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# Society's Views of Law Enforcement Use of Force

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# Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

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Roxann Fisk

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Walden University  
2017

Abstract

Society's Views of Law Enforcement Use of Force

by

Roxann Fisk

MSA, Walden University, 2014

MSA, Capella University, 2010

BA, Washington State University, 2004

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Psychology

Forensic Psychology

Walden University

November 2017

## Abstract

Individuals observe their surroundings and naturally judge others by what they observe or hear. In recent media portrayals, law enforcement officers were scrutinized for use of force and individuals were quick to verbalize their interpretation of events. Bandura's social learning theory served as a focal lens to guide the study. This qualitative phenomenological study examined lived experiences and what factors influence public perception of law enforcement use of force. Interviews were conducted with 10 participants who have encountered or witnessed law enforcement officers utilize use of force during a citizen encounter. NVivo software was used to code and analyze themes from interviews. The findings indicated lived experiences and emotions were high and did influence perception of use of force. Participants explained a variety of emotions when discussing their lived experiences. In addition, social media and mainstream news media played an important role in shaping perception of police officer use of force. This study promotes social change by presenting law enforcement agencies and society insight on how to improve on public perception and understanding of use of force so community relationships with law enforcement can flourish.

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## Dedication

I dedicate this academic achievement to my children, Skyler and Allison. You can achieve anything when you put your heart into. Never give up on your dreams. To Joshua, you came at the end of this journey but time is not measured in quantity, it is measured in quality with tasks like this. I could not have done it without your unfaltering devotion and belief in me and what this journey has meant to me. Thank you, babe, I love you with all my heart. You are my soul mate. My best friend, Nicole Krueger, who saw through hard work and dedication that this journey can be fulfilled through all life's obstacles. For my parents, Rita Barnett and Gene Fisher, my brother, Gene Fisher, Jr., and my grandparents, Leonard and Ellen Watson. This journey would not have been successful without your sacrifices. I dedicate this research to the law enforcement officers who serve and protect their communities and are willing to sacrifice their lives for others.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Public perception of police use of force is a concern at the forefront of the collective mind of U.S. society and is also a burning issue receiving considerable attention from our media. Policing requires both agency assistance and support of the community because there are ramifications for police decisions, and those decisions are not always favorable when considered through the lens of the public eye (Renauer & Covelli, 2011). Moreover, the rigorous nature of a police officer's day is physically, emotionally, and mentally challenging. Officers encounter days where their work demands vary from simple community concerns to dangerous incidents that test all aspects of policing, some of which have deadly outcomes. The work of law enforcement requires individuals to work in high-stress situations and for the communities they protect to put great faith in the actions of policing entities. Police officer training includes education in self-reassurance and instilling in the mind positive affirmations like "I will go home tonight," and how to manage the tensions associated with the *us versus them* media replay regarding police officers and community criticism. Society views police protection as a dependable aspect of their day, one which is often forgotten. In neighborhoods where crime is high, communities live with a certain amount of fear. When police do not respond within a perceived appropriate amount of response time, the public can lose trust in law enforcement and even previous favorable perceptions can change. The media are often the driving force behind perception (Ambrey, Fleming, & Manning, 2013). While media are not the only influence, it is a widely trusted form of information regarding use of force incidents.

## **Background of the Study**

The law enforcement community can be an unpredictable environment that is often misrepresented in the media, particularly when law enforcement events have resulted in a loss of life. Members of society can be quick to form their opinions about the events that occurred, and many will openly share those perspectives. Currently, there has been an influx in media attention surrounding police officers and deadly force in the United States (Bolger, 2015).

A variety of research has been conducted on various aspects of use of force and its impact on communities and law enforcement. These studies have established a foundation on which to build this current study. Ariel, Farrar, and Sutherland (2014) discussed how body cameras affect the ways in which officers manage their contact with citizens. Specifically, they examined how officer behavior changes when they know that their incidents are recorded and superiors may review the recordings. Also, Broomé (2013) discussed different levels of use of force and how, depending on the level used, its usage can psychologically affect officers. Broomé explained how the officers can be mentally affected by their decisions to use force and described the kind of police training that is implemented to assess what level of force, if any, is necessary in conflict situations. Maskaly and Donner (2015) explained their theory demonstrating how public perception may label an incident in which an officer made a split-second decision using their cognitive and physical training as unjustified.

Chapman (2012) focused on how an officer's education, age, experience, and ethnicity may influence the use of force. Jefferis, Butcher, and Hanley (2011) and Perkins

and Bourgeois (2006) examined the public perception regarding the use of force and how the media can influence that perception. Furthermore, Morrison and Garner (2011) explained the level of training officers receive that certifies them to use a gun and apply deadly force. Harris (2009) and Phillips (2010) conducted studies to identify those officers who would likely use force, ranging from verbal threats to deadly force, in arresting situations. The researchers also examined how other officers may report the use of force and consider how the “brotherhood” in law enforcement communities is forged. Lastly, Terrill and Paoline (2013) examined the levels of nonlethal force and how and when they should be applied. The existing knowledge about use of force among law enforcement was a springboard for this study, the aim of which was to understand the impact of law enforcement and public perceptions regarding use of force incidents.

### **Problem Statement**

The majority of individuals have experienced how social media reports on various stories about the use of force by law enforcement officers. How an incident is reported influences individual perception of events and, if reported in a negative way, can aggravate any tensions that exist in the environment. Perkins and Bourgeois (2006) discussed the recent shootings that targeted law enforcement in retaliation for perceived police brutality against the slain individuals. Media reporting of these events shaped a perception of law enforcement within the community that increased tensions toward officers, which could influence how officers react in high-risk arrests. Chapman (2012) asserted a viewpoint that some individuals perceive that the officer’s age, gender, and education provide an explanation as to why they choose to use force more often than

other officers with different demographics. Chapman analyzed the ways in which an officer's beliefs regarding the use of force can override any decisions made about the level of force used during an altercation or the extreme to which it is applied. The studies conducted by these researchers provide the basis of the topic for this study, which was to explore how the public forms their perceptions of use of force by officers and what factors influence their perception.

According to Perkins and Bourgeois (2006), the use of deadly force occurs about 80% of the time and within 7 yards of a suspect, which leaves just seconds to take action. Phillips (2010) conducted a study with law enforcement officers and their willingness to report fellow officers who used force, particularly when the use was excessive. He further elaborated how officers decide to use their weapons vice physical force in situations unique to suspects who were fleeing or attempting escape. Jefferis et al. (2011) expanded on this topic by conducting research on the public opinions of police and their use of force. Their findings showed that, in general, the public is supportive of law enforcement. Within their research, Jefferis et al. discovered that about 35% of individuals with negative opinions had based their views on media representations of the incident. Citizens also came out in support of law enforcement, standing firm on the understanding that police officers are doing their jobs and that investigations ultimately reveal the truth (Perkins & Bourgeois, 2006).

Some presented media stories have shaped public perception regarding excessive use of force, which can be problematic. Broomé (2013) researched how police officers are affected by their decisions and how the media portrays those decisions in their

reports. Recent incidents highlighted by the media include cases involving Tamir Rice and Michael Brown, both of whom died as a result of deadly force from police officers (Maskaly & Donner, 2015). As a result of these incidents and the sensational manner in which they were reported by the media, public perception of law enforcement was negatively affected and violent protests followed. Many media outlets provided forums for experts to assert their opinions and perspectives on confrontations between law enforcement and citizens that they felt could have been handled in a less lethal way (Maskaly & Donner, 2015). Both of those shootings were found to be justified after law enforcement investigations. A gap exists regarding research on how to educate the public on law enforcement practices and how to present law enforcement in-the-moment decisions from a public safety perspective. While not all decisions in use of force incidents may be justified, the determination of whether or not choices were sound remains dependent on the investigating professionals.

### **Purpose of Study**

There have been media reports, court cases, and local accounts of incidents involving use of force by law enforcement. More coverage has been given to situations where suspects were killed by law enforcement officers. In response to this coverage, society has been quick to place racially motivated stigma on those officers who employed use of force with deadly outcomes.

The purpose of this research was to gather information from the lived experiences of individuals and use them to develop common themes that can be used to answer the following research question: How do lived experiences affect an individual's perception



of law enforcement's use of force? Robak, Ward, and Ostolaza (2005) discussed how individuals can only understand their true selves by getting to know who they are from the inside out. Maskaly and Donner (2015) researched social learning theory when trying to understand the reasons why police officers may use force when engaging with suspicious persons. Husserl (1969) described phenomenology as the consciousness in itself and the individual's experience; it is not examined as anything other than the experience. By exploring the experiences of those individuals who have encountered use of force by law enforcement, this research may potentially highlight any distinct commonality that conveys that experience and how it affects the individual's perception of law enforcement use of force. Those common themes were used to inquire about their opinions, and how their experience allows for a deeper understanding of these lived experiences. Additionally, I sought to identify how or what influences the individual perception of the use of force by law enforcement.

A second purpose of this qualitative research study was to explore society's perception regarding use of force by law enforcement and how their perceptions were shaped. I investigated how individuals develop their conclusions about and what factors influence their attitudes toward use of force. I placed secondary focus on evaluating what influences lived experiences have on individual perception and how social media affects that perception. Results of this study could provide lawmakers and media outlets suggestions for implementing modifications to their reporting of current law enforcement use of force incidents and how their initial reporting can impact society perceptions of these events.

## **Research Questions**

The central research question for this study was as follows: How do lived experiences affect an individual's perception of law enforcement's use of force?

Subquestions to the central research question were as follows:

1. What type or types of conditions do participants believe constitutes use of force?
2. What do participants identify in the video that they believe justified use of force?
3. What do participants identify in the video that they believe was excessive use of force?

## **Theoretical Framework**

Advanced technology has made it nearly impossible for law enforcement to perform their work without it being broadcasted and scrutinized across various social media networks and broadcasting outlets. Anything from handheld video cameras, cell phones, pro cams, and body cameras have created a virtual reality show of the daily happenings of police officers. The capturing of live activity has provided the public with a platform to express, and in some cases act on, their opinions regarding law enforcement, particularly when the activities involve the use of force.

Social learning theory applies general behavioral principals to individuals in an attempt to explain how an individual's perceptions and actions can be a result of their associative patterns (Akers, 1990). For example, if a person is raised in an environment that perceives law enforcement negatively, then their attitudes and belief system

surrounding law enforcement will also be harmful. Heath, Kruttschnitt, and Ward (1986) explored social learning theory and referenced Bandera's experiment of the Bobo Dolls. Bandera conducted a study with young children who were between the ages of 3 and 6 years and observed their aggression based upon what they viewed on television. Heath et al. explored Bandera's research further by interviewing adult offenders who were institutionalized. Heath et al., (1986) results showed that participants indicated it was not only what they viewed on television that affected their aggression, but also what they observed growing up and were exposed to in their environment that affected their behavior.

Social learning theory examines the relationship between a person's associations and environment to how they perceive their individual lived experiences (Henderson, 2015). The social learning theory significantly impacted this study by demonstrating that (a) an individual's attitudes, beliefs, and opinions are based upon their circumstances and observed behavior, and (b) these attitudes influence the individual's perception of law enforcement. An account of their lived experiences assisted in developing a common theme among the participants. Brauer and Tittle (2012) explored social learning theory and indicated that the theory is the most highly recommended and used method when researching crime and deviancy. They argued that people learn deviant behavior just as they learn good behavior. Henderson (2015) further explored social learning theory through the lens of operant conditioning. For example, if a participant associates a negative perception of law enforcement by being raised in an environment that engaged in constant negative relationships with law enforcement, then that person might view law

enforcement negatively, despite not having any negative contact with law enforcement.

### **Nature of the Study**

The nature of this study was qualitative. The phenomenological method was the most appropriate for this research study. This approach identifies a single commonality or phenomenon experienced by an individual, such as anger, recovery, grief, depression, and so on (Creswell, 2013). Some individuals have negative feelings associated with the use of force by law enforcement. The use of phenomenological methodology was best suited for this study for two reasons. First, phenomenology is centered on individual lived experiences and seeks out the person's detailed explanation of the phenomena. Second, the phenomenological method relates to an experience throughout a person's lifetime. It is common for individuals to rely the experience of a single incident to form a lasting impression.

### **Procedures**

The process used for this study was interviews. According to Gill, Stewart, Treasure, and Chadwick (2008), interviews and focus groups are the most commonly used methods in collecting lived experiences and exploring the participants' understanding and views of that experience. Recruitment for participants was conducted using online participant pools, flyers, and ads on college bulletin boards and newsletters for volunteers. The research design, methods, and questions were discussed with the participants. Subjects received informed consent forms for the study and were notified that they could drop out of the study at any time without repercussion. I presented a series of videos portraying law enforcement use of force and then asked the participants a series

of questions to explore their attitudes and beliefs towards law enforcement and the videos.

### **Possible Types and Sources of Information or Data**

There were 10 participants in this study, and the data collected from their responses were used to generate analysis. Information from the interviews was transcribed into the NVivo computer software verbatim. The primary use of the Nvivo software was to identify standard verbiage, store and organize interview data, identify individual codes or themes associated with the participant's responses, and store my memos for reference (Creswell, 2013). Lastly, all data generated from the Nvivo software were kept on a private computer and protected by passwords. It will be stored for 5 years as recommended by Walden University. After 5 years, all data will be destroyed and any paper documents will be shredded.

### **Definition of Terms**

The listed terms and phrases were used in this study. They are defined as follows:

*Law enforcement:* Individuals who are trained to uphold the law, protect the community, and adhere to ever-changing policies specific to their policing agencies.

*Lived experiences:* Actual events that have occurred in an individual's life. They can vary from good experiences to bad experiences.

*Media:* Public news organizations that report on local, national, and global incidents and stories to the public. Means of communication through radio and television, the Internet, newspapers, and magazines, the goal for these agencies is to influence the public globally.

*Perception:* An individual's opinion of specific, event(s), individual(s), views, and how they interpret them.

*Society:* Individuals who live within a community.

*Use of force:* The reasonable level of force used to control a situation. Law enforcement is trained in various degrees of levels of force that are used to effectively subdue an individual with minimal to no injury to the suspect. There has been a blanket opinion that there is no precise definition of this term (National Institute of Justice, 2015).

*Use of force continuum:* Various stages of use of force including officer presence when no force was used, verbal tactic skills, a defensive tactic by use of the body, less than lethal techniques, such as pepper spray and Tasers, and lethal force (National Institute of Justice, 2015).

### **Assumptions**

The goal of this research was to convey to the audience that perceptions are part truth. My intent was to demonstrate to the participants and the audience how the law enforcement use of force continuum is a tool that is used to ensure public, community, and officer safety. The continuum was designed to create options for law enforcement to use the least amount of force to subdue a suspect. The exception is a small percentage of arrests that use excessive force, which is a skill that law enforcement officers are trained on, including how to control high-stress incidents with practical skills. If the public had the same knowledge about the training of law enforcement officers, then their perceptions of use of force by law enforcement could be changed. Further, this new understanding may allow individuals to interpret media reports and representations of law enforcement

conflict and decision making differently.

### **Limitations**

Limitations to the study included the population. Participants were individuals who had contact with police and developed an impression of police prior to the research study. Participants were informed that their personal experiences would not be used to self-incriminate or as a basis for judgment. A second limitation and threat to validity was my current career position. At the time of this study, I was employed as a law enforcement officer. Some may have questioned my bias and whether or not the participants were honest when expressing their feelings or answering the study questions. Self-surveys can be problematic since they rely on the honesty of the individual. The attitudes and beliefs of the participants were critical since their perception of law enforcement can be affected by any previous interaction with police. Assuring the participant and audience that my current position was entirely separate from the research and that I was presenting as a Doctorate student and not a probation officer was vital to the integrity of the data. Full disclosure of research did not include my professional career.

### **Significance of the Study**

This study promoted social understanding by fostering a universally understood definition of *use of force*. Also, the study allows the reader to see more clearly how media can influence perception of events and that what they read and hear in the media are only one perspective of the story. Law enforcement officers are trained to react quickly for the purposes of protecting the community and themselves. Despite previous research

conducted on the use of force, deadly force, and perception, there as a need for the subject to resurface based on recent officer-involved shootings. The perspective of events provided by technology (dash cams, body cams, etc.) has become a sort of proof of events and that when media gains access to these “live as they unfold” incidents, they are taken as reality without consideration for other factors unseen on video.

Lastly, it was my goal to educate the society on officer training, policy in law enforcement, and how media portrayal can skew actual incidents and cloud perception. Informing society about the training officers receive could promote social change through education. A wide range of information streams via news media outlets, social media, and other televised programming. Educating society on law enforcement terminology and the degree of intensity that is involved in split-second decision making may significantly improve society’s perception of law enforcement use of force.

### **Social Change**

This study promotes social change by offering an educational aspect to law enforcement use of force. The ability to challenge and influence previously formed ideas, perceptions, and biases by introducing a new way of thinking about those ideas is how social change occurs. In this current study, the outcome was to highlight those factors that influence public perception on law enforcement use of force. By educating the community on officer training and the steps taken by policing agencies to regulate officer training, use of body cameras, and promoting positive perceptions of community policing, public perception of law enforcement could become more professional and favorable. Researchers have shown that lived experiences impact knowledge involving



law enforcement.

Previous research had been conducted on the use of force, deadly force, and the understanding what it is, how it applied, and in what situations. However, with current officer-involved shootings, there was a need to reassess the requirements that constitute use of force. For example, technology provides live feed to incidents as they unfold and, when those feeds are made public, social media outlets become shape how the incidents are presented to the community and typically involve some sort of bias. One complication of technology and the ability to share information quickly is the number of cell phones and other devices that record incidents, often as they are occurring, and posting them to social media where other individuals input their opinion in the event.

Personal perception can be influenced by different factors. The media currently runs cell phone videos to support their views of use of force incidents. Two factors for body cameras were discussed. First, because opinions get posted, agitation increases and officers are vulnerable. Secondly, body cameras offer a different view of events, which in turn could challenge media reports. Ariel et al. (2014) examined what impact on police behavior resulted in the use of body cameras. They concluded that officers did appear more cautious of their interactions, and the use of cameras was presented as favorable (Ariel et al., 2014). Body cameras can also assist in investigations; recent events have demonstrated that the cameras worn can help to identify what occurred in arrests that required the use of force and whether the officer acted within his justified capabilities. In my researcher, I used the live footage of actual arrests, as seen through witness videos or police body cameras, and asked an untrained eye for an interpretation of events.

Chapman (2012) focused on how an officer's education, age, experience, and ethnicity may influence the use of force.

In the end, in this research, I created lines of communication and established open dialogue between communities, community partners, and police officers in a joint effort to find what influences public perception about use of force and why these groups feel the way they do. The intent of this work was (a) to create more positive view of law enforcement, (b) to strengthen public opinion regarding law enforcement and the determination to use force in conflict situations, (c) foster proactive interaction between police officers and the communities they protect, and (d) develop clarity around the reasons for use of force by placing emphasis on the presenting facts and not biased accounts given by media or public opinion. Lived experiences may not always be positive. However, change can influence perception.

### **Summary**

If individuals believed everything they watched on television or heard in the media, policing would be about kicking down doors, hunting high-profile fugitives, and have consistent involvement in mass shootings and high-speed car chases. The reality is that a majority of calls are to address animal complaints, suspicious circumstances, theft, and other low profile contacts. When there is an altercation or a rise in crime, typically police officers attempt to de-escalate behavior by establishing an increased police presence in those communities with higher crime rates and during initial calls of service. Officers are also versed in verbal and physical tactics to prevent or manage an escalation of a situation. Policing is a stressful career that requires quick decision making and

deliberate response. There are some who engage in contact with police who walk away with distorted perceptions based on their interaction; it is those perceptions that will provide the lived experiences to be used as the foundation of this study.

Understanding how these perceptions have been formed creates a springboard for communities to change perspectives, viewpoints, and perceptions of law enforcement. The misrepresentations and myopic perspectives reported by media and protestors have only aggravated and tainted the perception of law enforcement and its use of force. The tension between perception and reality is exacerbated by public opinion of whether an incident involving deadly force was justified by forming opinions after viewing a less than 2-minute video from a cell phone or taking an eyewitness account as full truth. In response to the public perceptions of the use of force, policing agencies across the United States have implemented the use of body cameras on their officers and their cars. These measures have aided in pinpointed actual events during the investigation of the use of deadly force resulting in both favorable and unfavorable outcomes for police departments and the officers involved. Even with the extra measures taken during investigations to understand what occurred, there are a handful of people whose opinions have not changed, perhaps because of the influence of their lived experiences. These were the participants I hoped to gather data from to better understand how they formed their opinions.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

The search key terms for this research were *perceptions, attitudes, use of force, excessive force, measurement of perception, lived experiences, and law enforcement*. The following literature review provides an explanation of society opinions and how law enforcement determines the level of force necessary to control potentially violent encounters with suspects. Included is an examination of cases that resulted in law enforcement use of force, the public opinions regarding those cases, and the effect of those opinions on public policy and state laws.

