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Factors influencing the Relationship between the Latinx Community and Law Enforcement

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Factors influencing the Relationship between the Latinx

Community and Law Enforcement

by

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Abstract

The study has quantitative and qualitative aspects. The quantitative aspect measures how attitudes toward law enforcement and fear are related and how attitudes toward law enforcement and willingness to seek help from law enforcement are related. The qualitative aspect explores how trust plays a role in the relationship between the Latinx community and law enforcement. The qualitative aspect of the study also seeks to address how the overall relationship between the Latinx community and law enforcement can be improves. Participants completed a quantitative survey that measured their attitudes towards law enforcement, fear towards law enforcement, and willingness to accept help from law enforcement. Separate participants completed a qualitative interview that looked into the factors that influence the level of trust that Latinx Canal residents have in the San Rafael Police Department as well as how those levels of trust shape the interactions between residents of the Canal community and the San Rafael Police Department. The interviews were conducted over zoom and lasted twenty to thirty minutes. No significant correlation was found between attitudes regarding law enforcement in the Latinx community and fear levels. A significant correlation was found between attitudes regarding law enforcement in the Latinx community and willingness to seek help from law enforcement. The qualitative findings demonstrated that trust levels between police and the Latinx community residents can be increased through the humanization of both parties. The Latinx community residents expressed that the humanization process consists of police involvement in the community beyond security, frequent interactions between the police and residents over time, and through transparency. As trust levels increase, fear levels towards law enforcement decrease in the community.

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Enforcement

Immigration has transformed the United States in many ways, including economically, educationally, and culturally. Recent Migration has brought new languages and cultures, different from those that were brought by European immigrants in the past (Massey, 1995). Currently there is 10.5 Million immigrants who live in California of which 49 percent were born in Latin America (Public Policy Institute of California, 2023). Modern-day immigration is multi-cultural and has led to the celebration and inclusion of different cultures within American society; it has helped shape the relationships that we see in society today. Living in an immigrant community allows people from different backgrounds to interact with each other and learn new customs and practices. For immigrants, migration is identified as a key driver of social prosperity.

While immigrants bring many positive elements to a community, there are fears and stereotypes that affect how native-born Americans view them. The statement has been made that immigrants steal jobs from natives. However, from a demographic perspective in the soon-to-be near future, there will not be enough U.S. workers to keep the economy with the workforce aging and the fertility rate falling (Rakos and Switzer, 2021). Immigrants take jobs that locals can not fill. Increasing the need for higher-skilled managers who more often than not are residents (Rakos and Switzer, 2021). Another fear people have about immigrants is that they increase crime rates. Just like United States citizens, immigrants play a role in crime rates (Rakos and Switzer, 2021). However, compared to native-born Americans, immigrant men 18-39 years old are incarcerated 75 percent less (Rakos and Switzer, 2021). Others might fear that immigrants cost society money (Massey, 1995). However, it has been demonstrated time and time again that

with the exception of some refugee groups, immigrants do not drain public resources (Massey, 1995).

The fears, stereotypes, and misinformation about immigrant communities often leads to discrimination. Discrimination is present in immigrants' lives. Discrimination can have a negative effect on an individual's psychological well-being and life satisfaction (Cobb et al., 2019). For Latinx immigrants, ethnic discrimination is a major stressor. That being said, the Latinx community's high ethnic/racial group identity could be a form of protection from the negative effects of discrimination. The Latinx community's high ethnic/racial group identity can provide a strong sense of belonging along with a social support system when faced with rejection (Cobb et al., 2019). Feelings of discrimination, rejection, and fear can create a barrier between Latinx immigrants and law enforcement.

This literature review will describe in detail three main themes. First, I will discuss the history of immigration and legislation. The history of immigration and legislation will provide an understanding of how immigration has affected the United States and how it has affected immigrants as well. In order to have some context of how the USA has handles immigration in the past. Second, I explain three different sources of fear circulating in the Latinx community in regard to law enforcement and the effects of this fear, including home country experiences, ICE interactions and stories, and excessive force by law enforcement. Third, I explore the history of community policing both in the United States and Central America.

History of Immigration and Legislation

Mexican Americans are distinct as a social group in the United States. After the 2010 census took place, 32 million people identified themselves as being of Mexican descent, which makes up two-thirds of the larger Latino/population, easily adding up to over 50 million people

(Vasquez, 2013). However, the ebb and flow of Mexican Immigration to the United States has been directly affected by U.S. immigration law.

On February 2, 1848 the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was signed. This treaty put an end to the war between the United States and Mexico. In this treaty Mexico gave 55 percent of its territory to the United States (National Archives and Records Adminstration, 2022). That 55 percent includes California, Nevada, Utah, New Mexico, most of Arizona and Colorado, and parts of Oklahoma, Kansas, and Wyoming (National Archives and Records Adminstration, 2022). The Mexican citizens that were in those states became Americans overnight once the treaty was signed.

The initial generation of immigrants who arrived during the Mexican Revolution in the 1920s witnessed an immigration hiatus during the Great Depression. The amount of immigrants that arrived to the US grew from 20,000 migrants per year during the 1910s to 50,000-100,000 migrants per year during the 1920s. This resulted in Mexican immigrants and second-generation immigrants seeming to be on their way to being Americanized or assimilated in some U.S. cities (Vasquez, 2013). Vasquez (2013) argues that if it were not for the ongoing presence of recent Mexican immigrants, older-generation migrants would have absorbed much as the European immigrants historically had, ultimately becoming a part of the American white ethnic population.

The Immigration Act of 1924 put a limit on the number of immigrants that were allowed entry into the United States. The limit was placed through the national origins quota. Through the quota system, immigration visas were provided to two percent of the total number of people of each nationality in the United States. This act also excluded immigrants from Asia.

The immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 commonly known as the Hart-Celler Act capped the number of annual visas at 290,000 which included a restriction of 20,000 visas per

country per year. The act opened new opportunities for immigrants from Asian nations to join relatives in America.

No new legislative bills were passed between 1965 to 1976. H.R. 12231 was introduced into the House on March 2nd, 1976. H.R. 12231 was a bill intended to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to Increase immigration from Western Hemisphere nations. H.R. 12231 amends the Immigration and Nationality Act to increase to 170,000 the number of aliens from Western Hemisphere nations who may become permanent residents of the United State each year. This included Latino immigrants from Mexico and the Central American countries of Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Panama. This bill allows people from the Western Hemisphere nations with nonimmigrant status in the United States to have their status changed to permanent resident alien by applying to the Attorney General. Allowing the individual who is in the process to have their status as a national of the United States declared, who may accept or continue employment in the United States pending judgment by the court.

