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Perceptions of Police Abusive Behavior: Factors Influencing Citizens' Attitudes Toward the Police Use of Excessive Force

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PERCEPTIONS OF POLICE ABUSIVE BEHAVIOR: FACTORS

INFLUENCING CITIZENS' ATTITUDES TOWARD THE POLICE

USE OF EXCESSIVE FORCE

by

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ABSTRACT

PERCEPTIONS OF POLICE ABUSIVE BEHAVIOR: FACTORS
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Old Dominion University and Norfolk State University, 2000
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This study analyzed several factors to determine their
influence on the public's perceptions of the police use of
excessive force or police brutality. Conflict theory and
cognitive consistency theory were used to conceptualize the
perceptions of police brutality. Based on these theories,
five hypotheses were predicted. Secondary data from a 1995
National Opinion Survey of Crime and Justice were re-
analyzed. The data provide 1,005 respondents for the
analyses. Analyses were performed at the bivariate and
multivariate level.

Findings from the bivariate analysis show that Blacks
were three (3) times more likely than Whites to perceive the
police use of excessive force as a serious problem. Low
socioeconomic status respondents held the same views.

Multivariate analyses were performed using the
independent variables (socioeconomic status, police-citizen
contact, confidence in the police and fear of crime and
victimization) as intervening variables to determine if they
could interpret the previously observed relationship between
race and views of police brutality. Findings indicate that

race explained only a small proportion (4 percent) of the variation in the perceptions of the police use of excessive force. The other independent or intervening variables did not have an effect on the relationship. Each independent or intervening variable added to the model, increased the percent of explained variance of respondents' perceptions. While race remained significant, contact with the police, and confidence in the police are the most important factors determining respondents' attitudes toward the police use of excessive force.

This thesis is dedicated to my
two children, Davida and Nai'Jee Wilson,
my step-mother, Cynthia Dixon-Barton,
and the Laville family.
Your patience, love and support made this endeavor
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This research examines variables that may influence the public's perceptions of the police use of excessive force. Excessive force is any type of unwarranted physical force, used by police officers in a given incident, that can be deadly or non-deadly (Kania and Mackey 1977; Pate and Fridel 1993). The term "police brutality" is used in cases where it has been alleged that police used excessive force during police-citizen encounters, and/or police have been found guilty of having used excessive force during police-citizen encounters. For the purpose of this study, the term "police brutality" will be used interchangeably with the term "excessive force".

Police brutality is an old phenomenon brought to the forefront by the news media. This heightened attention was sparked in the early 1990s. In 1991, the televised videotaped beating of Rodney King by officers of the Los Angeles Police Department captured the public's eyes. That incident resurrected the civil rights movement and prompted activists, organizations, and citizens to rally for zero tolerance of police brutality. In addition to the Rodney

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The format of this thesis follows the current style requirements of the *American Sociological Review.*

King beating, other events intensified the issue of race and fair treatment by police. The 1994-95 O.J. Simpson trial, which unveiled racism by Los Angeles Police Detective Mark Furman demonstrated the negative and harmful views this detective had for a suspect of African descent. The 1996 case of the Riverside County (California) sheriff's deputies beating the illegal Mexican immigrants after a 70-mile high speed chase followed. Then in 1997, the beating and sodomizing of Haitian immigrant, Abner Louima, shocked the New York City community. Most recently, the 1999 fatal shooting of West Guinean immigrant, Amodou Diallo by officers from the New York Police Department demonstrates a steady trend of cases involving the police use of excessive force.

Prior to these events, few incidents involving police brutality were well-publicized. This may have impacted citizens' view of the police use of excessive force. While most citizens agree that excessive force does occur, there are varying perceptions among different communities and/or social and economic groups. Some may see police brutality as a rare occurrence perpetrated by a few "bad apples". Analysts who have studied the problem say that 50 to 70 percent of the brutality complaints are lodged against 5 to 15 percent of police officers (Hatchett 1996). The Christopher Commission empaneled in 1991 to conduct an

investigation of the Los Angeles Police Department concluded that only a minority of officers engage in repetitive and unjustified use of excessive force--the subject of repeated complaints of police brutality (Human Rights Watch 1998).

On the other hand, others may see police brutality as a continuation of racist acts used quite frequently against minorities. According to the Human Rights Watch (1998) report, race is a significant determining factor with police brutality. Their examination of data from fourteen cities in the United States showed that minorities have alleged human rights violations by police more frequently than their White counterparts. Minorities were discriminated against, physically abused, and harshly treated by police more frequently than Whites in the same areas. Amnesty International (1996) performed a similar study in New York, and reported that a large majority of the victims of police abuse were minorities: African Americans, Latin Americans or persons of Asian descent. Racial disparity was also found amongst victims who died in custody.

Within the scope of the literature reviewed, many studies focused on attitudes toward the police. There is a paucity of empirical literature on variables that influence the public's attitudes toward police use of excessive force. Many researchers have found that minorities hold more negative attitudes toward the police than Whites. Most

recently, in an analysis of the nation's opinions on the police, Huang and Vaughn in Flanagan and Longmire (1996) found that race was one of the strongest predictors of attitudes toward the police. Other factors, such as socioeconomic class, level of education, environment, contact and experience with the police also showed major effects on one's attitudes toward the police. There was a racial difference in citizens' confidence in the police in areas of crime control, friendliness, fairness, and use of excessive force. In all areas, Whites held more favorable attitudes than Blacks. Contact with police explained more of the racial variations in attitudes toward the police.

Several reasons have been documented which explain that variation. One is that Whites are not policed in the same manner as Blacks and other minority groups. Hubert William's (a former New Jersey Police Chief) explanation of this phenomenon is that police officers use the "Enforcement Approach" when policing minority neighborhoods, while officers use the "To serve and Protect" community policing techniques when policing the White communities (Hatchett 1996:19). Secondly, modern policing is a reflection of traditional task forces that were used to control slaves, the "dangerous classes" of immigrants as well as minority groups (Holmes 1998). Thirdly, according to Thornton, Whitman, and Friedman (1992), Whites' stereotypical beliefs

about Blacks affect how Whites and Blacks are policed.
Further, these authors argue that these mythical beliefs and
stereotypes are observe in several national polls such as
the 1990 NORC and the 1990 Gallup where Whites perceive
Blacks as lazier and more violent than Whites. White
respondents also indicated beliefs that Blacks do not face
job and housing discrimination, and that Blacks refuse to
blame themselves for their problems. Such beliefs create
mistrust, resentment, suspicion, and hostility between the
dominant group and the minority groups which extend to
agents of social control, the police.

Minorities', specifically Blacks', negative attitudes
toward the police is more complicated than just a few
contemporary issues cited by researchers. Blacks'
experience of police brutality is a historical phenomenon
which is closely linked to the development of local police
departments. Police brutality has its roots in the
development of policing in the United States. From a
radical perspective, "the police grew out of the slave
posses [sic] that tracked runaway slaves, the militia that
met Native resistance with force of arms, and the rangers
who endorsed U.S. Control of Mexicans in the captured
territories" (People Against Racist Terror 1995:1). If
true, initial police, specifically, white recruits,
functioned as the disciplinarians of slaves and later

graduated to the gatekeepers of white control of the black minority (Barlow 1994).

The problem of police brutality, in relations to minority citizens, was first cited by the Wickersham Commission in 1931. Officers were involved in what the commission termed as "third degree" practices which involved torturing and beating to obtain confessions from arrested citizens (Doerner 1992:19). Presumably, this continued experience of forceful treatment by police over many years has impacted on the perceptions and attitudes that Blacks and minorities hold toward the police.

Researchers (Smith and Hawkins 1973; O'Brien 1978; Scaglion and Condon 1980; Huang and Vaughn 1996; Parker, Onyekwuluje, Murty 1995; Shaw, Shapiro, Lock, and Lawrence 1998) have also investigated the public's attitudes toward the police. Studies have included demographic factors such as race, age, gender, and income to situational factors like media influence, fear of crime/victimization, confidence in police, and police-citizen contact with race being the strongest predictor of attitudes toward the police (Huang and Vaughn 1996). The methods of analyses varied with some researchers (Tuch and Weitzer 1997; Sigelman, Welch, Bledsoe, Combs 1997; Shaw et al. 1998) analyzing results from opinion polls from specific states or regions.

Few studies (Polivka 1984; Huang and Vaughn 1996; Holmes 1998) address the issue of perceptions about the use of force. Therefore, for several reasons, the author believes that it is important to revisit citizens' attitudes toward police abusive behavior, specifically, the use of excessive force. First, the literature reviewed shows that police brutality continues to be a widespread problem (Lersch and Feagin 1996; Dority 1999) and this study can add to its significance, and empirical literature. Second, evidence can contribute to enhance police-community relations. O'Brien (1978:303) notes that "attitude of the public toward any organization is critical because it determines the effectiveness of the organization in great measure." Finally, the data will be a national study from which generalizations can be made.

The present study examines perceptions of police brutality and will highlight previous research (Smith and Hawkins 1973; The National Opinion Research Center-General Social Surveys 1996; Shaw et al. 1998; Holmes 1998). Factors such as race (Polivka 1984; Huang and Vaughn 1996; Tuch and Weitzer 1997; Holmes 1998), socioeconomic status (National Opinion Research Center-GSS 1996; Lersch 1998), police-citizen contact (Smith and Hawkins 1973; Bureau of Justice Statistics 1996; Holmes 1998), confidence in police (Huang and Vaughn 1996; National Opinion Research Center-

General Social Surveys 1996; Tuch and Weitzer 1997; Shaw et al. 1998), and fear of crime and victimization (Smith and Hawkins 1973; Thomas and Hyman 1977; Parker et al. 1995) will be analyzed to investigate whether they influence the public's attitudes toward police brutality.

From a theoretical stand point, conflict theory and cognitive consistency theory conceptualize the perceptions of police brutality. According to conflict theorists, people of a different class and different background will hold different views because "society is not held together by an agreement and consensus on major values" (Akers 1994:159), but rather is "a congerie of groups held together in a dynamic equilibrium of opposing group interest and efforts" (Vold 1958:204). From a cognitive perspective, the public's attitude can be linked to consistency theories which "view people as essentially thoughtful and rational, adjusting their attitudes and behavior in accordance with incoming information" (Oskamp 1977:192).

Data for this study are derived from the National Opinion Survey of Crime and Justice collected in 1995 by Timothy J. Flanagan and Dennis R. Longmire, which was analyzed by several of their colleagues. Responses to several of the questions serve as indicators of attitudes toward the police use of excessive force. Using this data, the following research questions are examined:

1) Do Blacks' and Whites' attitudes toward police use of excessive force differ?

2) Do lower socioeconomic status respondents and higher socioeconomic status respondents hold different views of the police use of excessive force?

3) Do respondents who have had unsatisfactory contacts with the police view the police use of excessive force different from those who have had satisfactory contacts?

4) Do respondents who have high confidence in the police view the police use of excessive force differently than respondents who have low confidence in the police?

5) Do respondents who have a fear of crime and victimization view the police use of excessive force differently than respondents who do not have a fear of crime and victimization?

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Brutal force used by police is not a new phenomenon. Sellin (1976) traces the existence of brutal force to the evolution of penal systems and practices in ancient Greece, Rome, and in the medieval Germanic States. Brutal force was used to punish slaves and later became a form of punishment for crimes committed by free men from the lower class. This method of punishment became acceptable in the United States during the period of colonization when settlers from Spain, Portugal, France, and England migrated to the New World. These settlers brought along their social and legal institutions (chattel slavery) using their old methods of criminal justice, penal sl.. ry, from the whipping post to their torturing instruments. "Thus chattel slavery became entrenched in the colonies and flourished especially in the South" (1976:134).

Slave labor became an invaluable commodity for White southern plantation owners, thus leading to the importation of black slaves from Africa. According to Sellin (1976), results of the census poll taken in 1790 showed that there were 292,627 black slaves in Virginia, 107,034 in South Carolina, 103,036 in Maryland, and 100,572 in North

Carolina. Further, Sellin described the punishment of slaves by their masters as "harsh, and even brutal" (1976:134). Most interestingly, those forms of punishment were "in current use by the criminal courts" (1976:135). Black slaves' resistance to this treatment came in the form of rebellions. Running away or stealing himself from his master, according to Sellin (1976), was the most common method of rebelling. As a protection of slave masters' property (slaves), public law enforcement became necessary in keeping the slave-labor intact and in compliance. Thus, police were employed to maintain this social and economic order. Brutal force was the method of control and punishment used on the slaves. When police today use this method of coercion, it is referred to as excessive force or police brutality.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The attitudinal studies on police brutality have applied several different theories for the conceptualization of citizens' attitudes toward police abusive behaviors. In the present study two of those perspectives will be used to explain citizens' attitudes toward police brutality. Conflict theory offers a conceptualization of police behaviors and activities, while consistency theory explains how people develop and change attitudes and perceptions.