### **Police Training**

Police officer training is extensive and detailed; the learning takes place not only in the classroom but also in simulations of incidents officer candidates may encounter in the community as a police officer. The image associated with law enforcement suggests a fast paced and exciting career as a police officer. Badges, firearms, flashlights, and Tasers are displayed, which foster public identification where officers are often referenced as heroes. It is not a career for just anyone. The role requires hard work, a college education, and the ability to endure public scrutiny. Bogats (2016) explored whether police decision to use force has any correlation to training. An officer determines his or her level of force from the Use of Force Continuum by how he or she perceives the threat to personal safety (Paoline & Terrill, 2015). Bogats concluded that participants felt confident in their decisions to use deadly force when they received continued training and understood agency policies.

As asserted in Chapter 1, perception can be influenced by many factors, one of

which is the criticism that policing is based on racial profiling. Schlosser (2013) compared the historical attitudes of police towards African Americans and Native Americans to today's rising fears and profiling practices toward immigrants after the events of September 11, 2001. He asserted that the two most relevant racial biases are against the African American and Latino populations. Due to the opinions circulating in current events, there is an increased need for policing to build on community relationships regardless of ethnicity or race (Schlosser, 2013). Schlosser suggested that the first step in changing policing attitudes is in the police academy.

Training officers to communicate and police with purpose in diverse populations is a critical step in creating a positive foundation for members of society. The research questions in Schlosser's (2013) study were the following: (a) What are the police recruits' attitudes and beliefs about race and racism when they enter the academy and (b) what are the police recruits' attitudes about race and racism when they leave the academy? His research focused on the training that individuals receive and the ways in which important policy changes and the examination of current practices inform necessary changes (Schlosser, 2013). Skogan, Van Craen, and Hennessy (2015) explored the lack of research regarding procedural justice training in the police academy. Their two-part study on the short- and long-term effectiveness of procedural justice identified the need for more research regarding the long-term effectiveness of police training.

The police simulations are designed to recreate realistic scenarios that are as close to real life as possible. It is at the academy where the unknown becomes the known for most candidates. During their training, officer candidates receive firearms training; gun

safety and marksmanship are essential in training considering that police officers are to expect daily encounters with armed assailants on any call. Morrison (2006) researched the limitations in current research on officer satisfaction in firearms training while at the academy. To some officers, it was not enough to simply qualify (2006). In fact, despite the requirement to complete in-service trainings on firearms periodically throughout their career, some officers wanted more training to develop confidence in the use of their firearm. This is especially concerning since each day is unpredictable in police work and may call for the use of firearms at a moment's notice. In addition to firearms training, scenarios where managing verbal confrontations in the field that escalate from cordial to violent are heavily emphasized throughout the police academy training.

Overall, police officer deadly force training accounts for about 60 hours of the academy time for new recruits (Morrison, 2006). Some research suggested that there are too few training hours at academies to prepare candidates for the number of use of force incidents (McCombs, 2016). Shaw (2000) examined police officers from 12 law enforcement agencies in Florida, splitting them in two separate groups. Of the 12 agencies, six represented one group that had on-going use of force training while the other six agencies did not. Shaw assessed the data to identify any connection between the amount of training and use of force violations by patrol officers. After 198 officers were questioned, the study showed no conclusive correlation between violations reported and the amount of training offered to policing agencies (Shaw, 2000).

Police officers in the field are not the only law enforcement personnel that need training in the use of force. Supervisors are held at a higher level of accountability when

it comes to use of force and civil complaints, officer reviews, and fit for duty determinations. Lim and Lee (2015) reported that a supervisor's education level and confidence in the capabilities of their subordinates had a direct influence on the level of confidence officers had for their supervisors. They concluded that supervisors monitored their officers and handled any use of force investigations with adequate responses.

### **Early Research**

There is a correlation between community attitudes toward police and reactive policing. When incivilities occur in neighborhoods, there is a subsequent increase in police presence in those neighborhoods, which increases the negative public perception of policing. While incidents of deadly force have not been publicized much in past years, the recent increase in the reporting of officer-involved shootings has placed the issue of deadly force in the public spotlight (Lersch & Mieczkowski, 2005). Poverty-stricken communities and those that have a relatively higher crime rate are more likely to assert the opinion that police presence in neighborhoods is negative (Sims, Hooper, & Peterson, 1999).

Use of force in law enforcement is not a new issue. While researchers have focused on various aspects of use of force across law enforcement, it is the advancement of technology that has prompted the need for more research on the impact of use of force practices on communities. McDonald, Kaminski, and Smith (2009) discussed how incidents of use of force account for about 2% of law enforcement and civilian interaction. As police departments have learned to manage use of force among their ranks, departments across the United States have begun to provide officers with more

options for less lethal force alternatives. Furthermore, adjustments to policy have been enacted, and communities have begun to observe a shift from deadly force to levels of force. McDonald et al. evaluated the options for levels of force given to law enforcement such as canines, batons, and discussed two specific options—conducted energy devices (CEDs) and oleoresin capsicum (OC), which is more often described as pepper spray. There are over 7,000 law enforcement agencies that use CEDs and OC as options. The use of these weapons has decreased the number of deaths in suspects when used, and the number of officer injury declined, but the use of OC has resulted in more officer injuries than did CEDs (McDonald et al, 2009).

Perkins and Bourgeois (2006) focused on recent shootings involving police officers. They showed that while police use of deadly force resulted in an estimated 100 deaths of suspects each year, citizen perception was that officers had misused deadly force (MDF). They also evaluated the public perception of MDF. Perkins and Bourgeois presented two areas of research. The first area addressed the number of shots fired and the number of officers on scene at the time of an incident. When measuring the perceptions of witnesses, the researchers found that perception was shaped by the number of shots fired by an individual officer. The second area measured the public perception regarding multiple officers responding and multiple shots fired. This area evaluated social dominance, which included the number of officers, the number of shots fired, and perceptions about social dominance. Results showed that public perception regarding MDF was widely dependent upon how many shots were fired by an individual officer. Perkins and Bourgeois asserted that their findings suggest that when an officer is



involved in the use of deadly force, the action usually occurs within 7 yards of the suspect and lasts less than 5 seconds.

As the perception of law enforcement began to take on a broad negative characterization, federal, state, and local agencies undertook the task of regulating the use of force to support both the community and the officer. An example of policy changes that impacted law enforcement across the United States resulting from these endeavors is demonstrated by the findings of *Tennessee v Garner* (1985). This specific case involved an unarmed black male who burglarized a residence. When police arrived on scene, he attempted to flee over a fence and was shot in the back. The change in the law states that an unarmed fleeing felon, who is not a threat to the community or police, cannot be stopped by deadly force and that these individuals were protected under the Fourth Amendment (Coroian, 2009).

Tennenbaum (1994) discussed how the *Tennessee v Garner* (1985) case influenced policy changes in law enforcement and decisions on deadly force. Previous to findings, four distinct policies governed the use of force laws: (a) The Any-Felony Rule, (b) The Defense-of-Life Rule, (c) The Model Penal Code, and (d) The Forcible Felony Rule. The similarity among each of these rules was that officer use of deadly force was justifiable when used against any felony offender that was considered legitimate. However, in 1985, when the Supreme Court amended the law and determined that the shooting of an unarmed fleeing felon was a violation of an individual's civil rights, the authority of these four rules was negated. One resulting conflict of the Court's decision was that many thought that amendment created the opportunity for felons to flee from

law enforcement. Tennenbaum discussed how the perception of the use of force is deeply motivated by an officer's act of shooting and how perception is widely driven by race, specifically African-Americans. The implementation of this case law decreased the number of police homicides by 16% (1994). The reduction in police homicides was not the only positive change that resulted from the decisions issued by *Tennessee v Garner* (1994); there was a reduction in civil lawsuits as well.

Law enforcement has defined *the totality of circumstances* as drive split-second decisions in high-conflict situations. The use of force is not only a physical element but psychological as well. Harris (2009) investigated the factors that may influence law enforcement use of force and explored what drives the officers to decision to use force and at what level. There are certain situational aspects of the use of force, the first of which is the seriousness of the offense and the immediate behavior of the suspect. The priority circumstance defines the officer's level of force. The use of force can be as simple as verbal commands and depends on how the situation unfolds, while in severe cases the level of force can be deadly. In today's society, there is a good chance that a camera is recording the incident.

Harris (2009) identified several factors that could influence an individual officer's decisions, which are education, length of time employed in law enforcement, attitudes and beliefs towards citizens, and their personal views on the use of force. Harris concluded that while previously mentioned characteristics did have some effect on an officer's decision regarding use of force, the effect was small. He discovered that patrol teams who were predominately White had a higher rate of use of force than those who

were mixed race or Black. Additionally, he found that attitudes toward citizens also influenced whether or not officers administered improper use of force. The more positive the attitude, the less likely they would use force.

The critical elements officers consider in determining the use of force are not the only factors the officer weighs but also how the public could potentially perceive the incident and the decision to use force. Maguire and Johnson (2010) explored the understanding of public perceptions and what drives individual opinions of law enforcement use of force. They theorized that when the critical elements of public perception and the relationship of the public versus law enforcement are explored, then the understanding of motivating factors for perceived authority can be explained. Maguire and Johnson discussed the six key dimensions in policing, which are (a) attentiveness, (b) reliability, (c) responsiveness, (d) competence, (e) manners, and (f) fairness.

Maguire and Johnson (2010) further developed their research by using four traditions of conducting research. The first is measuring service quality over the entire industry. The second is justice, which includes three distinct forms of justice—procedural, interactional, and distributive. Procedural justice focuses on the fairness of the outcome. Interactional justice is the quality of the interaction between the authorities and the individual. Distributive justice pertains to the overall result of the situation. The third tradition addresses the global notion of society's overall satisfaction with government agencies, public agencies, and all aspects of public services. Most of the public's opinions are founded and measured through surveys. The fourth tradition is legitimacy,

which, by definition, is a quality that is present by the government and law-abiding agencies that empower others to obey their commands and decisions voluntarily. Maguire and Johnson referenced Mastrofski (1999) who concluded that citizens wanted law enforcement to be readily available to them and whatever needs they had. They wanted police to be predictable, community-based, and efficient in their job, treat them with respect, and be fair in the implementation of their procedures.

### **Case Studies**

Previous research on the use of force provided a foundation to understand the complexities associated with the practice. However, there was a need for current research that considers change in perceptions of law enforcement based on recent police-involved shootings. The laws within the policing community and the conditions of the community's police agency were the environmental factors that motivate researchers (White & Klinger, 2012). By examining the case studies of past years and today, findings provided theories to identify gaps in the current knowledge. Phillips (2010) the opinions of law enforcement and how they would view the use of force by their fellow officers. He explored the reasons, or theories, that attempt to explain what motivates officers and their decision on the use of force. Phillips broke down the levels of use of force and used three separate scenarios to demonstrate for others the what, when, where, why, and how officers reach their decisions. The method of data collection he used allowed participants to engage in vignettes that portrayed the use of force on a range of intensity, from verbal to physical. He then asked officers who participated in the exercises what their opinions were regarding the level of force and whether they would report the use if it were deemed

unnecessary use of force or excessive. Phillips found that criminals were unlikely to report the unnecessary use of force by other officers to their supervisor.

Considering the bond that officers tend to develop with one another over the course of their careers and the perceived separation between law enforcement and the American public, current laws and department policy changes have been put in place to protect both the officer and the offender. Ariel et al. (2015) conducted research on officers wearing body cameras. The purpose of the study was to investigate officer behavior when wearing body cameras as compared to those who did not. Their theory was that officers would be more conscious of their actions if they believed someone was watching them and that they could face possible discipline for their actions. There were about 1,000 police shifts that were studied. Over a 12-month period, officers were randomly assigned to wear body cameras, which was the experimental group. Those who did not wear them were considered the control group. Results showed that there was a decrease in officer complaints among those who wore the body cameras in comparison to those who did not. Body cameras were not the only mechanism used to record incidents with law enforcement; law enforcement also used in dash cameras in patrol cars and cameras placed on the streets and buildings (Jennings, Fridell, & Lynch, 2014).

Ariel et al. (2015) asserted that police use of force is a nationwide concern in today's society and can be seen almost daily via media representation. They used a quantitative design to measure whether the use of body cameras worn by police officers reduces police officer use force. The study examined the impact of body-worn cameras on whether they: (a) reduced use of force complaints against officers, (b) enhanced police

legitimacy, (c) increased the success of prosecution of offenders, and (d) improved the amount and quality of evidence collected and evaluated by police and forensics.

Ariel et al. (2015) indicated that there had been some data collected on the effectiveness of body-worn cameras in previous research; but, there was no current research that focused solely on the benefits of body-worn cameras. The study identified three distinct areas of officer behavior while wearing the cameras—situational, psychological, and organizational. Their finding showed that officers and suspects did become more aware of their interactions when they knew that they were on record, and that the recordings were viable evidence in judicial cases. The study found that there were public and individual benefits in the use of body cameras. Publically officer's encounters with citizens showed that since wearing body cameras their interactions were more pro social and citizen complaints decreased and public opinion of police became more positive. Lastly, police officers account of incidents where use of force was applied could be supported by what their camera recorded. This offered an unrefuted digital testimony. (Ariel et al., 2015).

A study by Prenzler, Porter, and Alpert (2013) provided specific strategies targeting individual, organizational, and cultural strategies for police-citizen interaction. They used seven case studies to evaluate and discuss the level of force used and how changes in approach, training, policies, and programs can assist police officers and their decisions to the use of force. Individual suggestions were identifying officers who may have a history of citizen complaints and show signs of aggression, ensuring police accountability and discipline. Cultural strategies include community policing and civilian

review boards that address accountability and cultural norms. Lastly, organizational strategies that regularly review policies, policing, and supervisors to identify any needed modifications or implementations to align with the needed cultural, individual, and organizational changes (Prenzler et al., 2013)

The use of deadly force by law enforcements goes back as far as the 1800s when police officers began carrying firearms. Typically, when use of force is applied and there are resulting allegations, the public perception is subject to media speculation and used as a platform for other individuals to voice their opinion. One area often left untouched by media are how officers are trained to make split-second decisions. Broomé (2013) discussed the phenomenological aspect of officers and the struggle they have with these choices by examining the mental, physical, and social aspects of these decisions. The study consisted of three officers who shared their experiences about the use of force. Broome identified the phenomenological psychological factors when choosing use of force as the perceptions of bullets hitting the suspect, surreal experience, noticing body damage to the suspect, making meaning out of the experience, and officers understanding the suspects as adversaries. His findings showed that the emotional impact of the officer's experiences in using deadly force are not quickly forgotten and the impact of their decisions will permanently affect them.

Phenomenology is a traditional method used in qualitative research; interviewing is most associated with this method (Englander, 2012). Englander (2012) examined methodological concerns with data collection and focuses his research on interview methods. In his study, he examined the lived meaning in early emotional memories of his

participants. The data collected when using the phenomenological approach is limited to the number of participants interviewed and by how well the researcher can identify the meaning and purpose of the phenomenon (Englander, 2012).

An example interview question for this method would be asking a study participant to describe their lived experience of an emotional memory in their words. Using the participant's words, Englander provided a descriptive detail of the participant response. He discussed the benefit of face-to-face interviewing and how it allowed the researcher and participant to develop amore trusting foundation and opportunity to observe the participant and how they relay the information. Additionally, once the interview begins and the participants starts answering the questions, interviewing allows for real time secondary responses when collecting data using this method and approach. Englander transcribed his question and participant response in the study and outlined the purpose of the study, which as to analyze using the phenomenological approach of interview questions and data collection. Interviews have been most successful in documenting human interaction relationship as the firsthand accounts establish reliability in a phenomenological study. This method is also beneficial in gaining more insight on topics and participants (Qu & Dumay, 2011).

According to English Common Law, the principal of use of force protects police officers who may use any means necessary to stop a fleeing felon. Broomé (2013) referenced U.S. Supreme Court case *Tennessee vs. Garner* (1985) in which an officer responding to a burglary in progress shot a fleeing suspect in the back while the man was climbing a fence attempting to evade law enforcement. This particular case prompted



changes to the law, resulting in officers being able to use deadly force only when the suspect poses a significant threat to the officer or the public, or if the violent offender constitutes a serious threat to the community if not captured. MacDonald, Manz, Alpert, and Dunham (2003) found that police deadly force was statistically higher in property crimes than in more serious crimes, such as domestic violence. To put it plainly, MacDonald et al. asserted that a suspect or officer will more likely be shot during a burglary than a fight. A study by Gross (2016) analyzed statistics of police use of force and found that according to 2015 Law Enforcement Officers Fatality Report, there were 52 officers killed in the line of duty that year. Although this is a high number of officer deaths, the same report showed that when an encounter between a suspect and officer became deadly, the suspect is the one that is killed 89% of the time.

Broomé (2013) analyzed and shared the psychological perspective of a police officer and analyzes the mental aspect of the role of a law enforcement officer. Those that experience the incidents or witness them can visualize the “physical” aspects but not the internal thoughts, feelings, and decision-making that the police officer experiences right before, during, and after the incident. Furthermore, Broomé tried to bring those thoughts out in the open to help the audience have a more realistic idea of what it is like for officers to make split second decisions. He used a descriptive qualitative *voice* in a phenomenological research. Although his research focused on the psychological element that police experience during a police car chase, the incident still demonstrates the real life experiences of the officers. In his findings, he identified that the participant level of anxiety was heavily dependent upon the degree of tension in the situation and if there

were risk factors to the level of danger associated with the event such as the potential for the suspect, the officer, and bystanders to become collateral damage. Additionally, officer anxiety was dependent upon how much control they had over the situation (Broomé, 2013). Understanding police use of force can be difficult. To fully understand why use of force was applied the person seeking understanding must consider the incident from a variety of perspectives, to include public opinion and law enforcement perspectives.

In their study, Klahm, Frank, and Liederbach (2013) explored the use of force and attempt to identify the conceptualize use of force. While most may define use of force as unnecessary, excessive, or deadly, in reality, use of force is just that—the *use of force*—and can range from actions of verbal threats to deadly action. Klahm et al. asserted that there are several levels of force, the close examination of which may help in understanding why the level of force applied was necessary for a situation. Coercive force is the most commonly used form of force, which consists of verbal commands, kicks, punches, and the use of non-lethal weapons. It is at this level of force that officers can gain the most compliance from citizens. Klahm et al.'s (2013) study simplified the application of the use of force to assist policy makers in identifying the areas that needed to improvement when establishing operational policy for police use of force.

### **Theory**

In the process of development of this research, several theories were evaluated. Bandura's social learning theory (SLT) demonstrated how social modeling and cognitive development shape an individual and determine how they interact in the community (Rosenthal & Zimmerman, 2012). The SLT describes the learning process an individual

used to determine socially acceptable behavior. This theory can be applied when learning about criminal or deviant behavior as well. Modeling behavior occurs when a person observes an action and then imitates the behavior. For example, when an individual is introduced to criminal behavior, that person would also model that same conduct. Robak, Ward, and Ostolaza, (2005) discussed how individuals can only understand their true selves by getting to know who they are from the inside out. The researchers conducted a study on SLT examining how individuals process situations by having participants (a) rate themselves on their ability to observe and then (b) define their behaviors and beliefs (Robak et al., 2005). Robak et al. asserted that it could be concluded that individuals who have had negative or positive interaction with law enforcement will also carry a negative or positive opinion of law enforcement and may perceive the use of force differently depending on their personal life experiences.

Brauer and Tittle (2012) examined SLT from the perspective of differential association and operant conditioning. According to their research there are four components of social learning theory: (a) differential association, (b) differential reinforcement, (c) modeling, and (D) definitions. Individuals that commit crimes are most likely to do so when they learn criminal patterns cognitive definitions. An individual that has learned criminal behavior may perceive the use of force as unnecessary or excessive, even when it may be deemed justifiable. Motivations such as racial profiling, geographically boundaries, or origin of offense can be influential to negative and positive perception of the use of force. Therefore, under certain conditions, Brauer and Tittle established that reinforcement learning is reflective of operant conditioning.

According to Maskaly and Donner (2014), one of the most controversial topics when examining law enforcement is the tactical use of force among the general public. While there are several levels of use of force, one of the easiest to measure is deadly force. Two distinctive incidents in 2014 that drew attention to police use of deadly force of unarmed suspects were the death of Michael Brown on August 9, 2014, and the death of Tamir Rice on November 22, 2014. Masklay and Donner's study included three areas of research. First, they examine the *deadly force triangle*, which identifies three distinct criteria that must be satisfied before officers can use deadly force. These criteria are (a) opportunity, (b) ability, and (c) imminent danger. Second, the researchers also observed that the reinforcement that officers receive from superiors during their tenure, whether positive or negative, are an example of the law enforcement subculture and overall comradery of brotherhood that develops among police. Finally, the researchers examined terror management theory (TMT) to explain law enforcement use of force in deadly shootings. This study found that SLT is a component of crime and deviant behavior, which ultimately affects officer decisions to use deadly force.

Capece and Lanza-Kaduce (2013) examined SLT more deeply by exploring Akers' (1988) social structure-social learning theory (SS-SLT) through research on binge drinking among college students. While their research focused on binge drinking, it connected the learned behavior of observing peers and the desire for acceptance with the social pressures of college life and peer pressure.

