Police Brutality within Minorities Communities

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**ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this research is to examine police brutality towards members of the minority communities in society. This is important because police brutality has been on the rise since the 1960’s and society is becoming more aware of this problem and speaking out against the racial injustices happening today. I will be conducting a survey on a simple random sample throughout the “hip hop” home in a large city in the North East of the United States. I hope to find that members of society are aware of what is happening to members of the minority community and that once the data is collected from my survey within minority communities that people will adjust to this information and become educated on making a change in our society today.

*Keywords:* Police Brutality, Minorites, and Society

**INTRODUCTION**

This large North East State located in America is known as the city that never sleeps, full of diversity, and place with sights like no other. Being such a large city with 8.5 million people, the police force is very active with 77 patrol precincts, 12 transit districts to police the subway station, 9 police service areas to patrol housing districts, and uniformed civilians serve as traffic safety agents on the busy streets and as school safety agents protecting the public school in which students attend. With such a large cities police department having so many officers, and being such a diverse city, the topic of police brutality is almost inevitable to speak on and is likely to happen to those minority members in the community. In many minds today, the social contrast of Black Americans “blackness” being associated with being criminals has increased, and even more so through police forces. This creates a problem that is race was and is a primary factor when involving police brutality, and especially evident in such a big city. “The false representation of blacks as criminals in mainstream media hindered efforts to meaningfully reform the police department within these large communities” (St. Louis, 2019). Conflicts between Black Americans and Whites have been persistent since slavery, civil rights movements, and now is more prevalent in today’s society with police continuing to strip civil rights away from minorities and failed to protect them against abuse and attacks, almost as if history is repeating itself from the previous generations in a modern day way of police brutality. In today’s society with modern police, White officers killing Black Americans has sparked movements and riots in order for Blacks to express their concerns for the excessive use of force used against them by police officers. “These events and the strong public reactions to them make clear that the tensions between police and black communities have continued” (Paoline, Gau, & Terrill, 2018). The concerns being raised by researchers and members of the minorities communities is if more black officers are hired, this will help the difference between police and Black Americans, but there are reasons to question the concern and assumption. If more Black officers are hired at predominantly White precincts, they tend to use more force towards Black Americans as the White officers to avoid the differential treatment from those White Officers. Another concern is minorities trust with the police regardless of color because they are all seen as “blue” and that they are corrupt because of their job within the police force. In some cases, Black American who do join police forces to eliminate the injustice police brutality against minorities are seen as hypocrites. “Black officers encounter hostility from black citizens who view them as traitors or hypocrites”  (Paoline, Gau, & Terrill, 2018). Along with race being a factor proven to as why police officers use force against Black Americans, situational factors also occur in those moments of excessive force. Theses situational factors include suspect resistance, alcohol or drug impairment and the factor of the officer not being weak or absent. Due to these situational factors of suspect resistance and the officer seen as being absent, police officer tend to take more offense to a Black suspect resisting versus a White suspect and excessive force is used against those of color because the resistance is seen as disrespect. The reasoning behind Black Americans being resistant is due to the fact that “Black citizens may view their interactions with police as inherently racialized, a proposition corroborated by evidence showing that a substantial majority of black Americans believe police do not treat blacks and whites equally” (Paoline, Gau, & Terrill, 2018). After reviewing on the factors on why and how Black Americans receive more police brutality, the research in this paper is police brutality in one of America’s larger cities predominantly against those that are Black in the community versus the dominant race of Whites, and how this affect police relationships with Black Americans in the everyday life in the giant city of the north east.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

**Police Excessive Use of Force**

Police brutality is something we hear far too often in our society today happening all over the country, and media coverage regarding these cases is increasing as well. Police Brutality typically happens to those who are of color and who are minority races in our society. This literature review will discuss the trauma associated with police brutality, trauma to racist-incident based police involvement, and trauma of those who have witnessed police brutality or even survived encounters of police brutality. In the article, *The Trauma Lens of Police Violence against Racial and Ethnic Minorities,* the authors begin speaking on how police brutality is targeted minority groups and how deadly force against them has increased since the 1960’s. The authors then explain the psychological definition of trauma as “trauma occurs when an individual has an experience that threatens his or her life or bodily integrity, which overwhelms his or her ability to cope by creating feelings of hopelessness or intense fear” (Adams, Alejandre, Bryant, & Gray, 2017). Researchers stated that every seven hours a police officer kills an American citizen with Black Americans being killed twice as likely as White and Black men or boys are three times as likely as Whites to be killed by police officers. Other data the researchers have gathered is the only other race to be killed as many times by police is Native American individuals and in 57% of cases involving physical violence against citizen from police are from a baton and 23% involve a firearm. Lastly researchers stated that for every 1,000 individuals killed by police, only one would have been convicted of a crime. After pulling crime statistics for individuals involved with police brutality the researchers examined what traumas individuals would have regarding these interactions if survived and found that many will develop anxiety, depression, anger, fear, lack of trust, and are very likely to develop some type of PTSD. Another trauma related issue after being involved with police excessive use of force is the fear of being comfortable in one’s own neighborhood due to fear of harassment and violence from police due to their skin color. Researchers stated that they found a number of recommendations to eliminate police brutality and to help those who have developed trauma issues related to police brutality. One of the recommendation stated is appropriate training for those officers, and for accountability for those police department, chiefs, and officers who are involved in excessive use of force, and not covering it up but yet bring awareness to those individuals who were involved who now suffer trauma, and for consequences to brought to the officers who participated in this behavior because of the individuals skin color.

