departments across the country have seen a change in personnel the White supremacy root of the tree of modern-day policing is still going strong.

> According to P32, the law has been tilted to favor non-minorities, which contributes to police brutality against African Americans. P32 indicated that the law is tilted or changed to favor the slave master who now bares titles and roles of authority with modern titles such as

judge, officer, and various military ranks which are used to brutalize African Americans: "The law is tilted or changed to favor the slave master who now bares titles and roles of authority with modern titles such as Judge." P40 highlighted that Blacks are yet to heal from historical injustices promoted by Whites, who happen to be the majority in the law enforcement and criminal justice systems, which leads to conflicts thus police brutality:

> I feel like the oppression of African Americans and slavery are probably the two biggest reasons for police brutality because as history has shown is that when a group is being told what to do by another group it usually leads to conflict.

P31 also added to P32's responses, indicating that the history of African Americans, including slavery, has paved the way for the brutality of the police force despite slavery having been ended. Some police officers tend to act like slave masters when given a badge and a gun to protect and serve the community. According to P31, "There are some people that brutalize Blacks anyways and inflict unnecessary injury on African Americans over the simplest things."

Both participant P38 and P39's police departments were built on structural racism which is the continuation of slavery in modern-day slavery. P39 reported that there are fewer African-American police officers based on longstanding discrimination. Similarly, P38 reported that the continuation of structural racism is meant to keep the African American population beneath other races to ensure they will not become strong enough to evoke change. P38 and P39 shared,

> Structural racism is a continuation of slavery (modern-day slavery). The mindset is to continue to keep the African American population beneath other races to ensure they will not become strong enough to evoke change. Police Departments were built on structural racism. There are far fewer African American Police Officers based on longstanding

discrimination. Policies such as stop question and frisk are disproportionately used in African-American Communities.

Focus Group Findings.

Jim Crow Laws and Slavery as Historical Root Causes of Police Brutality. The findings from the focus group discussions also revealed the police culture in the United States is partially shaped by historical factors, which include Jim Crow laws and slavery. Although these are historical factors, their impact is still evident in the contemporary U.S. policing culture. The participants argued that historical injustices committed against racial minorities, particularly African Americans, somehow carried over into the contemporary policing system. The disproportionate use of excessive force (brutality) against racial minorities by the police justifies the arguments made by some participants that historical injustices, such as Jim Crow laws and Black slavery, have infiltrated the contemporary policing culture in the United States. For instance, one of the participants argued the current police brutality meted against racial minorities is just an extension of historical injustices: "So the connection from historical injustices to the connection of police brutality. Today, it's just a carryover, right? So you have a system that is still in place today, just under the disguise of different titles." Another participant also noted historical injustices and police brutality go hand in hand, except that contemporary policing has been shielded by the contemporary criminal justice system:

> Both historical injustices and police brutality, Kind of, are similar. They parallel to each other, except police brutality is shielded and hidden by the penal system, and which makes it really horrible because police brutality has been around for a long while. Like it goes right back to when you're talking about the slavery, the Jim Crow laws. So it goes

right back to the discrimination that injustice, civil rights we so segregation. So that's my intake on the connection between the history, historical injustice and police brutality.

Several other participants also alluded to the fact that contemporary policing is simply an extension of the old Jim Crow laws. One participant referred to the current system as "Jim Crow Hidden," probably implying that Jim Crow laws are still in existence to this day, only that they have taken on a more covert form as opposed to the historical explicit form. This participant argued that even though the Jim Crow laws supporting segregation and racial discrimination are not legally recognized by the U.S. criminal justice system, their impact especially on racial minorities is still being felt. The participant made the following statement during the focus group discussion:

> That's just the title right now. Back then, it was Jim Crow. Now it's Jim Crow hidden. It's not going anywhere anytime soon. I'll die before it goes anywhere, so that that concept of Jim Crow is still here. It's still being enforced without it actually existing in in in context as far as the title and in this country it's far. Jim Crow laws are just basically saying it's a White privilege thing and that's a that takes precedence over humanity. As far as other people, minorities, or whatever's concerned, it's not going anywhere.