On August 2nd, 1983 the Immigration Emergency Act was introduced in the Senate. The Immigration Emergency Act authorized the president to declare an immigration emergency according to his judgment. The president's judgment must consist of two factors. The factors are a substantial number of undocumented aliens from another country or geographic area who are ready to leave for the United States or have already left. Another example is knowing the normal procedures and resources of the Immigration and Naturalization Service would be an insufficient way to handle the influx of aliens. The Immigration Emergency Act requires the president to explain the action to the Speaker of the House and the President pro tempore of the senate within 48 hours. After 120 days the emergency act is terminated unless it is ended sooner or extended by the President.

On March 25th, 1994 the Immigration Enforcement Reform Act was introduced into the Senate. This act required employers to confirm their employee's immigration status. This act made it illegal to hire or recruit unauthorized immigrants knowingly.

Currently, in the United States, there are many community assets and cultural wealth that immigrants have. Immigrants are able to navigate through obstacles and use the resources that they have available. Even if those resources are themselves. The immigrant community has built a strong community that allows them to share experiences. That being said, there are various social problems resulting from migration to and within the United States. These problems include poverty, acculturation, and family difficulties (Dail, 1988).

In order to understand why community policing is important and why it is effective it is necessary to have an understanding of the history of immigration and legislation. History will allow us to understand why community policing is a better way to reach the communities and each communities needs.

History allows us to understand where fear stems from and what can trigger fear within minorities. Not only is the immigration history in the United States important but so is the history of Central America. The history from both areas allows us to understand where the communities fear stems from and how they are still present in their lives

Fear in the Community

Home country experiences

The Latinx community is exposed to trauma in their home country, ultimately leading to trauma symptoms resulting in dictating the attitudes toward police (Venta et al., 2022). Individuals of the Latinx community who are older have much more negative attitudes toward the police. Individuals of the Latinx community who have negative perceptions of police also

have an interactive effect of trauma and trauma symptoms (Venta et al., 2022). In the Latinx

community home regions, police violence, corruption, and repression may have contributed to

their traumatization (Venta et al., 2022). After a period of time, many individuals develop a more

positive perspective on police in the U.S. (Venta et al., 2022). This does not mean that the trauma

symptoms are not present. Over time the U.S. police may seem less threatening to immigrants in

contrast to the police in their home regions, although these experiences still inform their

perceptions of police work.

ICE

Through oral accounts of members of the Latinx community, direct violence inflicted by

"la migra" perpetuates trauma among asylum seekers in detention (Dominguez et al., 2022).

Common themes through the stories of immigrants who were detained by ICE were no

compassion, detention violence, post-detention trauma, health concerns, and resilience. People

who had been detained by ICE described destructive, oppressive, and violent policies that

criminalize asylum seekers (Dominguez et al., 2022). For example, one man who was detained

by ICE was forced into a room with 40 men, and in order for them to fall asleep, five people had

to take turns standing because they all would not fit if they laid down (Dominguez et al., 2022).

Immigration enforcement arrests go on to affect the children of those who get arrested as

well (Kirksey and Sattin-Bajaj, 2021). Immigration arrests are associated with declines in

elementary ELA and math achievement, secondary ELA achievement, and elementary absence

rates. These types of relationships were amplified when Trump was in office compared to

Obama's second term (Kirksey and Sattin-Bajaj, 2021).

Deportation affects families in different ways and with different levels of consequences

(Dreby, 2012). To best understand the different levels of consequences of deportation Dreby

(2012) illustrates these consequences in a deportation pyramid . A deportation pyramid best depicts the burden of deportation on children. The deportation pyramid is similar to the injury pyramid. The most severe consequence of deportation is when it leads to a permanent family dissolution. The pyramid consists of the following categories starting with the least severe, progressing with severity of the consequences. Short-term consequences consist of economic instability, changes in daily routines, and emotional distress. Long-term consequences consist of economic instability and emotional distress of separation, U.S. citizen children cannot reside in the USA, and family dissolution (Dreby, 2012). A common fear expressed by parents was losing custody of their U.S. born children. Many children who have not had a parent deported are still affected by the threat of deportation profoundly. Children who are on the younger side and do not yet understand how citizenship works fear they will also be deported regardless if they are U.S. citizens (Dreby, 2012).

In addition, there are profound psychological consequences of deportation fear on Latinx parents and adolescents. Since the 2016 presidential election in the United States, Immigrant communities have reported feeling unwelcome and uneasy, given the rapid pace at which anti-immigrant policies and rhetoric have progressed (Arreola et al., 2022). Common themes in the immigrant community include fear of separation, feeling unsafe or uneasy, increased discrimination and profiling, and concern for parents' status. Levels of depression, anxiety, and externalizing behaviors were present in youth and parents who reported higher deportation fears (Arreola et al., 2022). Individuals exposed to law enforcement home raids are more likely to meet the diagnostic criteria for PTSD or complex PTSD symptoms (Lopez et al., 2018). After house raids, individuals who were in the home described numerous symptoms that align with the diagnostic criteria of PTSD. Some examples are that the traumatic event is persistently

re-experienced in intrusive thoughts, nightmares, flashbacks, emotional distress after exposure to traumatic remind

ICE affects people's perception of the police. For immigrants oftentimes they think that ICE and their local police department are the same thing. This unfortunately leads people to fear their local police department because they have developed the idea that they will get deported by their local poloice department. People who have been detained by ICE and suffered abuse by ICE once released fear their local police department because they dont know the difference between the two and due to the trauma that the abuse has left them with.

Excessive Force

Public health outreach in the aftermath of police use of force incidents is helpful in managing the trauma and fears that residents carry around excessive police violence (Stansfield, 2022). A police officer may fire his or her firearm at another human due to the following reasons, to protect his own life, when in imminent danger, to protect the life of another, to prevent the commission of certain violent felonies, and to prevent the escape of a violent felon. Police officers will only fire their firearm after all other means have been exhausted (Wagel, 1984).

Police-suspect interactions for White, Black, and Latino suspects across time are different. Racial bias may be more evident in earlier interactions when less information about the situation is available (Kahn, McMahon, & Stewart, 2017). Black and Latino suspects received more force in the beginning stages of the interaction compared to Whites who escalated in the level of force faster after the initial levels (Kahn, McMahon, & Stewart, 2017). This could potentially have fear rise in immigrant communities.

