

## An Exploratory Examination of Police Shooting Data

High-profiled police shooting cases and subsequent public and media responses have launched an empirical examination of these incidents in an attempt to gain a deeper understanding of the factors that lead to shooting deaths in the United States. In 2015, the Washington Post created a website titled, *Fatal Force*; data had been compiled from police websites, local newspapers and various social media outlets, with the purpose of raising awareness of how many citizens have been killed by police officers each year. In 2016, the Washington Post received the Pulitzer Prize in National Reporting “for its revelatory initiative in creating and using a national database to illustrate how often and why police shoot to kill and who the victims are most likely to be” (Pulitzer, 2016). This research has analyzed the Washington Post’s data using Chi-square automatic interaction detection (CHAID) through SPSS. These extraordinary findings express a positive relationship between: race, gender, mental-illness, fleeing, and if a weapon was present or not. Past research has been conducted on racial prejudice and police shootings, however, little research has been conducted on the effects of a stressful situation as an influencer on a police officer’s decision to shoot or not to shoot. Future research could benefit from collecting zip codes from areas where these incidents take place. Gathering this crucial data could shed light on the level of social disorganization, poverty levels, ecological contamination, and the various forms of crimes committed in the area, and how they impact the police and civilian decisions.