

Case Study Assignment (Written Critique # 1)

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## Summary

The author of this assignment selected the article title *Assessing the Impact of Administrative Policy on Use of Deadly Force by On- and Off-Duty Police*. This evaluation was reviewed and subsequently published on June 1, 2000. The journal evaluation was conducted by Michael D. White, a research associate at the Crime and Justice Research Institute in Philadelphia. This study investigated the impact of the administrative policy and the police's use of deadly force on the citizens. Various police departments were randomly tasked with providing their data and reported on- and off-duty police shootings. Use excessive force was highly used by off-duty officers for multiple reasons that the officers justified their actions.

This article assesses the impact of administrative policy, which addresses the use of deadly force by police officers either on or off-duty. Documented throughout the years is the effect administrative rulemaking has had. Noted significantly in the review are the frequency and the nature of police activity that has resulted in deadly force with firearms use (Fyfe 1979, 1988; Geller and Scott 1992; Walker 2000). Typically this research analyzes the effects of internal policies that govern circumstances involving police shootings. Restrictions have been put in place to eliminate police officers' discretion if they deem it necessary to use deadly force. The restriction placed compels the officers to refrain from shooting suspects only if their lives were in imminent danger (Fyfe 1979).

1967 there was a concern over the lack of guidelines that places restrictions on a police shooting. The commission of law enforcement requested a review of the policies and guidelines on the motivating factor behind the deadly force. The President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice expresses the lack of rules and procedures that

generally guide police officers. Uncovered was how broad the guidelines were and how a lack of enforcement would lead to more deadly force from on or off-duty police officers. In addition, there was an outcry from the urban community in the early seventies over the numerous shootings of unarmed suspects. Because of community uproar and protest, the urban police departments were forced to review their policies and implement a more practical approach that would hopefully restrict the constant and pervasive use of deadly force.

The author looked over the data provided and was astonished at how little restrictions were placed on police officers. Instead, his examination uncovered decades of heavy-handed policing and a lack of restrictions that should be put in place to protect the public at large. The author looked at major metropolitan cities around the United States, unmasking the zero policies and guidelines to prevent these deadly shooting incidents from occurring (Walker 1993). The history of American laws regarding deadly force has played a significant part in how deadly force is viewed today. History, however, is not the only thing that has influenced the laws and rules governing the use of deadly force. Community relations, special interest groups, and politics also play a significant part in forming these changes.

Michael D. White, a research associate, reported that most deadly force shootings do occur while police officers were on duty; However, the percentage of off-duty shootings were quite sizeable (Geller and Scott 1992). Regardless of the jurisdiction, the numbers were generally the same and consistent. The research also concluded that a large percentage of off-duty shootings violated the new administrative policies. For example, the New York City Police Department disapproved of over 40% of the off-duty shootings. Los Angeles Police Department had a disapproval rate of 18% of off-duty shootings. However, a closer look was performed on

Chicago, and a shocking 74% of the department's shooting was disapproved, which also included off-duty police officers (Geller and Karales 1981b).

### **Evaluation Goal (s)**

The author disagrees with the premise of the research and evaluation in the various studies presented by a few scholars. The authors feel that the evaluation goal set by the journals and periodicals researched seem to place an excessive amount of blame onto the social dynamics when police officers are confronted, regardless of being on duty or off duty. The sociological theory wants you to believe that police are less anticipated to use brute force unless provoked by suspects in large urban areas. The author has been a victim of police brutality and would have to disagree vehemently. The author's confrontation with police officers almost always is confrontational to adversarial. Regardless of the time, day or night, the author has never used his badge to prevent abuse and maltreatment from police officers because of general principles. The author feels that regardless of your station and position in life, a law-abiding citizen must be treated with dignity and respect. This has not been afforded to the author of the review (Klinger, 1992).

The research methods used to develop the statistics and the data presented in the articles are also part of the item—the research methods in various police departments and their findings. The research also covered the impact of police brutality on the political system. The police departments' politicization has undermined their duties and corroded their fair judgment when carrying out their duties (Meyer, 1980). The research methods and data used in this case study covers the impact of police brutality. The statistical and data information acquired also reveals the politicization of public policies used by many police departments.

### **Theoretical perspective**

The theoretical perspective of this author has helped to form and create many assumptions as to what influences the use of deadly force within police departments. Usually, it reveals itself in the personality of the officers. In most incidences, the officer's character can provide a glimpse of the nature of the police officers involved with wrongful deaths and deadly force on or of duty. Theoretically, the off-duty officer can easily be mistaken for a civilian, especially when wearing plain clothing. Therefore, identification of law enforcement is paramount to making the general public feel safe and comforted. (Balch, 1972).

Given the level of violence in the United States, many citizens presume that a police officer should be armed all the time. Traditional philosophy stipulates that an officer should take the necessary option when encountering a criminal activity, whether on duty or not. The philosophy further argues that arming off-duty officers protects them from disgruntled members of the society who have had a run-in with the officer in question and could be seeking vengeance (Fyfe, 1979). In some instances, an off-duty police officer can feel outnumbered if he cannot immediately call in for backup; the disparity in number may give him the confidence to use deadly force.

Today, we are all too familiar with the amount of violence and wrongful deaths alleged to be committed by police officers. Unfortunately, the law itself has protected police officers from being charged with a crime after a wrongful shooting (Burghart, 2014). The lack of prosecution has emboldened police officers to commit even more violence against Black and Brown people in predominantly urban areas. Lack of punishment has convinced them they are untouchable; this is a sentiment shared by most minorities. Guilt or innocence is rarely a concept that many police officers find themselves; cart blanch immunity is all but guaranteed. Why else would they continue to violate the oath taken during the swearing-in ceremonies?