Conflict Theory and Police Brutality

Conflict theory begins with the work of Karl Marx. Today, there are varying perspectives on conflict: George Vold 1958; Richard Quinney 1965, 1970, 1977; Austin Turks 1964, 1966, 1969; Chambliss 1975; Vold and Bernard 1986; William III 1980, McShane 1987. However, one common assumption exists--"conflict", rather than consensus, "is the natural state of human society" (Williams III and McShane 1993:183). Conflict theorists are mainly concerned with the unequal distribution of power and resources. In other words, one group (the haves) has control of the wealth, property, income, while the other group (the have nots who are exploited by the haves) are the less powerful members of society (Feagin and Feagin 1990; Lersch 1998). For example, there was the existence of the feudal class system of lords to serfs in historical European society. Then, there was the class system of slave-owners to slaves in the United States during the antebellum period. Presently, there is the class system of capitalists to proletariats. In each case, the powerful group maintains its domination of the less powerful group[s] through "surveillance, manipulation, and coercion or physical force" (Lersch 1998:81).

Quinney's (1977) conflict perspective focuses on how the dominant or ruling class in a capitalist society

protects and promotes its interests through the development of laws, public policy, "ideological hegemony", and "coercive repression" (1977:43-44). These types of "systematic actions" create inequalities among race, sex, and economic status (1977:52). As cited in (Quinney 1977:44) with:

> The development of an economy based on the exploitation of one class by another, there was a need for a political form that would perpetuate that kind of order.

For example, the ruling or dominant class that acquired its wealth from slave labor would need to maintain their status quo under the new economic order, capitalism. Quinney further argued that the state forcefully protects its interests, and those of the ruling capitalist class through the legal system. The state establishes crime control agencies and enforces crime control policies (coercive) that check threats to the status quo from the exploited populace.

Violation of the laws that reflect the beliefs of the most powerful groups by subordinate groups create conflict among both groups, and between the subordinate groups and the police. In an effort to curtail these violations, the police may exhibit brutal behaviors. For example, during the 1980s, the Reagan administration declared the war on drugs and developed "several powerful drug control measures" (Lyman and Potter 1998:414). Some of these control measures are implemented by state police through the development of a

"*profile*" of a typical drug transporter: Black or Hispanic male, in their 20s, driving a rented car with Texas, California, or Florida plates (Goode 1999). Police use of brutality, or what Quinney called "coercive force", harassment, and racial discrimination are often the results of this type of law enforcement.

Cognitive Consistency Theory

The cognitive consistency perspective was launched from the work of Fritz Heider. Consistency theories explain peoples' attitudes (including law enforcement) by the "principle that people try to maintain consistency among their beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors" (Oskamp, 1977:192). The theories view people as "essentially thoughtful and rational, adjusting their attitudes and behaviors in accordance with incoming information" (1977:192). Social psychologists conceptualize attitudes to include three dimensions or elements: 1) "cognitive" or beliefs, 2) "affective" or like-dislike, and 3) "behavior" or intentions (1977).

The first element, "cognition", consists of the stereotypes, beliefs, and values that the attitude-holder has about a person, an idea or object (Oskamp 1977). A stereo-typical attitude includes the belief about some undesirable characteristics of one group that are used to

justify the negative affects (like-dislike) held toward that particular group (Jackson, Hodge, Gerard, Ingram, Erwin, and Sheppard 1996). For instance, one police myth (stereotype) of Blacks and other minorities is that they are more likely to commit crimes. Likewise, Blacks and other minorities' believe that police are generally cruel and unfriendly (Parker et al. 1995).

The second element, "affect", refers to the feelings and emotions toward the object, or person, of the attitude, (Oskamp 1977). Jackson et al. (1996) explained that "affect" is more important than "cognition". Cognition comes from indirect experiences, whereas, "affect" occurs through a direct experience. The "affect" component is observed through the public's reactions toward police brutality. For instance, one example is seen when activists, such as, Reverends Al Sharpton and Herbert Daughtry, and angry protestors (many of whom have experienced police brutality) sit outside of City Hall in New York and shout "No Justice No Peace" (Boyd 1999:45). This is a display of their "affect" toward police brutality.

The third element is the "behavior" component which consists of the "action tendencies" that are strongly related to the affects. When groups engage in riots like the Los Angeles riot that occurred after the 1991 publicized

beating of Rodney King, they are expressions of the "behavior" component.

The most important principle of consistency theory is that "people try to maintain consistency among their beliefs, attitudes, and behavior" (Oskamp 1977:192). It asserts that people are thoughtful and rational and are capable of adjusting their attitudes upon the receipt of new information about their beliefs. Attitudes are susceptible to change if new information about the beliefs is received. This change can only occur if the information is inconsistent to the beliefs previously held and individuals are made aware of the inconsistencies in their beliefs. An example of this principle is the change in the public's attitudes toward the police after the highly publicized 1991 beating of Rodney King by officers from the Los Angeles Police Department. Information that links police to brutal beatings of citizens is inconsistent with beliefs that police are fair, thus producing a change in attitudes. A decrease in citizens' approval of police beating of citizens under certain circumstances has been observed (Sigelman et al. 1997). This indicates a change in attitude.

In his analysis of consistency theories, Oskamp (1977) suggests that consistency theories do not assume a strict logical consistency of attitudes. Alberson's theory described by Oskamp includes an illogical consistency of

attitudes. This is illustrated when individuals deny the truth of the new information, or seek new data to bolster their present attitudes. The new information comes into conflict with the individuals' present views or beliefs of the object or person. A change in belief (cognition) may occur, and as explained by Carlson's perspective, "a change in cognitive elements could produce a change in affect" (Oskamp 1977:196).

PERCEPTIONS OF POLICE BRUTALITY

Conflict theory suggests that lower classes are more likely to be victims of police brutality. Police are likely to use excessive force as a means of power and control, especially toward lower classes. Cognitive theory argues that past experiences by members of a group will contribute to similar beliefs and attitudes among group members, and that experience will contribute to attitudes. Skolnick and Fyfe (1993) argue that brutality still exists, but has declined in the past fifty years. "We need to recall how much worse, how routine, police brutality used to be" (1993:18). In addition, Lee Brown, a former New York City Police Commissioner, agrees that "the problem of excessive force in American policing is real," but argues that "it is, in part, related to the nature of the difficult challenges faced by officers in urban neighborhoods" (1993:10).

While police brutality continues to exist, there are differences in scientific evidence about its frequency and differences in citizens' perception about its frequency. Some see it as a rare occurrence by a few "bad apples" while others see it as a racist act used quite frequently toward minorities and less toward others. Reviews of several articles (O'Brien 1978; Dinkins 1997; Lersch 1998; Boyd 1999; Barron 1999) reveal that the use of excessive force or police brutality has fostered resentment, hatred, and mistrust of the police among certain segments of the public.

Past Studies

Smith and Hawkins (1973) hypothesized that "observations of what the public considers wrong-doing or misconduct by police will negatively affect attitudes toward the police" (1973:141). Results showed that respondents who have seen the police do wrong have more negative feelings toward the police than those who have not seen the police engaged in any wrong doing. Twenty-seven (27)percent of the respondents reported that they had seen the police engaged in improper behaviors. When asked to identify the wrong doings, 15 percent witnessed police brutality. According to Smith and Hawkins, the police wrongdoing variable had a significant impact on attitudes toward the police.

The National Opinion Research Center (1996) has also examined the public's attitudes toward police brutality from 1973 to 1996 in the 'General Social Survey'. Citizens were asked: "Are there any situations you can imagine in which you would approve a police-man striking an adult male citizen" (1996:116)? In 1973, 77 percent of Whites responded "yes" with 40 percent of Blacks agreeing. Ten years later, in 1983, Whites' approval of the same question increased by 2 percent, and Blacks' attitude had increased by 18 percent. Following the same trend, in 1993, the rate of response to the same questions remained higher for Whites than Blacks, but did not reflect any significant difference from the previous twenty years.

Shaw et al. (1998) looked at several poll trends of public opinions toward crime and the police from 1980 to 1997. The measurement for the amount of "police brutality against members of minority groups" perceived by the public was question: "How much police brutality against members of minority groups do you think there is around the country these days" (1998:417)? Shaw et al's. (1998) summary of the 1991 Gallop Poll survey showed that 21 percent of citizens believed that police brutality against minority groups occurred "a great deal", and the 1992 Associated Press (AP) survey showed that 22 percent of the public held that same attitude. Similarly, 20 percent of the public in

both polls believed that "very little" police brutality occurred against minorities.

Holmes (1998) compared Anglos (non-Hispanic) attitudes to Hispanic attitudes in his study of the perceptions of abusive police practices in a United States-Mexico border community. The following four item scale: "(1) use vulgar or insulting language; (2) conduct a search without good reason; (3) use of excessive force during an arrest; or (4) beat a suspect in custody" was used to measure citizens' perceptions of abusive practice (1998:111-112). A second question, "how much police brutality actually occurs in El Paso" (with responses scaled from "none" to a "great deal") was used to control for any judgements of police behavior which may have been influenced by citizens' mistrust in the police (1998:112). Findings of this analysis showed that believing that a "great deal" of police brutality existed was strongly related to the "perceptions of abusive practice" scale.

FACTORS INFLUENCING PERCEPTIONS OF POLICE BRUTALITY

Previous studies have examined factors such as age, race, sex, income, community type, political ideology, etc., that may affect citizens' attitudes toward the police. The present study examines the factors of race, socioeconomic status, police-citizen contacts, confidence in the police,

and citizens' fear of crime and victimization as explanations of attitudes toward the police use of excessive force.

Race and Police Brutality

One of the major concerns observed throughout the literature on policing, is the belief among minority citizens that police still discriminate in their treatment towards them. Police brutality still remains a problem in minority communities. For example, Dinkins (1997) reported that New York has experienced an increase in the number of complaints of police use of excessive force, from 61.9 percent in 1995 to 86.2 percent in 1997. Dix (1997) reported that 37,000 complaints of police brutality were filed in Chicago between 1984 and 1994. In addition, Cooper (1980) believes that incidents of police brutality conjures the old horrors of Blacks experiences in the South, from the brutality of "alley justice" that they underwent for more than 300 years to the lynching by the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) backed by police immunity. Cooper also notes that "to many Blacks in the ghetto, the police of the North embody the KKK of the old Southland" (1980:135). Littlejohn (1981:177) believes that "these histories, to which police departments contributed abundantly, are the backdrops against which

contemporary police-community problems must be analyzed and measured."

Historical Policing and Blacks. Historical evidence suggests that the police used brutal force to control the behavior of Blacks in the south. Contemporary problems of police brutality can be traced back to this era of policing. According to Barlow (1994), one of the first modern style police departments in the United States was developed in Charleston, South Carolina in the 1740s. Its main purpose was to "catch runaway slaves and to maintain discipline and order through the regulation of the routine activities of slaves, (1994:152). People Against Racist Terror (1995:1) also argue that "the police grew out of the slave posses that tracked runaway slaves." The police were given the power to beat slaves, break into slaves homes, and punish those traveling without passes (Barlow 1994).

Although the North did not have slaves, municipal police departments were developed. From 1838, after the development of the Boston Police Department, nearly every major city in the United States developed a police department (Platt, Frappier, Ray, Schauffler, Trujillo, Cooper, Currie and Harring 1982; Lersch and Feagin 1996). Social control of an influx of immigrants, control of the "dangerous classes" (Lersch and Feagin 1996), the development of capitalism and industrialism, the emergence

of a hierarchical class structure, and the protection of their property, wealth and position of the dominant white society demanded the development of policing in the North (Feagin and Hahn 1973; Platt et al. 1982; Fielding 1991; Lersch and Feagin 1996; Lersch 1998). Often, brutal force was used by the police to control the "dangerous classes" (Lersch and Feagin 1996; Lersch 1998).

Some of the immigrants were Irish, Italians and freed Blacks from Southern territories migrating to the Northern cities. There, they were met by white police officers who enforced racist laws and policies, particularly against black immigrants. For example, police enforced Jim Crow laws (the gate keepers of segregation and discrimination), a Northern creation that was transferred to the South after Emancipation (Barlow 1994).