Many immigrants will, at one point, have an interaction with law enforcement officers when in the United States. Laws on the use of force are different in the United States than their

home countries. Use of force will be used in a police officer's career. This raises the question of how police interpret, explain, and justify the use of lethal force. There are specific instances in which a police officer will fire his or her firearm.

With mental health issues on the rise, oftentimes, law enforcement officers are the ones being called to deal with individuals who are having a mental health crisis (Stewart, 2023). People often state that they do not want law enforcement involved in mental health issue calls because they do not want a gun or badge as a potential consequence. The issue that arises with this is that there are no other public agencies to assess those calls. Increasing the budget for mental health services would be helpful, but it is something that needs to be worked out continuously over the course of years and can not be changed in a matter of months (Stewart, 2023).

In order to understand the relationship between law enforcement and the Latinx community there must be an understanding of both communities. That means that there must be an understanding of how law enforcement works. In this particular case, it would be excessive force. By understanding when an officer may use force can help understand what excessive force would look like. Which in turn will help us understand where fear of law enforcement may stem from in the Latinx community.

Community Policing

Central America

Community policing (COP) is a strategy that was developed with the goal of improving conditions of trust between the police and the public (McNeish, Matute, Ospina, & Fruhling, 2022). COP roots lay in the United States during the 1970s from where it spread to Canada and Europe, and into Latin America, Africa, and Asia. COP has a strong emphasis on the

preventative role of the police in close geographic areas. The COP model has a second

component which is the promotion of close relationships with the community with the ultimate

goal of creating a base for a continuous dynamic of communication with local citizens and

responsiveness to local perceptions and priorities (McNeish, Matute, Ospina, & Fruhling, 2022).

The desire to reform the police in Latin America was influenced by three major factors:

democratization, a rise in crime, and the context of state reform (Hugo Fruhling, 2007).The first

took place during the 1980s and 1990s in many of the countries in the Latin America region.

This process drew a lot of attention to the incompatibility between democracy and human rights

and the actions of police forces in Latin America. A significant rise in crime in what appeared to

be almost all Latin American countries led to attempts to transform the police paired with state

reform which was widespread in Latin America. Those attempts however were considered

inefficient or corrupt in the people's eyes (Hugo Fruhling, 2007). These reforms dramatically

reduced the size of the state apparatus ultimately affecting the effectiveness of government

agencies. When these changes took place the deficiencies of the national law enforcement

agencies were very evident (Hugo Fruhling, 2007). In Guatemala, for example, the influence of

civilians and military personnel with a history in the ministry government ultimately resulted in a

weakened police force through connections of corruption and organized crime. COP in

Guatemala and El Salvador did not last long due to the weak capacity of the police forces being

able to control the rising homicidal rates. This resulted in several governments bringing back the

military in public security operations(McNeish, Matute, Ospina, & Fruhling, 2022).

The attempted reform of the police in Latin America is relevant to this study because it

provides background information on where the fear, distrust, and other negative emotions

towards law enforcement can stem from. It provides an understanding of what type of law

enforcement exposure immigrants to the United States have had in the past. Understanding that

exposure will help in understanding how they currently view law enforcement or how it has

shaped past experiences with law enforcement.

The United States

Community Policing in the United States is classified into three eras: the political era, the

reform era, and the community policing era (Sozer, 2010). During the political era police were

linked to the local politicians. During the reform era police focused on visibility of patrols, quick

response times, and the success of follow-up investigations (Sozer, 2010). Crime fighting was

the sole responsibility of the police. That being said, public dissatisfaction with the police

services paired with increases in crime resulted in criticism and led people to believe that the

reform era of policing had failed. This led governments, scholars, and agencies to believe that

they could successfully reduce crime and improve police and community relations (Sozer, 2010).

Community policing has been shown to be effective when both law enforcement and the

community play their roles. A program called Stonewalls Citizens Patrol was established in San

Diego. It consisted of volunteers from the neighborhood as a watch patrol group. The

Stonewalls Citizens Patrol operated in Hillcrest, North Park and University Heights

neighborhoods of San Diego. The volunteers voluntarily agreed to submit to a rudimentary

National Crime Information Center (NCIC) background check.

Community policing needs to have trust in order for it to be effective. The biggest factor

in any healthy and productive relationship is trust. Building trust and being trauma-informed as

the main factors in creating healthy and productive relationships with the communities that law

enforcement serves (Fox et al, 2021). 90% of juvenile offenders in the United States have some

sort of traumatic event in childhood, and up to 30% of justice-involved Americans meet the

criteria for post-traumatic stress disorder due to trauma experienced during childhood (Fox et al, 2021). Early warning indicators of criminality state that adolescents who acted criminally had heavy exposure to poverty, violence, and other crime (Fox et al, 2021). A trauma-informed approach to policing will be helpful in the 21st century.

Conclusion

Immigration has had a big impact on the United States and continues to this day. The impact can be tied back to the history and legislation. Fear is something that, as was shown by the literature review, can be tied back to home country experiences, ICE interactions and stories, and excessive force by law enforcement. The history of community policing is important in understanding what type of policing we have in today's day. With all the information that was provided by the literature review, there is still a gap present in knowledge that exists. My study fills this gap because it focuses on the relationship between law enforcement and the Latinx community. My study allows the Latinx community members to voice their needs and concerns rather than having someone outside of the community try to figure out what they need.

Method

This study was intended to fulfill requirements for Psychology and Social Justice courses. Due to this, I conducted a mixed-methods study, including both quantitative and qualitative data.

Quantitative Survey

In this study, participants were asked to complete a brief online survey about their trust and attitudes towards law enforcement and how those play a role in their willingness to seek assists from law enforcement.

Participants

Participants were 33 Latinx community members. Participants were 16 females and 11 males. Latinx Community members came from various Central American countries, Guatemala, Mexico, and El Salvador. Latinx Community members were recruited through Rose who works at Canal Alliance. I emailed rose who asked the Latinx community for their voluntary participation, once they agreed to participate they would scan a QR code which would take them to the survey. They would have to rate statements that revolved around trust between SRPD and Latinx Community. They would rate the statements on a scale of 1 through 7. One being not agreeing at all with the statement and Seven fully agreeing with the statement. After the individual completed the questionnaire, I set up a time to meet with them and interviewed them in person.