Another participant remarked that even though Jim Crow laws have been scrapped off, they are still evident in contemporary policing. To support this argument, the participant cited the over-policing of African American neighborhoods even though both African Americans and Whites commit similar crimes at almost the same rates:

> And as we go forward, we have removed the Jim Crow laws. However, when we selectively enforce laws nowadays where we've heavily police Black neighborhoods, right, even though Black and White people commit the same crimes at the same rate,

Black people have been shown to be far more policed than those White communities with the same issues.

Lastly, another participant reiterated that Jim Crow laws are still present, although in a covert form, unlike during the days of slavery when laws legalizing racial segregation and exploitation of Blacks were explicitly stated in the constitution and recognized by the justice system:

> It (Jim Crow law) it'll always be here and it'll always have some type of connection of what we're going through today as far as the criminal justice system, the book just a lot of people think that the brutality begins with the police brutality. And we know falling slavery and the Jim Crow laws that were put in place, that's just to maintain suppression, you know, on the suppressing the Black person in society and keeping it as A2 tier and the when, you know the penal system and the penal codes and all the other laws on the books, maintain that cultural perspective the way we are viewed and it filters down like someone also said before, it filters right down to generations through the years.

Theme Six: Cultural Disconnect Between the Police and Racial Minorities

Nine participants contributed to this theme. This theme has three subthemes. According to the participants, discriminatory policing among police officers is a result of the cultural disconnect between police officers and minorities. There is a cultural disconnect between police in the way they handle the public, especially those from the minority groups, contributing to discriminatory policing among the police officers. The participants highlighted that the mentality of 'us vs. them' based on culture and racial affiliations in the police department was also associated with discriminatory policing among the police officers in the police department. The participants also perceived that a cultural understanding by police officers can affect

policing in the police department, as a lack of understanding of various cultures can contribute to discriminatory policing among the police officers in the department. The participants reported that most police are not deployed to work within the community they come from, which makes them show ethnic and racial bias amongst the community in which they police.

Some participants described that when police attempt to meet cultural expectations, they might end up developing deviant behavior, contributing to cultural disconnect with racial minorities. According to the participants, the recruited police officers are required to obey the organization's culture. Particularly, these recruits are sent to a training center where they are taught policing skills without having to undergo cultural diversity training to mitigate cultural disconnect with racial minorities. The participants also indicated a cultural disconnect between police and racial minorities that potentially influences discriminatory policing. The emergent subthemes are discussed below.

Cultural Disconnect between Police and Minorities. Three participants contributed to this subtheme, indicating that the cultural disconnect between the police and the minorities contributed to discriminatory policing in the police department. Such cultural disconnect contributed to police being predisposed to be distrustful and wary of the police as they are seen as a negative in the Black community. Marginalized communities experiencing epistemic injustices have their reflexive political agency openly questioned, as they are denied their fundamental right to be acknowledged and are subject to general sensitivity deficits, including cultural disconnect with the police whereby police associate minorities' culture and color to committing crime, resulting in policing injustices. This negativity against minorities leads to the police being perceived negatively by the Black community. According to P29, police are regarded as distrustful, and they adversely interact with Black community members: "My race

has me predisposed to be distrustful and wear of the police. Cops are seen as a negative in the

Black community."

According to P6, the same courtesy is not given to a certain sect of society, and policing

is mostly stereotypical, making them develop a certain belief about a certain cultural group, as

police officers believe that skin color is one factor that determines the propensity to commit

crime among individuals. Not taking time to understand a culture and its norms presents a

problem, which is more likely to contribute to discriminatory policing. This cultural disconnect

between police and racial minorities contributes to discriminatory policing among police

officers. The participant highlighted that a lack of understanding of different cultures contributes

to a cultural disconnect between the police and the minorities, which leads to discriminatory

policing in the police department, as most police lack a clear understanding of the culture within

the communities they are deployed to operate. P6 reported,

> The fact that the same courtesy is not given to a certain sect of society is bothersome to
>
> me. I believe not taking time to understand a culture and their norms presents a problem
>
> and can lend to discriminatory policing!