Chappell and Piquero (2004) conducted research that applied SLT to police conduct. They indicated there is a gap in research that measures the deviance in police

corruption and the extent of it; however, believed that there is more corruption than what is reported at a national level. Misconduct in policing can include the use and sale of drug and alcohol, brutality, insubordination, neglect of duty, and the protection of illegal activities. When police corruption occurs, the method of payment is usually gifts and meals. One of the forms of “payment” is the use of excessive force.

Chappell and Piquero (2004) believed that the most efficient way in attempting to explain police corruption is through the SLT. They analyzed and reviewed citizen complaints against officers or departments and how officers would say or act in a manner that the public deemed unprofessional. This could be anything from speaking to individuals offensively to justifying some of their behaviors because they are officers. A sort of “rules or laws do not apply to me” behavior. They applied Akers social learning theory in the framework of this study. The study found that some law enforcement officers may not agree with specific behaviors or tactics of their peers, but will still “go along” or not report to superiors out of fear of rejection, being perceived as a traitor, or being the target for some sort of retaliation (Chappell & Piquero, 2004).

In their research, Chappell and Piquero’s (2004) findings showed that, while a small percentage of officers displayed deviant behaviors, it occurred within small individual groups. The participants considered the acts of stealing and excessive force to be grave breaches that warranted extreme consequences. As for their attitudes on excessive force, they were related to citizen complaints and perceptions; the participants believed that the behavior of theft was more punishable than use of excessive force. Chappell and Piquero recommended police departments focus on training and

development to be consistent with the attitudes and beliefs of officers and citizens. They also identified the limitations of their research, one of which was that they only measured one behavior—citizen complaints. The other was that all their data came from a single large department and that further research should include smaller agencies as well.

As individuals, when we find ourselves in high-stress situations, a significant factor in how we respond may be driven by the emotion that we are feeling at that point. If we are sad, then we may cry, and if we are angry or frustrated, we may yell or physically respond. Tedeschi and Felson (1994) explored those emotions and use learning theory to attempt to explain aggression. Within their research, the researchers use Bandura's (1973) SLT because of his critical research on the observation of violence in media and how parents respond. One of the characteristics in their explanation of individual reaction to academic experiences was the relationships between people, their perceptions of each other, and where they place themselves within society's class expectation. It is not only their perception of them self but also of those people around them that contribute to their coercive actions.

According to Tedeschi and Felson (1994), children's behavior is learned by imitation and modeling behavior. Modeled behavior carries over into adolescent and adulthood; often social learning applies to a person's career and how they interact with others. Between the years of 1961 and 1963, Albert Bandura conducted an experiment using a Bobo Doll. This is a doll that gets up and down by itself. The children observe an adult beating up on a Bobo doll and then either receive an award, a punishment, or nothing for doing it. The children learned through behaviorism by reward and

punishment, but also through observational learning through watching someone get rewarded or punished. Although Bandura's Bobo experiment focused on children and aggressive behavior as related to mass media, Tedeschi and Felson (1994) integrated the Bobo experiment into individual environments to explain how people manipulate their learned behavior in their environment to achieve specific goals.

The research conducted by Hanna, Crittenden, and Crittenden (2013) established the relationship between ethical standards and laws, role modeling, and capitalism. They proposed that social learning theory was the foundation for the influences on and unethical standards or behavior of business leaders. They researched not only the participants' career goals but also their cultural beliefs. Their conclusions stated that future business leaders flourished under the umbrella of egoism, formalism, relativism, and utilitarianism. Lastly, this study demonstrated that people make decisions based upon personal gain and often without any regards to how their choices affect the people around them.

### **Use of Force**

It is the responsibility of law enforcement agencies to monitor and enforce officer use of force. Society depends upon law enforcement to ensure public safety. They also expect policing and policies to be enforced in order to hold officers that use excessive force accountable (Coroian, 2009). Policing agencies have a duty to protect the community and keep police and citizen interaction positive and justified. Unfortunately, there can be varied opinion between the public, the judicial system, and law enforcement concerning the perception of police officer use of force (Atherley & Hickman, 2014).

Excessive force is defined as the physical force that goes beyond what is necessary to control a suspect or situation. The term *excessive* can be anywhere from a push or shove to deadly force (Worrall, 2014). Law enforcement officers have seconds to make decisions when incidents occur that require the use of force. Decades ago policing agencies developed a use of force continuum that trains officers in specific use of force tactics to assist in controlling incidents. The continuum is a set of standards and techniques that were developed for law enforcement training. It is the level of force used by police to safely and effectively handle incidents where use of force is likely. The first level is power of officer presence and verbal skills, secondly is use of taser, pepper spray, baton, and other less than lethal tools, and lastly is deadly force. The purpose of this was to offer the officers a more reasonable level of use that could be trainable to the officer and accepted by the public (Hough & Tatum, 2010). Deadly force is most lethal and most talked about level of force. White and Klinger (2012) studied the elements of contagious fire (more than two officers shooting), the number of shots fired by each shooter, and the combination of those to assess deadly force and how policy changes can assist in policing.

Research conducted by Kleinig (2014) evaluated the legitimate and illegitimate use of force. He explained that there are techniques used by police officers to serve effectively and protect their policing communities without using unjustified tactics or coercion. On the other hand, he asserted, there are occasions where individuals exercise their authority in a manner that is invasive and violates the code of ethics for law enforcement. The definition of the use of force in Kleinig's (2014) was any force



necessary to safely subdue a suspect or control an incident. The examples of excessive force cited by Kleinig are the excessive tightening of handcuffs, unnecessary body cavity searches, high-speed pursuits, coercion tactics, and using medical means to induce vomiting.

Kleinig also identified some use of force methods that have proven effective in obtaining information from uncooperative individuals and are within approved policies of police agencies. These include strip searches, perp walks, handcuffing procedures, post chase apprehensions, profiling, stop and frisk tactics, and coerced confessions to name a few. Some of these methods are considered unconventional and not favorable used within agencies or popular among public opinion.

In the policy-changing decision of 1985 by the US Supreme Court in *Tennessee v Garner* established tougher criteria for police use of force. In this case, police were called to a burglary in progress. Upon arrival on scene, they spotted the Garner suspect fleeing the scene and climbing over a wall. They directed him to stop and when he did not, they shot and killed him (Broomé, 2011). The “fleeing felon” movement called for stricter requirements on police use of force. Public policy changes restricted the use of force to the protection of life. Broomé (2011) conducted a phenomenological study on police training in deadly force. He intended to appeal to the audience for empathy in the training of police officer duties. Then, he would apply a phenomenological method to empathetic responses to demonstrate the valuable contribution of empathetic viewpoints overall psychologically, in the law enforcement community, and to the community in general. He used the descriptive psychological method, a qualitative approach (Broomé, 2011). His

conclusions showed the psychological, emotional, and physical pressures that cadets experience when forced to make decisions in high anxiety situations.

Characteristics of police officer personalities are also factors in their decision to apply use of force. Chapman (2012) explored the individual characteristics of police officers, specifically their ethnicity, education, experience, and age. Participants were from three different departments and were selected using a survey method. Chapman measured the demographics of each participant. The purpose of the study was to gain a more precise understanding of police perspectives on what motivates their decisions in criminal incidents. Chapman discussed the police use of force and how it relates to officer education, age, experience, and ethnicity. He found that police force is used to ensure that communities obey laws and operate within defined expectations. He used internet-based surveys to ask questions relevant to use of force and what leads up to the decision to use it.

Chapman (2012) provided substantial information in his literature review that expressed how each referenced article would be beneficial to his proposed research. The dependent variable was education, and the independent variable was the use of force. Data was collected by (a) calculating an overall total force or (b) identifying the level of force used. The statistical tests in the research included a post hoc analysis and Cronbach's Alpha. Chapman's findings indicated that an officer's education and experience were connected to those officers being more cautious with the use of force in comparison to those officers with less education, younger in age, and different ethnicity. From a social learning perspective, officers who were older and more experienced

accepted the use of force by other officers more readily than those that were younger.

This is attributed to “brotherhood” among police officers (Chapman, 2012).

Considering the impact that the use of force has on communities, individuals, and policies, there is a need for continued research and policy reviews. Bolger (2014)

examined previous research on the use of force and incorporates current concerns in an attempt to identify what influences use of force decisions by law enforcement officers.

He conducted a meta-analysis on 44 separate analyses performed in 19 previous articles that collectively reference samples taken from 12 different datasets (Bolger, 2014).

Additionally, he focused on four different characteristics, which are listed as follows:

1. *Encounter*, which the study defines as police-citizen interaction.
2. *Suspect*, which is qualified by behaviors of as those suspects that were under the influence of drugs or alcohol had the highest likelihood of use of force.
3. *Officer* includes traits such as the level of education and on-the-job experience, which were the two most common characteristics.
4. *Community* includes the community where incidents took place.

The *community* characteristic had the highest percentage of use of force in the areas of poverty and high crime rates (Bolger, 2014). Bolger’s findings were significant to this study because of the community as the primary location of police and citizen interaction.

Officers are required to undergo specific training in the use of force and maintain their compliance and policy requirements for use of force throughout their career.

Morrison and Garner (2011) discussed handgun training and certification programs.

Previous to the 1990s, training approaches that looked at high-risk situations and

judgment to use deadly force were not addressed. It was not until the training commissions, professional associations, federal courts, and accrediting bodies stepped in to change procedures and training requirements that training on high-risk situations and the use of force were incorporated into training. Morrison and Garner examined all aspects of the use of force, the incidents that can lead up to them, and future implications of policies and law enforcement.

Police officers are sworn to serve and protect. Those officers that do not take their vow seriously and use excessive force unnecessarily are investigated by internal policing organizations when complaints are filed by citizens. Investigations are used to determine whether the agency is operating under the Department of Justice (DOJ) enacted Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994. It is the largest crime bill in U.S. History and is 356 pages long. It employed 100,000 new police officers, \$9.7 billion to help fund prisons, and \$6.1 billion in funding preventative programs. Section 14141 of this Act allows the Attorney General to investigate and sue agencies that are found to be using unconstitutional practices, as well as implement appropriate policy changes to establish more quality standards and practices. The development of this act came about after some high profile violent incidents that occurred, such as the incident involving Rodney King. Rodney King was beaten by Los Angeles police officers in a 1991 incident. His beating was videotaped by bystanders and televised across the America. After the acquittal of the officers there was a riot in Los Angeles that became out of control with looting, beatings, and threats towards law enforcement.

Schatmeier (2013) conducted a case study on the Cincinnati Police Department.

The department had received numerous citizen complaints of excessive force, racial profiling, and unlawful searches. Schatmeier's research showed that after the policing agency implemented the recommendations of the investigation, citizen complaints decreased. In his findings, Schatmeier concluded that reform policies had a positive impact on Cincinnati's Police Department, civilian complaints decreased, and perception of police officers increased positively. A memorandum of agreement (MOA) directed agencies to implement the DOJ best practice models as a means to address the use of force and requirements for policing organizations to regain control of their officers. The recommendations of the DOJ and MOA were not always agreeable within agency environments and department dynamics. Additionally, there were Constitutional challenges. Overall the research concluded that Cincinnati Police Department was perceived in a more favorable light by the community due to the changes implemented by recommendations of the DOJ (Schatmeier, 2013).

### **Perception**

Phillips (2010) examined police use of force by questioning law enforcement officers, specifically interviewing them on the unnecessary use of force. Phillips elaborated on previous research and limitations using a factorial research design and vignettes to study the dependent and independent variables. The dependent variables were two belief indicators—the unnecessary the use of force by law enforcement and the willingness to report by fellow officers who witness the use of force. The first one examined the judgment of the officers regarding the judgment exhibited by the officer in the vignettes. The second was the likelihood of whether the interviewed officer believed

that the officer in the vignette would report the behavior of the officer who used force in the vignette. Phillips' findings showed that an officer would report the unnecessary use of force if some of these factors were in place; their age, higher ranked, personal view of the offending officer, and education. His research is significant because the level of force used and perception of witnesses.

Jefferis, Butcher, and Hanley (2011) provided information regarding how media can influence the individual perception of police at a high rate in their examination of Alpert and Dunham's (1997) study *The Force Factor*, which was a study focused on the level of force used in comparison to the suspect resistance. Jefferis et al. compared the findings of the Alpert and Dunham study to other studies that previously measured the use of force by law enforcement officers in arrest scenarios. Individual characteristics for this research include gender, age, and nature of law enforcement contact. Jefferis et al. included significant statistical findings that demonstrate how some perceptions of individuals reflect identical opinions reported or portrayed by the media. Often the public receives their early information on an incident from the media and may form their opinion from there. Their early perception can lead to multiple misplaced theories and nonfactual information circulating through social media.

Boda and Szabo (2011) discussed media affects and how the media uses individual propensity to deviant behavior as a platform for their content. The media spins the reporting of criminal incidents with carefully articulated verbiage to instigate public perception of law enforcement and attitudes towards crime (Boda & Szabo, 2011). The ever changing perception has only been fueled by the popularity of crime-based dramas

and reality television such as *Law and Order: SVU*, *Cops*, and *America Most Wanted* (Callanan & Rosenberger, 2011).

Terrill and Paoline (2013) conducted research involving 3,544 scenarios that include police use of force. The purpose of the study was to look into the nonlethal use of force and suspect resistance. In this study, non-lethal use of force includes verbal cues, increased officer presence, use of Taser and pepper spray, and physical defense. The research reviewed the use of verbal and nonverbal use of force. Within the scenarios, some form of force is used in 12% of outcomes. Most uses of force in the research were verbal and seldom escalated to physical force (Terrill & Paoline, 2013). The study concluded that while the most common use of force was verbal, if the incident escalated to a physical nature, more officers were brought in to assist. Additionally, when certain levels of force are used that violate the law or required force, the outcome can cause psychological or physical harm to citizens (Terrill & Paoline, 2013).

Every tool on an officer is there for a purpose, and they are given specific training to understand their use and when to use them. There are different policies for each weapon and departments vary on the requirements regarding when to wear them. Some agencies require training every six months and allow firearm practice regularly.

Morrison and Garner (2011) discussed handgun training and certification programs. Previous to the 1990s, training approaches did not always address the high-risk situations police endure. It was not until the training commissions, professional associations, federal courts, and accrediting bodies stepped in to change procedures and training requirements. Morrison and Garner (2011) examined all aspects of the use of

force, the incidents that can lead up to them, and future implications of policies and law enforcement. Community and individual perception appear to split in the policing at times.

In their study, Ambrey, Fleming, and Manning (2014) recognized that the limited research on perceived crime and subjective well-being. They first defined the differences between *perceived crime* and *real crime*. Ambrey et al. wanted to investigate a perceived crime in an individual local area. To explain public perceptions on crime, the researchers used two theories—instrumental theory and expressive theory. Ambrey et al. cited Shjarback and White's (2016) study, which emphasizes the importance of public perception and how rapidly it can change depending on police and citizen interaction, especially those incidents that result in violence. Ambrey et al. asserted that the perception of crime through a person's experience or victimization is an instrumental theory, while an example of expressive theory is socio-emotional concerns of the cultural meaning of crime, social change and relations, and conditions that are conducive to crime. Their findings showed that a person's perception of crime in their area is skewed from factual reality. Crime rates are decreasing faster than the perceived crime rate. A person's life satisfaction (LS) detracts from the actual crime rates. Perceived crime rates have more of an impact on an individual's life than the actual crime rate (Ambrey et al., 2014).

An individual's personal experience with a crime is not the only thing that shapes perception; media can also be influential in how the public perceives an incident from the initial report and forward. Park, Lee, Choi, Lee, Ahn, and Park's (2014) study observed



similarity and how the third-person effect of the media can influence perception. They referenced the shooting incidents at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, where, on April 16, 2007, a college student opened fire on campus and killed 32 people. The media spin reported on the student's upbringing and speculated on how his violent tendencies developed. Then they shifted to his Korean ethnicity and how the incident may be perceived in the U.S. and in Korea. Park et al. focused on three aspects of media: (a) participant group that perceives the media, (b) the comparison group who's perception was influenced by the media, and (c) the object group who the comparison group forms their opinion.

Individual's experience with law enforcement has been a factor in the use of force. Research conducted by Ribeiro (2014) took a phenomenological approach in explaining Merleau-Ponty (2012) synchronization, which refers to the moment when individuals personalize their perception. Ribeiro uses phenomenology to explain the *before* and *after* of different perception. A person can change their opinion depending on what experiences they have. While their perception can change with each experience, it is often the negative experiences that are harder to change. Ribeiro (2014) asserted there are three specific factors to changing perception: (a) the experience of individuals, the experience can be gained through personal elements or observational, (b) physical features of a perceptual scene, and (c) context.

Renauer and Cocelli (2010) examined the individual perception and measure the correlation between police experiences and police bias. They discussed how public perception impacts the legitimacy of police and social control. When individuals or

communities have negative opinions of law enforcement, they are less likely to assist police within the community. Lived experience of individuals are the single most influential motivators in the perception of the police and policing agencies (Renauer & Cocelli, 2010). The researchers used purposive sampling to choose their participants, which is a process for researchers to hand select their participants to better answer the research questions (Duan, Bhaumik, Palinkas, & Hoagwood, 2015). The experiences inquired about can be voluntary or involuntarily formed. An officer's interaction with individuals during the encounter can affect the overall influence of public perception. Predictors that are present in forming perception are: (a) determining factors in police stops, (b) legitimacy of police agencies, (c) cooperation with law enforcement, and (d) law observance. Police bias and personal experiences are conclusively an influential factor in the public perception of police (Renauer & Cocelli, 2010). Renauer and Cocelli's study was significant to this study because it demonstrated how lived experiences can influence attitudes and beliefs towards police.

In some professions of policing, criminal profiling is practiced. The concept of profiling is to narrow the field of investigation by piecing together the evidence left behind or speculated. Ibe, Ochie, and Obiyan (2012) explored criminal profiling and the impact that it has on the use of force and racial intentions. They used a phenomenological approach to answer questions that address racial profiling and how police agencies tend to utilize criminal profilers when addressing investigations. The core of this research was to identify the characteristics of excessive racial profiling (Ibe et al., 2012).

Media influences policing in various aspects. The portrayal of policing incidents splashed across the pages of news and social media outlets, individual experience, and race were also factors in different perception. A study by Hughey (2014) revisited the racial “white backlash” and how even years ago there was an inequality among racial communities and policing. He examined the ‘post racial’ era of 1960-present day by discussing legal cases and media speculation on white backlash and white victimization. His study was significant to this study because it showed that the spread of racial profiling and victimization has been consistent over decades.

A recent study by Callanan and Rosenberger (2011) explored three components of public perception and the media, which are police fairness, confidence in the police, and use of force. They concluded that viewing media and victims and those with an arrest are not affected by what the media portrays. They did find that first-hand experiences with policing had more effect on their perception of law enforcement than the media.

### **Conclusion**

The literature review provided a theoretical and factual foundation for the study. It explains the demands of policing, the process used by police officers to respond to incidents, and how society shapes its perceptions law enforcement. It also established that lived experiences are a key factor in how individuals form their opinions, including the idea that there is more to the decision to use force than what they may see or hear reported by the media. Social learning theory suggests that individual opinion can also be influential in public perception. In addition to presenting the basis of the study, the review also identified the steps being taken by policing agencies to create a more positive

perception of law enforcement in hopes of increasing a pro-active relationship between officers and their communities.

### Chapter 3: Research Method

Recent negatively-charged media attention given to use of force events has placed critical eyes on law enforcement, and advancing technology puts a camera in almost every individual's hand. When the media obtains videos taken by eyewitnesses—and sometimes victims themselves—they add their spin to events while making useless attempts to remain unbiased. However, this is not always the outcome in the race to who gets the story out first.

The research theory used for this research study was the self-perception theory (SPT). Bem developed the theory in 1965. The SPT looks at an individual's attitudes, opinions, and beliefs when observing situations and when analyzing the circumstances that led to them (Bem, 1972). For example, if an individual is raised in an environment that perceives law enforcement negatively, then his or her attitudes and belief system surrounding law enforcement will also be negative. However, Bem (1972) asserted that it is possible to change perception.

Heath et al. (1986) explored SLT and referenced Bandera's experiment of the Bobo dolls. Bandera conducted the Bobo doll study in 1961 with young children aged 3 to 6 years old and observed their aggression based upon what they viewed on television. Heath et al. expanded this experiment and interviewed adult offenders who were institutionalized. Both studies resulted in participants indicating it was not only what they viewed on television but also what they observed growing up and their environment.

#### **Research Design**

The phenomenological concept, created by Husserl (1969), a German

philosopher, was most suitable for this study. This design focuses on the lived experiences of people and how those experiences affect their perception (Husserl, 1969). The purpose of this research was to gather information from individual lived experiences to develop a common theme that can be used to answer the research question of how a person's lived experience affects their perception of law enforcement's use of force.

Robak et al. (2005) discussed how individuals can only understand their true selves by getting to know who they are from the inside out. They conducted a study on SPT by exploring how people process by having participants rate themselves in observation and defining their behaviors and beliefs (Robak et al., 2005). The observation of reacting to one's behavior and reacting to one's beliefs is most influential on SPT. Their findings showed that most individuals do not take their own beliefs as an immediate factor when developing perception; it is something that they reflect on after an initial opinion is formed.