Measures

Attitudes Toward Police Scale. Measures juvenile individual attitudes toward police. The reliability for this scale was .872. In the 11-item scale, the items were in regards to the individual's neighborhood or city. Participants used a five-point Likert scale ranging from

"strongly disagree" to "strongly agree" to rate each of the items. The items included: "In general, I trust the police.' 'In general, I am satisfied with the police in my neighborhood.' 'In general, police officers do a good job.' 'In general, I like the police.' 'The police will help you if your car is broken down and you need help.' 'The police do a good job of stopping people from selling drugs.' 'The police do a good job of stopping people from using drugs.' 'The police do a good job in keeping my neighborhood quiet at night.' 'The police do a good job of stopping crime.' 'If the police see someone who is sick and needs help, they will do their best to help them.' 'The police do a good job in stopping people from hanging around the street corners and causing trouble.' This scale follows Brandl et al. (1994) and White and Menke (1982), both global attitudes and attitudes about specific police functions were measured.

      Fear Toward Police Scale. This scale was modified to best fit my study. The original scale measures fear of crime in one's neighborhood. My modified scale measures fear toward police. The scale consisted of five items regarding fear. The 5-item measure utilizes a response scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). This measure was .70 which suggests an acceptable level of internal consistency. In my study it was modified to a 4-item measure. The items included: "I am afraid to walk in my neighborhood when police are present at day time.' 'I am afraid to walk in my neighborhood at night when police are present.' 'I feel safer to stay outside my neighborhood than to stay in my neighborhood when police are present.' 'Overall, I am afraid to be attacked in my neighborhood by Police.'

Willingness to reach out to Police Scale.

      This scale was created based on the following two studies Policing immigrants: Fear of deportations and perceptions of law enforcement and criminal justice by Becerra, D., Wagaman, M. A., Androff, D., Messing, J., & Castillo, J. and Latinas' perceptions of law enforcement by

Messing, J. T., Becerra, D., Ward-Lasher, A., & Androff, D. K. I could not find a Scale that measured specifically the willingness to reach out to police. The items included: "If I am in need of assistance, I will contact the police.' 'If my loved ones are in need of assistance, I will contact the police.' 'If I am in danger, I will contact the police.' 'If my loved ones are in danger, I will contact the police.'

Quantitative Hypothesis

Past research on the relationships between law enforcement and the communities they serve have shown to be affected by cultural differences, trauma responses, and trust. I hypothesize that as attitudes towards law enforcement become more positive, fear decreases in the Latinx community. I also hypothesize as attitudes become more positive the Latinx community's willingness to seek help from law enforcement increases.

Procedures

The participants were recruited through Rose who works at Canal Alliance. I contacted Rose through email in which she later asked members of the Latinx community if they wanted to participate. They were informed that their participation was voluntary and were told the amount of time this study would require of them. Once they were given all the information, they scanned a QR code that took them to the survey.

Qualitative Methods

Research Question:

The purpose of the research was to examine the role of trust in the relationship between the Latinx community and the San Rafael Police Department. The central research question in this project asked, "What are the factors that influence the level of trust that Canal residents have with the San Rafael Police Department?" and "How does the level of community trust in law

enforcement shape interactions between residents of the Canal community and the San Rafael

Police Department?"

Description and Rationale for the Research Approach

In my study, social justice theories informed my research approach to analyzing the

relationship between the Latinx community and law enforcement. These frameworks helped me

gather information to answer my research question while addressing the perspective of the

Latinx community on law enforcement. My approach to research has been influenced by

intersectionality and cultural humility. Intersectionality is how social categorizations such as

race, class, and gender apply to a given individual to create overlapping and interdependent

systems of discrimination or disadvantage (Miyagawa, 2020). Cultural humility is defined by

Julia Sufrin (2019) as a lifelong process of self-reflection and self-critique whereby the

individual not only learns about another's culture, but one starts with an examination of her/his

own beliefs and cultural identities.

It is important to consider intersectionality when analyzing what the Latinx community

reports through the interviews. Intersectionality affects every generation in different ways. Many

people in the Latinx community have multiple aspects of their identity working against them,

including their immigration status, economic status, and ethnicity. For example, the first

generation of the Latinx community who came to the United States had their immigration status,

economic status, ethnicity, and language barriers working against them. When that generation

had children in the United States, that new generation was still affected by intersectional aspects

of their identity, including their economic status and ethnicity. Moreover, the second generation

also has fear about the immigration status of members of the community. The initial generation

fears themselves being deported, while the new generation fears their loved ones being deported.

My analysis of how the Latinx community's experiences with the San Rafael Police shape their view and relationship with law enforcement is based on an understanding of how a person's intersectional identities affects their ability to succeed in the United States.

Cultural Humility consists of lifelong learning, self-reflection, mitigating power imbalances, and institutional accountability (Miyagawa, 2020). Lifelong learning includes learning and understanding different cultures and perspectives. Through the process of cultural humility individuals must examine their own biases, beliefs, and assumptions through self-reflection. This includes looking at advantages and disadvantages that contribute to individuals' opinions and actions. Once individuals recognize power imbalances they can advocate for addressing power. When addressing power imbalances in minority communities, personal history and cultural context play a significant role in them along with finding solutions for those power imbalances. In this specific study, the relationship between the Latinx community and law enforcement is what will be examined, and personal history plays a role in how law enforcement is viewed in the eyes of the Latinx community.

When cultural humility is present in the research study, a humanized approach is best to carry out in the study. A humanized approach consists of nurturing relationships through care and dignity between the researchers and the participants (Savage, Johnson, Kenney, and Haynes, 2021).

I used a humanized research and community-engaged approach throughout my study. These specific approaches are meant to help the researcher and the individuals/groups that are a part of the research reflect on their relationships with the individuals/group they are working with. The humanized approach and decolonizing methodologies work together to help researchers not view their participants as statistics or numbers but view them as humans and try

to position themselves in their place to create an accurate analysis and representation of the group.

The goal of this community-engaged research project is to improve the relationship between the Latinx population in Canal with law enforcement. The purpose is to give the community members the mic. by allowing them to speak for themselves, as opposed to me speaking for them. The community members were able to express their point of view along with their stories regarding law enforcement. The goal is for the community members to feel involved in this study instead of simply being a statistic with no background information tied to it.

Research Design

Research Site and Entry into the Field

Canal Alliance is a community center that is frequently used by the Latinx community members that live in the Canal neighborhood and the Latinx community in San Rafael. Canal Alliance's mission is to break the generational cycle of poverty for Latino immigrants and their families by lifting barriers to their success. Sixty eight percent of Canal Alliance employees are female, and 32 percent are male. Seventy percent of employees are bilingual in Spanish and English. Fifty-one percent of employees identify as Hispanic/Latino, 35 percent identify as White/Caucasian, 11 percent identify as Asian/ Pacific Islander, and 3 percent identify as other.