Cultural disconnect makes policing difficult, as police patrolling neighborhoods are not

from within those locations. As a result, people are policed under a microscope because there is

a cultural disconnect between police officers and the minorities in those communities. P12

reported a cultural disconnect during policing as most of the police sent to patrol particular

neighborhoods are not from them, making it difficult for police because they do not understand

the culture of that community, which contributes to discriminatory policing. As per P12, "The

police that patrols our neighborhoods are not from them, we are policed under a microscope

because there is such a cultural disconnect."

The 'Us vs. Them' Mentality in the Police Department. Five participants contributed to this subtheme, indicating that police culture often fosters a sense of solidarity among officers, as the environment where police work is not always where they come from or where they can relate to. Therefore, they show ethnic and racial bias amongst the community in which they police with the mentality of 'us and them.' Such mentality contributes to racial discrimination as some police officers may treat individuals based on their culture where they handle those with a similar culture with care and those of different cultures roughly through the use of excessive force due to the 'us vs. them' mentality in the police department. Such a culture leads to disloyalty among the police, who end up lying regarding particular events, affecting minority communities.

According to the participants, the 'us versus them' mindset is generated between the police force and the communities they protect and serve, which contributes to discriminatory policing by the police. The participants reported that such a mentality can result in an adversarial view of the community, particularly in neighborhoods with high crime rates or minority populations. As a result, the level of violence and racial discrimination perpetrated against suspects by police officers is on the steady rise in these areas with the increased mentality of regrouping between the community and the police based on their cultural affiliations. This is in direct conflict with the demand that police officers be committed to justice, and most of the time, racial tensions are the driving force behind such savagery, as reported by the participants. Race is a system that values and shapes opportunities based on skin color, and it is unfairly tailored to benefit some and exclude others, as racism harms one's health in whatever form. In this regard, the mentality of 'us vs. them' may contribute to discriminatory policing among the police in the police department. P2 reported,

I think most not all but most police have a 'us vs. them' mentality. I believe that from the

environment police work is always not where they come from or where they can relate,

so they show ethnic and racial bias amongst the community in which they police.

The participants also revealed that apart from racism, the out-grouping of the police force based

on their culture and color inspires an 'us vs. them' mentality, which contributes to discriminatory

policing. P20 confirmed that regrouping of police force based on their race and culture promotes

this mentality: "Outside of racism, I think the out-grouping that the police force inspires (us vs.

them) is what contributes to discriminatory policing."

P21 highlighted that the mentality of 'us vs. them' contributes to the savior complex and

hierarchical power dynamic creation mindset that is generated between the police force and the

communities they serve. Individuals living in communities can approach police officers of their

color or culture for protection despite their wrongdoing against minorities, contributing to

discriminatory policing in the police department: "I believe that there is a savior complex and

hierarchical power dynamic created. In these structures, there is an 'us' versus 'them' mindset

that is generated between the police force and the communities they 'protect and serve.'"

P23 reported that, the 'us vs. them' mentality can be exhibited within the police culture,

which often fosters a sense of solidarity among police officers. Such a mentality can lead to an

adversarial perception of the community, especially in the neighborhood experiencing a high rate

of crime and with minority populations. The participant indicated that having such a negative

mentality may contribute to discriminatory policing among the police officers in the police

department. The mentality of 'us vs. them' may contribute to a strong feud between police

officers and minority communities, as police believe minorities are prone to higher crime rates.

When police officers mark minority communities as most associated with crime, they are more

likely to use force when serving and protecting this population due to the 'us vs. them' mentality. According to P23, this mentality contributes to discriminatory policing among the police:

Us vs. Them Mentality: Police culture often fosters a sense of solidarity among officers, which can lead to an "us vs. them" mentality. This can result in an adversarial view of the community, particularly in neighborhoods with high crime rates or minority populations.

Discriminatory policing has been enhanced by the 'us vs. them' mentality within the police department, enabling police officers to lie and cover up the mistakes of their colleagues who have used excessive force in handling minorities. The participants indicated that police are not able to police themselves, contributing to the covering of mistakes made in the field to conceal the truth regarding discriminatory policing behaviors in the community they are policing. According to P39, police departments provide further cover through rules and regulations, which provide the perception of accountability by the police, and unions have also developed funds, attorney representation, and a history of lies to cover every situation their members are confronted with, contributing to increased cases of discriminatory policing in the police department:

The us against them culture in policing creates an atmosphere where police officers lie and provide cover for their fellow officers. Police Departments provide further cover through rules and regulations which give the perception of accountability; the fact is police are unable to "police themselves." Unions have developed funds, attorney representation, and a history of lies to cover every situation their members are confronted with.

