Central Washington University

ScholarWorks@CWU

Summer 2020

Comparing Students' Perspectives on a Rural University's Special District Police Department and Student's Traditional Hometown Police Departments

Angela Pierce
Central Washington University, angela.pierce@cwu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.cwu.edu/etd

Part of the Criminology and Criminal Justice Commons

Recommended Citation

COMPARING STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES ON A RURAL UNIVERSITY'S SPECIAL

DISTRICT POLICE DEPARTMENT AND STUDENT'S

TRADITIONAL HOMETOWN POLICE

DEPARTMENTS

_____

A Thesis

Presented to

The Graduate Faculty

Central Washington University

_____

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Science

Law and Justice

_____

by

Angela Lee Pierce

August 2020

CENTRAL WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

Graduate Studies

We hereby approve the thesis of

Angela Lee Pierce

Candidate for the degree of Master of Science

APPROVED FOR THE GRADUATE FACULTY

_____   _____

Dr. Cody Stoddard, Committee Chair

_____   _____

Dr. Jillian Desmond

_____   _____

Dr. Michael Harrod

_____   _____

Dean of Graduate Studies

ABSTRACT

COMPARING STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES ON A RURAL UNIVERSITY'S SPECIAL

DISTRICT POLICE DEPARTMENT AND STUDENT'S

TRADITIONAL HOMETOWN POLICE

DEPARTMENTS

by

Angela Lee Pierce

August 2020

Understanding the public perceptions of police is not a new topic, but it is one that has not focused on that of university students. This current study aims to fill the gap in knowledge by comparing student's perceptions of two different police departments; traditional hometown police departments and special district police. This study targeted a specific population, college students, that needs additional research to understand what factors contribute to their perceptions of police. This study gathered students' perceptions of police using an email survey of all on-campus students in a regional state university. Using OLS regression, I was able to see the effect of select variables, like race, gender, living on/off campus, fear of crime on campus, social cohesion on perceptions of police. This study found that effectiveness, social cohesion, race, and sexual orientation was statistically significant and positively associated with the dependent variable.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This study consists of a survey conducted on Central Washington University (CWU) students' perception and attitudes of the CWU and their hometown law enforcement. This study is not like any others in the field as it is a comparison of views that people have towards two different police departments. This study is novel as it looks at an under-studied district police in a university police department.

The knowledge that we gain from this type of study can inform us where law enforcement departments are lacking and where they are succeeding. There is very little academic literature examining the role and perception of university police. This study can inform the university, public, and police of specific variables that have a positive or negative impact on the communities' attitudes towards police and ones that protect communities. In order to understand people's perceptions, we need to identify which variables influence or predict a person's perception. While the topic of perception and attitude has not been studied like this, there are gaps that need to be understood when we examine special populations such as university students and district police departments.

Defining Traditional and District Police

There are many different types of law enforcement in which the public interacts during their lifetime. Walker and Katz (2005) noted the fragmentations of law enforcement and identified six different types: local, state, federal, special district police, Native American tribal police, and private security. For this study, the CWU police department is considered a special district police department. Special district police consist of police in public schools, transit police, and college and university police (Walker and Katz, 2005). This study also uses students'

hometown police. These will be considered a traditional police department which encompasses local, state, and Native American tribal police.[1] In previous decades, universities tended to employ private security. While these are important to note, they are not the same as law enforcement because they do not have a peace officer certification from the state. These groupings of law enforcement are a broad view of the different types the public encounters.

Over the decades, there has been a shift of universities employing sworn police officers for the protection of their students and campus, rather than security (Reaves, 2015). The change from security departments to district police departments opens the door to comparing these university police to traditional police departments. There needs to be more information on what can and does change or influence the perceptions that students have towards the police. One thing to note for universities as a whole is that some of the security departments are actually police departments. The individual department may make a difference when reviewing the different universities.

Due to the trend of having sworn police officers employed by universities, Brian Reaves (2015) conducted a study for the Bureau of Justice Statistics on campus law enforcement to see the number of universities which used sworn peace officers compared to private security individuals. Reaves (2015) took a sample of 900 universities throughout the United States between 2011 and 2012 and found only 68 percent of them employed sworn police officers. This study also pointed out that some university police have received the same level of training as a traditional police department. This suggests I can compare the public's perception of the university police and the community police, while holding training constant.

---

[1] Local law enforcement consists of municipal police, county police, and county sheriffs; state law enforcement consists of state police and bureau of criminal investigations; federal law enforcement consists of federal law enforcement agencies and military law enforcement; and Native American tribal police (Walker and Katz, 2005).

The Gap

There are numerous studies on the public's perceptions of police, yet there is a gap on perceptions of special district police compared to traditional police. District police are composed of different police groups than the general population tends to have regular contact on a normal basis. When researching if there are prior studies comparing university students' perceptions on law enforcement, there is little to be found. This can be supported when examine the work conducted on college students by Mbuba (2010). The authors measured university students' perceptions of law enforcement and found "that education does not necessarily change one's perceptions of police if and when the person experiences a negative police encounter" (pp. 211-212). In their study, the encounter made an impact on perception which is similar to other results on traditional police (Brandl et al., 1994; Tyler, 1990; Nofziger and Williams, 2005).

The public's perception of law enforcement can be impacted by a number of factors. One of the ways that perceptions form is from an individual's personal contact with police and the outcome of such contact (Tyler, 1990; Nofziger and Williams, 2005; Brandl et al., 1994). It can also be formed by the general attitudes about the social context of where they live (Bridenball and Jesilow, 2008). Brandl et al. (1994) found that specific encounters had a stronger impact on perceptions than their overall views on police. Understanding how perceptions are formed is important, yet there is still a lot of unknowns about youths' perceptions of law enforcement.

There is a common trend within past studies that examine perceptions and attitudes towards the police. Demographics seem to color people's perceptions as some of the prior studies have linked factors to perceptions and attitudes towards police; these include race/ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, gender, urban/non-urban, social cohesion, effectiveness, and fear of crime (Dowler and Sparks, 2008; Radford et al., 2015; Nofziger and Williams, 2003;

Frank, Smith, and Novak, 2005; Orr and West, 2007; Uchida et al., 2013). This study is searching to understand which of these, and at what strength, impact a CWU student's view towards their hometown police compared to CWU police. The results of the study can be used to make changes to police policy and programs to fit the needs of the public.

Special district police departments are often misunderstood and underrepresented in the literature on public's perceptions and attitudes towards police. As noted earlier, university police departments are district departments and are not traditional police departments. Traditional police departments are formed with a quasi-military style in mind that promotes an 'us versus them' mentality which Walker and Katz (2005) noted is a barrier to building a strong community-police relationship. While little is known about the public's perception of special district police, many university police departments value relationships between their population and department. In this case of CWU, their police department provides different outreach programs and activities to interact with students on a personal level at a standard that is not usually seen when looking at reviewing a traditional police department.

The philosophy of university police departments is one that leans towards an educational, outreach, and learning approach compared to traditional departments that lean to an arrest and crime control approach (Johnson, 2011). The attitudes people have towards police are impacted by different policies and Johnson (2011) found philosophies and services between district and traditional departments are different. Reality and perceptions are an important aspect to note as they have the power to change images and ideals. The philosophy differences are ones that impact the public and officers. This can be seen as "campus police departments hesitate to employ certain practices common in other law enforcement agencies" (Johnson, 2011, para 5).

Barriers of Special District Police. This study starts to close the gap in the literature as there are few studies on university police departments. This comparison is a novel method in understanding if district departments command the same level of satisfaction and respect that is typically linked to traditional police departments, and whether the same factors affect perceptions of police. This is especially important because CWU police and students' hometown police are similar as they both have sworn peace officers.[2]

District police departments must overcome the stigma of not having the same authority as traditional police departments. There is an argument that police who work in a capacity other than for the state are not held to the same standards (Sparrow, 2014). The fallout of this type of reasoning is the perception that district police departments are less capable to handle criminal situations. Sparrow (2014) identified two viewpoints when looking at police: public police and private police. Sparrow's argument identified university police as a type of private police as the provider is the school and not the state. In his study, university police are comparable to private police (as their employer is not a state directly), even those who were certified peace officers and had worked in some capacity under an employer. Sparrows constructed a list of factors when investigating private policing and found there is a push against having 'private police'. "Private security and private policing have become inescapable. It is no longer useful for public police to hang on to their own regrets about these trends…" (Sparrows, 2014, p. 20). Whether you agree with Sparrow or not, this formation of thought is something the district police and, specifically,

---

[2] Washington State entry-level peace officer receive 720 hours of basic training which is mandated for all city and county officers. A centralized training model is used. "WSCJTC is committed to developing new officers to high standards and providing exceptional training to ensure they have the knowledge and skills to safely and effectively protect the life, liberty and property of the people they serve" (WSCJTS, 2019, para 2).

sworn university police officers have to deal with regularly. The discord among traditional police departments and district police departments is present and needs to be examined.

Limitations due to Scope of the Survey

When perusing the scope of the study there are some considerations to note: generalization of the study; who was allowed to take the survey; and where CWU is located. One of the first limitations within the scope of the study is that of generalization. CWU is a university located in a rural area and the findings of this study are not going to be generalizable to most other universities unless they have a similar regional comprehensive university. The second scope limitation is the factor of sample composition. Since the survey spans the Ellensburg campus and the social context and interactions surrounding that area, the study only consisted of students who are on the Ellensburg campus. It does not include students at satellite campuses or exclusively taking online classes. The rationale indicates those students do not have the same interactions with the CWU police compared to students who are taking classes on campus. Most universities accept a diverse group of individuals into their programs, which makes for a diverse group of individuals within the study. The third scope limitation that we need to address is the social context of the setting. Ellensburg is located in the Pacific Northwest and, as such, has a different culture and norms than other regions. The social context of the Pacific Northwest leans towards a liberal political standpoint which has a trickle effect on the cities within it. The laws that are enforced are typically linked to a liberal viewpoint, which changes the social context to form similar ideals.

Implications of this Study

This study compares, traditional hometown police departments and the special district CWU police department. It examines individual factors that influence a person's perception of

each law enforcement agency. Unlike other studies, this study will make it possible to see what plays a role in people's lives from a person's past in relation to location to where they are currently living. Understanding how individuals' lives are linked to one's identity is a valuable step in understanding differences in individual perceptions. Once we have that information we can then measure and make inferences from what we gathered. The outcome of a study like this is to make policy and procedural changes that benefit the community in which the police serve.

There are multiple outcomes that can be drawn from a study which compares district and traditional police departments while considering the youth's perceptions and individual characteristics. This study affects three groups: the students, the police, and the university. The students are able to express their attitudes, beliefs, and values through the survey questions. The police can see what is influencing an individual's perceptions of them. This information can be used to provide programs to target the needs of the students. By understanding the issues that the students perceive, the university and CWU police are able to improve the experience current and future students face. By understanding the possible divide between types of police departments, we are able to close the gap between departments and remove the stigma on non-traditional police agencies. The university can see what they need to keep or change with different programs they offer through the police department. This information can then be used as a tool to see our understanding of a program, ideal, or thought process.