I have been working with Canal Alliance since 2021 until 2023. I was first connected to this organization through my service learning course in which I helped assist in the digital literacy program, where I taught parents in the Latinx community how to assist their children during online learning. I participated in a Participatory Action Research project with Canal residents exploring public security and community lighting during the 2022-2022 academic year. I have also helped assist in Covid-19 outreach, where I would make appointments for members

of the Canal community to get their Covid-19 vaccine. I also assisted in their rental assistance

program, in which I helped the members of the Canal community apply for rental assistance due

to Covid. My role at Canal Alliance was to assist in the programs that they create.

　　　　The participants in my study and I have both similarities and differences in terms of

educational status, socioeconomic status, race/ethnicity, gender, and age. A majority of my

participants did not receive a full or proper education in the United States or their home country.

Many of my participants only attended a few years of school. The reason that the participants in

this study were not able to complete their education was due to financial status, geography, and

simply not having anyone assist them through their studies. In contrast, I am currently finishing

my bachelor's degree and working as a police cadet. I will enter the Police Academy upon my

graduation in Spring 2023.

　　　　Ethnicity is something participants and I have in common, given that I am a Latina. I

have noticed that being from the same ethnic group as the people that the community site serves

has helped me connect with the community on a deeper level. When the Latinx community

members speak to me they seem at ease, especially since I speak fluent Spanish.

　　　　Legal status is another significant difference between myself and the participants. I'm a

U.S citizen but many of the participants in my study who we provide resources through Canal

Alliance are not. There are a few who have work permits and some have their green cards. That

being said I can understand their fear of immigration to a certain extent. My parents are

immigrants from Guatemala, and it has not been up until recently that they gained legal

residence. I however remember the many times that they were filled with fear due to their legal

status. For example, when they would simply see the police, I can remember them avoiding eye

contact with them and trying to get out of the police's view. When members of the community

ask me if I will need to document who is receiving the resources they are seeking, I understand what they are indirectly trying to ask. What they really want to say or ask is, " is there any way for immigration to access my information if I use these resources."

In terms of socioeconomic status, I am in the same boat as the participants in my study. Many live paycheck to paycheck, just like my family and I. Many of them can not afford sick days or family emergencies like my family and I. Despite the differences between the Latinx community I serve and me, I am considered an insider. Whenever I go to my community site, it is not different from being at my family member's homes. The reason being that I'm a part of the Latinx community and share many of their struggles and fears. I have far more similarities than differences with the Latinx community.

Sampling Procedures

For the survey I contacted the Latinx community members through the civic engagement senior manager of Canal Alliance. I emailed my Letter of Introduction to share with the Latinx community members to the civic engagement senior manager of Canal Alliance and she posted the QR code at the Canal Alliance center. Once the Latinx community members chose to participate they scanned the QR code. When individuals scanned the QR code the first screen they saw was the Letter of introduction which explained my research study.

For the interviews I contacted Latinx community members that I knew personally and asked if they were willing to participate in a face-to-face interview. I have worked with these members of the Latinx community in the past in service-learning courses and have developed relationships with many individuals who are a part of the community and live in the neighborhood. I currently still work with them in my service-learning courses. Prior to each interview, I handed the participant a physical copy of the consent form and discussed the form.

This informed my participants about the nature of my study as well as the procedures of my study. Consent was obtained orally from participants. I asked for oral consent because requiring the participant's signature can be alarming for participants due to their immigration status.

Participants

The participants in this study were 5 Latina women. The participants' ages ranged from 35-50, all of the participants were lower class, and their educational background ranged from elementary school to college education . All of the participants' first language was Spanish. The names of all participants used in this study are pseudonyms.

Instruments for Data collection

The instruments for the Data collection were surveys and interview questions. The survey was 19 questions. The interview consisted of 12 questions (See Appendix A for a complete list of the interview questions). The twelve interview questions were created with the objective of determining what influences trust and how trust affects the interactions between the Latinx community and law enforcement.

Procedures

The interviews took place at Canal Alliance in one of their offices. Before the interview was conducted, participants were asked to provide oral consent. The participant was given a description of the study and its purpose in the Letter of Introduction. I provided a short verbal statement that addressed the purpose of the interview and the study overall. I cycled through the questions with the participant, and once all were completed, thanked the participant for their time and provided one last reassurance that everything discussed will be kept confidential. The interviews latest between 30 to 45 minutes.

Each interview was audio recorded on my personal phone and transcribed by me.

Data Analysis.

After the transcription, I began the data analysis process with open coding to identify

both expected codes based on the literature review and unexpected codes that were related to my

research questions.   This process involved marking short segments of the transcript with

brackets and then writing a keyword or phrase as a code for the central idea of the segment.

Expected codes based on the literature review included fear, equal treatment, less police, and

more community policing. Unexpected codes that were identified included humanizing

processes, open conversations, more police involvement in the community, and more police

patrolling.

The initial coding of the transcripts included peer coding to allow unique insights to

emerge from diverse perspectives. After initial coding, a concept map was created with the initial

codes to identify emerging themes in the data. The concept map was debriefed with peers to

allow for different interpretations of the data. During peer debriefing, relationships between the

emerging themes and the research questions were explored.

Using the concept map, I then returned to the transcripts and completed focused coding to

identify specific data (e.g., participant quotes or recorded observations) that either supported or

contradicted the emerging themes. Next, I returned to my concept map to revise themes based

on the results of the focused coding.   Finally, the identified themes were used to answer the

research questions, and specific data was identified as evidence to support the conclusions for

each research question.

Validity

The two main threats to validity were reactivity and research bias. Reactivity is when the

presence of the researcher affects participants' behavior, or the researcher's positionality affects

the ways in which participants respond to the researcher's questions (Maxwell, 2013). Researcher bias is when biases can lead the researcher to select data that fits into existing theories, personal goals, expectations, values or preconceptions (Maxwell, J., 2013).

Multiple methods were used to overcome the threat of reactivity and increase the validity of my findings based on the strategies for increasing validity proposed by Creswell (Creswell, 2014). As the researcher I was aware of my biases and looked for discrepant examples when in the process of completing the data analysis. I also engaged in peer coding sessions to reduce researcher bias. Triangulation is one of the methods used to overcome reactivity. Triangulation was used in this study by collecting both qualitative data through interviews and field notes and quantitative data through surveys. I also spent a prolonged time in the field. I spent a total of three years interacting with the Latinx community in the Canal neighborhood, as a part of the service learning program at Dominican University of California. Clarification of researcher positionality and potential biases were also addressed to overcome researcher biases.