Maskaly and Donner (2015) researched SLT and Terror Management Theory (TMT) to understand why police officers may use force when engaging suspicious behavior and the training on use of force that is involved. In this research study, I explored how individuals who have had lived experiences with law enforcement perceive law enforcement and whether or not those perceptions can be changed.

The research questions for this study were as follows:

1. How do lived experiences affect an individual's perception of law enforcement's use of force?
2. What type or types of conditions do participants believe constitutes use of

force?

3. What do participants identify in the video that they believe justified use of force?
4. What do participants identify in the video that they believe was excessive use of force?

The SLT significantly impacted this study by demonstrating that an individuals' attitudes, beliefs, and opinions are shaped by their circumstances and how observed behavior influences their perception of law enforcement. An account of their lived experiences assisted in developing a common theme among the participants. The stimulus that becomes the learned behavior of individuals formulates the framework of self-perception and becomes the eyes and ears of the individual (Bem, 1972).

In this study, I explored individuals and their lived experiences using a purposive sample. According to Creswell (2013), purposive sampling occurs when the researcher selects participants based on his or her experiences to assist the researcher in understanding the particular phenomenon. The selection of people was purposive based their responses to the questionnaire. Only participants who had previous encounters with law enforcement whether it be as an offender, a witness, or a victim, were considered for this study.

### **Role of Researcher**

As a researcher, there is vital importance in how I convey the study to the participant, and how I set the environment for the participant. Even though the participants for this current study were not from a vulnerable population, they made

themselves vulnerable by sharing intimate details and discussing events or incidents in their lives that may have been traumatic to them. How I set up the interviews and presented myself to them was important.

Rossetto (2014) suggested that the researcher puts the participant at ease by being open, exhibiting warmth and care, and remaining nonjudgmental in order to set the therapeutic process into motion. I felt that showing empathy and remaining unbiased was significant in setting the foundation for how comfortable the participant was in discussing their perception, how they thought they developed their understanding of law enforcement, and their willingness to share their opinions of the videos.

Therefore, the process was to collect data from the interviews and use my notes and transcribe them collectively from the final interviews. Moreover, I ensured that the participants received informed consent of the research study, how their participation was measured, and the importance of it. Lastly, the importance of openness, honesty, and comfort throughout the process was emphasized.

I have a law enforcement background involving the board of pardons and parole that spans over 10 years. Due to my role as a probation officer, I have been privy to the various levels of use of force throughout the community. With this stated, since the participants in this study were members of the general public, I did not have any affiliation with the individual that could have altered the data collected in this study. Lastly, it may be viewed that since I have knowledge in law enforcement and use of force that hidden biases may exist. However, I remained as neutral as possible in order to



employ reasonable efforts that ensured I did not transfer any of my thoughts, personal experiences, and preconceived notions and perceptions of analyzed data for this research.

### **Methodology**

The participants for this study were individuals who are members of the general public and who possessed lived experiences with police officers who used a form of force during the commission of their duty. Participants were selected based on purposive sampling. According to Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias (2008), purposive sampling is a form of nonprobability sampling that is used to select sampling units that appear to be representative of the research study. Participants from the Tri-Cities (Kennewick, Pasco, and Richland), WA who possessed experience from encounters with police officers during their execution of use of force provided me their lived experiences from their encounters.

### **Participant Selection**

I took into consideration that this was a qualitative study using the phenomenology approach. I interviewed 10 preselected participants and used a local college campus and community agencies to ask for volunteers for the purpose of the study. Flyers were posted asking for adult volunteers who had previous contact with law enforcement as either a witness, victim, or offender for a doctoral study. Once a volunteer contacted me, I asked questions from the demographic questionnaire. I asked volunteers their age, gender, economic status, and personal lived experience with law enforcement. The first 10 participants who answered all the questions of the demographic survey were asked to participate in the study. Additionally, once I had volunteers that included three

with experience as a victim, witness, or offender and the last one being from any one of those, the recruitment for volunteers ended. I called each selected volunteer and invited them to be part of the study. At that time, I set up an interview time and location.

I intentionally selected the participants based on their lived experience to ensure a full sample of the understanding of both the participant and their perception. I considered a participant's geographical demographics about their experiences and their knowledge. High crime and low crime areas were identified as types of crimes reported. Typical crimes in high-risk neighborhoods have clusters of criminal activities such as assaults, domestic violence, robberies, drug crimes, and other high violent calls. The low crime groups were forgery theft, larceny, and property crimes. To identify these areas, volunteers for the survey were asked specific questions about their neighborhood and local policing departments. Creswell (2013) referenced that a phenomenological study should consist of a smaller participant pool. I used 10 participants, with a diverse geographical demographics.

Individuals who were willing to participate in the study were provided my contact information to arrange a time to interview. Before any interviews, the study was discussed with the participants, how their participation would relate to the study, and how it may influence social change. The participants were required to read and sign an informed consent form. In an opportunity to assist in the participants being at ease with the interview and me, the participants were encouraged to provide ideas on where the interview could take place and that they could elect to terminate the interview and their participation at any time during the process without repercussion.

## **Instrumentation**

The interviews consisted of questions that were previously written and included potential follow up and supplemental questions contingent upon the responses during the interviews. The setting was intended to help the participant feel at ease, and there was pre-discussion before to the start of the actual interview to build a foundation with the researcher and participant. A digital audio recorder was used to put on file the interview questions and responses as well as the acknowledgment that the participant was aware the interview was on the record. The recorder was in plain sight of me and the participant. Additionally, the pre-conversation was not on the record. I also had a notepad to write down any unusual behavior of the participant and to look upon for any follow-up questions. Upon completion of the interviews, I listened to the tape before transcribing. At the conclusion of the interviews, the tape was transcribed verbatim, and the information from the interviews was imputed into the NVivo software to identify any themes and nodes.

The data collection method was through individual interviews of 10 people. Information from the interviews was put into the NVivo computer software verbatim. The primary use of the NVivo software is to identify standard verbiage, store and organize interview data, identify individual codes or themes associated with the participant's responses, and store memos from the researcher for future use (Creswell, 2013). Lastly, all data generated from the NVivo software were kept on a private computer and protected by passwords.

### **Procedures for Recruitment/ Data Collection**

Online recruitment was accomplished through Internet-based surveys used to establish participants for the research study. Wright (2005) explained the advancements in placing online reviews without all the time-consuming complications with HTML code, authoring programs, and scripting programs. The advantages of the online survey are the access to a vast number of participants, the automatic data analysis of responses, and the affected populations that it reaches (Wright, 2005). There are disadvantages as well. These include the questionable validity of the presented data outcomes sample strategies (Wright, 2005). The Internet has expanded the search field for the researcher and allows for a multitude of resources to be available to the researcher's intended topic. Libraries, universities, magazines, books, and journals are a few sources that may catalog peer-reviewed articles and books for researcher use (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008). The use of surveys for my research and design allowed for the sample size to be larger and for the participants to come from various backgrounds. It was more cost efficient and less time consuming to conduct online surveys. The Internet offers a variety of articles about the use of force and previous research on the intended question.

The procedure for this research was interviewing. According to Gill et al. (2008), interviews and focus groups are the most commonly used methods in collecting lived experiences and collectively exploring the participants' understanding and views of that experience. Participants for the interviews were recruited through online participant pools, flyers, and ads on college campuses for volunteers. The study was discussed with the participants, how their responses would benefit the study, the ability to drop out of the

study whenever they felt necessary, and that their identities were anonymous. There was a series of questions to participants that addressed their attitudes and beliefs towards law enforcement.

The interviews were held in a neutral setting agreed upon by me and the participant. I informed the participants that the interview could take an estimated 2 hours and that their time was voluntary. They were also informed that they would not receive any compensation for their participation. Additionally, they could take as many breaks as needed, and I would work around their schedules. The timeframe taken to complete the interviews was a 2-week time span for 10 participants. The questions were open-ended and began with the participants discussing their lived experience with law enforcement, what their perception was of policing and use of force, how their knowledge developed, and if they were to receive more education and understanding regarding policing and the use of force, how they thought it would affect their perception.

At the completion of the interview, I informed the participants that they could receive a transcribed copy of their transcript and a copy of the final project. Finally, I advised them that they could contact me with any questions and that their identities were anonymous. I also explained the Nvivo 10 and how their responses were to be transcribed, used, and stored.

### **Data Analysis Plan**

The Nvivo 10 software is a valuable tool in qualitative research. It takes all the information that the researcher inputs in it and then breaks it down into coded themes; the tool compares categories and creates theoretical concepts that form the foundation for the

framework. These results are organized, analyzed, and then stored in a single file (see Creswell, 2013). The use of purposive sampling allows the selection of participants to be specific and have lived experiences that would best fit into the research study and answer the research questions. The interviews were in an environment so that the participants would feel comfortable and know that they could express their thoughts and experiences without bias or opinion from me. Their experienced phenomenon was the biggest element in the study to bring together the analysis and the questions.

### **Ethical Procedures**

I worked in a capacity of law enforcement with Washington State as a community correction officer. I carry a firearm, Taser, and pepper spray. I go through extensive training with my weapons and defensive training for my hand-to-hand combat. I am required to go through qualification courses every 6 months for hand-to-hand combat and firearm training. There may be some opinion regarding whether I remained unbiased and conducted this research study without my experiences and opinions. Participants only knew that I was a doctoral student working on my dissertation. The participants were unaware of my own personal and professional experiences. I kept a journal of my research.

The participants signed a written consent form, were notified of the research study and intended purpose, and were told that they could terminate themselves from the study at any time. I informed volunteers that this was a voluntary based study, that their real names would not be used to identify participants, and that no personal identifying information was used in the study. The research study was confidential, and measures to

prevent the disclosure of the identities of the participants were taken. The computer program was password protected on a private computer. All digital audio tapes, researcher notes, transcribed documents, and participant information was secured in a personal safe and will be destroyed after the allotted time Walden University requires 5 years. The reliability and validity of the research study are significant in not only the current findings but also for any future research and discussions.

### **Summary**

Within this chapter are the design research method, research questions, participant selection, data collection, and ethical concerns. This qualitative research using a phenomenological approach examined the lived experiences of participants about law enforcement and their current perception of policing and use of force. The participants spoke about their phenomenon or experience with law enforcement as either a victim, witness, or suspect. They discussed their perceptions of policing and use of force and what factors influence it. Secondly, they viewed videos of actual events where the use of force in various methods was applied. Participants were given additional information and then asked if their perception changed based upon additional information or remained the same. The process of purposive sampling, interviewing, and phenomenological approach was the best course of this research study.

## Chapter 4: Results

In this chapter, I present an analysis and explanation of the results from the interview questions. The purpose of this phenomenological study was to examine the perception of law enforcement from individuals who had a lived experience that involved use of force by law enforcement. Face-to-face interviews offered me the opportunity to discuss lived experiences with individuals on a more personable approach. The central interview questions and follow up questions that were answered were as follows:

1. Have you ever had an experience with law enforcement as a victim, a witness, or as a suspect where use of force was used?
2. In your own words, describe your definition of use of force.
3. What kind of emotions and attitudes did you experience during your interaction with law enforcement while use of force was employed?
4. How much of your perception on law enforcement is based upon influences from mainstream news outlets and social media?

### **Setting**

The participants for this study were members of the local community. The participants were informed that there would be face-to-face interviews done. They each reported some experience with law enforcement where there was some level of force used. All participants were told to approach this experience with an open mind and to speak openly about their experiences. The interviews took place at a public library. The room was private and had a table with six chairs. The interviews were conducted at the participant's preferred time and date.



### **Demographics**

There were 10 participants selected to be interviewed for this study. The participants came from local volunteers who responded to flyers posted at the nearby community center and college campus. The first 10 participants who met the selection criteria were invited to participate in the research study. There were seven females and three males selected to be interviewed. All of the participants had reported being a witness, a victim, or a suspect when the use of force was used by law enforcement. For this study, demographic questions asked about gender, age, and income class. Participants were of various ages and income classes. In all, there were approximately 43 individuals who responded to the flyers. Those who did not meet the specific criteria were excluded from this study.

### **Data Collection**

The participants were informed at the beginning of the interview that they could opt out at any time without repercussions. All 10 participants completed the interviews. It took 2 weeks to get all the participants interviewed. Before the demographics questions, the participants reviewed the consent form and were persuaded to ask questions, if needed. They all had signed the consent form before the interviews began.

The participants were each asked a total of 29 questions; that number represents the demographic questionnaire as well as the questions about the acknowledgment of being recorded, being advised that the videos contained graphic images and consent to continue, understanding of anonymity, and acknowledging that they could opt out at any time during the research study. They were also informed that the interview could take up

to 2 hours depending upon their responses. The time also allowed for two 15-minute breaks, if needed. The interviews were recorded using a digital recorder. All participants were aware that they were being recorded and all of them knew that the interviews would be anonymous. I assigned all participants a binary number in place of names.

### **Data Analysis**

I knew that the data analysis would be the fact-finding process that weighed heavily on the lived experiences of the participants and their perception of law enforcement as well as their understanding of the use of force continuum. In the review of my literature, I saw a close relationship to the phenomenological approach and lived experiences. Furthermore, individual perception and how it develops is contingent on a few factors; one unique to this study was media influences. Jefferis et al. (2011) concluded that there was the significant impact on the individual perception of law enforcement that was formed by mainstream media opinion in conjunction with their specific experience.

The completed interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim. Once the interviews were transcribed, they were inputted into the Nvivo 10 software. This database was selected so that the content of the transcribed interviews was organized to capture, nodes, themes, and patterns from the interview questions. The Nvivo 10 software made it possible for me to assemble phrases into categories that had similar meanings. By analyzing the participants' responses to their phenomenon, I was able to exhibit the relationship among related patterns, themes, and nodes.

The participant interviews were conducted in a quiet room of a public library.

There were no other recording devices other than my digital recorder. Participants were aware of the time frame of 1 to 2 hours to complete the interview. My questions were all open-ended. The use of open-ended questions was so that I would be able to set parameters to provoke responses specific to my research design and focus. Creswell (2013) explained why the phenomenological method was most appropriate for this type of research study. This approach allowed me the opportunity to identify the participants' experience to try and identify a single commonality or phenomenon experienced by an individual, such as anger, recovery, grief, depression, and so on.

### **Evidence of Trustworthiness**

The participants' responses to the question that pertained to their own lived experience revealed that all of them had an immediately formed perception about their experience. As mentioned earlier, Jefferis et al. (2011) acknowledged the media as a significant influence on the individual perception of law enforcement. Several participants indicated that they viewed media as a less likely factor in their perception of policing. Phenomenological experiences of the participants gave me the opportunity to gain an understanding of how their personal experiences affected their perception and understanding of the use of force. Several themes manifested as I interpreted the data based upon their responses: (a) perception of police use of force, (b) perception of the media, (c) the age of participant in regard to appropriate responses, and (d) how participants defined the use of force. The themes developed as the data collection process was conducted. As indicated in the literature review, there were ideas for themes and assumptions of what the data may indicate, but the themes were not matured until after

the data collection and interpretation had begun. Moreover, the participant responses were outside of what was expected or assumed.

The reliability and validity of a research study are imperative. However, trustworthiness is also important. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2007), four specific characteristics can assist in proving trustworthiness in a qualitative study: dependability, credibility, confirmability, and transferability.

### **Dependability**

Denzin and Lincoln (2007) determined that it was crucial that the participants were allowed to repeat themselves. For this study, there were similarities with previous research that pertained to use of force or other similar topics. A qualitative study looks to develop themes and responses based on the feedback and interpretation of the participants. Within their responses, there were shared experiences that created more questions with similar responses.

### **Credibility**

As indicated previously, all interviews were recorded with an audio recording device. Once the interviews were completed, they were transcribed verbatim. As a law enforcement officer, I was able to accurately and comfortably talk about law enforcement and the dynamics of use of force. I was also able to provide follow-up information about the legal outcomes of the police videos they viewed. I felt that since I allowed the participants to come in at their convenience and set up an atmosphere that was comfortable and controlled, they had a level of trust with me that allowed them to speak freely. Credibility was added when the participants shared similar responses to the

questions and opened up about their experiences and opinions with law enforcement, the media, and their responses to the police videos. They had similar responses, experienced comparable emotions, and had an excellent array of professional careers.

### **Confirmability**

This qualitative study required specific individuals to meet the phenomenological approach and interview design. Denzin and Lincoln (2007) asserted that confirmability is developed when the people who are being interviewed have little or no knowledge of the subject matter. Then within the research, they mature in their understanding of the topic. I established confirmability by explaining the police videos, how situations can escalate, and the officer responses. Additionally, I provided documentation supporting my research, past research, and recording and transcribing interviews.

### **Transferability**

Trustworthiness within itself is hard to prove; Denzin and Lincoln (2007) discovered that transferability is best understood when it is dependent upon the environment and setting. This research is centered on a small town, and most participants were from middle-class demographics and different professional backgrounds. If there were any additional research conducted on this topic, I would recommend using a similar demographic and questions to establish transferability.

## **Results**

The responses from individuals in the research had some reoccurring themes that manifested as the study progressed and the data were inputted. The themes that were related to the central research question are (a) perception of police use of force, (b)

perception of the media, (c) the age of participant in regards to particular responses, (d) how participants defined use of force, and (e) experience with law enforcement. These responses came from 10 individuals who voluntarily agreed to participate.

### **Theme 1: Perception of Use of Force**

**Interview question.** *Describe your definition of the use of force.*

**Theme 1: Perception of use of force.** This theme related to how the individuals define use of force in their words. There was no right or wrong answer to this question. They were instructed to explain use of force in their words. The primary theme was divided into three emerging subthemes: (a) positive stress, (b) negative stress, and (c) neutral stress. All 10 individuals replied to the question in their clear definition.

**Subtheme 1.1: Positive stress.** Considering that use of force could be viewed differently, depending upon how the individual views it, defines it, and perceives it, the response could have been positive, negative, or neutral on the topic. Six participants viewed use of force as positive. Positive was interpreted as using a level of force to gain control of an individual. The levels of force that participants indicated were (a) physical force to subdue, (b) presence of multiple officers at one time for intimidation, (c) the use of a Taser, (d) the use of pepper spray, and (e) the use of a gun. None of the participants indicated verbal tactics as a level of force.

Multiple levels of force are used by law enforcement to gain control of an individual. There are specific behavior identifiers that assist law enforcement in identifying what level to use. If an officer attempts to subdue by presence or verbal first and that does not gain their control, they will move up to the next level using physical

force. Positive stress is where participants viewed the officer's tactic as favorable and necessary to subdue a subject. The participants defined this by indicating levels of force as necessary and efficient in response to what the person was doing.

**Subtheme 1.2: Negative stress.** Law enforcement has been portrayed as bullies or unjustified in their tactics within the media. There are incidents where police have gone beyond what is needed to subdue someone. In these cases, their tactics had been excessive and unnecessary. Two participants indicated in their response that officers tend to go beyond what is needed and "grandiose" their use of force for various reasons. Participants described incidents where they felt racial profiling was a factor in excessive force.

Police officers are dispatched out for multiple situations. While main media stream in reality shows, movies, and social streams have portrayed the law enforcement life with high-speed chases, gun fights, and blood-filled crime scenes, they are just a small percentage of what police are dispatched to do. The reality is far less glamorous. They have had plenty of shifts filled with barking dog complaints, malicious mischief, shoplifters, and noise complaints. Throw in some speeding tickets and fender benders, and the 12-hour days are not as exciting. Many factors could motivate police behavior. Neighborhoods that have had high volume crimes and massive police presence leave officers with a heightened level of awareness, and their natural adrenaline causes them to be viewed as aggressive or excessive. These reactions can cause a negative stress. One participant indicated that he believes officers intentionally cause some incidents to go out of control because they are overly aggressive for the situation, and in being that way, they

encourage their suspect to react angrily and instigate a fight.

The reality of police life is emotional, physically, and mentally straining. They have an active career that requires them to think fast and act faster. Policing exposes officers to dangerous and traumatic experiences that the general population of the public would have difficulty in comprehending. Throughout their careers, officers learn to adapt to their jobs, and some may develop negative attitudes towards specific populations. This negativity rolls over into their duties and causes undue stress and overly excessive responses in some situations.

**Subtheme 1.3: Neutral stress.** Stress in any workplace is difficult enough, but police stress is a constant factor in policing. The effects that stress has on officers is a topic that is discussed in many forums. These forums can be in politics, budgets reviews, policy changes, and imposing new laws that officers always see change, and they are expected to change with it. One participant indicated that she did not know much about what was expected in officer professionalism but had faith in believing that officers did what they had to do, and she could not say otherwise since she had no idea what training or expectations are for the police.

The neutral participants identified that police stress is heightened by their experiences and is a necessary part of the job since they are exposed to many dangerous situations, and their anxiety increases their senses. An officer's stress allows them to be more observant of their surroundings and allows them to act quickly in certain situations. While two participants knew stress was part of the police life, they were somber in their responses and indicated that officers and their families sacrifice a lot with often little



acknowledgment. The stress on officers often impacts their personal life and results in adverse effects such as diminished person relationships, alcoholism, suicide, poor individual evaluations, and mental health disorders such as depression and posttraumatic stress disorder. Neutral participants empathized with police families and the community they serve.