Cultural Understanding by Police Officers. Three participants contributed to this subtheme. According to the participants, limited cultural understanding by police officers could

be a cause for increased discriminatory policing in the police department. Police officers are exposed to stereotypical learning, which influences their decisions, making the police associate certain cultural groups with criminal activities. This explains why minorities have been the main victims of police brutality through the use of excessive force. Learning about cultural humility by police joining college courses should be a requirement for joining the police force to mitigate discriminatory policing because of cultural misunderstanding by the police officers, as reported by P20, "I think individuals should be required to take specific college courses rooted in cultural humility to be able to join the police force."

The participants also highlighted that learning how to be more understanding of how some of the African American community already view the police force in a negative light could help them understand how to handle different cultures in places where they are deployed to protect and serve. The training will help reduce discriminatory policing the by police officers. P40 indicated that understanding diverse cultures can help police officers protect different communities and apply minimal force, particularly for African American communities, leading to a decreased level of discriminatory policing: "I feel that some police officers need to learn how to be more understanding of how some of the African American community already view the police force in a negative light." P44 also highlighted that understanding the culture and the enforcement of equality would reduce discriminatory policing by the police officers in police departments, stating, "Understanding the culture & the enforcement of equality."

Summary

The aim of this study was to address the problem of police brutality in the African American community. Two research questions guided this study. RQ1 focused on how race or ethnicity influence the interactions between members of the police force and the general public.

RQ2 was intended to explore the current elements of the police culture in the United States that potentially influence discriminatory policing. This chapter included a presentation of the findings of the study. Regarding RQ1, the findings revealed that police officers racially profile and negatively stereotype racial minorities, especially African Americans, as people who are more likely than other races to commit crimes. The findings also revealed that the police generally have a negative attitude towards racial minorities, particularly those of African American descent. Thus, whenever the police interact with racial minorities, particularly those of African American background, they resort to aggressiveness and brutality. Regarding RQ2, the findings revealed several elements within the police culture that contribute to discriminatory policing. These elements include the following: (a) superiority complex and "us vs. them" mentality, (b) deviant behaviors and lack of accountability among some police officers, and (c) cultural disconnect between the police and racial minorities. From a broader perspective, the findings also revealed a covert reincarnation of Jim Crow laws in the police department, which advance brutality against racial minorities. In Chapter Five, the researcher discusses these findings in light of existing literature. The implications and limitations of the findings are also discussed, as well as recommendations for future research and practice.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Overview

The problem addressed in this study was that the level of violence and racial discrimination perpetrated against suspects by police officers is on a steady rise. This trend is in direct conflict with the demand that police officers be committed to justice (Gimbel, 2016). Most of the time, racial tensions are the driving force behind such savagery. Excessive use of force by police and unjustifiable killings have been on the rise, resulting in some deaths. Because of its impact on vulnerable groups and the public health system, this violence increased public suspicion of law enforcement and the government as a whole (Subbaraman, 2020). Based on this research problem, the aim of this study was to improve the problem of police brutality in the African American community. Current and prior research overwhelmingly attributes police brutality involving African Americans to improper training methodologies rather than inculpate historical injustices, ingrained insular police culture, and police agencies' failure to regulate and sanction members' activities judiciously (Adedoyin et al., 2019; Clayton, 2018; Subbaraman, 2020).

This study is important as it may provide information that can reduce discriminatory policing practices and further support African Americans through a renewed understanding of political and organizational policy, legislation, and reform that creates victimization systemic and systematic elements of bias within the policing community. The sources of research data for this study were a survey, interviews, a focus group, and document analysis, which supported triangulation. The instruments used to collect data from primary sources included a survey questionnaire, interview protocol, and focus group questions.

The researcher used a qualitative approach to collect data regarding discriminatory policing and brutality that members of minority communities face through their perspectives and as reported by previous data collection through document analysis. The participants included members of the community, law enforcement officers and organizations, and government agencies recruited using a snowball purposive sampling approach. The data analysis method adopted was thematic analysis. The remainder of Chapter Five consists of a summary of the findings, a discussion of the findings and the implications in light of the relevant literature and theory. The researcher also discusses methodological and practical implications, the study's delimitations and limitations, and recommendations for future research. The chapter concludes with a summary.

