Police Militarization in Canada: Examining Racial Disparities in Use of Force and Understanding the Consequences of Citizen-Police Encounters Using a Mixed-Methods Investigation

by

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Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

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Abstract

Despite being a critical issue in the contemporary discussion on police reform in Canada, the research investigating tactical units is still in its infancy. The existing research in this area primarily focuses on the proliferation of police militarization and its argued incursion into more general elements of patrol policing. Absent from this discussion is an analysis of use of force, racial disparities in use of force outcomes, and lived experiences of encounters with tactical units. This dissertation addresses these gaps in the literature by applying a mixed-methods approach to investigate (a) the intersections between tactical unit use of force and race and (b) the social, economic, and psychosocial challenges facing individuals who have encountered these militarized policing elements.

The quantitative aspect of the research relies on the use of freedom of information requests to collect use of force reports submitted by tactical units between January 1, 2020 and December 31, 2022. The study employs the racial disproportionality and disparity index mandated by Ontario's *Anti-Racism Act*. Furthermore, the quantitative aspect of this research applies a series of univariate, bivariate, and multivariate statistical analyses to develop a knowledge base in this area and find what, if any, variables are statistically significant predictors of use of force. The qualitative aspect of this research relies on semi-structured interviews with 25 individuals who have, directly or vicariously, encountered a police tactical unit and asks a series of questions concerning the nature of the encounter and its consequences for the individual and, if relevant, their family unit.

The findings of the quantitative research demonstrate that Black people are grossly overrepresented in use of force incidents involving tactical units. Unlike their White counterparts, Black people are less frequently armed in these incidents and more likely to encounter tactical units in proactive (planned) deployments. The multivariate analysis also finds that, when controlling for a range of other variables, Black people are statistically more likely to have a firearm pointed at them. Beyond the findings central to this research, the dissertation also finds evidence suggesting significant and systemic underreporting of use of force. I argue that the reporting framework is not intended to address systemic discrimination but functions to legitimize police use of force and expand militarized policing. I argue that race-based data collection functions as a form of racialized knowledge construction rather than a mechanism through which systemic racism may be addressed.

The qualitative research findings demonstrate the wide-ranging social, economic, and psychological consequences of encounters with police tactical units. The results indicate that individuals and families face various financial challenges, such as the destruction and loss of personal property, damage to their residence, and loss of access to social housing. Some participants experience theft, and others report having to pay to repair financial costs sustained.

Experiences of violence are also common among these interactions with police, as are social stigma and a range of psychological outcomes owing to the traumatic nature of these incidents. Black participants also draw on the idea of communal trauma and suggest these encounters with tactical units can be further contextualized as a tool of racialized social control directed against the Black community. The qualitative accounts also demonstrate the absence of formal institutional support and the reliance on informal support networks to manage these challenges. Finally, the accounts indicate a significant disruption to the family unit, including a loss of housing and disruptions in familial relationships.

This research relies on the use of critical race perspectives to contextualize the use of tactical units as a colourblind form of social control disproportionately applied against the Black community. The institution maintains the veneer of race neutrality by making appeals to crime control and public safety, which facilitates the expansion of aggressive policing practices and exacerbates existing racial and socioeconomic inequalities. The dissertation also offers a series of recommendations.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Collecting and analyzing race-based data offers an avenue for identifying systemic discrimination in policing practices. James Ramer, the Chief of the Toronto Police Service from August 2020 to December 2022, issued a formal apology after the service released data demonstrating that Black residents were four times more likely to be subject to police use of force than their proportion of the population would predict (Loriggio, 2022). Similarly, Peel Regional Police's analysis of its 2021 data indicated that Black people are 3.2 times more likely to experience force than their proportion of the population would predict (Miller, 2022). This pattern of racial disproportionality is also demonstrated in municipalities beyond the Greater Toronto Area, like Hamilton, London, and Waterloo (Chaarani, 2023ab; Hristova, 2023b). The absence of race-based data specific to police tactical units, colloquially referred to as special weapons and tactics (SWAT) teams, demonstrates a gap in the broader criminological knowledge about police use of force and police militarization. Police tactical units consist of specially trained officers who are responsible for responding to calls for service where there is generally a higher level of risk like weapons calls, hostage takings, warrant executions, and barricaded persons (Jenkins et al., 2021ab; Roziere &Walby, 2018).

An analysis into the use of force by tactical units is warranted as these specialized units are equipped with an array of weaponry and equipment like assault rifles, conducted energy weapons (CEWs or what are commonly referred to as tasers), distraction devices (flashbangs), ballistic shields, and an array of other use of force options (Kraska, 2001; Kraska & Cuebellis, 1997; Roziere & Walby, 2018; Sidhu, 2024; Special Investigations Unit [SIU], 2021b; Urbanik & Greene, 2020). While there is a large amount of research assessing the concept of police militarization (see Walby & Monaghan, 2010; Dunton & Kitchen, 2014; Kitchen & Rygiel, 2014; Madsen, 2020; Towns et al., 2023), its impact on racialized communities is understudied. For

example, much of the extant Canadian literature on tactical units investigated this issue from the lens of proliferation and its incursion into elements of policing it was not initially intended for (Cyr et al., 2020; Jenkins et al., 2021ab; Roziere & Walby, 2018). While this research has its empirical and theoretical merits, it does not substantially engage with the potential consequences stemming from the application of this policing doctrine for marginalized communities.

The Intersection of Militarized Policing and Use of Force

The broader sociopolitical discussion surrounding police reform and the academic literature in Canada draws attention to police militarization, racially disproportionate policing, and use of force as central issues facing the institution (Bennell et al., 2022; Cyr, 2016; Laming, 2023; Roziere & Walby, 2018; Wortley et al., 2020; Wortley & Owusu-Bempah, 2009). Relying on an integrated approach, which investigates the intersections among these three issues, offers unique avenues for understanding the context and consequences of contemporary police practices. Understanding the intersections between police militarization and the use of force allows for a more nuanced understanding of the context in which members of the public encounter police tactical units and provides a distinct avenue for further investigating the presence of racial disproportionality in police practices. The current framework for analyzing racial disparities in the use of force data does not account for the operational diversity that characterizes contemporary policing (Foster & Jacobs, 2022; Wortley et al., 2020; 2021). While no Canadian research has investigated the intersections between militarized policing and use of force, the salience of this research is highlighted through a series of case studies.

62-year-old Ejaz Ahmed Choudry, in a period of psychiatric distress, barricaded himself in his Malton, Ontario, apartment on the evening of June 20, 2020 (SIU, 2021[b]). Peel Regional Police's Tactical and Rescue Unit attended the incident to apprehend Mr. Choudry under the

Mental Health Act and devised a deliberate action plan entailing a group of officers breaching the residence through the apartment balcony, which would then be followed by a subsequent group of officers entering the apartment through its front door (SIU, 2021[b]). Mr. Choudry is alleged to have "moved towards the officers holding a large kitchen knife" when three tactical officers breached the balcony door to his apartment. The officers subsequently (1) yelled a verbal command for him to drop the knife, (2) deployed a CEW, (3) an Enfield Anti-Riot Weapon (ARWEN), a non-lethal launcher that fires ballistic impact projectiles, and (4) one of the officers discharged his handgun at Choudry, who was pronounced deceased on the scene (SIU, 2021[b]). Providing an account of this police-involved shooting is significant as it demonstrates the need to engage in the proposed research. The context in which police tactical units encounter members of the public, and the array of weaponry and equipment at the disposal of these units differentiates this element of policing from other aspects of the institution (Kraska, 2007; Kraska & Cuebellis, 1997; Roziere & Walby, 2020a; Sidhu, 2024).

An inquiry into the use of force outcomes involving tactical units is vital to account for potential contextual issues that may not necessarily emerge in more routine elements of police work. For example, Jenkins et al. (2021ab) indicated that the use of tactical officers is reserved for calls that present higher levels of risk for patrol officers, including calls involving weapons. Conversely, a more critical perspective has suggested that tactical units may reflect perceptions of who is risky or perceived as dangerous and are used to police these groups accordingly (Meeks, 2006; Mummolo, 2018). The research guiding this dissertation allows for a thorough and nuanced inquiry into the use of force by tactical units, examining this issue from various perspectives.

The application of force resulting in fatalities is uncommon from a statistical standpoint (Bennell et al., 2022; Oriola, 2020; Wortley et al., 2020). In contrast, the most common applications of force typically involve lower levels of force, like the use of oleoresin capsicum spray (OC spray, or what is commonly referred to as pepper spray), conducted energy weapons, soft control (like grabs, joint locks, and other physical techniques resulting in lower risk of injury), and hard control techniques (physical techniques that carry a higher risk of injury, like the use of empty-hand strikes and kicks) (Bennell et al., 2022; Wortley et al., 2020). However, use of force incidents resulting in fatalities are more publicized and may receive greater media attention (Schrodel & Chin, 2020; Towne, 2022). This presents an issue for researching use of force involving tactical units, as the most common applications of force may never come to the attention of the researchers. Furthermore, since police use of force data is publicly reported in aggregate form (see Foster & Jacobs, 2022; Wortley et al., 2020), investigating force incidents involving a tactical unit using publicly available data is implausible. The solution to this issue rests in establishing a partnership with the police to gain access to data. However, this approach faces two distinct challenges that minimize its efficacy.

The first of these challenges is that the police are selective with what researchers they work with and rely on a series of provisions that may hinder the dissemination of empirical data (Haggerty, 2004; Samuels-Wortley, 2022a; Walby, 2022). A faction of Canadian researchers who label themselves as ‘evidence-based’ researchers have largely monopolized research partnerships with the police. The central criticism of this faction is premised on the assertion that their access to the police is the result of the publication of research favourable to the police, who occupy the asymmetric position of the gatekeeper and control what research is conducted under its auspices (Samuels-Wortley, 2022a; Walby, 2022).

The second challenge stemming from partnerships with the police is that there is a tremendous degree of variation among police services about their use of force reporting and data collection standards (Bennell et al., 2022; Davies et al., 2021; Laming, 2023; Wortley et al., 2021). The variations pertain to differences in the forms filled out by police services, the circumstances in which the form is filled out, data retention, different organizational policies, the collection of race-based data, and the collection of several distinct contextual variables (Bennell et al., 2022; Davies et al., 2021; Laming, 2023; Wortley et al., 2021). While variation still exists among police services in Ontario, the police must collect race-based data on the standardized use of force reporting form (Appendix A; Davies et al., 2021; Foster & Jacobs, 2022). As a result of a patchwork system of use of force reporting, the absence of a uniform and national framework, and the absence of race-based data collection across many provinces, it is methodologically suitable to rely on data from Ontario to provide the foundation for the base of knowledge that will influence future research in this area. To bypass this methodological challenge and the challenges to research integrity that police partnerships can entail, this research relies on the use of freedom of information legislation to gain access to police data on the use of force.

Overview of the Quantitative Research

The quantitative aspect of this research uses descriptive and inferential statistics to measure the potential correlations among markers of social diversity, like race and use of force. The research assesses police use of force incidents involving tactical units using data from Peel Regional Police, Durham Regional Police Service, York Regional Police Service, Halton Regional Police Service, Hamilton Police Service, London Police Service, and the Waterloo Regional Police Service. The Toronto Police Service did not respond to the request for freedom of information. The researcher filed freedom of information requests requesting all available use-

of-force reports filed by the tactical unit of each respective service from January 1, 2020-December 31, 2022. 2020 is the starting point for data collection, as this is the first year in which Ontario police services were mandated to report the officer's perception of the subject race in these reports (Foster & Jacobs, 2022). A new version of the *Use of Force Report* was adopted in 2023 and offers several new data points. While the use of these new data points will inform the author's future research, this analysis relied on the forms for 2020-2022 to ensure consistency in reporting across police services.

The analytic strategy guiding this research relies on a multifaceted approach. The first strategy involves applying the framework established by Ontario's *Anti-Racism Act* and related data standards, in which the proportion of a specific racial group in police-reported data is compared to their relative representation in the population to establish a disproportionality index (Foster & Jacobs, 2022; Wortley et al., 2020). The calculation of each racial group's representation is then compared to a reference group to determine the degree of racial disparity between two specific racial groups (Foster & Jacobs, 2022; Wortley et al., 2020). While the *Anti-Racism Act* establishes minimum data standards and reporting requirements, this research goes beyond these standards and uses inferential statistics. Multivariate analyses are presented for an integrated dataset measuring correlates of use of force.

The *Police Services Act*, the active piece of legislation when the data was collected, outlines the conditions under which officers must report applications of force. *Regulation 926: Equipment and Use of Force* of the *Police Services Act* lays the legislative foundation for the use of force in Ontario and provides standards for police equipment, training, and certification standards, and reporting standards among other things (Police Services Act, RSO 1990, c.15). The regulation indicates that the "Use of Force Report" is submitted in cases where a (1)

handgun is drawn in the presence of a member of the public, (2) a firearm is pointed at a person, (3) firearm is discharged, (4) a weapon is used on another person, (5) a CEW is drawn or displayed to achieve compliance among the subject, (6) a CEW is pointed at a person, (7) a CEW is discharged, and (8) force is applied to a person, including through the use of horses or dogs, that results in an injury requiring the services of a nurse, paramedic, or physician (Police Services Act, RSO 1990, c.15). While there is a minimum standard for reporting force, different police services may require their officers to submit reports under other circumstances beyond the minimum standards (Bennell et al., 2022; Laming, 2023). Prior to engaging with the significance of the proposed approach, the research questions guiding the quantitative aspect of this dissertation are outlined:

1. To what extent, if any, is there racial disproportionality in tactical unit use of force compared to each racial group's general proportion of the population?
2. Is race a statistically significant correlate of specific force applications in use of force incidents involving a tactical unit?
    a. Is race a statistically significant predictor of firearms pointing?
    b. Is race a statistically significant predictor of CEW pointing?
    c. Is race a statistically significant predictor of CEW deployments?
    d. Is race a statistically significant predictor of empty-hand soft control techniques?
3. Is race a statistically significant correlate of the encounter context identified in the use of force report?

The quantitative element of the research is critical to contributing to the extant Canadian policing literature as it (1) provides the first enumeration of tactical unit use of force in the Canadian context, (2) provides measures of racial disproportionality and disparity among use of

force incidents involving tactical units, and (3) offers the use of inferential statistics to determine the presence of statistically significant correlates of use of force.

The analytical strategy for the multivariate analysis uses logistic regression models to determine the presence of statistically significant correlates of reported use of force incidents. This approach provides a novel means for analyzing race-based data in a way that goes beyond the disproportionality and disparity index mandated by the *Anti-Racism Act* and allows for the isolation of race as an explanatory variable and the inclusion of various control variables (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007; Wortley et al., 2020). This approach allows the researcher to identify the presence of statistically significant correlates of use of force, demonstrate racial disproportionality and disparity of use of force incidents involving tactical units, and provide insights into the variations in applications of use of force by tactical units. A more critical analysis of the data supports the inference that tactical units are underreporting the use of force, and this may potentially skew organizational data.

The central issue with using a strictly quantitative approach is that the absence of statistically significant research findings is often conflated with, in this case, the absence of racism or harmful consequences (Henne & Shah, 2015). A mixed-methods approach provides a greater context for understanding the expansive nature of the issue under inquiry (Brent & Kraska, 2010; Palys & Atchison, 2014). A solely quantitative evaluation neglects lived experiences and perceptions of racism, reducing it to a statistical variable (Henne & Shah, 2015).

Investigating Qualitative Accounts of Encounters with Tactical Units: A Gap in the Research

There is a substantial body of literature that has investigated involuntary encounters with the police in general (see Brunson, 2007; Brunson & Miller, 2006ab; Bryant-Davis et al., 2017; Greene et al., 2021; Samuels-Wortley, 2022b; Urbanik & Greene, 2020; Weitzer & Brunson,

2009), no investigations squarely focus on citizen-police interactions involving tactical units. A small body of Canadian literature, although not exclusively focusing on tactical unit officers, highlights qualitative accounts illustrating how police raids on inner city residents involve routine applications of violence, property damage, and allegations of theft (Greene et al., 2021, 2022; Urbanik & Greene, 2020). Media coverage of citizen encounters with police tactical units provides accounts that demonstrate the exceptionally damaging effects of these citizen-police interactions. These accounts suggest members of the public experience trauma emerging from the encounter, being held at gunpoint by police, non-criminally involved family members being present at the site of raids, and experiencing property damage (Hristova, 2023a; Trinh et al., 2021). The proposed research further investigates the consequences of police militarization.

The context of the encounter in which a tactical unit encounters members of the public is distinct from other segments of policing. Jenkins et al. (2021ab) noted the high-risk nature of calls attended by these units. Roziere and Walby (2020a) also demonstrated how these units operate in a fundamentally distinct capacity, relying on the use of dynamic entry (no-knock) warrants, distraction devices, the use of balaclavas, and a range of use of force options immediately accessible to them. While Brown (2016) highlighted the changing nature of the visibility of policing, the work of Roziere and Walby (2020a) and Urbanik and Greene (2020) indicated that tactical units primarily operate in low visibility settings as they may engage in warrant execution before dawn. The low visibility of the tactical unit's encounters with members of the public and the inability of researchers to reach individuals who have experienced interactions with tactical units (see Urbanik & Greene, 2020) contribute to a significant gap in the literature, as little is known about how these encounters unfold.

Overview of the Qualitative Research

The qualitative aspect of this research uses semi-structured interviews with individuals who have had an involuntary encounter with a police tactical unit and investigates the consequences of these citizen-police interactions. The research investigates these encounters' individual, interpersonal, and economic consequences. Consistent with the literature in this area (see Brunson, 2007; Brunson & Miller, 2006ab; Gau & Brunson, 2010; Laming, 2023), this work incorporates both those with direct and vicarious (through one's social network or witnessing encounters) experiences with tactical units. 25 respondents were sampled using a multifaceted sampling strategy that relied on recruitment via gatekeeper organizations, snowball sampling, and social media recruitment.

The interview schedule was developed in consultation with the existing trends in the literature on (a) involuntary citizen police encounters (see Brunson, 2007; Brunson & Miller, 2006ab; Urbanik & Greene, 2020), (b) stigma and the familial impact of encounters with the criminal justice system (see Hannem, 2019; 2011), existing Canadian research on the use of force (see Wortley et al., 2020), (c) police militarization (see Kraska & Kappeler, 1997; Delehanty et al., 2017; Roziere & Walby, 2018), and (d) the relationship between police encounters and trauma (see Aymer, 2016; Bryant-Davis, 2017; Hawkins, 2022). An inductive and deductive approach was used to analyze the interview data, relying on Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis. The research questions that guide the qualitative aspect of the dissertation are:
1. What financial challenges emerge for participants after interacting with a police tactical unit?
2. What social challenges emerge for participants after interacting with a police tactical unit?
3. What emotional/psychological challenges emerge for participants after interacting with a police tactical unit?

4. What personal challenges emerge for participants after interacting with a police tactical unit?
5. What support(s) do participants rely on following their interaction with a police tactical unit?

The findings of this dissertation also develop a base of knowledge that may inform future analyses of citizen-police encounters. The research allows for an understanding of these encounters from the perspective of those who lived through them as opposed to solely relying on police-reported data, which may privilege certain narratives consistent with the police worldview (Samuels-Wortley, 2022a; Walby, 2022; Wortley et al., 2020). The qualitative research also allows participants to discuss how race or class may have shaped their interaction with the police, challenging the institutional narratives of race neutrality in policing (Laming, 2023; Samuels-Wortley, 2021).

Theoretical Overview

This dissertation relies on critical race perspectives to contextualize the findings of the research's qualitative and quantitative elements. Critical race theory (CRT) is a framework that critically engages with the institutionalization of racism in the practices, policies, and discourses of institutions (Bell Jr., 1995; Delgado & Stefancic, 2007; Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Hayman Jr., 1995). The use of critical race perspectives is informed by (a) citizen perceptions of the racialized effects of encounters with tactical units, (b) statistical evidence demonstrating the disproportionate representation of racialized community members, (c) the emergence of contextual factors that do not adequately explain why force was applied, except the argument that the subject's race is assumed as a proxy for criminality and risk, and (d) potential variations in the applications of use of force among racialized groups and their White counterparts. The theoretical approach provides an opportunity to engage with the consequences of encounters with tactical units while offering an avenue also to discuss the potential emergence and contemporary

use of tactical units as a colourblind strategy (see Alexander, 2012) to respond to the perceived threat of criminality among cohorts categorized as the racialized Other.

Critical race perspectives allow the research to address the exclusion of marginalized voices by offering counter-narratives, through participant accounts, to the dominant discourses in mainstream criminology and of the state (see Glynn & Breen, 2024; Samuels-Wortley, 2021). Furthermore, the work interrogates the racialization of crime control and how the institutions of the state respond to the cultural fear of the racialized Other (Alexander, 2012; Crenshaw, 1991; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Garland, 2005; Glynn & Breen, 2024; Quiros, 2020). The framework does not necessarily indicate that only racialized people experience the adverse consequences of a policy or practice or insist upon structuring race as a binary (Webster, 2008). While Whites may also experience these adverse outcomes, the use of critical race perspectives suggests that racialized groups disproportionately experience these adverse outcomes or an underlying racialization produces these racially disparate outcomes (Alexander, 2012; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Glynn & Breen, 2024; Kim, 2004; Quiros, 2020). This perspective explores the potential emergence of racial disparities in the quantitative data and how differential social power is reflected in the accounts of individuals who encountered a tactical unit.

Structural Overview of the Dissertation

This work comprises eight distinct chapters. The conceptual and theoretical elements of the research are outlined within the first two substantive sections of the work. *Chapter Two* overviews the fundamental conceptual issues and empirical evidence informing this dissertation. This section offers an overview of the relevant research in the areas of police militarization, police use of force, and the consequences stemming from involuntary encounters with police. *Chapter Three* outlines the theoretical perspective guiding this work. This section provides an

overview of the central assumptions of critical race theory and discusses how this framework is applied to the research's methodological and conceptual elements.

Chapter Four provides a methodological overview of the proposed qualitative research, an overview of the methodological approach utilized, and illustrations of some central issues in the literature. This section addresses the various issues stemming from navigating gatekeepers and sampling a *hidden population*, the data collection process, the ethical precautions adopted, and the method for data analysis. *Chapter Five* identifies key methodological issues relevant to the quantitative aspect of the research and provides an overview of the method utilized to analyze data stemming from police use of force reports. The section outlines the relevant legislation guiding the data collection and analysis, the use of freedom of information research, and the analytical strategy used to assess trends in the data.

Chapter Six presents the quantitative findings and provides a series of univariate, bivariate, and multivariate statistics of use of force incidents involving tactical units. It also provides the results of the racial disproportionality and disparity analyses for each of the seven police services assessed in this data. *Chapter Seven* provides the results of the qualitative research. This chapter demonstrates the expansive personal, social, emotional, and financial consequences associated with citizen-police encounters involving police tactical units. The theoretical implications stemming from the qualitative and quantitative findings are considered in each respective section. *Chapter Eight* summarizes the key research findings and discusses the contributions of the mixed methods approach to the existing literature.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Tactical units, otherwise referred to as SWAT or emergency response teams (ERT), are regarded as the embodiment and most visibly recognizable form of militarized policing because of their routine use of militaristic tactics and weaponry (Kraska, 2001; Roziere & Walby, 2018; Sidhu, 2024). These units are intended to respond to high-risk situations, like active shooter and hostage-taking incidents, that exceed the general capacities of patrol officers (Jenkins et al., 2021ab). However, the literature demonstrates a proliferation of tactical units over the last four decades, marked by a trend in which these units more frequently respond to calls beyond their initially intended mandate, like mental health and domestic violence calls (Kraska & Kappeler, 1997; Roziere & Walby, 2018, 2019). This research is particularly relevant in the current state of policing, as a natural consequence of this proliferation is that a larger proportion of the public will encounter tactical units in the context of calls for service related to criminal and non-criminal matters.

This research addresses a gap in the existing literature on police militarization as it investigates racial disparities in use of force incidents and explores the consequences of citizen encounters involving tactical units. This chapter offers a multifaceted conceptual framework that engages with three distinct subfields from the policing literature: (1) police militarization, (2) police use of force, and (3) involuntary citizen-police encounters. Chapter 2.1 addresses the literature on police militarization, offering a conceptual overview of this area relevant to tactical units. Chapter 2.2 explores the research investigating the use of force, discussing several distinct methodological and empirical considerations framing the quantitative portion of this dissertation research. Chapter 2.3 outlines the literature investigating involuntary citizen-police encounters and their consequences, which ultimately establishes the qualitative framework of this research.

This chapter also contextualizes the implications stemming from the literature review as it relates to the methodological and theoretical elements of the dissertation, outlining its capacity to address the gaps in this area of research.

Chapter 2.1: Police Militarization

Conceptual Overview of Police Militarization

Police militarization is among the most fiercely debated research areas in the policing literature, with a range of distinct empirical and theoretical perspectives characterizing the academic work in this area (Bieler, 2016; den Heyer, 2013; Kappeler & Kraska, 2015). One of the central issues in the broader debate about police militarization emerges from attempts to define or characterize this element of policing. The military is intended to adopt an outward gaze and engage in warfare against external enemies of the state, while the police function is rooted in domestic law enforcement and preserving life (Campbell, 2010; Dunlap, 1999; Roziere & Walby, 2018). There is a lack of consensus surrounding the definition of what makes a police service, or its practices, militaristic (Bieler, 2016; Kraska, 2007; Simckes et al., 2019). In general terms, *militarism* is an ideological assumption emphasizing military power, technology, and operations as effective means to respond to problems. *Militarization* refers to adopting or applying the military model to an organization and its practices (Kraska, 2007).

Using a singular definition presents a series of complications, as militarization may be used as a catch-all term for a range of distinct practices that vary in scope and intensity (Bieler, 2016). The adoption of patrol carbines and semi-automatic handguns, the acquisition of mine-resistant ambush-protected vehicles (MRAP), aerial drones, the presence of military hardware and battle dress uniforms, the acquisition of surplus military equipment, the emergence of tactical units, and the use of military doctrines are all regarded as indicators of police

militarization (Blake Brown & Bartlett, 2023; Burkhardt & Baker, 2019; Gruhl & Combs, 2019; Haggerty & Ericson, 1999; Roziere & Walby, 2018; Phillips, 2016; Sidhu, 2024; Towns et al., 2023). Despite the vast array of indicators that characterize police militarization, the blurring distinction between the military and the police is central to understanding this concept (Campbell & Campbell, 2010; Dunlap, 1999; Kitchen & Rygiel, 2014).

Kraska (2007) posited a framework for analyzing police militarization along several continuums. For Kraska (2007), police militarization can be measured along four axes: the material, the cultural, the operational, and the organizational. The *material* indicators refer to adopting militaristic weaponry, equipment, and technologies in the scope of civilian policing. The *cultural* indicators of police militarization refer to the adoption of militaristic language, battle dress uniforms, beliefs, and values influenced by the military. The *organizational* indicators refer to the adoption of police structures or units that are influenced by martial arrangements and differ from traditional patrol policing duties. Finally, the *operational* indicators refer to activities and practices modelled after those used in the military. They may include intelligence collection, executing high-risk raids, and using equipment like helicopters and snipers for surveillance. Similarly, Simckes et al. (2019) used five indicators for understanding militarization, which is (1) the adoption of militaristic gear and technology, (2) operational procedures for engaging with the community, (3) the use of military tactics in police operations, (4) the influence of militarism on the mindset of officers, and (5) training or hiring requirements that prioritize militarism.

Kraska's (2007) and Simckes et al.'s (2019) works offer a more expansive conceptualization of police militarization than a singular definition. Extrapolating from these perspectives, police tactical units are regarded as one of the central hallmarks of police

militarization, as they are specialized paramilitary policing units that are inspired by elite military special forces units, use militaristic weaponry, and are intended to be used in specialized circumstances (Kraska & Cuebellis, 1997; Kraska & Kappeler, 1997; Kraska & Paulsen, 1997; Sidhu, 2024). The relevance of this literature is that it structures the qualitative and quantitative components of this dissertation research, as there should be an emphasis on understanding the different kinds of equipment used in the context of the use of force. The study must also account for a greater operational context, as the public may encounter tactical units in various capacities instead of solely encountering them in the context of raids (see Urbanik & Greene, 2020).

The Origins of Police Militarization

Kraska (1999) indicated that two broader theoretical perspectives shape police militarization research. Critical scholarship challenges the expansion of militarized policing, whereas advocacy scholarship primarily reinforces the police worldview through its research (Kraska, 1999). Consistent with this divide, the literature offers divergent perspectives on the origins of police militarization. One account of the origins of police tactical units suggested that these units formed in response to the *Texas Tower Sniper* incident of 1966 and growing civil unrest related to the Vietnam War and the Civil Rights Movement (den Heyer, 2013; Dobrin et al., 2020; Klinger & Rojek, 2008). Bolduc (2016), drawing on the concept of the *risk society,* suggested that the proliferation in militarized policing emerges from a political desire to address preventable threats. As a result of the *risk* associated with domestic and international drug trafficking, the proliferation of firearms possession among the civilian population, and the threat of terrorist incidents, among other factors, the militarization of police is treated as a solution to mitigate risk. This perspective of the origins of police militarization is rooted in its capacity to serve a functional purpose in crime control and public safety.

The critical perspective suggested that police tactical units emerged in response to broader threats to post-modern Western nation-states' economic and racial order (Coyne & Hall-Blanco, 2016; Gamal, 2016; Meeks, 2006). For example, the Los Angeles Police Department's Special Weapons and Tactics (LAPD SWAT) team is believed to have been formed in response to the perceived threat emerging from race riots in South Los Angeles and was used as a mechanism of racial control over the city's Black population (Coyne & Hall-Blanco, 2016; Gamal, 2016). Gamal (2016) and Bolduc (2016) illustrated how LAPD SWAT was mobilized against the Black Panther Party, and the 41st Street Shootout was one of its first primary operations that led to the demise of the Black Panther Party[1] (Fleischman, 2019). Meeks (2006) argued that the emergence of paramilitary policing is rooted in the management of a growing underclass emerging from the implementation of neoliberal economic policies and the *War on Drugs*. Balko (2013) further highlighted how the proliferation of police militarization coincided with the emergence of the *War on Drugs* and allowed this element of policing to expand with little public accountability.

The critical perspective implies that the expansion of police militarization is in response to the perceived threat of criminality and Black political activism and is used to maintain the existing economic and political structure of post-modern neoliberal societies. Kappeler and Kraska (2015), in response to den Heyer (2013), argued that there is no single causal explanation for the emergence of police militarization. The consensus in the literature suggests that the threat of active shooter incidents, the expansion of drug enforcement from the 1980s onwards, the threat of domestic and international terrorism, the threat of social unrest, the transnational and

[1] On December 8, 1969 the LAPD SWAT team raided the headquarters of the Black Panther Party. A shootout ensued, where over 5,000 rounds of gunfire were exchanged between the two sides. This is regarded as the first major SWAT raid and was used to execute arrest warrants. This incident also marked one of the critical moments that led to the demise of the Black Panther Party.

clandestine nature of organized criminal groups, and the emergence of the 1033 Program in the United States are all cited as factors that influenced police militarization (Ajilore, 2015; Balko, 2013; Bolduc, 2016; Burhardt & Baker, 2019; Dansby, 2020; Feigenbaum & Weissmann, 2016; Kraska, 2001; Meeks, 2006; Phillips et al., 2016; Towns et al., 2023).

The 1033 Program in the United States functions to provide surplus military equipment to civilian police services, and this includes uniforms, weaponry, military hardware, vehicles, and a range of other supplies (Balko, 2013; Bove & Gavrilova, 2017; Dansby, 2020; Delehanty et al., 2017; Harris et al., 2017; Helms & Kilburn, 2022; Johnson & Hansen, 2016). Dansby (2020) indicated that 1033 operates due to the *National Defense Authorization Act*, which provided the Department of Defense (DOD) with the capacity to transfer equipment through the Law Enforcement Support Office of its Defense Logistics Agency for use in counter-narcotics operations. Balko (2013), among others, demonstrated how the use of 'no-knock' warrants and other elements of militarized policing became a standard feature of the *War on Drugs* and linked this to the emergence of the 1033 Program. Towns et al. (2023) and Cyr et al. (2020) suggested that transferring military equipment from the military to civilian police is extremely limited in the Canadian context, as police services are relegated mainly to procuring their own equipment.

The origins of tactical units, and police militarization by extension, provide a basis for the use of critical criminological perspectives, owing to the argument that these units act as a form of social control primarily applied to the Black population (Coyne & Hall-Blanco, 2016; Gamal, 2016; Meeks, 2006). In addition to informing the theoretical aspects of this literature, the critical perspectives on the origins of police militarization provide the impetus for this research to assess the presence of racial disproportionalities and disparities in use of force incidents. Similarly, these contributions are essential in the context of the quantitative study, as the statistical analysis

must develop a series of indicator variables to account for high-risk situations and incorporate these as statistical controls.

Overview of Police Tactical Units

Police tactical units, commonly referred to as SWAT teams, are specialized policing units intended to respond to calls for service that go beyond the capabilities of patrol officers (Cyr et al., 2020; Dobrin et al., 2020; Jenkins et al., 2021ab; Roziere & Walby, 2018; Roziere & Walby, 2020a). These incidents include barricaded persons, hostage takings, executing high-risk search warrants, and active shooter incidents (Jenkins et al., 2021ab; Roziere & Walby, 2018; Roziere & Walby, 2020ab). As a result of the atypical nature of the incidents tactical units may respond to, they possess a range of specialized equipment. These units are equipped with an array of weaponry like assault rifles and submachine guns, have access to battering rams and explosive breaching devices to facilitate entry into structures, flashbangs and other distraction devices, and a range of different equipment and weaponry (ACLU, 2014; Kraska & Cuebellis, 1997; Kraska & Kappeler, 1997; Sidhu, 2024).

The first SWAT team was established in Los Angeles in response to the Watts riots (Coyne & Hall-Blanco, 2016; Gamal, 2016). It intended to make the LAPD more militaristic and better suited to the growing 'threat' posed by the city's Black community (Coyne & Hall-Blanco, 2016; Gamal, 2016). The inspiration behind SWAT was to have a specialized paramilitary policing unit that served a similar function to special forces units in the Vietnam War (Coyne & Hall-Blanco, 2016). This link between special forces units and police tactical units is essential, as tactical units are often afforded the status of being elite and emulate the function of elite military special forces units (Kraska & Cuebellis, 1997; Kraska & Kappeler, 1997; Kraska & Paulsen, 1997; Sidhu, 2024).

Although the LAPD established the first SWAT team in the United States, den Heyer (2013) noted that other Western nations also created similar units in the mid to late 20th century. For example, the Toronto Police Service's Emergency Task Force (ETF) was formed in 1965, and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police's Special Emergency Response Team was formed in 1976 (den Heyer, 2013). While den Heyer (2013) correctly indicated that the Toronto Police Service's Emergency Task Force was established in 1965, his claim failed to acknowledge that the central purpose of this unit was to respond to protests related to labour disruptions and strikes, as opposed to the specific paramilitary functions of LAPD SWAT (Sidhu, 2024; Toronto Police Service, 2023).

Despite the attention to police militarization, there is a notable absence of research assessing police tactical units (Dobrin et al., 2020). Koslikci (2017) indicated that most contemporary literature on this area stems from Kraska's contributions from the late 1990s. Kraska and Kappeler (1997), in a survey of American police services serving a population of at least 50,000 and a minimum of 100 sworn officers, found that the percentage of police services with a tactical unit grew from 59% in 1982 to 89% in 1995 (p.6). The authors also found that 79% of deployments in 1995 were for the execution of search warrants, and there was a 292% increase in police services using their tactical units to engage in proactive patrols. In a similar study assessing the deployment of police tactical units in jurisdictions where police services policed a population of 25,000 to 50,000, Kraska and Cuebellis (1997) found a 157% increase in the number of tactical units among smaller police services between 1985-1995 (613). Between 1980 to 1995, the mean number of callouts for these units also increased by 238%, and there was a 342% increase in the number of police services using their tactical units to execute search warrants between 1985-1995 (Kraska & Cuebellis, 1997, p. 615).

Kraska and Paulsen (1997) also found a similar trend in a police service that labelled itself as 'progressive,' where the tactical unit is used more proactively than responding to calls in a reactive manner. The central contributions of this research, however, lie in the qualitative observations emerging through Kraska and Paulsen's (1997) use of participant observation and semi-structured interviews. The authors indicated that tactical units view themselves as extensions of military power. There is a sense of hyper-dangerousness to the work of these units, which functions as a mechanism for establishing camaraderie (Kraska & Paulsen, 1997). This notion of engaging in hyper-dangerous callouts and the use of paramilitary strategies also allowed the officers to construct an *elite* status as SWAT officers. It allowed them to distinguish themselves from patrol officers, like how special forces operators differentiate themselves from the conventional infantry (Kraska & Paulsen, 1997). The research contributions of Kraska and Kappeler (1997), Kraska and Cuebellis (1997), and Kraska and Paulsen (1997) demonstrated the growth and normalization of paramilitary policing in the context of more routine elements of policing.

The Canadian Research on Tactical Units

The Canadian research investigating the use of tactical units is mainly in its infancy but contributes to a growing body of literature assessing police militarization. Roziere and Walby (2018) used freedom of information requests to investigate the use of tactical units across several Canadian cities. The proportion of deployments for the Calgary Police Service's Tactical Unit almost doubled between 2007 and 2016. However, it is essential to note that the total number of calls attended by this unit experienced a noticeable decrease from 1566 in 2007 to 564 in 2016 (Roziere & Walby, 2018, p.34). Roziere and Walby (2018) also indicated that proactive

deployments, with warrants accounting for 30-80% of these deployments, accounted for almost 70% of calls attended by the Ottawa Police Service's Tactical Unit (p.36).

Roziere and Walby (2019) also juxtaposed police and media accounts of militarization in the context of armoured vehicle purchases with data obtained through freedom of information requests. They found that the data disputed media and police narratives of the limited nature of tactical unit deployment. This suggests that these militarized units are more frequently used in general policing duties rather than the intended mandate of tactical units. Roziere and Walby (2020b) drew attention to the attendance of police tactical units to calls for service involving domestic violence complaints or individuals experiencing mental health crises as an indicator of the expansion of police militarization. Using a more complete dataset than their initial study, they demonstrated a consistent increase in deployments among police tactical units across Canada.

