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Attitudes Toward Police among College Students: Differences among Race, Social Work Status, and University History

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ATTITUDES TOWARD THE POLICE AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS:
DIFFERENCES AMONG RACE, SOCIAL WORK STATUS, AND UNIVERSITY HISTORY

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ABSTRACT

Minority populations often have more negative attitudes toward the police than their White counterparts. This study explored the differences between Black college students' attitudes towards the police in comparison to White college students. Using a sample of 1,108 students from a traditional flagship university and a Historically Black College University, the study sought to seek out differences in attitudes toward the police based on race, social work student status, and university history. Results indicated a significant difference between Black students' attitudes toward the police when compared with their White student counterparts. Results also indicated a significant difference in attitudes toward the police when comparing university history.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to assess collegiate student population's attitudes toward the police. The Department of Justice (2014) report on police legitimacy defines the term as the belief that law enforcement officials should be permitted to use their position to maintain societal order and handle issues present in their local communities. To accomplish these tasks, police must be seen as honest persons who attempt to perform their job to standard and protect the community (Department of Justice, 2014). To gauge student attitudes toward the police, this study employed three influential factors of race, social work student status, and university history. Two empirical measures were used to empirically measure student attitudes toward the police and will be referred to as the Attitudes Toward the Police scale developed by Webb and Marshall (1995) and Dunham and Alpert (1988) and the Student Attitudes Toward the police scale developed by Mbuba (2010). Race was compared using Black and White students, social work students were compared to non-social work students, and a traditional flagship university was compared to a Historically Black College University (HBCU) to gauge any differences in student attitudes toward the police.

In recent years, the political climate and media coverage of the influence of race on police brutality have brought forth a plethora of information regarding public attitudes toward the police. Because of the detrimental effects that negative attitudes toward the police can have on a community and the police officers ability to perform their duties, due in part to lost legitimacy, it is necessary to give further scrutiny into public attitudes toward the police (Department of Justice, 2014). These altercations between minorities and White police officers command visiting these events to examine their affect the public's attitudes toward the police and views of police legitimacy. The importance of these events cannot be underscored, as Hinds

(2009) found that hearing about a negative police encounter could have a significant impact on the public's attitudes toward the police. The Department of Justice found in 2014 that public opinions of police legitimacy have a direct affect on the officers' ability to successfully perform their duties.

Ferguson, Missouri came into the national spotlight when 18 year-old Black male named Michael Brown was shot and killed by White Officer Darren Wilson on August 14, 2014. As details of the events unfolded, the public learned that Officer Wilson stopped Michael Brown because he had stolen several packages of tobacco products from a nearby convenience store. Michael Brown was unarmed when he had 12 shots fired at him, with 6 to 8 shots making contact with his body (Department of Justice, 2015). A jury convened and it was determined that due to Brown allegedly attacking Officer Wilson, inconsistent eye-witness reports and lack of enough evidence, no charges would be brought against Officer Darren Wilson for the shooting death of Michael Brown. The shooting of Michael Brown, an unarmed Black teenager and the failure of indictment sparked outrage and protest in Ferguson and surrounding communities (Healy, 2014). The Department of Justice found in its 2015 report on policing in Ferguson, MS, that the Department's unlawful and harmful practices, which included racial bias, brought harm to the African American community. Additionally, the report found that these practices negatively affected the community's views of the police as trustworthy as well as police legitimacy (Investigation of the Ferguson, 2015).

Eric Garner, a 43 year-old Black male, caught the national attention when his recorded altercation with police officers resulted in his death (Nathan, 2014). Eric Garner was selling individual cigarettes at the time of the incident. The officer described a takedown maneuver that brought Garner to the ground; however, many other officials deemed the maneuver a chokehold

(Freedom du Lac, 2014). A chokehold is banned by the New York Police Department Policy and was so on the date of the incident (New York City, 2014). Eric Garner repeated 11 times, "I can't breathe" prior to becoming unconscious and later dying. This statement was later used as a form of protest, with the word printed on shirts worn by Lebron James and many others (Ford et al., 2014). The coroner labeled Garner's death a homicide and stated the cause of death was a result of compression of the neck, but that asthma and heart disease were also involved in Garner's death (Nathan, 2014). A Grand Jury did not rule to indict the officers involved in Eric Garner's death, sparking national outrage and protests in cities across the nation (Ford et al., 2014).

Freddie Gray, a 25 year-old Black male, was arrested for carrying an illegal knife and evading police during a chase. He was restrained and placed on his stomach in the back of a police van for transport. Gray was not buckled in the back of the police van, a practice that violated department policy (Linderman & Anderson, 2015). Gray died one week later after being hospitalized for spinal cord injuries. The death was ruled a homicide by the state's medical examiner (Blinder & Perez-Pena, 2015). Prior to being placed in the police van, Freddie Gray requested medical attention and was denied such service (Payne, Almasy, & Pearson, 2015). Six officers involved in the death of Freddie Gray were indicted on charges of manslaughter and murder (Blinder & Perez-Pena, 2015). The death of Freddie Gray resulted in numerous protests, riots, and lootings in many cities across the United States. Most notably riots in Baltimore gained national attention as buildings and businesses were destroyed (Blinder, Perez-Pena, 2015).

Social work should examine the effects of negative attitudes toward the police further because it directly affects vulnerable populations, which the social work profession exists to serve (NASW,2008). Police officers are more likely to patrol areas where minorities are located,

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making the possibility of interaction more likely (Mbuba, 2010). Minorities in lower socioeconomic environments with a high crime rate are not only more likely to hold negative attitudes and beliefs of legitimacy toward the police, but they are also more likely to disobey the orders of the police (Tyler, 2003; Tyler, 2005; Tyler & Fagan, 2008). These finding posit that minority populations are at an increased risk of negative interaction and victimization by police. Since police have interactions with these vulnerable populations prior to social workers, there is a duty of the profession to work with officers to reduce such negative interactions. The social work profession is the key to prevention and training of police officers to reduce negative interaction with minority communities. Over time, these interventions could help reduce the negative stigma that many of these communities feel towards law enforcement officials (Tyler, 2003; Tyler, 2005).

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This brief synopsis of the evolution of the police force in the United States is not intended to be all-inclusive but to show significant events and practices that led to the current model of police duties and practices.

Definitions

Standard 1.2-2 of the American Bar Association (AMA) described the major functions of modern day *police* to include the identification of crime and criminals. By this standard, police are also expected to apprehend criminals and attend subsequent legal hearings related to the apprehension. Also, the AMA stated that police are expected to reduce crime through prevention strategies such as patrolling. Police handle the creation and stabilization of subjective feelings of security within the local community; give assistance to persons at risk for victimization and those persons unable to care for themselves. Additional duties, as identified by the AMA, include the protection constitutional rights, assisting in personnel and vehicle traffic, the development and sustainability of civil order, as well as emergency services. Walker and Katz (2012) described police as those persons that attempt to prevent and investigate crime as well as perpetuate public order. For the purpose of this study, we combine the two aforementioned definitions and define police as public servants responsible for the deterrence of crime and the maintenance of public order (AMA, 1986; Walker & Katz, 2012). This definition is meant to include any law enforcement bodies with direct interaction with the general public on a daily basis.