Summary of Findings

RQ1

RQ1 was, "How does race or ethnicity influence the interactions between members of the police force and the general public?" The findings indicated that police brutality, mistreatment, and over-policing are common among racial minorities in the United States. Research data showed that police were hostile when handling African Americans compared to when dealing with other races, such as Whites. The findings demonstrate that race and ethnicity play a significant role for police when handling criminal activities as well as policing. The participants reported that over-policing of certain races or ethnicities is a major issue which can lead to greater mistrust of police and heightened tensions between law enforcement and communities of color. Race undeniably comes into play when walking into a public setting with police present as an African American.

The findings indicated that police brutality and mistreatment were more prevalent in African American communities, as other races feel safer around police officers whereas African Americans feel tense and uncomfortable around police officers. The study findings suggest that race and ethnicity play a significant role in police brutality with African Americans feeling more brutalized by police compared to other races. Although some participants indicated that race influences police brutality, others reported favorable interaction with the police regardless of race or ethnicity, as they had never encountered bad situations with the police

RQ2

RQ2 was, "What are current elements of the police culture in the U.S. that potentially influence discriminatory policing?" The findings revealed several elements within the police culture that contribute to discriminatory policing. These elements include the superiority complex and 'us vs. them' mentality, deviant behaviors and a lack of accountability among some police officers, and a cultural disconnect between the police and racial minorities. Other than deviant behaviors and a lack of accountability by the police, the participants highlighted that the failure to punish bad police officers encourages police brutality. When police officers who brutalize African Americans go without punishment, it contributes to the continuation of police brutality against the African American minorities.

According to the participants, police officers are limited by the lack of strong social structures within their departments, which makes them develop deviant behaviors as they can use coercive interrogation tactics to get important information from a suspect. The lack of accountability in most police brutality cases over the decades allows police to feel they can do anything to African Americans. A culture of lack of police accountability also contributes to

discriminatory policing. The findings further indicated that Jim Crow laws created injustice and racial segregation for African Americans by enhancing racial discrimination.

The Jim Crow laws and the War on Drugs contributed to racial segregation, which facilitated brutality because the law targeted minority communities and promoted unjust treatment, mass incarceration, and harsh sentencing of African Americans, which contributed to discriminatory policing in the police department. This study has shown that mass criminalization of the minority African Americans as part of American history and Jim Crow laws promoted racial segregation of the Black minority communities in the United States. Historical injustice and slavery including systemic racism promoted police brutality and discrimination in the United States against the African American communities. The findings also indicate that a cultural disconnect exists between police officers in the way they handle the public, especially those from the minority groups, contributing to discriminatory policing among the police officers.

Discussion

The research findings demonstrate that police brutality, mistreatment, and over-policing are common among racial minorities in the United States. The findings suggest that race and ethnicity play a significant role for police when handling criminal activities. Police brutality against minorities has become a problem in minority communities. This research provides great insights into discriminatory policing that has been rampant against minorities in the United States. Similar to current study results, Hinton and Cook (2021) found mass criminalization and incarceration of the minority Black Americans, which has been part of American history, have been on the rise. Concurring with current study findings, Drayton (2019) stated that since the inception of policing, African Americans have been the main target of extreme forms of policing and confinement. African Americans were subjected to all forms of brutality by the law

enforcers during the period of slavery, which has currently translated into continuous police brutality.

Although Hinton and Cook (2021) highlighted the criminalization of minority Black Americans, they did not indicate discriminatory policing against African Americans. The discrepancy in findings could be due to different sets of participants used as well as diverse study settings. The current research findings filled this gap by establishing that discriminatory policing has been on the rise against African Americans in the United States. Drayton (2019) indicated that many African Americans suffered from mental issues due to the drug penalties as the police continue to use excessive force against African Americans, which, in some cases, results in many deaths and severe injuries. The findings from the current research and the past research show how police brutality is of great concern among African American communities in the United States. The results suggest that the suffering among African Americans in the brutal hands of racist police officers within the police department is increasing.