Results

Quantitative

Attitudes and Fear

To test the hypothesis that attitudes regarding law enforcement in the Latinx community would be more positive as fear decreases, an pearson's correlation was calculated. The attitudes scale has a cronbach's alpha value of .94 and the fear scale has a cronbach's alpha value of .90. No significant correlation was found between attitudes regarding law enforcement in the Latinx community and fear levels ($r = -.23$, $p = .23$). This data does not support any type of significant relationship between attitudes regarding law enforcement in the Latinx community and fear levels.

Attitudes and Willingness

To test the hypothesis that attitudes regarding law enforcement in the Latinx community would be positive as the willingness to seek help from law enforcement increases, an pearson's correlation was calculated . The attitudes scale has a cronbach's alpha value of .94 and the willingness scale has a cronbach's alpha value of .91. A significant correlation was found between attitudes regarding law enforcement in the Latinx community and willingness to seek help from law enforcement ($r = .734$, $p < .001$). This data supports willingness to seek help from law enforcement is associated with more positive attitudes regarding law enforcement in the Latinx community.

Qualitative

The qualitative findings in this study demonstrate that trust levels between police and the Latinx community residents can be increased through the humanization of both parties. In what

follows below, I explore how this process occurs. The process of humanization includes police involvement in the community beyond security, frequent interactions between the police and residents over time, and through transparency when police respond to calls for assistance from the community. As trust levels increase, fear levels in the community decrease. Police involvement in the community beyond security provides community members to have the opportunity to create deeper relationships with police. Frequent interactions between the police and residents over time allow the community to become familiar with police, ultimately leading to the creation of relationships that would, in turn, increase trust between the Latinx community and law enforcement. Transparency allows the community to know that they are being told the truth and allows them to be aware of what is going on in their community, along with being able to feel protected and safe with law enforcement.

Through the interviews that were conducted, a common theme was residents' desire for police involvement beyond security. Community members voiced that they want to see more police involvement in their community. For example, having police personnel assist at community events, some of which are put together by Canal alliance or Voces de Canal. Canal Alliance is a nonprofit organization that is located in the Canal neighborhood, and Voces de Canal is a coalition of resident leaders and Latinx immigrants from the Canal neighborhood of San Rafael.

Maya stated, muchas veces, si estas conversaciones no son tan formales pero tenlas en cuenta. Para poder ver el aspecto humano de la persona, ver el aspecto humano del policía. De esa manera, nuestra comunidad puede estar más cerca de ellos. No venir de una manera que sea como, yo soy la policía, tengo un arma, en otras palabras, diferente.

esa conexión.

Many times, if these conversations are not so formal but have them in account. To be able to see the human aspect of the person, view the human aspect of the police. That way, our community can become closer to them. Not come in a way that is like, I'm the police, I have a weapon in other words, different. That connection."

Taylor stated, gente como el sargento aguliar que es amable y respetuosa con nosotros. El sargento aguliar siempre está ansioso y feliz de ayudarnos con nuestros eventos. Creo que fue el año pasado cuando vino a la colecta de juguetes y dejó libros para los niños.

Taylor stated, people like sergeant aguliar who are kind and respectful towards us. Sergeant aguliar is always eager and happy to help us out with our events. I think it was last year that he came to the toy drive and dropped off books for the children.

The community members voiced that they wanted more than just to be heard, Maya stated, " I think that open conversation with the public, hear the community, and just hear, have them like say what do you need. " Some current events that the police department of San Rafael currently attends that the community members found effective, especially when carried out in the Canal neighborhood, included Coffee with a Cop, Spring into Reading Program, and National Night Out. Leslie stated, "Have them show up at schools so that the children can feel safer and more secure, especially with all the things that have happened at schools. So have them visit schools more often so that the children can know that we are safe with them."

Along with police involvement beyond security, the community also expressed that they want to have those interactions frequently. In addition, the community members collectively

stated that they want to see police involved in the community and interact with them over time in order to build relationships with them.

> Kimberly stated, Creo que se llama night out no recuerdo como se llama. Pero puedes hablar con la policía o tomar una taza de café con la policía. Pero cuando lo haces más en público en la comunidad del Canal, es diferente a San Rafael en general. Es muy beneficioso en la zona de Canal. Conversaciones abiertas.

> "I think it's called night out I don't remember what it's called. But you can talk to the police or drink a cup of coffee with the police. But when you do it more in public in the Canal community, it's different than in general San Rafael. It is very beneficial in the area of Canal. Open conversations."

Many of the community members that were interviewed stated that they have been able to develop a relationship with Sergeant Raul from the San Rafael Police Department through the community events that he has assisted with time and time again. When the community members are organizing events, they are quick to remember to invite Sergeant Raul and Captain Leon because they have built that relationship over time.

> "Sí, las dos conversaciones que tuve con ellos fueron maravillosas, fueron completamente como hablar con otro ser humano en el sentido de que era una conversación de comunidad a comunidad. No fue como oh, soy un oficial de policía, ¿qué necesitas de mí? Conversación abierta y siento que ese tipo de conversaciones son importantes, y para mí, generó un poco más de confianza en ellas. Para poder acercarme a ellos".

Leslie said, "Yes, the two conversations I had with them were marvelous; they were

completely like talking to another human being in the sense that it was community to

community conversing. It was not like oh, I'm a police officer what do you need from me.

Open conversation and I feel like those types of conversations are important, and for me,

it generated a bit more trust in them. To be able to get close to them."

Through the interviews, community members expressed the need for transparency from the San

Rafael Police Department. Many of the community members spoke about their personal

experiences when reaching out to law enforcement for help. They stated that something that

would increase their levels of trust in the San Rafael police department was transparency.

Community members stated that having follow-up calls from police officers about their cases

would increase their trust in the police department even if there is no update on their case. Leslie

talked about an experience she had with police officers that left her with doubts and hesitation to

call 911. During the interaction, she felt dismissed and felt like the officer was not putting an

effort into listening to her concerns. "Es como la desconfianza, oh si este oficial no trató de

buscar a un tipo que estaba robando un auto, no van a venir por un baúl que está en llamas. Ahí

mismo sí tuve dudas de llamar a la policía." "It's like distrust, oh if this officer didn't try to look

for a guy that was stealing a car they are not going to come for a trunk that's on fire. Right there,

I did have doubts about calling the police." However, when transparency was present,

community members appreciated when calls were followed up by officers through personal

contact or a conversation that was initiated following the community member's outreach to the

police.

