

1 Question and Justification

Are more militarized law enforcement agencies (LEAs) more likely to engage in violent behavior when policing? The U.S. Department of Justice's (DOJ) 1033 Program—created under the 1996 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA)—has allowed LEAs around the country to acquire excess military equipment for policing. Items include assault rifles, grenade launchers, and bayonets (among others). In light of high-profile police brutality cases, President Obama issued Executive Order (EO) 13688 to regulate 1033 sales and thereby curb police militarization. The argument was that militarized LEAs used military-style—forceful and violent—policing tactics, resulting in police killings and other violent outcomes. It follows that I will question whether militarized LEAs are more prone to engage in violent behavior.

2 Hypothesis

H0: More militarized law enforcement agencies are no more likely to engage in violent behavior (specifically, killings).

H1: More militarized law enforcement agencies are more likely to engage in violent behavior (specifically, killings).

3 Research Design

To test whether militarized LEAs are more violent, I will analyze the relationship between 1033 Program receipts and police killings (by county and year). Here, the **independent variable** is 1033 Program expenditures and the **dependent variables** are police killings (by county and year). I plan to regress police killings on those dependent variables, expecting 1033 Program expenditures to have statistically significant effects on the number of police killings. To avoid bias, **controlling variables** might include income, population, violent crime—by race—and possibly other contributing factors to police killings and 1033 Program expenditures.

4 Data

At the moment, I have two core data sources:

1. 1033 Program receipts by law enforcement agency and date. This data-set comes from the Washington Post ([see here](#)). The Washington Post requested the data through the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). The data is time-series between 1998 to 2015 and includes receipt costs and item names.
2. Police killings by individual incidence. This data-set comes from the Fatal Encounters project ([see here](#)). It includes dates, location (coordinates, address, and city/state), LEA and cause of death. The data is time-series between 2000 and present.