Brief History of Police in the United States

Policing in the United States has evolved since Colonial times from a system based on English Common Law to our current model of community policing (Harring, 1981; Keller & Moore, 1989). Northeastern cities utilized the English Common Law based system known as the

watch system until the advent of police departments in the early to mid-1800's, (Harring, 1981). Watchmen patrolled at night and primarily in North Eastern cities. Watchmen were voluntary or court-ordered, unpaid, often untrained citizens who patrolled the streets surrounding their community (Harring, 1981; Lane, 1992). Early policemen or watchmen duties included alerting the public to danger, patrolling streets, detecting fires, lighting street lanterns, working in soup kitchens, and policing delinquent children (Lane, 1992; Liebman & Polen, 1978). Watchmen were reactive in criminal activities, although many citizens considered their presence patrols a preventative crime control measure (Liebman & Polen, 1978). Northern cities such as New York and Chicago instituted day watches as an additional measure to deter criminal activity (Gaines, Kappeler, & Vaughn, 1999). The watchmen techniques rendered limited success as a result of little to no organizational structure, no means of conduct accountability, and no public legitimacy. Many watchmen were negligent in their duties as a result of the inadequate supervision from constables and poor organization (Liebman & Polen, 1978; Lane, 1992). Constable responsibilities included rudimentary crime control; they would collect fees for apprehending criminals on behalf of the victim (Balko, 2013). This body also supervised the watch and had some basic duties reminiscent of modern law enforcement. Victims reimbursed the constables for their services, which included issuing warrants and escorting the alleged perpetrators to court (Lane, 1992).

Policing evolved in the1800's, due in part to rapid the growth of North Eastern cities as a result of the Industrial Revolution. Cities such as Chicago saw a massive population increase of immigrants, increased poverty and increased crime (Lane, 1992; Walker, 1996). The watch system proved itself inadequate for handling many of the social issues surrounding a rapidly

growing city (Balko, 2013). The growing cities required a transition from a small-scale and poorly organized watch system to a more centralized organization of social control (Lane, 1992).

In London, England, Sir Robert Peel successfully lobbied for the creation of what many consider the first modernized police department established in 1829 (Balko, 2013; Lane, 1992). Sir Robert Peel would revolutionize law enforcement through the use of uniforms and badges, a centralized headquarters, stricter recruiting standards, and a semi-militarized structure to name a few (Balko, 2013; Lane, 1992; Liebman & Polen, 1978). Major cities in the United States would eventually subsume some but not all of Peel's tactics (Lane, 1992).

Lane (1992) contended that mass rioting coupled with mass population growth were key factors in the establishment of police departments in Northern cities of the United States during the Industrial Revolution. Boston, Massachusetts would be the first municipality in the United States to establish a centralized police department in 1838. New York would follow in 1845, Chicago in 1851, and Philadelphia in 1854 (Lane, 1992; Mitrani, 2013). These cities inculcated many of the practices brought forth by the London Metropolitan Police Department (Liebman & Polen, 1978). Examples of methods from the London Metropolitan Police include the use of presence patrols and police headquarters located where civilians could gain easy access. Additionally, formalization of the police occurred through the use of military practices such as the use of rank structure (Lane, 1992; Liebman & Polen, 1978).

Police duties in the mid-1800's saw a transition to a more organized and preventative system of policing than the reactive watch system of the late 1700's (Lane, 1992). Police of the mid-1800's subsumed the public service duties of the watch system until the creation of additional public service organizations. Additionally, police engaged in the control of the *dangerous classes,* often immigrants and minorities, through public order laws and riot and mob

control tactics (Lane, 1992). Liebman and Polen (1978) ascertained that the elite millionaires of the Industrial Revolution had an influence on enforcement of the public order laws to gain social control over the lower classes. By the late 1800's, there was a consensus of the duties of police officers. A principle mission of the force was crime prevention along with presence patrols, traffic control, investigation through the established detective agencies, and law enforcement. Boston created the first detective bureau in 1846, although private firms continued to thrive for some time after this date (Lane, 1992).

Although many officers privately carried their personal firearms, police officers were officially issued firearms in the 1860's (Lane, 1992). Police officers were issued with the iconic blue police uniform In New York in 1853, another step in the legitimization of the police force. 1871 saw the first National Police Convention followed by the International Association of Chiefs of Police creation in 1893. These professional clubs further legitimized the profession of policing (IACP; Lane, 1992).

Police departments in the mid-1800's saw corruption as a major problem (Kelling & Moore, 1989). Police brutality against citizens and immigrants was a frequent occurrence (Balko, 2013). Politicians appointed officers and often utilized this force to further their political agenda. Payment for promotion was also a common practice in many departments during this time period (Fogelson, 1977). Commissions were formed and often addressed continued issues of police brutality and corruption in the 1900's (Kelling and Moore, 1989). Notably, the Wickersham Commission in 1931 found that forced confessions through police brutality to be a common practice among police officers. This discovery inevitably led to the denial of such forced confessions in a court of law (President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice, 1967). Kelling and Moore (1989) dubbed this period of the 1900's through the 1970's

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the *Reform Era* due to the numerous commissions and reform attempts directed at police departments and personnel.

In the 1920's and 1930's, August Vollmer advocated for a more scientific methodology to policing to legitimize the profession and combat corruption. Vollmer's contributions helped to form a more centralized force, which helped to prevent corruption from politicians. The professionalism movement during this time ended practices such as policemen paying bribes for promotion and replaced it with a merit-based system (Balko, 2013; Crank & Langworthy, 1992; Kelling & Moore 1989). O.W. Wilson and his 1950's book titled *Police Administration* further helped to legitimize the police force through the implementation of stronger patrol presence through the use of patrol cars instead of foot patrols. Additionally, *Police Administration* led to the formation of a rapid response system to those persons in need of assistance through the advent of what would become 911(Kelling & Moore; 1989). Lessened foot patrols would later contribute to police alienation from the public. This issue of alienation would later lead to a resurgence of foot patrols in the 1980's with community policing (Kelling & Moore, 1989).

The development of the police was different in the South than from their North Eastern counterparts. Police saw their evolution from slave patrols; a semi-formal militia utilized to control the slave population. The slave patrols of the Southern States mark the beginnings of a formal organization that would eventually develop into modern and centralized police departments. Slave patrols saw formalization over decades of practice (Roarke, 2001; Riechel, 1988). Like the watch system, slave patrols also have English influence. The English system of p*osse comitatus* would gather individuals or a posse to catch fleeing criminals (Balko, 2013; Roarke, 2001). The functions of the slave patrols were similar to the policeman duties of the

mid-1800's in that a principle duty was to control slave uprisings or meetings (Roarke, 2001). Lastly, slave patrols enforced the slave codes, and later, Jim Crow Laws (Riechel, 1988).

Modern Policing

The 1967 Presidents Commission on Law Enforcement further engrained the duties of police officers as *law enforcement*. The criminal justice department subsumed the police and police departments, further solidifying police duty to prevent crime and pursue criminals. The President's Commission further distanced the police from prior duties now considered to be the job of social work and similar professions (Kelling & Moore, 1989).

The *Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act* of 1968 allocated federal funds to improve state and local law enforcement agencies to ameliorate relations between the police and communities (Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968, 2012). *Community policing* departs from the centralization and mass bureaucracy established in the 1950's. This modernization of policing in the 1980's responded to the mass centralization of police departments and the isolation of the police from the public. Isolation occurred partly to lessened foot patrols and increased usage of patrol cars (Balko, 2013; Kelling & Moore; 1989). Officer duties of the 1980's began to include a more active role in fostering community relations and problem solving with community members (Kelling & Moore, 1989). Community policing utilizes neighborhood engagement to identify problems and solutions unique to the given population. Community policing also allows local community members information regarding criminal activity and community related events. Community policing locates law enforcement agencies in or near the community of reference to prevent public isolation (Community Policing Defined, 2014). Principle duties police duties of officers are still crime prevention and control, but also positive engagement with the community. This form of policing still utilizes strategies

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by O.W. Wilson such a rapid response to requests for assistance and increase of presence patrols but keeps community relations as a priority in duties and responsibilities (Kelling & Moore, 1989; Community Policing Defined, 2014).