During the interviews all the participants expressed that they did not trust the police back

in their home countries. Many of them stated that when they first arrived to the United States

they had similar views of law enforcement here and their home country. Many expressed that

after time and interacting with law enforcement here in the United States it changed. The levels

of trust between the police and the Latinx community residents can be increased through the

process of humanization. The process of humanization, in this case, would consist of

involvement in the community beyond security, frequent interactions between the police and

residents over time, and transparency. The involvement in the community beyond security allows

the Latinx community to build relationships with law enforcement. Frequent interactions

between the police and residents over time will create a good foundation for strong relationships

leading to the trust that the Latinx community has towards the police to increase. Transparency

allows the residents to feel involved and aware of what is going on in their individual cases or in

their overall neighborhood. These are the main components that the community members who

were interviewed expressed would help increase trust levels between police and the Latinx

community, ultimately decreasing fear levels.

Discussion

Quantitative

There was no correlation between attitudes regarding law enforcement and fear levels in

the Latinx community. There, however, was a correlation between attitudes regarding law

enforcement and willingness to seek help from law enforcement in the Latinx community. The

more positive the attitudes toward law enforcement, the more willing the individual is to seek

assistance/ help from law enforcement.

Attitudes and Fear Levels

The data demonstrated that there was no significant correlation between attitudes regarding law enforcement and fear levels in the Latinx community. This could be due to the small number of participants that were in the study. If more people would have participated in the survey there would have been a significant correlation.

Attitudes and Willingness

The data demonstrated that the more positive the attitudes toward law enforcement, the more willing the individual is to seek assistance/ help from law enforcement. An explanation for this is that the more positive the attitudes toward law enforcement the more trust that is present in law enforcement, allowing people to feel safe and more willing to seek help from law enforcement. Even though the Latinx community home regions, police violence, corruption, and repression may have contributed Vental et al 2022 found that after a period of time, many individuals develop a more positive perspective on police in the U.S. This results in the U.S. police seem less threatening in contrast to the police in their home regions.

Limitations

There were some limitations present in this study. Having a higher number of participants would have been ideal for analyzing the correlations between the hypotheses. While there was a significant correlation between attitudes towards law enforcement and willingness to seek help there was no significant correlation between attitudes towards law enforcement and fear levels. That none significant correlation could have due to the lack of participants. I wish I would have looked into how trust affect the attitudes towards law enforcement which would then help understand the negative or positive attitudes towards law enforcement.

In the future, this study could be expanded and have a section added to the survey that measures how trust affects attitudes toward law enforcement which would help paint a bigger overall picture. This study could, later on, be used to develop a study that focuses on what specifically influences the trust that influences the attitudes towards law enforcement.

Implications

These findings could be used to improve the relationship between the Latinx community and law enforcement. This study could be used and further developed to create strong and relabile relationships between the law enforcement and the communities they serve.

Conclusion

This studies main focus was looking into the relationship between law enforcement and the latinx community. This study looked into the factors that influence the type of relationship that is present and whether it is on the more positive or negative side. The latinx community has faced discrimination both in their home countries and in the United States. In their home countries police violence, corruption, and repression may have contributed to their traumatization of the overall goverment which

Qualitative

Existing fear in the community overlaps with the previous literature review. Many of the participants shared stories about the experiences that they had back home. They shared that the police in their home regions were not ones you could trust. Participants expressed that there was a lot of corruption present in their home counturies which led them to come to the United States with a negative image of law enforcement. As was discussed in the literature review Venta et al. found that after a period of time, many individuals developed a more positive perspective on police in the U.S. This does not mean that the trauma symptoms are not present. Over time the

U.S. police seem less threatening in contrast to the police in their home regions. The lack of trust that is present in the relationship between law enforcement and the latinx community can be increased through involvement in the community beyond security, frequent interactions between the police and residents over time, and through transparency. Programs that have been shown to increase the trust and improve the relationship between law enforcement and the latinx community are National Night out, Coffee with a Cop, and reading at schools.

The majority of the participants did not have a negative interaction with the police, with only one person describing an interaction where her concerns were not taken seriously. Through this study it was demonstrated that the Humanzations process is essential in increasing the trust between the Latinx community and law enforcement. Based on the literature review, it could be concluded that the community would find the only solution to be to add more police officers on patrol. What was found was that the community members want the police to show up to community events and at schools in order to reach the younger generations and older generations. All participants stated that they want to be in social settings with law enforcement to be able to see their human side. In other words be able to interact with them outside of emergencies.

My findings can help the police and the Latinx address their needs. What I mean by this is that it will provide the police department with direct information from the community members themselves rather than hearing it from people who do not live in the community. My study has provided the needs of the community members which are involvement in the community beyond security, frequent interactions between the police and residents over time, and through transparency. The police department can use those findings to create more programs that reach the community members in different ways. For example, they could create programs

or outreach programs that are specifically aimed for older generations and others that are aimed

for the younger generations. Recommendations for SRPD based on what the community

members expressed that would increase their trust towards law enforcement would be to become

more present at schools. That could consists of them attending their field days or officers

showing up to play sports with the students. Police officers could have more follow up calls with

community members who have active cases with SRPD. Even if the officers do not have any

new information about the individuals case they can still contact the individual to let them know

that they are still working on it and it has not been tossed to the back burner. SRPD could also

have officers patrol the Canal neighborhood on foot to make it easier to engage in conversation

with community members.

The current study had some limitations which included not interviewing or surveying law

enforcement. There was a limitation in the amount of participants along with the variety in age

and gender of the participants. My study was specific with my research site. My research site

influences the community that I chose to focus my research on which is the Latinx community

located in the Canal neighborhood in the city of San Rafael. Alot of the participants were

members of ethier Canal Alliance or Voces de Canal, the two research sites I was located at.

Future research is needed to explore the experiences of residents in other Latinx neighborhoods

in order to see if there is a correlation with the needs that were found in the Canal neighborhood.

In addition, the perspective of non-Latinx immigrant communities would shed light on the

different needs between communities. Finally, engagement with the police department would

allow for more understanding of what efforts go into creating programs or what steps go into

creating plans to engage and meet the needs of each community the police serve.

The pressing rationale for undertaking this research project was understanding the needs of the community when it came down to the relationship they had with law enforcement. This means seeing what the relationship between the Latinx community and law enforcement is lacking and how it can be addressed. A major factor in this project was to have the community members who are living in the community it self to be able to voice their needs. As well as to provide the community membetrs with a safe place to explain why those specific needs are vital for them to improve their relationship with law enforcement. The over arching goal of this project was to have the Latinx community members to be a part of the process of getting law enforcement to hear them and take their needs into consideration. That being said the longterm goal of this project is to have law enforcement agencies be able to read the findings and be able to implement programs or general change to build a stronger relationship with the Latinx community.