The current research findings provide important information that police officers have generally exhibited negative attitudes towards African Americans or Blacks in the United States, contributing to increased discriminatory policing. The findings support Avery and Ruggs (2020) who posited that Whites contextualize police brutality on African Americans as a matter of actions and consequences, whereas African Americans view it as a construct of their oppressive American experience. The results show a discrimination of African Americans, which translates to policing leading to discriminatory policing among the racist White police officers. Avery and Ruggs noted that every strategy employed by African Americans to address police brutality is deemed divisive. As a result, because police brutality is a widespread problem throughout America, many of the victims have been members of the African-American communities.

The current research has addressed the purpose set out in Chapter One by establishing that police culture in the United States contributes to discriminatory policing, which has been attributed to the culture within the police department regarding criminality in certain races that are marked as prone to chaos by the police. This outcome leads to increased brutality against minority communities, such as African Americans. The covert reincarnation of Jim Crow laws in the police department has also led to advanced brutality against racial minorities such as African Americans in the United States.

These findings are consistent with previous research by Abrams (2020) who found police culture to be the main factor contributing to police brutality in the United States. Abrams indicated that these discriminatory practices are entrenched in the force and are passed down to new generations of officers. Police training has not focused on psychological training regarding how to handle the members of the public; instead, a large number of police officers have relied on stereotypes to make decisions (Brownhill, 2020). The findings indicate the need for police officers to develop psychological strategies that can prevent the confrontation between the police and the general public, including minority communities, such as African Americans. The current study findings support previous research, which indicates that the use of force has made the members of the public lose trust in the police because police culture promotes implicit bias in policing (Brownhill, 2020). Such implicit bias has led to the discrimination of the American Africans when compared to their White counterparts (Brownhill, 2020). The results have addressed the research problem and burnout concerning the level of violence and racial discrimination perpetrated against suspects by police officers, which is on the steady rise in the United States.

The study findings have demonstrated that a lack of structure makes police officers develop deviant behaviors, as they can use coercive interrogation tactics to get important information from a suspect. The lack of accountability in most police brutality cases over the decades allows police to feel they can do anything to African Americans. The research outcomes provide important insights into the causes of continuous police brutality against minority communities in the United States by revealing a lack of accountability in police departments, as police officers are not held accountable for their brutal actions against unarmed minority individuals.

These findings confirm Levine's (2016) study that, historically, police officers have not been held responsible for their actions, giving them an image of invincibility and leaving victims disheartened and fearful of the system due to lack of accountability. Information from the current research indicate that Jim Crow laws against the minority African Americans, historical injustice, and slavery, including systemic racism, formed the basis of police brutality and discrimination in the United States against the African American communities. Brown (2019) indicated the various regional aspects of American policing coalesced to shape the current format and that American policing can be viewed broadly in Northern and Southern spheres within the context of slavery and Jim Crow laws against the minority African Americans. Policy reforms are needed to alleviate historical and outdated policies that have been against minority communities.

Implications

Theoretical Implications

Police brutality can be explained using conflict theory, which addresses how different social groups can result in conflict. For example, in the 1980s, poor people were the main target

of crack cocaine because of their social status (Lynch, 2018). The findings support this theory by revealing that a covert reincarnation of Jim Crow laws exists in the police department, which advances brutality against racial minorities such as African Americans, as these laws were made to target minority poor communities. The implication is that such precedents are adopted in the police department, leading to discriminatory policing.

Strain theory was another important theory that was used in this study and can explain deviant behavior within society. Strain theory explains how society encourages deviant behavior. Police misconduct can be attributed to the anomic social structure where they are considered masculine, crime fighters, and noble (Gottfredson, 2017). The implication is that these police officers are limited by the lack of strong social structures within their department, leading them to develop deviant behavior. The findings add to the theory by revealing that deviant behaviors and a lack of accountability among some police officers contribute to discriminatory policing against African Americans.