Jenkins et al. (2021a) interviewed police officers. They indicated that assessing tactical unit deployments solely on the type of call fails to account for other contextual factors like the presence of weapons. The officers who participated in this research indicated that the presence of the tactical unit is required in calls that are beyond the capability of patrol officers to resolve effectively. Risk factors must be accounted for to reduce the threats to officers and public safety. Similarly, Jenkins et al. (2021b) indicated that almost half of the calls the Winnipeg Police Service's Tactical Support Team attended were reported to involve firearms (p.387). The authors illustrated that weapons were also believed to be present in 45% of calls involving suicide threats and in 50% of domestic disturbances (Jenkins et al., 2021b, p.388).

While the empirical literature on tactical units in Canada is notably small, there is a growing body of theoretical and conceptual literature in this area. The public attention directed to police militarization in the aftermath of the civil unrest in Ferguson, Missouri (see Fox et al.,

2018) generated significant social debate on the proliferation of police militarization in Canada (Cyr et al., 2020). Cyr et al. (2020) indicated that there is no equivalent of the 1033 Program in Canada, and police services are primarily responsible for procuring equipment through their own budget. Sidhu (2024) engaged in a frequency analysis of images comparing the Toronto Police Service's ETF, the Canadian Forces infantry, and Canadian and American special forces units between 2008 and 2023. The author demonstrated that the ETF's adoption of equipment bypasses the conventional infantry and more strongly mimics the equipment used by special forces operators. The use of militarized technologies is expanding in Canada despite the lack of an equivalent to the *1033 Program*.

Cyr et al. (2020) argued that Canadian policing has a range of safeguards that prevent the expansion of police militarization. For example, Cyr et al. (2020) argued that greater judicial scrutiny limits the proliferation of tactical units. Despite not requiring formal judicial authorization to execute a dynamic entry (no-knock) warrant, the onus falls on the Crown to justify its use as reasonable. The courts have also ruled that the police use of balaclavas, carbines (assault rifles), and heavy body armour during warrants must be limited, and they cannot use these freely (Cyr et al., 2020; Roziere & Walby, 2020a). The premise of this argument is that the constitutionality of the execution of the warrant is determined in court (Cyr et al., 2020; Roziere & Walby, 2020a). However, Roziere and Walby's (2020a) work indicated that the Supreme Court's deference to police discretion in *R v Cornell* does not provide a robust mechanism for limiting dynamic entry warrant executions. The contributions of Cyr et al. (2020) and Roziere and Walby (2020a) suggest that the common law precedent of knock and announce may only be departed from in instances where there is a legal justification to do so, but there is also an assumption that police exercise considerable discretion when executing warrants. The issue with

this discussion is that it broadly ignores that tactical units are not only limited to operations involving warrant executions. For this reason, the claims that there is an increased scrutiny of police militarization are limited.

While there is a growing body of research investigating police militarization in Canada, the research has yet to explore the potentially disparate impact on marginalized communities. Similarly, the Canadian use of force research entirely bypasses militarized policing elements and views the institutions in a more monolithic capacity (Bennell et al., 2022; Foster & Jacobs, 2022; Wortley et al., 2020). Finally, except for Urbanik and Greene (2020) and Greene et al. (2021), the extant research has failed to investigate the consequences of encounters with militarized policing practices among those members of the public who experience this aspect of policing. The contributions of Roziere and Walby (2018) demonstrated that the research must expand its focus beyond police raids and other high-risk situations and investigate citizen accounts where participants may have encountered the police in a more general policing function. Furthermore, the work of Jenkins et al. (2021ab) is also significant to the quantitative section of this research, as the multivariate statistics must account for high-risk call types like warrant executions and weapons calls, where many organizational policies require the presence of the tactical unit.

Empirical Evaluations of Police Militarization

The empirical evaluations of police militarization offer mixed results when assessing the efficacy of this practice as a mechanism of crime control (Bove & Gavrilova, 2017; Harris et al., 2017; Masera, 2021a; Mummolo, 2018). The data used to conclude the efficacy of police militarization is, according to Steidley and Ramey (2018), largely premised on the use of county-level data and is subject to a range of methodological challenges, thus reducing the validity of the results. Bove and Gavrilova (2017) measure the influence of equipment transfers via the

1033 Program and its influence on violent crimes. The findings demonstrated that a 10% increase in aid received via 1033 reduced 5.9 crimes per 100,000 residents. Bove and Gavrilova (2017) indicated reductions in crimes like burglaries, vehicle thefts, assaults, robberies, and larcenies. Harris et al. (2017) found that the receipt of military items through the 1033 Program led to a decrease in property crimes and coincided with an increase in the number of arrests for drug and weapons possession.

Although the above findings illustrate the potential efficacy of police militarization, a growing body of literature offers competing evidence. Masera (2021a) argued that a quarter of this crime reduction effect results from the displacement of crime to neighbouring jurisdictions. Mummolo (2018) estimated the impact of SWAT teams on violent crime using deployment data from Maryland and found a statistically insignificant effect on violent crime. Similarly, Phillips et al. (2016) assessed the efficacy of police raids on crime using a fixed effects negative binomial regression. The authors demonstrated that targeted police raids produced a short-term crime reduction effect. However, the influence was limited to two weeks following the police operation. It is worth noting that the mixed nature of the findings is a common theme as it relates to the empirical efficacy of police militarization.

One of the primary justifications for the expansion of militarized policing is the premise that this policing model contributes to officer safety (Jenkins, 2021ab; Meitl et al., 2020). Meitl et al. (2020) engaged in a census of Texas Sheriffs and found that 89.4% of respondents somewhat agreed with the statement that the use of military tactics/weaponry leads to an increase in officer safety (Meitl et al., 2020, p. 852). Harris et al. (2017) are among the few researchers who found that acquiring military equipment is associated with a statistically significant decrease in assaults against officers. While Bove and Gavrilova (2017) found that receiving aid through

the 1033 Program contributed towards reductions in violent crime, they did not find any statistically significant association in the reduction of officers assaulted or injured in the line of duty. Carriere and Encinosa (2017) used a fixed effects negative binomial regression and found mixed results supporting the claim that officer safety is improved via increasing militarization over 26 years. The authors found that receiving armour and clothing via 1033 is associated with reduced assaults on police. However, Carriere and Encinosa (2017) found no statistically significant relationship between weapons acquisition and assaults on officers.

Receiving surveillance and intelligence-gathering equipment was associated with increased assaults against officers, as the receipt of this equipment changed the nature of policing duties some officers engaged in (Carriere & Encinosa, 2017). Mummolo's (2018) research also assesses the presence of officer injuries and illustrated a statistically insignificant increase in the number of assaults experienced by officers. Masera (2021b) used data from the 1033 Program and the FBI's Law Enforcement Officers Killed and Assaulted dataset. Contrary to the findings of Harris et al. (2017), the estimates suggest that increases in militarization contribute to 12,440 assaults and 2,653 injuries sustained by officers (Masera, 2021b). The research findings do not provide consistent evidence that the presence or adoption of militarized policing produces any changes in officer safety rates.

Like other measures in the literature, no consensus exists on whether receipt of militarized equipment promotes safer outcomes for citizens. Bove and Gavrilova (2017) and Harris et al. (2017) suggested that receiving military aid is not associated with increased civilian deaths. Masera (2021b) relied on using instrumental estimation to account for unobserved biases at the county level and cannot replicate the results. Masera (2021b) found that the receipt of military aid may contribute to an estimated 64 deaths per year among civilians in contact with

the police. Furthermore, Delehanty et al. (2017) and Lawson (2019) found a statistically significant association between the receipt of military equipment and civilian casualties. Koslicki et al. (2021) investigated the influence of the 1033 Program on civilian deaths and indicated a moderate positive relationship between the number of items received through the 1033 program and fatal force. However, this relationship disappears when police agencies are disaggregated by size (Koslicki et al., 2021).

There are several distinct caveats when analyzing the trends in this literature. Equipment received via the 1033 Program is not limited to tactical unit officers. It may be dispersed among patrol officers or those who have not received adequate training in using this equipment (Cyr et al., 2020). The common assumption is that tactical officers respond to more volatile situations and are more likely to deploy force than their patrol officer counterparts. However, in one of the first analyses of the use of force by SWAT team officers, Williams and Westall (2003) found no statistically significant relationship between an officer's assignment to SWAT and their use of force. The use of militarized equipment likely is occurring in contexts where police are confronted with a volatile situation and may rely on the use of force. Klinger and Rojek (2008) found that most citizens who die in encounters with tactical units die because of a self-inflicted injury or the proverbial set of circumstances referred to as 'suicide by cop.'

The literature measuring the efficacy of police militarization is essential to the larger framework utilized by this research. There is mixed evidence regarding the claim that militarized policing practices, including tactical units, improve officer and public safety (Bove & Gavrilova, 2017; Delehanty et al., 2017; Harris et al., 2017; Koslicki et al., 2021; Lawson, 2019; Mummolo, 2018). While militarization encompasses various strategies and extends to numerous aspects of policing, the dissertation research must delineate between tactical units and general patrol

officers when measuring use of force outcomes to ensure validity in the statistical analyses and their policy implications.

Police Militarization and Social Inequality

A large body of literature has implied that militarization is pursued in response to threats from minority populations, consistent with the minority group threat hypothesis, whether they are economic or racial minorities (Ajilore, 2015; Helms & Kilburn, 2022; Ramey & Steidley, 2018). Meeks (2006) indicated that the rise in police militarization further subjects the urban poor to surveillance and management, and this effect is more pronounced when considering the deterioration of social safety nets. In their analysis of documents provided by police services in 25 states and the District of Columbia, the ACLU (2014) demonstrated that search warrants accounted for 79% of incidents involving SWAT teams (p.3). Black and Latino citizens were disproportionately represented in the data, in comparison to their representation in the general population, as Blacks accounted for 39% of individuals and Latinos accounted for 11% of those in contact with SWAT teams. Mummolo (2018), when controlling for neighbourhood crime rates, also found that Black communities are disproportionately affected by SWAT team deployments.

Ramey and Steidley (2018) indicated that higher violent crime rates and lower rates of drug arrests are predictors of police participation in the 1033 Program. However, they also found a relationship between racial demographics and the acquisition of military equipment. Ramey and Steidley (2018) found a curvilinear relationship between the relative size of the Black population and involvement in the 1033 Program and an exponential relationship between the relative size of the Black and Hispanic populations and the value of equipment received from the 1033 Program. Alijore (2015) found that the presence of a large Black population reduces the likelihood of police acquiring MRAPs, as they may favour lower-profile military equipment.

However, the research also indicated that the distribution of racial groups in the form of residential segregation is a predictor of MRAP acquisition (Alijore, 2015). Helms and Kilburn (2022) suggested that jurisdictions with high levels of economic inequality and larger proportions of young adult men are more likely to pursue surplus military equipment. In contrast, the authors indicated that jurisdictions with higher ratios of Black and Hispanic residents to Whites are less likely to pursue surplus military inventory (Helms & Kilburn, 2022).

The potential for racially disparate policing outcomes is central to the purpose of the proposed research, as the quantitative analysis measures the potential degree of racial disproportionality and disparity in use of force data, and the qualitative research examines the financial and social implications stemming from these encounters. Beyond an enumeration of tactical unit use of force, the quantitative portion of the dissertation research isolates subject race as a potential correlate of use of force, and this addresses a significant gap in the Canadian research investigating police use of force, which largely relies on the use of descriptive statistics (Foster & Jacobs, 2022; Wortley et al., 2020). While the use of force data used in this research does not include any indicators of social class, the qualitative research may more thoroughly investigate the disparate impacts of tactical units on the urban poor, further adding to the literature in this area (see Greene et al., 2021; Urbanik & Greene, 2020). Using a mixed-methods approach allows the dissertation research to address crucial gaps in the literature, providing novel avenues to assess the disparate effects of police militarization.

Police Militarization and Community Policing

An emerging theme in the community policing literature demonstrates the incompatibility of community policing and police militarization (Boettke et al., 2016; Koslicki, 2022; Meeks, 2006). The use of police militarization informs the continued use of a top-down model of

policing, detracts from funding and resources to community policing programs, may limit officer involvement in community policing, affects the recruitment of officers with a community-oriented disposition, and the use of militarized policing strategies on marginalized cohorts may inhibit the ability of police to develop relationships with these groups (Boettke et al., 2016; Chappell & Lanza-Kaduce, 2010; Koslicki, 2022; Meeks, 2006). Koslicki (2021) suggested that officers with a *guardian* mindset are more closely associated with the central tenets of community policing. In contrast, those with a *warrior* mentality may have a disposition toward adopting values and beliefs consistent with police militarization.

The literature demonstrated the efficacy of community policing in enhancing relationships between the police and members of the community who may have histories of adverse contact with the police (Beck et al., 2022; Lowe & Innes, 2012; McCarthy et al., 2021; Muchow, 2022). However, there is a general belief that community policing is incompatible with other policing models, like militarization, emergency preparedness, and homeland security (Boettke et al., 2016; Koslicki, 2022; Vaughn Lee, 2010). The emphasis on enforcing drug laws and a policing agenda influenced by homeland security are all factors that adversely influence the local implementation of community policing as resources are shifted away from these programs (Boettke et al., 2016; Vaughn Lee, 2010).

In addition to changing priorities and differential resource allocation, research assessing police training also demonstrated the militaristic nature of both the culture and training of police colleges and academies (Chappell & Lanza-Kaduce, 2010; Morgan, 2022). The lack of emphasis on community policing in training may also be further compounded by the fact that police services that emphasize heavily militarized aspects of policing in recruitment materials may be more likely to recruit officers with militaristic mindsets (Koslicki, 2022; Kosklicki & Willits,

2018). Conversely, Koslicki and Willits (2018) found that departments that participate in community policing initiatives are less likely to pursue military surplus, and Koslicki (2022) found that police agencies that receive community policing grants are less likely to advertise militarized messages to prospective applicants.

The significance of the contributions demonstrating the inherently contradictory nature of community and militarized policing is vital to framing the recommendations posited by this research in police practice and public policy. Using militarized policing strategies and an inclination towards this model may displace community policing as a dominant framework for contemporary policing (Boettke et al., 2016). What is central is the idea that the proliferation of police tactical units and potential evidence of racial disparities and disproportionality in the use of force data have the potential to damage relationships with cohorts of the community that have strained relationships with the police. The findings may inform police services to limit the use of police tactical units to only the most necessary calls for service and divert funding to community-based measures intended to foster relationships between the police and the community. Furthermore, the qualitative aspect of this research will illustrate perceptions of the harm associated with tactical units and, by extension, militarized policing.

Public Perceptions of Police Militarization

A growing body of literature in police militarization research investigates public perceptions and factors influencing support, or a lack thereof, for indicators of militarized policing. Blaskovits et al. (2022) found that participants generally harbour negative feelings or perceptions of militarized officers concerning trust, morality, and approachability, among other traits; however, participants are more likely to rate these officers as being stronger or more capable of responding to dangerous situations in comparison to images of traditional patrol

officers. The American literature in this area provides a unique lens through which this issue may be further contextualized, especially when considering demographic and normative factors (Fox et al., 2018; Ilchi & Frank, 2020; Jiminez et al., 2022; Lockwood et al., 2022; Moule et al., 2019abc).

Ilchi and Frank (2020), in a survey of undergraduate students, indicated that those holding conservative crime ideologies or negative attitudes towards those in poor neighbourhoods with high levels of crime are more likely to view police as occupying the role of soldiers in the warzone of the urban inner city. Similarly, Jimenez et al. (2022) found, among a nationally representative sample of White Americans, that racial prejudice against Black and Indigenous Americans is a statistically significant predictor for supporting police militarization. Furthermore, Jimenez et al. (2022) also found that police services operating in states with higher rates of racial prejudice acquired more surplus military equipment through the 1033 Program. Lockwood et al. (2018) examined demographic factors associated with support, or a lack thereof, for the police use of military weapons or equipment for counterterrorism, drug enforcement, gang enforcement, and riot control. The research found that men are more likely to support the use of military weapons under all scenarios but only support the use of military equipment for gang enforcement. College graduates are statistically less likely to support the police use of military weapons or equipment than their non-college-educated counterparts, and individuals who are worried about counterterrorism, gangs, drug enforcement, or riot control are more likely to support police use of military weapons and equipment than those not worried about these issues (Lockwood et al., 2018).

Fox et al. (2018) found no demographic or normative features that emerged among supporters or opposers of police militarization. This research identified three different forms of

support the public may have for militarization and two different categories of opposition that members of the public may display. Similarly, Moule et al. (2019c) found that participants almost universally endorsed the use of police tactical units in response to issues like hostage takings or terrorist events but had less agreement on whether these units should be used to apprehend dangerous offenders or in times of civil unrest. Moule et al. (2019ab) also measured the influence of police legitimacy and cynicism. They found that these factors also shape the nature of public support for police militarization, as those who are more supportive of police and have higher perceptions of legitimacy are more likely to support militarization. These results are significant as they demonstrate that the public generally supports police militarization in circumstances where the aim of the practice is associated with its intended function. However, the results also demonstrate that demographic and normative factors influence public support for militarization.

Although the proposed research does not engage with the public perceptions of police militarization from a quantitative standpoint, the perceptions of individuals subject to these encounters are considered in the qualitative portion of the research. By documenting the perceptions of police militarization among those at the core of these citizen-police interactions, this research contributes to the literature in this area. The implications of the literature investigating public perceptions of the police also extend to the communication of the dissertation's findings. While the research findings may demonstrate the racially disparate nature of the use of force by tactical units, the research may likely be the subject of criticism by ardent supporters of police militarization or those holding racially prejudiced beliefs about the alleged criminal nature of specific racial cohorts (Jiminez et al., 2019; Kraska, 1999). As a result, the statistical analysis cannot merely provide a descriptive analysis of the use of force reporting or

the use of a disproportionality and disparity index to demonstrate the racially disparate effects of this form of policing. The quantitative analysis must use inferential statistics to assess these interactions' potentially racially disparate nature.

Chapter 2.2: Police Use of Force

Methodological Issues in Measuring Use of Force

While there is an abundance of empirical literature investigating police use of force, several reviews of the literature draw attention to inconsistent measurement or operationalization of use of force, among other empirical issues (Hollis, 2018; Hollis & Jennings, 2018; Klahm et al., 2014; Zimring, 2017). Klahm et al. (2014) argued that a significant proportion of the literature fails to provide a conceptual definition of use of force, contributing to inconsistencies in the research. Crawford and Burns (1998) incorporated verbal commands and physical restraints as indicators of use of force. In contrast, Williams and Westall (2003) measured use of force as all behaviours except verbal commands to gain control over a subject. To address the issue of inconsistent operationalization, a common approach used by researchers is to rely on the use of official police data in the form of standardized use of force reports that provide structured indicators of force (Bennell et al., 2022; Boivin & Lagace, 2016; Davies et al., 2021; Hollis, 2018; Sytsma et al., 2022).

The issue with relying on available data to drive the operationalization of a variable of interest is that there is an inherent potential for an underreporting of the use of force (Bennell et al., 2022; Sytsma et al., 2022; Wortley et al., 2020). For example, Bennell et al. (2022) indicate that many police services, in the Canadian context, collect data on the use of intermediate weapons, lethal force, or force that results in injuries to the subject. In contrast, techniques categorized as ‘soft control,’ which do not injure the subject, would likely not be captured in the

data. Similarly, Wortley et al. (2020) indicated that most official enumerations of use of force underreport the true extent of the phenomenon.

Several institutional, legal, contextual, and situational factors also emerge regarding the recording and reporting of police use of force (Boivin & Lagace, 2016; Davies et al., 2021). The provinces of Ontario, Quebec, and British Columbia use different metrics and standardized forms to capture reports, and these reports are completed by those officers who applied the force (Bennell et al., 2022; Boivin & Lagace, 2021; Davies et al., 2021). For example, the *Subject Behaviour-Officer Response* [SBOR] reporting mechanism used in British Columbia measures variables like the presence of mental health issues, whether the subject has a history of suicidal behaviour, associations with gangs or other criminal organizations, and the presence of a criminal record among other variables (Davies et al., 2021). The reporting mechanism in Ontario used in this research has none of the categories (Appendix A, Davies et al., 2021). Quebec's report is premised on using force as a continuum in response to subject resistance (Boivin & Lagace, 2016).

Researchers have attempted to establish the use of force databases using publicly available information, and this approach has guided some of the literature in this area (Delehanty et al., 2017; Feldman et al., 2017; Koslicki et al., 2021; Lawson, 2019; Shane et al., 2017). Bennell et al. (2022) and Wortley et al. (2020), among others, argued that there is a growing demand for a national standardized framework and database related to the use of force. The development of a national standardized framework for measuring and assessing use of force has the potential to alleviate many of the methodological issues stemming from numerous definitions of force.

What qualifies as proportionate and reasonable force is central in this discussion, and much of this is informed using a continuum perspective to guide law enforcement training (Boivin & Lagace, 2016; Lawton, 2007; Terrill & Paoline, 2013). The premise of the continuum of use of force is rooted in the notion that officers are expected to use a use of force option relative to the level of resistance posed by the subject (Boivin & Lagace, 2016; Hickman et al., 2021; Lawton, 2007; Smith, 2007; Terrill & Paoline, 2013). Weaponless physical force may incorporate the use of strikes, holds, locks, restraints, and other combative measures not associated with the use of a weapon (Bennell et al., 2022; Paoline et al., 2012; Stroshine & Brandl, 2020). Chemical agents, like oleoresin capsicum (OC) spray or what is more commonly referred to as pepper spray, impact weapons like the use of a baton or the use of CEWs or what are colloquially referred to as *Tasers* comprise more intermediate applications of force (Bennell et al., 2022; Boyd et al., 2023; Bozeman et al., 2018; Crow & Adrion, 2011; Dymond et al., 2023; Smith, 2007; Sytsma et al., 2022). Less than-lethal options, which include non-lethal firearms and ballistic impact launchers like the ARWEN 37, comprise a category of use-of-force options in which a weapon fires a projectile (whether a 'bean bag' round or rubber/plastic bullet) at a resistant subject (Boivin & Lagace, 2016). Finally, firearms comprise lethal use of force options and include the use of handguns, submachine guns, assault rifles, and marksman or sniper rifles (Lord, 2014; O'Brien et al., 2021; Porter, 2023; Phillips, 2016; Ross, 2015).

This research investigates use of force by tactical units among several Ontario police services. Considering that the data for this research was collected between 2020 and 2022, the *Police Services Act, RSO 1990, c.15* is the relevant legislation (this legislation has been replaced as of April 1, 2024). Regulation *926: Equipment and Use of Force* of the *Police Services Act* lays the legislative foundation for the use of force in Ontario and provides standards for police

equipment, training, certification standards, and reporting standards (Police Services Act, RSO 1990, c.15). A *Use of Force Report* (Appendix A) must be filed in cases where a (1) handgun is drawn in the presence of a member of the public, (2) a firearm is pointed at a person, (3) firearm is discharged, (4) a weapon is used on another person, (5) a CEW is drawn or displayed to achieve compliance among the subject, (6) a CEW is pointed at a person, (7) a CEW is discharged, and (8) force is applied to a person, including through the use of horses or dogs, that results in an injury required the services of a nurse, paramedic, or physician. (Police Services Act, RSO 1990, c.15). While these are the circumstances under which a report must be submitted, the *Report* itself provides more nuance for officers to outline the nature of the application of force. An interesting caveat to the submission of this report is that tactical units and other similar teams can submit a 'Team' report instead of using individual reports by all members of the team who applied force (Police Services Act, RSO 1990, c.15).

The literature warns against strictly adopting an empirical operationalization of use of force solely influenced by the data made available, as there may be critical contextual indicators that are not immediately captured by reporting mechanisms (Bennell et al., 2022; Davies et al., 2021; Wortley et al., 2020). As a result of the contributions in the literature, this research relies on a modified approach to coding the data. It will create categories for the application of a CEW, ARWEN, police dog, the use of distraction devices, and the use of ballistic shields to account for the array of force options available to tactical units (see Sidhu, 2024; Urbanik & Greene, 2020). Furthermore, the use of force report allows officers to describe what kinds of other calls for service or incidents they attend, and this will be used to code for the execution of search warrants, high-risk vehicle stops, barricaded persons, and mental health calls. If the research solely relied on the reporting framework used in the *Use of Force Report*, located in Appendix A,

the investigation into the use of force outcomes involving tactical unit officers is inherently limited, as all the applications of force mentioned above would solely be coded as *other*. (Foster & Jacobs, 2020). However, the call context (see Jenkins et al., 2021ab) must be considered to account for conceptually and theoretically relevant incidents, like warrant executions.

Correlates of Use of Force

While attempts to statistically measure the use of force are imbued with an assumption of objectivity, it is important to qualify that the use of force is very much premised on a subjective perception of threat made by officers, and this often involves a complex interplay of situational and contextual factors (Bolger, 2015; Hickman et al., 2021; Klahm & Tillyer, 2010; Krajewski et al., 2023; McCluskey et al., 2005; Terrill & Mastrofski, 2002). There is a consensus in the literature that police use of force is positively correlated with levels of subject resistance, which suggests that individuals who engage in more combative attempts to resist police are more vulnerable to experiencing use of force (Bolger, 2015; Boivin & Lagace, 2016; McCluskey et al., 2005; Terrill et al., 2008; Wortley et al., 2020). For example, Wortley et al. (2020) demonstrated that over 91% of individuals who experienced use of force by the Toronto Police Service engaged in some level of combative or threatening behaviour towards police.

The literature also suggests that force is more likely to occur when there is conflict between citizens (Bolger, 2015; Klahm & Tillyer, 2010). Similarly, the findings in the literature suggest that the presence of a weapon is also correlated with increases in use of force, with a particular emphasis placed on edged weapons or firearms (Bolger, 2015; Jennings et al., 2020; Johnson, 2011; Klahm & Tyler, 2010; McCluskey et al., 2005; Wortley et al., 2020). While there is a debate centred around the use of de-escalation strategies, as suggested by Engel et al. (2022; 2020), the empirical evidence suggests that more significant escalations in force occur in

instances when a subject is armed (Boivin & Lagace, 2015; Bolger, 2015; Jennings et al., 2020; Johnson, 2011; Klahm & Tyler, 2010; McCluskey et al., 2005; Wortley et al., 2020). The significance of assessing these contextual factors is that these measures are intricately linked with officer perceptions of threat, as escalations in the kind of force deployed may increase due to the subjective threat posed by the subject (Krajewski et al., 2023).

Race and Police Use of Force

Among the most heavily contested research around police use of force is the influence of race on differential citizen outcomes (Edwards et al., 2019; Fryer, 2019; Hollings et al., 2018; Klahm & Tillyer, 2010; Lieberman, 2023; Nix et al., 2017; Paoline et al., 2018; Tregle et al., 2019; Wortley et al., 2020). Hollis et al. (2018) and Klahm and Tillyer (2010) reviewed the literature and found mixed evidence of the role of race in use of force outcomes. For example, in 17 studies measuring the influence of race, Klahm and Tillyer (2010) found that two studies reported a positive relationship, seven reported mixed findings, and eight reported no statistically significant relationship between race and use of force. Some research findings that report no influence between race and use of force consistently observed this pattern across multiple models (Engel et al., 2000; Phillips & Smith, 2000; Sun & Payne, 2004).

Several empirical works suggest race is not a statistically significant factor when understanding police decisions to apply force (Cesario et al., 2018; Garner et al., 2002; McCluskey et al., 2005; Terrill & Paoline, 2017; Tregle et al., 2019; Wheeler et al., 2017; Williams & Hester, 2003). In making these determinations, it is essential to consider the methodological context under which some findings emerge (Hollings et al., 2018; Klahm & Tillyer, 2010).

In a study investigating racial disparities in instances of lethal police use of force, Cesario et al. (2018) and Wheeler et al. (2017) relied on the use of a benchmark population measuring violent crime arrest rates rather than a Census population benchmark. Evidence of racial disparities disappeared when considering violent crime arrest rates (Tregle et al., 2019). When using Census population benchmark data or benchmark data measuring the rate of citizen-police encounters, there is evidence of racial disparity. Importantly, Cesario et al. (2018) concede that, in their data, Black people were 3.7 times more likely to be fatally shot while holding or reaching for what was deemed to be a 'harmless' object - but this relationship was statistically non-significant. Ross et al. (2021) challenged the adoption of changing benchmarks, implying that it introduces statistical biases that obfuscate racial disparities. Furthermore, the studies above only examined lethal force, and Wortley et al. (2020) indicated that this application of force is uncommon. Considering that not all use of force incidents involve violent crimes (see Wortley et al., 2020) and that the police do not apprehend all individuals involved in crime, it is inappropriate to rely on this benchmark. As such, the most accurate benchmark accounts for each racial group's relative population proportion.

There is a substantial body of literature suggesting racial minorities, like Black, Indigenous, and Latino peoples, experience force differently than their White counterparts (Crawford & Burns, 2008; Dymond et al., 2023; Edwards et al., 2019; Fryer, 2019; Geller et al, 2021; Hoekstra & Sloan, 2022; Laming, 2023; Lee, 2016; Leinfelt, 2005; Terrill & Mastrofski, 2002; Wortley et al, 2020). Dymond et al. (2023) found that Black Britons were more likely to experience CEW drawing in contrast to handcuffing. This finding of racial bias, however, did not hold for Asian (South Asian and Asian) Britons, as they experienced decreased odds of CEW drawing. The work of Dymond et al. (2023) highlighted that race cannot be understood as a

monolithic category and must be disaggregated to account for differences between specific racial groups. Fryer (2019) found that even when controlling for various contextual and behavioural variables, there is still evidence of racial disparities in lower levels of police use of force.

The trends in the literature also demonstrate that Black, Latino, and Indigenous men have a greater lifetime risk of use of force than their White and female counterparts, suggesting there is a unique interplay between race and gender (Edwards et al., 2019). Wortley et al. (2020) also found this to be the case in an analysis of data from the Toronto Police Service, where Black men experienced force at rates greater than their White and female counterparts. The trends in the literature also demonstrate that racialized people may experience greater odds of having both lethal and non-lethal force applied to them in situations where they encounter police, even when controlling for a range of geographic and situational variables (Geller et al., 2021; Kramer & Remster, 2017; Morrow et al., 2017; Ross et al., 2015; Wright & Headley, 2023). The evidence of racial disparities in police use of force also provides insight into the contextual factors influencing these incidents. For example, Kahn et al. (2017) found that Black and Latino subjects are more likely to experience use of force in the initial stages of an interaction with police. In contrast, this risk decreases over the time of the interaction.

While the literature demonstrates mixed evidence of racial disparities in police use of force outcomes, there is a notable lack of research investigating use of force outcomes with police tactical units. Additional research is required to understand better how what Roziere and Walby (2018; 2020b) label as the expansion and normalization of police militarization in Canada influences use of force outcomes. In the Canadian context, use of force data is reported in aggregate and does not account for the specific policing context in which force was used (Foster & Jacobs, 2022; Wortley et al., 2020). A statistical analysis is required to understand the potential

influence of race to understand the degrees of racial disparity and disproportionality in the use of force outcomes, and inferential statistics are required to examine if patterns of racially differential force are statistically significant. As a result of the limitations in the literature, this research is uniquely situated to contribute novel findings that broaden the knowledge base on police use of force in Canada while allowing for a critical inquiry into police militarization and its consequences.

Mental Health and Police Use of Force

The case studies of Ejaz Choudry and Taresh Ramroop highlight the intersections between the use of tactical units and mental or behavioural health calls (SIU,2021[b], 2023). Roziere and Walby (2020;2018) illustrated that tactical units are used as a form of police response to calls classified as mental health calls. While there is a dearth of literature investigating use of force by tactical units and calls for service related to people in crisis, there is a substantial body of literature investigating police applications of force more generally (Alpert, 2015; Blais et al., 2022; Laniyonu & Goff, 2021; Morabito & Socia, 2015; Morabito et al., 2017; Mulvey & White, 2014; Willis et al., 2017). Officers often frame citizen-police interactions involving mental illness or behavioural health concerns as being among the most dangerous calls they can attend (Morabito & Socia, 2015; Ruiz & Miller, 2004).

Morabito et al. (2017) suggest that this belief may emerge as a result of conflating substance abuse issues with mental or behavioural health, ultimately contributing to the stigmatization of this group. Similarly, one of the primary concerns about the potential link between mental or behavioural health in the context of use of force is that individuals living with these conditions are often lumped together with those under the influence of alcohol or narcotics and that officers are not trained to accurately identify signs of mental illness (Alpert, 2015;

Morabito & Socia, 2015). The critical issue here is that it is not mental health or substance use but the erratic behaviour of the subject that leads to the designation of the call as a mental health call.

Using a dataset of police use of force reports, Morabito and Socia (2015) investigated factors contributing to injuries among officers and subjects. The results suggest that mental illness, on its own, is not a statistically significant predictor of injury to officers or subjects. However, the combination of mental illness and substance use was a statistically significant predictor of injuries to the subject, but this was also true of the presence of substance use only (Morabito & Socia, 2015). In contrast, Johnson (2011) indicated that individuals with mental illnesses behave more aggressively than those without diagnoses and suggests that those with mental illness are under the influence of substances. However, when controlling for the presence of a weapon, resistance to police, and violent acts, Johnson (2011) found that individuals with mental health conditions were not more likely to experience use of force. Swanson et al. (2014), however, argued that individuals living with mental illness are a more significant threat to themselves than others.

Kesic et al. (2013) suggested that only a small proportion of citizen-police encounters involve mental health calls. However, emerging data demonstrates that use of force outcomes differ for individuals living with mental or emotional health challenges (Brink et al., 2011; Kerr et al., 2010; Laniyonu & Goff, 2021; Rossler & Terrill, 2017). Analyzing the use-of-force reports, Laniyonu and Goff (2021) found that persons with serious mental illnesses account for nearly 20% of the use-of-force incidents and injuries. The results suggest that people living with serious mental illnesses are almost 12 times as likely to experience use of force than their counterparts and almost 11 times more likely to be injured. O'Brien et al. (2021) also

demonstrate that individuals facing mental health events were nearly twice as likely to be shot than their general benchmark in use of force incidents. Finally, Morabito & Socia (2017) demonstrate that individuals with comorbid behavioural health conditions were more likely to have force applied against them than those with substance use, only mental health disorders, or no behavioural health disorders. It is worth noting that the presence of officers trained in crisis intervention or functioning as part of a co-response model resulted in statistically significant reductions in the use of force (Blais et al., 2022; Willis et al., 2023).

Overall, the analysis of use of force incidents involving the tactical unit must investigate the presence of mental health calls as a control for specific applications of use of force. Furthermore, the qualitative research may also investigate citizen experiences with tactical units that revolve around calls for service related to a citizen's mental or emotional health. What is essential to consider in this context is that the presence of the tactical unit may not necessarily serve a law enforcement function, per se, as the tactical officers may attend scenes to facilitate a mental health apprehension in instances where somebody has barricaded themselves (Special Investigations Unit, 2021b, 2023).

Understanding Use of Force in the Canadian Context

There is a paucity of research investigating racial disparities and disproportionality in incidents of use of force in Canada (Bennell et al., 2022; Wortley et al., 2020; Wortley et al., 2020). One of the primary factors contributing to this lack of use of force data is what is generally regarded as a quasi-ban on the release of disaggregated race-based data by police services (Bennell et al., 2022). While race-based statistics are now available for analysis using freedom of information requests, it is crucial to indicate that there are several different sources of data highlighting racial disparities in the Canadian context.

Laming (2023) demonstrated that media organizations and academics have started compiling use of force statistics on police-involved deaths, but this dataset is subject to numerous limitations. Similarly, Pedicelli (1998) also examined media accounts of police shootings in Toronto and Montreal and found that 50 and 45% of people shot and killed by the police were Black men, while only accounting for 3% and 2% of the city's total population. Using media accounts over fifteen years, Carmichael and Kent (2014) found that cities with higher rates of racialized residents experienced higher rates of police lethal violence compared to cities with smaller racialized populations. Although numerous methodological limitations are associated with using media accounts as a measure of use of force, this information provides a basis for understanding this issue in the Canadian context. Laming (2023) summarized the literature demonstrating adverse citizen-police encounters among Indigenous people and highlighted the importance of collecting data to understand the degrees of racial disproportionality and disparity.

Wortley (2006) engaged in race-based data analysis of SIU cases and found a significant degree of racial disparity in the rate of Black people who were part of an SIU investigation as an affected person (complainant/victim), overrepresented as affected persons in use of force investigations, overrepresented as affected persons in police shootings, and shooting deaths. Similarly, in an analysis of data as part of a binding resolution at the Ontario Human Rights Commission, Wortley et al. (2020) found evidence of racial disproportionality (overrepresentation relative to the population) and racial disparity (overrepresented in comparison to White reference category) in lower-level use of force cases. Black people account for 8.8% of Toronto's population but were involved in almost 39% of cases involving lower-level applications of use of force, which indicates a disproportionate representation at a rate of almost

4.5 times their representation in the population (Wortley et al., 2020, p. 91). When further disaggregating the data by race, Wortley et al. (2020) found that Black men are almost nine times more likely to appear in lower-level use of force incidents than their overall proportion of the population would predict (92).

In 2020, the government of Ontario mandated the collection of race-based data in police use of force incidents. This has led to public reporting of racial disparities and disproportionality in use of force incidents (Foster & Jacobs, 2022). In an analysis of the Ottawa Police Service's data, Foster and Jacobs (2022) found that Black people were 4.8 times, Middle Eastern residents were 2.4 times, and Indigenous people were 1.8 times more likely to be represented in use of force incidents in comparison to their proportion of the city's population (p.9). While these metrics provide a general understanding of the racially disparate nature of police use of force, the literature has yet to consistently apply inferential statistics to determine the degree of statistical significance in these findings. This dissertation research addresses this gap using logistic regression, which allows for identifying statistically significant predictors of police use of force. To better facilitate this study's ability to engage with these issues effectively, the following section discusses trends in the literature investigating adversarial encounters with the police.

Chapter 2.3: Involuntary Encounters with Police

Racially Disproportionate Policing in the Canadian Context

Canada enjoys an international reputation as a multicultural colourblind mosaic free of the systemic racism characterizing the American experience (Maynard, 2017; Samuels-Wortley, 2021; Wortley & Owusu-Bempah, 2022). In stark contrast to this image, the institution of policing has been subject to claims of systemic racism for several decades, with an emphasis on practices adversely affecting the Black and Indigenous communities (Alberton et al., 2019;

Dhillon, 2015; Laming, 2023; Saberi, 2017. Tator & Henry, 2006; Wortley, 2019; Wortley & Owusu-Bempah, 2022). The study of racism in Canada has been hindered by several distinct factors like an informal ban on the release of disaggregated race-based data, advocacy research denying the presence of systemic racism, and a lack of quantitative research in this area (Laming, 2023; Millar & Owusu-Bempah, 2011; Samuels-Wortley, 2021; 2022b; Wortley, 1996; Wortley, 1999; Wortley& Owusu-Bempah, 2009;2011;2022; Wortley & Tanner, 2003).