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Appendix A

Survey

Trust between SRPD and Latinx Community Measure

Chose one for each of the following:

      Female   Male

Answer the following with short answer:

What country are you from?

Do you live in Canal?

How old are you?

Please rate the following questions with how you best agree with the following statements. Use the following scale:

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

1. In general, I trust the police.
2. In general, I am satisfied with the police in my neighborhood.
3. In general, police officers do a good job.
4. In general, I like the police.
5. The police will help you if your car is broken down and you need help.
6. The police do a good job of stopping people from selling drugs.
7. The police do a good job of stopping people from using drugs.
8. The police do a good job in keeping my neighborhood quiet at night.
9. The police do a good job of stopping crime.
10. If the police see someone who is sick and needs help, they will do their best to help them.
11. The police do a good job in stopping people from hanging around the street corners and causing trouble.
12. If I am in need of assistance, I will contact the police.
13. If my loved ones are in need of assistance, I will contact the police.
14. If I am in danger, I will contact the police.

15. If my loved ones are in danger, I will contact the police.
16. I am afraid to walk in my neighborhood when police are present at day time.
17. I am afraid to walk in my neighborhood at night when police are present.
18. I feel safer to stay outside my neighborhood than to stay in my neighborhood when police are present.
19. Overall, I am afraid to be attacked in my neighborhood by Police.

Appendix B

DOMINICAN
UNIVERSITY
of CALIFORNIA

Jan 17, 2023

Silvia Gramajo Mazariegos
50 Acacia Ave.
San Rafael, CA 94901

Dear Silvia,

On behalf of the Dominican University of California Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Participants, I am pleased to approve your proposal entitled *Relationship between the Latinx Community and Law Enforcement* (IRBPHP Initial IRB Application #[11103]).

In your final report or paper please indicate that your project was approved by the IRBPHP and indicate the identification number.

I wish you well in your very interesting research effort.

Sincerely,
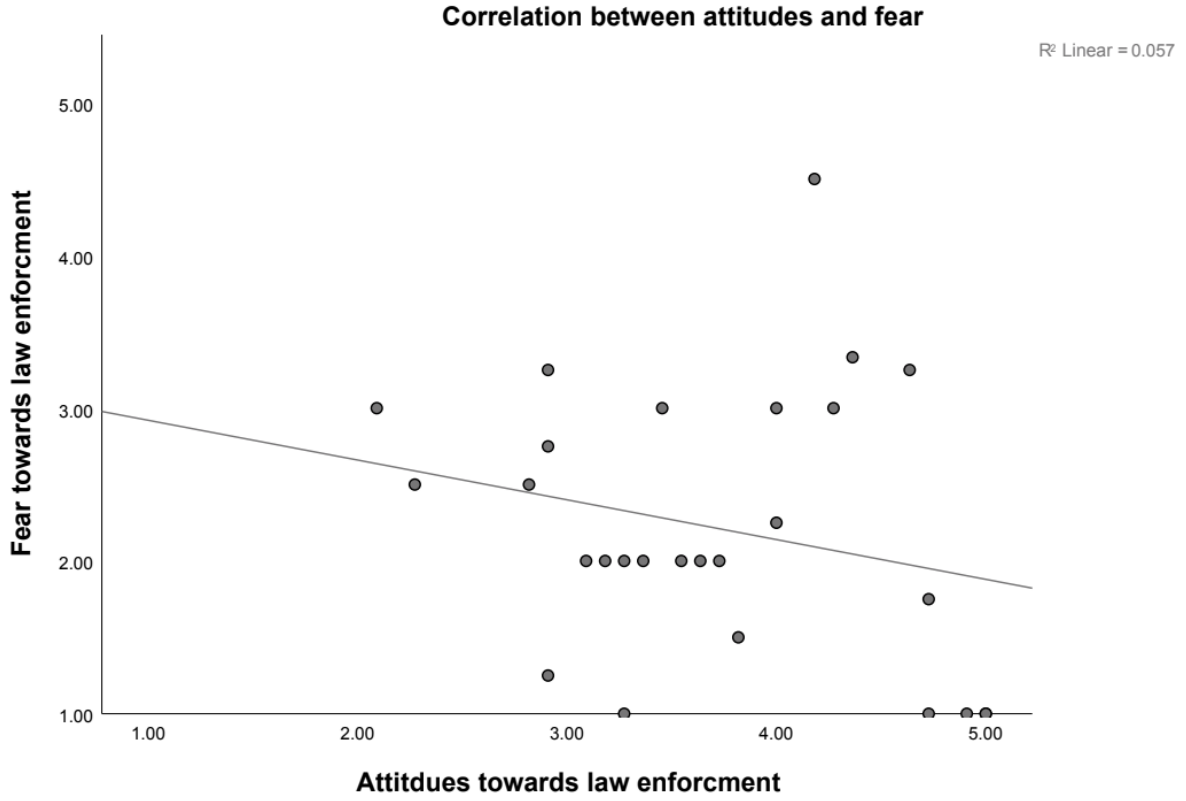
Michaela George, Ph.D.
Chair, IRBPHP

Cc: Benjamin Rosenberg

Appendix C

Interview Questions

1. How would you describe the level of trust that you have with the San Rafael Police?
2. What do you think the San Rafael Police could do to help build more trust in the community?
3. Can you describe an activity or an event that you would like to create with the San Rafael Police Department?
4. Do you know anyone who is a police officer?
    a. If yes, can you tell me a story about a time when you felt this relationship was important in your life?
    b. How does this relationship make you feel?
5. What are things that you have observed police officers doing in your community that have made you feel safe?
    a. How did this affect your trust in the police department?
6. What are things that you have observed police officers doing in your community that have made you feel unsafe?
    a. How did this affect your trust in the police department?
7. Can you tell me a story about an experience you had that made you think about the role of the police in your community?
8. Can you tell me a story about a time when you either contacted the police or thought about contacting the police?
9. Can you tell me a story about a time when you had a positive experience with Police/Law enforcement?
    a. How did that make you feel?
10. Can you tell me a story about a time when you had a negative experience with Police/ Law enforcement?
    a. How did that make you feel?
11. Can you explain the difference between ICE and your local police department?
12. How do you feel about potentially encountering a police officer when you are in the street?
    a. What experiences in your past have made you feel this way?
    b. What experiences or information from your home country have made you feel this way?
    c. What experiences or information about ICE have made you feel this way?
    d. What experiences or information about police interactions with the Latinx community have made you feel this way?

Appendix D

Appendix E

Correlation between attitudes and willingness