Emancipation and the end of the Civil War marked the second era of policing towards Blacks, with its continued role of control and domination through violence. Serious problems arose for southern land owners including the control of freed Blacks and the need for cheap labor to work the plantations. It was necessary for landowners, who controlled the resources, to maintain their economic interest, through cheap laborers, by employing means (police and legislation) for the control and regulation of Blacks (Barlow 1994).

Laws were enacted to imprison free unemployed Blacks to provide cheap convict labor to plantation owners. These laws also gave authority to the court to bound over, to white employers, black orphans and children whose parents were unable to support them. Under such system, the children were subjected to beatings and forced labor by white employers (Barlow 1994). Police were used to "aggressively enforce the laws designed to preserve this caste system" (1994:153).

During the race riots of 1917 and 1919, white officers assisted other white citizens against Blacks. Similarly, during the civil rights movement of the 1960s, "police officers aggressively sought to control Blacks and preserve segregation, discrimination, and current power relations" (1994:153). Reform and changes geared toward the professionalization, militarization and centralization of policing have not seemed to transform the historical influences of policing (People Against Racist Terror 1995).

Police Brutality and The Law. According to Fyfe (1981: 7) during the years following the 60s, "government at all levels has made enormous investments in the cause of improving police performance." For example, the Supreme Court played an active role in the attempt to restructure policing and control police behavior. Under Chief Justice Earl Warren, the Supreme Court forbade admittance of forced

confessions as evidence in trials. Their rulings in *Mapp v. Ohio* restrained police officers from making illegal searches and seizure, and *Miranda v. Arizona* protected citizens from incustody interrogation, which works to undermine the individual's will to resist and to compel him/her to speak (Newman 1993). These decisions were directly related to the turning point in the history of police brutality.

Although police brutality has decreased by historical standards, it continues to exist. Minority citizens' concern about police brutality reflects this reality. "The LAPD [Los Angeles Police Department] videotape peeled back the thin, phony cover of "equality" in this country and sharply exposed a view of the *daily reality of police brutality* for oppressed people" (Revolutionary Worker, 1991:33).

Recent Police Brutality Incidents and Minorities. A large number of incidents displaying police brutality have received notoriety. They have occurred in several large United States cities at different periods of time. Anecdotal accounts demonstrate that a large number of police-citizen contacts, among certain segments of the population, are always of the law enforcing type (Jones-Brown, 2000). According to Gerald M. Caplan, a law professor at George Washington University, "it's almost

impossible to speak about the problem except in an anecdotal impressionistic manner" (Harrison 1991:17).

Media publicity of many incidents usually involves individuals of a disfavored race, class, or sexual orientation. All of the incidents involved violence such as torture, beating, or shooting of minority citizens by police officers. Many of the police-citizen incidents resulting in death, involved the police use of excessive force, that may not have been necessary.

Littlejohn (1981) describes many major incidents in Detroit involving police brutality. The most notorious incident involved the law enforcement officers from the Stop The Robberies, Enjoy Safe Streets (STRESS) program developed by the police department in 1971. STRESS, after its first year of operation, was responsible for the killing of more civilians than the entire department in the decade prior to its development. All of the victims, except one, were Black.

Since the 1991 Rodney King beating in Los Angeles, several additional incidents of police brutality against minorities have been publicized, such as the 1998 killing of 19-year-old Tyisha Miller in her car by officers from the Riverside police department, and the 1996 shootings of William Betzner, Eduardo Hurtado, and Jaime Jaurequi by officers from the San Fernando Valley police department.

In 1968, Chicago became a symbol of police brutality when police officers attacked protesters outside the Democratic National Convention in the presence of a national television audience (Human Rights Watch 1998). Recent complaints of police brutality have involved torturous acts as in the 1982 incident where Wilson alleged that officers inflicted upon him electric shocks, and he suffered burns after being placed over a hot radiator, and in the 1997 beating of Jeremiah Mearday, who suffered head injuries and a broken jaw (1998).

New York's police department, with its long history of police brutality has gone through a series of scandals involving corruption and the use of excessive force (Human Rights Watch 1998). The most recent incidents of police brutality to gain media exposure were the August 1997 incident where Abner Louima was severely beaten and sodomized with a plunger, and the 1999 fatal shooting of Amodou Diallo, who suffered 19 of the 41 shots fired at him. Both victims were black.

The Philadephia Police Department has the worst reputation for police brutality in the United States (Human Rights Watch 1998). Incidents of brutality include: 1) the 1990 shooting of Sean Wilson, who suffered nine bullets over the back portion of his body while being pressed faced down on a hard surface; 2) a 1992 incident where a suspect (name

not disclosed) caught urinating in an alley, was beaten, kicked, had his groin stepped on, and had his head slammed in a car; and 3) the 1994 killing of DeJesus after being hit in the head by an officer with his baton.

According to Amnesty International (1999), independent inquiries have also uncovered systematic abuses of minorities by some of the country's largest police departments. There have been claims that these departments have various discriminatory systems in place that are specifically used for selecting minorities to be stopped and searched. One such system (police profiling) has targeted mainly Blacks as suspected drug offenders. This practice has been so common that with media publicity it gained the notorious name *"driving while black--DWB"*. For example, the 1995 killing of Johnny Gammage by Pittsburgh's police officers and the April 1998 shooting of three young men by New Jersey Turnpike Troopers. These incidents serve as examples of the accusations that Blacks and Latinos are being stopped solely on the basis of race, are brutalized, and are arrested.

All of the publicized incidents described above were against minorities, especially young males. According to Amnesty International (1999), young Black and Latino males in inner city areas are most often the victims of police brutality. Even if not victimized themselves, these cases

may have made other minority members more aware, and more fearful of police brutality. This expectation of brutality by police can lead to negative attitudes toward police. As we shall see studies of race and attitudes do suggest that minorities have more negative attitudes.

Race and Attitudes Toward Police Brutality

Polivka (1984) analyzed citizens' attitudes toward police brutality using four scenarios involving police officers using abusive language, threats of arrest, threats to use force, and use of physical force and violence. He found a difference in the perception of Blacks' and Whites' interpretation of these scenarios. Blacks were far more likely to perceive them as instances of police brutality than Whites.

Huang and Vaughn (1996) examined attitudes toward the police using the data analyzed in the present report. Respondents were asked to give their views about whether or not police use of excessive force was a "serious problem, somewhat of a problem, minor problem, or not a problem at all" (1996:185). Results showed Blacks slightly higher with 67 percent perceiving a problem compared to 60 percent of Whites, and 58 percent of Hispanics who perceived the police use of excessive force as a problem.

Tuch and Weitzer (1997) analyzed trend data from three polls taken before and after three incidents of police brutality in the Los Angeles area: "the 1979 killing of Eulia Love; the 1991 beating of Rodney King; and the 1996 killings of two Mexican immigrants" (1997:642). One of the questions they addressed was whether or not African Americans, Latinos, and Whites differed in their reactions to incidents of police brutality? Results showed African Americans' approval rating of the police declined after each incident of police brutality. In the case of Eulia Love, 81 percent of blacks perceived the incident as a case of police brutality instead of proper use of force. Sixty-six percent of Latinos had that perception, and 51 percent of Whites held the same perception. Trends in the poll showed similar patterns of citizens perception in the Rodney King case.

The years following the 1991 Rodney King beating, police approval ratings in Los Angeles skyrocketed, specifically among Whites. Tuch and Weitzer (1997) attributed this to changes in the department (hiring of minority officers, change in police chief, etc.). The 1996 incident involving two Riverside County sheriff deputies who were video taped beating two Mexican immigrants was marked with a decline of citizens' approval rating of the police, especially among Blacks and Latinos. Seventy-five percent of Blacks perceived police brutality as a common practice,

while 38 percent of Whites held the same view. "Latinos are less likely than Blacks, but more likely than Whites, to view brutality as common" (1997:645).

Holmes (1998) compared Anglos (non-Hispanic) attitudes to Hispanic attitudes of police abusive practices in a Texas community. The 817 respondents came from four separate communities referred to as "barrios": the communities that directly surround the business district where law enforcement agents operate. Results showed that living in the "barrio" was strongly related to perceptions of police brutality. Both Hispanics and Anglos from the barrio were more likely than Anglos living in the "non-barrio" to report that they had seen police abusive behaviors.

The literature reviewed above on race perceptions of police brutality shows several trends. First, minorities view the police more negatively, and are more likely to believe that they are the targets of police abusive practice than are Whites. Second, Blacks are more likely to have a deep-rooted mistrust of the police based on a history of police abuse dating back to slavery. Third, minorities who have experienced negative contacts with law enforcement officers, whether or not those contacts resulted in legal or nonlegal actions, will not have favorable attitudes toward police brutality. And fourth, as discussed earlier, Whites'

negative views or myths of Blacks may be used to rationalize approval of police use of brutality toward Blacks.

Socioeconomic Status and Attitudes Toward Police Brutality

Research on the socioeconomic variable and its impact on the public's attitudes toward police brutality shows that few empirical studies have been performed, and those that have been performed reported unclear findings. Therefore, the present study uses both the conflict and cognitive theoretical approach as justification to revisit perceptions of police brutality and to determine if the ambiguity in the literature can be clarified.

Some studies indicate that citizens from a lower socioeconomic class are more likely to hold negative attitudes toward the police, than citizens from a higher socioeconomic class (Jacob 1971; Thomas and Hyman 1977). Lersch (1998) attributes this phenomenon to the fact that minorities from the lower socioeconomic class are more likely to experience police brutality.

In the original analysis of the data used in the present study, Huang and Vaughn (1996) argue that there is an indeterminate relationship between socioeconomic class and attitudes toward the police. In their study of attitudes toward the police use of excessive force, Huang and Vaughn (1996) found that people with less than a college

education were more likely to view the police use of excessive force as a problem than those who had a college education. Those with incomes between ($30,001 and $60,000) held more favorable attitudes toward the police use of force than those with incomes less than $30,000.

While results from the above studies reflect conflict theorists argument, Hindelang (1974) found no difference between education and attitudes toward the police; Winfree and Griffiths (1977) were uncertain in their findings on socioeconomic status and attitudes toward the police; Peek, Lowe, and Alston (1981) found that both low-income individuals and educated Whites held negative attitudes toward the police.

In addition, the National Opinion Research Center-General Social Surveys (1996) used scenarios which included some type of negative behavior from the citizen, such as, "Would you approve of a policeman striking a citizen who...had said vulgar and obscene things to the policeman" (1996:119)? Results showed no significant difference in the attitudes of the lower socioeconomic status and the higher socioeconomic status based on income and education. More than 95 percent of citizens disapproved.

Despite the contradictory findings on the socioeconomic variable, Rodriguez (1993) argued that citizens in the poor or low socioeconomic class believe that they suffer more

police brutality than other classes. This reflects the negative "affect" component of attitudes resulting from the images of the police through contact over a period of time (O'Brien 1978).

Further, complaints of police brutality are disproportionately from poor minorities, consistent with the negative attitudes that minority citizens hold toward the police (Scaglion and Condon 1980; Lersch 1998). Citizens' complaints against the police revealed that they were more likely to be filed by citizens living in areas with fewer white residents, lower educational levels, lower median incomes and higher levels of poverty and unemployment (Lersch 1998).

Police-Citizen Contact and Attitudes Toward Police Brutality

The literature explains that there are two types of police-citizen contacts: voluntary and involuntary. These may have differing influences on attitudes. Voluntary police-citizen contacts are those initiated by citizens who are victims of crime, witnesses to crimes, or wanting other types of police assistance. On the other hand, involuntary police-citizen contacts are those initiated by the police, especially traffic stops. This can vary from state to state. For example, a large number of involuntary police-

citizen contacts in New York City occur on the street or in subways.

Involuntary police-citizen contacts have been found to be a major influence on citizens' attitudes toward the police (Jacob 1971; Smith and Hawkins 1973; Scaglion and Condon 1980; Huang and Vaughn 1996). Involuntary police contacts for Blacks are often likely to be especially difficult perhaps for several reasons. First, young White police officers lack an understanding of ebonics (black slang), and are not capable of communicating with some Blacks who speak ebonics during an encounter (Hatchett 1996). Second, police may show a lack of respect for Blacks and other minorities when they interact (Mann 1993; Wortley, McMillan, and Hagan 1997). And third, contextual factors such as vacant lots, empty dwelling and abandoned buildings, which are more often found in minority neighborhoods, create involuntary contact between the citizens and the police. "The more frequent the police patrol certain neighborhoods, the more likely they are to cause community and individual resentment" (Parker et al. 1995:406).