While there is an initial appeal to argue that race has recently come to the forefront of Canadian policing, several high-profile incidents of Black men dying in interactions with police services launched several inquiries (Wortley & Owusu-Bempah, 2022). In 1988, Michael Wade Lawson, a Black teenager, was shot and killed by two Peel Regional Police officers using hollow point ammunition (which was banned at the time) (Wortley & Owusu-Bempah, 2022). This case led to the formation of the SIU. The concerns about the use of force, as highlighted by Wortley et al. (2020), Wortley (2006), and Laming (2023), are among the many issues categorizing the racially disparate nature of policing in Canada.

Allegations of racial profiling came to the forefront following the release of data collected by the Toronto Star, which demonstrated that the Toronto Police Service disproportionately stopped members of the Black community (Tator & Henry, 2006; Wortley et al., 2003; Wortley & Tanner, 2003, 2005). This development led to the highly publicized attempt by the Toronto Police Service to mitigate the fallout stemming from the release of the data, as Tator and Henry (2006) demonstrate that the police used a series of discourses to maintain their image as racially neutral enforcers of the law. The practice of what was regarded as overt racial profiling seemingly transitioned into the use of street checks, or what is colloquially referred to as carding (Meng, 2014; Saberi, 2017; Wortley & Owusu-Bempah, 2022). In this practice, the

police stop individuals, often without pretext, and collect information on them for intelligence collection. Wortley and Owusu-Bempah (2022) demonstrated that this practice disproportionately affected Toronto's Black community, as they account for over 25% of carding instances while only comprising 8% of the city's population.

Policing practices like arrest decisions, particularly in the context of minor offences, have also been attributed to racial biases in the use of police discretion, adversely affecting racialized youth (Fitzgerald & Carrington, 2011; Samuels-Wortley, 2022b). For example, Fitzgerald and Carrington (2011) found no evidence of racial disparities in the police enforcement of violent offences committed by young offenders. However, they did find evidence of such disparities in property and drug offending among this same cohort of offenders. This leads the authors to conclude that the differential police treatment of visible minorities is the explanation for the observed disparities. In an analysis of youth pre-charge diversion data provided by a Greater Toronto Area police service, Samuels-Wortley (2022b) found that race is a statistically significant predictor of charging decisions adversely affecting Black youth who are more likely to be charged.

The relationship between Indigenous peoples and policing in Canada has primarily been characterized by systemic racism, fear, and a mistrust of the police (Alberton et al., 2019; Brown & Brown, 1973; Chartrand, 2019; Comack, 2012; David & Mitchell, 2021; Dhillon, 2015; Doob & Sprott, 2014; Flores et al., 2023; Laming, 2023; Samuels-Wortley, 2021; Wortley, 2006). David and Mitchell (2021) illustrated that Indigenous people are more likely to self-report encountering the police for an array of law enforcement and non-enforcement reasons. Crosby and Monaghan (2018) demonstrate how Canada's security intelligence, military, and law enforcement framework mobilize to protect the settler colonial interests of the state and a series

of private commercial organizations. Laming (2023), in interviews with Indigenous peoples who experienced force, highlighted how the impacts of police use of force often were long-term in nature. Dhillon (2015) and Flores et al. (2023) argued that settler colonial policing adversely affects Indigenous women and use examples of police violence, over-policing, and police neglect for the victimization and disappearances of Indigenous women and girls. Gillezeau et al. (2023) found that police-involved deaths of Indigenous people are most likely to occur in urban centers and take place in areas of low socioeconomic status.

The research trends suggest that race, to varying degrees, structures interactions between members of the public and the police (Bundy, 2019; Dhillon, 2015; Laming, 2023; Saberi, 2017; Samuels-Wortley, 2021, 2022b). From a methodological perspective, the literature substantiates the use of semi-structured interviews to assess how individuals experience race and their perceptions of how they believe their race structured their interaction (Samuels-Wortley, 2022b). The trends in the literature (see Owusu-Bempah & Luscombe, 2017; Tator & Henry, 2006; Wortley & Owusu-Bempah, 2022) further buttresses the need to assess the role of race in interactions with tactical units. The emphasis on race also supports the application of critical race perspectives to theoretically investigate how the use of tactical units may function as a colorblind (see Alexander, 2012; Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Bonilla-Silva, 2006) mechanism of policing that reproduces racial disparities.

Involuntary Citizen-Police Encounters

While a substantial body of qualitative research exploring the experiences of police raids among inner-city residents has emerged (see Greene et al., 2021; Greene et al., 2022; Urbanik & Greene, 2020), more research is needed to understand the implications of militarized policing for those at the core of these interactions. A substantial body of literature focuses on citizen-police

interactions in the context of general police practices in the inner city (Brunson, 2007; Brunson & Miller, 2006ab; Brunson & Weitzer, 2011; Gau & Brunson, 2015;2010; Hitchens et al., 2018; Laming, 2023; Roach et al., 2022; Weitzer & Brunson, 2009, 2013; Wortley & Owusu-Bempah, 2011). Involuntary police encounters may take on many different forms, including the general police surveillance of a community, police-initiated stops and questioning, searches of individuals, the use of traffic stops that serve as a precursor to investigative detention, police use of force and violence, detention and arrest, patrol work associated with order maintenance, and the use of police raids. Each of these encounters with police has the potential to adversely affect perceptions of and trust in the police (see Brunson, 2007; Cao, 2011; Laming, 2023; Sprott & Doob, 2014; Wortley & Owusu-Bempah, 2011), which may affect the degree to which the public cooperates with the police or perceives them as a legitimate institution.

The inner-city policing literature also acknowledges that involuntary contact may be experienced through direct interaction with the police or vicariously through one's family or peer group (Brunson, 2007; Brunson & Miller, 2006ab; Brunson & Weitzer, 2011; Bundy, 2019; Fox-Williams, 2019; Gau & Brunson, 2015;2010; Hitchens et al., 2018; Laming, 2023; Urbanik & Greene, 2020; Weitzer & Brunson, 2013; 2009). What is unique about this distinction is that it expands the measurement of police contact while providing the researcher with accounts of lived experiences where it otherwise may not be possible. For example, Laming (2023) relied on interviews with participants who experienced police use of force, directly or vicariously, and this allowed for a qualitative analysis of incidents that led to a fatality. Furthermore, vicarious exposure to involuntary police contact also provides a more nuanced understanding of tactics like police raids, as the family of the intended target may also be present during the time of the interaction (Greene et al., 2021; Urbanik & Greene, 2020). Vicarious contact is also assessed in

the present research, as individuals may rely on the experiences of those within their social network to form perceptions of the police (Brunson, 2007).

The trends in the literature investigating citizen-police encounters provide a methodological and conceptual justification for sampling individuals who have direct and vicarious experiences with police. From a methodological standpoint, including individuals who have directly or vicariously experienced policing allows the researcher to navigate potential challenges in sampling what is ostensibly a hidden population (Urbanik & Greene, 2020). Acknowledging the experiences of those with vicarious encounters with the police also allows for a greater understanding of how various police practices and police misconduct harm communities and their perceptions of police (Brunson, 2007; Dhillon, 2015; Laming, 2023). Furthermore, exploring vicarious experiences of police contact is attuned to exploring how intersecting inequalities shape these interactions with police, as a focus on vicarious experiences allows for the inclusion of family members of those who interacted with police (see Greene et al., 2021), and offers a more complete understanding of the challenges facing individuals and families who navigate these encounters with police.

Experiences of Harassment and Violence in Involuntary Encounters with Police

The literature acknowledges that individuals experiencing involuntary contact with police generally experience varying levels of harassment (Brunson, 2007; Brunson & Miller, 2006ab; Brunson & Stewart, 2006; Brunson & Weitzer, 2011; Bundy, 2019; Fine et al., 2003; Fox-Williams, 2019; Laming, 2023). Brunson's (2007) work demonstrated that young men experiencing involuntary police contact believed the practices of frequent searches and stops, without justification, to function as a form of harassment. Similarly, Bundy (2019) demonstrated

how members of Nova Scotia's Black community formed community patrols as a response to confrontations at a local bar to protect Black youth from police harassment.

While repeated police contact or unjustified searches may be regarded as one form of police harassment, the use of demeaning and threatening language is also a common theme that emerged in the literature (Brunson, 2007; Brunson & Miller, 2006ab; Laming, 2023; Mastrofski et al., 2002; Tyler & Wakslak, 2004; Wilson, 2020). Laming (2023) demonstrated that Indigenous people who experienced adversarial contact with the police reported being referred to as "drunk Natives," while another participant indicated being told they were going to be "beat up" if they did not leave (p.6-7). The themes of police verbal disrespect and harassment have characterized urban policing research for decades and function as another form of violence that individuals are subject to (Brunson, 2007; Brunson & Miller, 2006ab; Laming, 2023; Mastrofski et al., 2002; Weitzer, 1999). This form of police violence does not receive the same degree of focus as more expansive and physical acts of violence.

Violence, whether experienced directly or vicariously, is another distinguishing feature of involuntary police contact (Brunson, 2007; Brunson & Miller, 2006ab; Fox-Williams, 2019; Greene et al., 2021; Terrill & Reisig, 2003; Urbanik & Greene, 2020; Weitzer, 1999; Weitzer & Brunson, 2013). The levels of violence observed in the research above vary to great degrees, as Brunson (2007) illustrated the use of pushing, shoving, and kicking in the encounters of Black men with police. In contrast, Urbanik and Greene (2020) demonstrated the use of heavily armed raids by tactical units and other policing elements.

In their investigation into the experiences of inner-city police raids, Urbanik and Greene (2020) found that the presence of excessive violence beyond what participants felt was necessary was regarded as problematic. For example, the authors shared the experiences of one of their

research participants who was hit in the head while in handcuffs. Laming (2023) also indicated that participants in his research reported varying degrees of police violence despite being non-resistant and non-combative. Greene et al. (2022) asserted that police violence does not solely include incidents of lethal force and is also comprised of lower-level forms of violence while illustrating its adverse impact on public health. The presence of police violence and use of force in the literature has implications for the proposed qualitative research. Participant experiences of violence must be further explored to understand the varying levels or degrees to which this occurs and how citizens perceive violence in interactions with the tactical unit.

Experiences of Police Misconduct

The issue of police misconduct also characterizes the research on involuntary police encounters and is central to understanding public perceptions of legitimacy and trust in the police. Issues like evidence tampering, theft, property damage, transporting individuals to remote locations or rival neighbourhoods, sexual misconduct, excessive use of force, and a range of other activities are cited as an element of some police interactions with members of the public (Brunson, 2007; Brunson & Miller, 2006ab; Gau & Brunson, 2015;2010; Hitchens et al., 2018; Weitzer & Brunson, 2009;2013; Urbanik & Greene, 2020; Weitzer & Brunson, 2013). Brunson and Miller (2006b) noted that it is not the appropriateness or legality of an act that members of the public consider when forming opinions of police practice but its necessity.

Urbanik and Greene (2020) highlighted allegations of theft among individuals subject to police raids. While some seizures may have been documented, there are other instances where participants believed there were unreported seizures of valuable goods. Other participants indicated having consumer goods stolen, whereas some asserted that police reporting of evidence did not provide a full accounting of what police seized, leading some to believe their property

was stolen. Brunson's (2007) research also found allegations of theft, indicating that young men subject to involuntary police encounters often experience theft of cash by police. Some participants ascribe this to police perceptions of the community being a criminal threat, providing officers with a quasi-justification for seizing what they believe to be drug money or money obtained via crime (Brunson, 2007; Brunson & Miller, 2006ab). The claims of theft, particularly regarding cash, are a common theme in inner-city policing research, but this is not the only economic consequence associated with police encounters.

The use of dynamic entry often entails the use of a battering ram, Halligan bars (also referred to as a 'hooly'), and the use of flashbangs (commonly referred to as distraction devices) to gain access to structures (Roziere & Walby, 2020a; Urbanik & Greene, 2020). Police raids require extensive searches for evidence that involves searching through vents and other parts of their homes (Urbanik & Greene, 2020). The issue stemming from these searches was what individuals perceived as the unnecessary destruction of their property. Some participants reported having their consumer goods stolen and their clothes tossed in their toilets, and others reported having housing fixtures, furniture, and personal items destroyed. Urbanik and Greene (2020) demonstrated how participants in their research experienced extensive property damage, which may have caused significant disruptions to how individuals access their homes. The economic consequences stemming from these police encounters are profound as participants are forced to replace or repair these goods and incur the financial burdens associated with this cost.

Another issue facing the family unit is the threat of eviction or disruptions to housing. Alexander (2012) highlights how the presence of a conviction, in the American context, limits access to social housing. Fais (2008) demonstrated how calls to the police are used to delegate specific properties as nuisance properties. This leads to a series of coercive measures against

occupants, like fines and property forfeiture, and may facilitate the eviction of residents by landlords (Desmond & Valdez, 2013; Fais, 2008). Desmond and Valdez (2013) argued that third-party actors, like landlords, have the potential to evict residents who encounter the police. The authors demonstrated how this element of informal social control had the most adverse impact on racialized women. Most troubling about this trend is that some individuals may face eviction despite not being involved in criminal activities. For example, Greene et al. (2021) demonstrated how women in inner-city raids essentially experienced these encounters as a result of their male family members' involvement in crime. However, as Desmond and Valdez (2013) demonstrated, landlords may not be willing to abate nuisances or criminal activities in their properties.

The literature investigating the economic impact of citizen-police encounters allows for the qualitative aspect of the research to explore the challenges facing individuals and families following their interactions with police. While an element of the study will assess whether theft and property damage (see Urbanik & Greene, 2020) characterize encounters with tactical units, this research also addresses a gap in the literature by examining the impact of militarized policing on housing outcomes.

Perceptions of Police

The quantitative literature suggests that perceptions of police as being more procedurally just are associated with increases in police legitimacy (Gau, 2011; 2014; Gau & Brunson, 2015; 2010; Mazzerolle et al., 2012; 2013; Murphy, 2009; Reisig et al., 2007; Reisig & Lloyd, 2009). The central issue at play when considering perceptions of police legitimacy is that direct or vicarious encounters with police can erode confidence in police (Brunson, 2007; Brunson & Miller, 2006ab; Gau & Brunson, 2010,2015; Hitchens et al., 2018). The qualitative literature in this area also supports the notion that perceptions of and experiences of unfair, discriminatory, or

aggressive policing contribute to a loss of trust, growing feelings of cynicism, or negative perceptions of the police (Gau & Brunson, 2010; 2015; Hitchens et al., 2015; Stewart et al., 2009; Weitzer & Brunson, 2013; Urbanik & Greene, 2020; Wilson et al., 2020).

In Urbanik and Greene's (2020) analysis of inner-city police raids, participants understood that police raids are not meant to be pleasant and did not contest a series of policing practices. However, the participants contested those practices they believed to be procedurally unjust. Gau and Brunson (2010, 2015) also found that young men who were subject to aggressive policing practices had eroded perceptions of police legitimacy when faced with interactions they found to be procedurally unjust. Hitchens et al. (2018) also indicated that perceptions of legal cynicism grow due to exposure to aggressive policing practices. Concerning the scope of the proposed research, the trends in the literature provide empirical support for asking questions about perceptions of militarized policing among those who have encountered this element of policing. While this research is exploratory, understanding the perceptions of police militarization may provide a novel avenue to assess the consequences of these encounters.

Gender and Involuntary Citizen-Police Contact

The literature in this area examines the experiences of police contact among women, how gender may be used as a form of capital to navigate police contact, and how gender structures interactions with police (Brunson & Miller, 2006a; Bundy, 2019; Greene et al., 2021; Grundetjern, 2015; Hitchens et al., 2018; Roach et al., 2015; Wilson et al., 2020). Brunson and Miller (2006a) found that Black females were exposed to similar police interactions as their male counterparts, but the interaction was also gendered in nature. For example, the authors highlighted how these young women noted being stopped for curfew violations and were subject to sexual misconduct. Similarly, Hitchens et al. (2018) demonstrated that young women who

were stopped in the presence of Black or Latino men experienced intensified interactions in contrast to those they experienced in the absence of racialized men. Similarly, the young women in this study also reported experiencing direct and vicarious applications of the use of force but also reported being treated more leniently under some circumstances (Hitchens et al., 2019).

Greene et al. (2021) investigated how women in the inner-city navigate police raids and suggested that elements of these interactions with police differ from the male experience. For example, men experienced more physically and verbally aggressive encounters with police (Urbanik & Greene, 2020). In contrast, women were subject to police deploying gendered stereotypes to facilitate cooperation in law enforcement investigations, and some women used the officers' stereotypical assumptions to navigate the encounter by portraying themselves as victims (Greene et al., 2021). Some women were threatened with exposure to the child welfare system following a raid. In contrast, those who successfully presented themselves as good mothers noted this as a resource they relied upon to navigate this involuntary encounter (Greene et al., 2021). The findings of Greene et al. (2021) are essential as they highlight that experiences of police raids are not universal but structured by gender, especially as it relates to the issue of parenting.

An emergent theme in the literature surrounding involuntary police interactions explores the impact of these encounters on one's family unit, emphasizing children and youth (Bundy, 2019; Fox-Williams, 2019; Greene et al., 2021; Hitchens et al., 2018). In anticipation of encounters with involuntary citizen-police, the literature demonstrated the presence of intergenerational transmission of *conduct norms* (Bundy, 2011; Brunson & Weitzer, 2011). This primarily refers to the idea that parents or another guardian share strategies to avoid or effectively manage police contact to minimize the frequency of involuntary encounters and may

involve strategies like avoiding the police, complying with their demands when in contact, or policing the appearance of youth (Bundy, 2011; Brunson & Weitzer, 2011; Fox-Williams, 2019). The literature investigating youths' experiences with involuntary policing suggests that youth deploy a number of these strategies to minimize contact with police (Fine et al., 2003; Fox-Williams, 2019; Hitchens et al., 2018).

The threat of losing children to child welfare agencies is another area identified in the literature investigating the impact of these encounters on the family unit (Greene et al., 2021). For example, Greene et al. (2021) suggest that officers participating in raids use the threat of child welfare agencies removing children from the home to generate compliance or cooperation from mothers at the site of raids. The use of threats invoking child welfare agencies is particularly unique among the racialized people of lower socioeconomic status, as Clarke (2012) implies the presence of systemic discrimination facing racialized service users. While the proposed research does not engage in interviews with youth, these contributions are vital to the qualitative aspect of this research. The literature demonstrates that the experience of parenting is adversely affected by involuntary police interactions, as parents rely on a series of strategies to protect their children from or manage the adverse implications of these encounters (Bundy, 2019; Brunson & Weitzer, 2011; Fox-Williams, 2019; Greene et al., 2021).

The qualitative aspect of this dissertation research must engage with the gendered experiences of participants as it provides an avenue for understanding their intersectional experiences and how social location shapes encounters with police and the consequences stemming from these encounters. In addition to understanding the experiences and the context in which women encounter the police, the research must also expand its focus on the issue of parenting. While not exclusively limited to women's experiences, this research may address a

gap in the existing literature to see how men and women with children navigate their roles as parents during these interactions.

Perceptions of Police Legitimacy

The quantitative literature suggests that perceptions of police as being more procedurally just are associated with increases in police legitimacy (Gau, 2011; 2014; Gau & Brunson, 2015; 2010; Mazzerolle et al., 2012; 2013; Murphy, 2009; Reisig et al., 2007; Reisig & Lloyd, 2009). The central issue at play when considering perceptions of police legitimacy is that direct or vicarious encounters with police can erode confidence in police (Brunson, 2007; Brunson & Miller, 2006ab; Gau & Brunson, 2010,2015; Hitchens et al., 2018). The qualitative literature in this area also supports the notion that perceptions of and experiences of unfair, discriminatory, or aggressive policing contribute to a loss of trust, growing feelings of cynicism, or negative perceptions of the police (Gau & Brunson, 2010; 2015; Hitchens et al., 2015; Stewart et al., 2009; Weitzer & Brunson, 2013; Urbanik & Greene, 2020; Wilson et al., 2020). Urbanik and Greene's (2020) analysis of inner-city police raids found that participants understood that police raids are not meant to be pleasant and did not contest a series of policing practices. However, the participants contested those practices they believed to be procedurally unjust. Gau and Brunson (2010, 2015) also articulated that young men who were subject to aggressive policing practices had eroded perceptions of police legitimacy when faced with interactions they found to be procedurally unjust. Hitchens et al. (2018) also indicated that perceptions of legal cynicism grow due to exposure to aggressive policing practices.

Concerning the scope of the proposed research, the trends in the literature provide empirical support for asking questions about perceptions of militarized policing among those who have encountered this element of policing. Building on the findings of Urbanik and Greene

(2020), the research contributes to a growing body of literature exploring perceptions of militarized policing in the Canadian context. Understanding the perceptions of police held by participants of police militarization may provide a novel avenue to assess the consequences of these encounters as they relate to public perceptions of police militarization.

Psychosocial Consequences of Citizen-Police Encounters

A growing body of literature acknowledges the traumatic potential of law enforcement interactions, whether directly or vicariously experienced, and the racial distribution of trauma (Aymer, 2016; Briere & Runtz, 2023; Gillikin et al., 2016; Hawkins, 2022; Lipscomb, 2020; Klein & Lopez, 2022; Pryce et al., 2021). Black men exposed to direct or vicarious experiences of police violence exhibit higher levels of fear of the police, fear of being killed by police, face several distinct emotional health challenges and may show the symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (Briere & Runtz, 2023; Gillikin et al., 2016; Hawkins, 2022; Klein & Lopez, 2022; Sewell & Jefferson, 2016; Smith Lee & Robinson, 2019; Wilson et al., 2023; Venta et al., 2022). In interviews with families facing police-induced trauma, Lipscomb (2020) found that family members adopted various mechanisms to avoid and survive police interactions and had a general fear for their safety. Helms et al. (2010) categorized police violence against racialized groups as a cultural event rooted in a collective history of racism.

Sharpe (2015) argued that racialized people experience racialized appraisals of trauma, which rely on making meaning of events situated by their status and identity in a racially marginalized group. A growing body of research now engages with racialized appraisals to understand traumatic events facing a community (McGuffey & Sharpe, 2015; Smith Lee & Robinson, 2019). Bryant-Davis et al. (2017) outline how the history of racial terror violence is linked to a collective response to contemporary incidents of police violence. Bryant-Davis et al.

(2017) suggested that race-based trauma possesses an intergenerational component where contemporary incidents of violence are contextualized to the historical violence experienced by a group of people. Williams (2021) demonstrated that media representations of police violence against Black people inflicted a racialized trauma among young Black women. Similarly, Wilson et al. (2024) found that Black college students experienced stress and trauma as a result of exposure to police killings of Black people.

Lopez et al. (2018a) engaged in an exploratory study to understand the traumatic potential of law enforcement raids. The authors found evidence consistent with the understanding that individuals subject to raids may experience a range of symptoms associated with post-traumatic stress disorder. While noting the effect of exposure to police violence among families dealing with the consequences of police violence, Outland et al. (2020) noted that many families lacked formal support and resources to address the trauma they experienced. The work of Outland et al. (2020) also draws attention to the broader issues, likely associated with class, about the limited access to resources and support to address the traumatic nature of encounters with law enforcement.

A large body of literature examines the application of stigma to those engaged in crime and their families (Aiello & McQueeney, 2016; Goffman, 1963; Hannem, 2010; 2011; 2019;). Individuals in contact with the justice system are often ascribed a *spoiled identity*, where an individual is reduced to a negatively stereotyped attribute. Goffman (1963) introduced the concept of *guilt by association,* where stigma from one individual may be passed on and ascribed to others in their social group. Molet et al. (2013) demonstrated that people transfer negative perceptions of an individual onto their social group. As such, individuals who belong to a social

group or associate with an individual possessing a spoiled identity are ascribed a *courtesy stigma* (Aiello & McQueeney, 2016; Goffman, 1963; Hannem, 2019).

The stigmatic potential of police contact is further demonstrated in various empirical and theoretical works (Becker, 1963; Braman, 2004; Jacobsen, 2019; Hannem, 2019; Tinney, 2013). Individuals who encounter the police may experience social exclusion and a loss of prosocial relationships because of the stigma associated with police or justice system contact (Goffman, 1963; Tinney, 2023; Wiley et al., 2013). Tinney (2023) found that some individuals may be the subject of guilt by association, which predicted future arrest and subsequent involvement with police. The research literature also demonstrates that contact with elements of the justice system, including the police, also stigmatizes one's family group, among other adverse consequences (Porter & King, 2015; Roettger & Swisher, 2011; Turney, 2015; Wakefield & Wildeman, 2013).

Garfinkel (1956) refers to *degradation ceremonies*, which refer to the public nature of how people are ascribed stigmatized labels. While traditionally thought of in the context of sentencing and incarceration, the process of stigmatization may also unfold because of contact with the police. Considering that police tactical units are readily identifiable by their distinct uniforms, militaristic weaponry, and participation in less common police operations (see Kraska, 2007; Roziere & Walby, 2018; Sidhu, 2024; Urbanik & Greene, 2020), an argument may be advanced that contact with tactical units functions as a degradation ceremony as this contact with police ascribes a criminal master status to individuals. Relying on the work of Goffman (1963), the stigma attached to the individual would be transferred to their family group and associates.

The implications of the literature investigating the psychosocial consequences of citizen police encounters provide a conceptual basis to explore the challenges facing individuals who encounter tactical units. The research may engage with the emotional and psychological

consequences stemming from these encounters (see Aymer, 2016; Briere & Runtz, 2023; Gillikin et al., 2016; Hawkins, 2022; Lipscomb, 2020; Klein & Lopez, 2022; Pryce et al., 2021) and the social consequences stemming from them as it relates to stigma (see Goffman, 1963 Tinney, 2023; Wiley et al., 2013).

Conclusion

The literature review draws on three distinct subfields of the policing literature in the intersection between police militarization, use of force, and involuntary citizen encounters with police. Except for Greene et al. (2021, 2022) and Urbanik and Greene (2020), who investigated the experiences of police raids among inner-city residents, there is no existing Canadian research assessing the lived experiences of individuals who have encountered police tactical units. However, the literature investigating involuntary citizen-police encounters provides a basis for addressing this gap in the literature. The literature highlighted in this review demonstrates the expansive nature of the consequences associated with adversarial encounters with elements of the criminal justice system, like the police (Brunson, 2007; Bruson & Miller, 2006ab; Bryant-Davis et al., 2017; Greene et al., 2021; Hannem, 2011, 2019; Meade, 2017; Laming, 2023; Urbanik & Greene, 2020).

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework

Introduction

Anthony Aust, a 23-year-old Black man, was the subject of a dynamic entry (no-knock) search warrant stemming from a bail violation and a tip informing police he had a handgun (SIU, 2021a). Aust fell to his death from his family's 12th-storey Ottawa, Ontario apartment during the police operation. No handgun was recovered during the warrant, but a bag containing a substance alleged to be fentanyl was (SIU, 2021a). In November 2021, Rodger Kotanko, a 70-year-old White gunsmith, was shot and killed by Toronto Police Service officers who were executing a warrant concerning a firearm trafficking investigation in Norfolk County (SIU, 2022b). Kotanko is alleged to have reached for a handgun and turned in the direction of the officers with the weapon in hand (SIU, 2022b). Each case involved the risk of a firearm being accessible to the subject, suggesting a higher risk for officer safety (Jenkins et al., 2021a; SIU, 2021a, 2022b). However, a tactical unit only executed the warrant in the Aust case, and plainclothes detectives were responsible for executing the warrant in the Kotanko case (SIU, 2021a, 2022b).

The officers in the Kotanko case indicated they did not rely on a tactical unit to execute the warrant due to the subject's age, no evidence of a violent past, and no "articulable risk" (SIU, 2022b). Kotanko's apparent access to firearms was not considered a risk factor in this case. The detectives in the Kotanko case relied on a soft entry, whereas the tactical unit in Aust's case used a dynamic entry to gain access to the residence (SIU, 2021a, 2022b). These illustrative case studies offer a pathway for incorporating criminological theory and a critical interrogation of police practice based on the subject's social location.

Rather than solely being shaped by context-specific factors, I argue that one's social location shapes citizen-police encounters. Aspects of social location, like race, are essential for understanding criminalization processes and the application of state control to groups

characterized as the Other (Ajilore, 2015; Blalock, 1967; Brookman et al., 2022; Carmichael & Burgos, 2012; Carmichael & Kent, 2015; Free, 2005; Petrocelli et al., 2003; Stewart et al., 2009). This dissertation applies critical race perspectives to understand how the use of the tactical unit, like other elements of policing, is linked to the racialization of crime control and exacerbates existing social inequalities.

Using critical race theory (CRT) in the quantitative portion of this research provides a lens for engaging with (a) rates of racial disproportionality in the use of force data and (b) an assessment of whether race is a statistically significant correlate of specific applications of force. Using a critical race perspective shapes this research's capacity to enumerate racial disparity and allows for its identification from a statistical perspective (Lopez et al., 2018b; Sablan, 2019; Strunk, 2024). It provides a basis through which the influence of race may be examined, including how the use of force may function as an expression of power mobilized against the threat of the criminal Other (see Garland, 2005; Laming, 2023). The quantitative approach allows the research to interrogate if tactical units function as a colourblind form of racialized social control through disproportionate representation in force incidents and statistically significant links between race and specific applications of force.

Solely examining race through quantitative means disregards the lived experiences of racism, reinforces existing power divisions in the production of knowledge, and fails to identify how individuals perceive their race as having been a part of their encounter with police (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Henne & Shah, 2015; Samuels-Wortley, 20222b). The sole use of statistics disregards the institutional and political context in which crime is enumerated (Haggerty, 2001). The qualitative component of this research engages with critical race perspectives, primarily through counterstories, to better understand individual perceptions of how racism is experienced

at the interactional level (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Samuels-Wortley, 2022b). Using counterstories facilitates a more comprehensive discussion of race rather than treating this issue as something that may be solely understood using statistical inferences (Glynn & Breen, 2024; Henne & Shah, 2015; Samuels-Wortley, 2021).

The first portion of this chapter provides a general summation of the key elements of critical race theory. An overview of key concepts like colourblindness, differential racialization, Whiteness, intersectionality, counterstories, and the emergence of quantitative approaches in critical race research is provided. This chapter then applies the central tenets of critical race perspectives for understanding police militarization and its parallels to previous systems of racialized control. Finally, this chapter concludes with a discussion on how using critical race perspectives provides a more comprehensive understanding of how state violence is legitimized against the Other.

Chapter 3.1: Critical Race Theory

Overview of Central Tenets

CRT is a framework that critically engages with the institutionalized nature of racism in the practices, policies, and discourses of institutions (Bell Jr., 1995; Delgado & Stefancic, 2007; Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Hayman Jr., 1995; Tanovich, 2006; Tator & Henry, 2006; Van Cleve & Mayes, 2015). CRT rejects fixed biological categorizations of race, instead suggesting that race is socially constructed and expressed to achieve an array of economic, legal, or political goals that prioritize the structural position of hegemonic groups (Bhopal, 2023; Brynn & Gleen, 2024; Crenshaw, 1991; Delgado & Stefancic, 2007; Kim, 2004; Quiros et al., 2020). The social construction of the Chinese community as being unassimilable was used to engender public and political support for policies that limited Chinese immigration (Cho, 2021). Similarly, Sentas

(2014) demonstrates how race is expressed in 'race-neutral' practices to advance counter-terrorism policies that normalize the policing of Muslim and other ethnic communities in Australia. Perry (2023) also demonstrated how racially ambiguous rhetoric is expressed to foster support for populist policies. The social construction of race is demonstrated through structural arrangements of race (hegemony), and its dimensions (social experience) are informed by the explicit use of race or the ambiguous expression of race (Omi & Winant, 2002).

Critical race theorists contend that the institutionalized nature of racism, stemming from the social construction of race, fosters a range of discourses that maintain existing power structures privileging the White social location (Delgado & Stefancic, 2007; Kim, 2004; Quiros et al., 2020; Tator & Henry, 2006). Central to this perspective is the assertion that racism is not aberrative or solely the result of individual prejudice. Contemporary manifestations of systemic racism are commonplace and institutionalized in covert forms that do not make explicit mention of race, excluding the influence race plays in how individuals experience institutions and their social world (Alexander, 2012; Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Hayman Jr., 1995; Sandrin & Palys, 2022; Van Cleve & Mayes, 2015). Institutionalized racism exists despite formal declarations of legal equality, and this is accomplished using multiple frameworks that neglect (a) the social history of race, (b) understanding the influence of race's social construction on the formation of racial hierarchies, (c) and its organizing role in shaping existing structures of power.

Colourblindness

Colourblindness is one of the central frameworks that maintain institutionalized racism. Colourblindness is a condition where the law, its interpretation, or the practices of an institution are perceived to be racially neutral via the absence of explicit mentions of race (Alexander, 2011; Bonilla-Silva, 2006, 2010; Hayman Jr., 1995; Samuels-Wortley, 2021, 2022b). This condition

fails to acknowledge the racially stratified nature of society, obscuring the presence of systemic discrimination and making it more difficult to prove its presence (Hayman Jr., 1995).

Bonilla-Silva (2010) demonstrated the pervasive nature of colourblinding in discourses surrounding workplace and housing segregation. White people often explained racial segregation as the result of self-selection among racialized people rather than the result of racial discrimination (Bonilla-Silva, 2010). However, participants did not mention self-selection among Whites living in White neighbourhoods, as this is perceived as normal. Bonilla-Silva (2010) argued that the analysis of colourblind discourses is not to identify individual prejudice but rather the "social, economic, political…and ideological mechanisms responsible for the reproduction of racial privilege" (Bonilla-Silva, 2010, p.9). Alexander (2011, 2012) argued that the colourblind nature of drug laws, although making no explicit mention of race, functions in a manner that creates racially disparate outcomes that disenfranchise Black Americans. The law makes no mention of race, making it difficult to argue as a violation of one's Civil Rights, but maintains the normative and hegemonic White position by disenfranchising large numbers of Black people, limiting the cohort's political power (Alexander, 2011, 2012).

Alexander (2012) illustrated the family history of Jarvious Cotton to demonstrate the evolving and progressively covert nature of institutional racism. Jarvious' (a) great-great grandfather was unable to vote as he was enslaved, (b) his great-grandfather was lynched by the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) for attempting to vote, (c) his grandfather faced voter intimidation from the Klan, preventing him from voting, (d) his father could not vote on account of his literacy test scores and failing to pay poll taxes, and (e) Jarvious cannot vote as he is a convicted felon and lost his voting rights (Alexander, 2012). Jarvious' family history demonstrated how five generations of Black men were disenfranchised. However, the most recent generation of his

family did not face explicit forms of racial discrimination, instead being the subject of policies that masked its racist intent using colourblind discourses (Alexander, 2012).

Colourblindness is central to this research because of the contemporary nature of systemic racism. While specific racialized groups may experience certain outcomes at a disproportionate rate, there is an absence of policies that invoke race. As a result of the racially neutral nature of the contemporary criminal justice system (see Samuels-Wortley, 2021, 2022b), this research relies on colourblinding to analyze how the reproduction of racial disparities emerges despite commitments to bias-free policing (see Monaghan & Molnar, 2016). A focus on colourblind discourses allows for an interrogation of the link between militarized policing and the control of the racialized Other.

Differential Racialization

Differential racialization refers to the capacity of dominant institutions to socially construct or ascribe racial meanings to a group of people to achieve broader cultural, political, economic, or social aims (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Gleen & Brynn, 2024; Kim, 2004; Quiros et al., 2020). The binary of White/racialized essentializes the experiences of racial groups into a singular monolithic category, whereas the application of CRT allows for a nuanced understanding of the processes of racialization structure social hierarchies (Glynn & Breen, 2024; Kim, 2004; Quiros et al., 2020). Institutional practices, discourses, and actors use differential racialization to shape multiple group positions in society rather than framing race as a White/Non-White binary. Kim (2004) explained that different racial groups experience differential racialization, positioning the social location of these groups in a distinct hierarchy. Indigenous, Chinese, and Mexicans were characterized as being superior to Black people, which facilitated the social justification for slavery (Kim, 2004). Similarly, Mexicans were legally

classified as White and eligible for citizenship. In contrast, Chinese immigrants were characterized as being too unassimilable for naturalization, and Indigenous peoples were deemed to be unfit to live in White society (Kim, 2004). The differential racialization of these groups created varying positions for each group relative to one another, resulting in differential degrees of relative subordination to the hegemonic White social location (Kim, 2004).

Media representations of crime and institutional discourses are the primary mechanisms of differential racialization that contribute to the social construction of racial groups in crime and justice (Alexander, 2012; Erba et al., 2019; Slakoff & Brennan, 2023). Tator and Henry (2006) demonstrated how the Toronto Police Service, its union, and various media outlets framed the Black community as being a criminal threat and a deserving recipient of racial profiling. Similarly, Chartrand (2019) demonstrated how media portrayals and institutional discourses of the *Native criminal* were used in the 1960s to justify the use of incarceration against Canada's Indigenous peoples. In the Canadian context, dominant institutional discourses and media representations largely frame Black and Indigenous peoples as a criminal threat and the racialized Other (Chartrand, 2019; Laming, 2023; Saberi, 2017; Tator & Henry, 2006). The social construction of race frames specific communities as being a criminal threat to society, allowing for the expansion and legitimation of discriminatory practices under the guise of public safety (Chartrand, 2019; Saberi, 2017; Tator & Henry, 2006).

State institutions may use discourses of the criminal Other to justify the expansion of state violence and insulate themselves against claims of racial discrimination. Tator and Henry (2006) articulated that this strategy often relies on 'we-they' polarization, incorporating elements of a moral panic. The 'we' refers to the dominant White society and its institutions, and the 'they' in the dichotomy refers to the Other. Julian Fantino, former Chief of Toronto Police, attempted to

"link Blackness with out-of-control violence happening in the city…then suggested a number of strategies to address the problem, including the installation of CCTV surveillance" (Tator & Henry, 2006, p. 138). Tator and Henry (2006) also demonstrated how members of the Toronto media framed crime as a byproduct of Jamaican culture and advocated for the use of racial profiling. Saberi (2017) also demonstrated how racialized media discourses contributed to the proliferation of militarized and intelligence-based policing strategies in predominantly Black neighbourhoods in Toronto. The use of differential racialization in this capacity is evident as the discourse of the criminal Other relies on portraying specific racialized communities as a threat, which ultimately legitimates the use of aggressive policing strategies and insulates the police from criticism.