### **Theme 2: Level of Emotion**

**Interview question.** What kind of emotions did you experience during your interaction with members of law enforcement while the use of force was employed?

**Theme 2: Level of emotion.** This theme related to the degree of emotion the participant felt with his or her lived experiences that involved law enforcement use of force. Participants were asked to share an experience they had where police were involved, and there was a level of force used. The primary theme is divided into three emerging subthemes: mixed, neutral, and positive. Participants' lived experience is essential to this study as it may explain if individual lived experience affects their perception of law enforcement. They were instructed to think of an experience that they had where law enforcement had to use force to subdue a participant. This experience could have been as a witness, a victim, or a suspect. It was essential that all participants had a lived experience that fit one or more of those categories.

**Subtheme 2.1: Positive.** Lived experiences are sometimes the catalyst to people's perception. Six out of 10 participants had a positive experience with police. One of the participants, Participant 3, credited the cops with saving her from being violently assaulted by a man that had previously raped her. She stated that they arrived at a perfect

time. She did not know who contacted them, but was relieved that there was a witness to her lived experience. Participant 3 shared,

It happened when I was 17. I was out with some friends, and we were having fun, and somebody raped me. I reported it to the police and all that. I think someone called the guy and told him I reported it. I was walking out of school to my car, and he was yelling at me and pulling on my purse and pushed me up against my car. I think someone called the police because I felt someone pull him off of me but he kept yelling at me. He tried again to grab me and saying he was going to hit me. Then suddenly they caught him and threw him down to the ground, and he was all busted up.

Her experience became the most emotionally charged experience out of the 10 participants. Her recollection brought forth tears, even though the assault was six years ago. She credits the police in stopping the second assault on her. She was the youngest of our participants and was currently unemployed.

Another participant who worked as a firefighter/ paramedic described an event where he was a witness to officers using a Taser to gain control of an individual who was running down a turnpike to catch a plane he missed. He described his experience as positive because he felt the police were professional and courteous throughout the ordeal. Positive experiences assist officers in community policing and allow the public to see the right in what they do. Public opinion is important in providing feedback to policing agencies so that they can investigate any concerns and also so that they may acknowledge

those officers who have made a positive impact on their community.

**Subtheme 2.2: Mixed.** Today's society is fueled by technology. Whether it be cell phone footage or the body cameras worn by officers, the media takes the footage and puts it out to the media mainstream where the court of public opinion resides. Four participants had mixed emotions about their experiences. They described their event as both positive and negative. It is not uncommon for people to have mixed feelings in situations where they may not fully understand what is happening. Policing is a vast policy and law abiding career where individuals who are outside of the field may not fully comprehend.

Participant 8 shared,

We had a patient that was brought in for a legal blood draw. After the patient was served with a warrant for a legal blood draw, he became agitated and did not want us to draw blood. It took seven officers and a few nurses to hold him down to get the blood draw. In regards to that patient being held down, I do not think that all those officers needed to be there. However, I felt relieved that they were there to make sure we were protected.

This participant is a nurse in an emergency room. She described many events that occurred when an officer would bring in a suspect. This particular event was chosen because it was a time when she was close to being assaulted.

Another participant described her experience as a suspect that changed into a witness. She shared a time when she was pregnant and went with a friend to pick

someone up. They were in the house, and suddenly a lot of officers showed up and crashed in the door. They ordered everyone to lay down on the ground. She was afraid and did not know what to do because she could not lay down on her stomach due to her advanced pregnancy. The officers continued to yell orders at them. She stated she was afraid for herself and her baby. After a while, they sorted out who lived there, and she was released. Her fear turned into relief, and she stood by and watched the police arrest several people. She went from a suspect to a witness in one single event.

Throughout the interviews, there were several times that participants would be conflicted in their responses. The experience they talked about ranged from traffic violations to the assault that was shared earlier. Perception can change from person to person. The participants who had mixed emotions about their experiences had no common characteristics aside from their feelings towards law enforcement. Two of the participants describe being upset or afraid of the police during their experience before changing their opinion as their story went on to a positive view and one was even thankful for how he was treated. He created the police for their professionalism and expressed understanding in the policing career and how officer's emotions are heightened throughout their shift.

**Subtheme 2.3: Neutral.** There were no participants who had a neutral emotion about their experience.

### **Theme 3: Attitudes Toward Use of Force**

**Interview question.** What kind of attitudes did you experience during your interaction with members of law enforcement while the use of force was employed?

**Theme 3: Attitudes toward use of force.** This theme relates to the topic of the particular force used during their lived experience. All participants had some form of force used. There were no participants who had experience that required deadly force. It is imperative that their experience has some level of force used to be selected for this research. Three emerging subthemes evolved from their experiences—curious, impressed, and relieved. There could be a magnitude of emotions that develop in a person during an interaction with police. These emotions can be positive, negative, fear, excitement, and curiosity to name a few.

*Subtheme 3.1: Curious.* Police officers are continually called out to deal with one thing or another. They are regularly dispatched to deal with one complaint after another and can become desensitized to the community needs, including the citizens. Whenever an officer arrives on scene they have a pretty decent idea of what is happening by what the dispatcher relays over the radio. Even though some of what they deal with is unknown, such as, traffic stops and anything they may see within their shift that is first-hand response.

First-hand responses can cause high stress on an officer because they have no idea what is going to happen and they need to be able to go from one response to the next depending on the situation. An example may be that they are patrolling a neighborhood and they witness an altercation happening and they dispatch out that they are going to make contact with the individuals. Typically, a dispatcher will request for another officer to assist. The altercation can be between two gang members, and that causes the officer to elevate his response, and he could go from breaking up the fight to defending his life. A

bystander witnessing this incident are often more curious than anything else. One participant described their experience as curious and was interested in how it would turn out. This individual's experience was as a Police Officer Explorer. She did ride along with officers' and volunteered to work as security during large community events, like a state fair or concert. She reportedly witnessed several events where the use of force was conducted.

*Subtheme 3.2: Impressed.* For some people, the career of policing is fascinating and full of excitement. The public can perceive this career as adrenaline-powered, but the reality of what they do is less glamorous. If someone were able to witness a particularly unique situation where there were multiple agencies or multiple officers involved, they would likely be impressed by how well everyone works together and how fast the officers respond based upon the suspect's actions. Participant 1 shared,

I was out with some friends at Lakewood, WA area. There was a whole bunch of cops there and SWAT. We stayed and watched the whole thing. They kept yelling at someone to come out, and when he did, he started running at them. They started shooting him, and I thought they were bullets, but they were bean bags. He then went down but as officers came at him he tried to fight them off but a Taser was used, and he stopped. I was impressed. It was kind of cool. There was a whole bunch of officers for one guy.

The impression she had about law enforcement was a positive perception, and she indicated that her respect of policing increased over the years. She reported that she has

had a couple of tickets since this incident and her perception did not change. The ticketing officers were always respectful, and she knew that they were only doing their job. At one point, she reported, she entertained the idea to become an officer.

Another participant commented on how impressed he was with the commitment and professionalism the officers maintained through his experience. He stated the even as a firefighter/paramedic, he was not immune to the stress that such a difficult and unpredictable field brings. He mentioned a few other instances that he had witnessed where law enforcement either had to use verbal or physical force to subdue a person. It is through these experiences that he gained respect for police. All 10 participants did at some point in their interview indicate positive impressions of policing. Furthermore, all of them also spoke of law enforcement in high regard, even if they did not fully understand the escalation of Use of Force requirements.

***Subtheme 3.3: Relieved.*** One of the 10 participants felt relieved when police arrived at her incident. She was scared and unaware that someone had contacted the police. She described a wave of relief flowing through her when she heard the sirens and saw the lights of the patrol cars coming. Her particular experience was terrifying, and she said that her insecurities over the first assault were still fresh. Had the suspect attacked her again, she believed that she would have felt a hopelessness and possibly have emotional scars that would outlast the physical ones. Upon reviewing her interview on tape, it was relevant in her tone that even eight years could not erase the effects of this man's actions. During her interview she became tense and fidgety when speaking about her experience. However, her overall body, tone, and facial tension seemed to fade when

we discussed the police arrival.

#### **Theme 4: Influence of Social Media**

**Interview question.** How does news media representation of law enforcement activities assist you in developing perceptions of law enforcement use of force?

**Theme 4: Influence of social media.** Social media are a ‘total package’ platform for amateur photographers, videographers, and the court of public opinion. It is not uncommon in today’s society to turn on Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram accounts and see a video that someone took of law enforcement use of force. Typically, these videos are when deadly force is used, but sometimes it is of an individual getting a ticket, breaking up a fight, or on the scene of an accident. The one common thing all the videos have is the comments where people assess the situation and weigh in on what happened. The problem with these videos is that it is only a small caption of what happened. All 10 of the participants weighed in on how they view social media as a whole.

**Subtheme 4.1: Positive.** This question was presented with the intention of exploring the participant’s outlook about what they see on social media and how they respond to it. Two of the 10 participants viewed social media as positive. Their positive responses were for different reasons. One participant indicated that she did consider most of the police videos online out of curiosity and her overall emotions about law enforcement remain positive. She admittedly read some of the comments and would often feel irritated at what people would say about the incident. There have been occasions where she discussed herself, but it was not geared toward what others felt, but targeted at the people who were talking negatively about the video and basing their opinion on a



video that was less than two minutes. The reason she positively viewed social media was that her perception of use of force is positive. She understood that while social media are not always the source to turn to for accuracy, it does harbor some great deeds as well.

Policing agencies have been working hard on shedding a positive light on law enforcement. Today's public perception is somewhat skewed concerning police with all the media attention police incidents attract. There has been some research targeted at analyzing community relations and how they view police officers in their area. The purpose of some research has yielded recommendations for policing agencies to garner more pro-social police and community relations.

*Subtheme 4.2: Negative.* There are some redundancies in policing that can have a negative effect on their attitude. The day-to-day continuous calls for service can put them in a repetitive work cycle, and they become more focused on the services they provide and less on the public perception. They may develop tunnel vision and just care more about completing one call and then move on to the next call. The public opinion then rolls into posting their opinion in the comment section in social media. Three out of 10 participants viewed social media as negative. One participant openly discusses their perception of social media as outlets that care more about who gets the story out first.

Participant 6 stated, "I think again it is the same kind of the media. Whatever is trending out there, people want to take those opinions and make it their own." This participant works in the field of law enforcement. He took some of the comments to heart. The agency that he works for has strict policies against commenting on social media. Whenever he sees comments that are derived from "ignorant" people, he has to

step away and refocus his thoughts. He knows that people often fear the unknown and has to remind himself of that constantly.

Many of the negative feelings law enforcement carries come from responding to call after call with some days giving them with no recovery time before they rush off to another call. The videos and articles on social media only tend to divulge on the elevated incident it is recording. There is so much that happens before and after the video.

Another participant was more concerned about what exactly caused the person who recorded the video to start recording. Participant 4 said, "It usually makes the officers look bad. Why did the people start filming? Something happened to make them start recording. I have known good cops and bad cops." He continued to discuss at length the disdain he has for social media and he attributed technology with the sole destruction of people's lives. There are good cops and cops. He understood that some things in the media are right and he remained confident that truth will always prevail. Both of these participants have admittedly allowed seeming of what they see on social media change their perception. It should be noted that while they view social media as negative, the have at least two separate social media accounts.

***Subtheme 4.3: Neutral.*** The majority of participants took a neutral stance. Five of the 10 participants saw social media as both positive and negative. They felt that officers had the ability to handle themselves professionally at all times. Those officers that cannot should be reprimanded. Officers are directed to act like there is somebody recording them whenever they need to handle an incident that is in the public's view. Technology advances heightens officer stress, and sometimes situations take a traumatic turn, and

when this happens, someone is probably recording it. Participant 3 stated that “Some stuff make it look really bad but I mean there is good and bad in everything.”

There is some truth in her response. A portion of what social media display is fact. The other stuff that is questionable is left to the perception of others. There were no participants who admitted that they wait to see what the majority feels about what they are viewing before making their own opinions. That was something that was interesting to find in the results. They all, in some way, indicated that the mainstream media usually were too quick to comment on something that they knew little about or has had any proven accuracy.

Participant 1 shared,

Some of the comments are funny, and you can tell they are often ignorant and being considered a racial war. Like the black guy ran down the street, and a white cop ran after him, and then they take him down. It is not about race, I mean someone doesn't call 911 and say a black man has a gun, please send a white cop. That is just ignorance. I do not care what color they are if they are going to hurt me, I am going to shot them.

This participant was the youngest and least educated. She was a person who is very active on social media and had previously made comments that the internet is the best resource for finding current news and events. Most people may agree with that statement, but this particular question was presented to find if the participants would sway their perception to what the majority people believed occurred. The results of this portion showed that none of the participants gained their perception from the popularity of others opinions.

**Theme 5: Influence of News Media**

**Interview question.** How does news media representation of law enforcement activities assist you in developing perceptions of law enforcement use of force?

**Theme 4: Influences of news media.** The influence of news media are divided into three responses, which were positive, negative, and neutral. Much like the previous question, the participants were directed to only focus on television news. It could be local news, nationwide news, or any other news program that focuses on current events. The participants were instructed to give their perception of the news media, specifically their feelings towards how the media portrayed an incident where law enforcement used force. Participants discussed specific media outlets that they viewed. There was a divide in their attitudes toward people who commented on the videos. Some indicated the need to comment in retaliation but hesitated because they did not want to start a Facebook war; while others commented, but kept it politically correct and open-ended.

**Subtheme 5.1: Positive.** There was only one participant who indicated that the media was the best place to get informed on current events. Participant 9 stated, “I am an avid video watcher. The news shows real life happening. It is hard to deny something that is on video.” This is the same participant who felt social media was accurate and she believed most of what she viewed on their as well. We discussed the videos that were viewed during the interview, and she evaluated what she perceived and why she felt that way. It was somewhat surprising considering that she was critical of the news media that misrepresented the justified shootings. She felt that the media acted impulsively and should have waited until they had more information. Upon learning the outcomes of all

five videos once the investigation was completed, she chastised the media for not retracting their earlier story.

***Subtheme 5.2: Negative.*** There were seven of the 10 participants who viewed media as a negative outlet. All of them discussed the way the media presents their news. Some discussed the racial under tones and blamed the media for the outbreak of riots. One participant said that the news sources are one sided and biased. Also, the majority felt that the small-time frame was insufficient in content. Participant 5 said, “I think the media preserves, and they place doubts on the police, um...they don’t show everything. They only use small cell phone video and skew the perception of what is seen.”

As to not discredit the news entirely, participants did state that they believe that the media gets it right more than getting it wrong. The problem is that the ones that are inaccurate or lacking in information are, typically, the stories that garner the negativity of the public. All participants indicated that they reserve their opinions pending the investigation. It is within those findings that their perception is formed.

***Subtheme 5.3: Neutral.*** Two of the 10 participants viewed the media as neutral in their opinions. They commented on how the media can be overzealous in their stories, but also felt that people should know when incidents happen. They also stated that they reserve their perception until an investigation is complete. One participant out of the 10 was concerned about how the officers coped with the stress that must come along with using force. He believed that there should be a protocol that is done to assist law enforcement in wrongful information. He knows there is freedom of speech and it is that amendment that is the umbrella to the media.

## Video

### Video 1

In Burnsville, NC at a local McDonalds, Map Kong, age 38 was in his vehicle violently waving a large knife. In the video there are several officers present on scene talking about options. In one part there was an officer who stated "...either way this is going to end badly." After repeated commands to drop his knife, Map continued to beat his hands up and down on his steering column. The knife was never dropped. The officers decided to break a window on the passenger side in attempts to subdue by Taser. There were two attempts to Taser him and neither attempt stopped his erratic behavior. He then exited his vehicle on the driver's side. Once he left the vehicle, three officers opened fire and he was shot 15 times. Mr. Kong died from his injuries. All officers were found to be justified in their use of force. All of the participants reported that they have never seen the video prior to this research. There were eight participants who reported it as justified. Two participants reported unjustified. Participant five offered a suggestion. He felt that if they would have used a patrol car to block the driver side door then Mr. Kong would not have been able to get out of the car.

### Video 2

Last year in Seattle, WA, Che Taylor, age 46, was a convicted felon being supervised by the Department of Corrections. At the time of this incident, he had multiple warrants for his arrest from the Department of Corrections and King County. In the video Che can be seen standing outside of a Ford Taurus with the passenger door open. Seattle officers ordered him to place his hands in the air. After multiple attempts to take him into

custody he failed to heed to their demands. Three of the officers made it to the rear of the vehicle and circled around to the passenger side, guns drawn, screaming commands at Mr. Taylor. The next five seconds go quickly.

Che Taylor suddenly ducked into the passenger side and then officers fired multiple rounds at him. This video brought on a lot of speculation by the public and the participants. All of the participants reported that they had never seen the video before. Two of the participants deemed it justified. One participant was not sure how to respond and seven participants reported it as unjustified. The final investigation cleared all officers of any wrong doing. The moment Che Taylor ducked into the car, he was reaching for a hand gun that was on the passenger seat. That fact came out a couple of days after the video, but it had little to no effect on the opinion of protesters that flooded the downtown Seattle roadway. The officer who fired the initial shots wore a body camera that clearly showed the handgun on the passenger seat and Che Taylor grabbing it. Che Taylor had a history of violent crimes including drug possession, assaultive behaviors, and unlawful possession of firearms.

### **Video 3**

On December 29, 2010, a young male was outside of a store and Seattle officers questioned him about his vehicle being parked illegally and left running. The suspect explained why he was there and the young officer in the video began to respond aggressively and mocked the man for having so many keys on his key ring. There was another officer outside of the camera view who also engaged the officer and suspect in conversation. The suspect accused the officer of being “rude” and the officer responded

with, "I don't have to be nice to you." Further into the video the suspect began to exhibit resistive behavior and multiple officers assisted in detaining him. At one point an officer accused the suspect of biting him and punched the suspect in the face multiple times. The arrest attempt rolls over out of view of the dash cam, but audio reflected that the officers believe the suspect was resisting. The suspect stated that he cannot give them his arm because the officers are on it. All of the participants reported that they have never seen the video prior to this research. There were two participants who reported the incident justified and eight who felt the use of force was unjustified and excessive. The final investigation showed that two of the officers were being disrespectful and excessive in their force. They were fired from the Seattle police.

#### **Video 4**

The video selected was highly publicized within all media resources. On April 4, 2015, Walter Scott was stopped by Officer Michael Slagger. Officer Slagger reported to dispatch that Mr. Scott had attempted to get Officer Slagger's Taser and a physical altercation occurred. Then Mr. Scott ran from Officer Slagger and the officer fired at him and he was shot five times. Walter died of his injuries. There was something Officer Slagger did not know. A young amateur video was being shot. A bystander was videotaping the whole incident and Officer Slagger's story did not match the video. In the video, it does show some sort of struggle, but then Walter turned and ran from the officer. Then the officer shot at Walter, killing him. After the officer handcuffs Scott, he walked over to where the initial altercation took place and picked up his Taser from the ground. He then walked over to where Walter is lying on the ground and drops the Taser next to



him. The investigation concluded that Officer Slagger was unjustified in shooting Walter Scott and was put on trial for murder. In December 2016, the trial ended with a hung jury. On May 2, 2017, Michael Slagger pled guilty in civil court. He accepted a plea deal that would result in no criminal charges against him in exchange for a plea of guilty. There were a couple of participants who knew of the case and had previously viewed the video prior to this research. Eight of the participants reported the use of force as justified. Two participants were neutral in their responses.

### **Video 5**

There was little information on the final video at the time of this report. On August 3, 2002 a large black male was walking in the middle of the street acting aggressively. An officer ordered him to stop and put his hands in the air. The officer then approached him in an attempt to detain him. The male attempted to punch the officer. The officer backed away and called over dispatch for assistance. An officer arrived on scene carrying a Taser and deployed the Taser onto the male. The male dropped to the ground and multiple officers attempted to arrest him. The male was tased again. At that time the officers were able to take him into custody. All of the participants reported that they have never seen the video prior to this research. All of the participant's report that the officer acted justified.

### **Summary**

Chapter 4 provided a description of the settings, demographics, data collection, data analysis, and trustworthiness of evidence. The data collected from the interviews were transcribed verbatim and ran through NVivo 10 software program. The data

gathered in NVivo 10 assisted in organizing, analyzing, and established five themes and 15 subthemes.

The interview questions were conducted using 10 participants who had a lived experience that involved some variation of use of force. The interview results revealed that none of the 10 participants indicated that their perception of law enforcement and use of force was not established based on their event. Furthermore, each participant had either a positive, negative, or neutral opinion of their perception of use of force, the influence of social media, and influence of new media. Along with their perceptions, they also had an explanation for why they felt one way or another. Most of the negative feelings were at the way social media and news media presented their stories about law enforcement incidents. They all thought that most of what they reported was biased and needed more information.