There are different demographic factors prior studies have identified as having an impact on the public's perceptions and attitudes of law enforcement. The literature has surveyed age, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, location of residence, and gender (Dowler and Sparks, 2008; Madon, 2018; Wu, Sun, and Triplett, 2009; Cochran, Warren, and Novak, 2012; Owen et al., 2018). The literature has also noted social cohesion, fear of crime, and class standing as having

an impact on findings (Uchida et al., 2013; Wood-Wyatt, 2008). This current study will allow us to understand how different individual characteristics impact youth's attitudes towards police by first examining the literature that surrounds the topic on hand.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The prior literature is a guide we can use to filter what has already been used to make inferences so we are not reinventing the wheel. Frank, Smith, and Novak (2005) recognized that the police and the public have a relationship and that variance within this relationship can be explained by multiple variables. Lia and Zhao (2010) identified three different themes or grouping of variables that can be used to categorize the different studies and literature on perceptions people have of the police in a manageable fashion. These three categories are labeled as follows: demographics group of variables, neighborhood context group of variables, and the police/citizen interaction group of variables (Lia and Zhao, 2010). While not all of these categories will work for this study, the demographics model is similar to the types of studies that I have identified as being necessary for this study's literature review. The demographics group includes variables such as race/ethnicity, age, gender, and education that people have used within their studies to measure what may influence an individual's perceptions of the police.

Why are Attitudes Towards Police Important?

Understanding of perceptions is important because perceptions shed light on the relationship that exists between the public and the police and therefore influences their co-productions and cooperation to reduce crime and increase social cohesion. Mitlin (2008) stated that co-production "refers to the joint production of public services between citizen and state, with any one or more elements of the production process being shared" (p. 340). The relationship between the public and the police needs to be one that has cooperation and trust. The police are intended to protect and serve in a public service capacity and the departments need the trust of the public to notify them of crimes, cooperate in investigations, and obey the law. This is

supported by Williams et al. (2016) as they considered the aspect of co-production on a university campus and stated that "…co-production entails a series of steps that are dependent upon the willingness of all parties to coordinate, cooperate, and collaborate" (Williams, et al., 2016, p. 111). Co-production of crime reduction is dependent on the willingness of the public and is linked to their positive perceptions. If an individual has a negative perception of the police, they are less likely to be trustful and willing to cooperate when a crime or something else occurs within the community. The realization that co-operations is something that is needed for the functioning of police means that they need to take steps to understand what factors influence it in a negative or positive way.

Why Cooperation Matters?

The public is more likely to follow the law and law enforcement when they have an invested interest in doing so (Tyler, 1990). Cooperation is linked to the instilled sense of obligations and benefits in individuals to obey the law, rather than simply following written words. The action that is taken should be one that agrees with the social context of the time. Tyler (1990) identified two different approaches an individual may consider when examining why the public obeys the laws: the normative perspective and the instrumental perspective. The normative perspective gets public compliance through personal morality and legitimacy (Tyler, 1990). It takes an intrinsic approach in which the individual has a moral code they will not cross. The instrumental perspective gets public compliance through a logical approach which was the cost versus benefits of committing a crime (Tyler, 1990). The instrumental perspective is linked to the theory of deterrence; the punishment is harsh enough to deter an individual from committing a crime. These two different approaches get compliance through different means but

the outcome is similar: the public follows the written laws thereby making them acceptable boundaries for society.

Theoretical Framework of Attitudes Towards Police

There are two main ways to think of attitudes towards the police: the global police image and specific attitudes from personal experience. Considering these two types of attitudes is consistent with how people form perceptions. These attitudes are therefore needed to produce a comprehensive picture of what influences individual's perceptions of police. In considering the two type of attitudes, these factors will dictate the attributes in a positive or negative aspect that may stem from personal experience or global image of police (Brandl et al., 1994). Brandl and colleagues (1994) identified these two factors by addressing the question of global attitudes toward the police and specific attitudes toward a single event or interaction. Global attitudes encompass an individual's overall assessment of policing as a whole. Specific attitudes are based on one's personal experience with police and their assessment of the individual interaction. In recognizing that there is a theoretical understanding that supports "…global attitudes toward the police influence specific assessments" people are able to understand more ideas and variables that play a role in how people form their perceptions (Brandl et al., 1994, p. 122). Brandl et al. conducted a study and found "respondents who have had a contact with the police tend to be more satisfied with their individual contact than with the police more generally" (p. 131). This idea is supported by Bridenball and Jesilow (2008) as they stated "people who have had some actual experience with officers may tend to view the police differently than those with no familiarity" (p. 159). These studies contribute to the argument that global attitude influences specific attitudes and vice versa.

Specific contacts with police have the ability to improve or diminish global attitudes. For example, poor impatient treatment by the police may generally decrease trust in policing as a whole. When comparing the understandings of attitudes global can affect specific, or specific affect global; they can be interchangeable. For instance, a citizen may have poor perception of police in general, which leads them to notice negative aspects of a specific police encounter. Essentially, a person can make personal contact that influences their global attitude, or their global attitude can influence their personal contact. Orr and West (2007) recognized this as something that needs more understanding and therefore conducted a study to test it. They found "…the direct exposure people have to crime and the local police affects their assessments more than general attitudes about the political process" (Orr and West, 2007, p. 650). Frank, Smith, and Novak stated that "information about the basis of citizen attitudes can provide police with feedback about the performance of officers or, at a minimum, citizen perceptions of performance" (p. 207). When we understand attitudes, we are capable of changing the programs or policy to fit the needs of the community.

Each community is different, and those differences play a role in how people perceive themselves and others. This is something that will help police departments understand where they need to focus their resources and time to specific areas which seem to be lacking or to better understand the areas which are improving the community, to use in other policy aspects. The reason why the understanding of attitude is important and needed is due to what it says about the community relationship with the police and therefore their co-productions and cooperation. The information gathered from studies advances knowledge to produce social cohesion and cooperation within the community and local government agencies.

<center>**Factors that Influence Perceptions of Police**</center>

There are many factors that influence perceptions of police. These following studies investigate two or more demographics by population, income, characteristics of the population, and general number of people within the population boundaries. The literature on these variables is diverse as there are many ways to examine and study it.

Location

When inspecting the literature presented there are a number of studies that classify location. Rural to urban, metropolitan to nonmetropolitan, and major city to non-major city as some examples. The location of where an individual came from to where they currently live is an important part of the variables to consider when discovering how perceptions are made and, if ignored, make the study incomplete (Wu, Sun, and Triplett, 2009). A handful of studies have identified different attributes of the location that influence an individual's perception of police, such as crime and disorder levels (Lee, Kim, Cao, and Woo, 2019; Nofziger and Williams, 2005; Payne and Gainey 2007). However, there is a lack of studies that consider nonurban areas, even though the characteristics are different from urban areas (Nofziger and Williams, 2005). Nofziger and Williams (2005) studied small towns in relation to an individual's fear of crime in one's location and their neighborhood and found the connection can explain some of the variance within their model. In non-urban settings where the social ties to the community are close, the involvement of the officer may have had a greater impact than in urban communities (Nofziger and Williams, 2005, p. 264).

Location has shown to be an influence when controlling for race. Surprisingly, Sharp and Johnson (2009) noted the race gap closed when accounting for individual-level and city-level. This is supported when viewing the study conducted by Wu, Sun, and Triplett (2009). Wu et al.

<center>13</center>

found that "once neighborhood characteristics, such as racial composition, are held constant, the effect of race becomes non-significant" (p. 149). An individual's residence can impact their confidence in the police (Nofziger and Williams, 2005; Sharp and Johnson, 2009; Wu, Sun, and Triplett, 2009).

Past Place Lived. When inquiring where an individual had lived, we are better able to understand their context. It impacts their view; past exposure to different factors has an impact on forming perceptions. When evaluating the past of individuals we must keep in mind that they may have lived in a range of areas: major city to non-major city, community to neighborhood, apartment to house, renter to homeowner, and other different characteristics. Taylor and Lawton (2012) investigated the difference between urban and rural settings with regards to the public's perception of confidence with the police in those areas. The findings showed confidence with the police was greatest within the urban settings and lowest in the rural settings. One thing that we should keep in mind is that there is a possibility that time spent in one place actually decreases one's trust in the police as Lee and colleagues (2019) found. Boateng (2016) conducted a study on two different neighborhood demographics; he compared the community's trust in police when accounting for income and higher level of education. Boateng found there is a difference that could be related to individuals' hometown (i.e. living in a rural or urban city) and that the "…strongest influence on police confidence appeared in some of the smallest scale communities" (p. 428). Where an individual resides does have an influence on attitudes, but the literature appears to be divided. There is a major lack in this area as the specific characteristics need to be studied more. This is not to discount those studies' findings; this just needs to be better understood and defined.

Current Place Residing. The location of a person's current residence can have an impact on the formation of their perception. Fear of being victimized, or, in other terms, a fear of crime, can and does impact the view that people have towards the police (Boateng, 2016; Nofziger and Williams, 2005; Bridenball and Jesilow, 2008; Dowler and Sparks, 2008). Victimization can be thought of as (1) having occurred in the past, or (2) the perception of potentially becoming a victim. Both of these can lead to an individual having a high fear of crime. Boateng (2016) recognized there are two ways to view fear of crime: in terms of a generalized fear of crime or specific fear of crime. Considering if an individual has a fear of crime as a whole verses having been victimized of a particular crime in the past will change the individual's current residential security and trust in police. Nofziger and Williams (2005) did a study with two relevant variables: one of the variables they used was to see if there was a fear of crime within the resident's location and the other was to see how the interaction between the individual and the police were conducted. They found the fear of crime impacts a feeling of safety within one's neighborhood (Nofziger and Williams, 2005). Where people reside can have an influence on their perceptions of police especially if they reside in a place that has disorder and this "…may increase residents' fear and be enough to produce negative attitudes toward the police." (Bridenball and Jesilow, 2008, p. 161) The influence of a person's residence is further supported by the work done by Dowler and Sparks (2008) as they stated a "…fear of victimization has been found to be related to negative attitude toward police." (p. 399). All of these studies show the location a person lives has an impact on their perception of the police.

Social Cohesion and Class Standing

The social connections that are formed from the location of individuals can also impact their specific attitudes towards police. These connections can be represented by individual's

social ties to the community (Uchida et al., 2013). Social cohesion as defined by Uchida, Swatt, Solomon, and Varano (2013), is the social ties that come from an emotional connection to the people within an area. The connections made to form social cohesiveness within individuals lead to an understanding and acceptance and "these social ties are the glue that helps bind neighborhood residents together" (Uchida et al., 2013, p. 3). Scarborough et al. (2010) measured social cohesion as knowing the names of people within the community. They found that as social cohesion increased the fear of crime decreased (Scarborough et al., 2010, p. 824). To review another side of social cohesion is the study of Lee, Boateng, Kim, and Binning (2019). Lee et al. found the more time an individual spent in one place the more likely their trust in the police decreased. The difference in the two studies show there is not one viewpoint when accounting for the social context of an individual's life which encompasses multiple factors like that of demographic variables and social cohesion. Miller and Davis (2008) inferred that communities have a ripple affect; individuals talk to each other about their personal experience with the police in terms of negative or positive ways which adds to an individual's perceptions on the global scale. Nofziger and Williams (2005) found having contact with police was a stronger predictor to a negative influence than a fear of crime. Social cohesion helps us to understand the context of an individual's perceptions. Social cohesion is a phenomenon strongly encouraged in a university setting through community events and even community competitions.