Jacob (1971) analyzed respondents' perception of the police in three neighborhoods (black ghetto; white working-class; white middle-class) in Milwaukee. Results showed that Blacks' perceptions of the police were more negative, in some aspects, than those of the working-class and middle-

class Whites. Furthermore, when examining four contexts: calling the police for help; arrested or stopped by the police; contact with the police due to an accident; traffic violation, in which they may have had a police-citizen contact, Jacob found that ghetto Blacks reported having been arrested and stopped by the police more often than White working-class or White middle-class. From the sample, 43.8 percent of ghetto Blacks reported that they had been arrested or stopped compared to 33.8 percent of White working-class and 22.1 percent of White middle-class. Most White working-class reported that their police contacts were in the context of calling for help, and most White middle-class reported calling the police for auto accidents or assistance. Findings showed that ghetto blacks who had more negative contacts were more dissatisfied with the police.

Smith and Hawkins (1973:136) analyzed several variables to determine how citizens view the fairness of the police in the areas of "discrimination, selective law enforcement, and general feelings about police impartiality." Respondents who had voluntary contact with the police because of victimization were asked to give an evaluation of police performance during that contact. Results showed that respondents who were dissatisfied with the contact held negative attitudes toward police actions.

A survey by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (1996) analyzed 6,421 respondents of which 20.4 percent (N=1,308) reported having some type of contact with the police. Only 1.1 percent (N=14) respondents reported having had contact with the police where threat or use of force (hit, choked, sprayed with chemical or pepper spray, restrained by a police dog) was used. Most of those respondents who said that the police threatened or used force during the contact believed that they provoked the police into taking those measures. This finding suggests that there are situations in which citizens may be dissatisfied with a police-citizen contact, but will still approve of the police use of excessive force.

Huang and Vaughn (1996) analyzing the data used in the present study examined 547 respondents who had contact with the police two years prior to the study. Citizens' satisfaction with the police contact and several other factors such as race, gender, age, and education were regressed with several other variables (crime protection, crime solving, crime prevention, promptness, friendliness, fairness, and use of force) on citizens' attitudes toward the police. Findings showed that those respondents who were very satisfied with the police contact held positive attitudes toward the police.

Holmes' (1998) study on perceptions of abusive police practices provides an in-depth analysis of the police-citizen contact variable. The contact variable was measured by asking respondents "if they had any contact with the El Paso Police in the previous two years, and if they had, the nature of their contact" (1998:113). Four types of police contact were included: "arrest or family disturbance involving the respondent or their family; traffic citation or accident; other contact; no contact" (1998:113). The study found that police-citizen contacts, specifically traffic citations and family disturbances are sometimes of an antagonistic nature, and may result in an arrest. Respondents were more likely to view that police brutality occurred during those contacts.

A relationship between police-citizen contacts and attitudes toward the police is supported by the above research. Citizens' attitudes tend to be negative toward the police when experiencing involuntary contacts. Although Holmes (1998) and others have given us some insights of the influence of police-citizen contacts, further analysis of the police-citizen contact is necessary to establish a substantial relationship of attitudes toward police brutality.

Confidence in the Police and Attitudes Toward Police Brutality

Confidence in the police has echoed throughout the studies examined but not in relation to attitudes toward police brutality. It has been established that certain segments of the population are less trusting of the police than others. In addition, cognitive consistency theory predicts that high confidence leads to lower concern about brutality.

The National Opinion Research Center-General Social Survey (1996) examined citizens' attitude toward the police. Sixty-one percent of Whites reported having "a great deal" of confidence in the police, and 8 percent had "very little". In comparison, 34 percent of Blacks had "a great deal" of confidence while 24 percent had "very little". Older citizens had greater confidence in the police than younger citizens.

Tuch and Weitzer (1997) found that citizens' attitudes toward the police are influenced by well-publicized incidents of police brutality. "This applies not only to specific questions such as police brutality or racism, but also to global questions such as confidence in police and the way police handle their job" (1997:647). They analyzed the Los Angeles Times poll where citizens' were asked about their approval of the way the Los Angeles police department

was handling its job? In 1988, 74 percent of Whites, 64 percent of Blacks and 80 percent of Latinos approved. Almost a decade later, there was an increase in Whites' approval to 77 percent, a decrease in that of Blacks to 56 percent, and a decrease to 58 percent for Latinos.

Shaw et al. (1998) looked at trends in the attitudes toward the police, both on the community and national level by examining results from the Gallup Organization, Columbia Broadcasting System/*New York Times*, and Public Policy Research Institute, and Texas A&M University surveys that asked: "how much confidence do you, yourself, have in the police of your community" (1998:441). From 1993 to 1997, citizens' confidence in the police has not shown any major change. The responses of having "a great deal" of confidence in the police fluctuated between 22 percent and 26 percent in 1995.

The above findings show that Whites have more confidence in the police than other groups. As explained by Hubert William (a former New Jersey Police Chief), this is because Whites and Blacks receive differential treatment from the police (Hatchett 1996). These factors, among others may have some relationship to those citizens with high confidence level in the police.

On the other hand, Skolnick and Fyfe (1993:16) believe that the "so-called war on drugs" has reinforced the

mistrust and resentment that certain groups hold toward the police. "Mistrust and hostility predictably follow upon abuse and repression" are some of the reasons for the negative perceptions held by certain groups (1993:16). Those groups that do not trust the police, obviously do not have a great deal of confidence in the police, and this will likely make them more concerned about police brutality.

Fear of Crime and Victimization and Attitudes Toward Police Brutality

Fear of crime is a growing reality "stimulated by dramatic incidents" (Blumstein 1999:7), of violent crimes (Polly Klaas, Nancy Kerrigan, the Long Island commuter train shooting rampage, the Menendez brothers, and Reginald Denny) which contribute to citizens' sentiments (Warr 1995). The experience of victimization (Gunter 1982; Moore and Trojanowicz 1988), and the belief that one is a target of crime can elicit a powerful fear reaction (Gunter 1982). According to Moore and Tojanowicz (1988:1):

> When a ghetto teenager is shot to death in a gang war, when an elderly woman is mugged for her social security check, when a nurse is raped in a hospital parking lot, when one driver is punched by another in a dispute over a parking place, when a black family's new home is vandalized--society's attention is naturally focused on the victims and their material losses. Their wounds, bruises, lost property, and inconvenience can be seen, touched, and counted. These are the concrete signs of criminal victimization.

In any event, the police are called upon to solve crimes and capture the criminals which brings about an interaction between the police and two groups of citizens: those who are victims who may fear crime and victimization, and those who are the criminals. Therefore, if some citizens are afraid of crime and view the police as the solution, it can be argued that those citizens may be less likely to view police use of excessive force as a problem.

The fear of crime has been conceptualized in many different ways. According to Skogan (1999), the following four measures have been adopted by the National Institute of Justice as appropriate for showing the variations in individuals' fear of crime. Three dimensions are cognitive: 1) individuals' concern about crime which relates to their beliefs of crime; 2) the risk of victimization which refers to individuals' beliefs that they are likely to be victims of crimes; and 3) the threat of crime which emphasizes "the potential for harm that people feel crime holds for them" (1999:48). The fourth dimension approaches fear from a behavioral perspective which involves individual's reaction to their fear of crime. In other words, the extreme and frequency individuals will go through to protect themselves from crime.

Fear of crime and victimization have been associated with several demographic factors such as income, educational

attainment and race, to situational factors like the publicity of crime, past personal experiences, knowledge of the victimization of friends or relatives and high crime neighborhoods (1999). Neighborhood incivilities such as abandoned storefronts, unkept lots, graffiti, litter, noise, and public drunks are often as powerful in generating feelings of fear, as is crime itself (LaGrange, Ferraro, and Supancic 1992). Although the literature is limited in terms of citizens who fear crime and victimization and their perceptions of police brutality, specifically, studies do relate citizens' fear of crime to the police in general.

Smith and Hawkins (1973) presented several hypotheses pertaining to fear of crime or victimization in relationship to attitudes toward the police. Results did not support their hypothesis that individuals who perceived a great deal of threat of victimization will hold more negative views of the police. In other words, threat of victimization was not a factor influencing citizens' attitudes toward the police. The results were the same when victims and non-victims attitudes were compared in the test of the hypothesis that victims of crime and victimization will be more likely to hold negative attitudes toward the police.

Thomas and Hyman (1977) performed a study on *Perceptions of Crime, Fear of Victimization, and Public Perceptions of Police Performance.* They investigated the

impact of several variables (demographics, occupational prestige, experience as a victim of a criminal offense and fear of victimization) on the public's evaluation of police performance in Chesapeake, Norfolk, Portsmouth and Virginia Beach. While results of their analysis showed that 64.4 percent of the public agreed that increasing crime rates have contributed to an increase in their fear of being victimized by criminals, 78 percent of the public perceived that the police perform effectively and deserve to be complimented. In addition, 66.3 percent did not perceive that the police discriminates against the poor and minorities, 71 percent said that the police were respectful, and only 8.5 believed that the police were "prone to employ undue force or violence" (Thomas and Hyman 1977:313).

Parker et al. (1995) used an ecological approach to examine residents in "high crime" and "low crime" areas. Attitudes toward the police behavior were measured using the following descriptive terms: being smart or dumb, being friendly or unfriendly, and being kind or cruel. Findings showed respondents who scored negative on attitudes toward the police and their behavior lived in the high crime neighborhoods.

The literature has contributed some important insights about citizens' fear of crime and victimization in relationship to several factors. Females, non-whites, lower

educated, older individuals, and the poor (Hindelang 1974; Erskine 1975; Thomas and Hyman 1977; Haghighi and Sorensen 1996) were more likely to have a concern about crime and are "consistently most frightened of the streets in their particular neighborhoods" (Erskine 1975:132). Therefore, further study may determine if fear of crime and victimization are associated with perceptions of police brutality.

SUMMARY AND HYPOTHESES

The first purpose of the present study is to examine factors that may influence the public's perception toward police use of excessive force (brutality). Review of the literature shows that police brutality continues to be a widespread problem, yet few empirical studies address the public's attitudes' toward the police use of force. Except for race, factors that may determine perceptions of police use of force lack empirical analysis. Further analysis can provide insight of how the public feels about police use of excessive force.

Another purpose of the present study is to examine a representative national sample. The bulk of studies performed on attitudes toward the police and police brutality, analyzed data from specific states or regions. Thus, opinions of the public's attitudes are from selected

areas which may have lower incidents of police brutality and have more or less positive attitudes.

Findings from the present study can also contribute to enhance police-community relations. O'Brien (1978:303) notes that "attitude of the public toward any organization is critical because it determines the effectiveness of the organization in great measure." It is, therefore, of importance to revisit the subject analyzing data from a broader sample of the population to determine if the attitudes held in previous studies reflect the population as a whole. The data collected by Flanagan and Longmire (1995) provide information to address these issues. The following hypotheses are tested in this study:

1. Blacks will be more likely to view police use of excessive force as a serious problem than Whites.

2. Respondents from a lower socioeconomic status will be more likely to view police use of excessive force as a serious problem than those from a higher socioeconomic status.

3. Respondents who are dissatisfied with their contact with the police will be more likely to view police use of excessive force as a serious problem.

4. Respondents who have a great deal of/or high confidence in the police will be less likely to view the police use of excessive force as a serious problem.

5. Respondents who frequently worry about crime and victimization will be less likely to view police use of excessive force as a serious problem.

In addition to testing the above hypotheses, five of the independent variables will be examined to consider their relative importance and how they relate to possible racial differences in the views of the police use of excessive force.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The primary purpose of this study was to examine variables that may relate to the public's perceptions of the police use of excessive force. Re-analysis of secondary data were used to test the hypotheses. This chapter gives details of the methods used to measure the variables and testing of the hypotheses outlined in Chapter II.

DATA COLLECTION

The data for this thesis came from a 1995 National Opinion Survey of Crime and Justice (NOSCJ) sponsored by the Criminal Justice Center's Survey Research Program at Sam Houston State University. The NOSCJ was a collaborative investigation by several researchers. The primary investigators, Timothy Flanagan and Dennis Longmire (1995) collected the data to provide legislators and public officials with information on the public's attitudes toward crime and other criminal justice topics. Sims (1996) provided the discussion on the Development and *Methods of sample*, Huang and Vaughn (1996) analyzed the data on the *Public's Attitudes Toward the Police*, and Haghighi and Sorensen (1996) analyzed the data on *America's Fear of Crime*.