Past research reported that lived experiences are reliable in researching perception. This study disclosed that participants who have experienced use of force as either a victim, witness, or suspect had an immediate perception of law enforcement during their incident. Most of the participants disclosed a positive attitude and emotion towards law enforcement. During the interviews, it was discovered that age was a factor in their perception, along with their employment. The youngest participant believed most of what she read or viewed on social media and news media. Her perception may be a millennial attitude. Technology is far more advanced now than it was 20 years ago. The oldest participant gave the little credit for any positive perception of social media and law enforcement.

During the interviews, the participants were asked about their careers. Those that worked in law enforcement and medical defended law enforcement in their tactics during their event and when discussing the video. During one video an officer was openly disrespectful and unprofessional. One participant felt that the officer had some reason to talk to the suspect. This same participant also defended actions of an officer who was unprofessional and responded unjustifiably.

Chapter 5 includes the interpretation of the findings, limitations of the study, recommendations, implications, and conclusion of the study.

## Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to establish participant lived experiences and discuss how those experiences affected their perception of law enforcement use of force, if at all. This study added additional information to previous studies of the use of force among law enforcement and offers another perspective using lived experiences. Policing agencies have been placed in the media spotlight over the last few years. There have been many news reports that show different levels of force used, and the public has commented with their opinions, which has placed law enforcement in a negative light. It has also resulted in several riots across the state. Those riots were when the media showed deadly force being used by a White officer and a Black suspect. Technology has offered a close view of current deadly force being used. Through this technology, there was officers who were justified and some that were not justified.

Interviewing was used in the data collecting. From the interview process, five themes emerged within this research study. The five themes were analyzed to review the perception of use of force, level of emotion that the participants felt during their experience, the participants' attitude toward law enforcement as a result of their encounter, what influence social media has on their perception of police, and how news media affects their perception. The media are often the driving force behind perception (Ambrey et al., 2013). In this study, I found that participant lived experiences had little to no effect on their current views of the use of force. There were some participants who

reported that media are a driving force in their opinions and that they sometimes look at others' views before stating theirs.

### **Interpretation of the Findings**

The findings revealed five different themes related to lived experiences and law enforcement use of force: people's perception of police use of force, attitudes towards law enforcement, emotions towards law enforcement, influences of social, and influences of news media. The implications of this study were supported by earlier studies (Broomé, 2014; Chapman, 2012; Harris, 2009; Maskalay & Donner, 2015). The interviewed participants expressed a variety of emotions during their experience; these emotions were expressed both through personal opinion and the actions by the police during their experiences. The findings of this study confirmed that media outlets have an impact on some of the participants' attitudes and emotions towards police and the use of force. There were also demographic factors that impacted their perceptions. The participant responses to the videos yielded some same and expected differing of perceptions. All of the participants responded one way or another. There were a couple of participants who wanted to know what other participants indicated as their response to the video. That information was not disclosed.

The research findings in this study revealed that there were outside factors that impacted public perception of law enforcement use of force. All of the participants reported a lived experience where law enforcement was involved. Over half of the participants were witnesses to the police use of force. One individual was a suspect turned witness. Two participants were associated professionally with law enforcement. In

the process of the interview, one of the participant referred to video one as unjustified. His defense to that was that the officers shot the suspect in the back as he was running away. The other participant offered a suggestion on what else could have been done prior to the shooting. He suggested having one of the patrol cars come up and block the driver's side door. Several participants went with their first instinct on the videos. The outcome of the investigation on all the videos was shared after the interview concluded. Some stated they would have changed their response had they known of the details of the investigation. This was especially true when addressing the second video that involved Che Taylor. Once they learned of the additional information, they felt that the media was unfair in putting just that one video on the Internet. The participants were informed that the shooting officer's body camera footage was on the Internet for a short time before it was removed.

Although participants in this study had all reported a lived experience with law enforcement, none of them felt that their experience influenced their perception of law enforcement on its own. The law enforcement participants were aged about 20 year's difference. Their responses were supported by research that indicated age and career span affects law enforcement perspective (Chapman, 2012). The younger officer, age 33 and 3 years an officer, watched Video 3 and stated that the officer did say some things that were offensive but then defended the officer by indicating that the officer may have had a history with the suspect and reasons to act the way the officer did. The older officer was 53 years old and had over 15 years in law enforcement. He felt that the officer in Video 3 was over zealous and acted prematurely in his tactics and level of force. Over half of the

participants felt that the suspect in the third video did not bite the officer and that the officer punching the suspect was excessive force.

The research study revealed several factors, such as age, career, gender, lived experience, and understanding of use of force were all factors in the participant responses to the interview questions. The findings demonstrated that the younger the participant, the more likely that they rely on social media and news media to be truthful. Participants who were working in law enforcement were defensive in the officer's tactics throughout the videos; however, they also offered up potential solutions in a couple of the videos. Two participants worked in the medical profession. Those two participants described their lived experiences, and one described a feeling of relief and safety when the officers came in to assist her. The other participant felt that his adrenaline raised while watching the officer do his job. He talked about having a rush of adrenaline while officers chased a suspect through an airport turnpike. All of the participants defined the use of force as a tactic to subdue a suspect. The majority defined use of force as verbal tactics and officer presence. Only two participants mentioned deadly force as a use of force.

The participant's attitudes and emotions towards law enforcement varied based on their responses to the interview questions and how they perceived the videos. When discussing attitudes and emotions towards law enforcement use of force, their responses were dependent upon whether they were the suspect, witness, or victim. The only suspect was a young participant who was in a home while a police raid was happening. She expressed fear of what was happening. Her fear came from not knowing what was happening. Once she was cleared as a suspect, she became a witness. It was then that her

emotion became excitement and relief. Two of the participants were in the medical field, and they felt excitement and relief. The difference between the two was the perception of the video. The male explained away the officer's behavior in the third video as if he had a reason to do what he did while the female thought the officer was unprofessional. She did testify to the relief of having the police around during her lived experience.

The three individuals who worked in law enforcement or in the military all approached the research with a serious demeanor. There was about a 20-year age gap between two of the officers. Both were male, and the older one was a seasoned officer who saw various levels of force and who also used a majority of the tactics described by the participants. His responses to all the questions throughout the interview were carefully spoken and well thought out. He did not try to seek justification in explaining what the videos portrayed, and offered solutions to what could have been done to lessen the use of force. The younger participant was hesitant in some of his responses and would second guess his answers to the questions pertaining to the video. The third participant was a female employee who worked at the Department of Defense. She was young, was direct in her responses, and often mentioned awaiting opinion until the investigation was completed.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The study was on police perception of law enforcement use of force. The participants were individuals who experienced the use of force during an encounter with law enforcement. Participants who have not had a lived experience may share different opinions of the use of force. In addition, the participant pool was only 10 individuals, and



a broader study that used more participants may have different perspectives. The ability for transferability may be limited in other studies if future research does not duplicate the findings in similar settings.

The results for this study are limited based upon the minimal number of participants. According to Creswell (2013), the main issue when conducting a qualitative study is the number of participants required. Therefore, if someone was seeking participants in the hundreds, the preferred approach would be quantitative. This study had a sample size of 10 participants. There were no lived experiences that were the same, and a more narrowed study that focuses on participants who either have all been witnesses, all victims, or all suspects may yield different responses. Additionally, in this study, I only sought to determine whether lived experiences affected personal perceptions of the use of force. Another study may seek personal perception of police in general and not their tactics used.

The study had three males and seven females. There was no limitations or preferences of gender; however, if the participant pool was evenly split among males and females, there may have been a more comparable spread of responses. I would have liked to select all males or all females to gauge if there were any gender differences in responses, especially in the attitudes and emotions to the use of force.

Where diversity is concerned, the demographics of this research were represented by all classes of income. I did not see any specific response that income class contributed to. I did see age as a factor in responses. As for ethnicity, nine of the participants were White and one was Hispanic. I would have liked to broaden the ethnic pool, but ethnicity

was not an exclusionary factor nor a question on the initial demographic questionnaire. There did not appear to be earlier studies that targeted specific ethnic backgrounds for comparison purposes.

### **Recommendations**

There are many factors that can change perception. It is known that one can change their opinions about something on a consistent basis. One moment someone may rally behind law enforcement and support their community agency, and the next moment stand against them because they do not like a new law that police are dedicated to enforce. Perception is unique to the individual, and many factors can affect it.

The study results suggested that participants' lived experiences gave each an emotional experience, but it did not cement their perception of police use of force. It did bestow in them a mutual respect for law enforcement and what they do day to day. During the interview, each participant explained his or her experience and how he or she felt during it. The emotions felt were fear, relief, surprise, aggression, curiosity, and respect. They all stated that their experience did not cement any perception that could not be changed. It was clear that all of them respected police and understood that what they need to do in order to safely and effectively control each situation. Maguire and Johnson (2010) explored the understanding of public perceptions and what drives individual opinions of law enforcement use of force. They theorized that when the critical elements of public perception and the relationship of the public versus law enforcement are explored, then the understanding of motivating factors for perceived authority can be explained.

The participants' perceptions of news and social media were evenly distributed towards not relying on the media for their news. There was one participant who referred to the Internet as a good source for news and current events. She was the youngest participant in the study. The other participants talked about media representing law enforcement in a negative light most of the time. They felt there was a lot of speculation among the public off of short cell phone videos that only tell part of the story. Video 2 showing Che Taylor standing next to his car was referenced by each participant. In the video, Che was shot when it appears he was getting into his car. What the video did not show was the firearm on the passenger seat. The discussion focused on the media showing what they wanted for the story—even after the body camera video was released, and Che can be seen reaching for the firearm. On the other hand, Videos 3 and 4 were used in terminating law enforcement for excessive force. This is an example of how body cameras can show the whole interaction between police and civilians.

The professionalism of police has improved over time. There has been extensive research conducted on improving policy and police practices. Body cameras are simply a tool used to improve police and civilian relationships. Researchers have demonstrated that the police and civilian relationship has been tarnished. Media spin stories of officer involved shootings and indicating race as a motivating factor. The interest of the media are to be the first to break the story. Community stakeholders have expressed their perception of the use of force. Research into various policing agencies identified that the untrustworthy bond between the community and the police is broken, and something needs to happen to improve upon it. Due to the opinions circulating in current events,

there is an increased need for policing to build on community relationships regardless of ethnicity or race (Schlosser, 2013). In addition, studies conducted on stressors in law enforcement have shown that geographical areas with high crime rates are stressors for police, and they are often in a heightened state of awareness when patrolling these areas. Poverty-stricken communities and those that have a relatively higher crime rate are more likely to assert the opinion that police presence in neighborhoods is negative (Sims et al., 1999).

### **Future Research**

In this phenomenological study, I examined 10 participants who had lived experiences with law enforcement where a level of force was used. The levels of force officers use are presence, verbal, physical tactics, pepper spray, Taser, and deadly force. The officers receive extensive training in all levels and are trained when to use each of them. Some researchers suggested that there are too few training hours at academies to prepare candidates for the number of use of force incidents (McCombs, 2016). The participants in this study experienced officer presence, physical force, Taser deployment, and use of a bean bag gun. There were no experiences where a firearm was used. Future research should be conducted where deadly force had been used.

In this study, I used 10 participants consisting of seven females and three males. Future studies should use more participants and a more even number of males and females. There has been little previous research on gender specific attitudes and the perception of law enforcement use of force.

Future research should focus on how effective body cameras and dash cameras

have been in improving public relationships and investigating police use of force. Ariel et al. (2015) conducted a study on the effectiveness of body cameras and community relationships. Results showed that there was a decrease in officer complaints among those who wore the body cameras in comparison to those who did not. Furthermore, they also recognized that research on this subject was needed to effectively evaluate the effectiveness of body cameras and dash cameras. Ariel et al. indicated that there had been some data collected on the effectiveness of body-worn cameras in previous research, but there was no current research that focused solely on the benefits of body-worn cameras.

In this study, there were 10 participants who had a lived experience in the use of force. Future research should identify participants who had the use of deadly force as either a witness, participant, or a victim by losing a loved one to deadly force. Future research may also educate participants by placing them in a 4-hour training on the use of force and then asking them about their perceptions. Researchers may also include videos where only deadly force was used and see if their perception is affected by their own experience.

### **Implications**

This study provided for a social change that would enhance society on the stressors of police use of force. The social change begins with understanding the levels of force and how police officers are trained in using it. Furthermore, society should educate itself on social media and news media reporting standards. There have been many instances where news media reports on officer use of force and spins it to appear that race was a motivator. These stories are then shared on social media and the court of public

opinion begins to weigh in on their perceptions of the incident. There are some individuals who will await the investigation and others who will take their first impression and never change it, even if the investigation shows the shooting was justified. To effectively change society's attitudes toward police, society must be educated on the levels of force. When people do not fully understand something, they can only speak about what they know.

Secondly, communities are reliant on police officers to serve and protect their community. There is a need for change in opening doors to improvement on community relations and law enforcement. Improving those relationships benefit both the community and the policing agencies. This is especially true in neighborhoods with high crime activity. Police officers are often heightened in their awareness when they are patrolling these areas. If there stressors are amplified, then any contact with individuals in the area may seem more direct and officers could react with a higher level of force due to the aggravated stressors. The research findings in this study revealed that many of the participants understood that the use of force was used in subduing an individual but had some trouble identifying the reasons for use when watching the videos.

The last portion of social change would be not to allow news media and social media be the sole source of perception. Understandably, the success of news broadcasting is to be the first to get the story out. This desire to be the first is problematic to police because the news does not wait for more information before broadcasting the incidents of deadly force. They may take a short cell phone video that was submitted by a bystander and display it on the television and put their take on what occurred. In the case of Che

Taylor, a dash camera from a patrol car was used and only showed police approaching Che Taylor with their guns drawn and verbalizing to him to put his hands in the air. The next thing you see is rapid fire by police officers. The news did not wait for more information. Instead, they stated that a Black male was shot by a White officer. If they had waited, then the body camera of the shooting officer would have shown Che Taylor reaching for a gun on the passenger seat. Should news outlets be worried about how their lack of information affects society? Some people may think they should. It is essential that policing agencies restore faith back into their communities and for communities to restore confidence back into policing agencies.

### **Conclusion**

The research results increased the understanding of existing research, improved on self-awareness, and provided lived experiences of ten participants where a level of force was used. Despite previous research conducted on the use of force, deadly force, and perception, there is a need for the subject to resurface based on recent officer-involved shootings. The perspective of events provided by technology (dash cams, body cams, etc.) has become a sort of proof of events and that when media gains access to these “live as they unfold” incidents, they are taken as reality without consideration for other factors unseen on video.

This study is distinctive because it focuses on lived experiences and how those experiences affected participant perception of the use of force. The research results lead to new ideas on how to improve on public perception and understanding law enforcement use of force. Several proactive methods need to be taken by both policing agencies and

communities to offer a better understanding of police use of force and building community relationships. The traditional methods that have been used need to be researched in how affective they are in improving the police officer relationships with their agencies and their community.

The research questions assisted in gathering a better understanding of what civilians believe the use of force is and how it is used. Participants describe their lived experience and how it affected them emotionally and if it affected their perception of police and the use of force. A thorough explanation of each level of force was explained in this research study. Recommendations were made to assist policing agencies and communities in developing better relationships within their agencies and their communities. One key resolution to policing agencies is to educate society on the levels of force and what constitutes each level of force to be used. Additionally, this research demonstrated how body cameras, dash cameras, and cell phone videos capture incidents where a use of force was used. Through technology, investigations can be done with live footage to determine if the police officer used appropriate force during the arrest. Furthermore, this research demonstrated the lack of information that news media and social media have when they first publicize their stories. Society and news stations should be educated on police training and how the level of force is determined for each incident.

In conclusion, when society and police work together, it allows police officers to perform at optimum level, increases positive public relationships, it increases the potential to save lives, and provides education to society about police training. Police officers and communities working together to provide safer communities and improve



police relationships with society is essential to building a healthy relationship between law enforcement, society, and public broadcasting and social media sectors.

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### Appendix A: Demographic Questionnaire

1. Are you male or female?
2. How old are you?
3. Based on your current income, would you be classified as lower class, middle class, or upper class?
4. Have you ever had an experience with law enforcement as a victim, a witness, or as an offender?

### Interview Questionnaire

1. Describe your definition of use of force?
2. What kind of emotions and attitudes did you experience during your interaction with members of law enforcement while use of force was employed?
3. How does news media representation of law enforcement activities assist you in developing perceptions of law enforcement use of force?
4. How does social media (e. g., Facebook and Twitter) notifications assist you in developing your perceptions on law enforcement use of force?

### After Viewing Police Videos

1. What is your perception of the use of force?
2. Was the level of force justified or unjustified? Why?

## Appendix B: Use of Force Videos

There was no permission needed to use these videos. All videos for this research study were posted on a public website, *You Tube*.

1. *Bodycam Released of Fatal Shooting after Taser Fails* (2016). Burnsville, MN.

Website: [http://www.liveleak.com/view?i=ff1\\_1466603528](http://www.liveleak.com/view?i=ff1_1466603528)

2. *Seattle Police Release Video of Che Taylor Shooting* (2016). Seattle, WA.

Website:

<http://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=videos+of+police+use+of+force+Che+Taylor&view=detail&mmscn=vwll&mid=86332664E320B77E459D86332664E320B77E459D>

3. *Seattle Police Use of Force* (2010). Seattle, WA. Website:

<http://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=videos+of+police+use+of+force&view=detail&mmscn=vwll&mid=1EAE92902628CE0B7FB61EAE92902628CE0B7FB6>

4. *RAW Video Walter Scott Shooting* (2015). North Charleston, NC. Website:

<http://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=walter+scott+shooting&&view=detail&mid=71CC977EC894E51ECE4E71CC977EC894E51ECE4E&rvsmid=140198290A0BAD74973E140198290A0BAD74973E&fsscr=0&FORM=VDFSRV>

5. *Police Taser vs Big Guy* (2002). Unknown location. Website:

<http://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=guy+on+pcp+fight+cops&view=detail&mmscn=vwll&mid=5A9A6BCFBE18960639D85A9A6BCFBE18960639D8>

## Appendix C: Results

**Subdue:****Pepper Spray**

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 4 MIKE>](#) - § 1 reference coded [0.24% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.24% Coverage

“Pepper spray.”

**Range of verbal, physical, and/or use of weapon**

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 10 MELLISSA>](#) - § 1 reference coded [2.19% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.19% Coverage

“Law enforcement use of force has to deal with the amount of physical and verbal use of force to sub do a subject.”

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 5 JAMES>](#) - § 1 reference coded [1.68% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.68% Coverage

“Any level of force used to subdue a suspect. The use of force can be just presence to deadly force.”

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 6 JASON>](#) - § 1 reference coded [2.51% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.51% Coverage

“Use of any force to get an offender into handcuffs. I mean it can be anywhere from presence to verbal’s and Taser to a spectrum 2 of deadly force.”

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 7 SHONNA>](#) - § 1 reference coded [1.75% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.75% Coverage

“I work with Department of Defense and use of force is any force necessary to alleviate a situation.”



**Taser**

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 1 KASIE>](#) - § 1 reference coded [0.35% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.35% Coverage

“Hit him with a Taser.”

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 4 MIKE>](#) - § 1 reference coded [0.25% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.25% Coverage

“Using a Taser.”

**Use of Bodily Force**

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 1 KASIE>](#) - § 1 reference coded [0.33% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.33% Coverage

“Wrestled with him.”

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 10 MELLISSA>](#) - § 1 reference coded [0.45% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.45% Coverage

“The amount of physical.”

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 2 TONETTE>](#) - § 1 reference coded [0.27% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.27% Coverage

“Bodily contact.”

**Use of Gun**

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 1 KASIE>](#) - § 1 reference coded [0.37% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.37% Coverage

“They shot at the guy.”

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 4 MIKE>](#) - § 1 reference coded [0.20% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.20% Coverage

“...and a gun.”

### Verbal Use

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 10 MELLISSA>](#) - § 1 reference coded [0.37% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.37% Coverage

“Verbal use of force.”

### Emotions and Attitudes while experiencing or witnessing use of force

#### Mixed:

- Concern for offender’s well-being relief that public  
[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 8 NICOLE>](#) - § 1 reference coded [3.26% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 3.26% Coverage

“In regards to the patient that was held down, I do not think that all those officers needed to be there. However, I felt relieved that they were there to make sure we were protected.”

- Emotions higher in offender  
[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 6 JASON>](#) - § 1 reference coded [2.28% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.28% Coverage

“Emotions I think in pretty much all my dealings with use of force, the emotions of force is usually higher in the offender.”

- Surprise Fear Aggression  
[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 5 JAMES>](#) - § 1 reference coded [1.55% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.55% Coverage

“Um...probably say um...surprise, fear, aggression, and cannot think of anything else right now.”

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 9 SANDY>](#) - § 1 reference coded [1.58% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.58% Coverage

“I walked in a room and watched the cops and yelled at people. I was scared for my baby.”

### **Positive**

- [<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 10 MELLISSA>](#) - § 1 reference coded [1.22% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.22% Coverage

“Curiosity at what they were doing and why they were doing it.”

- [<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 2 TONETTE>](#) - § 1 reference coded [0.53% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.53% Coverage

“They have all been positive.”