Differential racialization is a central framework for this research as it indicates that different racial groups occupy a distinct position in relation to the normative White position. This perspective acknowledges that not all racial groups will experience the disproportionate effects of a particular practice. In contrast, those groups whose social construction intersects with an institution's aim will experience the most disproportionate outcomes in that area (Kim, 2004). Engaging with differential racialization is important as it indicates that disproportionality and disparity do not have to be experienced by every racial group, and the absence of discrimination across racial groups does not imply the absence of systemic discrimination.

Whiteness

A growing body of literature suggests researchers should interrogate the normative position of Whiteness (Bhopal, 2023; Brynn & Gleen, 2024; Delgado & Stefancic, 1997; Leonardo, 2002; Webster, 2008). Interpreting the normative White positions provides an avenue for challenging the existence of a homogenous Whiteness or White identity (Delgado &

Stefancic, 1997; Smith, 2014; Webster, 2008). Understanding Whiteness as a normative position provides insight into race formation and how the boundaries of what is considered 'White' shift across time and context (Delgado & Stefancic, 1997; Smith, 2014; Webster, 2008).

Webster (2008) suggested that White people perceive a degree of differentiation between themselves based on various elements of their social location, rejecting the notion of a universal White experience. For example, the images of White methamphetamine users and labeling this group as 'White trash' effectively others them from middle and upper-class Whites (Linnemann & Wall, 2013). Webb (2019) further demonstrated how Romany Gypsies are afforded the status of White but simultaneously occupy a minority position in reference to White Britons. The intersections of race and class may establish a normative, or ideal, position of Whiteness, and those White people who do not meet this 'ideal' type are effectively Othered (Linnemann & Wall, 2013; Webb, 2019; Webster, 2008). Economically marginalized White people who live in social housing are subject to racialized discourses distinguishing them from middle and upper-class White Britons (Webster, 2008). Smith (2014) and Linnemann and Wall (2013) argued that definitions of Whiteness are shaped by class boundary markers that rely on class as a signifier rather than its distinction being solely predicated upon the distribution of material resources. Bhopal (2023) indicated that all White groups benefit, to some degree, from the structural advantage provided by their race. This is not to say that White people do not experience the adverse outcomes associated with a specific practice, but that racialized people may experience these outcomes in a different capacity because of how they are racialized (Bhopal, 2023; Kim, 2004; Webster, 2008).

As a result of the complexity of race, this research does not replicate a White/non-White binary and devotes greater attention to the intricacies of race and Whiteness. The focus on the

normative White position is unique as it allows this research to interrogate further how specific cohorts of White people may negatively experience the police because of their social location, and this highlights the need to use an intersectional framework. Using class as a signifier fuels class contempt toward lower-class and socially marginalized White people and exposes them to similar discourses and practices targeting racialized people (Linnemann & Wall, 2013; Smith, 2014; Webster, 2008). The targeting of socially marginalized White people demonstrates that the normative White position is as much a social boundary as it is an ethnic or racial one.

Intersectionality

An intersectional perspective examines how different elements of social location overlap with one another to shape experiences of the social world. Intersectionality highlights how factors like race, class, and gender (among other social identities) may compound disadvantages experienced by individuals or groups (Crenshaw, 1991; Hill Collins, 2019; Lowery, 2019; Schneider, 2004). Crenshaw (1991) advocated for the use of an intersectional perspective to critique how the structures of sexism and racism overlapped with one another to marginalize women of colour experiencing violence. Lowery (2019) examined how the intersections of race and an array of economic extralegal factors were correlated with differential outcomes for juvenile offenders. White female offenders who lived in a single-parent household or had histories of trauma and neglect were more likely to be offered plea bargains than their Black counterparts (Lowery, 2019). Lowery (2019) contextualized these findings on the premise that marginalized Black girls are not regarded as ideal candidates for rehabilitation and are viewed as violent aggressors.

Hill Collins (2019) offered four distinct premises guiding intersectional analyses. The first premise is that race, class, gender, and other systems of power are interdependent and

mutually construct one another. The second premise is that intersectional power relations produce interdependent social inequalities of race, class, and gender, among other elements of social location. Power is another core element of intersectional analysis and draws attention to how various aspects of identity cannot be understood in isolation (Hill Collins, 2019). The third premise is that the social location of individuals and their intersecting power relations shape one's experiences with the social world. The concept of relationality draws attention to how certain social positions acquire power (or a lack thereof) in relation to other social positions (Hill Collins, 2019; Phoenix & Pattynama, 2006). Hills Collins (2019) also argued that inequality is often understood using separate entities, like race or class inequality, but argues for an analysis of social inequality that focuses on larger power structures that produce these interdependent systems of domination. Finally, the fourth premise is that solving social problems requires intersectional analyses. Intersectionality is highly complex as its theoretical interpretation is iterative and requires an understanding how these interdependent power systems function together (Hill Collins, 2019).

Class and race are regarded as two of the primary mechanisms through which minority status is ascribed in Western societies (Carmichael & Kent, 2015; Chambliss & Seidman, 1971; Free, 2005; Petrocelli et al., 2003; Quinney, 1970; Stewart et al., 2009; Tagaki, 1974; Turk, 1969). While this general approach suggests that economically marginalized White people also experience adverse outcomes, the use of an intersectional approach allows for a more critical interrogation of how race may create differential outcomes among otherwise similarly situated groups. For example, Owusu-Bempah and Luscombe (2021) found that Black and Indigenous people are disproportionately arrested, in comparison to their White counterparts, for possession of cannabis. The authors also cited research challenging the assertions that (a) racialized groups

are more likely to use drugs and (b) the visibility of drug use among marginalized and racialized groups explains racial disparities. The broader implications stemming from this research are that the application of critical race perspectives does not imply that only racialized groups experience the adverse outcomes of a particular practice or policy; it is that they are disproportionately affected by it because of differential racialization (Alexander, 2012; Kim, 2004; Quiros et al., 2020).

Using an intersectional framework is vital for understanding the lived experiences of encounters with the police as it allows for an analysis of how various elements of social location shape these interactions. The focus on relationality provides a basis for understanding how those in positions assumed to occupy privilege may also experience the adverse effects of a practice like those considered marginalized (Hill Collins, 2019). Acknowledging the interdependent nature of systems of power provides this research with a lens to understand how factors like class, race, and gender influence the experiences and perceptions of encounters with police. When analyzing research findings, an intersectional framework provides greater nuance and complexity rather than solely focusing on a singular framework (see Hill Collins, 2019). Davis and Shaylor's (2020) critique of mass incarceration examined the issue using an intersectional framework investigating the class, race, and gendered nature to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the inequalities characterizing imprisonment in the United States. Intersectional analyses provide a novel avenue for assessing how power and social inequality are reproduced through interactions with the police.

Power and the Production of Knowledge

The production of knowledge and its proposed objectivity is also central to legitimizing institutional discrimination. Positivist research implies a degree of objectivity and neutrality, as

the relationship between crucial constructs is primarily reduced to questions of statistical significance (Henne & Shah, 2015; Strunk, 2024). However, quantitative research may be structured with an epistemological or theoretical bias that privileges dominant worldviews or is conducted by researchers with little knowledge of the experience they are assessing (Brynn & Gleen, 2024; Sablan, 2019; Samuels-Wortley, 2022a; Walby, 2021). For example, Strunk (2024) demonstrated how quantitative approaches provided empirical support for eugenics, White supremacy, and other oppressive ideologies. Henne and Shah (2015) argued that positivist research maintains White privilege by omitting race and racial stratification from its analysis or using it as an explanatory variable for certain outcomes. This approach in positivist research ignores the organizing effect of race and racial stratification in the criminal justice system (Henne & Shah, 2015).

State and positivist research primarily relies on using quantitative statistics and enumerations of racial disparity to identify discrimination (Anti-Racism Directorate, 2022; Henne & Shah, 2015; Lopez et al., 2018b). Haggerty (2001) articulated that "statistics are themselves a social accomplishment, a product of institutional regimes and processes" (p.3). Statistics and data collection are directed by a neoliberal framework that demonstrates the value of a particular strategy or program (Garland, 1996; Haggerty, 2001). The police tremendously influence how crime data is recorded due to their institutional position and role as knowledge producers (Haggerty, 2001). The indicators or variables that comprise statistics are tacitly used to legitimize the various strategies of governance (Haggerty, 2001). For example, the collection of data indicative of the threat of a firearm being present in calls attended by tactical units (see Jenkins et al., 2021) serves the broader purpose of legitimizing the need for this aspect of

policing. The collection of this data point, among others, is a byproduct of a neoliberal environment that provides police institutions with a justification for their practices.

Racial classifications serve a political purpose as the 'Other' is constructed through the production of racialized knowledge (Haggerty, 2001; Said, 1978). Race-based data allows the state to develop forms of knowledge that allow for the governance of ethnic groups. Racial differences in crime rates or statistics allow the institution to mobilize various discourses and practices. This implies that the use of statistics is not predicated on what they illustrate but on how these statistics are contextualized in the broader institutional environment. Haggerty (2001) noted how conservative political actors would use statistics to support anti-immigration policies or legitimate the use of aggressive policing practices. The central issue stemming from using statistics is that they are afforded the status of being objective, disregarding the inherent structural factors that shape what data is collected and how it is used.

CRT places race at the core of inquiry and utilizes a story-telling approach to prioritize the lived experiences of those who have experienced racism, as opposed to treating it as a peripheral explanation for a social phenomenon (Samuels-Wortley, 2021; Sandrin & Palys, 2022; Van Cleve & Mayes, 2015). Storytelling challenges the dominant narratives advanced by the exclusion of racialized perspectives, combats the discourses that privilege Whiteness in mainstream criminology, and draws attention to lived experiences and perceptions of racism (Glynn & Breen, 2004; Samuels-Wortley, 2021; Schneider, 2004). Storytelling relies on qualitative methodological approaches that place racialized peoples at the forefront of knowledge production, allowing for an interrogation of how racism structures the everyday experiences of racialized people (Samuels-Wortley, 2021). Some critical race scholars argue that the best means

to understand the nuances of racism is through qualitative research emphasizing the nuanced and endemic nature of racism (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017).

Using counterstories offers an avenue for challenging the asymmetric nature of knowledge production in the social sciences by placing those with lived experience at the core of the inquiry. Emphasizing the lived experiences of those at the core of these citizen-police encounters provides a lens to understand how individuals perceived their race or racism as having structured their experiences with police. Furthermore, incorporating lived experiences of police contact provides a novel avenue for critiquing the permanence of certain institutional discourses. The use of counterstories in this research is also buttressed through an intersectional perspective, as participants may highlight how various elements of one's social location may have shaped their encounter with police. The focus on intersectionality structures the qualitative investigation, as the research can assess the various challenges faced by participants and how factors like race, class, and gender may affect their perceptions of their interaction with police.

Quantitative Critical Approaches

A growing body of literature has called for the broader incorporation of quantitative methodological approaches to enumerate racial disparities (Garcia et al., 2018; Lopez et al., 2018b; Sablan, 2019; Strunk, 2024). The quantitative critical approach also allows critical researchers to challenge the perceived objectivity of traditional positivist research. This is accomplished through intersectional analyses and challenging empirical works that neglect race (Garcia et al., 2018; Lopez et al., 2018b; Sablan, 2019; Strunk, 2024). For example, Lopez et al. (2018) found educational achievement gaps when applying an intersectional analysis, whereas traditional positivist research relegated elements of social location as control variables. Samuels-Wortley (2022b) also found evidence of discriminatory policing in charging decisions involving

young offenders, adversely affecting Black youth. Black males were the most likely cohort of young offenders to be charged and least likely to be cautioned (warned) in cases where diversion was appropriate (Samuels-Wortley, 2022b). It is vital to consider using quantitative approaches in critical research because the researcher must have an ontological understanding of power and its structuring effect on social institutions (Garcia et al., 2018; Strunk, 2024). Borrowing from the intersectional approach, quantitative critical methods focus on deconstructing the oppressive realities and intersectional nature of discrimination facing racialized people (Garcia et al., 2018).

While a methodological divide between quantitative and qualitative researchers may exist, the dissertation research incorporates a mixed-methods approach, allowing for a comprehensive empirical investigation that places race at the forefront of analysis (Garcia et al., 2018; Henne & Shah, 2015; Sablan, 2019). Understanding the issue of racism through the lens of CRT allows statistical analyses to account for factors like differential racialization and challenge the discourses of colourblindness (see Lopez et al., 2018b; Skrunk, 2024). Similarly, using a qualitative approach further bolsters the capacity of the research to provide a framework for understanding systemic discrimination in a manner that does not solely reduce it to matters of statistical significance (see Henne & Shah, 2015). While the use of quantitative methods does not insulate the research from criticism by advocacy scholars or institutions of the state (see Tator & Henry, 2006), its use provides the research with a greater capacity to demonstrate the presence of systemic discrimination in interactions with police.

A foundational approach guiding this research is using a quantitative critical approach. While identifying the lived experiences of racism provides an essential avenue for understanding the undocumented practices of tactical units, the scope of the racially disparate nature of this policing doctrine is unknown. Applying a quantitative approach using a critical lens allows for an

enumeration of racial disparities and provides an avenue for statistically identifying discrimination (Garcia et al., 2018; Lopez et al., 2018b; Sablan, 2019). What differentiates this research from other positivist research is that the research adopts an ontological position that acknowledges the influence of racial stratification as an organizing construct in policing. While this research is still affected by the issue of using police-generated data (see Haggerty, 2001), its approach allows for integrating race as a central element of these encounters rather than solely reducing the concept to an explanatory variable.

Chapter 3.2: Theoretical Application

CRT allows for analyzing policing as a source of racial disparity despite the declarations of formal legal equality and anti-discrimination (see Samuels-Wortley, 2021). Monaghan and Molnar (2016) identified the RCMP's commitment to 'bias-free' policing. They found that the race-neutral use of radicalization indicators substantiated the use of surveillance practices that profiled Muslims. This perspective suggests explicit racial animus is removed, and the institution's practices are framed as functioning in a racially neutral or colourblind manner. However, the contemporary manifestations of institutional practices reflect those of previous systems of racial control (Alexander, 2012; Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Durr, 2015; Van Cleve & Mayes, 2015).

Durr (2015) suggested that policing, from its inception to its contemporary manifestations, is rooted in the social control of the racialized Other. Policing, however, is not solely limited to state actors but encompasses a range of strategies for social control. From the end of the *Civil War* to the middle of the 20th century, organized White violence was a defining feature of the mechanism of social control employed against the racialized Other (Alonso, 2004; Gamal, 2016; Garland, 2005). Garland (2005) describes how the use of racial terror lynch mob

violence was legitimated through its characterization as criminal punishment under the broader political framework of racial domination. Alonso (2004) demonstrates how Black gangs in Los Angeles initially formed as a mechanism of community defense against organized White violence that maintained the city's racially segregated neighbourhoods. Organized White violence was glorified in the media, celebrated in local communities, and maintained racial supremacy in political, economic, cultural, and social contexts (Garland, 2005). Cunningham (2012) argued that increased federal prosecutions for Civil Rights violations and high-profile legal investigations effectively dismantled White supremacist groups like the KKK in the late 1960s.

A critical race theorist would argue that the law removed an institution imbued with an explicit racial animus that would be replaced with a race-neutral institution that effectively accomplishes the same goal as its predecessor (Alexander, 2012). Gamal (2016) demonstrated how racialized fears stemming from Civil Rights riots were mobilized to foster support for the proliferation of police militarization. Rather than explicitly using race, the justification for police militarization is "couched in the rhetoric of law and order" (Gamal, 2016, p.993). In the 1960s, the LAPD SWAT team was formed as a paramilitary unit, and its most common initial deployments focused on dismantling the Black Panther Party in South Los Angeles (Coyne & Hall-Blanco, 2016; Gamal, 2016). The justification for the creation of a paramilitary policing unit that emphasized the use of militaristic violence emerged from the perceived threat of race riots and the growing influence of the Black Panther Party (Coyne & Hall-Blanco, 2016; Gamal, 2016).

Gamal (2016) asserted that the use of militarized policing strategies in response to racial justice protests functions to maintain existing racial hierarchies by framing them as a threat to the

existing social structure. Balko (2013) highlighted that the proliferation of militarized policing escalated because of the War on Drugs, a public policy that Alexander (2012) argued functions in a race-neutral manner to dispossess Black people of their civic rights. Using a critical race perspective, the formation of tactical units may be conceptualized as a race-neutral practice that functions as a mechanism for the social control of the threat posed by Black political activism and, in the context of this research, the threat of Black criminality (Coyne & Hall-Blanco, 2016; Gamal, 2016). Cyr et al. (2020) juxtaposed police militarization in Canada to its use in containing racial justice protests across the United States, ultimately arguing that there are greater institutional controls in the Canadian context. The implicit premise of this argument is rooted in the position that police militarization serves a crime control purpose and is not mobilized in the context of racialized social control, substantiating a justification for labeling it as race-neutral.

Through an application of CRT, I argue that tactical units occupy the colourblind position of previous iterations of racialized social control. Extrapolating from the works of Gamal (2016), Garland (2005), and Saberi (2017), police institutions use the threat of criminality as their justification for the expansion of police militarization. The appeals to crime control are used as a means for legitimating the use of violence against the racialized Other. The statistics collected by police serve to justify the expansion of this strategy of governance and obfuscate the true nature of the racialized use of this policing doctrine. The use of an intersectional approach also acknowledges that the adverse consequences of police militarization are not solely limited to racialized people but also extend to marginalized White people. The use of militarized policing practices is justified as a means of controlling the Other, using race and class as signifiers of social difference.

Alternative Theoretical Approaches

Kraska (1999) identified the distinction between advocacy and critical scholarship in police militarization research. Advocacy scholarship is primarily rooted in substantiating police practices, whereas critical scholarship is premised on challenging policing as an institution of social harm. Walby (2022) also demonstrated a similar trend in Canadian research, as the literature on police militarization is divided between critical and 'evidence-based' scholarship. The moniker of 'evidence-based' scholarship is imbued with scientific objectivity. Samuels-Wortley (2022a) clearly articulated how this research privileges the police worldview by restricting the inclusion of critical perspectives, as her research on police bias training was effectively demolished by two of the leading practitioners in this area. I further engage with evidence-based policing in the following chapter.

The evidence-based policing research would argue that the tactical unit does not function as a colourblind form of racial control, as evidenced by White people also being the subject of an encounter. Similarly, this brand scholarship would draw attention to the nature of the encounter with police (see Jenkins et al., 2021ab) to challenge claims of discriminatory intent. I acknowledge there is merit in considering the context of the encounter as there are particular policing situations, like hostage-taking and active shooter incidents, that necessitate the need for a militarized response.

There are two counterarguments to what is, in essence, an overly simplistic argument to negate the presence of systemic discrimination. The focus is not entirely rooted in the actor's race but premised on Whiteness's normative position (Bhopal, 2023; Delgado & Shaw, 1997; Henne & Shah, 2015; Webster, 2008). The White person engaging in a criminal act and subject to an encounter with the tactical unit could reasonably be conceived as no longer occupying the

normative position of ‘White’ (Linnemann & Wall, 2013; Smith, 2014; Webster, 2008). The use of an intersectional approach demonstrates that various factors, like class or criminality, distinguish marginalized White people from the hegemonic White position. Furthermore, the question of whether White people also experience an adverse effect of a policy or practice does not equate to the absence of systemic discrimination. Owusu-Bempah and Luscombe (2021) demonstrated that White people are also arrested for cannabis possession, but this does not challenge the evidence illustrating the racially discriminatory policing of drug laws disproportionately impacting Black and Indigenous peoples.

Evidence-based policing theorists could also argue that rational choice theories (RCT) provide a competing explanation for understanding the application of force. The central assumptions of RCT suggest that individuals, weighing the costs and benefits of their actions, make decisions that maximize utility (Becker, 1968; Ramey & Steidley, 2018). RCT is most applied in criminological research to explain deviance (see Thomas et al., 2022). However, this perspective also has a surface-level utility when engaging with officer decisions to employ force. Cyr (2016) correctly indicated that s.25(1) of the *Criminal Code* provides police the lawful authority to apply reasonable force. While the issue of reasonableness and interpretations thereof are considered in the sociolegal literature on police violence (see Watson, 2023), officers face several risks stemming from their application of force.

Police officers are faced with dynamic and volatile incidents that may rapidly deteriorate; officers may be subject to civil lawsuits or criminal proceedings based on their application of force, may be subject to police oversight investigations, and may face reputational risk for their use of force via bystander recording (Brown, 2016; Cyr, 2016; Wortley et al., 2020). For example, Brown (2016) demonstrated how the threat of ‘going viral’ or being recorded by

members of the public changes the visibility of policing and affects the decision-making processes of officers to apply force. The work of Brown (2016) implicitly suggested that officers are aware of the risks associated with the public documentation of force and will adjust accordingly. While rational choice theory has been used to explain police decisions to acquire militarized equipment (see Ramey & Steidley, 2018), it may also be used to understand police use of force when considering the costs officers must weigh when engaging in their decision-making processes.

The rational choice perspective posits that officers will apply the most efficacious means to resolving incidents while limiting the potential consequences of more aggressive or physical force applications. Restricting the use of force limits the capacity of police oversight investigations to assess the reasonableness of officer conduct, as these investigations are often triggered when police-citizen interaction leads to serious injury, death, or an allegation of sexual assault (Wortley et al., 2020). The SIU, however, cannot invoke its mandate for firearms pointing. As a result, the use of rational choice theory would suggest that officers engage in firearms pointing as a default use of force option as (a) they are responding to high-risk incidents where they are not aware of what, if any, weapons a subject may possess (see Jenkins et al., 2021ab), (b) the pointing of firearms while necessitating the completion of a *Use of Force Report*, does not result in any external investigations or risk of legal sanction, and (c) the threat of a firearm discharge via pointing, in theory, would convince a rational criminal actor to comply with police demands limiting the application of more invasive kinds of use of force. While RCT may explain officers' reflexive processes when exercising their agency, the broader sociocultural context is omitted from the analysis.

While rational choice perspectives may provide a theoretical explanation for the relevant situational decision-making processes weighed by officers in these encounters, the approach fails to acknowledge the influence of power. For example, the context in which individuals encounter police is the byproduct of various systemic factors that shape police decision-making processes (Fitzgerald & Carrington, 2011; Owusu-Bempah & Luscombe, 2021; Samuels-Wortley, 2022b). Critical race perspectives suggest the lack of adequate oversight for police firearms pointing is legitimated through (a) a cultural fear of the racial Other (see Tator & Henry, 2006) and (b) a quasi-criminal punishment meted out by agents of the state against an actor viewed as a threat to the moral fabric of society (see Garland, 1996, 2005). The use of firearms pointing in these force incidents is regarded as a legitimate means of violence that does not require systematic scrutiny. The critical race perspective argues that this application of violence is not perceived as an issue that is deserving of moral or political reform as a result of the social location of the target of state violence. This broader perspective is supported by a range of empirical evidence highlighting the influence of social location and state response to criminality (Brookman et al., 2022; Carmichael & Burgos, 2012; Chamlin, 1989; Carmichael & Kent, 2015; Eitle & Taylor, 2008; Jackson & Carroll, 1981; Jacobs, 1979; Jacobs & Carmichael, 2004; Kane et al., 2013; King & Wheelock, 2007; Liska et al., 1981; Welch, 2016).

For example, Liska et al. (1981), in an analysis of 109 police departments, found that increases in the non-White population predicted increases in the size of police services. Carmichael and Kent (2015) demonstrated that lethal police action in Canada's 39 largest cities is associated with the size of the ethnic minority population. Likewise, King and Wheelock (2007) found that individual perceptions of the Black population as a threat to the position of Whites predicted attitudes supporting more punitive punishments against Blacks. Similarly,

Berdejo (2018) demonstrated that race is used as a proxy for criminality and risk when there is no available information to indicate the presence of criminal history. Furthermore, there is also an extensive collection of Canadian quantitative research (see Fitzgerald & Carrington, 2011; Owusu-Bempah et al., 2023; Samuels-Wortley, 2022b; Wortley & Owusu-Bempah, 2009,2011; Wortley et al., 2020) that provided statistical evidence of racial inequalities and disparities. The research in this area challenges the assertion that an economic calculation solely influences police decision-making. Critical race perspectives allow a more nuanced understanding of how asymmetric power shapes citizen-police encounters and legitimizes the use of violence and other coercive strategies against groups regarded as the Other.

Critical perspectives further highlight another vital issue in the analysis of police data. The data recording mechanism is an institutional document that privileges the police worldview and provides statistical justifications for the application of force. The data points on the form are institutional constructs that legitimize state violence. For example, officers must select a reason for force deployment (Appendix A). Every application of force requires a justification, but there is no assessment of whether the force deployed is justifiable.

Similarly, the presence of a weapon and its location are also flexible categories. Walby (2022) articulated that almost all homes have objects that could reasonably be construed as weapons. The flexibility of weapon location is outlined by three distinct categories: weapon in hand, concealed in person, and at hand (Appendix A). The concealed weapon category offers a post-hoc justification for applying force, as it is unknown if the officers knew of this weapon beforehand. The at-hand designation maintains the most interpretive flexibility, as no definition exists for what is considered ‘at-hand’ (Appendix A). However, the presence of a weapon at hand justifies the application of force. The arbitrary collection and analysis of statistics ignore that

officers may misrepresent information on reporting mechanisms to legitimate their actions (see Hristova, 2024). The statistics collected on this form are the product of an institutional context that seeks statistical evidence to justify its governance structures (see Haggerty, 2001).

A critical race perspective engages with the various issues stemming from the use of police statistics and does not prioritize the police worldview. It provides an interrogation of how police violence is legitimated using statistics and other institutional discourses. This theoretical perspective engages with the asymmetrical distribution of power, the hierarchical nature of social relations, and how these are structured by race, gender, class, and other elements of social location (Garcia et al., 2018; Hill Collins, 2019).

Conclusion

The use of critical race perspectives provides an opportunity to interrogate the intersections between race and policing further, examining both the larger macro-level context in which police practices operate (see Samuels-Wortley, 2021; Tator & Henry, 2006; Wortley et al., 2020) and the meaning drawn from these encounters by those who have lived through them (see Greene et al., 2021; Laming, 2023; Urbanik & Greene, 2020). The application of a critical race perspective provides an opportunity to engage in a statistical analysis of racial disproportionality and the use of inferential statistics to isolate the effects of race (see Wortley et al., 2020), but also accounts for how individuals perceive and experience racism from a more subjective perspective (see Laming, 2023). A mixed methods approach allows for a statistical enumeration of disparate racial outcomes while avoiding the issues of displacing racialized people's lived experiences in the context of knowledge production (Garcia et al., 2018; Henne & Shah, 2015; Lopez et al., 2018b; Sablan, 2019; Skrunk, 2024).

This chapter provides a more sophisticated understanding of race, as it offers a substantive theoretical justification for analyzing the experiences of marginalized White and racialized people (Samuels-Wortley, 2021; Smith, 2014; Webb, 2019; Webster, 2008). This approach provides an avenue for understanding how individuals perceive their social location elements as relevant to their interaction with the police. Using a critical approach also allows for an interrogation of how statistics are a social accomplishment within the broader political context of institutions (see Haggerty, 2001). What is unique about using a critical race perspective is that it allows for a critical interrogation of the colourblind nature of tactical units, considering that policing in Canada relies on the institutional narrative that its practices are not racially discriminatory (see Samuels-Wortley, 2021; Tator & Henry, 2006).

Chapter 4: Methodological Overview of Qualitative Research

Introduction

Solely using quantitative approaches to study issues of race and ethnicity provides no expansive means for understanding how racism is experienced or how individuals understand the role race may have played in their social interactions (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Similarly, using quantitative approaches reduces complex sociological phenomena to questions of statistical significance and is embedded with various ontological biases (Garcia et al., 2018; Henne & Shah, 2015; Lopez et al., 2018). Qualitative methodological approaches allow researchers to document individuals' interactional experiences and provide novel avenues for engaging in research (Brent & Kraska, 2010; Bryman & Bell, 2019; Palys & Atchison, 2014). The use of a qualitative approach, comprised of semi-structured interviews, allows for the incorporation of counterstories that amplify the experiences of research participants and a nuanced understanding of systemic discrimination and perceptions of racism (Samuels-Wortley, 2021).

This research investigates the lived experiences of individuals who involuntarily encountered a tactical unit to understand the nature and the scope of the consequences stemming from this interaction. Qualitative research methods allow the researcher to understand the nuances of these encounters and identify thematic issues that may not have been thoroughly considered in the literature (Brent & Kraska, 2010; Bryman & Bell, 2019; Palys & Atchison, 2014). Individuals who encounter tactical units are regarded as a paradigmatic example of a hard-to-reach population, and research with this population is unlikely to yield a large enough sample size to generate meaningful statistical analyses (Urbanik & Greene, 2020). However, the insights they can provide into their experience may challenge the dominant narrative of militarized policing advanced by the evidence-based policing community and the police themselves (Samuels-Wortley, 2022a; Walby, 2021, 2022).

Chapter 4.1 explores different approaches for researching hidden populations, including the techniques used to sample these groups and strategies for navigating gatekeepers. This section of the chapter lays the foundation for the methodological framework used in this research and outlines the social location of the researcher. Chapter 4.2 discusses the ethical precautions adopted concerning this research, addressing the various strategies employed to mitigate the risks facing participants. Chapter 4.3 offers an overview of the multipronged sampling method used in this research and outlines its capacity to address limitations stemming from the sole use of a singular sampling method. Chapter 4.4 provides a comprehensive overview of the data collection process. It details the development and structure of the interview schedule, its collection, and the process for recording data. The final section, Chapter 4.5, provides an overview of the analytic strategy guiding the data analysis using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis. The broader implications of the trends in the literature are outlined throughout the chapter, reinforcing the robustness of the methodological approach employed in this research.

Chapter 4.1: Key Methodological Considerations

The Researcher as the 'Outsider'

Identifying the location of the researcher relative to their participants allows for a critical engagement of how one's positionality structures the process of knowledge construction while drawing attention to reflexivity (Bonner & Tolhurst, 2002; Braun & Clarke, 2013; Breen, 2007; Bridges, 2001; Crean, 2018; McRae, 2007; Wiggington & Setchell, 2016). Central to this discussion is the construction of the researcher as an *insider*, one who shares a set of attributes with the participants in the study, or the *outsider*, who does not share the social location of participants in the research (Bonner & Tolhurst, 2002; Breen, 2007; Bridges, 2001; Crean, 2018; McRae, 2007; Wiggington & Setchell, 2016). The researcher's position is influenced by various

intersectional factors, like social class, gender, sexuality, education level, lived experience, political and cultural values, and religion, among other markers (Breen, 2007; Crean, 2018; McRae, 2007). Bonner and Tolhurst (2002) argued that the insider has a level of relational intimacy with participants or may have lived experiences of the phenomenon being investigated. Conversely, the outsider is often criticized for engaging in exploitative research, disempowering the narratives of those with lived experiences, and being unable to fully understand the intricacies of the issues investigated (Breen, 2007; Bridges, 2001). The insider, however, may assume participants have universal experiences akin to their own or have assumptions about the nature of the issue affecting the analysis of the phenomena (Breen, 2007; Bridges, 2001). Pitman (2002) engaged in insider research and inadvertently outed the sexual orientation of one of their participants, assuming that they were also as open about their sexual orientation as the researcher.

Breen (2007) suggests that the insider/outsider orientation dichotomy is overly simplistic, and the location of the researchers should be viewed as one on a continuum rather than predefined binary categories. The assertion that outsider research is inherently exploitative is subject to criticism. Brynn and Gleen (2024) and Samuels-Wortley (2022a) demonstrate the systemic barriers in knowledge construction and how they limit the capacity of those with different social locations to conduct research. Challenging the dichotomous nature of the position of the researcher acknowledges that outsiders also have the capacity to produce research that may draw attention to issues facing marginalized groups but further reinforces the need for these researchers to attune themselves to the cultural context(s) of the population they are researching and acknowledge their own power as a process of deconstructing the inherently asymmetrical nature of knowledge production.

As a former civilian employee and volunteer of a large municipal police service, I attended the tactical unit's base of operations several times. I have seen how flashbangs work at close range, discussed tactics with officers, and have fired a range of lethal and non-lethal weapons. While acknowledging the inherent irony of this position, I am a critical criminologist and actively oppose the expansion of the coercive and violent nature of militarized policing. I am a first-generation Canadian citizen, was raised in a working-class family, have experienced varying degrees of poverty during my teenage years, and have been subject to racism and discrimination during my various vocational pursuits in policing and academia. While some elements of my positionality firmly entrench me as an outsider, others afford me the partial status of an insider. Using Breen's (2007) distinction of a continuum, I engage in this research with substantial reflexivity and respect for the lived experiences of those who encounter the police in adversarial circumstances. Central to this approach is an acceptance that not every participant will experience their encounter in the same way or have similar perspectives on the police.

Sampling Hidden Populations

Hard-to-reach or *hidden populations* refer to cohorts that are traditionally difficult for researchers to access due to the nature of group membership relying on a specific lived experience (Palys & Atchison, 2014). Examples of hidden populations include instances where acknowledging membership in the cohort may be threatening or stigmatizing, a gatekeeper controls access to the sample, there is no known sampling frame from which participants can be drawn, participants may have a distrust of researchers, or they are not socially proximal to researchers (Abrams, 2010; Benoit et al., 2005; Ellard-Gray et al., 2015; Greene et al., 2021; Urbanik & Greene, 2020). Individuals who have encountered tactical units should be regarded as a hidden population as (1) they may be involved in criminal or illicit activities or subcultures, (2)

individuals may not be aware of the research as a result of the social distance between the researcher and the subject, (3) potential participants may be before the courts or held in custody, (4) some participants may have a mistrust of researchers, (5) there exists no sampling frame to recruit potential participants from, (6) the nature of the interaction with the tactical unit may be stigmatizing, (7) individuals may not participate in the research as a result of the emotionally distressing nature of their interaction, and (8) some may fear the prospect of retaliation by police or other elements of the justice system (Abrams, 2010; Greene et al., 2021; Pawelz, 2018; Shaghaghi et al., 2011; Umamaheswar, 2018; Urbanik & Greene, 2020).

In their work on inner-city police raids, Urbanik and Greene (2020) and Greene et al. (2021) relied on their personal and existing relationships in Regent Park and St. Jamestown to generate a sample of participants. I do not have any pre-existing relationships with individuals or gatekeepers that can afford me access to this sample. Acknowledging the challenges stemming from the researcher's position facilitates an overview of the kinds of strategies that researchers often deploy to gain access to hard-to-reach populations and demonstrates how a relative *outsider* may gain access to a cohort of this nature.

The literature around involuntary citizen police encounters largely relies on purposive sampling methods (see Brunson, 2007; Brunson & Miller, 2006ab; Laming, 2023; Samuels-Wortley, 2021). One of the key strategies used to generate a sample is snowball sampling, in which participants refer others in their social network to the researcher for potential recruitment (Faugier & Sargeant, 1997; Laming, 2023; Pawelz, 2018). While this sampling method offers a researcher the capacity to recruit from participants' social networks, Chenane and Hammond (2022) argued that snowball sampling can produce biased results as there may be a general level of homogeneity among the sample. Potential similarities in the lived experiences may result from

other contextual factors that link participants together, like their geographic or socioeconomic proximity, effectively narrowing the understanding of the phenomenon (Chenane & Hammond, 2022). While snowball sampling does present its limitations, Faugier and Sargeant (1997) advocate for its uses as it provides a basis for recruiting when no suitable alternative may exist.

The literature suggests that researchers have more frequently relied on the use of social media platforms to recruit potential participants or engage in targeted advertising (Archer-Kuhn et al., 2022; Baltar & Brunet, 2012; Chenane & Hammond, 2022; Kayrouz et al., 2016). This approach generates greater involvement as potential participants have access to accounts or pages outlining the purpose of the study and may have direct access to researchers. Social media recruitment also provides a range of mechanisms to establish contact with and recruit participants traditionally unavailable to the researcher. For example, Kayrouz et al. (2016) demonstrated that recruitment through Facebook is 2.5 times faster than traditional recruiting strategies. While the literature highlights certain benefits of social media recruitment, it is essential to note that not all parties can access social media or be easily identifiable as potential participants.

Another potential solution to recruiting hard-to-reach participants is to access them through gatekeeper organizations (Abrams, 2010; Laming, 2023; Pawelz, 2018; Umamaheswar, 2018). This approach generally allows the researcher to access a hard-to-reach cohort through an intermediary who routinely engages with the target population in some capacity. For example, Laming (2023) recruited participants in his study by disseminating recruitment materials to gatekeeper organizations like legal clinics that provided services to individuals in contact with the justice system. The primary issue with gatekeeper organizations stems from the fact that they present difficulties for researchers aiming to navigate their institutional context, as these

organizations may have broader goals they wish to pursue through the research and allow access to participants on this basis (Jeffords, 2007; Umamaheswar, 2018; Yeager, 2008). The approaches identified in the literature suggest that various sampling strategies may be applied to recruit participants from a hidden population, and a multifaceted approach is needed.

Navigating the Gatekeeper

The role of the gatekeeper and their implications on social sciences research has been a topic of inquiry for decades. Broadhead and Rist (1976) argued that the role of the gatekeeper adversely influences the objectivity of research, as these actors limit access to data, respondents, and research sites and restrict the scope of analysis and what information is published. The literature on gatekeepers demonstrates that state institutions, like the police, use their power in controlling access to research sites, participants, and data as a mechanism for ensuring the institution's interests are maintained (Broadhead & Rist, 1976; Haggerty, 2004; Jeffords, 2007; Samuels-Wortley, 2022a; Trulson et al., 2004; Umamaheswar, 2018; Walby, 2022; Yeager, 2008). The role of the gatekeeper in facilitating or hindering research is readily apparent in research involving institutions within the criminal justice system. Jeffords (2007) indicated that state actors assess research, in part, on its utility to the goals of the gatekeeper institution and provide access to those researchers who possess similar goals as the institution. Reputational risk management may explain the seemingly rational motivations for determining what researchers receive access and who is excluded. Reputational risk management broadly refers to the notion that organizations will not engage in any activities that subject them to reputational harm (Solarz, 2018). The role of the gatekeeper in preventing access to research is further illustrated in the Canadian policing research sphere.