The Civil Rights Movement and the Vietnam War brought public protests and rioting. Public displays of police force used to break up riots brought many Americans to question police authority of the use of force on fellow American citizens (Balko, 2013; Kelling & Moore, 1989). Many individuals saw the creation of the Special Weapons Attack Teams or SWAT in the late 1960's to be the precipice to the militarization of the modern police force (Balko, 2013). Further, the adoption of laws in which police could raid residences without notification or *no-knock laws* allowed the further police use of military tactics. Phrases and campaigns such as *The War on Drugs,* which utilized SWAT raids and strike forces further helped to inculcate military tactics into modern police culture (Balko, 2013; Baum, 1996). Further legislation equipping police with training and military weaponry would further the militarization of the police force into the twentieth century (Balko, 2013). It should be noted that in January of 2015, President Obama enacted an executive order and formed a working group designed to limit the acquisition military style weapons and equipment to local law enforcement agencies (Executive Order No. 13688, 2015).

Perceptions of Police

The United States population generally holds positive attitudes toward the police (Lee & Gibbs, 2015; Mbuba, 2010). Positive public attitudes toward the police make crime prevention and control easier for police to accomplish on a day-to-day basis. Fairness and positive treatment by law enforcement are important aspects of the public's perception of police as a legitimate force (Correia et al. 1996). Views of police illegitimacy and the mistrust of this authority have

been found to contribute to the failure of citizens to obey police instructions (Lai & Zhao, 2010; Mazerolle, Antrobus, Bennet, & Tyler, 2013; Tyler, 2003). Baltimore, Maryland in 2015 may exemplify police need for public legitimacy to comply with police instruction. Research posited that when the public view police as legitimate, citizens are more likely to cooperate with police authority (Tyler, 2006; Mazerolle, Antroubus, Bennet, & Tyler, 2013).

Encounters with police have shown to be an important dimension in influencing public perception of police. These encounters have a direct reflection on police activities being viewed with legitimacy or illegitimacy (Mazerolle et al., 2013; Mbuba, 2010; Webb & Marshall, 1995). Negative encounters with police can likely result in negative attitudes toward the police (Chaney & Robertson, 2013; Mazerolle et al., 2013). Inversely, community policing draws on research that positive encounters with law enforcement official will foster positive public attitudes toward the police and compliance with police instruction (Gaarder, Rodriguez & Zats, 2004).

Race and its influence of attitudes toward the police is a well-researched variable (Lee & Gibbs, 2015, Mbuba, 2010; Webb & Marshall, 1995). An established finding in the United States is that Black and other minorities view police less favorably than the White American majority (Lee & Gibbs, 2015; Mbuba, 2010; Schuck, Rosenbaum & Hawkins, 2008). Wu et al. (2009) further supported the finding that Black Americans tend to have less positive attitudes toward the police even with control of socioeconomic status. Webb and Marshall (1995) found that Hispanic attitudes toward the police were higher than the Black population, but still scored lower in attitudes toward the police than the White majority population. Mbuba (2010) reported among student attitudes toward the police that race was the most significant role in his study among four-year university students. Mbuba's research demonstrated that white college students showed more positive student attitudes towards the police when compared with minority students. Wu et

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al. (2009) study also supported that minorities tend to have lower views than the majority population. The Mbuba (2010) study contended that neighborhood plays a significant factor in student attitudes towards the police. Schuck et al. (2008) findings supported the need to explore further direct or vicarious contact with the police. Although this study found that Black Americans still held more negative attitudes toward the police than their White counterparts even with police contact considered. Contradicting previous studies, Lee and Gibbs (2015) found that race became an insignificant factor after introducing interactive and relational aspects of social distance as a measurement of attitudes toward the police. This finding is not well researched and the warrants replication.

Wu et al. (2009) used the sense-of-injustice model as one of three models to explain the negative attitudes toward the police held by Black Americans in the United States. Specifically, the belief that minorities are treated unfairly by police officers may profoundly influence minority attitudes toward the police. The practice of police presence through patrols may add support to this model in that patrols along with problem oriented policing can have a detrimental effect on the minorities attitudes toward the police. Problem oriented policing correlates with the most patrolled areas of a city being those that are higher in crime and lower in socioeconomic status; which often means higher minority populations (Mbuba, 2010; Tolliver, Hadden, Brown-Manning, & Snowden, 2016). The practice of foot patrols may further stimulate feelings of discrimination in minority communities rather than positive police-community relations sought through community policing strategies (Bain, Robinson, & Conser, 2014; Cohen, 1987). Bain et al. (2014) also posited that public perceptions of police might correlate with a lack of general knowledge of police provided services in the local community.

Empirical Measures of Focus

The two measures used as the foci of this thesis are as follows: (1) **Attitudes Toward the Police** (ATP) **scale**, and (2) **Student Attitudes Toward Police** (SATP) **scale** (for ATP, see Dunham & Alpert [1988] and Webb & Marshall [1995]; for SATP, see Mbuba [2010]). This thesis will refer to Mbuba's measure as SATP to denote its focus on the collegiate population.

Dunham and Alpert (1988) developed four content areas in their study on neighborhood effects on attitudes toward the police. Webb and Marshall (1995) added an additional content area to this ATP measure and used it in multiple attitudes toward the police studies. Web and Marshall used these five content areas empirically gauge public attitudes toward the police in a sample of seven hundred and ninety residents in Omaha, Nebraska. The five content areas included within the survey totaled twenty-three items.

The content areas from Dunham and Alpert are Officer Demeanor (ODEM), Responsibility for Crime Control (RCC), Discretion (DISC), Active Patrol Strategies (APS). The original study by Dunham and Alpert (1988) gauged differences in neighborhood attitudes toward police using ethnically different cities. Their study showed that more differences in attitudes toward the police exist when comparing one neighborhood to another than with attitudes within the neighborhood itself. This discovery stressed the importance of cultural competence in policing. Dunham and Alpert (1988) described the content areas from the original study below:

- Officer Demeanor (ODEM): consists of eight items measuring the subject's perceptions of the general demeanor of police officer and his/her orientation towards citizens;

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- Responsibility (RCC): consists of two items concerning the role of the police and citizens in controlling crime;

- Discretion (DISC): consists of two items and measures agreement with the need for variability in enforcing the law, especially in stretching procedural safeguards in some neighborhoods;

- Patrol (APS): consists of two items and measures the approval of active patrol strategies, such as stopping and questioning those individuals walking down the street and conducting random checks on stopped vehicles

Webb and Marshall (1995) developed the fifth content area titled Officer Characteristics (OCHR). This content area consists of nine items designed to measure the interpersonal as well as intrapersonal characteristics of police officers. Features in this content area include active listening and responding, candor, and discrimination (Webb & Marshall, 1995). Additionally, Webb and Marshal (1995) included contact with police as a variable in determining public attitudes toward the police. They found that prior contact with police did have a significant effect on public attitudes toward the police, although not as significant as the race variable.

Mbuba (2010) conducted a similar survey to compare student attitudes toward the police with the hypothesis that higher education would counter-balance mass media reports of police in influencing attitudes toward the police in college students. Mbuba's (2010) empirical measure did not investigate the student attitudes toward the police using neighborhood. Webb and Marshall (1995) and Zhao and Ren (2015) studies probed for neighborhood. Mbuba (2010) examined negative encounters toward police affecting overall student attitudes toward the police among a sample of college students. Webb and Marshall (1995) also probed contact with the police, although positive or negative contact was not specified. Mbuba also questioned if taking a

criminal justice course would have an impact on the student's overall perception of the police. Mbuba's results of his 2010 study did not find significant variance between student perceptions and the general population. His study did reinforce previous findings that race had the most significant contribution to the attitudes toward the police of college students. Mbuba (2010) did not find education as an important factor when comparing student attitudes toward the police.

Other questions used in the study specifically address the perceived possibility of the following regarding police: excessive use of force; higher likelihood of minority's victimization; and additional training needed for cultural competency and situation de-escalation. These questions are described below:

- Continuum of Police Force: consists of one item and measures the approval of police use of continuum of force while conducting their daily duties. The scale is also designed to measure perceptions of police use of force against minority populations.