When considering the class standing of students we need to review the social construction of what it means to be a student. Mbuba (2010) notes some of the student's perceptions of police can possibly be due to a population who has a background in making informed decisions to back up their statement like those who are pursuing a higher education. Mbuba identifies a possibility of difference in perceptions in university students; his study can be

16

used as a preliminary finding and will need further research. There is little information and studies conducted on university students, and therefore this population needs further research to make inferences or identify themes.

<div align="center">**Demographic Variables**</div>

Many factors can impact the formation of attitudes and perceptions towards the police. Some of these factors have been identified as demographic characteristics in prior studies. Oftentimes the studies found these demographic variables did show significance on the respondent's attitudes (Dowler and Sparks, 2008; Sharp and Johnson, 2009; Lia and Zhao, 2010; Cochran and Warren, 2012; Owen et al., 2018; Finneran and Stephenson, 2013; Nofziger and Williams, 2003).

Race and Ethnicity

Race plays a role in influencing people's perceptions of police (Dowler and Sparks, 2008; Weitzer and Tuch, 2004; Sharp and Johnson, 2009; Mbuba, 2010; Lia and Zhao 2010; Cochran and Warren, 2012). Race as a factor is supported by Dowler and Sparks (2008) who stated "much of the research on public attitudes toward police found race and ethnicity to be the most salient determinants" (p. 397). Race can be defined as a collection of physical traits and ethnicity can be defined as origin, language, culture, and religion (Barak, Leighton, Cotton, 2018). Weitzer and Tuch (2004) found race had some variance when investigating people's perceptions of police and stated "our findings indicate that demographic variables do not fully capture the determinants of public opinion" (p. 411). Weitzer and Tuch recognized that there is a gap in the data they gathered and to better explain what has an impact will need more variables to explain the reason why race is a factor.

Race and ethnicity have explained some of the distrust and negative perceptions towards the police and in the police's ability to conduct their duties. Sharp and Johnson (2009) performed a study to understand the differences of distrust with the police when accounting for race. They used the variables race, age, education, gender and others in thirty-three different cities. The result showed how race and ethnicity should not be overlooked as the study found significances with Nonwhites who had an impact on outcomes of their study. In examining this finding, Sharp and Johnson concluded that due to this closing, "the race gap in distrust of the police can be understood as a result of both differences in sociodemographic characteristics and conditions that shape psychological predispositions to distrust as well as differential reactions of Black and White citizens to several key aspects of police department policy and performance" (p. 174). This investigative study shows different reasons for race to make a difference in perceptions and the possibility for other factors to also contribute to an individual's perception.

Despite a number of studies using different coding schemas for race, all found attitudes towards police differ by race and ethnicity. Mbuba found that there was variation within the study for those who were grouped in either race (White or minority). Minorities believed the police provide important services, but they held a less favorable view of police when compared to Whites (Mbuba, 2010). Lia and Zhao (2010) conducted a survey that utilized the variables into three categories: demographics model, neighborhood context model, and the police/citizen interaction model. Lia and Zhao found race and ethnicity was a factor for an individual's attitude towards police; they also found three variables-race, concentrated disadvantage, and satisfaction of the encounter with police led to specific trust issues that are linked to police work. African Americans had more unfavorable attitudes towards the police when compared to whites (Lia and Zhao, 2010, p. 690). Lia and Zhao found specific perceptions have more influence than general

perceptions. The difference between general attitudes and specific attitudes of trust supports the Brandl et al. (1994) theory of perceptions towards police. Dowler and Sparks (2008) found race was indeed a significant variable in identifying attitudes towards police. African Americans and Hispanics had a higher distrust in police when compared to Whites (Dowler and Sparks, 2008). Cochran and Warren (2012) examined demographic influences of both respondents and responding officers. Cochran and Warren found that the race of the individual and of the officer played a role in the individual's perception as the stop being legitimate (Cochran and Warren, 2012). Wehrman and Angelis (2011) measured race as White, Black, Asian, and other in a study conducted to measure an individual's willingness to work with the police. Wehrman and Angelis found race was a strong indicator considering an individual's willingness to work with the police and that "Blacks were more willing to cooperate with the police compared to White[s]" (p. 59). Race is something that had been shown to have an effect and still needs to be considered for future studies.

Age

When identifying the University population in relation to age, there are two main ways to think of the student body: traditional students, or those enrolled in college directly after high school; and nontraditional students, or those who have a gap of time between high school and college enrollment. The United States Department of Education has recognized the age of the individual plays a factor in who is and is not a traditional and nontraditional student with the work conducted by Radford et al. (2015). Radford et al. divided their sample population into five different age groups: 18 and younger, ages 19-23, ages 24-29, ages 30-39, and ages 40 and older. While Radford et al. did not only explore age as a factor, they recognized age is a commonality with nontraditional students. the study of Radford et al. can be supported by Wood-Wyatt's

(2008) study that classified nontraditional students as 25 and above. There is a difference between those who are labeled traditional and those who are labeled nontraditional students. Age is only one of the factors that can be measured as there are others that also make a student nontraditional.

When scrutinizing an individual's age as a factor on attitudes towards police, age should be considered a relationship as there is a link between age and crime; a large percentage of offenders are youth (Lilly, Cullen and Ball, 2015). Age is going to affect how the students create their perceptions of the police. Lilly, Cullen and Ball (2015) recognized age is related in such a way that it produces an age-crime curve which reaches its highest point around the age of 17. It stands to reason if youth are caught committing a criminal act they may have a negative view towards the police depending on if they perceived the outcome as fair or not (Tyler, 1990). Brunson and Weitzer (2009) implied that age is a way to predict individuals' perceptions of the police as youth have an increased propensity for committing criminal acts when compared to adults.

The age crime curve, in part, is questioned by Madon (2018) as they noted the relationship of police and age is positive but is not an end-all theory as there are some studies that are contrary to this and result in a negative relationship between age and police (Madon, 2018). Madon found that individuals who were ages 20-24 years old had a negative view of the police whereas 15-17 years old had a positive view. A university population may be different when accounting for age, so further research is needed to understand how a student's views are different when there is no account for the population as a whole. The age-crime curve overall has been shown to be a valid theoretical understanding but the dip within it that accounted for

individuals who were 20-24 years old is a gap within the current literature that needs further research.

Sexual Orientation

Individuals who identified as being a part of the Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender, and Plus (LGBT+) community have faced discrimination from police conduct and have experienced hate crimes (Owen et al., 2018; Briones-Robinson, Powers, and Socia, 2016). This negative experience had led to distrust and a fear of discrimination from a public service which was intended to protect and serve the community. In fact, the LGBT+ Pride parade started as a protest of police brutality against the population. The current social context, however, is changing to include the Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, and Transgender population which can be shown when we look at the Lawrence v. Texas (2003) case which made same-sex relationships legal and the Obergefell v. Hodges (2015) case which made same-sex marriage legal. Owen et al. (2018) conducted a study that researched this population and what their perceptions of police were with regards to being fairly treated. Owen and colleagues found in their sampling most of the individuals who identified as a part of the LGBT+ community had a negative perception of police.

There is a stigma attached to the LGBT+ community when seeking help from the police (Finneran and Stephenson, 2013). Finneran and Stephenson (2013) conducted a study with men who identified within the LGBT+ community and investigated the perceptions the men had towards police in regard to intimate partner violence. Finneran and Stephenson found reluctance among this population to seek out assistance from police. When exploring one's willingness to report crime, thereby entrusting the police, we can consider how hate crime and discrimination are barriers to this relationship. This can be understood by examining what is identified as

"according to LGBT victims, an important barrier to reporting are perceptions of police bias that may stem from homophobic attitudes." (Briones-Robinson, Powers, and Socia, 2016, p. 1689) These attitudes relate to what Owen et al. noted within their study; an LGBT+ individual's trust of the police could be compromised.

Gender

Gender is defined as femininity and masculinity and their behaviors linked to male and female; sex is defined as the biological characteristics of males and females (Barak, Leighton, and Cotton, 2014). While there is distinction between sex and gender, they are often used interchangeably in much of the literature. Nofziger and Williams (2003) found that "the literature on safety also indicates that older respondents and women report higher levels of fear of general victimization or personal crime" (p. 259). This implies there is a gender difference in how individuals make perceptions. Liu (2015) conducted a study on the age-crime curve with regards to sex and found that males self-reported more criminal actions compared to females. This, in a sense, can be related to more negative contact with police. Cochran, Warren, and Novak (2012) analyzed the gender difference when race and location are considered and found that gender did show some variation. Males were more likely to report encounter dissatisfaction with police than females (Cochran, Warren, and Novak, 2012). Prior studies have shown gender makes a difference when accounting for cooperation and trust (Cochran, Warren, and Novak, 2012; Nofziger and Williams, 2003).

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

The respondents were asked to rate how they perceive the police as being professional, friendly, capable to deal with crime, and able to be contacted for both criminal and personal matters. They were also asked to identify if the CWU police was more, less, or the same on each characteristic compared to their hometown police. To understand what influences people's perceptions of police, capturing information on where they come from can help in understanding the complexities that are linked within the formation of perceptions. There is a contextual difference between a rural town and a non-rural town. By comparing the rating between the two, this study can possibly capture a new variable that can influence a person's perception. As this study is novel, the results are going to be new and will fill a gap in the current literature.

This Study

Surveys are a good way to measure an individual's attitudes, beliefs, opinions, and characteristics (Kraska and Neuman, 2012). I used a survey to study students' attitudes, values, and beliefs on police. In this study, I considered race and ethnicity, gender, age, class standing, sexual orientation, whether the student lives on-campus or off-campus, effectiveness of the police, social cohesion, and fear of crime as the literature shows these as having an effect and have had some variances explained in past studies.

As there is little information and studies done on campus police compared to hometown police, this study is necessary to start closing this gap for future studies. More simply put, the variation in perceptions by location is being captured by the outcome variables (preference towards university or hometown police). The past literature has shown to be useful in obtaining a comprehensive picture of reality but there should not be only a handful of the variables to use.

23

We can place different variables together to see what has an impact; we can take what the past has provided and question what is missing.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Research Question One

How do demographic variables impact a student's preference in perceptions towards CWU police when compared to their hometown police?

Research Hypothesis #1a: When looking at gender, I hypothesize that males will have more of a positive view towards their hometown police and females will have a more positive view towards CWU police.

Research Hypothesis #1b: When looking at race and ethnicity, I hypothesize that Caucasian (White) students will have more of a positive view towards their hometown police whereas African American, Asian-American, Hispanic/Latinx, and Other will have a more positive relationship towards CWU police.

Research Hypothesis #1c: When looking at on-campus and off-campus living situations, I hypothesize that individuals who live on-campus will have a positive view towards CWU police whereas individuals who live off-campus will have a positive relationship towards their hometown police.

Research Question Two

How will students from rural hometowns differ from students from non-rural areas?

Research Hypothesis #2a: I hypothesize that individuals who come from a non-rural area will have a higher fear of crime and will see CWU police and their hometown police the same.