Emerging literature highlights concerns with a growing field of Canadian policing research, which refers to itself as *evidence-based policing* (EBP) (Samuels-Wortley, 2022a; Walby, 2021, 2022). Walby (2021, 2022) argued that EBP research is structured to privilege the police worldview because of the power institutional actors wield in granting access to research sites and approving the kinds of research conducted under their auspices. Samuels-Wortley (2022a) asserted that EBP silences racialized voices and systematically operates to thwart access for researchers critical of police. Samuels-Wortley (2022a) provided an account demonstrating how two of the primary practitioners of EBP in Canada actively undermined her research into anti-bias training, resulting in the loss of a substantial amount of data. One EBP researcher claimed, "I am very protective of the agencies we work with" (Samuels-Wortley, 2022a, p.74). Samuels-Wortley indicated losing all access to the police service and the data she collected and documented the array of institutional barriers she faced as a Black female scholar attempting to navigate the intricacies of this faction of policing researchers. Haggerty (2004) also highlighted how police services heavily restrict access to the organization and use their role as gatekeepers to insulate themselves from external criticism. Extrapolating from Solarz (2018), gatekeeping amounts to a mechanism of reputational risk management to ensure that information that could potentially harm the organization is not released.

The issues stemming from navigating gatekeepers also apply to non-state actors, like not-for-profit organizations and various community-based service providers. Umamaheswar (2018) argued that accessing respondents from a community organization was more difficult than accessing incarcerated individuals based on her work in a three-site study. Umamaheswar (2018) indicated that the officials at the community organization were responsible for approving the research, its staff arranged access to its clients, and the control of information exercised by the

gatekeeper organization curtailed the independence of the research. While community organizations are not generally criticized for the issue of gatekeeping in criminal justice research, similar issues of the asymmetrical power between the researcher and the gatekeeper emerge. Jeffords (2007) asserted that considerations like who the researcher is, the subject matter explored, and the impact of the research on the institution are all weighed when gatekeepers make decisions on access. Extrapolating from Jeffords (2007) and using Umamaheswar's (2018) experience, it is assumed that non-state actors would engage in a similar process of screening potential research partnerships and providing access to those with similar goals and values. As Haggerty (2004) indicated, some gatekeepers rely on formalized research requirements necessitating legal agreements outlining the terms of access and dissemination of information. Regardless of the motivations, these agreements present a potential conflict of interest.

I did not sample any participants from organizations or sources that sought formal research agreements. Instead, I sought grassroots organizations that could disseminate information about the study to their clientele or service user base, whether through traditional in-person interactions or social media. The organizations I formed partnerships with did not require any review of the findings, nor were they involved in sampling participants. This approach ensured that the gatekeeper could not influence the findings, data collection, or results, bypassing many challenges associated with navigating gatekeepers. Researchers looking to access gatekeeper organizations should consider this approach, as more formally entrenched community organizations may wield powers like state actors (Umamaheswar, 2018). The contributions in this section also provide a unique theoretical perspective to examine how gatekeepers make utilitarian decisions premised on reducing risk (Solarz, 2018). The gatekeeper is a rational actor who partners with researchers, allowing the organization to pursue its goals and minimize risk.

Debates Surrounding Interviewing and Participant Believability

The use of self-report data, whether through interviews or structured surveys, has been the subject of methodological inquiry and critique in sociological research for decades. Jerolmack and Khan (2014ab) draw attention to what they coin as an *attitudinal fallacy,* where researchers erroneously infer participant behaviour from their verbal accounts. The foundation of this critique rests in the literature exploring attitude-behaviour consistency, the idea that an individual's responses in a particular social context are unrelated or inconsistent with their behaviour (Gross & Niman, 1975; Jerolmack & Khan, 2014). Jerolmack and Khan (2014) argue that ethnographic research provides the basis for investigating attitude-behavioural inconsistencies, whereas interviewing largely ignores this issue. This critique of methodological approaches employing interviews posits that researchers using these accounts must either (a) indicate that their analysis is not premised on how people behave but how they think they behave or (b) demonstrate that the accounts predict future observed behaviours. The challenge for qualitative researchers is that they must estimate how and to what extent their data is inaccurate (Miller et al., 2001; Plummer et al., 2004). The criticism of interviews and self-report surveys is that respondents may exaggerate or misrepresent their accounts, which leads to a broader question investigating the believability of respondent accounts.

Historical and contemporary qualitative research has routinely documented issues associated with attitude-behaviour consistency. As Jerolmack and Khan (2014) note, Warriner (1958) analyzed the issue of morality in a small Kansas town and found that community members publicly condemned alcohol consumption but consumed it in their private lives. Dean (1958) found that factory workers exaggerated their participation in union activities and did not respond to the question inquiring about their participation in union activities but responded to the perceived question of how often they pictured themselves participating in union activities. Miller

et al. (2001) found a gendered exaggeration of wealth in their study of family planning in Malawi, where women and men provide exaggerated (and competing) accounts of their family wealth. Interpreting respondent narratives and accounts is difficult as the responses are abstracted from the social context in which they occur and assume a performative quality where the researcher cannot verify participant narratives (Dean & Whyte, 1958; Jerolmack & Khan, 2014; Liebow, 1967). While these critiques of interview-based methodologies raise compelling methodological questions, the arguments supporting the use of interviewing methodologies must also be considered.

While Jerolmack and Khan (2014) argue that ethnographic methodologies are preferred to understand the inconsistencies between attitude and behaviour, observation is not always feasible or suited to the research. Vaisey (2014) indicated that concerns surrounding the accuracy of self-reported data are overstated and neglect an important dimension of social sciences research. Interviewing may be the most appropriate qualitative methodology when investigating lived experiences surrounding sensitive research topics or when the research is not concerned with future actions or explaining behaviours (Lamont & Swindler, 2014; Vaisey, 2014). The claim that a low correlation between attitudes and behaviours disqualifies interviewing research is inherently problematic, as this approach disregards the myriad of intervening factors that may contribute to this issue (Cerulo, 2014; DiMaggio, 2014; Vaisey, 2014). For example, DiMaggio (2014) indicates that participant behaviours may be shaped by their peers' preferences when individuals are not particularly passionate or invested in an issue. Qualitative interviewing is employed to understand how individuals interpret some aspects of their lived experience. Interviewing allows the researcher to understand and engage with theoretically driven questions, which rely on participants' perceptions or interpretations of their lived experiences. This brief

summation of the literature offers an overview of some issues surrounding qualitative interviews and provides an avenue for interrogating this issue in the context of this dissertation research.

Each methodological approach possesses inherent strengths and limitations. Lamont and Swidler (2014) argue that self-consciousness of the weaknesses of a particular methodological approach allows the researcher to engage or otherwise compensate for important limitations. Similarly, Dean and Whyte (1958) argue that researchers should employ various mechanisms to triangulate participant responses. The use of social media sampling provided me with the capacity to employ these 'validity checks' in my interviewing. For example, participants recruited through internet-based platforms often had filmed interactions of their encounters with the tactical unit. In their responses to questions probing the incident, there were no observed instances where participants introduced accounts or narratives that conflicted with their recorded experiences with the tactical unit. The heterogeneity of responses also mitigates the claim that participant accounts should be dismissed or otherwise characterized as nefariously motivated when responding to interview prompts. For example, a small proportion of the sample made theft allegations directed against the police, allegations of assault and harassing behaviour were not universal, and the accounts of use of force were consistent with policing practice (i.e. pointing of firearms, use of flashbangs, execution of warrants at particular times of day).

The debate about participant believability also presents a theoretical caveat that requires further interrogation. The dismissal of interview accounts exemplifies positivist biases that reproduce racial hierarchies in research as they implicitly disqualify or challenge the accounts of racialized people (Brynn & Gleen, 2024). Jerolmack and Khan's (2014) focus on ethnographic research places an onus on the capacity of the researcher to interpret the social dynamics of participants' lived experiences. This undermines the epistemological focus on counterstories in

critical race research. Framing interviews as performative narratives that are subject to exaggeration and misrepresentation dispossesses marginalized cohorts of the mechanism they possess to communicate their experiences of state harm and implicitly reinforces their position as the 'other'. Issues of racial discrimination and state harm are constructed to observable acts rather than the more nuanced and complex social interactional dynamic experiences. Dismissing, or otherwise challenging, the accounts of participants also feeds into the broader discourse of reverse discrimination (see Tator & Henry, 2006), in which institutional actors argue that the police are victims of politically motivated researchers and journalists. Dismissing the lived experiences of individuals in contact with elements of the legal system further perpetuates the narrative that state institutions are, by default, truthful and limits the capacity of critical research to interrogate how the production of 'truth' is the result of institutional practices and socially constructed rather than an objective social fact.

This research is informed by previous empirical works investigating direct and vicarious encounters with police. As directed by Jarolmack and Khan (2014), the use of observational research is not feasible in this context as the researcher could not experience police raids alongside the participants. As such, interviewing is an appropriate methodological approach that allows for data collection concerning the research questions posed. Furthermore, the concerns surrounding participant believability are also mitigated by the premise that the results of this research are validated by a large body of existing research that reaches similar conclusions about interactions with police (see Brunson, 2007; Greene et al., 2022; Greene et al., 2021; Laming, 2023; Urbanik & Greene, 2020).

Chapter 4.2: Ethical Precautions

This section provides an overview of the numerous ethical precautions used to mitigate risks facing participants. This research was reviewed and approved by the University of Waterloo's research ethics board (REB) (#44580). A general summation of some of the more common ethical precautions is outlined before engaging with some of the emergent issues in this research. Each participant was provided a copy of the informed consent form (Appendix C) before the interview. Participants engaging in virtual or telephone-based interviews were provided with this information via email, and those engaging in in-person interviews were provided the consent form before the interview. Regardless of how the informed consent form was delivered to participants, the researcher read the contents of the consent form to ensure participants were aware of their rights, how their data was being used for the research, the risks associated with the study, how these risks were being mitigated, the responsibilities of the researcher, and the remuneration they would receive prior to the interview process.

In consultations with various community organizations, a decision was made to provide each participant with a $40 gift card to a retailer of the participant's choosing. These elements of the research are generally consistent with research in the field (see Bryman & Bell, 2019; Palys & Atchison, 2014). Several distinct ethical precautions were employed concerning the elevated risks facing participants. Factors like documenting consent, participant confidentiality, mitigating psychological or emotional distress, and the threat of production orders are considered in greater detail in this chapter.

Documenting Consent and Mitigating Risks for Criminally Involved Participants

Qualitative researchers have consistently argued that the current framework of research ethics governance places too great an emphasis on the use of legalistic consent forms that require

participants' signatures (de Vries et al., 2004; Ells & Gutfreund, 2006; Van den Hoonard & Tolich, 2014). The central critique against the use of conventional approaches to securing consent, informed by the biomedical sciences, is that these approaches may damage rapport, be culturally inappropriate, and participants engaged in illegal or deviant activities may not be willing to sign forms that identify their participation in said activities (Jacob & Riles, 2007; Librett & Perrone, 2010; Van den Hoonard &Van den Hoonard, 2013). As identified by Greene et al. (2021) and Urbanik and Greene (2020), some research participants who have experienced adversarial encounters with the police may be involved in criminal activities. As a result, the statements made by research participants, especially those related to illegal activities, are of interest to law enforcement and prosecutors (Palys & Lowman, 2012).

Considering these arguments, a verbal consent log was employed rather than traditional signed informed consent forms. This strategy for documenting consent was approved by the University of Waterloo's REB, and is consistent with their framework for collecting consent. The reason for using a verbal consent form stems from the risks faced by participants still involved in criminal activities. If these parties are apprehended by police and their properties are searched, resulting in them finding a signed consent form, law enforcement entities would have knowledge of the participant's participation in the study and may use a production order for the researcher's notes (Palys & Lowman, 2012). In contrast, merely having an unsigned copy of the consent form, as participants were provided in this research, does not indicate or imply participation. It would be reasonable to assume that the participants did not consent to participate in the study, as they could have opted not to participate after reading the document. The use of verbal consent and its documentation on a standardized form by the researcher further promotes the confidentiality of participants and minimizes the risk of a production order.

Minimizing the Threat of Production Orders

The threat of a production order was among the key issues the REB and the researcher considered during the ethics approval process. Engaging in research with participants who may have knowledge of or involvement in criminal activities presents a unique set of complications for researchers. The *Boston Tapes* refer to an oral history project collected to recount the roles of paramilitaries engaged in *The Troubles* in Northern Ireland (Palys & Lowman, 2012). On these tapes, one of the research participants highlighted his role in the murder of a suspected informant, and this admission to a murder became the central focus of a production order for the researchers' notes (Palys & Lowman, 2012). The use of verbal consent eliminates the need for the researcher to provide documentation to the participant, which may be seized by authorities and used as evidence to support the use of a production order for the researcher's notes. Similarly, a decision was made not to record participants' responses and to rely on handwritten notes. The detailed research notes were transcribed onto an encrypted file, anonymized, and stored on an external hard drive in a secure location. Furthermore, the original notes were destroyed following their transcription. Finally, the screening criteria were also developed to mitigate the risk of a production order. Participants were asked if the event they were going to discuss was the subject of an ongoing prosecution relevant to the police interaction they would discuss in the interview or if they knew themselves to be under investigation by the police for any matter. The screening criteria are further outlined in Chapter 4.3.

These measures were employed to ensure that the matter discussed in the interview had run its course through the legal system, and the absence of a known police investigation limits the potential of electronic or physical surveillance (Pawelz, 2018). Finally, the researcher deleted all communications, including phone records and emails, between themselves and the participant

to mitigate the threat of a production order for the researcher's communications. The work of Palys and Lowman (2012) provides a basis for establishing an ethical framework that reduces the potential risks associated with judicial orders and requests for data by state actors.

Participant Confidentiality

Several measures were taken to ensure the anonymity of the participants. Each participant is provided a pseudonym consistent with the qualitative research assessing involuntary citizen encounters with police (Brunson, 2007; Greene et al., 2021; Laming, 2023; Urbanik & Greene, 2020). While this approach is generally consistent across the literature, additional steps are taken to ensure what Tolich (2004) refers to as the internal confidentiality of the research. Internal confidentiality relates to the notion that an individual may be identifiable to those with pre-existing knowledge of the participant or their circumstances (Tolich, 2004). The primary issue in this research is that the specificity of the incident or encounter with police may make a participant identifiable to actors in the criminal justice system with knowledge of the incident or to other parties, like family members, who did not participate in the research (Tolich, 2004). To bolster the internal confidentiality of the research findings, this dissertation intentionally omits or redacts specific locations, times, cities, and municipalities, the relationship between the participants and their family members, some detailed specifics of the incident, and other forms of information that may reveal the identity of a participant.

Mitigating Psychological Risks

Involuntary encounters with the police, whether they are directly or vicariously experienced, have a uniquely traumatic potential (Aymer, 2016; Briere & Runtz, 2023; Bryant-Davis et al., 2017; Gillikin et al., 2016; Hawkins, 2022; Lipscomb, 2020; Klein & Lopez, 2022; Lopez et al., 2018). Each of these challenges may emerge in the context of their semi-structured

interview as the individual is asked to recount their experience and the sociolegal, socioeconomic, and interpersonal consequences associated with their encounter with police. Some of the strategies used to mitigate the potential for psychological harm include reminding the participant of the voluntary nature of the interview, reminding the participant that they should only answer what they feel comfortable disclosing, allowing the participant to take breaks when needed, terminating the interview when they wish to do so, and providing the research participant with a realistic expectation of the potential harms involved in the study (Bryman & Bell, 2019; Palys & Atchison, 2014). Each research participant also received a series of local free-to-access mental health supports they can utilize following the interview if they feel any emotional or psychological distress (Bryman & Bell, 2019; Palys & Atchison, 2014). These ethical protections and strategies are essential as they provide the research participants with a clear understanding of their rights and after-care support in case they require them.

Chapter 4.3: Sampling Method

Criterion Sampling

This research used purposive sampling methods as individuals with adversarial encounters with the police are a paradigmatic example of a hidden population (Greene et al., 2021; Urbanik & Greene, 2020). The research investigated the experiences of individuals with direct or vicarious experiences of encounters with the tactical unit, which is an approach consistent in involuntary encounter research (Brunson, 2007; Laming, 2023). Direct encounters are those immediately experienced by the individual, whereas vicarious encounters are those observed or experienced through a family member or other party in their social network (Brunson, 2007; Laming, 2023). Criterion sampling was also employed in this research. The criteria used to establish eligibility for the research was that (a) the participant had to have

experienced an encounter with a police tactical unit, (b) the participant had to be 18 years of age or older to participate, (c) were able to communicate with the researcher in English, (d) had no impairments affecting their ability to understand the contents of the informed consent form, (e) the matter they are discussing with the researcher is not the subject of an active court case, and (f) the participant does not know themselves to be under police investigation for any matter.

There were no participants deemed ineligible for participation. The criterion that produced the most difficulty was determining whether the participant had encountered a police tactical unit, but this was a semantic issue. Many of the participants referred to these units as 'SWAT teams' when initially asked about their encounter and, as a result, were deemed eligible for participation. One participant was unaware of the terminology and was asked to describe the officers they encountered. The participant indicated that the officers who raided her home were wearing helmets, carrying guns with red lights (lasers), dressed in grey, and looked like soldiers. Each of these indicators is consistent with the equipment used by tactical units (see Sidhu, 2024), and the researcher determined that the participant met the criteria for having encountered a tactical unit. The specific criteria employed in this research ensured the researcher interviewed participants who have encountered a tactical unit, not other policing units, and satisfied the ethical precautions previously outlined.

Social Media Sampling

The use of social media platforms proved beneficial to the research and relied on two distinct approaches. The first approach was premised on distributing recruitment posters through the social media accounts of several prominent academics and grassroots organizations advocating for victims of police violence. This approach is distinct from the everyday use of social media sampling, which relies on the use of targeted sampling using advertisements

(Archer-Kuhn et al., 2022; Baltar & Brunet, 2012; Chenane & Hammond, 2022; Kayrouz et al., 2016). Distributing recruitment posters via social media is beneficial in the sense that potential participants do not physically have to be in proximity to an organization, the calls for recruitment are not directly competing with other materials (as would be the case on a poster board) and distributing materials through gatekeeper organizations functions similar to the use of targeted advertising, as social media users may be following a specific account as a result of a shared experience. For example, some of the social media outlets that recruitment materials were distributed to are activist pages that challenge police violence in various Canadian urban centres, which amass a substantial following of individuals who may have been involved with the police. The use of social media in this capacity mitigated the costs associated with traditional targeted social media sampling strategies (Archer-Kuhn et al., 2022; Baltar & Brunet, 2012; Chenane & Hammond, 2022; Kayrouz et al., 2016).

Another social media recruitment approach involved contacting potential participants who have voluntarily shared their experience with a tactical unit through media or have voluntarily posted about their experience on social media. These parties were located by triangulating the names of parties documented in media reporting and matching the images on the profile to the individual who shared their account to the media or searching for specific terms like ‘swat team’ on a social media platform and scouring through the results to see if any posts relevant to this research were made. The researcher engaged in targeted sampling by contacting these potential participants via social media. A singular message was sent to participants, and no follow-up messages were sent unless the party requested more information on the research. This is because consistent messaging may be regarded as invasive, viewed as a form of coercive recruitment, and violating the boundaries of the potential participant. Participants who responded

to the message requests were sent additional information regarding the study and asked if they were interested in participating. Using social media sampling in this context allows the researcher to address the low-visibility nature of these encounters and navigate the traditional challenges associated with sampling hidden populations (see Urbanik & Greene, 2020).

Sampling Through Gatekeeper Organizations

The researcher established contact with gatekeeper organizations, like Laming (2023), and distributed paper copies of recruitment materials to these organizations. This approach proved beneficial and resulted in the recruitment of over 1/3 of the sample. To avoid the inherent conflict of interest emerging from partnerships with gatekeeper organizations (see Broadhead & Rist, 1976; Jeffords, 2007; Umamaheswar, 2018), the researcher did not pursue any avenues for recruitment that relied on the development of a formal research partnership. The gatekeeper organizations were comprised of local grassroots organizations that provide a range of support and services to individuals who have experienced incarceration, trauma, and contact with police. The researcher connected with these organizations using social media to facilitate initial contact. This was followed by an in-person meeting where the researcher would explain the overall aims of the study and disseminate the research materials to representatives of the organization. None of the gatekeeper organizations, whose identities are confidential at their request, are involved in collecting, analyzing, or disseminating research results. The use of gatekeeper organizations was central to the research as these organizations could bring attention to the research project and reach a cohort of potential participants that the researcher would be incapable of doing on their own navigating the various divides emerging in the sampling of hidden populations (Greene et al., 2021; Pauwlez, 2018; Urbanik & Greene, 2021).

Respondent-Driven Sampling

Snowball sampling is regarded as a fundamental technique to recruit participants from hidden populations when individual members of a population are known to one another (Faugier & Sargeant, 1997; Pawelz, 2018; Urbanik & Greene, 2020). A snowball sampling script was developed and disseminated among participants who indicated they knew other individuals with similar experiences with a tactical unit. These participants were advised that they could not provide the information of those in their social network to the researcher and that those participants would have to contact the researcher of their own volition. Furthermore, there was no financial incentive associated with the snowball sampling. This negates the potential of certain participants being coerced into participation for the benefit of the participant who serves as the entry node (Palys & Atchison, 2014). Throughout the four months in which data was collected, the researcher received numerous inquiries via telephone and email from participants who indicated they were interested in sharing their experience after learning about the research through an acquaintance. As previously noted, snowball sampling is associated with the potential limitation of sampling bias, as the diversity of a sample may be diluted by homogeneity among those in a particular network if participants are known to each other (Faugier & Sargeant, 1997).

The use of a multifaceted sampling strategy, like the one used in this research, improves the heterogeneity of a sample and largely mitigates the concerns surrounding biased sampling stemming from the exclusive use of snowball sampling (Faugier & Sargeant, 1997; Pawelz, 2018; Urbanik & Greene, 2020). Furthermore, due to some participants being known to one another, ensuring internal confidentiality (see Tolich, 2004) was a central element of the ethical precautions adopted in this research, as previously outlined.

Chapter 4.4: Data Collection

The qualitative component of this research uses semi-structured interviews as the primary source of data collection. Semi-structured interviews involve a standardized interview schedule, which is integral to making comparisons or identifying specific thematic trends among a diverse participant sample while providing participants with the capacity to share experiences not captured in the interview schedule (Aurini et al., 2016; Bryman & Bell, 2019; Palys & Atchison, 2014). Semi-structured interviews allow for a better understanding of the experiences of an understudied population (Bryant-Davis et al., 2017; Gallardo, 2023; Greene et al., 2021; Urbanik & Greene, 2020). More importantly, using in-depth interviews allows the researcher to understand the social world better and the lived experiences of police contact from the participants' perspective (Brunson, 2007; Laming, 2023; Samuels-Wortley, 2021; Urbanik & Greene, 2020). As Brunson (2007) notes, the perspectives of members of the public who have encountered the police in an adversarial capacity are vital to the construction of public perceptions of the police and are often shared amongst the social networks and communities where these interactions take place.

The importance of this methodological approach rests in its contribution to the knowledge base of the literature investigating involuntary citizen-police encounters, addresses a gap in the literature that largely neglects citizen encounters with tactical units and relies on the use of a critical criminological approach that challenges police narratives and worldviews surrounding the use of tactical units (see Walby, 2022). The only qualitative work that specifically investigates tactical units in the Canadian context is Jenkins et al. (2021a), which solely relied on interviews with the police. The use of semi-structured interviews of individuals who have been on the opposite end of the encounter provides an opportunity to understand

tactical unit use from a novel perspective and allows participants to share counterstories that challenge the dominant functionalist perspectives on policing (Brunson, 2007; Brunson & Miller, 2006ab; Samuels-Wortley, 2021; Greene et al., 2021; Laming, 2023; Urbanik & Greene, 2020).

Structure of the Interview Schedule

The interview schedule for this research comprised five sections based on the structure developed by Aurini et al. (2016). The first section of the interview included introductory remarks, where participants were advised of the aims of the study, reminded of their rights as research participants and that they were free to terminate their participation without penalty, and allowed the participant the opportunity to ask any questions they may have of the researcher (Aurini et al., 2016). The second section of the interview comprised a series of warm-up questions integral to developing rapport between the researcher and participant (Aurini et al., 2016; Bryman & Bell, 2019; Palys & Atchison, 2014). Participants are asked open-ended questions to identify their motivations for participating in the research, their perceptions of the police, and general information about themselves. Closed-ended questions were also asked to collect demographic data such as the participant's age, self-identified race, and gender.

The most substantive section of the interview, the third, comprised three major thematic categories and relied on standardized sub-questions and probing questions when necessary (Aurini et al., 2016; Brunson, 2007). Participants could describe what happened during their encounter with the tactical unit, who or what the police were looking for (purpose of the interaction), how they felt following the encounter, and if they experienced any forms of violence. The following element of this section inquired about the different challenges participants or their families faced because of the encounter. These questions inquired about the different supports received by the participant, the mental or emotional challenges they

experienced, other challenges they have experienced, how their community reacted to the incident, and what kinds of damage they experienced to their home or property and other financial consequences they faced. Additional probing questions were asked regarding theft (see Urbanik & Greene, 2020) and the challenges parents faced due to the encounter (see Greene et al., 2021).

The fourth section of the interview asked participants a series of questions to transition to the end of the interview and asked about any elements of their experience that they would like to share that were not captured by the interview questions, how they were feeling, and their future plans. Considering the emotionally charged and sensitive nature of the interviews, the question regarding the plans of the participants allows them to discuss events or goals in their lives that they are looking forward to and, implicitly, places the locus of power with the research participant (Aurini et al., 2016). The final section of the interview is comprised of closing remarks. While there is a set of standardized questions guiding the development of the interview, the use of probing questions and participants' deviation from standardized questions was integral to the data collection process and provided novel sources of information that are not necessarily accounted for in both the literature and the interview schedule (Aurini et al., 2016; Bryman & Bell, 2019; Palys & Atchison, 2014).

Data Collection

The semi-structured interviews relied on a combination of in-person, virtual, and telephone-based interviews with participants. One of the immediate benefits of in-person interviews is that the individual does not necessarily require a high level of literacy to participate in an interview, as opposed to a survey, and the in-person interview provides an opportunity to bypass issues related to accessibility (Palys & Atchison, 2014). The central challenge stemming

from in-person interviews is that these are more logistically difficult to organize due to finding a secure and private location, navigating geographic proximity with participants, and arranging for the researcher and participant's transportation (Aurini et al., 2016). As a result of this limitation, a methodological decision was made to also conduct interviews over the telephone and using internet-based communication mediums, like Microsoft Teams and Zoom.

Data collection took place from February 2023 to May 2023. Regardless of the interview format, a standardized process was followed. Participants were provided with a copy of the information and consent form, either in-person or via email, prior to the commencement of the interview. The researcher then asked a series of screening questions to the participants to determine their eligibility for participation in the research, including whether there were any factors affecting their ability to understand the information and consent document, whether they were actively facing charges before the criminal courts pertaining to the matter discussed in the interview, and if they knew themselves to be under police surveillance or investigation for any matter. No participants were deemed ineligible for participation in this research.

Following the screening process, the contents of the informed consent form were discussed with the participants, and they were advised of their rights as research participants. Participants received a $40 gift card as remuneration. They were advised that receiving a gift card was not associated with their responses or continued participation. Participants who participated in interviews through telephone or virtual conferencing were sent their gift cards via email prior to the interview and were advised that an email containing the gift card could not be retracted by the researcher under any circumstances. The researcher emphasized to the participants that if they terminated their participation prior to the commencement of the

interview, they would still receive the remuneration. No participants terminated their involvement in the research, and no participants skipped any questions.

Consent was verbally collected from the participants and documented on a verbal consent log, approved by the University of Waterloo's REB. Participants were also provided with a list of community resources, which included several free-to-access supports, that they could rely on for support following the interview's conclusion. Following the receipt of the participant's verbal consent, the interview commenced. Sanders et al. (2010) identify that some participants may feel uncomfortable with the audio recording and may equate the interview process with a law enforcement investigation. As a result, a decision was made to take detailed notes during the interview instead of relying on audio recordings. Participants appreciated this effort, and many understood that there were aspects of their interview responses they would be asked to repeat (sometimes on multiple occasions) so the researcher could accurately capture their responses verbatim. Some participants expressed frustration at what they called the institution's 'red tape' but appreciated the efforts of the researcher to complete the research in the manner it was approved. Following the conclusion of the interview process, the research notes were transcribed onto encrypted Word files and saved to an external hard drive stored in a secure location.

Chapter 4.5: Data Analysis

The research uses an inductive and deductive approach to establish critical themes and keywords and is informed by the literature on police militarization and involuntary citizen-police encounters (see Brunson, 2007; Greene et al., 2021; Laming, 2023; Urbanik & Greene, 2020). While the research investigating encounters with the tactical unit is novel, this research proceeded with the general assumption that these encounters would essentially mimic those involving patrol officers (see Brunson, 2007). As a result of the influence of literature in

establishing the interview schedule, a deductive approach would be the most fitting for this analysis (Aurini et al., 2019; Bryman & Bell, 2019; Palys & Atchison, 2014). The transcription of interviews took place following their completion, but the data analysis began following the coding of the final interview (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Urbanik & Greene, 2020). A thematic analysis was used to guide the analyses of interview data. This approach allows researchers to summarize key features of the data, highlights similarities and differences between participants and helps generate unanticipated insights (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Urbanik & Greene, 2020). The major findings emerging from the thematic analysis are presented in *Chapter Six*.

I first read through the transcripts and made notes of key themes in the data, relying on identifying free codes. I then developed subcodes and main codes that were consistent with the approach to thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Urbanik & Greene, 2020). After becoming familiar with the data, initial codes were developed and categorized according to the more prominent theme they aligned with. For example, the thematic area of *exposure to violence* accounts for threats experienced by participants, potential injuries emerging from the elements of the police operation, rough handling of subjects, applications of the use of force, witnessing violence, and allegations of assault. A broader category of violence was established, and factors like the use of flashbangs, firearms pointing, and deployment of CEWs are subcoded as applications of the use of force. Conversely, other more invasive applications of violence that do not fall within the realm of use of force, like physical assaults, are assigned a unique subcode but fall within the broader thematic category of violence. Codes identified the form of violence experienced by the participants, and this led to the formation of themes emerging from the data, which were then reviewed, defined, and augmented with selected extracts from the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). A similar approach was adopted for every substantive thematic category

emerging from the interviews. This approach provides a more nuanced understanding of the data and allows the researcher to interrogate specific aspects of the participant's responses thoroughly.

Conclusion

Rather than reiterating the methodological approach guiding this research, this section offers commentary on the suitability of this approach. The sampling strategy, relying on multiple non-random sampling techniques, provides a blueprint for future researchers interested in engaging with police violence. The primary limitation of this perspective is that, for social media recruitment, researchers may need to be part of an existing social network to access research participants effectively (Archer-Kuhn et al., 2022; Baltar & Brunet, 2012; Chenane & Hammond, 2022; Kayrouz et al., 2016). Furthermore, gatekeeper organizations present various issues, especially concerning the level of interference or influence they may exert on the research (Haggerty, 2004; Jeffords, 2007; Umamaheswar, 2018). The approach utilized in this research effectively navigates this issue by engaging with grassroots organizations and community networks instead of those within more corporatized structures that rely on formal agreements. The ethical approach adopted relies on using a series of mechanisms involved to reduce the potential of production orders for research notes, and a series of safeguards are implemented to secure the internal confidentiality of participants (Palys & Lowman, 2012; Palys & Atchison, 2014; Tolich, 2004). Qualitative research, which engages with the lived experiences of individuals who encounter tactical units, is central to supplementing the quantitative analyses and is arguably the richest component of this work.

Chapter 5: Methodological Overview of Quantitative Research

Introduction

Assessing racial disparities in use of force incidents involving tactical units presents a series of distinct methodological considerations. This research uses the disproportionality and disparity index, as outlined in the *Anti-Racism Act*, but also applies a series of inferential statistics to isolate the potential correlation between race and the use of force. The current use of force reporting framework aggregates service-wide data and fails to account for this specific policing context in which force was used (see Foster & Jacobs, 2022; Wortley et al., 2020). There is no existing Canadian research assessing racial disparities in the use of force incidents involving tactical units, and the methodological approach adopted in this research addresses this gap. Beyond the capacity to identify potential areas of racial disparity, the quantitative portion of this research is uniquely suited to the application of critical race perspectives.

Tator and Henry (2006) highlight the various discourses the Toronto Police Service used in response to statistical evidence demonstrating the presence of racial profiling. Two of these discourses included challenging the methodological tenets of the research and using differential racialization to portray Toronto's Black community as a criminal threat to the public. Accounting for the potential institutional response to this study's findings allows for a critique of the state's use of differential racialization and the manipulation of quantitative research to justify the expansion and legitimation of police violence against communities of colour. The capacity of the institution to develop counternarratives to findings demonstrating racial disproportionality and disparity (see Tator & Henry, 2006) substantiates the need to use statistical analyses beyond assessments of racial overrepresentation, including inferential statistics.

The application of critical race perspectives is used to contextualize the argument that the tactical unit occupies a race-neutral institutional capacity to police the threat of Black criminality.

This may be demonstrated through the overrepresentation of people perceived to be Black in the use of force statistics or the disproportionate application of force when controlling for a series of other context-based factors (Foster & Jacobs, 2022; Wortley et al., 2020). The findings of the quantitative analyses may also guide future research investigating the discourses mobilized by the institution in response to statistical analyses indicating systemic discrimination.

Before discussing the central issues and elements of the methodological design, an overview of the individual components of the chapter is offered. Chapter 5.1 summarizes the methodological issues guiding the empirical approach used in this research and explores the various legislative frameworks used to guide data collection. Chapter 5.2 outlines the data collection strategy employed in this research and illustrates the suitability of freedom of information research. Chapter 5.3 offers an overview of the analytical strategy for analyzing racial disparities using inferential statistics.

Chapter 5.1: Key Methodological Issues

Police Services Act and Measuring Police Use of Force

The *Community Safety and Policing Act* (CSPA) took effect on April 1, 2024, establishing the legal framework for policing in Ontario. The CSPA replaced the *Police Services Act* of 1990, the legislation in effect when the use of force reports analyzed in this research were filed and collected. As such, the relevant legislation to this research is the *Police Services Act*, RSO 1990, c. P.15. Laming (2023) indicates that this legislation offered a comprehensive legislative framework for policing standards in Ontario and various reporting requirements and adequacy standards. *Regulation 926: Equipment and Use of Force* establishes the provincial framework for police use of force and reporting requirements (Laming, 2023; Police Services Act, RSO 1990, c. P.15). There are eight conditions under which police are legally obligated to

report force, and these include instances where a (1) handgun is drawn in the presence of a member of the public, (2) a firearm is pointed at a person, (3) firearm is discharged, (4) a weapon is used on another person, (5) a CEW is drawn or displayed to achieve compliance among the subject, (6) a CEW is pointed at a person, (7) a CEW is discharged, and (8) force is applied to a person, including through the use of horses or dogs, that results in an injury requiring the services of a nurse, paramedic, or physician (Police Services Act, RSO 1990, c.15).

When the use of force meets this threshold, officers must submit a *Use of Force Report*, a standardized reporting item that captures a bevy of relevant incident characteristics (Davies et al., 2021; Laming, 2023). For example, Part A of the form details (a) officer information like their rank, years of service, whether a team or individual submits the report, and the number of officers involved, (b) outlines the context of the encounter and the kind of incident the subject was encountered in, (c) details the kinds of force used, the sequence of force, and the justification for force, and (d) outlines incident characteristics like the distance from the subject, whether the subject possessed weapons and the location of the weapons relative to the subject, injuries sustained, and environmental factors like time of day and incident location (Appendix A).

There is also a section for an incident narrative where officers may provide an account of the situation. There are no specific incident selections for using search warrants, barricaded persons, high-risk vehicle stops, or other call types. The only indication of these incident details is provided when an officer provides this information on the written form in response to selections of 'Other' on the reporting item and specifies the context of the incident. There is also no checkbox indicating a mental health call. However, officers may provide this information in

the form by indicating this in the “Other” categories and specifying a mental health apprehension or emotionally disturbed person (Appendix A).

The *Use of Force Report* does not capture characteristics Klahm and Tillyer (2010) identified, like the incident's geographic location, the subject's demeanor, and the subject's criminal history. These pieces of information are usually located in the general occurrence reports associated with the incident (Wortley et al., 2020). However, these documents were only accessible to Wortley et al. (2020) due to a binding resolution with the Ontario Human Rights Commission and the Toronto Police Service. With this limitation in mind, it is worth noting that this research makes use of information accessible through freedom of information. The absence of the above-mentioned contextual factors also presents the opportunity to apply critical criminological perspectives to assess how the structure of specific reporting metrics may legitimize state violence against marginalized groups based on the subject’s social location (Garland, 1996; Meeks, 2006).

The subject's previous criminal history and geographic location may be irrelevant to understanding applications of force, as previous contact with the justice system does not necessarily equate to resistive or combative acts during interactions with police. Extrapolating from Garland (2005) and Meeks (2006), an argument may be presented that these contextual factors create a category of cohorts who are ‘deserving’ and ‘undeserving’ of state violence. Similarly, the issue of subject demeanor is entirely premised on individual perception and may be influenced by differential racialization and the construction of race (Kim, 2004). Likewise, an individual's perceived criminal threat and the community's geographic context may also be attributed to the social construction of what groups are considered dangerous (Kim, 2004; Tator & Henry, 2006). While there are limitations to the sole use of the *Use of Force Report*, the

probative value of some missing information is debatable. Furthermore, critical race scholars would argue that collecting this quantitative information is embedded with a systemic bias that prioritizes state narratives justifying the expansion of a potentially discriminatory practice (see Henne & Shah, 2015; Lopez et al., 2018; Sablan, 2019).

Laming (2023) notes that officers do not have to report incidents involving lower applications of force so long as they do not result in injury. Although the *Police Services Act* outlines the minimum threshold for when force is documented, some municipal services may require officers to submit a report when force is applied under any context (Bennell et al., 2022; Laming, 2023). There may be an underreporting of the true extent of police use of force, as only a specific threshold of force applications must be legally documented (Bennell et al., 2021; Laming, 2023; Wortley et al., 2020). Incidents where a tactical unit draws a carbine (assault rifle) or marksman rifle but does not point it at a subject are not required to be reported, as the reporting mechanism only requires officers to report when a handgun is drawn. Similarly, distraction devices occupy a gray area as they could technically be conceived of as weapons, necessitating their reporting when deployed. However, their categorization as distraction devices may obfuscate reporting requirements, as demonstrated in the results of this research. Tactical units can file team reports, where force applications are measured as a single incident rather than multiple ones. Laming (2023), among others, suggests various provisions contribute to underreporting force incidents. This research cannot capture all force incidents, and the statistics will naturally underrepresent the tactical unit's true extent of force applications.