The questions in the survey mirrored those found in the annual Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics, Gallup and Harris surveys, *Los Angeles Times* polls, and the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) General Social Survey. "It was important to include questions that have been the mainstay of public opinion polls on crime over the past 30 years" to allow for the reporting of consistency or changes in the public's attitudes over a period of time (Sims 1996:171).

Questions from scholarly journals combined with those from the national polls produced a questionnaire which concentrated in several areas of the criminal justice system. The present study focused on questions from the areas of the public's fear of crime, and attitudes toward police. Responses were obtained via telephone interviews with an average length of 26 minutes per interview. This followed Lavrakas' (1993) suggested range of 20 to 30 minutes. The questionnaire was evaluated several times prior to its use for the telephone interview.

Early drafts, and the final questionnaire were reviewed by the study team, the contributors, and the staff at Sam Houston State University's Criminal Justice Center and the Texas A&M Public Policy Research Institute. They pretested the questionnaire and problem questions were either eliminated or revised. In anticipation of a large number of

Hispanic respondents, a Spanish version of the questionnaire was drafted.

POPULATION AND SAMPLING

All working, listed and unlisted telephone numbers in the 50 states of the United States comprised the population. A random sample of 6,000 was selected. From that target sample, a total of 17 percent (1,005) interviews were completed for the dependent and independent variables applicable to this study.

Survey Sampling, Inc. (SSI) provided the sampling frame for the survey using a large data base, specialized computer programs, and classical statistical techniques. The authors claimed that these techniques produced an unbiased sample of telephone numbers in the United States, and controlled for an equal probability of selection of homes that consisted of more than one telephone number. From this sampling frame a proportionate stratified random sample was selected. "In this way, the sample is distributed across all counties in proportion to their share of the total population of telephone homes" (Sims 1996:173).

Next, a random sample of respondents within a household was selected by applying the "last birthday method" to control for under sampling of males. That is, only males 18 years or older with the most recent birthdays were first

targeted to obtain the ratio of males to females in the population. After the ratio of males was accomplished, the "last birthday method" was eliminated.

The data were further weighed using two weighting techniques: one controlled for an equal selection of ethnic and gender groups between the sample and the population, and the other controlled for an equal selection of homes with more than one telephone numbers, and homes with a number of people. The 1990 Census data were used as a landmark to weigh for the number respondents who were 18 years and older adults by ethnic and gender groups. The sample was then adjusted to the population distribution of 1990 census sample.

Interview Procedures

Telephone interviews were conducted June in 1995. A computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) system was used to gather the data. The researchers used this method because it controls for the accuracy of data gathering (Sims 1996). The quality of the CATI also provided a mechanism that prevented any mis-dialing of numbers or contacting of respondents that were not in the targeted time zone.

MEASUREMENT OF VARIABLES

The dependent variable used in the present study is

persons' perception/evaluation of the police use of excessive force. Race, socioeconomic status, police-citizen contact, confidence in the police, and fear of crime and victimization comprise the independent variables.

Dependent Variable

The 1996 National Opinion Survey question was used to measure perceptions of the police use of excessive force. "In some places in the nation there have been charges of excessive use of force by the police. In your community would you say this is a serious problem, somewhat of a problem, a minor problem, or not a problem? Responses were recoded from the original data: Serious problem--coded as 4, Somewhat of a problem--coded as 3, Minor problem--coded as 2, Not a problem--coded as 1, Don't know--coded as 8, and Refused--coded as 9. A low score means that a respondent does not view police use of excessive as a problem. Responses "Don't know" and "Refused" were recoded as missing data.

Independent Variables

Race. Race and ethnicity are represented by four distinct categories. To the question, "Which of the following best describes your racial or ethnic group?" The categories are: "White--coded as 1, Hispanic--coded as 2,

African American--coded as 3, Other--coded as 4, Don't know--coded as 8, and Refused coded as 9. For the analysis of the first hypothesis in the present study, race was recoded into a dichotomous variable: Whites--coded as 1, and African American--coded as 2. "Hispanics", "Other", "Don't Know", and "Refused" were recoded as missing data.

Socioeconomic Status. Respondents' socioeconomic status was measured using their educational attainment level and family income as indicators. Educational attainment level was measured by asking respondents "What was the last grade of school completed?" There were 7 possible responses: Grade 0-4--coded as 1, Grade 5-8--coded as 2, Grade 9-11 (some high school)--coded as 3, Grade 12 (high school graduate)--coded as 4, Grade 13-15 (some college, business or trade school)--coded as 5, Grade 16 (college graduate) coded as 6, Graduate work--coded as 7, Don't know--coded as 8, and Refused--coded as 9. In the present study responses were recoded into 4 response categories: Grade 0-8--coded as 1 (no high school), Grade 9-12--coded as 2 (high school), Grade 13-16--coded as 3, and Graduate work--coded as 4. The higher the score, the higher educational attainment. Response categories "Don't know", and "Refused" were recoded as missing data.

Respondents' incomes were measured asking "Please tell me your annual household income," and recording one of the

following choices: Less than $15,000--coded as 1, $15,000 to $30,000--coded as 2, $30,000 and $60,000--coded as 3, Over $60,000--coded as 4, Don't know--coded as 8, and Refused coded as 9. In the present study, response categories "Don't know", and "Refused" were recoded as missing data.

Police-citizen Contact. Only respondents who had a police contact within the previous two years were asked about that contact. Respondents were asked, "Would you say you were very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, somewhat dissatisfied or very dissatisfied?" Responses were as follows: Very satisfied-- coded as 1, Somewhat satisfied--coded as 2, Neither--coded as 3, Somewhat dissatisfied--coded as 4, and Very dissatisfied--coded as 5. For the purpose of the present study response categories "Don't know" and "Refused" were recoded as missing data.

Confidence in the Police. Seven questions were used to assess the public's confidence in the police. Six of the 7 questions were used to create a scale measuring confidence in the police. Three questions rated police's ability to protect respondents from crime, solve crime, and prevent crime. Response choices ranged from 1 to 4: A great deal-- recoded as 4, Some--recoded as 3, Little--recoded as 2, and None at all--recoded as 1. Response categories "Don't know" and "Refused" were recoded as missing data. Three other

questions rated police on their promptness, friendliness, and fairness. Response choices were: Very high—recoded as 5, High—recoded as 4, Average—recoded as 3, Low-recoded as 2, and Very low—recoded as 1. Responses "Don't know", and "Refused" were recoded as missing data. A high score means that respondents have a great deal of confidence in the police.

The six items were considered to form a confidence in the police scale. In a test of reliability, the items in the new scale yielded a Chronbach alpha of .85.

Fear of Crime and Victimization. Fear of crime and victimization were measured using 7 questions which asked about respondents' fear of personal and property offenses toward themselves or someone in their family. Respondents were specifically asked: "Do you worry frequently, somewhat frequently, seldom or never about yourself or someone in your family (getting sexually assaulted; being attacked while driving your car; getting mugged; getting beaten up; knifed or shot; getting murdered; your home being burglarized while someone is at home; your home being burglarized while no one is at home)?" Responses ranged from 1 to 4 and were recoded as follows: Very frequently-recoded as 4, "Somewhat frequently—recoded as 3, Seldom-recoded as 2, and Never—recoded as 1. For the purpose of the present study, response categories "Don't

know" and "Refused" were recoded as missing data. The higher the score, the more a respondent worry about crime and victimization.

These items were then combined to create a fear of crime and victimization scale. The test of reliability of the new scale yielded a Chronbach alpha of .86.

Intervening Variables. Race, coded as (Whites, and Non-whites: African American, Hispanics, and Other), socio-economic status, police-citizen contact, confidence in the police, and fear of crime and victimization variables were used as intervening variable to extend the analysis in determining the relative influence of each variable on the police use of excessive force.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

SPSS for Windows was used to analyze the data for the present study. Scale reliability was assessed by Chronbach alpha 1951 for two variables (confidence in the police, and fear of crime and victimization). Performing a frequency distribution of the data provided descriptive statistics of the sample. Correlation coefficients were used to assess the nature of the relationship between the variables. Cross tabulation was performed using Chi Square Test of Independence, and Multiple Regression Analysis was perform

to test the significance of the relationship between the dependent and independent variables.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Secondary data were re-analyzed to test the research hypotheses in the present study. The original researchers collected the data through the use of the Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) system using a 113-item survey questionnaire. This technique provided a high level of quality control for data collection.

However, for a national survey, the number of completed interviews appear to be rather low. From a 6000 sample, only 1,005 (17 percent) interviews were actually completed to compile the data. Factors such as a large number of disconnected phone calls (2,023), hearing-impaired citizens (103), no answers, busy phone lines, answering machines (946), business or government phones (367), refusals (612), and call backs not completed (944) are some of the limitations cited by the authors. However low, when the national distribution of United States households with telephones were compared to the distribution of surveys completed by regions (unweighted sample), a high percentage of completion was observed. For example, 5 percent of the population represented the states in the New England region's households with telephones. Four percent of the

surveys from that region were completed which represents the lowest percentage of completed surveys. On the other hand, only 16 percent of the population represented the states in the Pacific region's households with telephones, but 19 percent of the surveys from that region were completed.

While secondary data are cheaper and faster than original surveys, there are several limitations to the present study. It is evident that the data were collected for Flanagan and Longmire's study, and because of that, it is not quite ideal for the present study. First, the hypotheses and analyses are limited to the questions in the data. Take for instance, the following specific question limits respondents' perceptions of the police use of excessive force to their respective neighborhoods: "In some places in the nation there have been charges of excessive use of force by the police. In your community would you say this is a serious problem, somewhat of a problem, a minor problem or not a problem at all" (Flanagan and Longmire 1996:185)? While communities in Brooklyn or the Bronx of New York city are notorious for sensational police-citizen clashes, this may not be the case in a community like Long Island, New York. Thus, responses from respondents living in the Mid-Atlantic may not be a representative of the population of that region, rather, responses may be a representative of the community in which respondents live.

Another limitation of the present study is the low representation of Blacks. There was 10 percent in the original data, and 7.7 percent(after recoding), compared to about 12.8 percent (U.S. Bureau of Census 2000) in the United States population. Since the major purpose of the analyses is to further investigate racial differences, there is the possibility that these respondents may not be a representative of the population. On the other hand, the selection of African Americans in the study parallels that of Whites so that overall, the original researchers argue, the results are comparable to other national samples.

In addition, it must be noted that the data for this study were collected in 1995, and since that date, several major incidents involving the police use of excessive force have occurred. If the data were collected after these incidents, citizens' perceptions of police use of excessive force may be different, thus the data may not reflect present views.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The purpose of this research is to examine variables
that may influence the public's perceptions of the police
use of excessive force. Secondary data were used to re-
analyze factors that may influence the public's perceptions
of the police use of excessive force.

DESCRIPTIVE CHARACTERISTICS

The secondary data provided a sample of 1,005
respondents, but for the purpose of analysis, recoding
reduced the number of respondents for several of the
question items. A frequency test providing the descriptive
statistics of the data can be viewed in *Table 1*.

In the total sample of 1,005 respondents, 52 percent
(N = 524) were females, and 48 percent (N = 481) were males.
The sample provided 974 usable responses for the race
variable. Eighty-four percent (N = 817) of the respondents
were White, 7.9 percent (N = 77) were Blacks, 7.9 percent
(N = 77) Hispanics, and .3 percent (N = 3) said that they
were "Other". Their ages ranged from 18 to 99 years of age,
with a mean age of 45.61 years and a standard deviation of
18.04.

The data provided 906 respondents who reported their

Table 1. Descriptive Characteristics

Variables	F	Percentage
Sex		
Male	481	48.0
Female	524	52.0
Race		
Whites	817	83.9
Blacks	77	7.9
Hispanics	77	7.9
Other	3	.3
Annual Household Income		
Less than $15,000	135	15.0
Between $15,000 and $30,000	234	26.0
Between $30,000 and $60,000	337	37.0
Over $60,000	200	22.0
Highest Grade Completed		
No High School	23	2.3
High School	392	39.4
College	460	46.3
Graduate	119	12.0
Age		

Mean = 45.61
Range = 18-99
SD   = 18.04

annual household incomes. Fifteen percent (N = 135) reported annual household incomes of less than $15,000, 26 percent (N = 234) reported incomes between $15,000 and $30,000, 37 percent (N = 337) reported incomes between $30,000 and $60,000, while 22 percent (N = 200) said their incomes were more than $60,000.

A total of 994 respondents reported their educational attainment level. Two percent (N = 23) had no high school education, 39 percent (N = 392) had some high school education or graduated from high school, 46 percent (N = 460) reported to have some college education or had graduated, and 12 percent (N = 119) said that they had a graduate education.