- Likelihood of Minority Victimization: consist of two items designed to measure if minorities are perceived to become victims of police violence more so than the majority White population.

- Cultural Competency: consists of one item and measures the perceived need for additional training to be culturally competent in their communities of service.

- Situation De-escalation: consists of one item designed to measure if police need more training to de-escalate situations.

Purpose

The broad purpose of this thesis is to examine attitudes toward the police among college students. More specifically, the purpose is broken down to gauge any differences in the global ATP and SATP scale scores criteria via race, social work student status, and traditional flagship

university versus an HBCU. Five additional questions were added to gauge any differences in college students using the previously mentioned criteria.

The current political climate and recent events regarding police use of continuum of force make further research into the public attitudes toward the police a controversial and worthy topic. Social work as a profession has taken a firm stand against excessive force by law enforcement. The National Association of Social Workers (2014) produced a statement for the need to police reform after a grand jury failed to indict Officer Darren Wilson, accused of unlawfully shooting death of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri. Additionally, the NASW (2014) called for advocacy and reform in response to multiple fatal police shootings of minority populations. This call to action makes the topic of attitudes toward the police a worthy topic of the social work profession. Few studies exist with a focus on attitudes of the social work profession or students on attitudes toward the police. Through the use of two similar but distinct empirical measures, this thesis hopes to have a positive impact on the knowledge base of attitudes toward the police.

Research Questions

- R_1: Are there any significant differences in ATP/SATP global scores when comparing Black students to White students?

- R_2: Are there any significant differences in ATP/SATP global scores when comparing social work students to non-social work students?

- R_3: When comparing students from a traditional flagship university to students at an HBCU, are there any significant differences in ATP/SATP global scores?

- R_4: Are there any significant differences in agreement of Continuum of Police Force when comparing Black college students to White college students?

- R_5: Are there any significant differences in agreement of Continuum of Police Force when comparing social work students to non-social work students?

- R_6: Are there any significant differences in agreement of Continuum of Police Force when comparing traditional flagship university students to HBCU students?

- R_7: Are there any significant differences in agreement of Likelihood of Minority Victimization when comparing Black college students to White college students?

- R_8: Are there any significant differences in agreement of Likelihood of Minority Victimization when comparing social work students to non-social work students?

- R_9: Are there any significant differences in agreement of Likelihood of Minority Victimization when comparing traditional flagship university students to HBCU students?

- R_{10}: Are there any significant differences in agreement of Cultural Competency when comparing Black college students to White college students?

- R_{11}: Are there any significant differences in agreement of Cultural Competency when comparing social work students to non-social work students?

- R_{12}: Are there any significant differences in agreement of Cultural Competency when comparing a traditional flagship university to an HBCU?

- R_{13}: Are there any significant differences in agreement in Situation De-escalation when comparing Black college students to White college students?

- R_{14}: Using the aforementioned measures, are there any significant differences in agreement of Situation De-escalation when comparing social work students to non-social work students?

- R_{15}: Are there any significant differences in agreement of Situation De-escalation when comparing traditional flagship university students to HBCU students?

CHAPTER 3: METHODS

Design and Sampling

This thesis utilized a cross-sectional design because the purpose was to examine attitudes toward the police at one point in time of a sample of college students' attitudes towards the police (Rubin & Babbie, 2013). Institutional review boards at both a traditional university and an HBCU in the southern United States granted permission to conduct this study. The study sample consisted of college students from both institutions who volunteered to complete the questionnaire. To ensure an equitable sample of Black and White races, this study utilized college students from both a traditional university and an HBCU in the southern United States.

This study used a two-step process in collecting questionnaire data. The first step in collecting data was accomplished through assistance by the HBCU. Data was solicited via an online questionnaire to the students by the HBCU using its university wide emailing list, various college deans' student emailing lists, and college professors' emailing lists. HBCU officials sent the link of the questionnaire to their students' email addresses to administer the survey. At no time did any researchers have access to personal identifying information.

Step two of data collection involved collecting data at the traditional university**.** Data was collected via an online survey sent through the various colleges' emailing list. Permission to administer the online questionnaire was granted by the dean of his or her respective college. College officials sent the link of the questionnaire to their students' email addresses to administer the survey.

Measures

Demographics. The surveys collected demographic information consisting of age, race, sex, academic major, and traditional flagship university versus an HBCU.

ATP scale. Dunham and Alpert (1988) developed four content areas in their 1995 study on neighborhood effects on attitudes toward the police. Webb and Marshall (1995) added an additional content area to this ATP measure and used it in multiple attitudes toward the police studies. A five-point Likert response format was used with each item ranging from *1-strongly disagree* to *5-strongly agree*. The five content areas included within the ATP questionnaire total twenty-three items. Global scores on this entire scale range from 23-115 points, with the higher score indicating a more positive attitude toward police. Previous studies did not include reliability on the overall measure.

SATP scale. Mbuba's (2010) questionnaire consisted of fourteen items and utilized a five-point Likert response format ranging from *1-strongly disagree* to *5-strongly agree*. Total possible global scores for the SATP scale range from 14-70. The higher global score reflects a more positive student perception of the police. Mbuba (2010) did not cite a reliability indicator in his original study of college students' attitudes toward the police.

Other questions in the study. There were an additional five questions added for the purpose of further investigating student attitudes' toward the police. The questions specifically addressed excessive police force, the likelihood of minority victimization, the need for cultural competency and situation de-escalation training. A five-point Likert response format was used with each item ranging from *1-strongly disagree* to *5-strongly agree*. The five additional questions are described below:

- Continuum of police force. Consists of one item with scores on each ranging from 1-5 points. The higher score indicating a more negative perception of police use of force.

- Likelihood of minority victimization. Consists of two items with scores on each question ranging from 1-5 points. The higher score indicates a more negative student perception of the likelihood of minority victimization from police officers.

- Cultural Competency. Consists of one item with scores ranging from 1-5 points. The higher score indicating the agreement for need of additional cultural competency training.

- Situation De-escalation. Consists of one item with scores ranging from 1-5 points. The higher score indicating a more positive agreement for the need for additional situational de-escalation training.

Analytic Strategy

Descriptive statistics. This study reported descriptive statistics on the sample characteristics of the study population. Descriptive statistics reported on the mean global scores for the entire ATP scale. Descriptive statistics also reported the SATP mean global scale scores.

Research Questions. R_1 addressed any differences between White and Black students on the ATP and SATP scales. Following this analysis, a *t*-test examined any significant differences in these average global scores between White and Black students.

R_2 compared social work student status to non-social work students to measure differences in ATP/SATP. A *t*-test measured whether there were significant differences in these average global scores between social work and non-social work students.

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R_3 examined significant differences between a traditional flagship university and an HBCU. A *t*-test measured whether the average global scores on the ATP and SATP scales between these two groups were significantly different.

R_4, R_7, R_{10}, and R_{13} examined if there was any significance between Black students and their White counterparts regarding Police use of force, Minority victimization, Cultural Competency, and Situation De-escalation. A chi-square test examined whether the difference in agreement between these two groups was significant.

R_5, R_8, R_{11}, and R_{14} examined if there was any significance between social work student status regarding Police use of force, Minority victimization, Cultural Competency, and Situation De-escalation. A chi-square test examined whether the difference in agreement between these two groups was significant.

R_6, R_9, R_{12}, and R_{15} examined if there was any significance regarding university history regarding Police use of force, Minority victimization, Cultural Competency, and Situation De-escalation. A chi-square test examined whether the difference in agreement between these two groups was significant.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

All sample characteristics are presented in Table 1. The final sample consisted of 1,108

student participants. The plurality of the sample for race was Black participants (49.1%). Group

mean for age in the sample was 22.81 (6.12). The final sample consisted of majority 59.8%

female participants and 39.7% male participants. The final sample contained majority 57.6%

participants from the traditional flagship university and 42.4% from the HBCU. Lastly, the final

sample contained a majority 93.1% non-social work students and a minority 6.9% social work

students.