Excessive use of force just like police brutality happens on a daily in the United States and roughly 44 million American’s have interactions with the police yearly. Another study on police brutality identifies that Black Americans are 2.5 times more likely to be stopped by police than white residence and since the 1960’s like in the previous study; larger cities have gained a massive response to the unarmed Black Americans being killed with protest such as Black Lives Matter. In *Stop, Frisk, and Assault? Racial Disparities in Police Use of Force During Investigatory Stops,* researchers Rory Kramer and Brianna Remster found that communities with greater racial inequality have higher rates of lethal violence by police and their research shows that situational factors only explain a portion of police use of force and have turned to studying lethal force at an individual level. Kramer and Remster says data has limited the study of police use of force because it always been a challenging but one thing that remains the same as the previous article, is that police officers perceive Black individuals differently than whites and that their policing strategies differ across neighborhoods. Kramer and Remster also acknowledge that the term “bad apple” argument is unlikely because of the repeated systematic patterns happening in police violence against Black Americans. The viewing behavior of Black Americans as suspicious compared to Whites is the prime example of how violence against Black Americans rises more quickly than towards Whites. Kramer and Remster’s findings indicates that Black civilians have a 27% higher chance of being stopped and experience force during a stop and a 28% higher chance of an officer drawing their gun during the stop than White Americans.

**Police and the Minority Community**

Minority communities’ interactions with the police have been a problem from previous years in history and plague into the present that we see today. In *Race and the Police Use of Force Encounter in the United States,* researchers Eugena Paoline, Jacinta Gau, and William Terrill found that the interactions with minorities and officers makes no difference whether the officer is White or Black, making the interactions between officers and minorities filled with tensions and are not unique in this day in time. Researchers also found that police departments are less likely to investigate race-motivated murders of Blacks and tend to defend officers who use racially derogatory language towards members of the minority communities. The argument continues, regardless of the interactions with White or Black officers, minority communities urge for police departments to hire more minority officer, even if those officers are influenced or pressured by the White officers to act a certain way. In addition to their research, Paoline, Gau, and Terrill found that Black are no more likely to be noncompliant than Whites nor was their strength of resistance greater and yet Black’s still receive a higher use of force or in some cases deadly force.

As many of the studies mention Black American’s are the base of police violence simply because of their color, Researcher Ermus St. Louis wrote in his article *Fight the Power: African Americans and the Long History of Police Brutality in New York City,* “blackness” and its association with criminality has formed the basis in the racialized social control of black through the use of police force. St. Louis emphasizes on how the community recently has been coming together in making efforts to address the racial injustice with black activist such as “People’s Voice” and “Black Lives Matters”. In addition, St. Louis states how these organization can raise public awareness of police brutality by attending peaceful protest and educate the white press on how police forces use their domination towards Blacks and how it is a violation of basic human rights in which that is the police departments jobs to protect when in reality they are eliminating them by using excessive force towards Black Americans. St. Louis also urges police departments to adopt de-escalation strategies with better police treatment and increase accountability for officer who do engage in excessive use of force towards Black Americans. Further research shows that because of the excessive use of force and lack of accountability, eliminates trust between minority communities and police forces, and explains that the trust is going to keep decreasing if violence between police and Black Americans, racial profiling, and discriminatory police practices keep increasing. With this, researcher St. Louis has suggested the only way to decrease the excessive use of force between minority communities and police is to enhance body cameras on police officers, accountability, and by meaningfully involving citizen in police departments decision making on policy.

**METHODS**

The method used to gather data about police brutality against minorities will be a survey that consist of question asking does and, has/had police brutality affected the individual in their lifetime, have they been a witness to police brutality, and demographic question such as age, race, gender, and socioeconomic status. In this study I will be going into neighborhoods located within “hip-hop’s” home in the most Northern area of the city that never sleeps. I will being going into two neighborhoods known as the most dangerous known as Rappers Road, and Mix Tape Lane and using a simple random sample method selecting every sixth house to complete my survey on the experiences with police brutality. The population of “hip hops” home is 1,418,207, with 52.8% being female and 47.2% being male. The housing units hold 537,232 citizen with 499,728 of them being households accompanying 2.79 persons per household. Along with this, 72% of residence have a high school diploma while only 19.8% hold a bachelor’s degree or higher. In this “hip hop” home area 27.3% are living in poverty with the medium income being $38,085. This medium income is well below the average income as most Americans cannot live comfortably under $55,000 a year. Going into the neighborhoods Rappers Road population is 22,291, with 51.31% female and 48.68% male and 24.7% black and 72.3% Hispanic or Latino. The average household income in Rappers Road is $34,566.07 and household being an average of 3 people per household with the median being $23,321.00. In the second neighborhood, Mix Tape Lane, the population is 17,273 with 52.35% female and 47.65% male and 22.4% being black. The average household income is $40,589.84 and household being an average of 3 people as well with the medium income of $27,244.00.

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