Anti-Racism Act and Measuring Racial Disparities

The *Anti-Racism Act* was enacted in 2017 and is the provincial framework for identifying, monitoring, and eliminating systemic racism (*Anti-Racism Act,* 2017, S.O., c.15;

Foster & Jacobs, 2022). The *Anti-Racism Act* facilitates the collection of race-based data among public service organizations (PSOs), including agencies in the justice and child welfare sectors (Foster & Jacobs, 2022). Police services in Ontario were mandated to collect race-based data in all use of force reports as of January 1, 2020 (Foster & Jacobs, 2022). The reporting metric also allows for the collection of race-based data to identify the officer-perceived race of the subject(s). Foster and Jacobs (2022) indicated that police services are required to record the perceived race of the subject in use-of-force incidents. The categories for perceived subject race noted in Part A of the *Use of Force Report* include "Black," "East/Southeast Asian," "Indigenous," "Latino," "Middle Eastern," "South Asian," and "White" (Appendix A). This identification of race may be made through a visual identification of the subject's face, body, hair, or any other physical marker that informs the officer's perception. This caveat accounts for instances where individuals may have escaped police while wearing a disguise or clothing articles that make identifying their race difficult. Samuels-Wortley (2021) noted that officers use "White" as the default classification for perceived race, which may contribute to overrepresenting those identified as 'White' in the data. The reporting metric allows for selecting up to three subjects but allows officers to indicate the total number of subjects without specifying their race (Appendix A). The form is not premised on the individual subject but the use of force incident as the unit of analysis (Foster & Jacobs, 2022; Wortley et al., 2020).

The data standards outline the creation of a racial disproportionality and racial disparity index (Anti-Racism Directorate, 2022; Foster & Jacobs, 2022; Watson & Sidhu, 2023). A racial disproportionality index compares a group's overrepresentation in an outcome, like using force, to their representation in a general reference population (Anti-Racism Directorate, 2022; Foster & Jacobs, 2022; Watson & Sidhu, 2023). For example, Wortley et al. (2020) calculated the

percentage of Black people who experienced force by the Toronto Police Service in comparison to all use-of-force cases and then compared this figure to the proportion of the city's population that was comprised of Black people. A racial disproportionality score of 1.00 indicates that the group is equally represented to their representation in the benchmark population, a score less than 1.00 indicates underrepresentation and a score greater than 1.00 indicates overrepresentation (Owusu-Bempah & Luscombe, 2021; Wortley et al., 2020). Once disproportionality is calculated, the rates of disproportionality can be compared across groups to determine the degree of racial disparity, which is a measure of how much more likely Group A is to experience a specific outcome relative to Group B (Anti-Racism Directorate, 2022; Watson & Sidhu, 2023). The benchmark most used in analyzing Ontario's race-based use of force data is Canadian census data (see Foster & Jacobs, 2022; Wortley et al., 2020).

While the legislation offers a minimum reporting standard, the use of a disproportionality and disparity index does not measure the statistical significance of these findings. As a result, the minimum reporting standards cannot effectively gauge whether there is a statistically significant relationship between race and experiencing specific force outcomes. The analytical strategy employed uses multivariate statistical analyses to assess the correlation between race and the use of force rather than solely calculating disparity and disproportionality. Using an integrated approach offers the research with greater capacity to identify discriminatory policing practices.

While statistical analysis is imbued with an underlying assumption of objectivity, it is vital to understand that statistics about crime, deviance, and crime control measures are inherently political (Cloke et al., 2001; Haggerty, 2001; Williams, 2011). For example, Haggerty (2001) demonstrated how statistics, in addition to being informed by various actors in the criminal justice system, are also used as a mechanism to manage institutions. Similarly, Cloke et

al. (2001) and Williams (2011) each highlighted how the enumeration of homelessness is influenced by broader political discourses that define what is conceptualized as being homeless and how these measures reinforce broader ideological narratives about an issue. The issue of race-based data collection is no exception and is the subject of intense political debate (Bennell et al., 2022; Millar & Owusu-Bempah, 2011; Owusu-Bempah & Millar, 2010). Canada's de facto ban on race-based statistics emerged from two unique sources. One of these sources stems from community concerns that overrepresentation in data would be used to impose more aggressive law enforcement practices. In contrast, an attempt by Statistics Canada to collect this information was hindered by a lack of compliance among some police services (Owusu-Bempah & Millar, 2010).

The collection of race-based data may also provide a vehicle for assessing racial disparities, highlighting the prevalence of racial disproportionality and disparities, and guiding the implementation of policy changes to account for discriminatory practices in the legal system (Millar & Owusu-Bempah, 2011; Owusu-Bempah & Millar, 2010; Owusu-Bempah & Luscombe, 2021). Using Haggerty's (2001) contributions to the enumeration of crime statistics, the efforts of institutions in the justice system to avoid or obfuscate the collection and analysis of race-based data may be an attempt to limit the governance of these institutions. Millar and Owusu-Bempah (2011) suggested that the suppression of race-based data limits accountability to the public while serving the interest of institutions like the police. Similarly, the trends in the literature demonstrate that the collection of race-based data is not consistent, and the use of the category of *visible minority* limits a greater understanding of the influence of race on outcomes in the justice system. Sprott and Doob (2014) indicated that the categorization of visible

minorities ignores the diversity of experiences among racialized groups and is a common practice in the collection of race-based data.

Regarding the collection of perceived race-based data, Samuels-Wortley (2021) indicates that 'White' is the default category marked by officers. A good faith analysis of the *Use of Force Report* data would suggest that race is being recorded as it is being perceived. However, the police mislabeling of race limits the potential to engage in research assessing the presence of systemic discrimination in policing and prevents the imposition of more sophisticated forms of external governance (Haggerty, 2001). The literature engaging in enumerations of racial disproportionality and disparities uses the 'White' categorization as the reference group, and an overrepresentation of this group through a default coding practice may limit the efficacy of these analyses as the institution has a vested interest in avoiding novel forms of governance (Haggerty, 2001; Millar & Owusu-Bempah, 2011).

The Anti-Racism Directorate (2022) specifies a minimum standard for measuring racial disproportionality and disparity using population benchmarks but does not specify the appropriate benchmark population. The Canadian literature in this area primarily focuses on the use of census-level data relative to the geographic location as a measure of assessing racial disproportionality (Foster & Jacobs, 2022; Owusu-Bempah & Luscombe, 2021; Wortley et al., 2020). For example, in analyzing racial disproportionality in marijuana arrests, Owusu-Bempah and Luscombe (2021) compared the arrest data to the census data for the cities they analyzed. Similarly, Wortley et al. (2020) used the city of Toronto's population as a benchmark for understanding racial disproportionality in the Toronto Police Service's use of force data. This is the standard in the Canadian context, but the Waterloo Regional Police Service sought to change the population benchmark used for its race-based data analyses (Chaarani, 2023b). It calculated

racial disparity by dividing the number of racialized people using force data by the total number of incidents. This approach is problematic due to a base rate fallacy that assumes all racial groups account for an equal proportion of the population rather than comparing the proportion of use-of-force incidents to the Census data. The central issue with changing the benchmarks for data analysis is that changes could create a statistical bias that makes it more difficult to find evidence of disproportionality and disparity (Ross et al., 2021). Producing novel benchmarks, which create statistical biases, is a mechanism that state institutions and advocacy scholars may use to obfuscate evidence of racial disparity.

The research relies on the use of the Census population benchmark, as this is the measure that is used in the Canadian literature investigating racial disparities in police use of force and other outcomes (see Foster & Jacobs, 2022; Owusu-Bempah & Luscombe, 2021; Wortley et al., 2020). The police do not only use force in instances of violent crime but may use force while making an arrest, attending a mental health call, engaging in a traffic stop, and any range of other encounters (Wortley et al., 2020). Furthermore, as noted by Ross et al. (2021), the interaction with police may be the result of individual racial discrimination or the presence of discriminatory policing tactics that make specific cohorts of racialized people more likely to encounter police. It is for this reason that a crime rate or similar benchmark should not be used as it operates under the flawed assumption that the police respond to all crimes, encounter all individuals who engage in crime, and only employ the use of force in the context of criminal matters.

Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act

The *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* governs the release of government records, including what records are made available to the public and what exemptions limit the release of information, among other things (*Municipal Freedom of*

Information and Protection of Privacy Act RSO 1990; Chapter M.56). The legislation includes several provisions that allow government agencies to prevent the release of information or records to the public. There are several important considerations to note as it relates to this research study. *S.8(1)* of the legislation allows a head to prevent the release of information that endangers law enforcement, interferes with their capacity to investigate and control crime, and if the release of information jeopardizes investigative techniques used by the police (*Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* RSO 1990; Chapter M.56).

The legislation has numerous exemptions that prevent the release of personal information and personal records stored by a government agency, and several provisions indicate that any information that violates elements of a labour agreement must be redacted. Although there is a provincial framework for releasing and retaining records, the legislation is applied by the 'Head' of the government agency to which the request is being submitted, and coordinators are responsible for collecting information (Roziere & Walby, 2018). This indicates that the release of records is not uniform, and there will be variation across police services due to the interpretation or application of the legislation made by coordinators. For example, the number of officers assigned to each use of force report may be redacted because releasing this information may hinder the capacity of the tactical unit to respond to crime effectively. Furthermore, the incident narratives included in the use of force reporting mechanism are also redacted, which is common in other Canadian research (Systma et al., 2022).

General occurrence reports cannot be released through freedom of information, as these documents contain personally identifiable information that may be used to identify a subject. Similarly, the legislation allows a coordinator to block access to information like the years of experience accumulated by an officer, which would be used as a control in the analysis (see

Klahm & Tillyer, 2010), on the basis that this is an employee's individual information and violates the aspects of the act related to labour agreements. While this presents limitations for a more thorough understanding of the use of force, it is essential to note that the tactical unit comprises teams of officers and is permitted to submit team reports rather than individual reports, preventing individual-level officer data collection (Laming, 2023). While using freedom of information requests is regarded as an alternative methodology to police research (see Roziere & Walby, 2018), police services can still perform a gatekeeping function related to releasing information.

The use of freedom of information requests as a research methodology is characterized by some researchers as adversarial or being marred by numerous practical issues that prevent or delay the release of information (see Chowdhury, 2022; Lee, 2001; Luscombe et al., 2017; Owusu-Bempah & Luscombe, 2021). Some of the primary critiques of this data collection technique are that costs associated with the production of records are prohibitive, the decisions to reject requests are often discretionary, there are variations in municipal, provincial/state, and national legislation, there are lengthy delays in gaining access to information requested, there may be non-response among certain government agencies, and the data requested may be essentially unusable as a result of its quality (Chowdhury, 2022; Lee, 2001). Despite the numerous practical limitations associated with its use, freedom of information research is frequently relied upon as a data collection method to facilitate access to government documents (Larsen, 2013; Lee, 2005; Savage & Hyde, 2014; Walby& Larsen, 2015; Walby & Luscombe, 2019; Yeager, 2006).

There are several inherent strengths associated with this data collection method, as (1) personally identifiable information is not included as the release of data is vetted to exclude said

information, (2) this method is an accessible form of research as it may be used by researchers, media organizations, non-governmental organizations, and a range of other actors, (3) the use of freedom of information research allows access to government records that facilitate research that could otherwise not be accomplished, and the use of this strategy allows researchers to essentially bypass the gatekeeping role of state institutions (Brownlee & Walby, 2015; Roziere & Walby, 2018; Walby, 2012; Walby & Larsen, 2012; Walby & Luscombe, 2019; Yeager, 2006). What is important to note about this data strategy is that its ultimate strength relies on how well-formatted the request is and the role of the researcher in brokering access (Brownlee & Walby, 2015).

Methodological Concerns Surrounding the Accuracy of Police Reporting Mechanisms

One of the central caveats to the analysis of use of force data from police services is that the reporting mechanism maintains the veneer of objectivity. While this research has engaged with the issue of non-reporting and underreporting (see Bennell et al., 2022; Laming, 2023), the issue of misrepresentation has yet to be discussed. In July 2024, gun charges against Toronto-based rapper Omary Brent fell apart as a judge ruled that a Toronto Police officer falsified a use of force report mechanism to justify tasering Brent (Hristova, 2024). In the report, Brent was classified as having a concealed weapon. The officer indicated this characterization was a mistake, but the judge ruled it a deliberate attempt to mislead the court and justify using a CEW on Brent (Hristova, 2024). This illustrative example raises an issue with the use of police reports and offers a segue for interrogating the accuracy of these reporting mechanisms.

The composition of reports provides police with the capacity to control the facts of an incident and establish a narrative that other actors in the criminal justice system rely upon and is a form of knowledge production (Ericson, 1982; Fisher, 1993; Yung, 2014). Various factors may

explain misrepresentation in police reports, but Fisher (1993) indicates that the practice ranges on a continuum from the fabrication of evidence to the exclusion of exculpatory evidence. Yung (2014) found that police reports are a mechanism through which sexual assaults are undercounted. Police services employ difficult-to-detect methods like failing to file a report or classifying incidents using other coding mechanisms to foster an illusion of success in combating crime (Yung, 2014). Ericson (1982) demonstrates how police officers reproduce their power through institutional practices, in which report writing is central. Reporting mechanisms are a vehicle through which the police make and unmake crime but should not be considered an objective representation of police business or crime (Ericson, 1982). Instead, police reports are institutionally situated and reinforce the power of the police.

As demonstrated in the illustrative example of *R v Brent*, use of force reporting mechanisms are prone to misrepresenting facts to justify police action. For example, officers may interpret the presence of a perceived weapon and code it as a weapon being present to justify the application of force against a subject. Similarly, officers may not record the application of force against family members in a residence, which allows for an undercounting of the use of force while allowing them to file a use of force report being applied against the subject. As demonstrated in the quantitative findings, officers may also choose not to file a report altogether when the application of force is expected. Ericson (1982) maintains that one of the mechanisms used by the police to engage in non-reporting is the exercise of discretion in low-visibility settings. Decisions employed by officers in these low-visibility settings are not open to re-examination due to the absence of a report, which prevents an official process from being invoked to question police decision-making (Ericson, 1982). Official reports are constructed to consider how supervisors will review these reports and tailor them to various institutional

practices and aims (Ericson, 1982). The police composition of reports should not be regarded as an objective practice but one that is institutionally situated. The broader significance of this methodological issue is that use of force reporting mechanisms should be interpreted cautiously. The discretionary and institutionalized nature of reporting mechanisms provides the institution with a vehicle through which statistics may be generated to solidify its practices or strategies of governance (Ericson, 1982; Haggerty, 2001).

An emergent issue stemming from this discussion is the broader question of the utility of use of force data, especially when considering its potential to be inaccurate. An interrogation of this data is required to demonstrate how this reporting mechanism fails to capture the true extent of use of force in encounters involving tactical units and is used to legitimize its application. While inaccuracies may mar the data, this should not preclude an investigation into use of force applications involving tactical units, as these reports function as the only mechanism through which critical researchers can unpack the various intricacies and limitations associated with this reporting mechanism to address systemic racism. The police-reported statistics are likely an underrepresentation of the true extent and nature of use of force applications. Biases in data collection and reporting make it less likely to find a statistically significant effect in measuring the association between race and specific force applications. Considering that this research adopts a conservative approach to data analysis, any noted effects are likely more prominent than what the statistics point to. The critical analysis of these reports provides the foundation for future theorizing and research challenging their efficacy in addressing systemic discrimination.

Chapter 5.2: Data Collection Strategy

Freedom of information requests were filed with several police services in the winter and spring of 2023. The requests sought the use of force reports filed between January 1, 2020, and

December 31, 2022, as 2022 was the last year of accessible data, and the Use of Force Report underwent significant changes in 2023. The requests were made to (1) Peel Regional Police, (2) Halton Regional Police Service, (3) Durham Regional Police Service, (4) York Regional Police Service, (5) Hamilton Police Service, (6) Brantford Police Service, (7) Waterloo Regional Police Service, (8) London Police Service, and the (9) Toronto Police Service. These requests were made because each jurisdiction is readily accessible to the researcher, and these police services serve populations of over 100,000 residents. Requests were made for available deployment data and every use of force report filed by the respective police service's tactical unit during the specified timeframe.

The police services included for analysis in this study are (1) Peel Regional Police, (2) Durham Regional Police Service, (3) Halton Regional Police Service, (4) York Regional Police Service, (5) Hamilton Police Service, (6) Waterloo Regional Police Service, and (7) London Police Service. The Brantford Police Service advised that they maintain a containment team, rather than a tactical unit, consistent with O.Reg. 3/99, s.22 of the *Police Services Act*. A containment team cannot employ offensive tactics before the arrival of a tactical unit unless this is for the purpose of preventing the loss of life or serious bodily harm. As a result of this distinction, which no other police service advised of, a decision was made to exclude the data from this police service on the basis that the analysis would only focus on police services with tactical units.

Chowdhury (2022) emphasizes that one of the primary challenges in freedom of information research is the frequent misunderstanding of requests by coordinators. To address this concern, I prepared a formal document on university letterhead that clearly outlined the date range of the requested data, identified the specific form the requested data could be found on,

outlined the associated legislative provisions requiring the release of the information, and outlined the purpose of the research study. Each request was tailored for each police service to include the official name of its tactical unit (Roziere & Walby, 2018). As suggested by Luscombe et al. (2017), I also engaged in numerous informal conversations with coordinators to ensure they understood the specifics of my request. I provided additional context and detail if necessary.

I routinely highlighted the legislative requirements indicating the release of the information requested, used publicly available sources to justify the release of the number of officers and the specific applications of force, and pre-empted redactions by requesting certain pieces of information be redacted knowing that it was not going to be released (Brownlee & Walby, 2015). For example, Systma et al. (2022) indicated that incident narratives were redacted for their study into CEW usage by Ontario Provincial Police officers. My discussions with coordinators revealed that many of these reports include a sentence about the incident. This suggested that requesting this information would not be beneficial, as it would expand the costs and time associated with the request. Using the language of Luscombe et al. (2017), I made concessions on the kinds of information I would receive.

There were some challenges associated with freedom of information requests. There appeared to be several duplicate records among some of the released services. To account for the potential of duplicates, these cases were electronically screened on STATA and matching cases were compared. If there were no differences in the checked indicators and written components of the form, only one of the two records was used. Similarly, there were instances where reports not filed by tactical units were included in the release of records. For example, there were several instances where reports from the canine unit, protest management/containment teams, and general patrol officers were included in the analysis. This issue was most pronounced in data

from the London Police Service. To ensure the validity of the findings, only cases that mentioned the Emergency Response Unit or tactical were included in this analysis. While it is possible that some individual reports may have been excluded from analysis, this was the most appropriate measure to ensure confidence that only tactical unit reports were included for analysis.

Chapter 5.3: Data Analysis

Unit of Analysis

Each use of force report is treated as the unit of analysis instead of the individual experiencing force. The primary justification for this emerges from the fact that the report allows for the identification of up to three subjects and does not specify what force was applied to what subject. As a result, if the individual were treated as the unit of analysis, the research could theoretically overreport the use of force. However, my approach ensures that overreporting is avoided, thereby producing a more conservative estimate of the use of force. For example, assume that an incident involving two South Asian subjects involved the use of an ARWEN and firearms pointing. If the individual were treated as the unit of analysis, the dataset would report two applications of an ARWEN and two applications of firearms pointing.

Operationalization of Key Variables

One essential use of force variable assessed in this research is firearms pointing, measured as a binary variable (0=No/1=Yes). Firearms pointing is determined through an analysis of the *Use of Force Report* and any indication where an officer has indicated pointing a firearm at a subject. The variable reflected the outlined incident types mentioned on the reporting metric and a selection for multiple incident types. Weapons-related calls were binary-coded and identified through an analysis of the reporting mechanism where officers indicate the presence of this contextual variable. As previously indicated, in the' Other' response category, officers could

identify specific situational contexts like search warrants, high-risk vehicle stops, barricaded persons, and mental health calls. Binary indicators were created for each specific call type category identified in the reporting mechanism, allowing them to be used as controls in the multivariate analysis. Any incidents that made mention of mental health apprehension (MHA), person in crisis (PIC), emotionally disturbed person (EDP), and suicide attempt were all coded under the binary mental health indicator variable.

The presence of a weapon was coded into three categories: 'weapon,' 'unknown,' and 'none,' with each response category comprising its own indicator variable and is determined based on the identification of these categories in a use of force report. The highest selected category was used for each incident. For example, if one subject was armed and another was unarmed or designated as having an unknown weapon, the incident was coded as having a weapon. Incidents featuring no weapon were the reference group.

Race was a categorical variable that may involve multiple responses per incident since multiple individuals could be involved in a single incident. The response categories for all seven identified racial groups were used in addition to a category indicating the presence of multiple subjects of multiple racial identities. Indicator variables were created for each response category, with a score of 1 indicating its presence and 0 indicating its absence. For example, if an incident comprised of subjects only perceived to be Black, then a score of 1 was given to the corresponding indicator. A trichotomous race variable was developed using White as the reference category, and Black and other racial groups/combinations comprised the remaining response categories. Multiple racial groups were coded in the other response category. This response accounts for the methodological challenges associated with low cell counts and expected frequencies observed among some groups and accounts for the theoretical social

construction of the Black population as the criminal Other (Alexander, 2012; Kim, 2004; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007; Tator & Henry, 2006).

While the operationalization of race is suitable for establishing the parameters for inferential statistics, the analysis of racial disproportionality required the creation of a continuous variable that measured the total number of each racial group per incident. This accounts for the issue of multiple racial groups being identified in an incident and measures the total number of people who have force applied against them (Foster & Jacobs, 2022). If an incident comprised of two subjects perceived to be White and one as South Asian, the 'Total White' variable would indicate the presence of two individuals, and the 'Total South Asian' variable would indicate the presence of one individual.

Consistent with the approach from Phillips and Varano (2008), a categorical variable comprising the police service involved was also developed, with Peel Regional Police serving as the reference category. Continuous variables were incorporated to measure the number of officers and subjects in the incident. The diversity of indicator variables, especially concerning the kind of incident and weapon type, accounts for what Jenkins (2021ab) refers to as the context of the call. These variables allow for the inclusion of numerous control variables that may explain variations in force. The framework for the statistical analyses exceeds the minimum standards specified by the *Anti-Racism Act* through its use of inferential statistics.

Approach to Missing Data

McKnight (2007) identified various strategies to engage with missing data, such as using multiple imputation methods to account for missing data. Rather than using imputation methods, McKnight (2007) also illustrated the use of deletion methods to address issues stemming from missing data. Listwise deletion was used for variables where no data was recorded on the *Use of*

Force Report. The statistical analyses of Wortley et al. (2020) appear to use deletion methods to remove missing variables from the analysis altogether. This research used the same approach as the Canadian literature for methodological consistency. A theoretical justification for relying on deletion methods is offered.

Allison (2014) acknowledged that listwise deletion may contribute to data losses and increase the probability of Type II errors. However, it is worth noting that the issue of statistical power is not adversely impacted among large datasets. However, Allison (2014) also indicated that listwise deletion can produce unbiased estimates when the probability that a variable is missing does not depend on the dependent variable. Listwise deletion is also predicated on having a correctly specified regression model and applies beyond linear regression. Allison (2014) also indicated that listwise deletion is preferred over traditional models as other methods have incorrect standard errors and parameter estimates, as this method provides estimates based on the information used.

Racial Disproportionality and Disparity

The *Anti-Racism Act* outlines the minimum data standards required to engage in the construction of an index measuring racial disproportionality and racial disparity (Foster & Jacobs, 2022; Owusu-Bempah & Luscombe, 2021; Wortley et al., 2020). The disparity index measures the degree to which one racial group is represented in a specific outcome, such as the use of force. It compares this to their overall proportion of the population. This measure is used to determine whether a group is under, over, or proportionately represented, as predicted by that group's general proportion of the population (Foster & Jacobs, 2022; Owusu-Bempah & Luscombe, 2021; Wortley et al., 2020). As previously noted, this literature uses Census data to determine a benchmark (Foster & Jacobs, 2022; Wortley et al., 2020). Considering that the data

collected is from incidents between 2020 and 2022, the 2021 Canadian Census is used as the source of the benchmark population. Estimates for the White population are derived by subtracting the total minority and Indigenous populations from the total population and dividing the remaining number by the total population (Wortley et al., 2020, p.38). The estimates for determining the Indigenous population are derived by dividing the proportion of individuals who identify as Indigenous by the total population, and a similar approach is used for each racial minority group (Foster & Jacobs, 2022; Wortley et al., 2020).

A score of 1.00 indicates proportional representation, a score beneath 1.00 indicates underrepresentation and a score above 1.00 indicates overrepresentation (Foster & Jacobs, 2022; Wortley et al., 2020). A figure of .75 indicates that a racial group is 25% less likely to be represented in the statistics, and a figure of 1.75 would indicate that a racial group is 75% more likely to be represented than their shares of the population would predict (Wortley et al., 2020). There is no established standard for quantifying disproportionate representation, which is cause for concern, as these figures vary across studies using this metric (Wortley et al., 2020). Based on the contributions of Wortley et al. (2020), this research adopts an odds ratio of 1.50 or greater as indicative of racial disproportionality and disparity for concern (p. 39). This approach is adopted to remain consistent with the trends in the literature while acknowledging that this is a substantial effect.

$$Disproportionality\ A = \frac{\left(\frac{Racial\ Group\ A\ Use\ of\ Force\ Total}{Total\ Number\ of\ Individuals\ in\ Use\ of\ Force\ Incidents}\right)}{\left(\frac{Racial\ Group\ A\ Population\ Benchmark}{Total\ Population\ Benchmark}\right)}$$

Disproportionality is calculated using the total number of individuals who experienced force divided by the total number of individuals in use-of-force incidents. The results are presented in proportions (Foster & Jacobs, 2022; Peel Regional Police, 2023). Assume that 40

out of 100 individuals who experience force are perceived to be South Asian; the proportion equals .40. The next portion of the equation involves calculating the proportion of people in the benchmark population identifying as a specific racial group relative to the total population. The total number of people identified as South Asian in the 2021 Census is divided by the total population to produce a proportion. For illustrative purposes, assume that the proportion is .20. Finally, the proportion of South Asian individuals in use-of-force incidents (.40) is then divided by that racial group's proportion of the population (.20). The result (2.0) indicates that South Asians are two times more likely to experience force than their proportion of the population would predict.

$$Disproportionality\ GroupA/B = \frac{Group\ A\ Disproportionality}{Group\ B\ Disproportionality}$$

Calculating racial disparities (Disproportionality Group A/B) involves comparing the rate of racial disproportionality between a specific racialized cohort and a reference group, which often comprises the White population. The disproportionality for racial group A is divided by the rate of disproportionality for racial group B to determine how overrepresented a specific racial group is compared to a reference population (Foster & Jacobs, 2022; Watson & Sidhu, 2023). While the use of the disproportionality and disparity index illustrates the scope of the issue, this analysis is not equipped to engage in tests for statistical significance.

Analytical Strategy for Inferential Statistics

Each outcome variable employed in this research is dichotomous and well-suited for logistic regression analysis (Hosmer et al., 2013). Logistic regression allows for including predictor variables that do not require residual normality, a linear relationship with the outcome variable, or equal variance between groups (Hosmer et al., 2013; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). This quantitative analysis employs logistic regression to analyze trends for each police service

when the test assumptions are met. An integrated dataset of all incidents from the five GTHA police services was assessed. Using an integrated dataset is appropriate as Cyr et al. (2020) argue that greater standardization of tactical unit training exists in Canada. Each police service assessed in this research is governed by the same use of force and reporting framework and legislative standards for fielding a tactical unit as indicated by the *Police Services Act*.

Several diagnostic assumptions must be met to apply logistic regression (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). The adequacy of expected frequencies and power is typically measured by examining expected cell counts (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). The general assumption is that the expected cell count is no lower than one, and no more than 20% of cells have an expected cell count of 5. Like other regression models, logistic regression must demonstrate an absence of multicollinearity (Hosmer et al., 2013; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Furthermore, a diagnostic of model fit relying on the Hosmer-Lemeshow test is required and must produce a statistically non-significant Hosmer-Lemeshow p-value to have met the assumption of a good model fit (Hosmer et al., 2013). Similarly, Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) indicate that there must be linearity among the continuous predictors and the logit-transformed dependent variable, which may be measured using a Box-Tidwell test. Finally, there must be an absence of influential outliers when applying logistic regression. Each logistic regression employed in this research meets the diagnostic criteria for its use.

Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) identify the independence of errors as central to the use of logistic regression, and this essentially assumes that the cases are independent of one another. As indicated earlier, this research treats the use of force reports, not the subjects, as the unit of analysis. This was done to maintain the independence of cases. Data in the social sciences is often clustered within higher-level units, and this presents a methodological challenge for

researchers (Allison, 2009; Best & Wolf, 2014; Collischon & Eberl, 2020; Lindegaard et al., 2022; Moehring, 2021; McNeish & Kelly, 2019; Piza et al., 2023; Vincens & Stratform, 2018). The cases for each police service are clustered in the variable measuring the year of the incident. Similarly, the central issue with using an integrated dataset is that the assumption of independence of errors, which guides most statistical tests, is violated (Hosmer et al., 2013; Leyland & Groenewegen, 2020; Sommet & Morselli, 2017; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Failing to account for the nested structure of data may lead to biased standard error estimates and adversely impact the capacity of the models to make the correct statistical inferences (McNeish & Kelly, 2019). Researchers may employ multilevel or fixed-effects models when the assumption of independence is violated (Best & Wolf, 2014; Leyland & Groenewegen, 2020; McNeish & Kelly, 2019).

Multilevel modeling statistically accounts for the clustering of cases (Leyland & Groenewegen, 2020; Sommet & Morselli, 2017; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Using a multilevel model allows this research to apply logistic regression models to address the same research questions while accounting for the clustering of cases and the issues stemming from unobserved cofounders (Best & Wolf, 2014). The central issue with this approach concerning this research is that multilevel modeling relies on a substantial sample size of level two units, with some 40 level two units needed for multilevel modeling (Sommet & Morselli, 2017). In response to these limitations, using a multi-level model would be impractical as this research only encapsulates five police services and does not possess the necessary units to employ these random effects models (Sommet & Morselli, 2017).

While fixed-effects models are often associated with panel data, this approach is well-suited for cross-sectional multilevel data (Allison, 2009; Best & Wolf, 2014; McNeish & Kelly,

2014). Fixed-effects models may be employed where students are nested within classrooms within schools, workers are clustered in firms, individuals are nested in communities or countries, or longitudinal data is used (Best & Wolf, 2014). Fixed-effects models control for unobserved heterogeneity at the cluster (Allison, 2009; Best & Wolf, 2014). McNeish and Kelly (2014) indicated that there are non-overlapping definitions of what accounts for a fixed-effects model, and this varies based on the field in which the model is employed. Rather than using random effects or coefficients, fixed-effect models directly include cluster affiliation dummy variables in the statistical analysis, yielding cluster-specific estimates (McNeish & Kelly, 2019). In the context of regression analyses, the Hausman (1978) test assesses whether a fixed-effect model is more appropriate for the data than a random-effect model. However, the lack of an adequate number of nested units indicates that the model is not suited to analysis using random effects.

One of the primary benefits of using fixed-effects models is that there are fewer diagnostic assumptions when compared to random or mixed models (McNeish & Kelly, 2019). As indicated, using random-effects multilevel modeling requires large quantities of level one (cases) and level two units (clusters) (Sommet & Morselli, 2017). In contrast, McNeish and Kelly (2019) argued that the model needs to be "properly specified concerning Level 1 predictors (time-varying predictors in panel data) for the parameter estimates and standard errors to have desirable statistical properties. The cluster affiliation dummy variables handle all possible Level 2 predictors (time-invariant predictors)" (p.24). Fixed-effects models do not assume clusters are sampled randomly (McNeish & Kelly, 2019).

The use of fixed-effects logistic regression allows for the analysis of panel and clustered data (Allison, 2009; Collischon & Eberl, 2020; Lindegaard et al., 2022; Moehring, 2021; Piza et

al., 2023). Conditional logistic regression is a fixed effects model that also accounts for the variance in the clustered variable and removes unobserved factors that may impact the statistical results (Allison, 2009; Collischon & Eberl, 2020; Hosmer et al., 2013; Moehring, 2021). One potential issue with conditional logistic regression is that it accounts for cluster-specific variation without estimating cluster-specific effects. McNeish and Kelly (2019) demonstrated how cluster-specific variables may be incorporated into the model to account for this potential limitation. Reference coding is one approach to incorporating cluster-specific dummy variables, and it relies on using one of the cluster affiliation variables as a reference category (McNeish & Kell, 2019).

This research employs the approach used by Phillips and Varano (2008), which includes the potential clustering variables as controls within the regression model. In their research, assessing police officer charging decisions across multiple police services, Phillips and Varano (2008) included the clustering variables as controls compared to a reference category. The model incorporates a time-invariant cluster comprising the police service, with Peel Regional Police as the reference category. This model accounts for clustering using a fixed effect and is appropriate considering this research's small number of clusters (see Sommet & Morselli, 2017). Using the clustering variables as controls allows the research to account for the methodological challenges stemming from the violated independence assumption while preserving critical variables in the model (Best & Wolf, 2014; McNeish & Kelly, 2019).

Conclusion:

Henne and Shah (2015) outline the concerns associated with relying on a quantitative approach for engaging with race and ethnicity, as these issues are reduced to statistical significance. In contrast, a growing body of literature highlights the need to incorporate quantitative methodological approaches and statistical analyses in critical criminological works

because of their capacity to address biases in existing research and highlight intersectional findings (Garcia et al., 2018; Lopez et al., 2018; Skrunk, 2024). The state primarily understands systemic racism to be an issue through quantitative means, as identified in the *Anti-Racism Act* and the police collection of race-based statistics. For example, despite decades of concerns about racially discriminatory policing practices (see Wortley & Owusu-Bempah, 2022), the Toronto Police Service did not issue any formal acknowledgment of this reality until their use of force figures demonstrated an excessive degree of racial disproportionality (Loriggio, 2022).

The qualitative experiences of individuals are primarily relegated to the margins in comparison to statistical evidence, demonstrating a biased understanding of how racism is experienced and identified by the state. The use of a mixed-methods approach provides a mechanism for identifying racism using statistical means, incorporating the lived experiences of individuals at the core of these interactions with the state, and provides a vehicle for challenging the way the state conceptualizes and comes to understand racism. The results of the quantitative element of the research are discussed in *Chapter Six*.

Chapter 6: Quantitative Findings

Haggerty (2001) demonstrated the political and institutional context in which statistics emerge and how their use is linked to broader governance structures. Statistics are self-fulfilling as institutions collect information on specific indicators that provide *evidence* to justify expenditures and maintain existing institutional practices. The variables and the structure of the *Use of Force Report* are no exception. The indicators on this form may be used to challenge claims of racial disproportionality (see Chaarani, 2023b), justify expenditures on militarized equipment (see Dubinski, 2024), and be used in a context to frame specific racial cohorts as an actuarial risk deserving of aggressive policing practices (see Tator & Henry, 2006; Wortley et al., 2020). Critiquing the proposed neutrality of these measures is central to identifying them as a cultural product that reproduces existing inequalities. This critical perspective provides an alternative lens for a quantitative analysis that extends its focus beyond investigating statistically significant relationships (Henne & Shah, 2015). Similarly, applying a critical approach to the analysis of statistics also provides an avenue to critique the discriminatory potential of institutional practices and reporting mechanisms (Lopez et al., 2018; Strunk, 2024).

This chapter presents the univariate, bivariate, and multivariate results from the analysis of force reports. These results are presented in aggregate form encompassing (1) Peel Regional Police, (2) Durham Regional Police Service, (3) Halton Regional Police Service, (4) York Regional Police Service, (5) Hamilton Police Service, (6) London Police Service, and the (7) Waterloo Regional Police Service. The racial disproportionality and disparity index results for each police service are presented individually in this chapter. The research questions guiding this portion of the dissertation are outlined:

1. To what extent, if any, is there racial disproportionality in tactical unit use of force compared to each racial group's general proportion of the population?

2. Is race a statistically significant correlate of specific force applications in use of force incidents involving a tactical unit?
    a. Is race a statistically significant predictor of firearms pointing?
    b. Is race a statistically significant predictor of CEW pointing?
    c. Is race a statistically significant predictor of CEW deployments?
    d. Is race a statistically significant predictor of empty-hand soft control techniques?
3. Is race a statistically significant correlate of the encounter context identified in the use of force report?

I hypothesize that Black people will be overrepresented in use of force statistics, as this aspect of police militarization functions as a form of social control applied against this racial group (Gamal, 2016). Relying on the cultural fear of Black criminality (see Alexander, 2012; Saberi, 2017; Tator & Henry, 2006), I hypothesize that both the context and kinds of force experienced by Black people are different from that experienced by White people and other racialized peoples. If Black people are viewed as a criminal threat, they will be treated as more dangerous, necessitating the use of a militarized response. As such, Black people will be more likely to encounter the tactical unit in the context of search warrants, a preplanned deployment. Black people will be more likely to have a firearm pointed at them than other racial groups, as this use of force option is the most closely linked to lethal force.

I argue that the use of force reporting mechanism effectively colourblinds police use of force, presenting it as a race-neutral practice premised solely on incident characteristics. The statistical indicators used on the form are guided by a larger actuarial framework that presents 'objective evidence' of specific individuals and populations as dangerous, legitimizing police violence (Haggerty, 2001; Wortley et al., 2020). This argument implies that despite evidence of

racial bias in the use of force applications, the institution's use of an actuarial framework effectively presents racialized people as the criminal Other. The implications stemming from this argument are that the statistics guiding this actuarial framework further support (a) the proliferation and expansion of police militarization and (b) solidify the position of Black people as the criminal Other. The reporting mechanism presents a series of contextual factors, like call type and weapons presence, that allow the institution to justify the use of force and allow for the collection of data points that reinforce existing discriminatory police biases.

Chapter 6.1 presents the results of the univariate analysis and demonstrates several substantive issues with the use of force reporting framework. Most notably, there appears to be an underreporting of use of force incidents and disparate coding practices for various force applications. Chapter 6.2 displays the results of the bivariate analyses and provides an initial indication that Black people are more likely to encounter the tactical unit in a proactive (planned and discretionary) function and that this cohort is most likely to have a firearm pointed at them as an application of the use of force. Chapter 6.3 outlines the results of the racial disparity and disproportionality analyses, further demonstrating the disproportionate effect this element of militarized policing has on the Black community. Chapter 6.4 offers the results of the multivariate analyses relying on numerous fixed effects models that account for the situational context (see Jenkins et al., 2021ab). Finally, Chapter 6.5 uses critical race perspectives, various explanatory models of police use of force (see Wortley et al., 2020), and Haggerty's (2001) contributions to contextualize the results further.