### **Research Methods**

The research does not distinguish between deadly force and shootings during off-duty or on-duty police officers (White, 2000). The data used in the article occurred primarily in Philadelphia during two distinct periods (1970-1978 and 1987-1992) considered a unique quasi-experimental design used to compare the overall effects of an administrative policy purported to limit the number of police shootings. The research methods used did not question or address the access to firearms or police weapons carried. However, the article does attempt to draw a distinction administratively, exactly when to shoot and the application of administrative policies. The analytical data compiled by the researcher does take into account the impact of deadly force by off-duty and on-duty police officers (Fyfe 1979, 1988; Geller and Scott 1992; Walker 1993).

The gathering of data occurred throughout the United States among various police departments. The excessive force that produced the most impact on the administrative policy occurred in Philadelphia, 1974 (Geller, 1992). The Philadelphia Police Department stamped out its moderated police force policy, thus leaving the officers to operate in an unconfined 7 Impact of Administrative Policy and deadly force provision. As a result, police shootings surged up averagely by 20% annually until 1980. Then, a reform regime reinstated the former policy; thus, police's fatal incidents dropped by 67% in a single year (Fyfe, 1979). Consequently, the previous policy, which seems to suppress police shootings, positively affected how police officers dealt with suspects.

In 1972, New York Police Department created new policies focused on controlling and managing violent force by its police officers. Established in their guidelines is the precise instance of when to use deadly force; it had to be when self-defense was the only option available. This places severe restrictions on its police force. Police officers felt that it

undermined their discretion of opening fire on a suspect that fled the scene. Many questioned the restrictions; however, the data revealed a decline in incidents of use of deadly force by officers; remarkably, there was an upsurge in the number of arrests (Gain, 1971). According to Fyfe (1979), the policies put in place by the administration were working well and achieving the desired goals.

Oakland, California circa 1968, similar policies were implemented, which also reduced deadly force. The trend reveals that common sense police restrictions with good, well-thought-out policies can curb abuse and violence brought on by lackadaisical administrative policies (Walker, 1993). Independent variables are the leading causes of the use of lethal force by the law. Independent variables in these cases mean the circumstances under which the officer finds no better option than the use of deadly force against a citizen. However, those in favor of more policing will argue that these variables seem to be justified. The author of this essay believes that nothing could be further from the truth; it seems morally reprehensible to be a judge, jury, and executioner without due process (Adler, 2007).

### **Conclusion**

It should be a foregone conclusion that an administrative policy on using deadly force by on- and off-duty police can remarkably reduce the number of unwarranted police shootings. Much research has been documented about the effects of administrative rulemaking and its significant reduction of the deadly force associated with police officers and firearms. Organizational policies, expectations, and directives by the concerned departments primarily affect brute force by the police. Police use of lethal force has little to do with the margins of violence present in the community or the current racial disparity in the community. Officers of the law are trained to obey and follow the orders of their superiors (Geller, 1992).

If they are ordered to only arrest suspects and under no circumstances should they open fire, then be rest assured no suspects will be put in harm's way by the officers unless they draw a weapon and the officer retaliates. (Walker, 2000). In most occasions where police use excessive force, they are protected by the police department and the state. Police officers are rarely punished for using deadly force when dealing with victims regardless of whether they are guilty or innocent. This notion has made many officers believe they are above the law and are untouchable. Society appreciates the work and sacrifice of these honorable men and women to place their lives at stake in the name of maintaining law and order (Fyfe, 1979).

### **Evaluation Concepts**

Independent variables are the leading causes of the use of lethal force by the law. Independent variables in these cases mean the circumstances under which the officer finds it dire to apply brutal force. Although these variables seem to be justified, that does not justify using deadly force in policing. Officers are individuals with extensive training, and they can apply other methods to handle violent solutions. This is what separates them from hooligans. The idea of disarming off-duty police officers is a good one. Mostly, armed off-duty officers tend to use violent approaches in handling suspects and disarming them, and restricting their police training when off-duty will also decrease police brutality cases (Burghart, 2014).

The decision to use deadly force has been influenced by three variables that impact police behavior: environment, organization, and situation. (White, 2000) These variables make up the working atmosphere of most police departments, externally and internally. Situations where weapons are involved, a higher danger element, and the public crime rate are all environmental factors. Internally, administrative workings, police organization, and norms all affect an officer's decision as well. While police officers engage in good displays of force, these displays can also lead to stress which can turn into more violence. Medical studies have linked aggression and



stress. It impacted the emotional and psychological state, causing a lack of sleep and decreased concentration.

When an officer, on- or off-duty, opens fire at a fleeing suspect in a crowd, he or she puts the lives of other civilians at risk. A bullet may ricochet and hit an innocent child, or a passer-by might be caught in the crossfire and killed instantly. Americans of all ages, races, and religious beliefs all feel that the police's use of unprovoked deadly force must come to an end.

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Process evaluation was also used in this research; the process evaluation determines whether the prevention program's activity has been implemented as intended. It facilitates practitioners to determine how closely the intervention was implemented and how it will reach the police officers, its targeted population. The process evaluation related to deadly force was used to monitor and document the prevention of excessive force. The purpose of process evaluation methods determined which police departments received services, identified which kind of services they received, and how long the departments received the services. The most important and what the author perceives as the essential evaluation concepts utilized in this research was the nonequivalent dependent variables design. Although it is often viewed as the weakest quasi-experimental design, researchers should interpret findings cautiously (Fyfe 1979).

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