Social learning theory was also used in this study. Adopting a new culture will certainly influence the conduct of the police. Social learning theory can be used to explain the deviant behavior of police officers. Newly recruited police officers are required to obey the organization's culture and are sent to a training center where they are taught policing skills, which are mostly stereotypical, making them develop a certain belief about a certain cultural group. The findings have added to this theory by indicating that a police culture of lack of accountability and police officers covering up the mistakes of their colleagues encourage police brutality against African Americans. The implication is that police officers are trained to work as a team against minority communities such as African Americans.

The general theory of crime was also used in this study, which addresses the high police misconduct cases (Gottfredson, 2017). Police officers who lack self-control are more likely to engage in violence because they do not fear the possibility of long-term consequences. This theory is supported by the current study findings, which highlighted the lack of accountability by the police who get away with brutality against innocent African Americans. This lack of accountability, in turn, contributes to discriminatory policing. The implication is that the general theory of crime can be used to explain why police are brutal against minority African Americans, including a lack of accountability, suggesting the need for accountability by police departments taking action against brutal police officers.

Practical Implications

The amount of violence inflicted by police on suspects in today's news, resulting in premature deaths of most suspects, has been noted as a great concern. This outcome is contrary to the requirement that those who serve in police forces are committed to justice (Buchanan & Goff, 2019). The findings provide great insighta into the victimization faced by African Americans from policing in their communities by establishing various causes of such continued police brutality against African American communities. Police administrators may use the current study findings to implement cultural diversity programs in their police recruitment and training to reduce police negative attitudes towards minority populations, including African Americans. Racism is a system that assigns value and shapes opportunity while unfairly benefitting some and alienating others based on skin color (Trinkner et al., 2016).

These findings can promote police officers' understanding of the need for equality in their policing practices. Improved comprehension of equality practices will help to reduce discriminatory policing by the law enforcement department by decreasing the use of excessive

force when handling some sections of U.S. populations, such as African Americans. A growing number of incidents of excessive police force and unjustified killings have been documented, some of which have resulted in fatalities. This violence increases distrust in law enforcement and the government as a whole because of its effect on vulnerable communities and the public health system (Buchanan & Goff, 2019; Trinkner et al., 2016).

The findings provide policymakers with insights into implementing various strategies to curb racial discrimination by police officers during community policing that contributes to brutality against minority communities. Police officers are exposed to stereotypical learning, which influences their decision-making. Stereotypic learning makes the police associate certain cultural groups with criminal activities, which is why African Americans have been the main victims of police brutality. In this regard, the U.S. government should review the training process of police officers to ensure they do not acquire negative behavior that triggers police violence.

Limitations and Delimitations

According to Fields et al. (2023), limitations are shortcomings, conditions, or influences that the researcher cannot control, placing restrictions on a study's methodology and conclusions. Researchers should be aware of some of the limitations of data generated through document analysis (Deakin University, 2021). For instance, some records may not bear all the critical information required for research because they were never meant for research (Deakin University, 2021). Other limitations include privacy and copyright issues as well as the effect of translated documents on the quality of the data collected (Deakin University, 2021).

Some limitations are inherent to qualitative research, such as instrumentation rigor and elimination of researcher prejudices (Chenail, 2011). These limitations can affect the quality of

the research data and findings if they are not managed appropriately, which can lead to the disqualification of such studies by the IRB (Chenail, 2011). Biases can arise in situations where the researcher is not adequately prepared to conduct the research. The researcher's ability to analyze the data is impaired by physical and mental conditions such as fatigue or where the researcher has some affinity or interest in the matter under investigation (Chenail, 2011).

The study was also limited to one sampling technique: purposive sampling. The researcher used the purposive sampling technique to recruit participants who provided individual perspectives and experiences that were pertinent to the research topic. The limitation of purposive sampling is that it is prone to researcher bias, impacting the validity of findings. This study was delimited to African American minorities and the qualitative methodology was best suited for this research.

Recommendations for Future Research

The data collected, both secondary and primary, were aligned to discriminatory policing and racial and ethnic influences between members of the police and the general public in the United States. Using secondary data reduces the validity of the research outcomes, as secondary data may have unresolved errors from the primary study. Future research should focus specifically on primary data sources.