Research Hypothesis #2b: When looking at effectiveness, I hypothesize that individuals from a rural setting will see the CWU police in a more positive light compared to their rural Hometown police.

Research Hypothesis #2c: When looking at social cohesion, those who have a high social cohesion will favor the CWU police department compared to those with lower levels of social cohesion.

<div align="center">

Data

</div>

Student Perceptions of Police Survey

This study gathered students' perceptions of police through an email survey sent to CWU students. The survey was administered in spring 2019. The survey was sent to all students who were taking in-person classes on Ellensburg campus as some of the questions asked were related to the campus environment. After the initial distribution of the survey, there were multiple reminders sent to the students to complete the survey. All the surveys were anonymous and voluntary. The survey was written in such a way to avoid leading questions. Some of the questions asked the respondent to rate their agreement or disagreement to the question on a five-point Likert scale with two categories that have a positive perspective, one neutral category, and two categories with a negative perspective. There was a total of 8,265 surveys distributed and 1,196 completed surveys, giving a response rate of 14.4%.

<div align="center">

Control Variables

</div>

Class standing tells us how long an individual has stayed in the university environment and how long was their contact with CWU police.[3] Freshman are more likely to perceive campus

---

[1] It should be noted some students can "skip" years by taking additional credits or credits while in high school.

police as a security officer, rather than a peace officer due to a possible lack of understanding of the way that CWU police is run. On the other side, the past studies have shown that seniors are more likely to perceive CWU police in a negative light, as Madon (2018) found that ages 20-24 had a more negative perception of police. Also, graduate students are not likely to live on campus, thereby changing the dynamic of their contact with CWU police. Mbuba (2010) considered that education may play a factor in how a student perceives the police. There is limited research on how class standing affects the respondent or what is going to have an impact on their perceptions.

Age has been shown to explain variance within studies and theory that are related to criminal justice and criminological research (Lilly, Ball, and Cullen, 2015; Madon, 2018; Brunson and Weitzer, 2009). Traditional universities are a four year, plus two if you are adding in a graduate program, commitment that starts at age 18 and ends at age 24. There are some students that are considered nontraditional as being over the age of 25 as an undergraduate. The breakdown of who is and is not a traditional student can be supported by looking at Radford et al. (2015) and Wood-Wyatt's (2008) work. Individuals over the age of 25 may not have the same type of interactions as those who are considered traditional students. This may lead them to not having a personal connection to the CWU police and having one towards their hometown. By identifying two different age groups that may have different demographic and intrinsic factors we are able to see if there is a change in the perceptions of police. Brunson and Weitzer (2009) found that youth have a higher likelihood of committing a crime thereby increasing a negative perception of police as a whole. This was supported by Madon (2018) who noted that the perceptions of ages 20-24 were negative. Overall, there needs to be more understanding on age as a factor when looking at a population condensed to a university setting.

Sexual orientation needs to be accounted for because it is an expanding reality for us to understand and include. The trust in the police is diminished when we look at the LGBT+ community (Owen et al., 2018). Due to the way this population was treated in the past, I predicted their views will be the same for both hometown police and CWU police. This is a special population that we need to consider within our study as it can help build our understanding on how far the police need to go to rebuild trust. If we are not aware of a problem it is near impossible to fix it; trust needs to be established between the LGBT+ community and law enforcement. When looking at trust we can see how it affects the LGBT+ community in terms of approachability to police.

Dependent Variable

I selected a single item, which asked students to compare their hometown police and CWU police as my dependent variable. I will use OLS regression to understand the relationship between the dependent variable and the independent variables. The survey asked five sub-questions under the heading 'when compared to your police department at home, are CWU police: professional, friendly, capable to deal with crime, comfortable to contact a personal matter, conformable to contact with a criminal matter'. They were placed on a five-point scale with 'much more, somewhat more, about the same, somewhat less, and much less'. I created an additive scale with the lowest score being a 5 and the maximum score being 25, where higher values represent a favor for CWU police over hometown police.

Independent Variables

The role that different variables play in an individual's life needs to be attended to because it plays a part in identifying and controlling variables. For this study there are different variables that I have identified as having some impact on my study.

Demographic Factors

Gender. The survey asked, 'Which gender do you most identify with?' with 'male, female, transgender male, transgender female, and gender variant/non-conforming'. For this study I have coded gender dichotomously with males = 0 and females = 1. I have chosen to exclude the categories of transgender male, transgender female, and gender variant/non-conforming due to the limited amount or responses within these sections.

Race and Ethnicity. The survey asked, 'Do you have Hispanic or Latin origins?' with a yes or no and 'what describes your racial/ethnic background? Check all that apply' with a choice of Caucasian (White), African American, Asian-American, Hispanic/Latinx, and Other. For this study I have coded racial/ethnic background into a dichotomous variable. Caucasian (White) = 0 and African American, Asian-American, Hispanic/Latinx, and Other = 1.

Sexual Orientation. The survey respondents were asked, 'which of the following sexual orientation do you most closely identify with?' and had a selection of heterosexual, gay or lesbian, bi-sexual, questioning or unsure, asexual, prefer not to say, and other. For this study I have coded sexual orientation as a dichotomy with straight (Heterosexual) = 0 and cases that identified as being gay or lesbian, bi-sexual, asexual, and other (LGBT+) grouped into one and = 1. I excluded the cases that chose prefer not to say and questioning, or unsure as they have not identified into the two groups that I will be using for this study. The main reason why I did not include these two groups is due to the limited number of individuals who chose this option and would not be a significant number or change the results.

On-Campus or Off-Campus. The survey respondents were asked, 'While attending Central Washington University, do you currently live on or off campus' and had three choices: 'on-campus; off-campus; and off-campus, outside of Ellensburg'. With this question is the

question of 'During the school year, where did you take the majority of your classes? Ellensburg campus, non-Ellensburg campus, and online'. With these two questions in mind, I have coded it as a dichotomous variable where on-campus = 1 and off-campus = 0. I will exclude cases that noted as non-Ellensburg campus as the survey questions are geared to Ellensburg campus related factors.

Class Standing. The survey respondents were asked, 'What is your class standing as of the 2018-2019 academic school year?' and noted 'freshman, sophomore, junior, senior, graduate student, and other'. For this study I have coded class standing into dummy variables where every standing is compared to freshmen. I have chosen to exclude the cases that identified as other and graduate students as there is not a substantial amount of cases.

Rural Hometown. I have used Zip Code data as a way to identify an individual's hometown. The survey respondents were asked, 'what is the Zip Code for your hometown? (where you lived before attending Central Washington University)' and allotted for student to write in their Zip Codes. (For those that I have used) I linked them to their city and look whether they have been classified as a rural or not. I created a new variable from this as a dichotomous one where non-rural is equal to 0 and rural is equal to 1. For this study I utilize the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) (2019) as they have identified and coded all counties within the United States into a system that is labeled Rural-Urban Continuum codes. Those who have a USDA code range of 1-3 will be coded as 0 in my study. Those who have a USDA code range of 4-9 will be coded as 1.

Age. For this study I coded age as a dichotomy where traditional students ages 18-24 coded as 0 and nontraditional student with an age 25 and over are coded as 1.

Justification for Variables

Gender. Gender needs to be accounted for as there are differences between those who identify as males because males tend to have a negative view towards police and females tend to have a positive view towards police (Cochran, Warren, and Novak, 2012). There are different viewpoints that can be accounted for when we considered gender. As males tend to have committed more crime in the aggregate level and have had more contact with police, the possibility exists that they have a more positive perspective toward their hometown police compared to CWU police. The reasoning for this argument is that those students who had a contact previously with the police, perceived as fair or just, are more likely to trust that officer (Tyler, 1990). On the other hand, females tend to have an increased fear of crime when compared to males; there needs to be different programs and approaches to how the police interact with them (Nofziger and Williams, 2005). The fact that CWU police are constrained to a small area means that they have a high level of visibility which could lessen the fear of crime in females.

Race and Ethnicity. Race and ethnicity needs be accounted for as we can see from a variety of studies that produces a picture of an individual's role in life. When studying race, Weitzer and Tuch (2004) found other variables, such as income, age, media exposure, and location did have some impact, but race was a main predictor of one's perception. Race is something that has value and should be evaluated within studies and the fact that race and ethnicity have an impact means it is a variable that has weight (Barak, Leighton, Cotton, 2018). The reasoning for White students having a positive view towards their hometown is based on the studies that find that other races did not see the police with positive perception (Dowler and Sparks, 2008; Weitzer and Tuch, 2004; Sharp and Johnson, 2009). The study conducted by Sharp

and Johnson (2009) found that White individuals had a different reaction than Black individuals towards the police. CWU police is a district police department and may not be held in the same light as a traditional police department which could impact minorities' perceptions of them. Sparrows (2014) considered university police at the same level as campus security whereas Walker and Katz (2005) considered university police as a district police department. CWU police have a philosophy of education and outreach towards the community members which in turns builds a connection. CWU polices' approach to the community is built on positive interactions and experiences with the students and faculty. The social aspect that can be gained from positive interactions could have an impact on the students. How the student perceives the legitimacy and capability of CWU police may play a role in how they perceive them. This could result in the students viewing them in a positive light compared to their hometown police.

On-Campus and Off-Campus. The variable of on-campus or off-campus measures the impact of proximity on the dependent variable. The living situation of the respondent changes their relationship with CWU police. The dynamic of their social life and interactions with CWU police could be limited if they live off-campus. If a crime occurs off campus police who would respond to the call would be Ellensburg police or Kittitas County Sheriffs. As the interactions that CWU police have with students tend to be geared towards those who live in the dorms, there is little contact with those who live off campus (CWU Police, Community Involvement, 2020). This study tells us if the variable of proximity is supported when we compare the perceptions of those who live on-campus to those who live off-campus.

Fear of Crime. Fear is a powerful motivator. There is more exposure to disorganization in a non-rural setting as opposed to a rural setting which can increase an individual's fear of crime. Fear of crime can come from specific or general attitudes which Bridenball and Jesilow

31

(2008) identified as contributing from the location of an individual. If the student perceives their hometown police as incapable of dealing with crime, how can we expect them to perceive a district police department any different? General attitudes towards police may impacted student to perceive that all police are the same (Brandl et al., 1994). As some studies showed that fear of crime impacted the perceptions of individuals, I presumed there will not be a difference when we compare CWU police to a student's hometown police (Dowler and Sparks, 2008; Nofziger and Williams, 2003; Boateng, 2016).

Effectiveness. An individual's perception of effectiveness of CWU police compared to their hometown police will allow this study to see themes that support this as an argument. The finding of Lee, Boateng, Kim, and Binning (2019) that time might influence a person's perception of the police's ability to be effective may be why the students possibly have more trust in CWU police compared to their hometown police. Students in a rural setting may have more exposure to their rural police thereby forming specific attitudes influenced by the social structure and connections; negative attitudes towards police may be caused by negative interactions. Some students may perceive CWU in a positive way because they have yet to form those social connections that have the ability to produce negative or positive outcomes.