Table 1
Sample Characteristics

Variable	N	%	*M*	*SD*
Sex				
Female	663	59.8 %		
Male	440	39.7 %		
Other	5	0.5 %		
Race				
Black	544	49.1 %		
White	498	44.9%		
Other	66	6 %		
University History				
Traditional	638	57.6 %		
HBCU	470	42.4 %		
Age			22.81	6.12

Hypotheses Findings

R_1: Differences in ATP/SATP scores regarding race. There was a significant

difference between Black students' and White students' mean global scores on the both the ATP

and SATP scale. Black students' mean global scores were significantly lower than their White

counterparts. Table 2 details these findings.

Table 2
Results Regarding Race on the ATP and SATP Scales

		ATP				SATP			
Variable	N	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Race									
Black	544	62.65	12.16	-12.89***	.000	40.89	7.80	-16.95***	.000
White	498	73.81	14.42			50.46	10.15		

***p < .001

R₂: Differences in ATP/ SATP scores regarding social work student status. There

was not a significant difference on the mean global scores between non-social work students and

social work students on the ATP scale nor was a significant difference found on the mean global

scores of the SATP scale. Table 3 details these findings.

Table 3
T-Test Results for Student Status on the ATP and SATP Scale

		ATP				SATP			
Variable	N	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Field of Study									
Social Work	77	66.06	14.04	-1.28	.202	45.84	8.90	.356	.723
Non-Social Work	1031	68.30	14.85			45.47	10.23		

**R₃: Differences in ATP/ SATP scores regarding a traditional flagship university and

an HBCU**. A significant difference was also found on the mean global scores between students

from the traditional flagship university and the HBCU on the ATP scale, *t*=8.62*, p* < 0.001 and

the SATP scale, $t=12.99$, $p < 0.001$. The traditional flagship university scored significantly

higher on mean global scores on both the ATP and SATP scales. Table 4 details these findings.

Table 4
T-Test Results for University History on the ATP and SATP Scale

		ATP				SATP			
Variable	N	M	SD	t	p	M	SD	t	p
University Type									
Traditional	638	71.20	15.97	8.62***	.000	48.55	10.43	12.99***	.000
HBCU	470	64.00	11.86			41.34	8.06		

*** $p < .001$

R$_4$: Differences in Continuum of Police Force regarding race. All responses of

strongly agree or *agree* will be reported together as being in agreement while *strongly disagree*

and *disagree* response's will be reported together being in disagreement. The chi-square test

results indicated a statistically significant relationship between race and agreement with the

statement: *Police use too much force in the daily conduct of their duties*. Black students were

more likely to answer in agreement (54.6%) with the statement than White students, who had

significantly fewer students answer in agreement (27.3%) with the aforementioned statement.

Table 5 details these findings.

Table 5
Results for Police use of Force in Daily Duties

	N	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Race						
Black	544	18.4 %	36.2 %	33.3 %	9.7%	2.4%
White	498	9 %	18.3 %	26.9 %	32.9 %	12.9 %

$\chi^2(8) = 161.03$, $p < .001$

R5: Differences in Continuum of Police Force regarding social work and non-social work students. All responses of *strongly agree* or *agree* will be reported together as being in agreement while *strongly disagree* and *disagree* response's will be reported together being in disagreement. The chi-square test results indicated a slight difference between the non-social work students and social work students and agreement regarding excessive police force in their duties. Social work students were more likely to answer in agreement (45.5%) with the statement; *Police use too much force in the daily conduct of their duties,* than non-social work students. Non-social work students were less likely to in agreement (41.8%) with the aforementioned statement. Table 6 details these findings.

Table 6
Results for Police use of Force in Daily Duties

	N	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Field of Study						
Non-social Work	1031	14 %	27.8 %	29.3 %	21.1 %	7.8 %
Social Work	77	11.7 %	33.8 %	31.2 %	19.5 %	3.9%

$\chi^2(4) = 2.77, p = .597$

R6: Differences in Continuum of Police Force regarding a traditional flagship university and an HBCU. All responses of *strongly agree* or *agree* will be reported together as being in agreement while *strongly disagree* and *disagree* response's will be reported together being in disagreement. The chi-square test results indicated a statistically significant relationship between the traditional flagship university and the HBCU and agreement with the statement; *Police use too much force in the daily conduct of their duties.* Students from the traditional flagship university were less likely to answer in agreement (35.4%) with the statement than

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students from the HBCU, who had significantly more students answer in agreement (51.1%)

with the aforementioned statement. Table 7 details these findings.

Table 7
Results for Police use of Force in Daily Duties

	N	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
University History						
Traditional	638	11.6 %	23.8 %	25.2 %	28.5 %	10.8%
HBCU	470	16.8 %	34.3 %	35.1 %	10.9 %	3 %

$\chi^2(4) = 87.10$, $p < .001$

R$_7$: Differences in Likelihood of Minority Victimization regarding race.

More minorities are likely to become victims of police brutality than White persons. All

responses of *strongly agree* or *agree* will be reported together as being in agreement while

strongly disagree and *disagree* response's will be reported together being in disagreement. The

chi-square test results indicated a statistically significant relationship between race and

agreement with the statement: *More minorities are likely to become victims of police brutality*

than White persons. Black students were more likely to answer in agreement with the statement

(80.7%) than White students (50.4%). Table 8 details these findings.

Table 8
Results for Likelihood of Minority Victimization through Police Brutality

	N	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Race						
Black	544	54.2 %	26.5 %	14.3 %	2.2 %	2.8 %
White	498	18.7 %	31.7 %	14.9 %	17.3 %	17.5 %

$\chi^2(8) = 211.53$, $p < .001$

Police are more likely to use deadly force against a Black male than a White male. All

responses of *strongly agree* or *agree* will be reported together as being in agreement while

strongly disagree and *disagree* response's will be reported together being in disagreement. The

chi-square test results indicated a statistically significant relationship between race and agreement with the statement: *Police are more likely to use deadly force against a Black male than a White male*. Black students were more likely to answer in agreement to the statement (81.6%) than White students (41.4%). Table 9 details these findings.

Table 9
Results for Likelihood of Minority Victimization through Police use of Deadly Force

	N	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Race						
Black	544	60.5 %	21.1 %	14 %	2.4 %	2 %
White	498	19.5% %	21.9 %	18.7 %	15.7 %	24.3 %

$\chi^2(8) = 268.99, p < .001$

R$_8$: Differences in Likelihood of Minority Victimization regarding social work and non-social work students. ***More minorities are likely to become victims of police brutality than White persons.*** All responses of *strongly agree* or *agree* will be reported together as being in agreement while *strongly disagree* and *disagree* response's will be reported together being in disagreement. The chi-square test results did not indicate a statistically significant relationship between the non-social work students and social work students in agreement with the statement: *More minorities are likely to become victims of police brutality than White persons*. Non-social work students were less likely to answer in agreement (65.4%) with the statement than the social work students (78%) with the previously mentioned statement. Table 10 details these findings.

Table 10
Results for Likelihood of Minority Victimization through Police Brutality

	N	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Field of Study						
Non-social Work	1031	36.9 %	28.5 %	15 %	9.6 %	10 %
Social Work	77	40.3 %	37.7 %	7.8 %	7.8 %	6.5 %

$\chi^2(4) = 6.01, p = .198$

Police are more likely to use deadly force against a Black male than a White male. All

responses of *strongly agree* or *agree* will be reported together as being in agreement while

strongly disagree and *disagree* response's will be reported together being in disagreement. The

chi-square test results did not indicate a statistically significant relationship between non-social

work students and social work students in agreement with the statement: *Police are more likely*

to use deadly force against a Black male than a White male. Non-social work students were less

likely to answer in agreement (62%) with the statement than the social work students (72.8%) to

the previously mentioned statement. Table 11 details these findings.