CROSSTABULAR ANALYSIS

Cross tabulation of attitudes toward the police use of excessive force was performed to see if significant differences exist between groups with different racial backgrounds, socioeconomic status, and level of satisfaction with the police. The findings are presented in frequencies and percentages, and results of Chi Square Test are reported.

Race and Police Use of Excessive Force

The first hypothesis states that *Blacks will be more*

likely to view police use of excessive force as a serious problem than Whites. To test this hypothesis, race was recoded into two response categories, Blacks and Whites, excluding all other categories. Police use of excessive force was recoded so that a high score signified a "Serious problem".

Results from the cross tabulation of race with attitudes toward the police use of excessive force (displayed in *Table 2)* show that of the 859 respondents, 91.4 percent (N = 785) were Whites with 15 percent (N = 118) viewing the police use of excessive force as somewhat or a serious problem. Blacks accounted for 8.6 percent (N = 74) of which 36 percent see the police use of excessive force as somewhat or a serious problem. Results of chi-square = 27.970, df = 3, with a statistically significance level (p < .0001) which signifies a difference in the way Blacks and Whites view the police use of excessive force. Blacks were 3 times more likely than Whites to perceive the police use of excessive force as a serious problem. Although race was weakly, but significantly correlated with the police use of excessive force showing a Contingency Coefficient of .178, (p = .000), thus the relationship observed is in the predicted direction.

Table 2. Race and Police Use of Excessive Force

	Police Use of Excessive Force							
Race	Not a Problem		Minor Problem		Somewhat of a Problem		Serious Problem	
	F	Percent	F	Percent	F	Percent	F	Percent
Whites	(465)	59.0	(202)	25.7	(91)	11.6	(27)	3.4
Blacks	(26)	35.1	(21)	28.4	(18)	24.3	(9)	12.2
Total	(491)	57.2	(223)	26.0	(109)	12.7	(36)	4.2
Chi Square (df = 3)			27.970*					
Contingency Coefficient			.178*					

N = 859
* $p < .0001$

Socioeconomic Status and Police Use of Excessive Force.

The second hypothesis states that *respondents from a lower socioeconomic status will be more likely to view the police use of excessive force as a serious problem than those from a higher socioeconomic status.* Respondents' highest grade of completion and annual household incomes were used to test this hypothesis. Highest grade completed was coded into 4 response categories ranging from no education to graduate education to correspond with the income response categories. Respondents with a high education and a high income represent the higher socioeconomic status.

Highest Grade Completed. Cross tabulation results of this analysis presented in *Table 3a,* show that 954 respondents provided usable response for this analysis. In the sample, 2.7 percent (N = 3) respondents with graduate education perceived the police use of excessive force as a serious problem, while 8.7 percent (N = 2) with no high school perceived the police use of excessive force as a serious problem. Results do not indicate statistical significance. The chi-square = 14.340, df = 9, and (p = .111) which is greater than alpha at .05 is not significant. Thus, they do not support the hypothesis.

Annual Household Income. The second variable measuring respondents' socioeconomic status was annual household

Table 3a. Socioeconomic Status and Police Use of
Excessive Force (by education)

Cross tabulation of Socioeconomic Status Using
Respondents' Highest Grade Completed as a
Predictor Variable.

Police Use of Excessive Force

Highest Grade Completed	Not a Problem (F)	Percent	Minor Problem (F)	Percent	Somewhat of a Problem (F)	Percent	Serious Problem (F)	Percent
No High School	(14)	60.9	(3)	13.0	(4)	17.4	(2)	8.7
High School	(223)	60.7	(80)	20.8	(47)	12.6	(24)	6.2
College	(226)	52.1	(128)	29.5	(57)	13.1	(23)	5.3
Graduate	(60)	53.1	(33)	29.2	(17)	15.0	(3)	2.7
Total	(533)	55.9	(244)	25.6	(125)	13.1	(52)	5.5

Chi-square (df = 9)   14.340

N = 954
p > .05

income. This was cross tabulated with perceptions of the police use of excessive force. The results displayed in *Table 3b* show that 872 respondents were included in the analysis. Of those with an income over $60,000, 3.6 percent viewed the police use of excessive force as a serious problem. Of those respondents who reported incomes less than $15,000, 8.5 percent viewed the police use of excessive force as a serious problem. The results support the hypothesis that there is a significant difference between income levels and perceptions of the police use of excessive force with chi-square = 26.709, df = 9, (p = .002). Individuals with lower incomes were twice as likely to view the police use of excessive force as a serious problem as those with higher incomes.

Police-citizen Contact and Police Use of Excessive Force

The third hypothesis states that *respondents who are dissatisfied with their contact with the police will be more likely to view the police use of excessive force as a serious problem*. Responses of "Don't know" and "Refused" were coded as missing data. This provided a new sample size of 544 respondents with 523 usable responses. Results of the cross tabulation analysis indicated a statistical significance level of (p < .0001) with a chi-square = 104.218, df = 12. A test of the strength of relationship

Table 3b. Socioeconomic Status and Police Use of
            Excessive Force (by income)

Cross tabulation of Socioeconomic Status Using
Respondents' Annual Household Income as a
Predictor Variable.

Police Use of Excessive Force

Annual Household Income	Not a Problem (F)	Percent	Minor Problem (F)	Percent	Somewhat of a Problem (F)	Percent	Serious Problem (F)	Percent
Less than $15,000	(74)	56.9	(22)	16.9	(23)	17.7	(11)	8.5
Between $15,000 and $30,000	(129)	57.8	(53)	23.8	(24)	10.8	(17)	7.6
Between $30,000 and $60,000	(184)	56.6	(85)	26.2	(47)	14.5	(9)	2.8
Over $60,000	(95)	49.0	(69)	35.6	(23)	11.9	(7)	3.6
Total	(482)	55.3	(229)	26.3	(117)	13.4	(44)	5.0

Chi-square =   26.709*
(df = 9)

N = 872
*$p < .05$

yielded a Contingency Coefficient of .408, (p = .000).

Data in *Table 4* show that 28.1 percent (N = 16) of respondents who were very dissatisfied with police contacts viewed the police use of excessive force as a serious problem, while 2.1 percent (N = 4) who were very satisfied with police contacts said that the police use of excessive force was a serious problem. These results support the hypothesis.

BIVARIATE CORRELATION ANALYSIS

Bivariate Correlations were used to examine the strength of a linear association between respondents' confidence in the police, fear of crime and victimization, and the police use of excessive force. A Correlation Matrix is presented in *Table 5,* including correlations of all variables used in the present study.

Confidence in the Police and Police Use of Excessive

The fourth hypothesis in the present study predicts that *the higher respondents' confidence are in the police the less likely they will view the police use of excessive force as a serious problem.* To measure confidence in the police six questions rating police abilities were combined to create a scale which produced a Chronbach alpha = .85. Responses were recoded so that a high score signifies high

Table 4. Police-citizen Contact and Police Use of Excessive
Force

Police Use of Excessive Force

Satisfied with Police Contact	Not a Problem (F) Percent		Minor Problem (F) Percent		Somewhat of a Problem (F) Percent		Serious Problem (F) Percent	
Very satisfied	(132)	68.4	(45)	23.2	(13)	6.7	(4)	2.1
Somewhat satisfied	(98)	54.1	(52)	28.7	(28)	15.5	(3)	1.7
Neither	(20)	55.6	(13)	36.1	(3)	8.3	(0)	
Somewhat dis-satisfied	(28)	50.9	(11)	20.0	(11)	20.0	(5)	9.1
Very dis-satisfied	(19)	33.3	(6)	10.5	(16)	28.1	(16)	28.1
Total	(297)	56.8	(127)	24.3	(71)	13.6	(28)	5.4

Chi Square   104.218*
df = 12

Contingency Coefficient   .408*

N = 523
*p < .0001

Table 5. Correlation Matrix of Bivariate Relationships
Between Dependent and Independent Variables

Bivariate Relationships between Respondents' confidence
in the police, fear of crime and victimization,
including (race, socioeconomic status: education and
income, satisfaction with the police), and police use
of excessive force:

VAR	Y	X_1	X_2	X_3	X_4	X_5
Y	1.000	.210	.020 -.027	-.329**	-.346**	.153**
X_1		1.000	-.095** .120**	-.137**	-.156**	.062
X_2			1.000 1.000	.101* .041	.073* -.046	.062 .049
X_3				1.000	.674**	-.027
X_4					1.000	-.117**
X_5						1.000

Y = Police Use of Excessive Force
X_1 = Race
X_2 = SES (Education, Income)
X_3 = Satisfaction with Police Contact
X_4 = Confidence in the Police
X_5 = Fear of Crime and Victimization

**. Correlation significant at the 0.01 level.
*. Correlation significant at the 0.05 level.

confidence in the police. Bivariate correlations show a low to moderate significant inverse relationship with Pearson's r = -.329, (p = .000) supporting the hypothesis that the more confidence respondents have in the police, the less likely they will view the police use of excessive force as a serious problem. Results also show that there is a moderate to strong relationship between confidence in the police and satisfaction with police-citizen contacts showing Pearson's r = .674, (p = .000).

Fear of Crime and Victimization and Police Use of Excessive Force

The final hypothesis in the present study states that *respondents who frequently worry about crime and victimization will be less likely to view police use of excessive force as a serious problem.* Fear of crime was measured by combining seven questions about respondents' fear of personal and property offenses into a scale yielding a Chronbach alpha = .86. Responses were recoded so that the higher the score, the more respondents worry about crime and victimization. The bivariate correlation shows a weak, but significant positive relationship between fear of crime and victimization, and police use of excessive force with Pearson's r = .153, (p = .000) which is in the opposite direction predicted by the hypothesis. The results also

showed an inverse relationship between fear of crime and victimization, and confidence in the police with Pearson's $r = -.117$, $(p = .001)$.

MULTIPLE LINEAR REGRESSION

Cross tabular analysis showed that race was one of the strongest factors predicting attitudes toward the police use of excessive force. This is consistent with Huang and Vaughn (1996) who analyzed the original data. There were also differences in the perceptions of respondents from different socioeconomic status, and significant differences in the perceptions of respondents' satisfaction with their police-citizen contact, and the police use of excessive force. In addition, bivariate correlations show that respondents' confidence in the police and fear of crime and victimization were related to their perceptions of the police use of excessive force, and are moderately correlated among themselves. To further understand racial differences in the perceptions of the police use of excessive force, these factors were used as intervening variables in several multiple regression analyses.

Racial Differences on Intervening Variables

Results of the test of first hypothesis described above using cross tabulation show that Blacks were three times

more likely than Whites to perceive the police use of excessive force as a serious problem. A weak to moderate correlation of .210 was observed between race and the police use of excessive force. Multiple Regression was performed to see if the observed racial differences in perceptions could be explained by the intervening variables: socioeconomic status, police-citizen contact, confidence in the police, and fear of crime and victimization. Five regression models are showing the amount of variance that each independent (intervening) variable contributed in explaining the dependent variable, and changes in the effect of race (if any). *Tables 6* and *7* display these results.

Model I: Race and The Police Use of Excessive Force. For this analysis, race was recoded into a dichotomous variable with Whites--coded as 0, and Non-whites: African Americans, Hispanics, and all other--coded as 1. In this model race accounted for 4 percent (R^2 = .044) of the total variation in the perceptions of the police use of excessive force, $F(1, 933)$ = 43.09, (p = .000), adjusted R^2 = .043 with a beta weight (standardized multiple regression coefficients) of .210, (p = .000).

Model II a/b: Race, Socioeconomic Status (highest grade completed and annual household income), and The Police Use of Excessive Force. Respondents' highest grade completed was next added to the equation in *Model IIa.* The variance

Table 6. Multiple Regression of Attitudes Toward The
          Police Use of Excessive Force on Independent
          (Intervening) Variables Showing Explained
          Variance

	Analysis of Intervening Variables Effects on Race (Change in Variance and Probability) in Five Models:	
	R-squared	Probability
Model I Non-whites	.044	.000*
Model IIa Non-whites Highest Grade Completed	.048	.000*
Model IIb Non-whites Highest Grade Completed Annual Household Income	.058	.000*
Model III Non-whites Highest Grade Completed Annual Household Income Police-citizen Contact	.156	.000*
Model IV Non-whites Highest Grade Completed Annual Household Income Police-citizen Contact Confidence in Police	.189	.000*
Model V Non-whites Highest Grade Completed Annual Household Income Police-citizen Contact Confidence in Police Fear of Crime and Victimization	.189	.000*

Note: Reference category for Non-whites is Whites.
       *p < .0001

Table 7. Multiple Regression of Attitudes Toward The Police Use of Excessive Force Showing Important Independent (Intervening) Variables.