Social Cohesion. In investigating an individual's social cohesion we are able to see their level of investment in the community and their place of residence. Students who are from a rural hometown may have more social cohesion and investment into their hometown community, and thus when they come to CWU they may try to recreate that connection where they are residing. Social cohesion as noted by Scarborough et al. (2010) is defended by how many people one knows on a personal basis. This connection and community ties that are formed in an individual's past can be used as a guideline for how they will act in similar situations. Miller and

32

Davis (2008) found that individuals can and do talk to each other and that social connection plays a role in their perceptions.

Contributing Themes Measured as Factors

Effectiveness. The survey test for the perception of the CWU police effectiveness was by asking the respondents: 'the CWU police keep the student safe?; the CWU police solve problems?; the CWU police effectively control crime?; the CWU police provide quality services?; the CWU police are easy to contact?; the CWU police are a useful resource?'. All of these questions are on a five-point scale of strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, and strongly disagree.

For this study I will input these questions into an additive scale; the students who find the CWU police effective at their job will have higher points. Using an additive scale will make comprehension of the results easier. I reverse coded all of these so the higher score is a higher perception of effectiveness. The highest score point that can be achieved on questions of effectiveness results in a positive viewpoint of the CWU police's ability to conduct their job effectively. A low score point means that there is the perception of the police as being ineffective at their job. The highest scale point number that can be recorded for this question is 30 and the lowest score is 6. This allows this study to evaluate at how individuals perceive the police in a positive or negative way. If the student does not think of CWU police as effective, it may have an impact on their willingness to trust the police.

Fear of Crime. The survey respondents were asked, 'How safe do you feel on CWU campus walking alone at night' with the choice being very unsafe, unsafe, save, and very safe. This question informs us how the individual feels when walking on campus which relates to their trust or confidence in CWU police. I coded this in a dichotomous manner where very unsafe and

unsafe = 1 and very safe and safe = 0. This is examined to see if the individual responds

positively or negatively towards the CWU police and their ability to keep campus safe.

Social Cohesion. The survey respondents were asked, 'to what degree do you agree with

the following statements: people around here are willing to help friends?; this is a close knit

neighborhood?; people in this neighborhood generally get along with each other?; people in this

neighborhood share the same values?; very few of my neighbors know me?; I can recognize

most of the people who live in my neighborhood?; I feel at home in this neighborhood?; I expect

to live in this neighborhood for a long time?; people in this neighborhood work together to get

problems solved?; people in this neighborhood can be trusted?'. A choice was given on a five-

point scale: strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, and strongly disagree. In

this context the survey classified neighborhood as being the area that is a five to ten-minute walk

from the respondent's residence. For this study, I utilized an additive scale that allows me to give

the respondent a social cohesion score; a high number relates to high level of social cohesion. All

of these needed to be reverse coded except for 'very few of my neighbors know me well?' as this

is a negative worded question. The highest scale point number that can be recorded for this

question is 50 and the lowest score is 10. This Is viewed as the individual's response, ether

positively or negatively, to their place of residence. General information and coding of the

variables from the survey can be found in Table 3.1.

Table 3. 1
Coding of Variables

Coding of Variables						
Dependent Variable	**N- Size***	**Mean**	**Median**	**Mode**	**Minimum**	**Maximum**
Preference for CWU Police	989	17.0	16	15	5	25
Independent Variables						
Effectiveness	989	23.9	24	30	6	30
Social Cohesion	923	31.9	31	30	10	50
Fear of Crime (Unsafe =1)	923	.28	0	0	0	1
Class Standing (dummied to Freshman)	1101	1.7	2	2	0	4
Hometown (Non-Rural =1)	1096	.26	0	0	0	1
Gender (Females = 1)	1092	.27	0	0	0	1
Age (Non-Traditional Students = 1)	1115	.16	0	0	0	1
Race and Ethnicity (Nonwhite = 1)	1116	.29	0	0	0	1
Location (On-Campus = 1)	1115	.48	0	0	0	1
Sexual Orientation (LGBT+ = 1)	1086	.16	0	0	0	1

*The number of surveys distributed = 8265. The number of surveys returned = 1196. The sample size (N) = 1169. This is a response rate of 14.4%.

Limitations

In reviewing the study, there are some limitations which should be noted as they may have played a role in the findings. It should be noted that race was measured in terms of Caucasian (White), African American, Asian-American, Hispanic/Latinx, and Other. The last choice was a write-in category that some respondents filled out. The literature that I had collected measured race in terms of Caucasian (White), African American, and Hispanic/Latinx and while there are more race and ethnicities than just these ones, substantial research has been conducted on these races. It should also be noted that this study is looking at a survey that was conducted in 2018 and thereby is limited to what the respondents noted on it.

Another limitation to this study is that we do not know the exact department that the students are remembering when they answered in terms of their hometown police; some may be thinking of state patrol, tribal police, county sheriffs, or city police. These variations should be kept in mind.

Central Washington University

The CWU police is a department that is dedicated to protecting its university campus. CWU police staffs eighteen individuals, eighteen of whom are Washington State peace officers (CWU Police, 2020, Department Staff). The mission statement of the Central Washington University police department clearly defines a community-oriented role, stating "the mission of the University Police and Public Safety is to work in partnership with our communities to create a safe and secure environment through education and enforcement" (CWU Police, 2020, Main page, para 1). Furthermore, CWU Police Department states the goals and values that they hold:

> This mission statement describes our vital role in supporting the campus mission of teaching students. The University Police is the primary contributor to the safe learning and living environment of the campus. We accomplish our goals through partnerships, especially with students, which take an interest in reducing and preventing crime. (CWU Police, 2020, Main page, para 2)

The mission of the CWU police reinforces the district police departments' philosophy as CWU police are more geared to be community oriented to the students than traditional police departments as they are teaching through different programs and services. The officers also patrol a small area as they have the ability to focus their patrols to the buildings and property of the university. Primarily being foot patrols, relationships can be formed between CWU police and students and are based on informal contacts, personal connections, and professionalism.

CWU police offer a number of programs that encourage interactions between officers and students for non-crime related purposes. These include various events such as students can

36

compete against the police in sport events or information meetings in the dorms throughout the quarter (CWU Police, Community Involvement, 2020). CWU police conduct these programs to build trust and educate students on a variety of topics that are related to law enforcement.

External Influences. As this study was conducted at the end of the 2018-2019 school year, we need to consider two major incidents involving or impacting the law enforcement community occurring on the Ellensburg campus or in Ellensburg during the administration of the survey. These incidents transpired shortly before the study was conducted and could impact the student's perception of local law enforcement. One of the reasons why these are noteworthy is because they are not the typical interactions of the public with law enforcement. The presence of the police greatly increased in these stressful situations. We do not know if the presence was an influence in a positive or negative way when we evaluate this study.

False Active Shooter Situation. The first incident occurred on February 6, 2019 around 4:13 pm when an unidentified student made threating statements. The CWU police and Ellensburg Police Department informed faculty of the threats and asked them to take precautions at which point a student heard there was a threat of a shooting on campus. The CWU police implemented active shooter protocols after multiple students called 9-1-1 with information regarding an active shooter. At 5:25 pm, CWU sent an alert to inform people of the threat. There was an abundance of law enforcement individuals on campus and the students saw armed police officers throughout the buildings and walkways. The incident was deemed all clear at 7:27pm. The police had to clear the campus buildings for students who had not received the all clear and may have still been barricaded in rooms. This was deemed a false active shooter incident; the event was escalated by social media and word-of-mouth. It was important to consider because it relates to an individual's fear of crime. There is a fear that mass shooting is becoming common

37

as US President Barack Obama noted that it is becoming routine (Dahmen et al., 2018, p. 456).

Mass shootings are something universities are having to address by making plans and procedures regarding response during a critical event. The abundant visual aspect of multiple law enforcement agencies on campus which responded to the incident could have influenced a positive feeling of safety or a negative feeling of fear. This is going to be different based on the location of where the individual during that time. There is no clear understanding of how this can affect the study, but it is something that we need to keep in mind as we look at our results.

Memorial on Campus. The second incident occurred on March 19, 2019 when Kittitas officer Benito Chavez was wounded, and Kittitas County Deputy Ryan Thompson was killed while conducting a traffic stop in Ellensburg. The officers were CWU alumni and had an integrated relationship with the school and the community. The loss of Deputy Ryan Thompson was felt and mourned throughout Kittitas County. The memorial service was held at the Pavilion on CWU campus where more than a thousand people attended (*The Seattle Times*, 2019). The streets surrounding campus were filled with different law enforcement vehicles. As this was a fatality of an officer, this event could create a sense of compassion and respect for police or it could influence the student's fear of crime on campus.

These two incidences occurred in close proximity to the survey. Due to the events occurring near the time of the survey, consideration should be kept in mind as they may have had an unforeseen impact on the students and facility perception of police. This study is evaluating and comparing perceptions that students have towards different police departments and these two incidents had a higher than normal police presence within CWU grounds.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

This chapter outlines the basic findings for the univariate and multivariate techniques for this study. The overall sample size of 1196 was filtered to account for missing cases, which resulted in 799 useable cases for this model. Missing cases are those who did not answer all questions used for this study. The technique used was OLS regression to measure the bonds that these variables have on identifying what will impact an individual's perception of police.

Univariate

The dependent variable (preference towards CWU Police) indicates that the higher the score a respondent chooses, the more they favor CWU police over their hometown police. This has a possible minimum score of 5, which means the respondent favors their hometown police more than CWU police, and possible maximum score is a 25, which means the respondent favors CWU police more. The actual scores reached were in the range of 5-25. When reviewing the data from the dependent questions of preference towards CWU, there is a trend of respondents slightly favoring CWU police over their hometown police. The data collected from the sample shows the mean of 17.1 with a standard deviation of 3.8. The most common value was a score of 15 with 204 individuals (25.5%). However, the data is very skewed, with only 13.8% of respondents falling in the latter portion of the variable that describes a preference towards their hometown police (score < 14). The data tends to indicate that more students have a preference towards CWU police than of their hometown police (See Table 4.1).

One of the independent variables is the perception of effectiveness which has a possible minimum score of 6 and a possible maximum score of 30, where higher scores indicate CWU are more effective. The actual scores reached were in the range of 6-30. When examining the data on

effectiveness of CWU police, the modal score is 24 (n = 148, 18.5%). This indicates that

respondents view CWU police as being very effective police officers.

The social cohesion independent variable was measured with possible minimum score of

10 and a possible maximum score of 50, whereas higher scores represent more social cohesion.

The actual scores reached were in the range of 10-50. The mode of the distribution was 30 (75

cases constituting 9.4% of respondents). The data indicate that respondents tend to view

themselves as more slightly more connected to the community than not.

Table 4. 1
Descriptive

Dependent Variable	N= Size*	Mean	Median	Mode	Standard Deviation	Min	Max
Preference for CWU Police	799	17.1	16	15	3.8	5	25
Independent Variables							
Effectiveness	799	23.9	24	30	4.6	6	30
Social Cohesion	799	31.9	31	30	7.0	10	50

*Sample size with the filter in place.

The respondents were grouped into their corresponding class standing and the sample

showed they were relatively similar to one another with the highest number of students being

Junior standing. The exact distribution of students resulted in Freshmen having 190 respondents

(23.8 %), Sophomore having 174 respondents (21.8%), Junior having 250 respondents (31.3%),

and lastly, Senior having 185 respondents (23.2%).