Chapter 6.1: Univariate Results

The freedom of information request yielded a sample of 1183 use of force incidents across the seven police services assessed. Table 6.1 summarizes how many use of force reports

are analyzed per police service. Use of force reports are typically maintained for two years, and requests for information were made in the winter and spring of 2023. It is possible that some force reports were destroyed, as per each police service's data retention policies.

Table 6.1

Tactical Unit Use of Force Incidents by Police Service (2020-2022)

Police Service	Number of Use of Force Incidents
Peel Regional Police	190
Durham Regional Police Service	89
Halton Regional Police Service	243
York Regional Police Service	6
Hamilton Police Service	187
London Police Service	189
Waterloo Regional Police Service	279
Total	1183

Note. [a] Includes all cases of use of force, including instances with animals and no identified subject.

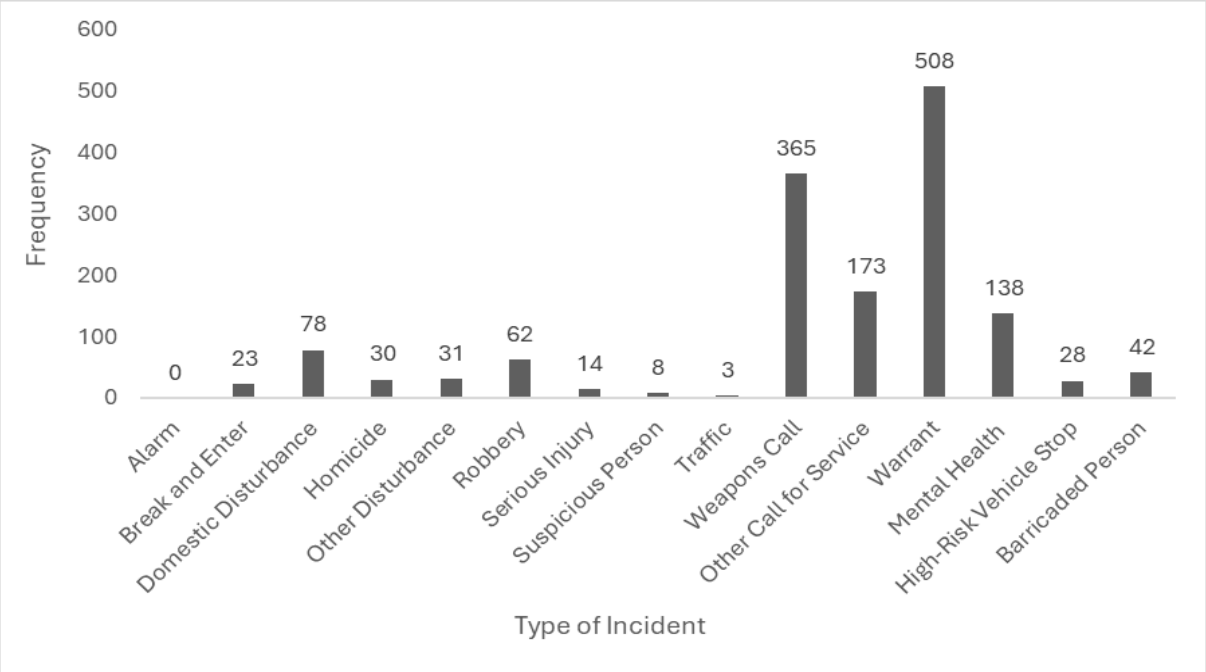
Use of Force Incidents

Use of force applications were deployed in reactive (unplanned) and proactive (planned) deployments. Figure 6.1 illustrates that the most common incidents resulting in the use of force were weapons-related deployments, warrant executions, and mental health apprehensions. The most frequent of these incidents are warrant executions. While warrants are regarded as proactive deployments, they may have specific contextual factors that necessitate a tactical unit, like the threat of an armed subject or the imminent destruction of evidence (Roziere & Walby, 2020a). Tactical units must complete risk assessments in the planning of warrant executions, which are often scrutinized in court to determine the constitutionality of a search (Cyr et al., 2020; Roziere & Walby, 2020a). These risk assessments function in an actuarial capacity to assign risk to particular subjects. They may function to effectively legitimize the use of force on subjects designated as being high-risk. Police assessments of risk are often fueled by intelligence gathered

by the police, which may stem from subjective and discriminatory assessments, but are framed as being objective because of their actuarial nature (Brayne, 2017; Wortley et al., 2020).

Figure 6.1

Incidents Resulting in Use of Force, 2020-2022



Note. [a] n=1183. [b] Officers may select multiple incident types per incident. [c] Officers can specify what "Other" is in the Use of Force Report, including warrants, high-risk vehicle stops, mental health, and barricaded person calls. [d] Other Call for Service is comprised of all other incidents.

Another issue that emerges in the analysis of Figure 6.1 is the potential underreporting of use of force. I will highlight this issue using data from Peel and York Region. Peel Regional Police's Tactical and Rescue Unit was deployed to 888 incidents that are feasibly categorized as 'high-risk' between 2020 and 2022. This included 40 high-risk pedestrian stops, 124 high-risk vehicle stops, 261 incidents involving contain and callouts with no warrant and 463 warrant executions. However, there are only 190 use of force incidents from Peel Regional Police during this time, and this accounts for all call types. As demonstrated in the following chapter, contain and callouts and warrant executions routinely feature the use of firearms pointing. Considering the high-risk nature of these incidents (see Jenkins et al., 2021ab) and the desire to maintain a

tactical advantage over subjects (see Roziere & Walby, 2020a), it is not unreasonable to assume that force applications are present in many of these high-risk incidents and are not being accurately reported.

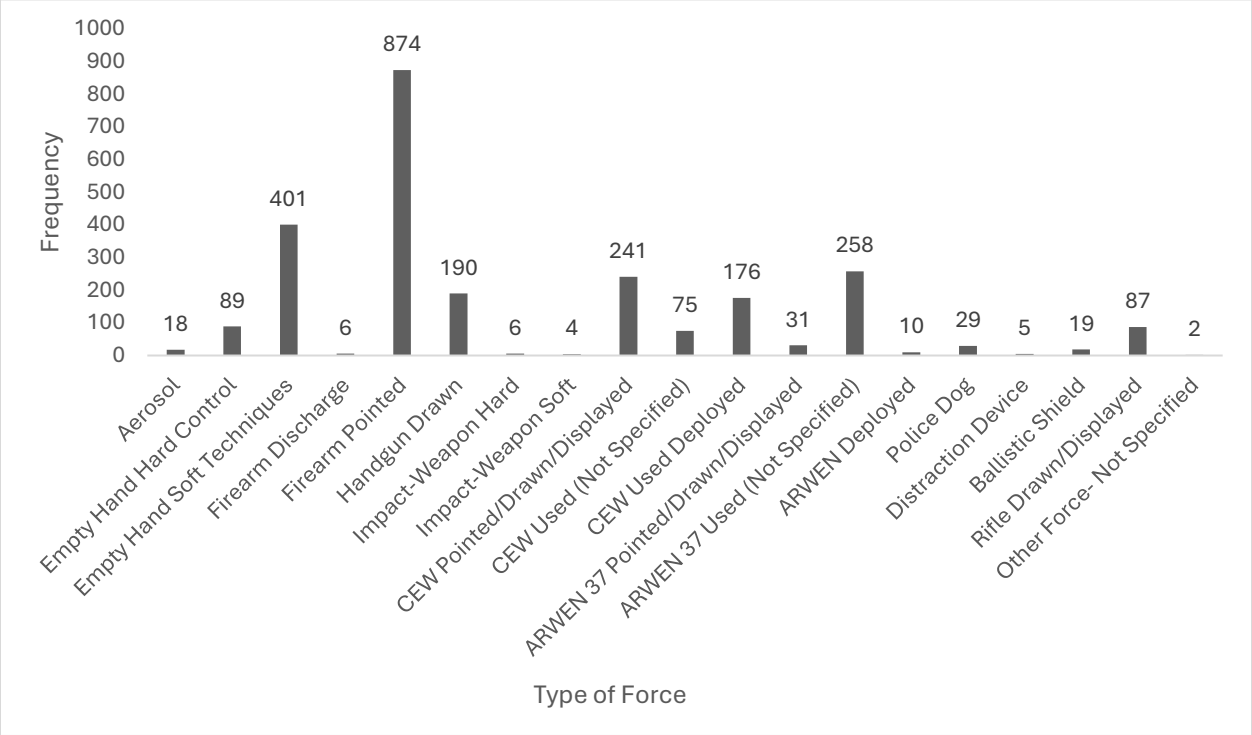
York Regional Police Service's Emergency Response Unit presents a peculiar case, as only six use of force reports were filed between 2020-2022. The Emergency Response Unit was deployed to 1781 incidents, including 331 weapons calls, 97 warrant executions, 18 barricaded people, 88 emotionally disturbed person calls, and 188 out-of-region deployments. Considering the high-risk nature of many of these calls, it is highly problematic to assume that there were only six force applications between 2020-2022. Tactical units executing search warrants are doing so as a result of a determination that the subject(s) presents a risk for violence or the destruction of evidence (Roziere & Walby, 2020a). Considering the standardization of training (see Cyr et al., 2020), the divergence between the York Regional Police Service's statistics and that of other police services in this research indicates underreporting.

Two potential explanations exist for the divergence in reporting use of force incidents. The first is that tactical units are engaged in systemic underreporting. This is plausible as the existing research on use of force reporting argues that the true extent of use of force is unknown due to lower levels of force being underreported (Bennell et al., 2022; Laming, 2023). However, this justification cannot apply in this context as firearms pointing is an option that is legally required to be reported in Ontario. The second explanation is that tactical units attend calls that do not warrant their attendance, so there is a divergence in the reported figures and deployments. Roziere and Walby (2018, 2020b) argued that the expansion and normalization of police militarization demonstrates this mission creep. Both explanations critique the governance of police militarization, as the extent of force in encounters with tactical units is unknown. This

argument implies that the existing institutional safeguards preventing the expansion of militarized policing are limited in their capacity to do so.

Figure 6.2

Type of Use of Force Applications Deployed by Tactical Units, 2020-2022



Note. [a] n=1183. [b] Officers may select multiple applications of force per incident. [c] Applications of ARWEN and CEW were indicated, but their specific use was not specified, necessitating the creation of a new variable.

Figure 6.2 demonstrates that firearm pointing is the most common application of force. The different response categories in the figure also highlight the variations in use of force reporting among police services (see Bennell et al., 2022). Some police services specified whether they pointed or deployed a CEW or ARWEN-37, whereas others indicated its presence without specifying its use. While different organizational policies are one explanation for the variation in the use of force reporting, I argue that the proliferation of police militarization also contributes to this issue.

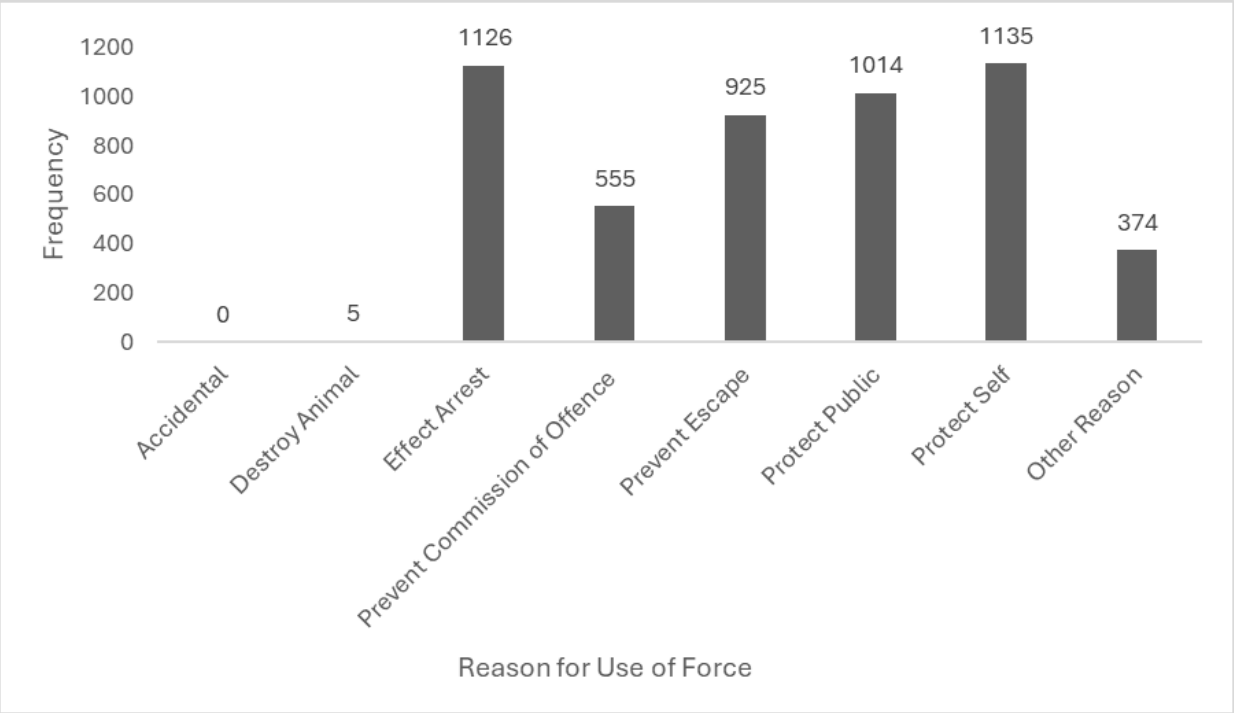
The legislative standards and reporting mechanisms for documenting the use of force are characterized by a blind spot that fails to account for the proliferation of militaristic equipment by tactical units (see Sidhu, 2024). Waterloo Regional Police Service was the only police service to report instances where rifles were drawn but not pointed or otherwise used. The *Police Services Act*, however, only requires that officers complete a form when a handgun is drawn in the presence of a member of the public. Tactical units are equipped with rifles and submachine guns that are routinely drawn in the presence of members of the public. Why officers do not have to document the drawing of more lethal firearms in the presence of members of the public is unknown. This issue has yet to be addressed as the *Community Policing and Safety Act* (the successor to the *Police Services Act*) also does not require the reporting of incidents where rifles or other firearms are drawn in the presence of members of the public but maintains that the drawing of a handgun must be reported.

There are only five incidents where distraction devices, or flashbangs, are used. However, internal documents obtained from Peel Regional Police demonstrated that its Tactical and Rescue Unit deployed these devices 132 times between 2020-2022. These devices are classified as explosive devices (weapons) and should be reported when they are deployed, consistent with the *Police Services Act*. Roziere and Walby (2020a) demonstrated that flashbang deployments are commonly used in search warrant executions. While warrants were the most numerous incidents where force was applied, reporting flashbang use was notably absent across use of force reports. The implications stemming from this finding further support the notion that force is being systemically underreported and that the existing reporting mechanisms are unable to keep pace with the proliferation of militarized equipment and weaponry. This policy gap may contribute towards underreporting the use of force as there are applications of equipment that may

reasonably be construed as force, which are not required to be reported. This further demonstrates that the existing reporting mechanisms and institutional safeguards are ineffective in containing the expansion of police militarization owing to the proliferation of militaristic equipment in domestic civilian policing (Kraska, 2007).

Figure 6.3

Reason for Tactical Units Use of Force, 2020-2022



Note. [a] n=1183. [b] Officers may select multiple reasons for applying force per incident.

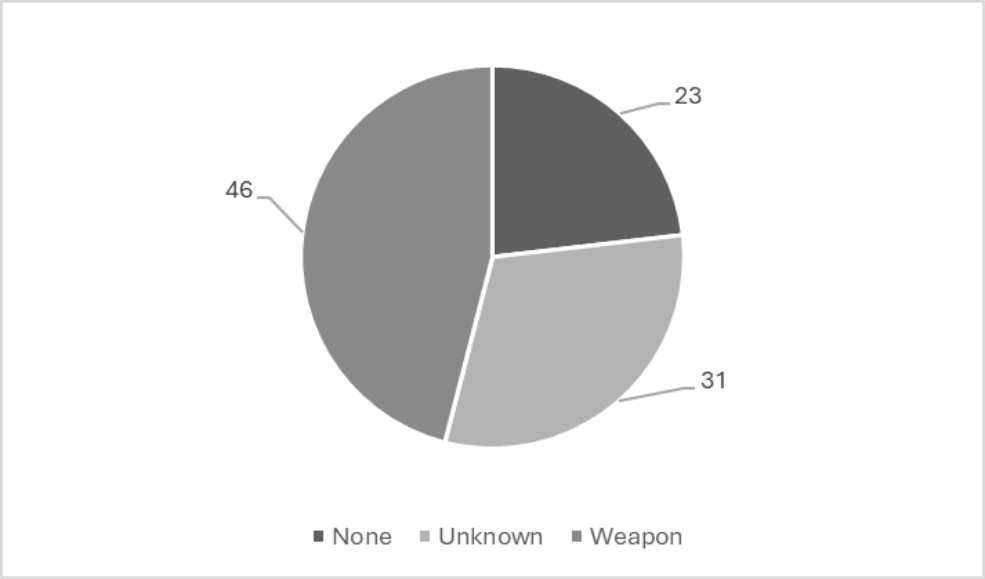
Figure 6.3 illustrates the various reasons why tactical unit officers employ force. It is worth noting that the *Use of Force Report* cannot be submitted without selecting a reason for deploying force. These categories appear to function in a more default capacity, as many reports from individual police services commonly had the same reasons selected for every report with minimal variation.

There was a tremendous degree of variation in weapons reporting across incidents. Figure 6.4 demonstrates that 46% of use of force incidents involved indicating a weapon possessed by

the subject. Weapons may be ‘at hand’, ‘concealed on-person’, or ‘in hand’. The issue with this designation is that there is no classification for what ‘at hand’ means, and it is subject to interpretive flexibility. A related issue is that a single weapon may be at hand for multiple subjects, resulting in overreporting the number of weapons per incident. For example, a single knife may be designated as ‘at hand’ for three subjects.

Figure 6.4

Highest Level of Subject Weapon Identified in Incidents Involving Use of Force, 2020-2022 (%)



Note. [a] n=1148. [b] If any subject in the incident possessed a weapon, it was coded as having a weapon present. Multiple subjects may be coded as having weapons. The form does not explicitly indicate how many weapons are present per incident.

Table 6.2 suggests there may be disparate practices in the coding of weapons across police services. Halton Regional Police reported weapons in 17% of incidents (n=241), Peel Regional Police reported weapons in 22% of incidents (n=187), Durham Regional Police Service reported weapons in 49% of incidents (n=89), and the Hamilton Police Service reported them in 12% of incidents (n=184). 71% of the reported weapons in the data emerged from the London Police Service, which reported weapons in 95% of its incidents (n=187) and the Waterloo Regional Police Service, which reported weapons in 78% of incidents (n=252). While an

immediate explanation for this trend is that weapons are expected in incidents involving the tactical unit, owing to their high risk, Roziere and Walby (2018) demonstrated that tactical units frequently respond to incidents outside their mandate. More research is required to triangulate the proportion of weapons identified among these two police services to determine whether these weapons are present or if these results emerge from a different coding strategy than what is used by police services in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area. For example, officers may perceive weapons despite not encountering one, which may explain the notable differences in rates of weapons reporting.

Table 6.2

Highest Level of Weapon per Incident by Police Service, 2020-2022

Police Service	None	Unknown	Weapon	Total
Peel Regional Police	59 (31%)	88 (47%)	40 (22%)	187
Durham Regional Police Service	29 (33%)	16 (18%)	44 (49%)	89
Halton Regional Police Service	58 (24%)	143 (90%)	40 (17%)	241
York Regional Police Service	0	0	6 (100%)	6
Hamilton Police Service	85 (46%)	77 (42%)	22 (12%)	184
London Police Service	4 (2%)	5 (3%)	178 (95%)	187
Waterloo Regional Police Service	31 (12%)	24 (10%)	197 (78%)	252
Total	266 (23%)	354 (31%)	528 (46%)	1148

Note. [a] n=1148. [b] Cases involving animals, no identified subjects, and missing weapon values removed from the analysis.

In 2018, the London Police Service reported encountering firearms in 15% of use of force incidents (n=221). In 2019, this figure was 28% (n=141). In 2020, the year in which race-based data collection began, the number of firearms per incident skyrocketed to 43% (n=245) in 2020,

42% (n=269) in 2021, and 46% (n=228) in 2022. London's crime severity index has remained consistent, ranging from 74.72 to 76.59 (Statistics Canada, 2024). There is no apparent reason for the dramatic increase in the number of semi-automatic firearms encountered by the London Police. A potential change in the way weapons-related statistics are captured in use of force incidents allows the institution to challenge claims of systemic discrimination by substantiating the use of force as being justified in response to weapons possession. Future research is needed to triangulate the reported increase in firearms possession to determine if the results stem from a more flexible approach to coding data or result from a substantive change in the criminal environment in London, Ontario.

When viewed in aggregate, the findings suggest that weapons are common in use of force incidents involving tactical units. A more thorough interrogation of this finding demonstrates that this trend is primarily driven by at-hand weapon designations, concentrated among two police services. Building on Haggerty's (2001) contributions, the coding of weapons at hand serves a broader institutional function. Failing to specify the number of weapons in use of force incidents and a greater interpretive flexibility to code multiple subjects as having a weapon serves to justify the expansion of police militarization. The institution can justify the expansion of police militarization and the adoption of militaristic equipment by making appeals to officer safety and crime control as a result of an increased rate of weapons being present in use of force incidents. Dubinski's (2024) reporting on the London Police Service's purchase of armoured vehicles featured institutional discourses about the increase in weapons possessed by subjects to substantiate the purchase. Similarly, the evidence-based scholarship (see Jenkins et al., 2021ab) has used weapons possession, or the threat thereof, to justify the expansion of police militarization when challenging Roziere and Walby (2018).

Table 6.3 demonstrates that many weapons the subject possesses are designated as being at hand. When weapon location was recorded, 80% of incidents were those where the weapon was at hand (n=762). In contrast, only 11% of incidents involve a subject who has a weapon in hand. This issue is further complicated because virtually every household can access objects that may be construed as weapons, like knives (Walby, 2022). These findings also do not indicate that every subject has a unique weapon but that they have a weapon accessible to them. There may only be one weapon in the incident, but all subjects may be coded as having access to a weapon at hand. However, the presentation of the statistical results implies that multiple subjects are in possession of multiple weapons.

Table 6.4 offers additional context for understanding weapons possession. The most common weapon categorization is "none" or "unknown" across each subject. This implies that most incidents involving use of force by tactical units involve individuals who do not have weapons, even when accounting for the data from Waterloo and London.

Table 6.3

Weapon Location Per Incident by Police Service, 2020-2022

Subject	At-Hand	Concealed On-Person	In-Hand	Total
1	402 (75%)	55 (10%)	78 (15%)	535
2	129 (88%)	14 (10%)	3 (2%)	146
3	77 (95%)	4 (5%)	0 (0%)	81
Total	608 (80%)	73 (10%)	81 (10%)	762

Note. [a] Officers may indicate that multiple subjects possessed weapons and designate weapon location, regardless of the total number of weapons (not captured on the form). [b] If there is one weapon and three subjects, an officer could designate each subject as having the weapon at-hand.

Table 6.4

Weapon Type by Subject Involved in Use of Force Incidents, 2020-2022

Subject	Baseball Bat/ Club	Knife/Edged Weapon	Revolver	Rifle	Semi-Automatic	Shotgun	None	Unknown	Other	Multiple Weapons	Total
1	11 (0.96%)	139 (12.10%)	19 (1.66%)	22 (1.92%)	221 (19.25%)	32 (2.79%)	271 (23.60%)	356 (31.01%)	34 (2.96%)	43 (3.75%)	1148
2	2 (0.46%)	8 (1.83%)	6 (1.38%)	5 (1.15%)	90 (20.64%)	8 (1.83%)	140 (32.11%)	157 (36.01%)	7 (1.61%)	13 (2.98%)	436
3	1 (0.41%)	2 (0.83%)	3 (1.24%)	1 (0.41%)	52 (21.49%)	9 (3.72%)	79 (32.64%)	85 (35.12%)	3 (1.24%)	7 (2.89%)	243

Note. [a] There are instances where Subject 1 may have been designated as having an unknown or no weapon, but another Subject in the incident may have been in possession of a weapon.

Figure 6.5 illustrates the officer-perceived race of subjects involved in use of force incidents. The findings demonstrate that the Black community is the most frequently visible minority group in the data. This finding is consistent with the systemic issues in policing adversely affecting the Black community (see Wortley and Owusu-Bempah, 2022).

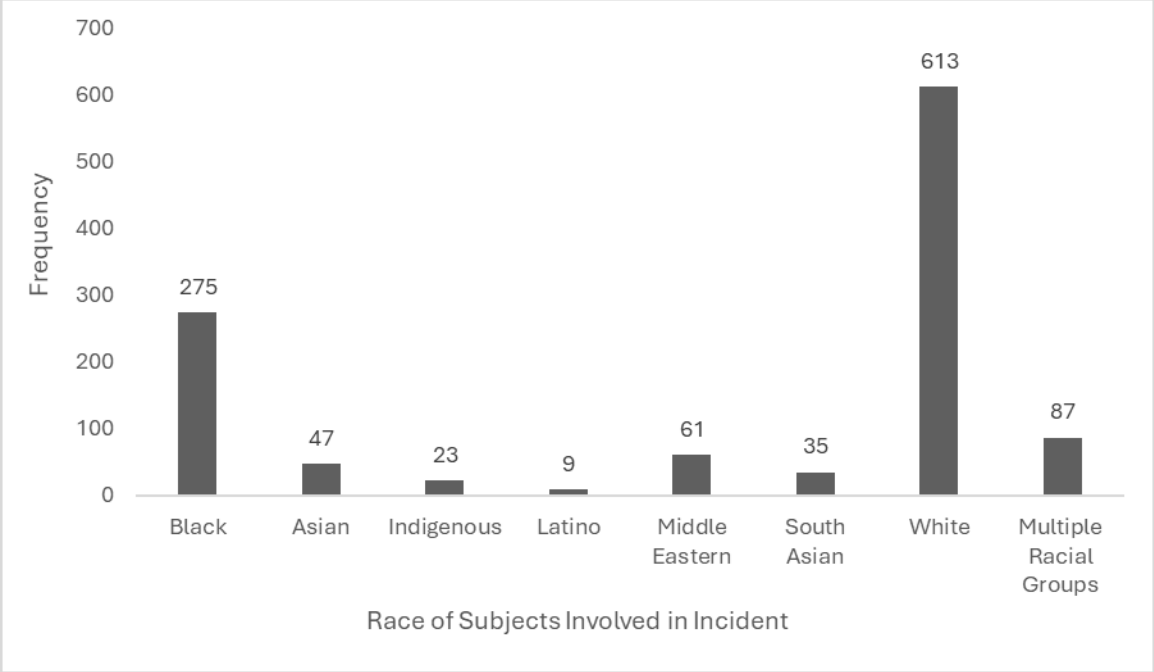
Indigenous peoples are largely absent from the use of force data and only account for 38 individuals across all cases, and there are 23 incidents only involving Indigenous peoples. One potential explanation is that the municipalities assessed in this research do not have large numbers of Indigenous residents, making it statistically less likely for them to encounter the tactical unit. An alternative explanation is geographic variation in Indigenous overrepresentation in the justice system (LaPrairie, 2002; Wiley et al., 2020). The research literature demonstrates that the prairie provinces and northern cities contribute to higher rates of Indigenous contact with the justice system (LaPrairie, 2002; Wiley et al., 2020). In contrast, eastern cities are identified as having more economic and social resources (LaPrarie, 2002). Schneider (2022) articulated that

the prairie provinces have concentrated levels of communal disadvantage and ethnic segregation of Indigenous persons.

This is not to say that Indigenous people do not experience discriminatory treatment by the police (see Dhillon, 2015; Laming, 2022). The rates of overrepresentation of Indigenous peoples in use of force statistics in Ontario may stem from interactions with patrol officers rather than tactical officers, which draws attention to patrol policing. Another explanation is that Indigenous people may be perceived as White by officers, which functions as the default category (see Samuels-Wortley, 2022b). As such, future research should investigate regional race-based disparities to account for regional variation and demographic changes.

Figure 6.5

Officer-Perceived Race of Subject Involved in Use of Force Incident



Note. [a] n=1150. [b] "Multiple Racial Groups" refers to separate individuals of different racial groups involved in the incident.

Considering the distribution of the racial groups in this data, an approach like Wortley et al. (2020) is used. The race variable in this research is a trichotomous variable with White as the

reference group, a category for Black subjects, and a third response category for all other racial groups. This approach also allows the researcher to navigate the violations of numerous statistical tests that would have emerged due to low expected cell counts and observed frequencies (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). The methodological justification for this also stems from the findings demonstrating the presence of Black and White subjects in these incidents. The inferential statistics will employ a trichotomous race variable to account for the violations of statistical tests, whereas the descriptive statistics and measures of racial disproportionality and disparity present the figures for each racial cohort to demonstrate the potential effect of differential racialization.

Chapter 6.2: Bivariate Results

Bivariate Tabulations

Table 6.5 illustrates the officer's perceived race of subjects in use of force incidents across police services. Incidents involving only subjects perceived to be Black account for 13% to 43% of the use of force reports, suggesting that the Black community will be overrepresented in these use of force incidents. Table 6.6 presents a tabulation of specific applications of use of force per racial group. The results demonstrate that 41% of incidents involving Black subjects feature firearms pointing, the highest proportion of this form of force among any single racial group. Firearms pointing was used in 32% of incidents involving White subjects. 10% of incidents involving Black subjects resulted in the deployment of a CEW, whereas this figure was only 5% for White subjects. Considering the application of these two force options, the statistical analysis will assess predictors of firearms pointing and CEW deployments.

Table 6.7 presents a bivariate tabulation of officer-perceived subject race and call type. Of incidents involving Black subjects, 47% occurred in the context of a warrant execution and

24% for weapons-related deployments (n=275). White subjects encountered tactical units in warrants in 41% of incidents, and 34% involved weapons-related calls for service (n=613). 5% of incidents involving Black subjects occurred in the context of a mental health-related call for service (n=275), whereas this figure was 17% for incidents involving White subjects (n=613). White subjects were more frequently represented in barricaded person calls, as this accounted for 5% of their incidents compared to only 1% among Black subjects. Finally, 5% of incidents for Black subjects involved high-risk vehicle stops, whereas this figure was 1% among White subjects. These figures indicate that incidents involving Black people are more likely to involve proactive (planned) deployments. In contrast, White people were more frequently represented in reactive incidents where the police are responding to an active situation or a 9-1-1 call.

Table 6.5

Officer-Perceived Race of Subjects by Police Service, 2020-2022

Service	Black	E/S.E Asian	Indigenous	Latino	Middle Eastern	South Asian	White	Multiple Racial Groups	Total
Peel Regional Police	79 (43%)	20 (11%)	1 (0.5%)	3 (2%)	10 (5%)	20 (11%)	44 (24%)	10 (5%)	187
Durham Regional Police Service	13 (15%)	4 (4%)	1 (1%)	0 (0%)	3 (3%)	2 (2%)	55 (62%)	11 (12%)	89
Halton Regional Police Service	69 (29%)	5 (2%)	1 (0.4%)	1 (0.4%)	19 (8%)	4 (2%)	126 (52%)	17 (7%)	242
York Regional Police Service	2 (33%)	1 (17%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (50%)	0 (0%)	6
Hamilton Police Service	38 (21%)	8 (4%)	2 (1%)	0 (0%)	7 (4%)	4 (2%)	105 (57%)	20 (11%)	184

London Police Service	40 (21%)	1 (0.5%)	17 (9%)	2 (1%)	7 (4%)	1 (0.5%)	101 (53%)	20 (11%)	189
Waterloo Regional Police Service	34 (13%)	8 (3%)	1 (0.4%)	2 (0.8%)	15 (6%)	4 (2%)	179 (71%)	9 (4%)	253

Note. [a] n=1150. [b] Cases involving animals and no identified subjects were removed from the analysis.

Table 6.6

Use of Force Application by Perceived Race of Subjects, 2020-2022

Use of Force Incident	Black	E/S.E Asian	Indigenous	Latino	Middle Eastern	South Asian	White	Multiple Racial Groups
Aerosol	5 (0.9%)	3 (3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (0.7%)	2 (3%)	6 (0.4%)	1 (0.6%)
Empty-Hand Hard Techniques	21 (4%)	6 (7%)	4 (8%)	1 (4%)	2 (2%)	7 (10%)	43 (3%)	5 (3%)
Empty-Hand Soft Techniques	84 (15%)	10 (11%)	10 (20%)	3 (13%)	17 (13%)	7 (10%)	237 (17%)	32 (20%)
Firearm Discharge	2 (0.5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (0.7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Firearms Pointing	223 (41%)	31 (36%)	18 (36%)	6 (26%)	47 (36%)	21 (29%)	447 (32%)	80 (49%)
Handgun Drawn	38 (7%)	1 (1%)	7 (14%)	2 (9%)	10 (8%)	1 (1%)	107 (8%)	12 (7%)
Impact Weapon Hard	1 (0.2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (1%)	3 (0.2%)	1 (0.6%)
Impact Weapon Soft	4 (0.7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (0.7%)	0 (0%)	2 (0.1%)	0 (0%)
CEW Pointed/Drawn/ Displayed	47 (9%)	7 (8%)	4 (8%)	2 (9%)	10 (8%)	8 (11%)	145 (10%)	12 (7%)
CEW (Used-Not Specified)	8 (1%)	1 (1%)	0 (0%)	1 (4%)	10 (8%)	3 (4%)	50 (4%)	1 (0.6%)
CEW Deployed	54 (10%)	19 (22%)	5 (10%)	3 (13%)	8 (6%)	14 (19%)	66 (5%)	5 (3%)

ARWEN-37 Pointed/Drawn/ Displayed	8 (1%)	1 (1%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (1%)	20 (1.4%)	1 (0.6%)
ARWEN-37 (Used- Not Specified)	27 (5%)	6 (7%)	1 (2%)	4 (17%)	17 (13%)	4 (5%)	177 (13%)	6 (4%)
ARWEN-37 Discharged	2 (0.4%)	1 (1%)	0 (0%)	1 (4%)	0 (0%)	1 (1%)	5 (0.3%)	0 (0%)
Canine	7 (1%)	1 (1%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (0.7%)	1 (1%)	14 (1%)	1 (0.6%)
Distraction Device	1 (0.2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (0.2%)	1 (0.6%)
Ballistic Shield	3 (0.5%)	0 (0%)	1 (2%)	0 (0%)	1 (0.7%)	1 (1%)	16 (11%)	0 (0%)
Rifle Drawn/Displayed (Not Pointed	8 (1%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (2%)	1 (1%)	54 (4%)	4 (2%)
Other Force Option	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (0.1%)	0 (0%)
Total	544	87	50	23	129	73	1397	162

Note. [a] n=1150. [b] Cases involving animals and no identified subjects were removed from the analysis. [c] Officers may apply multiple applications of force per incident.

Table 6.7

Type of Incident by Officer-Perceived Subject Race, 2020-2022

Incident	Black	Asian/SE Asian	Indigenous	Latino	Middle Eastern	South Asian	White	Multiple Racial Identities
Alarm	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Break and Enter	5 (2%)	2 (4%)	1 (4%)	1 (11%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	8 (1%)	2 (2%)
Domestic Disturbance	9 (3%)	3 (6%)	3 (13%)	2 (22%)	2 (3%)	1 (3%)	57 (9%)	0 (0%)
Homicide	13 (5%)	0 (0%)	1 (4%)	1 (11%)	2 (3%)	0 (0%)	6 (1%)	5 (6%)
Other Disturbance	4 (1%)	1 (2%)	0 (0%)	1 (11%)	1 (2%)	2 (6%)	22 (4%)	0 (0%)

Robbery	25 (9%)	5 (11%)	2 (9%)	0 (0%)	1 (2%)	5 (14%)	16 (3%)	5 (6%)
Serious Injury	2 (0.5%)	1 (2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (3%)	6 (1%)	3 (3%)
Suspicious Person	2 (0.7%)	0 (0%)	1 (4%)	0 (0%)	2 (3%)	0 (0%)	3 (0.5%)	0 (0%)
Traffic	1 (0.4%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (11%)	1 (2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Weapons Call	66 (24%)	13 (28%)	7 (30%)	2 (22%)	19 (31%)	14 (40%)	210 (34%)	27 (31%)
Warrant	130 (47%)	15 (32%)	5 (22%)	2 (22%)	25 (40%)	13 (37%)	254 (41%)	48 (55%)
Mental Health	15 (5%)	3 (6%)	2 (9%)	1 (11%)	7 (12%)	7 (20%)	103 (17%)	0 (0%)
Barricaded Person	4 (1%)	4 (9%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (5%)	1 (3%)	30 (5%)	0 (0%)
High-Risk Vehicle Stop	14 (5%)	3 (6%)	0 (0%)	1 (11%)	1 (2%)	1 (3%)	6 (1%)	2 (2%)
Other	48 (17%)	9 (19%)	1 (4%)	0 (0%)	10 (16%)	3 (9%)	83 (14%)	13 (15%)
Total	275	47	23	9	61	35	613	87

Note. [a] n=1150. [b] Cases involving animals and no identified subjects were removed from the analysis. [c] Officers may indicate multiple incident types per report. [d] Other Call for Service is comprised of all other incidents not indicated.

Table 6.8 demonstrates the bivariate tabulations of perceived subject race and weapons possession. The results show that incidents 50% of incidents involving White subjects (n=611) feature weapons possession, whereas this figure is 39% for incidents involving Black subjects (n=275). The majority of incidents involving Black subjects do not feature weapons and point to a potential racial disparity in the context in which Black subjects encounter the tactical unit. Black people are indicated to have an unknown weapon 41% of the time (n=275), whereas White people are coded as having an unknown weapon only 26% of the time (n=611). The results for

the unknown weapon possession may be the result of statistical discrimination, in which the use of force is justified against unarmed Black people, as the indication of having an unknown weapon presents them as being dangerous. Like the incident variables, weapons possession is also used as a control for the multivariate analysis.

The threat of weapons possession may necessitate the use of tactical units (see Jenkins et al., 2021ab) but also substantiate the use of firearms pointing to ensure officer and subject safety. The important caveat to consider is that weapons possession may be overreported due to what seemingly appear to be distinct coded practices adopted by the Waterloo Regional Police Service and the London Police Service. However, there is no evidence to refute these statistics, and weapon possession is a conceptually relevant variable related to the use of force.