Analysis Showing Importance of Intervening Variables When Added to the Equation (Beta = Standardized Coefficients and Probability):

	Beta	Probability
Model I		
Non-whites	.210	.000**
Model IIa		
Non-whites	.217	.000**
Highest Grade Completed	.057	.080
Model IIb		
Non-whites	.233	.000**
Highest Grade Completed	.081	.023*
Annual Household Income	-.026	.470
Model III		
Non-whites	.214	.000**
Highest Grade Completed	.086	.059
Annual Household Income	-.027	.557
Police-citizen Contact	.307	.000**
Model IV ***		
Non-whites	.194	.000**
Highest Grade Completed	.095	.044*
Annual Household Income	-.010	.830
Police-citizen Contact	.152	.010*
Confidence in Police	-.240	.000**
Model V		
Non-whites	.192	.000**
Highest Grade Completed	.093	.051
Annual Household Income	-.011	.821
Police-citizen Contact	.154	.010*
Confidence in Police	-.233	.000**
Fear of Crime and Victimization	.031	.495

Note: Reference category for Non-whites is Whites
*p < .05   **p < .0001   ***Model shows best fit

in the perceptions of the police use of excessive force increased slightly almost to 5 percent (R^2 = .048) with $F(2,$ 924)= 23.16, (p = .000), adjusted R^2 = .046. Highest grade completed had no effect on the observed racial differences in the perceptions of the police use of excessive force since beta weight for race remained significant and increased to .217, (p = .000). Education showed an insignificant beta weight of .057, (p = .080).

When annual household income was added to the equation in *Model IIb,* the three variables accounted for almost 6 percent (R^2 = .058) of the variance, another slight increase in the perceptions of the police use of excessive force with $F(3, 844)$ = 17.204, (p = .000), adjusted R^2 = .054. Annual household income showed no effect on the observed racial differences in respondents' attitudes toward the police use of excessive force. It strengthened the effect of the highest grade completed in the model with a beta of .081, (p = .023). Race remains the most important factor influencing respondents' perceptions of the police use of excessive force with the largest significant beta weight at .233, (p = .000); and annual household incomes showed a non-significant negative beta of -.026, (p = .470).

Model III: Race, Socioeconomic Status (highest grade completed and annual household income), Police-citizen Contact, and The Police Use of Excessive Force. This model

with four variables, explained over 15 percent of the variance from *Model IIb* with $R^2 = 0.156$, $F_{(4, 468)} = 21.634$, $(p = .000)$, adjusted $R^2 = .149$. While adding support for the police-citizen contact hypothesis, police-citizen contact has no effect on racial differences in the perceptions of the police use of excessive force. The beta weights in *Model III* (displayed in *Table 7*) show that race slightly decreased, no change in the highest grade completed and household annual income, but beta for police-citizen contact is the highest with a significant beta of .307, $(p = .000)$, suggesting independent contribution. Race remains significant with a beta of .214, $(p = .000)$; highest grade completed at .086, $(p = .059)$; and annual household income at -.027, $(p = .557)$. These results signify that differences observed in previous models are explained by the type of police-citizen contact experienced by the respondents, regardless of race.

Model IV: Race, Socioeconomic Status (highest grade completed and annual household income), Police-citizen Contact, Confidence in the Police, and The Police Use of Excessive Force. Confidence in the police was next variable added to the multiple regression equation. Results showed that this model explained 19 percent $(R^2 = .189)$ of the variance, a slight increase, in perceptions of the police use of excessive force with $F_{(5, 423)} = 19.758$, $(p = .000)$,

adjusted R^2 = .180. The beta weights for this model (displayed in *Table* 7) show that confidence in the police is the most important predictor of perceptions of the police use of excessive force with a significant negative beta of -.240, (p = .000); followed by race with a significant beta of .194, (p = .000); police-citizen contact with a significant beta of .152, (p = .010); highest grade completed with a significant beta of .095, (p = .044); and annual household income with a non-significant negative beta at -.010, (p = .830). While race remains a significant factor explaining perceptions of the police use of excessive force, a slight decrease in its beta suggests that confidence in the police explained some of the variance for race. The beta for police-citizen contact also decreased suggesting that confidence in the police also explains police-citizen contact.

Model V: Race, Socioeconomic Status (highest grade completed and annual household income), Police-citizen Contact, Confidence in The Police, and Fear of Crime and Victimization, and The Police Use of Excessive Force. In the final analysis, the fear of crime and victimization variable was added to the multiple regression equation to assess its relative contribution explaining racial differences in the perceptions of the police use of excessive force. The equation containing all of the

possible intervening variables accounted for the same 19 percent (R^2 = .189) of the variance in the perceptions of the police use of excessive force with $F_{(6, 420)}$ = 16.290, (p = .000), adjusted R^2 = .177. Fear of crime and victimization had no influence on racial differences observed in the perceptions of the police use of excessive force with a non-significant beta of .031, (p = .495). In terms of importance, confidence in the police remained the most important factor influencing citizens' perceptions of the police use of excessive force with a significant negative beta weight of -.233, (p = .000); then race with a significant beta of .192, (p = .000); police-citizen contact with a significant beta of .154, (p = .010); highest grade completed with a non-significant beta at .093, (p = .051); and annual household income also with non-significant beta of -.011, (p = .821).

The results of the multiple regression analyses showed that the confidence in the police variable slightly influenced the observed racial differences in the perceptions of the police use of excessive force. Confidence in the police also showed some influence on the police-citizen contact variable. In terms of factors that are important in studying citizens' perceptions of the police use of excessive force, results in Model III (displayed in Table 7) show that police-citizen contact was

more important than race, and *Model VI* and *Model V*

(displayed in *Table* 7) show that confidence in the police

remained the most significant factor regardless of racial

background. *Model IV* (displayed in *Table* 7) appears to be

the best fit for the study of perceptions of police use of

excessive force.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The present study re-analyzed data collected by
Flanagan and Longmire (1995) to determine the relationship
between race, socioeconomic status, police-citizen contact,
confidence in the police, fear of crime and victimization
and perceptions of the police use of excessive force. Using
a 1995 telephone survey data of respondents from a National
Opinion Survey of Crime and Justice, the following
hypotheses were tested: (1) Blacks will be more likely to
view the police use of excessive force as a serious problem
than Whites; (2) respondents from a lower socioeconomic
status will be more likely to view the police use of
excessive force as a serious problem than those from a
higher socioeconomic status; (3) respondents who are
dissatisfied with their contact with the police will be more
likely to view police use of excessive force as a serious
problem; (4) respondents who have a great deal of/or high
confidence in the police will be less likely to view the
police use of excessive force as a serious problem; (5)
respondents who frequently worry about crime will be less
likely to view the police use of excessive force as a
serious problem.

Race and Attitudes Toward The Police Use of Excessive Force

Results of the bivariate analysis showed a significant racial difference in the perceptions of the police use of excessive force which supports the hypothesis that *Blacks will be more likely to view the police use of excessive force as a serious problem than Whites.* Blacks were three (3) times more likely than Whites to perceive the police use of excessive force as a serious problem. This finding is consistent with the original analysis by Huang and Vaughn 1996 and by previous researchers (Polivka 1984; Tuch and Weitzer 1997). In addition, findings support both conflict and consistency theories.

According to conflict theory as discussed in Chapter II, police brutality is a method of control used by the dominant class to control the subordinate groups in society. The literature reviewed show that minorities, especially Blacks have been the subordinate groups who over the last 200 years in the U.S. have consistently experienced coercive authority by police officers. On the other hand, consistency theory suggests "that people maintain consistency among their beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors" (Oskamp, 1977:192). Therefore, if Blacks believe that their ancestors were brutalized by the police in the past, and if they themselves have past experiences of police brutality,

then it is consistent to perceive the police use of excessive force as a serious problem.

While results in the present study showed that only 3 percent of Whites perceived the police use of excessive force as a serious problem, 38 percent perceived the police use of excessive force as either a (minor) or (somewhat) of a problem. This may be associated with respondents' experiences with the police. Those individuals may have never experienced police brutality, but may have learned of the problem through news media coverage of incidents involving police brutality. An explanation for that phenomenon is the cognitive consistency perspective argument which states that people are "essentially thoughtful, and rational, adjusting their attitudes and behaviors in accordance with incoming information" (1977:192).

However, race in the regression analyses only explains a small proportion (4 percent) of the variation in the public's perceptions of the police use of excessive force when controlling for the influence of race. When controlling for confidence in the police, the beta for race decreased slightly showing that some perceptions of the police use of excessive force are explained by their confidence in the police, although race still remains significant. The intervening variables (socioeconomic status and fear of crime and victimization) when held

constant, had no effect on the perceptions of the police use of excessive force nor on observed racial differences.

Socioeconomic Status and Attitudes Toward The Police Use of Excessive Force

As discussed in Chapter II, the relationship between socioeconomic status and the police use of excessive force lacks empirical studies. Huang and Vaughn (1996) believed that the relationship between socioeconomic status and perceptions of the police is not clear. In the present study, analysis at the bivariate level shows the measures of socioeconomic status (highest grade completed, and annual household income) had inconsistent results. The highest grade completed (education) showed no significant differences and did not support the hypothesis that *respondents from a lower socioeconomic status will be more likely to view the police use of excessive force as a serious problem than those from a higher socioeconomic status.* However, the income variable was significant.

The Correlation Matrix shows an inverse relationship between annual household income and attitudes toward the police use of excessive force. This indicates that respondents with high annual household incomes do not perceive the police use of excessive force to be as serious a problem. This result supports conflict theory that the

dominant or powerful groups of society with the most resources, will be more likely to approve of police brutality and other forms of misconduct since it protects their resources. However, neither variable is significant in the regression analyses, so socioeconomic status is not a strong predictor of attitudes toward the police use of excessive force.

Police-citizen Contact and Attitudes Toward The Police Use of Excessive Force

Cross tabulation results support the hypothesis that *respondents who are dissatisfied with their contact with the police will be more likely to view police use of excessive force as a serious problem.* The analysis shows that of the respondents who were very dissatisfied with their police contact, 28 percent perceived that the police use of excessive force was a serious problem compared to those very satisfied with their police contact--4 percent who said that the police use of excessive force was not a problem. This finding is consistent with the work of other researchers (Jacob 1971; Smith and Hawkins 1973; Scaglion and Condon 1980; Huang and Vaughn 1996) that contact helps to explain the variations in perceptions of the police.

Although the literature suggests that minorities, especially Blacks, were more likely to experience

involuntary contacts with the police and hold negative views
of the police, this was not the case in the analysis of the
data in the present study. Of the total number of
individuals (N = 523) who responded to this question (very
satisfied to very dissatisfied), 40 percent saw the police
use of excessive force as either a (minor) or (somewhat) of
a problem. While any number of factors, including
involuntary or negative contact, may have contributed to
those perceptions, it is quite clear that a large number of
Whites hold similar views to those of the Blacks and
Hispanics. On the other hand, the analysis showed that a
large number of respondents, whether (satisfied or
dissatisfied) with their police contact, did not perceive
the police use of excessive force as a (serious) problem.
This suggests that those individuals may have had an
involuntary contact (traffic stop) with the police but were
satisfied with the outcome of the contact. Therefore, their
perception of police use of excessive force differs from
those who may have experienced an involuntary contact with
the police that involved coercive means of enforcement.

Nevertheless, in the regression analysis, police-
citizen contact was significant and contributed a ten (10)
percent increase in the explanation of the variance. This
implies that, in general, the public's attitudes toward the

police use of excessive force are good until they experience an involuntary or have a negative contact with the police.

Confidence in The Police and Attitudes Toward The Police Use of Excessive Force

Bivariate Correlation showed that confidence in the police had the strongest association with the police use of excessive force. A significant inverse relation of -.346 support the hypothesis that *respondents who have high confidence in the police will be less likely to view the police use of excessive force as a serious problem.* This relationship suggests that respondents who have high confidence in the police are less likely to view the police use of excessive force as a serious problem.

While this variable does not explain much of the relationship between race and attitudes, it seems more important having the highest significant beta of -.240 displayed in *Model IV* of *Table 7.* The literature reviewed suggests that interactive factors may contribute to the level of confidence that individuals have in the police. For example, a broad question like "how much confidence do you have in the police?" may not produce the same results as a set of questions asking respondents to rate police performance in specific areas. In addition, using the cognitive perspective that attributes are organized, it can

be argued that unpleasant experiences with the police lead to dissatisfaction with the police, which in turn leads to low confidence in the police.