The dichotomous variables were fear of crime, age, on-campus, sexual orientation, race,

gender, and hometown. Fear of crime was measured into two different categories of safe or

unsafe. The respondents who had a feeling of safety while being on campus constituted 72.2 %

(n = 577) of the sample, while the remaining 27.8 % (n = 222) felt unsafe. Based on this, a little

less than three-quarters of the population felt safe on campus at night. Age was measured into

two groups with the larger group being traditional students (age 18-24) at 88.6 % (n = 708), and with only a small percentage of non-traditional students (25 and over) at 11.4% (n = 91). On-campus was measured by where the respondent lived. The sample was almost evenly split in regards to location, or where the respondents lived. The percentage of students who identified as on-campus was 50.2% (n = 398) whereas the percentage who identified as off-campus was 49.8% (n = 401). There was only a difference of 3 individual respondents who lived on-campus verses off-campus. Sexual orientation was measured as either LGBT+ or straight. There was only a small portion of the sample that identified as LGBT+. The majority of respondents identified as being straight, having a percentage of 85.5% (n = 683) of the sample, and respondents who identified as being LGBT+ having 14.5% (n = 116). Race was measured as White and Non-White with the majority identifying as White. Of the sample, 71.2% (n = 569) identified as being White and 28.8% (n = 230) as Non-White. Gender was measured as female and male with females having a higher percentage at 63.8% (n = 510) of the overall sample size whereas males had 36.2% (n = 289). Hometown was measured by non-rural and rural. Non-rural had 74.6% (n = 596) of the sample and rural consisted of 25.4% (n = 203). The majority of the sample's respondents came from a non-rural hometown.

Bivariate

Pearson's Correlation was used to examine the correlation between the three metric values (preference towards CWU, effectiveness of CWU, and social cohesion). We are able to see how strongly related two variables are with each other; having a value that is close to 0 means it is has no relationship whereas having a value close 1 indicates a perfect relationship (See Table 4.2). The results show effectiveness was positively correlated with preference towards CWU (r = .464, p < .001) and social cohesion was positively correlated with preference

towards CWU (r = .225, p < .001). The test indicated that students who saw CWU police as being more effective or had stronger ties to their community were also more likely to prefer CWU police compared to their hometown police departments.

Table 4. 2
Pearson Correlation

	Preference towards CWU	Effectiveness of CWU Police	Social Cohesion
Preference towards CWU Police			
Pearson Correlation	1.0	0.464	0.225
(Significance)		(p <.001)	(p <.001)
Effectiveness of CWU Police			
Pearson Correlation	---	1.0	0.358
(Significance)			(p <.001)
Social Cohesion			
Pearson Correlation	--	--	1.0
(Significance)			

T-Test's were conducted on the dichotomous variables to test the relationship they have with the dependent variable. All their differences were statistically insignificant (See table 4.3). One thing should be noted students who indicated they were non-white tended to have higher preference towards CWU police (mean = 17.6) compared to their white counterparts (mean = 16.9). This difference between white and non-white respondents is approaching significance but was ultimately not considered significant in this study (t = .054, p <.001).

Table 4. 3
T- Test Significance Not Reached

Variable	Mean Difference	t-value	Significance
On-Campus	-.174	.518	.682
LGBT+	-.351	.357	.232
Female	.492	.077	.585
Non-Traditional	-.268	.525	.337
Nonwhite	-.615	.054	<.001
Unsafe	.581	1.948	.052
Rural	.311	.312	.466

An ANOVA test found there was no difference in CWU preference between different

class standings (F = .817, p = .484). When Freshman are compared to Sophomore (p = .995),

Junior (p = .634), and Senior (p = .988), no statistical difference is found.

Multivariate Analyses

OLS regression was used to examine the effect of all variables on the dependent variable:

preference towards CWU police. The overall model is significant (F = 22.191, p<.001), meaning

there are some factors which can and do play a role in how individuals perceive the police. The

model produced an adjusted R^2 value of .242 which means that 24% of the variance can be

explained by the independent variables. Table 4.4 shows the model and their corresponding

values.

Table 4. 4
OLS Model Predicting Preference towards CWU Police

	b	Standard Error	Beta	t	P value
Constant	5.877	.890		6.602	< .001
Effectiveness	.386	.028	.471	13.734	< .001
Social Cohesion	.040	.018	.073	2.161	.031
Unsafe	.051	.285	.006	.178	.859
Sophomore	2.48	.366	.027	.677	.498
Junior	.131	.346	.016	.378	.708
Senior	.004	.386	.000	.011	.991
Non-Traditional Students	.845	.392	.071	2.156	.031
On-Campus	.213	.269	.028	.789	.430
LGBT+	1.059	.340	.098	.3116	.002
Nonwhite	1.052	.261	.126	4.037	< .001
Female	-.225	.261	-.029	-.862	.389
Rural	-.510	.278	-.059	-1.836	.067

Adjusted R-Squared	R2=.242
Model Fit	F = 22.2 P = <.001

Two of the additive scale variables (Effectiveness and Social Cohesion), produced significance within this study. Effectiveness was significant (t = 13.734, p < .001) in the model and produced an unstandardized coefficient b = .386. For a 1-point increase with regards to effectiveness score there will be a .386 increase in preference towards CWU score. The standardized coefficient of effectiveness had the highest beta weight of all independent variables within the model with β = .471. This tells us that effectiveness is the strongest variable within the model. The way the respondents perceived CWU as effective has a strong link in gearing positive perceptions towards CWU police compared to their hometown police.

Social cohesion was significant (t = 2.161, p = .031) in the model and produced an unstandardized coefficient of b = .040. For a 1-point increase in social cohesion there would be .040 increase in preference towards CWU score. Social cohesion had a standardized coefficient of β = .073, which was low for significant predictors in the model. While an individual's social cohesion has a significant impact on their perception of CWU police and was relatively weak within this model, it is something that can help police departments. As social cohesion was significant the more an individual feels like a part of a collective group the more that they will prefer CWU police. When we compare the unstandardized coefficient (b) for both effectiveness and social cohesion, we are able to see an increase in preference towards CWU.

Class Standing was not a significant variable in the model. Each of the dummy variables were statistically insignificant indicating that class standing does not have any influence on preference towards CWU compared to hometown police: Sophomore (t = .677, p = .498); Junior (t = .378, p = .706); and Senior (t = .011, p = .991).

The demographic variables, age, sexual orientation, and race had significant effects whereas gender, hometown, and on-campus did not. Fear of crime also did not produce a

significant finding in the model. Age was significant in the model ($t = 2.161$, $p = .031$) with an unstandardized coefficient of $b = .395$ and a standardized coefficient of $\beta = .071$. This indicates that students who identified as being non-traditional had a .845 increase, on average, in their preference towards CWU score. Sexual orientation also had a statistically significant influence on preference towards CWU ($t = 3.116$, $p = .002$) with an unstandardized coefficient of $b = 1.059$ and a standardized coefficient of $\beta = .098$. Students who identified as being LGBT+ on average had a 1.059 increase in their preference towards CWU score. The sexual orientation of the respondent plays a role in how they perceive the police. In terms of this study, identification as a member of the LGBT+ community increased preference toward CWU police compared to their hometown police. Lastly, race exerted a significant effect on the preference towards CWU in the model ($t = 4.037$, $p < .001$). Overall, students who identified as Non-White favored CWU police compared to their White counterparts with an unstandardized coefficient of $b = 1.052$ and a standardized coefficient of $\beta = .126$. This means that students of color on average preferred CWU police at 1.052 increases compared to White students.

The other independent variables in the model did not produce significance but are ones that still need to be discussed as they are telling substantive findings about the model. Gender was not significant on the model ($t = -.862$, $p = .389$); hometown was not significant in the model ($t = 1.836$, $p = .067$); on-Campus was not significant in the model ($t = .789$, $p = .430$); nor was fear of crime significant in the model ($t = .178$, $p = .859$). None of these independent variables exert a statistically significant impact on preference towards CWU police.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Findings from the analysis supported some hypotheses while rejecting others. Research question one queried how gender, race and ethnicity, and on-campus or off-campus impacted a student's preference and perceptions towards CWU police when compared to their hometown police. Research question two investigated the impact of hometown and social cohesion on a student's preference and perceptions towards CWU police.

Research Question One

Research hypothesis #1a examined gender and hypothesized that males will have a comparatively positive view towards their hometown police whereas females would have a more positive view towards CWU police. This questioning was grounded in literature which found gender as being a relevant variable making an impact on attitudes; Cochran, Warren, and Novak (2012) and Nofziger and Williams (2003) found that gender was a meaningful variable within their own studies. Nofziger and Williams found that females had more confidence in police compared to their male counterparts as they analyzed perceptions towards small town police departments. Cochran et al. found that Non-White males and females were more likely to report a stop conducted for illegitimate reasons compared to their White counterparts. Contrary to this past literature, the current study did not find that gender had a significant impact in the model. Being male or female did not impact the perceptions students make when comparing their hometown police with CWU police. Being one gender or the other does not predispose an individual to exhibit a positive or negative view when compared hometown police to CWU police and, therefore, this is a rejected hypothesis.

Research hypothesis #1b focused on race and ethnicity; I hypothesized that White students would have more of a positive view towards their hometown police whereas Non-White would have a more positive relationship towards CWU police. Multiple studies, like that of Dowler and Sparks (2008), Sharp and Johnson (2009), and Weitzer and Tuch (2004), found race and ethnicity as having an effect on how people make perception of police. Dowler and Sparks found that individuals who identified as Non-White were less likely to be satisfied with the police compared to their White counterparts (p. 404). Sharp and Johnson found that Non-Whites have less trust in the police compared to Whites; Non-Whites answer "not at all [trust in the police]" at 15.39% whereas Whites answered at 4.00% (p. 116). Weitzer and Tuch found that Non-Whites are more likely to support a police reform than their White counterparts. Accounting for race and ethnicity is relevant to the current social climate and I expected to see race and ethnicity as having some impact on the study. This study found that race and ethnicity was significant in the model. Individuals who identified as being Non-White tended to have a preference towards CWU police over hometown police when compared to their White counterparts; this, then, supported the hypothesis.

Research hypothesis #1c compared students who lived on-campus or off-campus. I hypothesized that on-campus residents would have more positive views towards CWU police whereas off-campus residents would have a positive relationship towards their hometown police. Lee, Brandl et al. (1994) found that specific encounters with police impacted how an individual perceives the police more so than general perceptions. I had expected to see the students who lived on-campus to have a positive relation with CWU police based on proximity to the officers as well as exposure time. This was not the case as the study did not find on-campus as being statistically significant in the model and therefore it had no effect. Because it was not significant

on-campus of off-campus had no weight on whether a student favored CWU or their hometown, therefore this is a rejected hypothesis.