The study was limited by the use of the purposive sampling technique. The researcher used the purposive sampling technique to recruit participants who provided individual perspectives and experiences that were pertinent to the research topic. The limitation of purposive sampling is that it is prone to researcher bias, impacting the validity of findings. In this regard, future research should be conducted using a random sampling technique to mitigate cases of researcher bias. Because this research was delimited to African American minorities,

future research should focus on other races, including Whites and Asian Americans. Future researchers should use a quantitative research design to collect statistical data for comparison purposes regarding the policing between White majority communities and the minorities communities, such as Blacks and Asian Americans.

Conclusion

The study has provided important insights to help in the management of policing in U.S. police departments. The findings demonstrate that discriminatory policing against African American minorities is increasing. From this study's findings, it can be confirmed that discriminatory policing and brutality have been more severe against African Americans than any other race in the United States due to the culture developed within the police department. This research was important because police officers racially profile and negatively stereotype racial minorities, especially African Americans. African Americans are perceived to be aggressive and criminal-minded by the police officers, resulting in police aggression and brutality against them. The literature and the current research findings confirm that police officers are often brutal against African Americans and target them as crime-prone communities, leading to discriminatory policing. Elements of superiority complex and the 'us vs. them' mentality, deviant behaviors, and a lack of accountability among some police officers have been associated with increased brutality against minority communities.

Discriminatory policies and laws targeting Blacks have contributed to unequal treatment of African American communities in the United States. This study can be used as a foundation to understand the need for police reforms to ensure equality during policing. The information from this research can be used to reform discriminatory policing practices, provide further support African Americans through a renewed understanding of political, organizational policy,

and legislation, and reform systemic victimization and systematic elements of bias within the policing community. Further research should focus on strategies to eliminate police brutality, including cultural diversity training programs within the police training programs.

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APPENDIX

Appendix A: Survey Questionnaire

1. How would you say race or ethnicity influences your interactions with members of the police force?

2. Do you think African Americans are brutally treated by police due to their race?

3. Based on experiences with members of the police force, what historical injustices can you say facilitate police brutality?

4. Do you think that Jim Crow Laws established a framework for police brutality against African Americans?

5. Do you think slavery established a framework for police brutality against African Americans?

6. Do you think structural racism facilitates police brutality against African Americans?

7. What current elements of the police culture can you say influence discriminatory policing?

8. What elements of the police culture do you think need to be changed to reduce police brutality in the African American community?

Appendix B: Interview Protocol

Dear participant,

I'm a graduate student conducting interviews to investigate how race or ethnicity influences the interactions between members of the police force and the general public. My study further focuses on the current elements of the police culture in the United States that potentially influence discriminatory policing. The ultimate objective of this study is to improve the problem of police brutality in the African American community. I have developed open-ended interview questions that will guide our discussion. There is room for follow-up remarks or queries as we continue with our chat. The interview questions have been affiliated with the research questions of the current study that focus on how race or ethnicity influences the interactions between members of the police force and the general public as well as on the current elements of the police culture in the United States that potentially influence discriminatory policing. The interview questions are open-ended, which will make this process of data collection an open discussion. The interview will take approximately 25 to 40 minutes.

All data gathered will be kept confidential and anonymous through a numerical system.

I appreciate your time and acceptance to contribute to this study.

Date:

Interview started at _____ (Insert time).

Interview Questions

1. How would you describe your interactions with members of the police force?

2. Do you feel that your race or ethnicity influences your interactions with members of the police force?

3. Based on your interactions with members of the police force, what can you say are the causes of police brutality?

4. How would you describe the influence of the organizational Use of Force police culture on discriminatory policing?

5. How would you describe the influence of personal survival police culture on discriminatory policing?

6. How would you describe the influence of explicit and implicit biases on discriminatory policing?

7. How would you describe the influence of citizens' support of an uncompromising exercise of law and order on discriminatory policing?

Interview ended at _____ (Insert time).

Appendix C: Focus Group Questions

1. How would you describe the connection between historical injustices against African

    Americans and police brutality?

2. How would you describe the connection between Jim Crow Laws and police brutality

    against African Americans?

3. How would you describe the connection between slavery and police brutality against

    African Americans?

4. How would you describe the connection between structural racism and police brutality

    against African Americans?

5. How would you describe the connection between current elements of police culture in the

    United States and discriminatory policing?

6. In what ways do you think current elements of police culture need to be changed to

    reduce police brutality in the African American community?