Table 11
Results for Likelihood of Minority Victimization through Police use of Deadly Force

	N	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Field of Study						
Non-social Work	1031	40.2 %	21.8 %	15.9 %	8.9 %	13.2 %
Social Work	77	48.1 %	24.7 %	15.6 %	5.2 %	6.5 %

$\chi^2(4) = 5.04, p = .283$

R_9: Differences in Likelihood of Minority Victimization regarding a traditional

flagship university and an HBCU. *More minorities are likely to become victims of police*

brutality than White persons. All responses of *strongly agree* or *agree* will be reported together

as being in agreement while *strongly disagree* and *disagree* response's will be reported together

being in disagreement. The chi-square test results indicated a statistically significant relationship

between the traditional flagship university and the HBCU in agreement with the statement: *More minorities are likely to become victims of police brutality than White persons*. Traditional flagship university students were less likely to answer in agreement (58.3%) than were HBCU students (77%) to the previously mentioned statement. Table 12 details these findings.

Table 12
Results for Likelihood of Minority Victimization through Police Brutality

	N	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
University History						
Traditional	638	29 %	29.3 %	12.9 %	14.6 %	14.3 %
HBCU	470	48.1 %	28.9 %	16.8 %	2.6 %	3.6 %

$\chi^2(4) = 102.27, p < .001$

Police are more likely to use deadly force against a Black male than a White male All responses of *strongly agree* or *agree* will be reported together as being in agreement while *strongly disagree* and *disagree* response's will be reported together being in disagreement. The chi-square test results indicated a statistically significant relationship between the traditional flagship university and the HBCU in agreement with the statement: *Police are more likely to use deadly force against a Black male than a White male*. Traditional flagship university students were less likely to answer in agreement to the statement (51.9%) than were HBCU students (77.5%) to the previously mentioned statement. Table 13 details these findings.

Table 13
Results for Likelihood of Minority Victimization through Police use of Deadly Force

	N	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
University History						
Traditional	638	29.3 %	22.6 %	15.2 %	13 %	19.9 %
HBCU	470	56.2 %	21.3 %	16.8 %	2.8 %	3 %

$\chi^2(4) = 142.32, p < .001$

R₁₀: Differences in Cultural Competency regarding race. All responses of *strongly agree* or *agree* will be reported together as being in agreement while *strongly disagree* and *disagree* response's will be reported together being in disagreement. The chi-square test results indicated a statistically significant relationship between race and agreement with the statement: *Police need more training to be culturally competent*. Black students were more likely to answer in agreement (78.3%) to the statement than White students, who had significantly less answer in agreement (54.4%) with the aforementioned statement. Table 14 details these findings.

Table 14
Results for the Need for Police to be Culturally Competent

	N	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Race						
Black	544	49.8 %	28.5 %	18 %	1.7 %	2 %
White	498	27.9 %	26.5 %	16.9 %	16.9 %	11.8 %

$\chi^2(8) = 143.11, p < .001$

R₁₁: Differences in Cultural Competency regarding social work and non-social work students. All responses of *strongly agree* or *agree* will be reported together as being in agreement while *strongly disagree* and *disagree* response's will be reported together being in disagreement. The chi-square test results indicated a statistically significant relationship between the non-social work students and social work students in agreement with the statement: *Police need more training to be culturally competent*. Non-social work students were significantly less likely to answer in agreement (65.7%) with the statement than the social work students, who were more likely to answer in agreement (85.7%) to the previously mentioned statement. Table 15 details these findings.

Table 15
Results for the Need for Police to be Culturally Competent

	N	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Field of Study						
Non-social Work	1031	37.1 %	28.6 %	17.9 %	9.4 %	7 %
Social Work	77	64.9 %	20.8 %	13 %	1.3 %	0 %

$\chi^2(4) = 27.56$, $p < .001$

R$_{12}$: Differences in Cultural Competency regarding a traditional flagship university and an HBCU. All responses of *strongly agree* or *agree* will be reported together as being in agreement while *strongly disagree* and *disagree* response's will be reported together being in disagreement. The chi-square test results indicated a statistically significant relationship between the traditional flagship university and the HBCU in agreement with the statement: *Police need more training to be culturally competent*. Traditional flagship university students were less likely to answer in agreement (62.1%) to the statement than the HBCU students, who were more likely answer in agreement (73.8%) with the aforementioned statement. Table 16 details these findings.

Table 16
Results for the Need for Police to be Culturally Competent

	N	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
University History						
Traditional	638	34.8 %	27.3 %	14.7 %	13.6 %	9.6 %
HBCU	470	44.7 %	29.1 %	21.5 %	2.3 %	2.3 %

$\chi^2(4) = 74.90$, $p < .001$

R$_{13}$: Differences in Situation De-escalation regarding race. All responses of *strongly agree* or *agree* will be reported together as being in agreement while *strongly disagree* and *disagree* response's will be reported together being in disagreement. The chi-square test results indicated a statistically significant relationship between race and agreement with the statement: *Police need more training on how to deescalate a situation*. Black students were more likely to

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answer in agreement (83.2%) to the statement than White students, who had significantly fewer

students answer in agreement (69.4%) with the aforementioned statement. Table 17 details these

findings.

Table 17
Results for the Need for Police Training on Situation De-escalation

	N	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Race						
Black	544	56.4 %	26.8 %	14 %	1.5 %	1.3 %
White	498	36.9 %	32.5 %	16.1 %	8.8 %	5.6 %

$\chi^2(8) = 77.34, p < .001$

R$_{14}$: Differences in Situation De-escalation regarding social work and non-social

work students. All responses of *strongly agree* or *agree* will be reported together as being in

agreement while *strongly disagree* and *disagree* responses will be reported together being in

disagreement. The chi-square test results did not indicate a statistically significant relationship

between the non-social work students and social work students in agreement with the statement:

Police need more training on how to deescalate a situation. Non-social work students were

somewhat less likely to answer in agreement (76.4%) with the statement than the social work

students, who had more answering in agreement (81.8%) with the aforementioned statement.

Table 18 details these findings.

Table 18
Results for the Need for Police Training on Situation De-escalation

	N	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Field of Study						
Non-social Work	1031	45.6 %	30.8 %	14.9 %	5.1 %	3.5 %
Social Work	77	54.5 %	27.3 %	14.3 %	2.6 %	1.3 %

$\chi^2(4) = 3.53, p = .473$

R₁₅: Differences in Situation De-escalation regarding a traditional flagship

university and an HBCU. All responses of *strongly agree* or *agree* will be reported together as being in agreement while *strongly disagree* and *disagree* response's will be reported together being in disagreement. The chi-square test results indicated a statistically significant relationship between the traditional flagship university and the HBCU in agreement with the statement: *Police need more training on how to deescalate a situation.* Traditional flagship university students were less likely to answer in agreement (75%) with the statement than the HBCU students, who had more students in agreement (79.2%) with the aforementioned statement. Table 19 details these findings.

Table 19
Results for the Need for Police Training on Situation De-escalation

	N	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
University History						
Traditional	638	42.6 %	32.4 %	13.2 %	7.1 %	4.7%
HBCU	470	51.1 %	28.1 %	17.2 %	2.1 %	1.5%

$\chi^2(4) = 30.44, p < .001$

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Summary of Findings

Black students' ATP and SATP scale scores differed significantly from their White counterparts. Black students aggregately reported lower levels of positive perception of police than their White counterparts. Although these significant differences existed on race across multiple, attitudes toward the police race variables, White students reported similar attitudes to most areas of agreement/disagreement as Black individuals. These attitudes were though not as fervently reported; hence, the significant differences.