Research Question Two

Research hypothesis #2a considered where an individual lived. I hypothesized that individuals from a non-rural area would have a higher fear of crime and would see CWU police and their hometown police the same. Wu, Sun, and Triplett (2009), Miller and Davis (2008), Nofziger and Williams (2005), and Sharp and Johnson (2009) used a type of location and found some impact on their study. Wu, Sun, and Triplett found some neighborhood characteristics can be used as a variable to help understand police satisfaction. Miller and Davis discovered neighborhood characteristics can be linked to community perceptions of police. Nofziger and Williams researched how people perceive small town police and Sharp and Johnson examined local police. In my study the respondents were asked to identify where they lived before coming to CWU. I was exploring if this difference, of location, made an impact on perceptions of police. Where an individual lived previously did not statistically influence preference about CWU police in the model and therefore the hypothesis was rejected. This means that an individual's preference towards CWU police is not impacted by their hometown county rural or non-rural code. I would have expected to see the past location of an individual as having an impact because people are influenced by their rural or non-rural connections. This study examined how much the past location impacts the preference towards the CWU favoring score. In this case, the location of the individual, rural and non-rural, was not something that produced a change in the model and therefore this is a rejected hypothesis.

In research hypothesis #2b, I hypothesized that individuals from a rural setting would have a preference towards CWU police compared to their rural hometown police with

48

effectiveness in mind. The hypothesis looked at effectiveness which was significant ($p < .001$)

within the model. Brandl et al. (1994) found that perceptions can be formed by specific and

general attitudes. Mitlin (2008) studied the relationship between the police and the public. This

relationship should rely on trust which Williams et al. (2016) noted as co-production between

police and the community. Trust can be seen as a form of co-production. Smith, and Novak

(2005) made this observation: understanding how an individual perceives the police can provide

the police with information on what to change. Walker and Katz (2005) noted district police are

not considered the same as traditional police. Reaves (2015) found many universities started

using sworn peace officers to protect their campus instead of private security. This could have an

impact on the student perception of effectiveness as this is a change from private security to

officer. The way that CWU police conduct themselves and present themselves could also affect

how the students perceive them as being effective at their duties; at this point I do not have the

information to make a claim. In looking at effectiveness within CWU, I had expected to see

respondents from a rural setting see CWU police as effective even though they are a district

police department and not a traditional police department compared to their non-rural

counterparts. This was not the case as the respondent's hometown did not make an influence on

the preference towards CWU score in this study, therefore this is a rejected hypothesis.

Research hypothesis #2c analyzed social cohesion. I hypothesized that students who had

a high social cohesion score would favor the CWU police department compared to those with

lower levels of social cohesion. Uchida et al. (2013) discovered social cohesion by looking at the

social ties an individual within an area. Nofziger and Williams (2005) found that contact with

police had an impact on an individual's fear of crime. While fear of crime is not significant in

this model the contact an individual makes with the community can lead to a personal connection

and a possible lower fear of crime. Personal connections can be linked to the argument that

Brandl et al. (1994) noted with specific attitudes. Social cohesion can be related to the

community members as well as the officers within the community. In general, it is the social ties

that a person has with another. In this study, social cohesion was significant in the model and

therefore is supported by the data as being a variable that has an effect on favor. I had expected

to see this as having an impact and the data supported the hypothesis.

Table 5. 1
Research Question One

	Significance	**Supported / Rejected**
Research Hypothesis #1a	Not Significant	Rejected
Research Hypothesis #1b	Significant	Supported
Research Hypothesis #1c	Not Significant	Rejected

Table 5. 2
Research Question Two

	Significance	**Supported / Rejected**
Research Hypothesis #2a	Not Significant	Rejected
Research Hypothesis #2b	Significant	Rejected
Research Hypothesis #2c	Significant	Supported

Unexpected

The fact that sexual orientation produced significant findings (p =.002) was unexpected

in terms of hypothesis as it was a control variable, but not with regards to what the literature

notes on perceptions. Owen et al., (2018) and Briones-Robinson, Powers, and Socia (2016) noted

in their studies individuals who identify as a part of the LGBT+ community had faced

discrimination from police officers. There is a stigma attached to individuals who identify as

being a part of the LGBT+ community (Finneran and Stephenson, 2013). The fact that this

model found sexual orientation as being significant means that individuals who identify as

LGBT+ will have a likelihood of 1.059 score increases in preference towards CWU police.

A student's age, nontraditional status, was another variable that produced significant findings (p = .031). Wood-Wyatt (2008) classified students over 25 as being nontraditional. Madon (2018) studied students who were 20-24 years old which are within the traditional students age range. There is something going on here as to why nontraditional students favor CWU police over their hometown police. This finding was unexpected and will need further studies as to what makes this a significant variable.

The Supported Hypotheses

The two supported hypotheses, research hypothesis #1b and research hypothesis #2c, need additional attention as they supported the idea that the special district CWU police is doing something different than the traditional hometown police departments. The special district CWU police are making individuals who identify as Nonwhite and/or LGBT+ favor them compared their hometown police. There is a difference in what CWU police are doing to have this outcome. As noted by Johnson (2011) university police are departments that use an educate and outreach approach versus a crime control approach. CWU police is involved in the community and with the student body by hosting events as well as attending school events (CWU, 2020, Community Involvement). The past literature on the topic of the public's perception of police focused on how demographic variables explain differences whereas this study shows that a variable to consider may be the department itself or a specific program or approach that is used to produce more favorable attitudes towards CWU police. Something that CWU police are doing is influencing Nonwhite individuals and LGBT+ individuals to favor their department over others.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

This study compared traditional hometown police departments and the special district CWU police department to identify which individual factors influence a person's perception of law enforcement. Because of this study we can better understand what factors might play a role in what determines perceptions of the police. How an individual's life has been lived and how they identify as person are important factors to examine when trying to understand an individual's formation of perception. Once we have that information, we can then measure and make inferences from what we gathered. The outcome of a study like this is to make positive policy and procedural changes that benefit the community in which the police serve.

Policy Implications

This study can add to the growing body of literature that examines the relationship between the public and the police, specifically those relationships that focus on district police departments on university campuses. There is limited research on youth's perception of police when considering higher education. This study found that individuals over 25 favored CWU police compared to their hometown; as to why this was significant will need to be further researched. This study also helps in growing the body of information about special district police departments; special district departments are doing something that is resonating with the students more than their traditional police.

This study can be used by the academic community to understand some of the challenges and advantages that a district police department faces within a rural university setting. It can show there is a difference within the way that the departments are perceived by some members of the public. By using this study, the university can make policy changes to assist CWU police

in improving citizen's perceptions of police. This study found that social cohesion was an indicator of an individual favoring CWU police. This is important to note as the social cohesion questions were not related to the respondent knowing the police but how they felt within their neighborhood and the people around them. Social cohesion is defined as the bonds that connect an individual to a person or place. CWU can make policy changes and add programs to try and create a space for social connections to be made for their students. They can have a hand in changing the view that the students have towards police. The social aspect is something that CWU focuses on as they have different programs, clubs, small class sizes, and events (CWU, 2020, Homepage). The better that CWU does in integrating and connecting their students into the community at Ellensburg, the more likely they will see CWU police in a positive light even if they do not have personal contact with CWU police officers. CWU has the ability to help change how the public sees the police. In this case social cohesion was a significant indicator that the students would see CWU favorably.

The study can also be used to make changes to CWU police policy and programs to fit the needs of the public. There can be two ways to interpret the results of this study. The first way to interpret it is to note the variables that were statistically significant and see if the current way the department runs is producing these positive factors; if so, could it be used to help with other variables? The second way to interpret the results is to see which variables will need to be targeted to create a change in perception. Different programs can be used to target an individual demographic or police may take a program that works and utilize it for a different demographic. Something that CWU police are doing in their outreach to LGBT+ and Nonwhites is working to change their perception in a positive light. Is this something that can be utilized in other programs?

This could be an area that plays into outreach or creating better policy that focus on building strong relationships with the public. By identifying that race, sexual orientation, social cohesions and perception of effectiveness are variables that influence the public perception of law enforcement, police departments could update a policy that target these demographics. The literature showed that individuals who identified as Non-White and LGBT+ traditionally have significantly more mistrust of the police compared to their counterparts (Finneran and Stephenson, 2013; Sharp and Johnson, 2009). This current study implies that trust can be present for some police departments even though this demographic tends to have mistrust in police. CWU police have the preference of students who identify as being Non-White and LGBT+ over their hometown police which opens the door to understanding what is different about the CWU police department. There can be changes to policy to mirror or model after some of the programs that CWU uses when dealing with individuals who have these demographic characteristics.

Limitations

There are some limitations that are linked to this study. While this study shows what variables had an impact on the students, it does not dive deep into the why variables are significant. The first limitation to note is the construction of CWU police compared to hometown police departments. The second limitation is the way that hometown was measured. The third limitation is how university police are perceived. The fourth limitation is the lack of information on the contact that the respondents had made with police.

The first limitation for this study is the fact that CWU is located in a rural town and most students' hometowns were not located in Ellensburg. The conditions to generalize the findings of this study will require have similar university characteristics in location and student body.

The second limitation is how I measured hometown at the county level and not the city level. Counites are larger than individual cities yet in a non-rural county there could be rural cities or vice versa. This study was only able to research the zip codes within a county and not in the individual's town or city. Since county level information was examined, measurement was not as precise as it could have been. Researching using a more specific measurement of rural or non-rural would give more precision and the ability to find differences within and between the respondents that could possibly change the way the variable impacted the model in an unknown way.

The third limitation is that CWU police are sworn peace officers and not private security which makes this study comparable to other universities that have sworn officers rather than private security. Reaves (2015) found only some universities are employing sworn police officers. Additionally, Washington State has standardized their basic peace training for all entry-level officers (WSCJTS, 2019). This is not the same for all states and may differ depending on the state hiring and training policy. Due to this, the generalization to place other types of police departments, traditional police and special district police, outside of Washington state is limited.

The fourth limitation relates to prior contact with police. This study did not look at the outcome students had in the past with police. This understanding came about from different factors as it could be related to Boateng, Kim, and Binning's (2019) argument which revealed time in a negative way; they found that individual's trust decreased in police the longer they were in contact. Could it be due to the students not knowing their hometown police or CWU police? Or it could be related to the opposite argument presented by Brandl et al. (1994) who noticed how specific attitudes impacted perceptions? If the student had a positive interaction then it could affect their perception. This can also be linked to the fear of crime argument where an

individual who feels safe will have a higher view of police or vice versa (Boateng, 2016; Bridenball and Jesilow, 2008).

Recommendations for Additional Research

This study notes that there is a difference in how individuals who identify as Non-White, LGBT+, having a high level of social cohesion, or seeing CWU police as effective officers will favor CWU police over to their hometown police departments. This infers that there is a difference between the two police departments. There is still a gap within the current literature on this topic; the difference will need to be further studied. Comparing different police departments is something that can be expanded on especially during the current unrest within the police-public relations in the United States. Understanding why certain police departments are better perceived over some others could lead to less altercations between the public and police. I would recommend that this be further studied to either support or reject such ideas. There needs to be more information as to what special district police are doing and how it impacts individual's perception of police. There needs to be an improvement within the body of literature that accounts for youth and special district police departments.

As the perception of effectiveness has the biggest impact in the model, the information on what effectiveness is and what the public identifies as being effective needs to be clarified. There are different ways we can look at effectiveness and how individuals perceive the police based on it. This is something that is going to need to be studied further as this study is limited in its scope to the questions asked on the survey.