- [<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 3 SARAH>](#) - § 1 reference coded [1.98% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.98% Coverage

“I was terrified. I was scared and crying. I thought he was going to hurt me. When the police showed up I was relieved.”

- [<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 4 MIKE>](#) - § 1 reference coded [1.02% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.02% Coverage

“They maintained their professionalism and kept cool.”

- [<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 7 SHONNA>](#) - § 1 reference coded [1.56% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.56% Coverage

that “I have the upmost respect for all law enforcement. I have had some anxiety at time.”

### **Curious**

- [<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 10 MELLISSA>](#) - § 1 reference coded [1.22% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.22% Coverage

“Curiosity at what they were doing and why they were doing it.”

### **Impressed**

- [<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 1 KASIE>](#) - § 1 reference coded [0.85% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.85% Coverage

“There was a whole bunch of officers for one guy.”

- [<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 4 MIKE>](#) - § 1 reference coded [1.02% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.02% Coverage

“They maintained their professionalism and kept cool.”

- [<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 7 SHONNA>](#) - § 1 reference coded [0.88% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.88% Coverage

“I have the upmost respect for all law enforcement.”

### **Relief**

- [<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 3 SARAH>](#) - § 1 reference coded [0.68% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.68% Coverage

“When the police showed up I was relieved.”

## Experience with Law Enforcement

### Combination

- [<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 2 TONETTE>](#) - § 1 reference coded [1.49% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.49% Coverage

“I have had multiple traffic violations as well as witnessing domestic dispute.”

- [<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 9 SANDY>](#) - § 1 reference coded [5.58% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 5.58% Coverage

“I think I was about 17 and we went over to a house to pick up a friend. While we were there waiting for him a bunch of cops came in. They told us to get down on the ground. I was worried because I was very pregnant. We had to get down. I was able to leave after a while because I did not know anyone there.”

### Law Enforcement

- [<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 6 JASON>](#) - § 1 reference coded [4.16% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 4.16% Coverage

“In my job as a community corrections officer we have used force on offenders who were noncompliant. In a recent event we had an offender who did not want to be arrested and we had to use force to take him down to the ground and into handcuffs.”

### Offender

- [<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 2 TONETTE>](#) - § 1 reference coded [1.49% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.49% Coverage

“I have had multiple traffic violations as well as witnessing domestic dispute.”

### Victim

- [<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 3 SARAH>](#) - § 1 reference coded [10.18% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 10.18% Coverage

“Yes I have experience as a victim. It happened when I was 17. I was out with some friends and we were having fun and somebody raped me. I reported it to the police and all that. I think someone called the guy and told him I reported it. I was walking out of school to my car and he was yelling at me and pulling on my purse and pushed me up against my car. I think someone called the police because I felt someone pull him off of me but he kept yelling at me. He tried again to grab me and saying he was going to hit me. Then suddenly they grabbed him and threw him down to the ground and he was all busted up.”

- [<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 5 JAMES>](#) - § 1 reference coded [1.68% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.68% Coverage

“Yes. As an officer I was assaulted by a suspect and they were ultimately charged with an Assault 3<sup>rd</sup>.”

Witness

- [<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 1 KASIE>](#) - § 1 reference coded [7.40% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 7.40% Coverage

“Yes. Once. I was out with some friends at Lakewood area. There was a whole bunch of cops there and SWAT. We stayed and watched the whole thing. They kept yelling at someone to come out and when he did he started running at them. They started shooting him and I thought they were bullets but they were bean bags. He then went down but as officers came at him he tried to fight them off but a Taser was used and he stopped.”

- [<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 10 MELLISSA>](#) - § 1 reference coded [2.52% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.52% Coverage

“As a witness. I spent two and a half years as a police explorer. We did several ride along and saw various levels of forced used.”

- [<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 4 MIKE>](#) - § 1 reference coded [3.98% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 3.98% Coverage

“Yes. I am a paramedic/firefighter. I was involved with an incident when Tasers were deployed at the airport when a guy tried to run down a turnpike to catch a plane. He was a professional football player.”

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 7 SHONNA>](#) - § 1 reference coded [4.25% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 4.25% Coverage

“Yes I did. My husband was a Captain in the military. I was on the base during a critical moment and the use of force became deadly. The suspect was threatening to harm someone on the base and ignored the officer’s commands to drop his weapon.”

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 8 NICOLE>](#) - § 1 reference coded [4.64% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 4.64% Coverage

“We had a patient that was brought in for a legal blood draw. After the patient was served with a warrant for a legal blood draw. He became agitated and did not want us to draw blood. It took 7 officers and a few nurses to hold him down to get the blood draw.”

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 9 SANDY>](#) - § 1 reference coded [5.58% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 5.58% Coverage

“I think I was about 17 and we went over to a house to pick up a friend. While we were there waiting for him a bunch of cops came in. They told us to get down on the ground. I was worried because I was very pregnant. We had to get down. I was able to leave after a while because I did not know anyone there.”

Income Class Self Report:

High – 1

Low- Middle (9 others)

News

Neutral –

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 3 SARAH>](#) - § 1 reference coded [1.72% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.72% Coverage

“Well I mean you see stuff on TV and it has been on a lot. There is riots and mass shootings on police.”

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 8 NICOLE>](#) - § 1 reference coded [2.63% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.63% Coverage

“That again can be mixed. Social media plays a big part in the tactics used to subdue someone. I mean you do not always know what the whole story is.”

News Negative

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 1 KASIE>](#) - § 1 reference coded [0.99% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.99% Coverage

“I mean they always try to make it about race and rioting.”

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 10 MELLISSA>](#) - § 1 reference coded [2.37% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.37% Coverage

“Oh the media! I tend to not believe the media. I wait until the investigation is complete and the body cameras are shown.”

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 2 TONETTE>](#) - § 1 reference coded [2.67% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.67% Coverage

“I believe the news media law enforcement use of force is biased and one-sided. I believe they are trying to arise conflict among the public.”

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 4 MIKE>](#) - § 1 reference coded [2.47% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.47% Coverage

“I don’t really trust the news media approach and police officers video. Something made these individuals turn on the cameras.”

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 5 JAMES>](#) - § 1 reference coded [2.91% Coverage]



Reference 1 - 2.91% Coverage

“Um...I think the media preserves, they place doubts on the police, um...they don't show everything. They only use small cell phone video and skew the perception of what is seen.”

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 6 JASON>](#) - § 1 reference coded [2.86% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.86% Coverage

“The media perception of use of force I don't really look at it at all. Working in LE we have been trained in totality of circumstances and not just a video recording.”

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 7 SHONNA>](#) - § 1 reference coded [2.80% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.80% Coverage

“Media will report anything. Their only concerned about being first to get the story out. They do not care who they hurt when the report halfhearted information.”

### **Positive**

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 9 SANDY>](#) - § 1 reference coded [2.00% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.00% Coverage

“I am an avid video watcher. The news shows real life happening. It is hard to deny something that is on video.”

## **Social Media**

### **Neutral**

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 1 KASIE>](#) - § 1 reference coded [7.56% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 7.56% Coverage

“Some of the comments are funny and you can tell they are often ignorant and being considered a racial war. Like the black guy ran down the street and a white cop ran after him and then they take him down. It is not about race, I mean someone doesn't call 911 and say a black man has a gun, please send a white cop.

That is just ignorance. I do not care what color they are, if they are going to hurt me, I am going to shoot them.”

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 10 MELLISSA>](#) - § 1 reference coded [2.72% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.72% Coverage

“Five years ago the mass media did not have the instruments that we do now. There is more going on than just a minute long cell phone video.”

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 3 SARAH>](#) - § 1 reference coded [1.38% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.38% Coverage

“Some stuff make it look really bad but I mean there is good and bad in everything.”

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 5 JAMES>](#) - § 1 reference coded [1.63% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.63% Coverage

“My perception they don’t skew it very much. I have enough experience to know what they are doing.”

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 7 SHONNA>](#) - § 1 reference coded [1.70% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.70% Coverage

“I ignore all of it. Some responses are hilarious and completely wrong. I refrain from commenting.”

### **Negative**

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 2 TONETTE>](#) - § 1 reference coded [2.75% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.75% Coverage

“Again, they are very biased whether or not they are a news media source a um friend or a contact share or opinion. A very limited understanding.”

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 4 MIKE>](#) - § 1 reference coded [3.13% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 3.13% Coverage

“It usually makes the officers look bad. Why did the people start filming? Something happened to make them start recording. I have known good cops and bad cops.”

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 6 JASON>](#) - § 1 reference coded [2.34% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.34% Coverage

“I think again it is the same kind as the media. Whatever is trending out there people want to take those opinions and make it their own.”

**Positive** [<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 8 NICOLE>](#) - § 1 reference coded [2.15% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.15% Coverage

“Perceptions could still be racial based but my perceptions of use of force is nothing but good because they protect us.”

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 9 SANDY>](#) - § 1 reference coded [1.87% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.87% Coverage

“I would say social media, Facebook, and Twitter have a lot of videos and I believe most of what I see.”

## **Video 1**

### **Justified**

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 10 MELLISSA>](#) - § 1 reference coded [3.40% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 3.40% Coverage

“Justified. I believe the level of force escalated based upon what the suspect was doing.

He was not doing what the officers were telling him to do. He ended up getting killed.”

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 3 SARAH>](#) - § 1 reference coded [0.15% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.15% Coverage

“Justified.”

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 4 MIKE>](#) - § 1 reference coded [0.18% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.18% Coverage

“Justified.”

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 5 JAMES>](#) - § 1 reference coded [0.57% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.57% Coverage

“It was justified, without a doubt.”

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 6 JASON>](#) - § 1 reference coded [2.69% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.69% Coverage

“I believe it was unjustified because they tried using lower uses of force. I believe it was unjustified because the guy was running away when they shot him.”

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 7 SHONNA>](#) - § 1 reference coded [0.16% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.16% Coverage

“Justified.”

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 8 NICOLE>](#) - § 1 reference coded [0.48% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.48% Coverage

“I believe it was justified.”

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 9 SANDY>](#) - § 1 reference coded [2.62% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.62% Coverage

“I do not know. Justified probably. There was so much going on and it looked like a lot were there. I feel like they were protecting themselves.”

### **Unjustified**

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 2 TONETTE>](#) - § 1 reference coded [1.13% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.13% Coverage

“I believe firing their firearm was excessive and premature.”

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 6 JASON>](#) - § 1 reference coded [2.69% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.69% Coverage

“I believe it was unjustified because they tried using lower uses of force. I believe it was unjustified because the guy was running away when they shot him.”

## Video 2

### Justified

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 2 TONETTE>](#) - § 1 reference coded [6.43% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 6.43% Coverage

“My perception of the use of force was by language, tone, even vulgarity, um the use of barricading the individuals car and then firing their weapons was ...um justified. The officers were justified in getting the other people out of the car. They were hard to see in the video but the officers were verbal in getting them out of the car.”

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 4 MIKE>](#) - § 1 reference coded [2.55% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.55% Coverage

“Level of force was justified because the officers were in fear of their lives. The victim getting back in the car to get a weapon.”

### Unjustified

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 2 TONETTE>](#) - § 1 reference coded [6.43% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 6.43% Coverage

“My perception of the use of force was by language, tone, even vulgarity, um the use of barricading the individuals car and then firing their weapons was ...um justified. The officers were justified in getting the other people out of the car. They were hard to see in the video but the officers were verbal in getting them out of the car.”

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 3 SARAH>](#) - § 1 reference coded [2.67% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.67% Coverage

“I think it was unjustified. I mean if you are just looking at the video, a bunch of cops came running at a guy standing next to his car and then they shot him.”

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 5 JAMES>](#) - § 1 reference coded [4.29% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 4.29% Coverage

“I think it was unjustified because it looks like the perp is just standing outside his car and then the officers come at him telling him to put his hands up and then he ducks into the car. Once he did that the first officer backed up and started shooting.”

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 6 JASON>](#) - § 1 reference coded [1.68% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.68% Coverage

“Unjustified based on this video. You don’t see anything besides telling him to get on the ground.”

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 7 SHONNA>](#) - § 1 reference coded [2.19% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.19% Coverage

“Unjustified just by the video here. I am sure more came out about it later that could change a person’s perspective on this.”

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 8 NICOLE>](#) - § 1 reference coded [2.10% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.10% Coverage

“Unjustified and excessive. You cannot tell why he went back into the car. The officers came at him and just shot him.”

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 9 SANDY>](#) - § 1 reference coded [4.12% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 4.12% Coverage

“I don’t know. It looked like the cops were running at a guy who was standing next to his car and then he went to get into it but the cops shot him. I think unjustified because we don’t know why he was getting back into the car.”

**Neutral**

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 10 MELLISSA>](#) - § 1 reference coded [3.96% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 3.96% Coverage

“I do not know because it was like a 15 second video. How could you tell what level it was, I would reserve the perspective until after the investigation is done? They are human and people make mistakes.”

**Video 3****Justified**

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 4 MIKE>](#) - § 1 reference coded [1.53% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.53% Coverage

“I have been in similar situations with officers and it is arguably justified.”

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 6 JASON>](#) - § 1 reference coded [1.95% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.95% Coverage

“I would say the use of force throughout most of it that is was justified. At least until the officer punched him.”

**Unjustified**

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 1 KASIE>](#) - § 1 reference coded [0.74% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.74% Coverage

“Unjustified. He didn’t need to be punched.”

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 10 MELLISSA>](#) - § 1 reference coded [3.57% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 3.57% Coverage

“They use various level of force. Whether some of them were justified or not I do not know because their attitudes were arrogant. He presumed to have preconceived notion of the suspect.”

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 2 TONETTE>](#) - § 1 reference coded [2.25% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.25% Coverage

“Not able to see the gun due to the restrictions of the dash cam I feel the force used by the officer was unjustified.”

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 3 SARAH>](#) - § 1 reference coded [4.58% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 4.58% Coverage

“I mean they guy wasn’t really going crazy but the guy was upset with how the cop was talking to him. He wanted respect the officer was not giving him that. I think cops represent their community and that officer was not being professional. The officer seemed like a bully.”

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 5 JAMES>](#) - § 1 reference coded [2.79% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.79% Coverage

“It was a little extreme. I mean yeah the guy kept moving his hands but he was not acting anymore erratic then people I have dealt with under the same circumstances.”

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 7 SHONNA>](#) - § 1 reference coded [4.46% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 4.46% Coverage

“Unjustified. He did not need to call the guy names and yell at him. I mean the guy did not look like he was resisting. He just looked like he was trying to figure out how leaving a car running to go in a store warrants all this attention from the police.”

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 8 NICOLE>](#) - § 1 reference coded [0.99% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.99% Coverage

“Unjustified. It was a little excessive and aggressive.”

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 9 SANDY>](#) - § 1 reference coded [2.91% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.91% Coverage

“They were telling him to do things and he looked like he was obeying. The officer was talking disrespectful to the guy. They should have been more professional.”

#### **Video 4**

**Justified – 0**



**Neutral –**

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 4 MIKE>](#) - § 1 reference coded [0.27% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.27% Coverage

“I am not sure.”

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 6 JASON>](#) - § 1 reference coded [0.24% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.24% Coverage

“I am not sure.”

**Unjustified**

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 1 KASIE>](#) - § 1 reference coded [0.62% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.62% Coverage

“Unjustified and should be in prison.”

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 10 MELLISSA>](#) - § 1 reference coded [0.87% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.87% Coverage

“I believe it was extreme. It was unjustified.”

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 2 TONETTE>](#) - § 1 reference coded [0.74% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.74% Coverage

“I believe the officer was unjustified.”

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 3 SARAH>](#) - § 1 reference coded [5.35% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 5.35% Coverage

“It looked like the guy was talking to the cop and then ran away. Then the cop shot him in the back about 8 times. I really don’t know why he had to shoot the guy I mean I didn’t see any weapon. The officer then picked something up and dropped it next to him. That is a dirty cop. It looked like he was planting evidence.”

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 5 JAMES>](#) - § 1 reference coded [4.81% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 4.81% Coverage

“Obviously unjustified because the guy had no weapon when he was running away and he was not hurting the officer. I mean you see the officer walk over and pick up something and then drop it next to the guy. That is just horrible policing and sheds a negative light on my Blue brothers.”

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 7 SHONNA>](#) - § 1 reference coded [7.09% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 7.09% Coverage

“I believe it was unjustified. In the beginning you see the guy running and I don’t know why he was running. Then the officer shot him. He also walked back over to where he was standing and picked something up and then drop it next to the guy. I saw support officers come in and I know previously we heard the officer tell dispatch that the guy tried to take his Taser. I don’t think that was a good shoot.”

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 8 NICOLE>](#) - § 1 reference coded [5.23% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 5.23% Coverage

“On just the video I had seen. Well I believe...well...without knowing the facts I don’t know why the gentleman was running. I only see him drop something and then runs. The officer shot him and then went back to where they were standing and picked up something and dropped it. That’s illegal.”

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 9 SANDY>](#) - § 1 reference coded [3.83% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 3.83% Coverage

“The guy was running away. He was not threatening the cop. I did see something fall next to the officer and the officer picked it up after he shot him and dropped it next to the guy he shot. This was unjustified.”

## **Video 5 Justified**

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 1 KASIE>](#) - § 1 reference coded [4.30% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 4.30% Coverage

“That was a big guy in the street and he had his gun out calling for a cop with a Taser. The cop kept his cool and called for a Taser. The guy in the street was not posing a threat to people, he was just dancing around stripping off his clothes.”

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 10 MELLISSA>](#) - § 1 reference coded [0.52% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.52% Coverage

“I believe it was justified.”

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 2 TONETTE>](#) - § 1 reference coded [2.36% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.36% Coverage

“They used verbal. They used Taser. They looked like they were going to use their batons. They also displayed their weapons.”

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 3 SARAH>](#) - § 1 reference coded [0.45% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.45% Coverage

“I believe it was justified.”

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 4 MIKE>](#) - § 1 reference coded [2.12% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.12% Coverage

“Justified because the officer was assaulted by the victim and could have shot him but instead used a Taser.”

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 5 JAMES>](#) - § 1 reference coded [0.45% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.45% Coverage

“I believe it was justified.”

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 6 JASON>](#) - § 1 reference coded [7.37% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 7.37% Coverage

“I believe it was justified. Because after the guy punched him they could have actually gone to deadly force if they thought he was a threat. The guy has got to be at least 6’4” and over 300 pounds. I mean I would not be able to take him and it looks like the first

officer was the only one on scene for a short while until the guy with a Taser came. I also do not understand why the officer did not have a Taser in the first place.”

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 7 SHONNA>](#) - § 1 reference coded [5.85% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 5.85% Coverage

“I believe it was justified. That was a big dude. In comparison to the first guy in the video, he was huge. I think that a Taser was a great choice to help stop that guy. Also with him standing in the middle of the street yelling and screaming, if the officers did fire their weapon then they could have hurt someone who was watching.”

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 8 NICOLE>](#) - § 1 reference coded [3.22% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 3.22% Coverage

“I believe it was justified if the officer did something right when the guy swung at him but he did not. I do not think the guy was a threat to anyone and did not need to be Tased.”

[<Internals\\PARTICIPANT 9 SANDY>](#) - § 1 reference coded [0.49% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.49% Coverage

“I believe it was justified.”

**Unjustified - 0**

## Appendix D: Figures

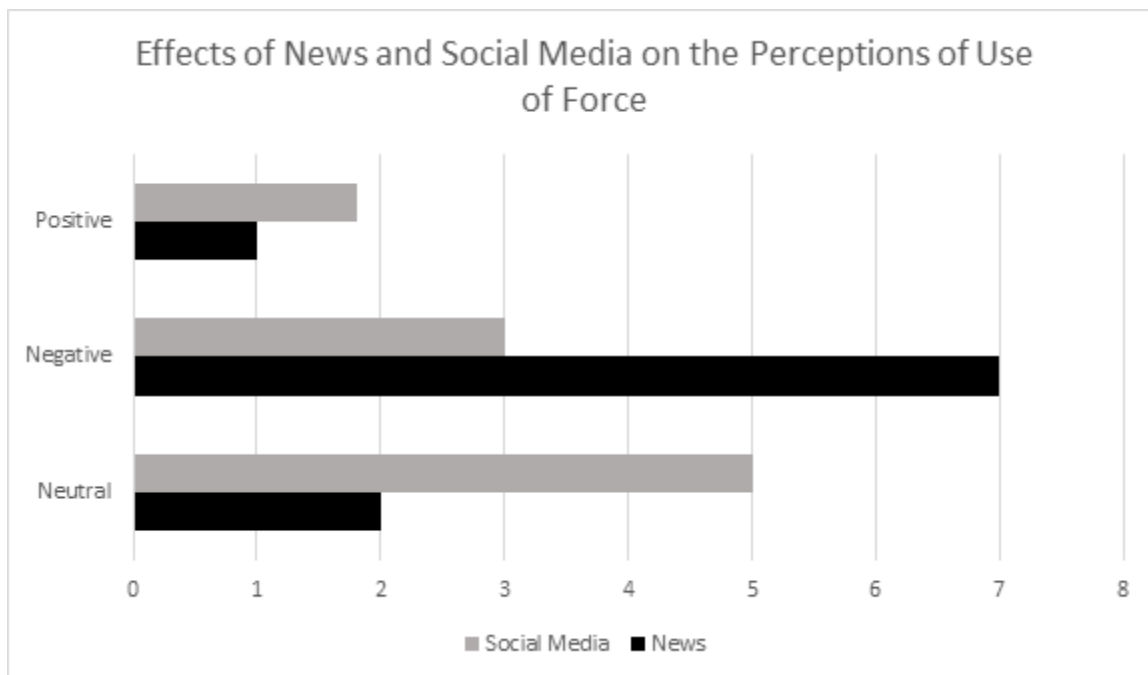


Figure D1. Effects of news and social media on the perceptions of use of force.