Fear of Crime and Victimization and Attitudes Toward The Police Use of Excessive Force

The final hypothesis that *respondents who frequently worry about crime will be less likely to view the police use of excessive force as a serious problem* was not supported in the bivariate analysis. It also did not show any significant effects in the multivariate analysis. Instead, results show a significant positive correlation suggesting that as concerns about crime and victimization increase, the concerns about the police use of excessive force also increase. These findings may suggest that respondents' concerns of crime and victimization include being a victim of police brutality. More precisely, it appears as though fear of crime and victimization, in some cases, also results in negative evaluations of the police. Thomas and Hyman (1977:306) in their citation of Berkley, Giles, Hackett and Kassoff (1976), suggest that a possible explanation for this phenomenon is that:

> The officer's high visibility tends to aggravate his isolation from the community. His vehicle and uniform stand out distinctly and become highly visible symbols of the system. The conflict now begins. He cannot understand why the community, in many instances, will not support him when he apprehends the "bad guys." In

time, he begins to become more sensitive to criticisms of the citizens and begins to communicate some of his tensions to the community he serves. The community, in turn, "telegraphs" its tensions to the officer, leading to an escalation in hostility.

On the contrary, Thomas and Hyman's (1977) findings did show a positive relationship between fear of crime and victimization and attitudes toward police brutality. Although citizens, in their study, are concerned with the threat of crime and being a victim, they believe that crime can be lessened with more forceful policing, and less compassion by the courts. As explained by O'Brien (1978), these inconsistencies in the public attitudes come from the difference in the desires and expectations of the community of police service. "Groups differ from one another as to the types of conduct they wish proscribed depending obviously on their own mores developed by religion, tradition, and habit" (1978:304).

Multiple Linear Regression Analyses

Several studies (Polivka 1984; Huang and Vaughn 1996; Tuch and Weitzer 1997) found that race was a strong predictor of citizens' attitudes toward the police. The present study provided a more in depth analysis of this relationship. The results showed that although race was significant it explained only a small percent of the variance. Satisfaction with the police, and confidence in

the police are significantly related to perceptions of the police use of excessive force, and have a moderately strong linear relationship among themselves. Investigation of the original relationship between race and the police use of excessive force showed that when other factors were taken into account, past findings that race is the strongest predictor of attitudes toward police performance did not hold true.

While race remained significant, police-citizen contact and confidence in the police were found to have the greatest support as an explanation of attitudes toward the police use of excessive force. In both regression *Model IV* and *V* shown in *Table* 7, confidence in the police was the most important factor explaining perceptions of the police use of excessive force. These results clearly demonstrate that satisfaction with police contact and confidence in the police interact in their effect on perceptions of the police use of excessive force. That is, perceptions of the police use of excessive *force is conditioned* by the level of satisfaction with police contacts. In turn, satisfaction with police contact determines the level of confidence individuals have in the police. Therefore, according to the findings in the present study, regardless of race, individuals who experience negative contacts with the police are more likely to have less confidence in the police. These results are also in

support of cognitive consistency theory. Results of this analysis show that research on public's attitudes toward police performance is incomplete.

CONCLUSION

The present study re-analyzed data from a 1995 National Opinion Survey collected by Flanagan and Longmire. Despite the observed significance of race in all of the regression models, findings in the present study indicate that it is the contact with the police, in general, that explains more variation in the public's perceptions of the police use of excessive force. Adding confidence in the police to the equation increased the variation in the perceptions of the police use of excessive force to 19 percent. Therefore, perceptions of the police use of excessive force is conditioned by the type of contact perceived by the public whether (involuntary/dissatisfied or voluntary/satisfied) which determines their confidence level in the police. These findings of perceptions toward the police use of excessive force are consistent with past studies (Jacob 1971; Smith and Hawkins 1973; Scaglion and Condon 1980; Huang and Vaughn 1996) pertaining to the evaluation of the police in general.

Interestingly, while minorities only represented 15.5 percent of the sample, and Whites represented 84.5 percent

of the sample, there was a high level of Whites as well as minorities reporting dissatisfaction in their encounters with the police. Jacob's (1971) findings can help to explain that phenomenon. He found that while Blacks have the most severe contacts where they are threatened, sanctioned, or arrested, working class Whites also experience many of those circumstances. Perhaps these individuals [working class Whites] are beginning to report their negative experiences which are similar to those of Blacks and Hispanics. In addition, lack of media attention, and lack of advocates against police brutality to represent poor or working class Whites can help to explain the findings in this study. These findings suggest that race, by itself, is not enough to explain the public's perception of the police use of excessive force, and that additional factors need to be taken into account.

Another observation in the analysis is the difference in the significance of the socioeconomic status variables. Results showed respondents without a high school education were more likely to perceive the police use of excessive force as a serious problem than those with a college or graduate education. But these contributed only one (1) percent of the variance and had no effect on racial differences in perceptions of the police use of excessive force.

Comparing the characteristics of the respondents may help to explain this observation. Of the 55.9 percent of respondents who did not perceive the police use of excessive force as a problem, almost half of them (23.7 percent) had a college education, and 6.3 percent had education at the graduate level. A similar trend was also observed from the analysis of annual household income. Of the 55.3 percent of respondents who did not perceive the police use of excessive force as a problem, 21.1 percent had annual household income between $30,000 and $60,000, and 10.9 percent have income over $60,000. The data show that a significant amount of minorities along with Whites are representative of the higher socioeconomic class who may have fewer encounters with police, and thus, fewer unsatisfactory contacts with the police. On the other hand, minorities and Whites in the lower socioeconomic class who have frequent negative contacts with the police, may hold more negative views of the police use of excessive force. Therefore, socioeconomic status, by itself, cannot determine the public's attitude toward the police use of excessive force. In essence, the public's perceptions of the police use of excessive force are formed by a number of factors, most importantly, the type of contact experienced with the police.

While conflict theory received some support, the observed trends suggest that Quinney's conflict theory that

"systematic actions" create inequalities among race, sex, and economic status (1977:52) is insufficient in the explanation of perceptions of the police use of excessive force. However, since respondents' gender was not analyzed in the present study, to completely disqualify the theoretical approach will be erroneous on the researcher's part. In all reality, it appears that as minorities attain higher levels of education, higher incomes, and a change in socioeconomic status, they are better treated by the police, thus their views of police brutality change, and the opposite holds true. What needs to occur then, is an integration between conflict and cognitive consistency theory of attitudes based on an argument that people in certain groups will experience more negative contacts with the police than people in other groups, and based on those experiences, they will have less confidence in the police.

It is, therefore, concluded that findings in the present study give some important insights for future investigation of the public's attitudes toward police performance, and enhancement of police-community relations.

IMPLICATIONS

"Police brutality has been with us forever" (Maple, 1999:67). While police brutality continues to be a widespread problem, studies have focused on the police

general performances, limiting their focus on issues that affect police-community relations. Findings in this study suggest that a vast number of individuals, other than minorities, experience negative or unsatisfactory contacts which influenced their views on the police use of excessive force. These findings suggest that there is a fundamental need for improvement in police-community relations at both the police, and the community levels.

As noted by Smith and Hawkins, on the one hand "a negative and hostile public makes the enforcers job extremely difficult" and "a hostile citizenry also increases the probability that police will use physical or verbal abuse" (1973:147). On the other hand:

> Police often view citizens as holding more hostile
> attitudes than is in fact the case... This shared
> misunderstanding can have self-fulfilling consequences.
> Police expect a hostile citizen reception and hence
> take a more authoritarian attitude in order to assure
> that actions will be seen as legitimate and authority
> will not be questioned (Thomas and Hyman 1977:307).

Police departments have to implement a number of policies and adopt methods that might help to reduce citizens' negative attitudes toward the police, to enhance community satisfaction, and provide a strong relationship between the community and the police.

First, officers must obey the same rules expected of the community they serve. Repeated publicity of police corruption, brutal force, and other wrongdoings by police

increase the tension between the police and the community. When police officers respect themselves, rid themselves of corruption and brutality, and become positive role models in the communities (especially minority communities) in which they serve, people are likely to have heightened confidence in them and this might minimize confrontations between residents and police officers.

Second, continued efforts in the direction of community policing with the implementation of neighborhood watch programs, community assistance programs, community advisory panels, and strong citizen involvement may reduce the public's fear of the police, fear of crime, and efforts to gain the community trust. As argued by O'Brien (1978), police need an understanding of the differences between 1) community relations: the day to day relationship between police and the public; 2) public relations: any attempt to improve the image of the agency; and 3) human relations: the awareness of officers that the mission of the police is dependent upon "a solid community relations program permeated by the positive human relations of each officer" (1978:307). While a solution to end unjustified brutal force may be difficult to achieve, police departments need to continue in their efforts of improving relations and attitudes between the police and the public.

Third, police and minority groups need to narrow the gap of cultural knowledge of each other. "The objective each group should strive for is reciprocity through knowledge rather than dominion through assertion" (Carter 1985:499). The 100 Blacks In Law Enforcement Who Care (1998) has produced a manual entitled *What To Do When Stopped By The Police*. This manual provides instructions for the public in the following areas: what to do when a police knocks at your door; when stopped by police in the streets; how to interact with a police in the occurrence of an incident; how to interact with a police if stopped while driving. On the other hand, as recommended by the Kerner Commission's report in 1967, police need to be taught how to deal with the sensitive issues of minority communities. This can improve race relations between citizens and police, and assist in building the public's trust in the police.

Fourth, police departments must not create conflicting interest among officers in their efforts to reform. Smith and Hawkins (1973) argue that police departments that set up special units, and patrolmen to act as public relations agents create a conflict of interest among police officers and their duties. A patrolman on the street tends to feel that the special units are responsible for the police-community relations work, while they [patrolman] are responsible for police work. This creates the basis for

police officers to oppose their own department's community-relations efforts.

Finally, the United States Police departments should consider adopting several features from the Japanese style of policing which is reported for having very limited occurrences of police brutality (Terrill 1999). First, the Japanese Police's one year intense educational training in law, police procedures, sociology, psychology, history, and literature; and a "year in the field for on-the-job training" (1999:371) for recruits who only possess a high school diploma. Second, the Japanese's *koban* or *chuzaisho* (as an officer is known) system that provides permanent stationed police in neighborhoods that patrol on bicycle or by foot, offer citizens benefitting information, and maintain law and order (Fenwick 1982; Reichel 1999; Terrill 1999). And third, the Japanese's biannual visitations by police to each household within his jurisdiction to conduct a household survey (Fenwick 1982; Reichel 1999). This process allows the officers to acquaint themselves with news, problems, concerns among the people and assist in their fight against crime (Reichel 1999). As part of their efforts in engaging the community in crime control, volunteer crime control organizations are formed in many of their neighborhoods, and annually, a festive get-together is

organized whereby residents are reminded of their cooperation in crime control efforts (Fairchild 1993).

FUTURE RESEARCH

The findings in the present study have given some important insights on the public's perceptions of police brutality and help explain the influence of race. Results show that several questions still need to be answered. Further explanations of racial differences are needed. Analyzing factors such as age, gender, media, and so forth, may add additional information. In addition, observational research of police brutality may be appropriate in finding interactive factors.

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June 1994; John Jay College of Criminal Justice (CUNY)

Training Programs:
Dispute Resolution (30 credits at CUNY); Dispute
Resolution and Mediation (Commonwealth of Virginia);
Peer Counseling; Cultural Diversity Awareness.

Related Experience:
Intern, Mediation Center of Hampton Roads, Norfolk, VA.
August 1999 - November 1999.

Court Assistant, Juvenile & Domestic Relations Courts,
Virginia Beach, VA. April 1997 - April 1998

Security Officer, Norfolk International Airport,
Norfolk, VA. June 1997 - December 1997

Intern, Young People's Information Services,
New York, NY. January 1994 - June 1994.

Intern, Sidewalks of New York
New York, NY. June 1993 - August 1993.

Activities and Awards:
* John Jay College's Dean's List - 1992/93/94.
* National Dean's List - 1993/94.
* Secretary/Yearbook Editor, John Jay College's Student
  Government 1993-1994.
* Scholarship and Service Award, John Jay College 1994.
* Who's Who Among Students in American Universities and
  Colleges - 1994.
* Graduate Representative, ODU Sociology/Criminal
  Justice 1997-1998.
* Chairperson, KLMS PTA Reflections Program 1999-2000.
* Distinguished Service Award, Virginia Congress of
  Parents and Teachers - 2000.