As this study found some significant variables, class standing was not a significant factor. This factor is related to the time that a student may spend at CWU. Does CWU police want to focus their efforts so that Seniors who have been at the university longer would have a more

positive view compared to Freshman? Is the time that individuals spends in Ellensburg impact their views of police or is this not a variable that needs to be considered. These questions can be answered with further research. There may be reason to try and create a change to focus efforts on a specific demographic depending on the police department. I would recommend that this be considered for future research.

My recommendation is that race continue to be researched as it reached significance within my study. Race is a variable that has shown to be one that has significance when it comes to police-public relations, and in today's political unrest the public's perception of the police is a topic to continue examining. These findings suggest CWU Police are viewed more favorably by students of color, meaning they are doing something (programs, focus on community policing, etc.) that is resonating better than traditional police departments.

It is apparent that sexual orientation is worthy of looking into further as it is a variable that has recently grown in literature, yet it is one that still needs to be focused on. I would recommend that this be further studied as this is a variable with significance in my model.

Social cohesion is identifying the human connection an individual makes within their community. The connections are made through the community interactions and community location are ones that do have an impact on preference. I would recommend social cohesion be studied to see the different factors that would increase the ties an individual has within their community and how the factors relate to the ties they may have with police.

This study is unique because it compares a district police department to a traditional police department. What makes CWU police different from the student's hometown police? There are numerous variables to considered as to why an LGBT+ person favors CWU police over their hometown police; or why perceived effectiveness had more weight than others in

understanding favoring CWU police over their hometown police; or why the level of social cohesion an individual has within the community relates to more favor for CWU police over their hometown police; or why an Non-Whites favor CWU police over their hometown police. Could it be based on the literature that noted that district police are not considered the same as traditional police (Walker and Katz, 2005)? Is this increase due to the way that CWU police uses a teaching type of policing; is it due to the connection to the university; is it due to the community and the social connections that a rural university has on the student population; or could it be due to the individual contact that an officer has with students? These are questions that are outside the scope of the survey but are questions that could contribute to the gap in the literature. These questions and others are helpful to understand perceptions of police and should be studied further.

In looking at recommendations for further research, there seems to be a difference between CWU district police and traditional police departments which could be due to factors not identified. Having sworn peace officers within the university make the comparison possible but the similarities between the two departments needs to be examined more than this study allowed. This is something noteworthy for the future as it will need to be further studied. I would recommend the next time a district police department and a traditional police department are compared and contrasted that the internal policy, programs, and actions of the officers be examined to see what differences there exists within the structure. I would also recommend looking closer at the rural, non-rural variable except at a smaller level that separates it at the city and not at the county.

REFERENCES

Barak, G., Leighton, P., & Cotton, A. M. (2018). *Class, Race, Gender, & Crime: The Social Realities of Justice In America* (Fifth ed.). Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.

Boateng, F. (2016). Neighborhood-Level Effects on Trust in the Police: A Multilevel Analysis. International Criminal Justice Review, 26(3), 217-236. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 43(12), 1688-1709.

Brandl, S., Frank, J., Worden, R., & Bynum, T. (1994). Global and Specific Attitudes Toward the Police: Disentangling The Relationship. *Justice Quarterly*, 11(1), 119-134.

Bridenball, B., & Jesilow, P. (2008). What Matters: The Formation of Attitudes Toward the Police. *Police Quarterly*, 11(2), 151-181.

Briones-Robinson, R., Powers, R. A, & Socia, K. M. (2016). Sexual Orientation: Examination of Reporting, Perception of Police Bias, and Differential Police Response. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 43(12), 1688-1709.

Brunson, R., & Weitzer, R. (2009). Police Relations with Black and White Youths in Different Urban Neighborhoods. *Urban Affairs Review*, 44(6), 858-885.

Central Washington University. (2020). Homepage. Retrieved from https://www.cwu.edu/

Central Washington University Police. (2020). Department Staff. Retrieved from https://www.cwu.edu/police/department-staffhttps://www.cwu.edu/police/department-staff)

Central Washington University Police. (2020) Community Involvement. Retrieved from https://www.cwu.edu/police/community-involvement

Central Washington University Police. (2020) Main Page. Retrieved from https://www.cwu.edu/police/https://www.cwu.edu/police/).

Cochran, J., Warren, P., & Novak, K. (2012). Racial, Ethnic, and Gender Differences in

> Perceptions of the Police: The Salience of Officer Race Within the Context of Racial
>
> Profiling. *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice*, 28(2), 206-227.

Dahmen, N., Abdenour, J., Mcintyre, K., & Noga-Styron, K. (2018). Covering Mass Shootings:

> Journalists' perceptions of coverage and factors influencing attitudes. Journalism
>
> Practice, 12(4), 456-476

Dowler, K., & Sparks, R. (2008). Victimization Contact with Police, And Neighborhood

> Conditions: Reconsidering African American And Hispanic Attitudes Toward the Police.
>
> *Police Practice and Research*, 9(5), 395-415.

Finneran, C., & Stephenson, R. (2013). Gay and Bisexual Men's Perceptions of Police

> Helpfulness in Response to Male-Male Intimate Partner Violence. *Western Journal of*
>
> *Emergency Medicine*, 14(4), 354-362.

Frank, J., Smith, B., & and Novak, K. (2005). Exploring the Basis of Citizens' Attitudes Toward

> the Police. *Police Quarterly* (8)2, 206–228.

Johnson, R., A. (June 2011). Perspective Determining the Best Fit for University Policing.

> Federal Bureau of Investigation: Law enforcement Bulletin. Retrieved from
>
> https://leb.fbi.gov/articles/perspective/perspective-determining-the-best-fit-for-university-
>
> policing

Kraska, P. B. & Neuman, W. L. (2012). *Criminal Justice and Criminology Research Methods*

> (2nd ed.). Boston, MA. Pearson.

Lai, Y., & Zhao, J. (2010). The Impact of Race/Ethnicity, Neighborhood Context, And

> Police/Citizen Interaction on Residents' Attitudes Toward the Police. *Journal of Criminal*
>
> *Justice*, 38(4), 685-692.

Lawrence v. Texas, 539 U.S. 558 (2003)

Lee, Boateng, F., Kim, D., & Binning, C. (2019). Residential Stability and Trust in the Police: An Understudied Area of Police Attitudinal Research. *American Journal of Criminal Justice*: AJCJ, 1-14.

Lee, H., Cao, L., Kim, D., & Woo, Y. (2019). Police Contact and Confidence in The Police In A Medium-Sized City. *International Journal of Law, Crime and Justice*, 56, 70-78.

Lilly, J. R., Ball, R. A., & Cullen, F. T. (2015). *Criminological Theory: Context and Consequences*. Los Angeles: Sage.

Liu, S. (2015). Is the Shape of the Age-Crime Curve Invariant by Sex? Evidence from a National Sample with Flexible Non-parametric Modeling. *Journal of Quantitative Criminology*, 31(1), 93-123.

Madon, N. S. (2018). Re-examining the Relationship between Age and Confidence in the Police in Canada. *Canadian Journal of Criminology & Criminal Justice*, 60(1), 122–135.

Mbuba, J. (2010). Attitudes Toward the Police: The Significance of Race and Other Factors Among College Students. *Journal of Ethnicity in Criminal Justice*, 8(3), 201–215.

Miller, J., & Davis, R. C. (2008). Unpacking Public Attitudes to the Police: Contrasting Perceptions of Misconduct With Traditional Measures Of Satisfaction. *International Journal of Police Science & Management*, 10(1), 9–22.

Mitlin, D. (2008). With and Beyond the State — Co-Production As A Route To Political Influence, Power And Transformation For Grassroots Organizations. *Environment & Urbanization*, 20(2), 339-360.

Nofziger, S., & Williams, L. (2005) Perceptions of Police and Safety in a Small Town. *Police Quarterly*, 8(2), 248-270.

Obergefell v. Hodges, 576 U.S. ___ (2015)

Orr, M., & West, D. (2007). Citizen Evaluations of Local Police: Personal Experience or

    Symbolic Attitudes?. *Administration & Society*, 38(6), 649-668.

Owen, S., Burke, S., Few-Demo, T., & Natwick, W. (2018). Perceptions of the Police by LGBT

    Communities. *American Journal of Criminal Justice*, 43(3), 668-693.

Payne, B., & Gainey, R. (2007). Attitudes About the Police and Neighborhood Safety in

    Disadvantaged Neighborhoods: The Influence of Criminal Victimization and Perceptions

    of a Drug Problem. Criminal Justice Review, 32(2), 142-155.

Radford, A., Cominole, Skomsvold, National Center for Education Statistics, & RTI

    International. (2015). Demographic and Enrollment Characteristics of Nontraditional

    Undergraduates: 2011–12. National Center for Education Statistics.

Reaves, B. (2015). Campus law enforcement officers. Retrieved from

    https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/cle1112.pdf.

Scarborough, B., Like-Haislip, T., Novak, K., Lucas, W., & Alarid, L. (2010). Assessing the

    Relationship Between Individual Characteristics, Neighborhood Context, And Fear of

    Crime. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 38(4), 819-826.

Sharp, E., & Johnson, P. (2009). Accounting for Variation in Distrust of Local Police. *Justice*

    Quarterly, 26(1), 157-182

Sparrow, M., & National Institute of Justice, Issuing Body. (2014). Managing the Boundary

    Between Public and Private Policing (New Perspectives in Policing). Washington, DC:

    U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, National Institute of Justice.

The Seattle Times. (2019). Service for Slain Kittitas County Deputy Draws More Than A

      Thousand People. Retrieved from https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/law-

      enforcement-officers-gather-at-service-for-slain-kittitas-county-deputy/

Tyler, T. (1990). *Why people obey the law*. New Haven: Yale University Press

Uchida, C. D., Swatt, M. L., Solomon, S. E., & Varano, S. (2013). Neighborhoods and Crime:

      Collective Efficacy and Social Cohesion in Miami-Dade County. Justice Security

      Strategies, Inc. Retrieved from https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/245406.pdf

United States Department of Agriculture. (2019). Rural-Urban Continuum Codes. Retrieved

      from https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/rural-urban-continuum-codes.aspx

Walker, S., & Katz, C.M. (2005). *The police in America: An introduction* (Fifth ed.). New York,

      NY: McGraw-Hill.

Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission. (2019) Basic Law Enforcement

      Training. Retrieved from https://www.cjtc.wa.gov/training-education/blea

Wehrman, M., & De Angelis, J. (2011). Citizen Willingness to Participate in Police-Community

      Partnerships: Exploring the Influence of Race and Neighborhood Context. *Police*

      Quarterly, 14(1), 48-69.

Weitzer, R., & and Tuch, S. (2004). Reforming the Police: Racial Differences in Public Support

      for Change. *Criminology*, 42(2), 391-416.

Williams, B., Lepere-Schloop, M., Silk, P., Hebdon, A., Steen, T., Nabatchi, T., and Brand, D.

      (2016). The Co-Production of Campus Safety And Security: A Case Study At The

      University Of Georgia. *International Review of Administrative Sciences*, 82(1), 110-130.

Wood-Wyatt, L. (2008). A Study of Nontraditional Undergraduate Students at the University of

      Memphis.

Wu, Y., Sun, I., & Triplett, R. (2009). Race, Class or Neighborhood Context: Which Matters

More in Measuring Satisfaction with Police? *Justice Quarterly*, 26(1), 125-156.