The traditional flagship university differed significantly than the HBCU in both the ATP and SATP scale scores. A student from the traditional flagship university was more likely to have a positive perception of the police than their HBCU counterparts. There was no significant variation found between social work students compared to non-social work students in both the ATP and the SATP scale.

The traditional flagship university differed significantly than the HBCU in both the ATP and SATP scales. The HBCU aggregately reported lower perceptions of police on both scales than their traditional flagship university counterparts. There was no significant variation found between the attitudes toward police of the social work students compared to non-social work students in both the ATP and the SATP scale.

Black students differed significantly from White students on the five additional questions in this study. Black students' responses reflected a more negative perception of police than their White counterparts on all five questions. White students also indicated some negative perceptions or agreement with the question in regards to the five questions, though not near as significant as their White counterparts. The five questions also produced significant differences

between the traditional flagship university and the HBCU, with the HBCU reflecting more negative perceptions of police than the traditional flagship university.

Four of the five additional questions were not found to have significant results among the variable of social work student status. Social work students aggregately reported similar perceptions of police as non-social work students in four of the five items. Social work students reported a high level of congruence with the statement, *Police need more training to be culturally competent,* which may be a reflection of the importance of cultural competence in social work practice (NASW, 2008).

Implications of Findings

The implications of these findings demonstrate a significant disparity between Black college students and White college students' attitudes toward the police. The results of this study demonstrate a need for the police to improve community relationships through their interaction and conduct with the minority population. Tolliver et al. (2016) posited that stop and frisk laws and policing through predicting who is a lawbreaker and who is not has led to a form of systemic racism. Additionally, Black males are more likely to be unarmed if shot and killed by a police officer than their White counterparts (Swaine, Laughland, & Lartery, 2015). A compilation of statistics of police involved shootings found in 2015 that the members of Black population were three times more likely to be killed by police than the White population and other minorities (Kindy, 2015). These facts alone might help to explain the negative attitudes toward the police held by Black college students.

Community policing involves the local residents in problem solving and locates police stations inside the community to foster positive relationships (Community Police Defined, 2014). The results of this study demonstrate the need for a revisiting of the community policing

structure in communities of color to improve existing relationships and foster trust (Mbuba, 2010). The problem is not the negative attitudes toward the police. These attitudes represent a symptom of a much large issue, the racial bias present in policing structure and policies. These biases manifest in laws targeting minorities, such as problem oriented policing and stop and frisk laws (Otuyelu, Graham, & Kennedy, 2016, Tolliver et al.; 2016, Tyler, 2003; Tyler & Fagan 2008). A critical component of improving relations between the community and police lie in changing the public perception of the police. These previously mentioned practices represent an opportunity that is well suited for the social work profession, as the profession is known to serve as advocates for vulnerable populations (NASW, 2008).

The lower ATP and SATP scale scores of Black college students underscore a multitude of complex issues, some of which are stated above, that should be addressed to ameliorate negative attitudes toward the police. Hinds (2009) found that hearing about a negative police encounter could have a significant impact on the public's attitudes toward the police. Being that the minority Black population often has more contact with the police than the majority White population (Mbuba, 2010), improvement of police the quality of contact with minority populations could potentially improve public attitudes toward the police. To improve relationships with minority communities, there is a necessity for cultural competence and racial sensitivity in policing (Otuyelu, Graham, & Kennedy, 2016). The term cultural competence may carry automatic stigma or apathy among police officers and, as such, training in cultural competence may be met with skepticism. One suggestion to alleviate this potential obstacle is to infuse aspects of culture and cultural competence, where relevant, in de-escalation trainings. De-escalation and similar may already be present at police academies and annual training, making infusion of cultural competence and racial sensitivity more practical.

Intervention between the local community and police is paramount in improvement of the public's attitudes toward the police as national media continuously highlights instances of minority victimization of police (Kahn & Martin, 2016). One example of such victimization occurred near the region of this study. In this example, 14-year-old Black honor student Cameron Tillman, who was shot four to five times in the back while running with friends through an abandoned house. Police reported that a weapon was found close to Tillman's body (Agorist, 2014).

Prevention, cornerstone in many issues, should be used before negative attitudes toward the police are developed (Kindy, 2015). Additionally, the student population should be given opportunities to address their issues with the police and offer guidance on how to improve the relationships between the police and community. Local police should be made aware of the results of this study and how such negative perceptions could affect their ability to perform their duties. Many of these attitudes may be prevalent due to increased police contact with minorities compared to the majority White population (Mbuba, 2010). It may be necessary for the local police to seek out opportunities to improve their methods of community policing with communities that they often come into contact. By starting at the community level, local communities could serve as models for future national policy implementation.

The results of this study are relevant to the social work profession in many ways. The findings that social work students and non-social work students do not differ significantly on the ATP or SATP scale highlights the need for additional education of social work students on vulnerable populations. For example, it is well highlighted in the research that one reason for less positive attitudes toward the police by minorities reflects adverse treatment of minority groups by police (Mbuba, 2010). The results suggest that social work students' views are not in line with

the minority community's perception of the police or their lived experience. It should be noted, however, that the sample if social works students was significantly smaller than the sample of non-social work students. Future studies should attempt to gain a larger number of student social workers in its sample population.

It is important for current social workers to take note of the differences in Black and White collegiate students' attitudes towards the police. The knowledge of potential biases between Black college students and a person in authority, such as a police officer is important when planning services for that individual. Based on the results of this study, social workers that often work in close collaboration with vulnerable populations should be cognizant of potential negative client attitudes toward the police. Social workers should also understand that this negative perception towards police might extend to the social worker, as he or she is often in a position of authority over the individual seeking services (Akbar, 2011; Gambril, 2001).

Amelioration of negative attitudes toward the police is clearly in line with social work values of service and social justice (NASW, 2008). More positive attitudes toward the police may be accomplished through comprehensive advocacy campaigns as well as partnerships with the local community and police force. The cause of these negative attitudes toward the police is multifaceted and complex. Social workers should seek to improve conditions at the local and legislative levels. Social workers, who often work in close proximities with law enforcement, serve as ideal advocates for minority populations as well as the prevention and improvement of negative attitudes toward the police ("Police Shootings Demonstrate Need," 2014). Through close collaboration of the social work profession with law enforcement, improvement of the quality of contact with the target population could serve as a vehicle to gradually improve community attitudes toward the police.

Study Limitations

There are some limitations that should be mentioned in this study. First, there was not a true random sample since two universities were specifically targeted for this study. Generalizability of this study to universities outside of the Southern geographical region should be addressed. This study was conducted at a traditional flagship university and a HBCU in the Deep South. Although a large sample size was obtained, it may not be appropriate to generalize the results to universities located outside of the region. Therefore, this study should not be used as a representative of the opinions of all universities.

Data for this study was collected from January 20, 2016 to March 6. 2016. During this time, there was a police involved chase and shoot-out with a minority suspect in the city where the study was conducted. Two police officers were shot and the suspect eventually died from wounds received in the shoot-out (Kinchen, 2016). Police involved shootings with minorities are not new in the media. Also, the police officers were reported to be using self-defense at the time the incident occurred. Such an event has the potential to skew results but whether it did or not is unknown.

This study did not break down differences within the universities. Future studies should seek to find differences in all attitudes toward the police variables within the universities.

Another limitation of this study is the reliability coefficients of the scales used. Previous studies by Dunham and Alpert (1998) and Webb and Marshall (1995) showed reliability coefficients of the ATP scale within the realm of acceptability, except for two content areas. Mbuba (2010) did not report reliability coefficients for the study on student attitudes toward the police; therefore its reliability is unknown. Future research should seek to report on the reliability

of the scales and content areas used to determine if they are appropriate measures of attitudes toward the police.