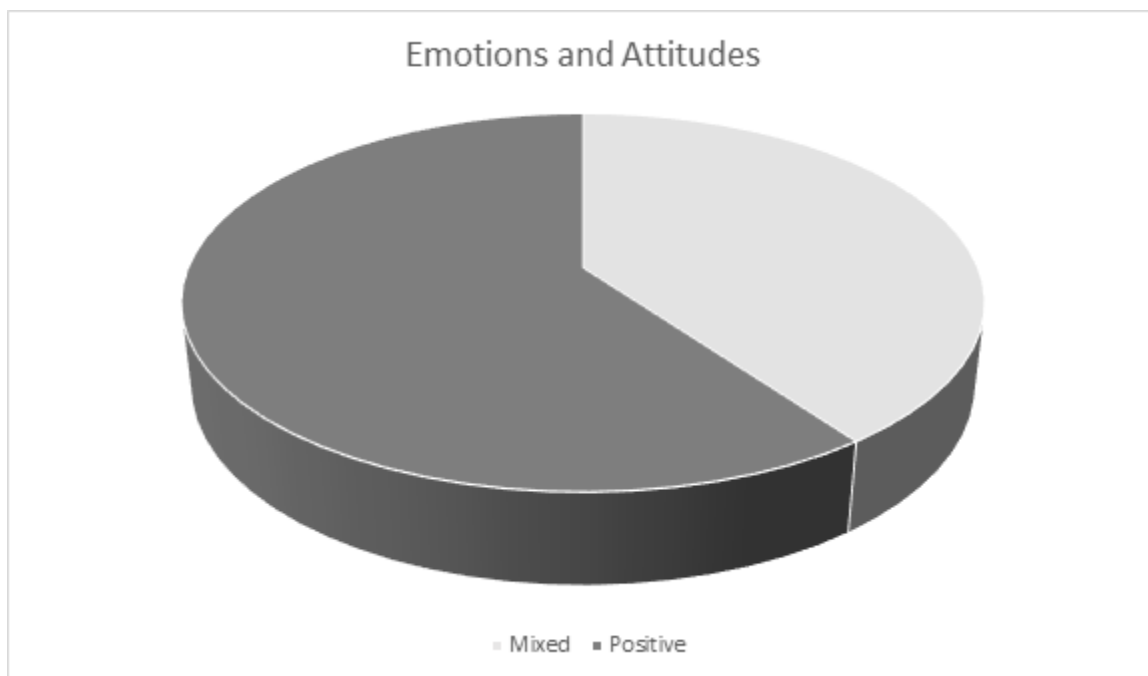


Figure D2. Emotions and attitudes.

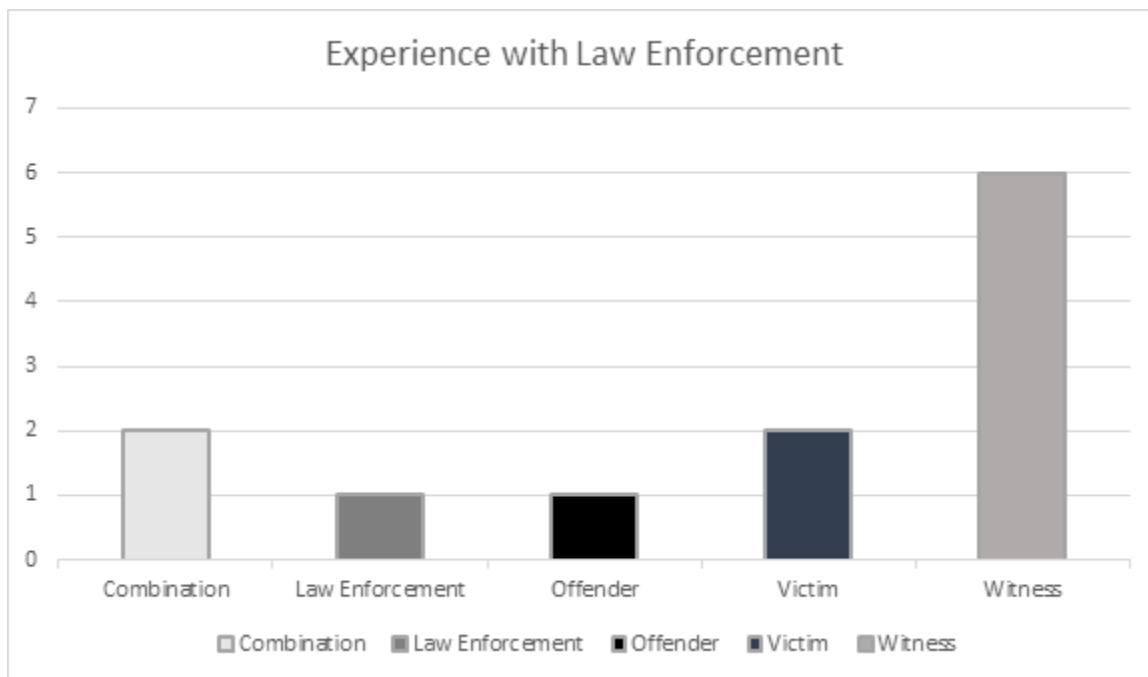


Figure D3. Experience with law enforcement.

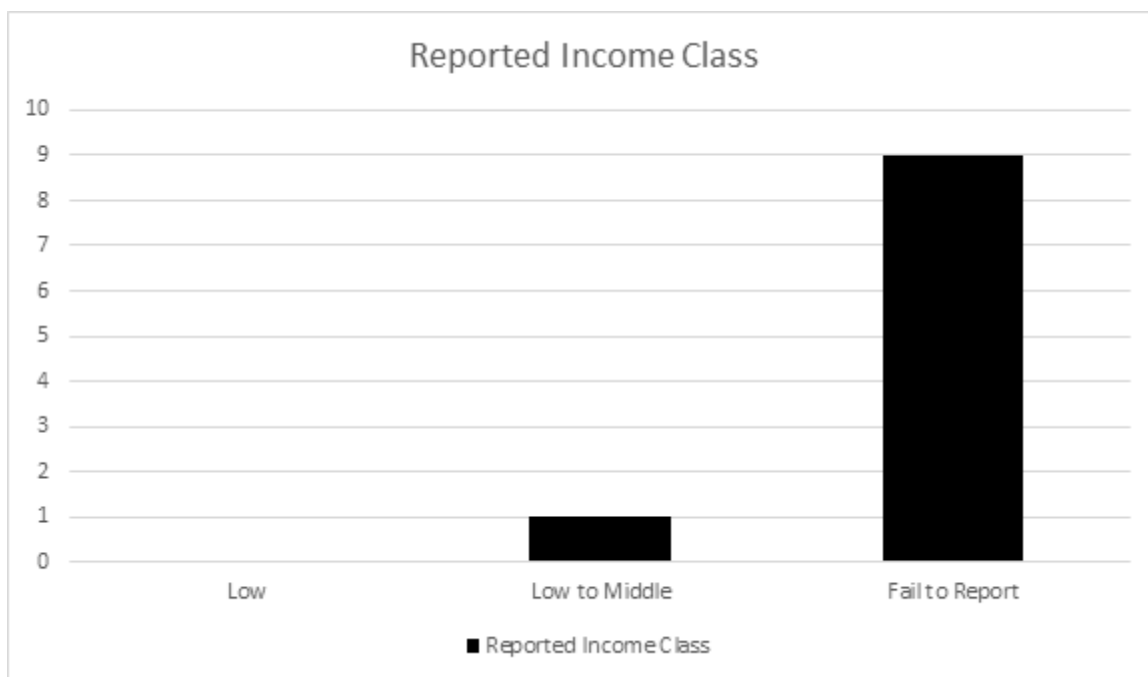


Figure D4. Reported income class.

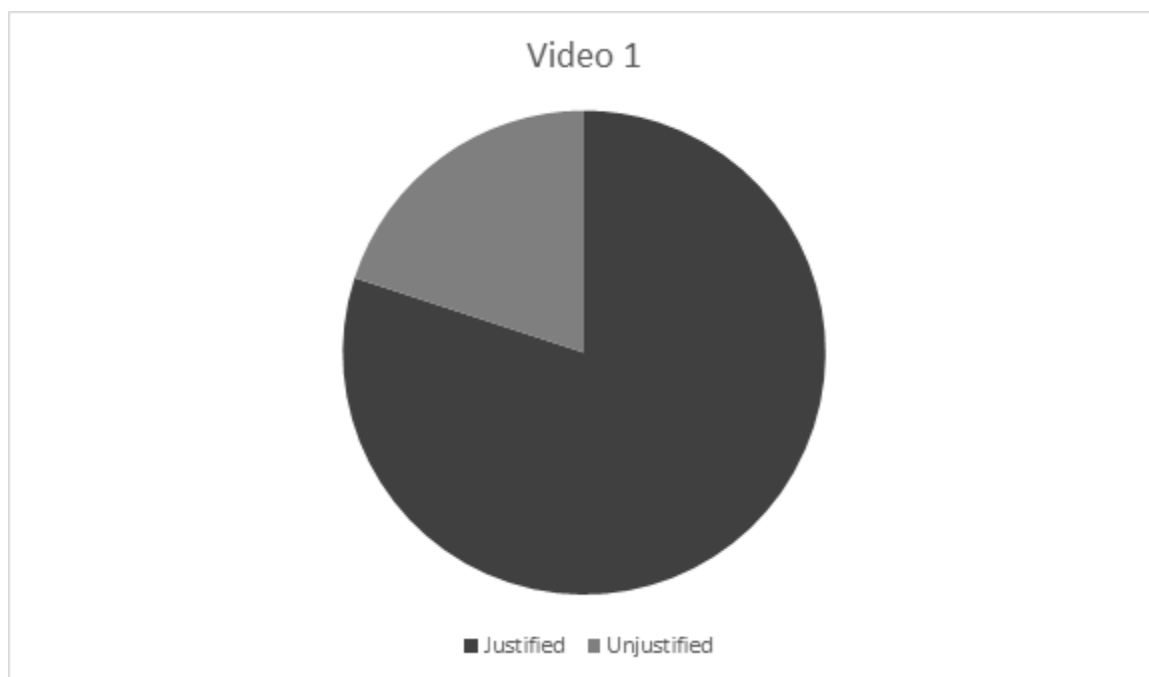


Figure D5. Video 1.

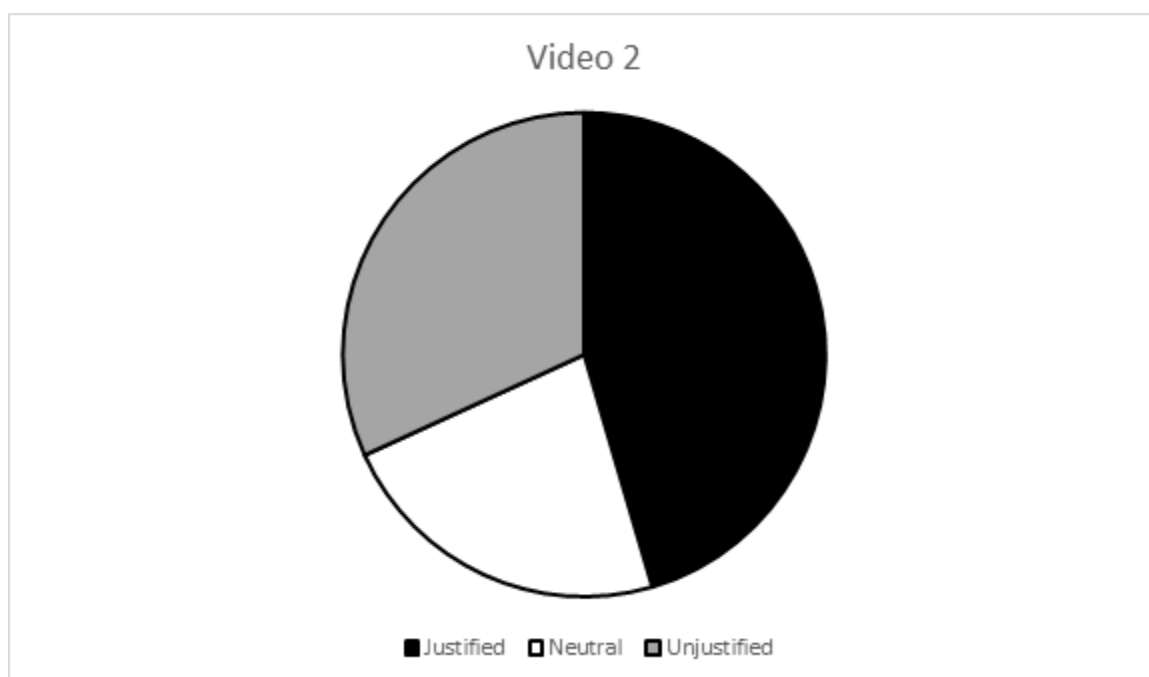


Figure D6. Video 2.

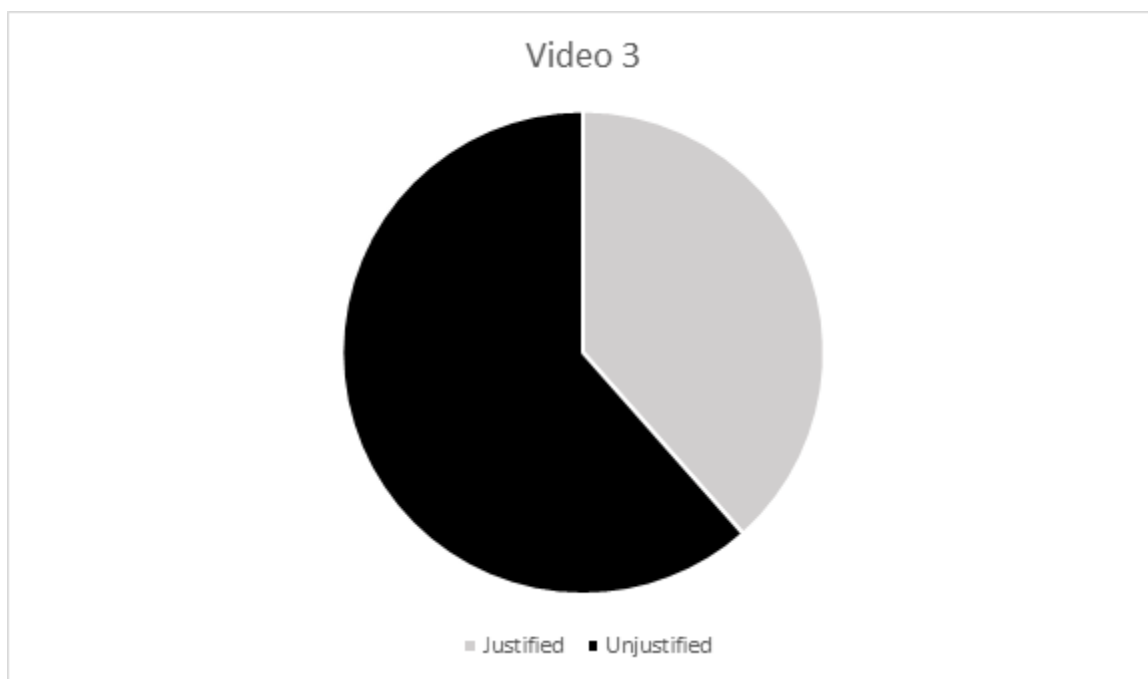


Figure D7. Video 3.

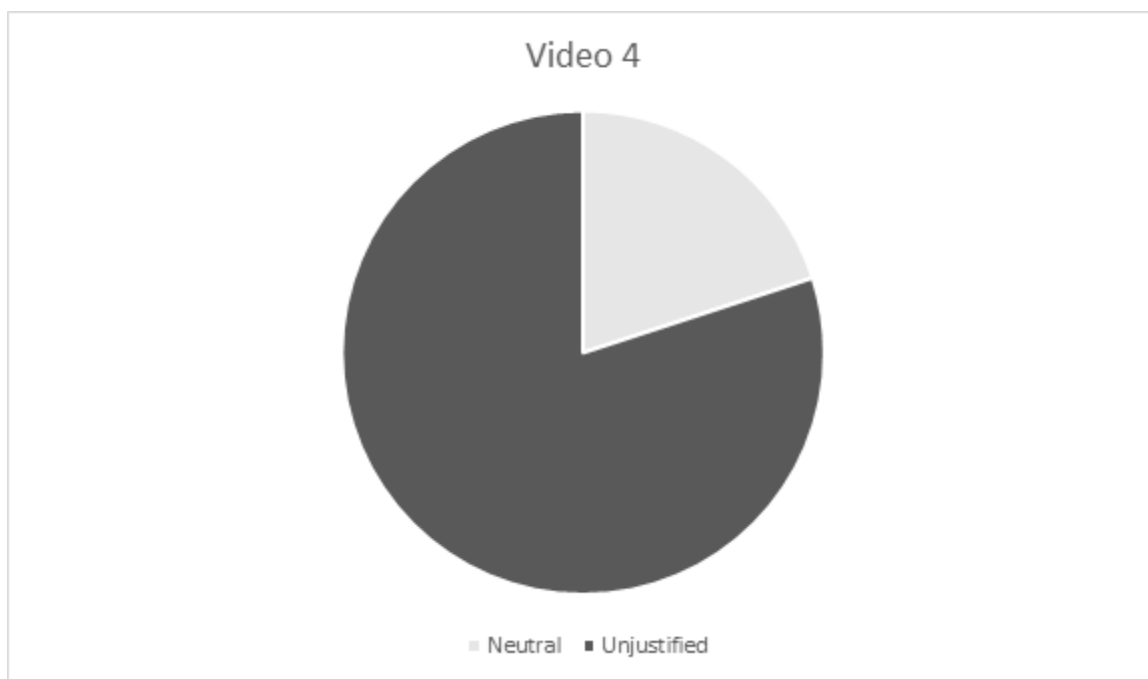


Figure D8. Video 4.



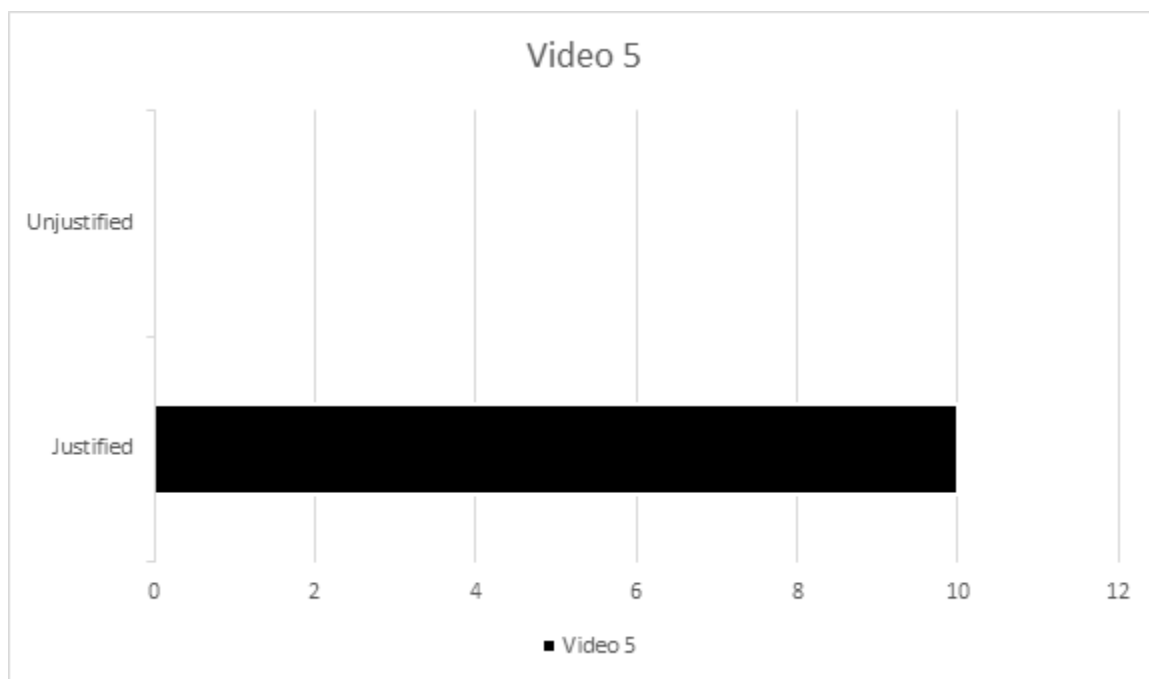


Figure D9. Video 5.