Future research should focus on the quantitative measures of the ATP and SATP scales to ensure generalizability of results. Additionally, focus on the quantitative data needs to be given to determine if contact with police significantly had an effect on the public's attitudes toward the police. Future studies might consider student interviews to ascertain why these perceptions of police exist and strategies to ameliorate these perceptions. Future studies should also include zip code mapping to determine if race is the major factor in ATP or SATP, or if socioeconomic status might also play a factor. By mapping zip codes, police could gain valuable information on where to increase their efforts in improving community relations.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study is to assess collegiate student population's attitudes toward the police. The study began with a literature review outlining the development of policing in the United States and its transition into modern day policing. This study of the development of policing helps to demonstrate modern practices and their effect on the populations' attitudes towards the police. As demonstrated earlier, Black college students have significantly more negative perceptions of police than do their White student counterparts. Future research must seek out solutions to improve relations between police officers and communities of color. Using race, social work student status, and university history, this study attempted to find any significant differences in attitudes toward the police. Although little differences were found among attitudes towards the police in regards to social work student status, significant differences were found among the race and university history variables. This thesis added to the body of knowledge by exploring a topic that has been under-researched in the past but is now at the forefront of our national media outlets.

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Appendix
Institutional Review Board Approval Forms

ACTION ON PROTOCOL APPROVAL REQUEST

LSU

Institutional Review Board
Dr. Dennis Landin, Chair
130 David Boyd Hall
Baton Rouge, LA 70803
P: 225.578.8692
F: 225.578.5983
irb@lsu.edu | lsu.edu/irb

TO: Scott Wilks
Social Work

FROM: Dennis Landin
Chair, Institutional Review Board

DATE: December 22, 2015

RE: **IRB#** 3678

TITLE: Attitudes toward Police among College Students: Differences among Race, Social Work Status, and University History

New Protocol/Modification/Continuation: New Protocol

Review type: Full ____ Expedited _X_   **Review date:** 12/21/2015

Risk Factor: Minimal ___X___ Uncertain _____ Greater Than Minimal_____

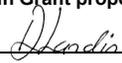**Approved**_____X_____ **Disapproved**_____

Approval Date: 12/22/2015   **Approval Expiration Date:** 12/21/2016

Re-review frequency: (annual unless otherwise stated)

Number of subjects approved: 500

LSU Proposal Number (if applicable)**:**

Protocol Matches Scope of Work in Grant proposal: (if applicable) _____

By: Dennis Landin, Chairman _____

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING –
Continuing approval is CONDITIONAL on:

1. Adherence to the approved protocol, familiarity with, and adherence to the ethical standards of the Belmont Report, and LSU's Assurance of Compliance with DHHS regulations for the protection of human subjects*
2. Prior approval of a change in protocol, including revision of the consent documents or an increase in the number of subjects over that approved.
3. Obtaining renewed approval (or submittal of a termination report), prior to the approval expiration date, upon   request by the IRB office (irrespective of when the project actually begins); notification of project termination.
4. Retention of documentation of informed consent and study records for at least 3 years after the study ends.
5. Continuing attention to the physical and psychological well-being and informed consent of the individual participants, including notification of new information that might affect consent.
6. A prompt report to the IRB of any adverse event affecting a participant potentially arising from the study.
7. Notification of the IRB of a serious compliance failure.
8. **SPECIAL NOTE: When emailing more than one recipient, make sure you use bcc.**

All investigators and support staff have access to copies of the Belmont Report, LSU's Assurance with DHHS, DHHS (45 CFR 46) and FDA regulations governing use of human subjects, and other relevant documents in print in this office or on our World Wide Web site at http://www.lsu.edu/irb

ACTION ON PROTOCOL APPROVAL REQUEST

LSU

TO: Scott Wilks
                      Social Work

FROM: Dennis Landin
                      Chair, Institutional Review Board

DATE: February 11, 2016

RE: **IRB#** 3678

TITLE: Attitudes toward Police among College Students: Differences among Race, Social Work Status, and University History

Dr. Dennis Landin, Chair
130 David Boyd Hall
Baton Rouge, LA 70803
P: 225.578.8692
F: 225.578.5983
irb@lsu.edu | lsu.edu/irb

New Protocol/Modification/Continuation: Modification

Brief Modification Description: Increase number of participants to 850.

Review type: Full ____ Expedited __X__   **Review date:** 2/10/2016

Risk Factor: Minimal ___X___   Uncertain _____   Greater Than Minimal _____

Approved ___X___   **Disapproved** _____

Approval Date: 2/10/2016   **Approval Expiration Date:** 12/21/2016

Re-review frequency: (annual unless otherwise stated)

Number of subjects approved: 850

LSU Proposal Number (if applicable)**:**

Protocol Matches Scope of Work in Grant proposal: (if applicable) _____

By: Dennis Landin, Chairman ____*Landin*_____

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING –
Continuing approval is CONDITIONAL on:
1. Adherence to the approved protocol, familiarity with, and adherence to the ethical standards of the Belmont Report, and LSU's Assurance of Compliance with DHHS regulations for the protection of human subjects*
2. Prior approval of a change in protocol, including revision of the consent documents or an increase in the number of subjects over that approved.
3. Obtaining renewed approval (or submittal of a termination report), prior to the approval expiration date, upon request by the IRB office (irrespective of when the project actually begins); notification of project termination.
4. Retention of documentation of informed consent and study records for at least 3 years after the study ends.
5. Continuing attention to the physical and psychological well-being and informed consent of the individual participants including notification of new information that might affect consent.
6. A prompt report to the IRB of any adverse event affecting a participant potentially arising from the study.
7. Notification of the IRB of a serious compliance failure.
8. **SPECIAL NOTE:**

All investigators and support staff have access to copies of the Belmont Report, LSU's Assurance with DHHS, DHHS (45 CFR 46) and FDA regulations governing use of human subjects, and other relevant documents in print in this office or on our World Wide Web site at http://www.lsu.edu/irb

Institutional Review Board Approval Forms

ACTION ON PROTOCOL APPROVAL REQUEST

LSU

Institutional Review Board
Dr. Dennis Landin, Chair
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P: 225.578.8692
F: 225.578.5983
irb@lsu.edu | lsu.edu/irb

TO: Scott Wilks
            Social Work

FROM: Dennis Landin
            Chair, Institutional Review Board

DATE: December 22, 2015

RE: **IRB#** 3678

TITLE: Attitudes toward Police among College Students: Differences among Race, Social Work
            Status, and University History

New Protocol/Modification/Continuation: New Protocol

Review type: Full _____ Expedited _X_   **Review date:** 12/21/2015

Risk Factor: Minimal ___X___ Uncertain _____ Greater Than Minimal_____
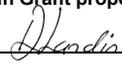
Approved_____X_____ Disapproved_____

Approval Date: 12/22/2015   **Approval Expiration Date:** 12/21/2016

Re-review frequency: (annual unless otherwise stated)

Number of subjects approved: 500

LSU Proposal Number (if applicable)**:**

Protocol Matches Scope of Work in Grant proposal: (if applicable) _____

By: Dennis Landin, Chairman _____

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING –
Continuing approval is CONDITIONAL on:

1. Adherence to the approved protocol, familiarity with, and adherence to the ethical standards of the Belmont Report,
   and LSU's Assurance of Compliance with DHHS regulations for the protection of human subjects*
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or on our World Wide Web site at http://www.lsu.edu/irb

VITA

Lisa Lewis was born in Tucson, Arizona and raised in Hereford, Arizona. She attended Palominas Elementary School, Palominas Junior High School, and Bisbee High School. Lisa graduated from the University of South Caroline with a Bachelor of Arts degree in psychology in May 2013. She continued her studies at Louisiana State University and expects to graduate with a Master of Social Work degree in May 2016.

Lisa currently lives in Baton Rouge, Louisiana with her husband Spencer. Lisa intends to continue her research in attitudes towards the police while pursuing a doctorate degree in social work. Lisa also expects to serve in the United States Army as a social worker.