Table 6.8

Highest Level of Weapon in Incident by Officer-Perceived Subject Race, 2020-2022

Highest Weapon Category in Incident	Black	Asian/SE Asian	Indigenous	Latino	Middle Eastern	South Asian	White	Multiple Racial Identities
None	54 (20%)	16 (34%)	2 (9%)	2 (22%)	11 (18%)	10 (29%)	145 (24%)	26 (30%)
Unknown	114 (41%)	21 (45%)	2 (9%)	1 (11%)	17 (28%)	16 (46%)	158 (26%)	25 (29%)
Weapon	107 (39%)	10 (21%)	19 (83%)	6 (67%)	33 (54%)	9 (26%)	308 (50%)	36 (41%)
Total	275	47	23	9	61	35	611	87

Note. [a] n=1148. [b] If any subject in the incident possessed a weapon, it was coded as having a weapon present. Multiple subjects may be coded as having weapons. The form does not explicitly indicate how many weapons are present per incident.

Bivariate Tests

Table 6.9 presents the results of chi-square tests of independence examining the relationship between use of force applications and subject race. The results demonstrate that incidents involving Black subjects and other racial groups were more likely to include firearms pointing than incidents involving White subjects (χ^2 (2, N=1150) = 7.387, p = .025). Incidents only involving subjects perceived to be Black featured firearms pointing in 81.09% of incidents (n=275) in contrast to 72.92% of incidents involving subject(s) perceived to be White (n=613). Similarly, incidents involving Black and other racialized subjects were more likely to indicate the use of CEW deployment than incidents involving White subjects (χ^2 (2, N=1150) = 19.565, p = <.001). 19.64% of incidents involving Black subjects and 20.61% of incidents involving other racialized groups (n=262) featured this application of force. In comparison, only 10.77% of incidents involving White subjects indicated CEW deployment.

The results also demonstrate that Black and other racialized subjects are less likely to have a CEW pointed at them (χ^2 2, N=1150) = 8.4063, p = .015) when compared to their White counterparts. Almost 38% of cases involving subjects perceived as White include the reporting of soft physical control, whereas this is the case in 30.55% and 30.15% of incidents involving Black and other racialized subjects. Similarly, Black and other racialized subjects are less likely to be involved in incidents where soft physical control is employed in comparison to their White counterparts (χ^2 2, N=1150) = 8.720, p = .013). These findings indicate that race is a statistically significant predictor of use of force applications. Black and other racialized groups had higher proportions of incidents where more serious forms of force were applied to them, whereas their White counterparts were more frequently involved incidents where less severe forms of force were applied to them.

Table 6.9

Use of Force and Officer-Perceived Subject Race, 2020-2022

	White	Black	Other Race	Total	χ^2 (p)[a]
Firearm pointed					
No	166 (27.08%)	52 (18.91%)	59 (22.52%)	277 (24.11%)	7.387 (.025)
Yes	447 (72.92%)	223 (81.09%)	203 (77.48%)	872 (75.89%)	
CEW deployment					
No	547 (89.23%)	221 (80.36%)	208 (79.39%)	976 (84.87%)	19.565 (<.001)
Yes	66 (10.77%)	54 (19.64%)	54 (20.61%)	174 (15.13%)	
CEW pointed					
No	468 (76.35%)	228 (82.91%)	219 (83.59%)	915 (79.57%)	8.406 (.015)
Yes	145 (23.65%)	47 (17.09%)	43 (16.41%)	235 (20.43%)	
Empty-hand soft control					
No	376 (61.34%)	191 (69.45%)	183 (69.85%)	750 (65.22%)	8.720 (.013)
Yes	237 (38.66%)	84 (30.55%)	79 (30.15%)	400 (34.78%)	

N=1150; *df=2*

Table 6.10 presents the results of a chi-square test of independence to examine the relation between the type of incident where force was employed and subject race, as this may be an important contextual indicator that could explain the observed statistical disparities. The relation between race and warrants was not statistically significant (χ^2 (2, N=1150) = 2.980, p = .225). Race was a statistically significant correlate of reported weapons-related incidents (χ^2 (2,

N=1149) = 9.321, p = .009). Use of force incidents involving White subjects were more likely to stem from weapons-related calls than use of force incidents involving Black and other racialized subjects. 34.26% of incidents involving subjects only perceived to be White included the identification of a weapon, whereas the proportion of these incidents were 24% and 31% among Black and other racialized subjects. Similarly, incidents involving White subjects were more likely to result from mental-health calls in comparison to incidents of use of force incidents involving Black and other racialized subjects (χ^2 (2, N=1150) = 29.76, p = <.001). These results illustrate the importance of examining the context of the incident, which demonstrates that White subjects more frequently experience force in reactive incidents, whereas Black and other racialized counterparts who are more frequently experience reported force incidents in more proactive calls.

Table 6.10

Call Context and Officer-Perceived Subject Race, 2020-2022

	White	Black	Other Race	Total	χ^2 (p)[a]
Warrant Execution					
No	359 (58.56%)	145 (52.73%)	154 (58.78%)	658 (57.22%)	2.980 (.225)
Yes	254 (41.44%)	130 (47.27%)	108 (41.22%)	492 (42.78%)	
Weapons-Related Call					
No	403 (65.74%)	209 (76%)	180 (68.70%)	792 (68.87%)	9.321 (.009)
Yes	210 (34.26%)	66 (24%)	82 (31.30%)	358 (31.13%)	

Mental Health-Related Call					
No	510 (83.20%)	260 (94.55%)	242 (92.37%)	1012 (88%)	29.276 (<.001)
Yes	103 (16.80%)	15 (5.45%)	20 (7.63%)	138 (12%)	

N=1150; *df=2*

Weapons possession is another important factor that may explain potential disparities in use of force, and serves as an important contextual variable (Jenkins et al., 2021ab). Table 6.11 examines the relationship between perceived subject race and weapons possession. The relation between these variables was statistically significant, χ^2 (4, N=1148) = 23.257, p = <.001. Incidents involving White subjects featured higher rates of weapons possession in comparison to incidents of use of force involving Black and other racialized subjects. While Black and other racialized subjects experienced force at a proportionately higher rate, they were less likely to be involved in reactive incidents. In contrast, White subjects were more frequently involved in reactive incidents, and the presence of a weapon, may necessitate the involvement of the tactical unit in these instances. These results cannot explain the observed racial disparities in the most severe applications of force, which are firearms pointing and CEW deployment.

Incidents involving Black subjects were coded as having an *unknown* weapon in over 41% of incidents (n=275). In contrast, 25.86 of incidents involving White subjects (n=613) and 31.30% of incidents involving other racialized groups (n=262) featured this unknown designation as the highest level of identified weapon. Some potential explanations for this disparity in the rate of unknown weapons possession may stem from implicit biases of officers in which some may view Black subjects as being more dangerous (see Wortley et al., 2020) or access to information or intelligence about a subject that is not disclosed on the reporting mechanism that may lead an officer to this inference. Conversely, a more critical interpretation

suggests that presenting Black people as being more actuarially risky (by indicating they have an unknown weapon) functions to legitimize and justify the use of force against an otherwise unarmed subject.

Table 6.11

Officer-Perceived Subject Race and Highest Category of Weapon in Incident, 2020-2022

Subject Race	No Weapon	Unknown Weapon	Weapon	Total
White	145 (23.73%)	158 (25.86%)	308 (50.41%)	613
Black	54 (19.64%)	114 (41.45%)	107 (38.91%)	275
Other Race	67 (25.57%)	82 (31.30%)	113 (43.13%)	262
Total	266 (23.17%)	354 (30.84%)	528 (45.99%)	1148

N=1147 ; χ^2= 23.257; *df*= 4 ; p= <0.001

The next set of analyses, in Table 6.12, investigates firearms pointing and specific call types. The execution of a search warrant (χ^2 (1, N=1183) = 51.534, p = <.001) and attendance at a mental health call (χ^2 (1, N=1183) = 28.635, p = <.001) had statistically significant relationships with the reporting of firearms pointing. Mental health calls are less likely to feature incidents of firearms pointing than other call types, whereas warrants had the highest proportion of this force application. 85% of reported warrant executions indicated the use of firearms pointing, which was the highest observed rate among the assessed incident types (N=508). Warrant executions are more likely to feature firearms pointing than incidents not involving warrants, and this is likely owing to their high risk nature (Roziere & Walby, 2020a). The relation between firearms pointing and weapons-related calls was not statistically significant (χ^2 (1, N=1183) = 0.112, p = .738). These findings demonstrate the conceptual and empirical

importance of accounting for the relationship between call type and use of force, as it suggests that tactical units apply different force applications to the call context.

Table 6.12

Firearms Pointing and Call Context, 2020-2022

	Firearm Not Pointed	Firearm Pointed	χ^2 (p)[a]
Warrant Execution			
No	230 (34.07%)	445 (65.93%)	51.534 (<.001)
Yes	79 (15.55%)	429 (84.45%)	
Total	309 (26.12%)	874 (73.88%)	
Weapons-Related Call			
No	216 (34.12%)	602 (65.88%)	0.112 (.738)
Yes	93 (25.48%)	272 (74.52%)	
Total	309 (26.12%)	874 (73.88%)	
Mental Health-Related Call			
No	247 (23.64%)	798 (76.36%)	28.556 (<.001)
Yes	62 (44.93%)	76 (55.07%)	
Total	309 (26.12%)	874 (73.88%)	

N=1183; *df=1*

Table 6.13 presents the results of a chi square test of independence measuring the relationship between CEW deployment and call context. Deployments involving warrants are less likely to report CEW deployment than mental health and weapons-related calls for service

and this relationship is statistically significant (χ^2 (1, N=1183) = 34.481, p = <.001). CEW deployments are no more likely in weapons-related incidents (χ^2 (1, N=1183) = 2.42, p = .086). Conversely, CEW deployments were more likely to be reported in incidents involving mental health calls (χ^2 (1, N=1182) = 38.784, p = <.001).

Table 6.13

Call Context and CEW Deployment, 2020-2022

	CEW Not Deployed	CEW Deployed	χ^2 (*p*)[a]
Warrant Execution			
No	539 (79.85%)	136 (20.15%)	34.481 (<.001)
Yes	468 (92.13%)	40 (7.87%)	
Total	1007 (85.12%)	176 (14.88%)	
Weapons-Related Call			
No	706 (86.31%)	112 (13.69%)	2.94 (.086)
Yes	301 (82.47%)	64 (17.53%)	
Total	1007 (85.12%)	176 (14.88%)	
Mental Health-Related Call			
No	914 (87.46%)	131 (12.54%)	38.784 (<.001)
Yes	93 (67.39%)	45 (32.61%)	
Total	1007 (85.12%)	176 (14.88%)	

N=1183; *df=1*

Table 6.14 presents the results of a chi-square test examining the relationship between call context and CEW pointing. Warrant executions (χ^2 (1, N=1183) = 1.915, p = .166.), weapons-related calls for service (χ^2 (1, N=1183) 3.310, p = .069) were not statistically significant correlates of CEW pointing. Roziere and Walby (2020a) indicate that search warrants are executed in a manner that generally relies on officers having a tactical advantage, which is usually accomplished through the element of surprise. Similarly, the potentially risky nature of some of these encounters may also contribute to officers' decisions to employ firearms pointing rather than CEW pointing. Mental health calls were a statistically significant correlate of CEW pointing (χ^2 (1, N=1183) = 7.145, p = .008) as almost 29% of these incidents featured an indication of CEW pointing, which was the highest proportion among the assessed call types (n=138).

Table 6.14

Call Context and CEW Pointing, 2020-2022

	CEW Not Pointed	CEW Pointed	χ^2 (p)[a]
Warrant Execution			
No	528 (78.22%)	147 (21.78%)	1.915 (.166)
Yes	414 (81.50%)	94 (18.50%)	
Total	942 (79.63%)	241 (20.37)	
Weapons-Related Call			
No	663 (81.05%)	155 (18.95)	3.310 (.069)
Yes	279 (76.44%)	86 (23.56%)	

Total	942 (79.63%)	241 (20.37)	
Mental Health-Related Call			
No	844 (80.77%)	201 (19.23%)	7.145 (.008)
Yes	98 (71.01%)	40 (28.99%)	
Total	942 (79.63%)	241 (20.37)	

N=1183; *df=1*

Table 6.15 presents the results of a chi-square test examining the relationship between call context and the use of soft physical control. Warrant executions (χ^2 (1, N=1183) = .7973, p = .372), weapons-related calls for service (χ^2 (1, N=1183) 2.862, p = .091), and mental health calls (χ^2 (1, N=1183) = .2825, p = .595) are not statistically significant correlates of police-reporting of empty-hand soft control techniques. The results demonstrate that soft physical control is applied at similar rates across these three incident types. The results of the aforementioned analyses demonstrate the need to incorporate these contextual variables, like the kind of incident, in the multivariate models testing for influence of race in the application of force.

Table 6.15

Call Context and Soft Physical Control, 2020-2022

	No Soft Control	Soft Control	χ^2 (p)[a]
Warrant Execution			
No	439 (65.04%)	236 (34.96%)	.7973 (.372)
Yes	343 (67.52%)	165 (32.48%)	
Total	782 (66.10%)	401 (34.90)	

Weapons-Related Call			
No	528 (64.55%)	290 (35.45%)	2.863 (.091)
Yes	254 (69.59%)	111 (30.41%)	
Total	782 (66.10%)	401 (34.90)	
Mental Health-Related Call			
No	688 (65.84%)	357 (34.16%)	.283 (.595)
Yes	94 (68.12%)	44 (31.88%)	
Total	782 (66.10%)	401 (34.90)	

N=1183; *df=1*

Table 6.16 analyzes the relationship between the call context and the highest level of reported weapon. Deployments indicating the presence of a weapon are less likely to feature firearms pointing (χ^2 (2, N=1148) = 9.039, p = .011) and less likely to feature CEW deployment (χ^2 (2, N=1148) = 6.188, p = .045) than incidents where the subject is unarmed or has an unknown weapon. In calls involving weapons, there was a statistically significant association with the use of soft physical control as these incidents were had the highest proportion of this force application (χ^2 (2, N=1148) = 75.596, p = <.001). Incidents where a weapon is identified also featured the highest proportion of CEW pointing among the three weapons categories (χ^2 (2, N=1148) = 33.193, p = <.001). A potential explanation for this is that a significant proportion of incidents where tactical units are encountering are mental health calls and may necessitate the need for intermediate use of force options, as the coding of the weapons variable included all instances where a weapon is identified on the report.

Table 6.16

Force Applications by Highest Level of Reported Weapon in Incident, 2020-2022

	None	Unknown	Weapon	Total	χ^2 (p)[a]
Firearm Pointed					
No	60 (22.56%)	68 (19.21%)	147 (27.84%)	275 (23.95%)	9.039 (.011)
Yes	206 (77.44%)	286 (80.79%)	381 (72.16%)	872 (76.05%)	
CEW Deployment					
No	220 (82.71%)	291 (82.20%)	463 (87.69%)	974 (84.84%)	6.188 (.045)
Yes	46 (17.29%)	63 (17.80%)	65 (12.31%)	174 (15.16%)	
CEW Pointing					
No	232 (87.22%)	300 (84.75%)	381 (72.16%)	913 (79.53%)	33.193 (<.001)
Yes	34 (12.78%)	54 (15.25%)	147 (27.84%)	235 (20.47%)	
Empty Hand Soft Control					
No	209 (78.57%)	265 (74.86%)	275 (52.08%)	749 (65.24%)	75.596 (<.001)
Yes	57 (21.43%)	89 (25.14%)	253 (47.92%)	399 (34.76%)	

N=1148; *df=2*

The final set of bivariate analyses, featured in Table 6.17, investigates the relationship between call type and the highest level of weapon identified. Deployments involving warrants are less likely to feature weapons among subjects than other call types (χ^2 (2, N=1148) = 46.967, p = <.001). 34.62% of warrant executions featured the presence of an identifiable weapon reported on the *Use of Force Report*. This may be explained by the premise that these warrants

are executed using the element of surprise and the subjects at the core of these interactions may not have a weapon at their possession and some of these incidents may involve the execution of warrants for other criminal matters, like the interdiction of controlled substances. Deployments involving weapons calls are more likely to feature weapons among subjects than other call types (χ^2 (2, N=1148) = 74.169, p = <.001). While this analysis seems redundant, it is essential to note that the police may be called to weapons-related incidents where there is no identifiable weapon. Mental health calls were also correlated with the identification of a weapon (χ^2 (2, N=1148) = 11.627, p = .003).

Table 6.17

Call Context and Highest Level of Reported Weapon in Incident, 2020-2022

	None	Unknown	Weapon	Total	χ^2 (*p*)[a]
Warrant Execution					
No	119 (18.11%)	180 (27.40%)	358 (54.49%)		46.967 (<.001)
Yes	147 (29.94)	174 (35.44%)	170 (34.62%)		
Weapons-Related Call					
No	218 (27.56%)	276 (34.89%)	297 (37.55%)		74.169 (<.001)
Yes	48 (13.45%)	78 (21.85%)	231 (64.71%)		
Mental Health Call					
No	240 (23.76%)	324 (32.08%)	446 (44.16%)		11.627 (.003)
Yes	26 (18.84)	30 (21.74%)	82 (59.42%)		

N=1148; *df=2*

Discussion

The bivariate data supports the hypothesis that Black people differentially experience use of force applications in interactions with tactical units when compared to their White and other racialized counterparts. Use of force incidents involving subjects perceived to be most frequently involved proactive deployments, whereas their White counterparts were more likely to encounter tactical units in reactive incidents. 47% of the use of force incidents involving Black people occurred during warrant executions, the most of any racial group. In contrast, Black people are least frequently encounter the tactical unit in the context of a weapons call (24%) and mental health-related call (5.45%) (n=275). Incidents involving Black subjects were the most likely to be characterized by the presence of an unknown weapon (41.45%) and were the least likely cohort to be classified as having 'none' as their weapon designation (19.64%) (n=275). While Black people had lower levels of identified weapon possession compared to their White counterparts, 81% of incidents involving Black people featured firearms pointing, the highest proportion of this force application. The findings demonstrate that Black people experience firearms pointing, the most closely linked use of force option to lethal force, more than any other cohort and experience force in proactive deployments rather than reactive incidents.

A critical race perspective sheds light on the disparities observed in the bivariate analyses. The differential racialization of the Black community positions them as a criminal threat (Kim, 2004; Saberi, 2017; Tator & Henry, 2006). These discourses are cemented in media and police discourses about crime and crime control, which results in a fear of Black people and stereotyping (Saberi, 2017; Tator & Henry, 2006; Wortley et al., 2020). Black people are seen as dangerous, and this changes officers' perceptions of risk when encountering them. The decision by investigators to employ the assistance of a tactical unit in executing a warrant may also be

explained by a general perception of Black people being dangerous. Considering that Black people are constructed as the paradigmatic criminal threat, this 'danger' is reflected in the increased proportion of incidents where tactical unit officers point firearms.

These racial disparities operate in a colourblind manner. Despite the disproportionate effect on the Black community, the police can effectively claim race neutrality while making appeals to the crime control function of militarized policing (Gamal, 2016). A critical race perspective informs the argument that the *Use of Force Report* functions to legitimize police violence by creating racialized knowledge about the subjects who experience force, thus perpetuating police militarization as a governance strategy for the urban underclass. For example, the data from the *Report*, could be phrased in a manner that communicates that (a) Black people are more likely to encounter the tactical unit in high-risk search warrants and (b) more frequently encounter police when weapons possession is unknown. By constructing these statistics in this manner, the state can mitigate claims of racial disparity and use statistics further to buttress the differential racialization of the Black community. This form of racialized knowledge presents Black people as dangerous, which necessitates the use of a tactical unit. Ultimately, the critical race perspective could be used to inform the argument that race may function as a proxy for risk, which justifies the use of militarized policing elements.

The issue with this approach is that the categorization of having an unknown weapon or the decision to employ a tactical unit to execute a warrant may be the result of the cultural fear of the racialized Other, rather than the inherent risk of the call type. The critical race perspective sheds light on the broader sociopolitical and sociocultural context in which force is reported and how the metrics on the reporting mechanism serve to justify and further expand police militarization. These statistics are a social construction used to create knowledge about groups

that are subject to various governance strategies by the state (Haggerty, 2001). The critical race perspective informs the argument that race-based use of force reporting does not function as a mechanism to address racial disparities. Instead, the indicators on the form serve to legitimize police violence and expand militarized policing by illustrating the *danger* that certain racial groups pose to society or by positioning the subjects of force as deserving of this form of policing via the construction of racialized knowledge.

Chapter 6.3: Racial Disproportionality and Disparity Index

This section presents the results of the racial disproportionality and disparity index. Racial disproportionality refers to the degree of relative over or underrepresentation in a particular statistical outcome compared to census data as a benchmark population (Foster & Jacobs, 2022). Consistent with the approach of Wortley et al. (2020), a rate of 1.50 will be used to outline gross overrepresentation. 2021 Census data was used to determine benchmark populations for each region. Racial disparity investigates the levels of disproportionality relative to the White population. This is accomplished by comparing the disproportionality among a particular racial group to the reference racial group's level of disproportionality. The results for each police service are presented and the theoretical implications are discussed following the multivariate analysis.

Peel Regional Police

Table 6.18 illustrates the racially disparate nature of use of force in Peel Region, as subjects perceived to be Black account for the majority of individuals who experience force in interactions with the Tactical and Rescue Unit. Figure 6.6 offers a graphical representation of the degree of racial disproportionality. Black people account for 45% of the use of force incidents while comprising less than 10% of Peel Region's population. Black people were 4.55 times more

likely to be involved in use of force incidents with a tactical unit than their proportion of the population would predict. In contrast, White people were 22% less likely to experience force from the tactical unit. The group least likely to experience force was South Asians, who are 67% less likely to experience force than their proportion of the population would predict.

The results of the racial disparity index demonstrate that Black people are almost six times more likely to experience force than their White counterparts when compared to each group's relative proportion of the population. Middle Eastern and East/Southeast Asian people were also 1.42 and 1.35 times more likely to experience use of force in comparison to the White population in Peel when compared to each group's relative proportion of the population. All racial groups were overrepresented in comparison to the White reference group, except South Asians, who were 58% less likely to experience use of force involving the tactical unit when compared to the reference group.

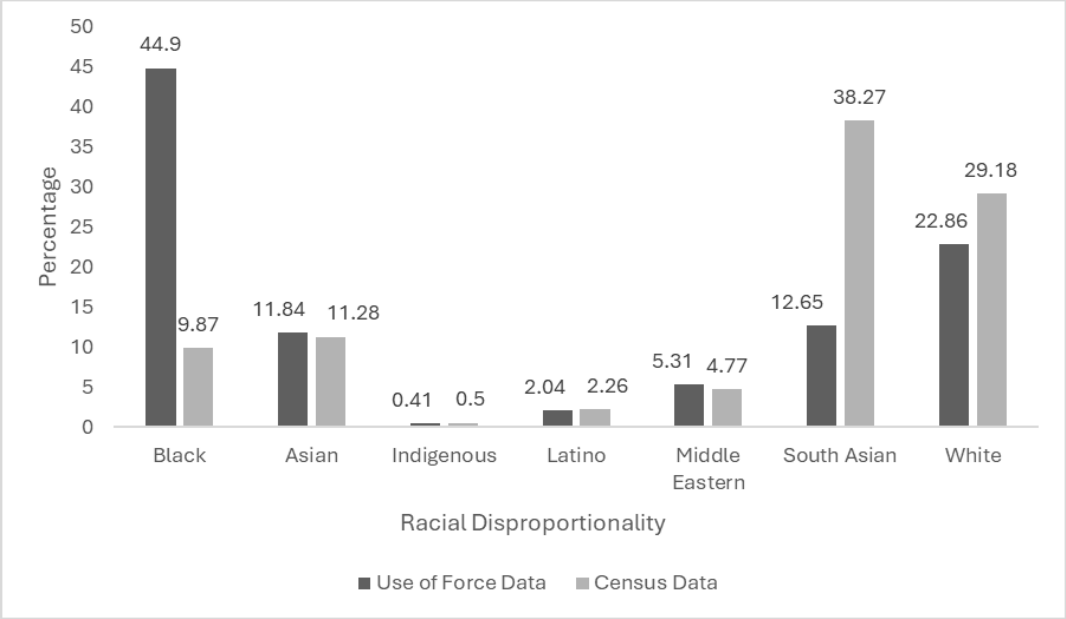
Table 6.18

Peel Regional Police Tactical and Rescue Unit Racial Disproportionality and Disparity, 2020-2022

Officer-Perceived Race	Total Number of Individuals	Disproportionality Relative to 2021 Census	Disparity Relative to White Reference Group
Black	110	4.55	5.83
East/Southeast Asian	29	1.05	1.35
Indigenous	1	.82	1.05
Latino	5	.90	1.15
Middle Eastern	13	1.11	1.42
South Asian	31	.33	.42
White	56	.78	N/A
Total	245		

Figure 6.6

Peel Regional Police Tactical and Rescue Unit Use of Force Incidents Racial Disproportionality, 2020-2022



Note: [a]N=245

Some of these incidents may involve subjects who do not reside in Peel, and there may be instances where the same individuals encounter the tactical unit across multiple incidents (Owusu-Bempah & Luscombe, 2020). It is important to note that the encounters the tactical unit has with members of the public may be the result of having to attend 9-1-1 calls or calls that carry inherent risks (see Bolduc, 2016; Jenkins et al., 2021ab), or they may be downstream of other elements of policing like investigative policing. For example, tactical units are responsible for carrying out search warrants and high-risk stops, but this may be in support of an investigative function. The rate of disproportionality indicates the potentially racially disparate nature of militarized policing and is further investigated in the multivariate analysis.

These results should be interpreted assuming that the application of force has been underreported. During the three years assessed, the Tactical and Rescue Unit attended almost 900 incidents categorized as high-risk, such as warrants, contain and callouts, and high-risk vehicle

and pedestrian stops. The majority of these calls would necessitate some application of force due to the high-risk context in which incidents like warrants and callouts occur, but the results of the FOI request and Peel Police's internal reporting suggests the underreporting of force. Only 245 use-of-force incidents were reported internally; Peel Police publicly reported 200, and 190 (including animal cases) were reported in this research. It is unclear as to whether the 245 incidents reported by Peel Regional Police encompass individuals who had force applied to them or account for use of force reports, which is how these incidents are quantified in public reporting.

Durham Regional Police Service

Table 6.19 provides an initial indication of the overrepresentation of Black people in use of force incidents involving the Tactical Support Unit, albeit not to the same degree as Peel Region. 34 total individuals perceived by officers as Black were identified in the use of force reports, whereas the majority were subjects perceived to be White. Other racial groups were minimally represented, demonstrating the racially disparate nature of militarized policing and its adverse effect on the Black community. Figure 6.7 offers a graphical representation of the degree of racial disproportionality and highlights the gross overrepresentation of Black people in use of force incidents. The results demonstrate that Black people are 2.30 times more likely to experience use of force than their proportion of the population would predict. Another notable result was among South Asians who were 81% less likely to experience force than their population would predict. Like Peel Region, there was a small number of Indigenous subjects. All other racial groups experienced force at rates proportional to their relative population proportion. The results of the racial disparity analysis demonstrates that Black people are 2.28

times more likely to be involved in use of force incidents compared to their White counterparts, when considering each group's relative share of the population.

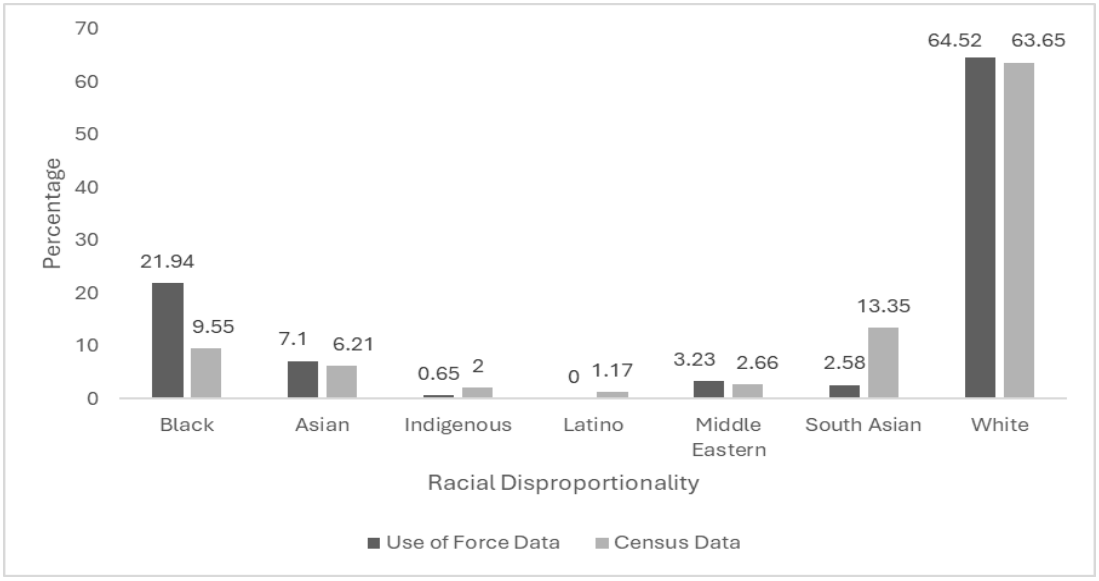
Table 6.19

Durham Regional Police Service Tactical Support Unit Racial Disproportionality and Disparity, 2020-2022

Officer-Perceived Race	Total Number of Individuals by Officer-Perceived Race	Disproportionality Relative to 2021 Census	Disparity Relative to White Reference Group
Black	34	2.30	2.28
East/Southeast Asian	11	1.14	1.13
Indigenous	1	.33	1.05
Latino	0	0	0
Middle Eastern	5	1.21	1.20
South Asian	4	.19	.19
White	100	1.01	N/A
Total	155		

Figure 6.7

Durham Regional Police Service Tactical Support Unit, Use of Force Incidents Racial Disproportionality, 2020-2022



Note. [a]N=155

York Regional Police Service

Table 6.20 and Figure 6.8 provide a representation of the rates of racial disproportionality compared to the benchmark population data for the racial groups identified in these use of force incidents. The results demonstrates that individuals perceived to be Black are over 21 times more likely to be represented in the use of force data than their proportion of the population would predict. In contrast, East/Southeast Asians and White people are 67% and 33% less likely to be represented in the data than their proportion of the population would predict. The results of the disparity analysis indicate that Black people are nearly 32 times more likely to be represented in tactical unit use of force compared to White people, when considering each group's relative proportion of the population.

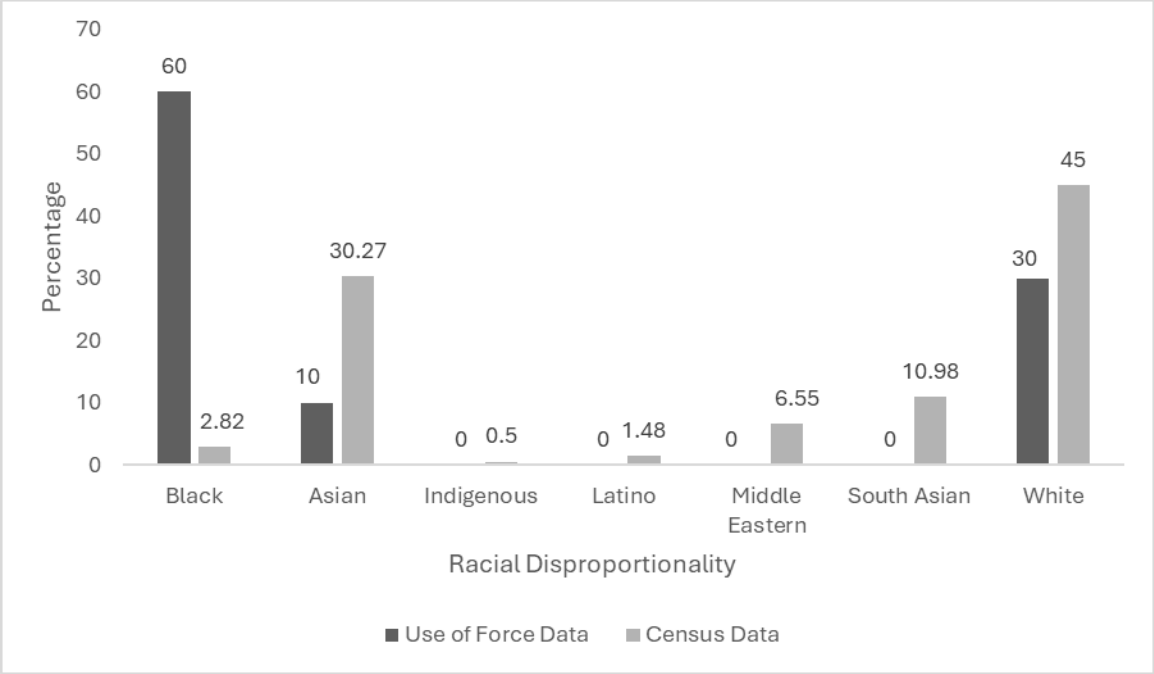
Table 6.20

York Regional Police Service Emergency Response Unit Racial Disproportionality and Disparity, 2020-2022

Officer-Perceived Race	Total Number of Individuals by Officer-Perceived Race	Disproportionality Relative to 2021 Census	Disparity Relative to White Reference Group
Black	6	21.28	31.76
East/Southeast Asian	1	.33	.49
Indigenous	0	0	0
Latino	0	0	0
Middle Eastern	0	0	0
South Asian	0	0	0
White	3	.67	N/A
Total	10		

Figure 6.8

York Regional Police Service Emergency Response Unit, Use of Force Incidents Racial Disproportionality, 2020-2022



Note. [a]N=10

York Regional Police Service's Emergency Response Unit submitted six team reports between 2020-2022. The Emergency Response Unit was deployed to 1781 incidents during this time span including 331 weapons calls and 97 warrant executions. The execution of warrants by tactical units, based on the trends in case law, is done in cases where there is a risk to officer safety or the risk of the destruction of evidence (Roziere & Walby, 2020a). As a result, warrants executed by tactical units could conceivably be regarded as employing some level of force, primarily firearms pointing, for the purposes of establishing compliance, minimizing threats to officer safety, and reducing the threat of the destruction of evidence (see Roziere & Walby, 2020a). The data from the other police services assessed also indicates that firearms pointing, and other applications of force, are common in warrant executions. This information supports the premise that use of force is being underreported.

The underreporting of force by tactical units is highly problematic, considering the exceptional, non-routine nature of the calls they attend and the various militaristic equipment they use (see Sidhu, 2024). The central issue is that the public dissemination of use of force figures and the release of race-based data are intended to serve as a function to monitor police use of force and the potential presence of systemic discrimination. It may be that underreporting of use of force incidents, either in their entirety or by omitting specific applications of force, serves as a mechanism for police to avoid additional oversight and scrutiny of the police. The underreporting of the use of force also functions in the broader actuarial framework within the institution, as it provides the institution with a mechanism to avoid scrutiny (Haggerty, 2001).

This highlights another concern stemming from the lack of publicly reported data on tactical unit use of force, namely that its omission from the public record maintains the existing level of militarization, and the use of police narratives in the absence of data may allow for its proliferation (Roziere & Walby, 2019). The potential underreporting of the use of force by tactical units demonstrates the limitations associated with the use of force reporting framework employed in Ontario and highlights the need for external forms of triangulation and public access to use of force reports.

Halton Regional Police Service

Table 6.21 outlines the number of individual subjects by perceived race involved in use of force incidents. Of the 365 individuals who experienced force, 120 were perceived as Black, and 196 were identified as White. The next numerous racial group is Middle Eastern, accounting for 27 individuals. Figure 6.9 illustrates the racial disproportionality in use of force incidents compared to each group's relative proportion in the Census benchmark data. Black and Middle Eastern subjects are grossly overrepresented in the use of force statistics. Individuals perceived

to be Black are 9.50 times more likely to be represented in the data than their proportion of the population would predict. Individuals perceived as Middle Eastern are 1.57 times more likely to be represented in the data than their proportion of the population would predict. In contrast, subjects perceived as White were 17% less likely to be represented in the data than their share of the population would predict despite being the most numerous subject group. Black and Middle Eastern subjects are 11.45 and 1.89 times more likely to be represented than their White counterparts, compared to each group's relative population share.

A plausible explanation is that Halton Regional Police is more accurately reporting their use of force incidents. Owing to the greater level of standardization in training among Canadian police services (see Cyr et al., 2020), this divergence in reporting cannot be attributed to different training standards. The findings from Halton, which has a relatively small Black population, suggest that the true extent of the adverse effect of police militarization on the Black community is not enumerated as a result of systemic underreporting of force.

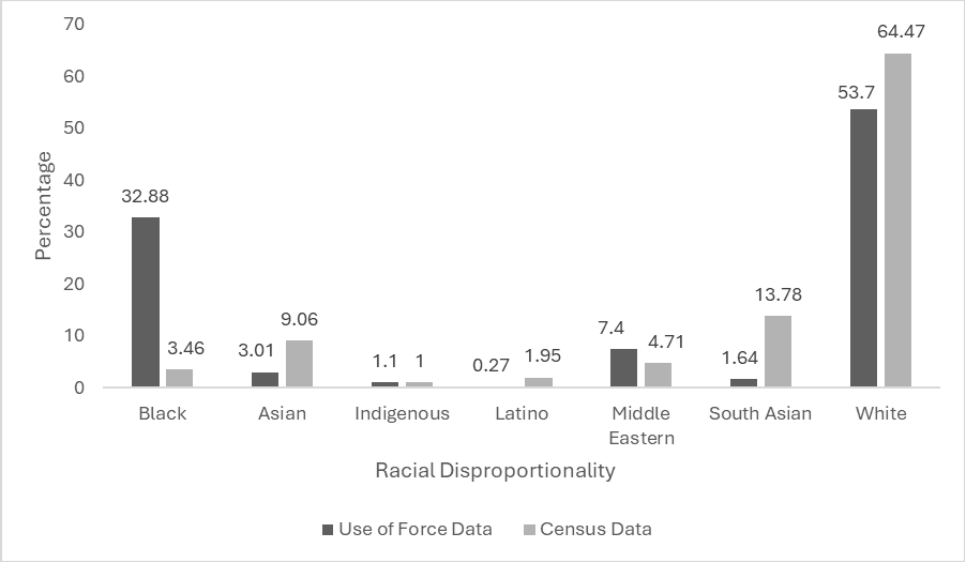
Table 6.21

Halton Regional Police Service Tactical Rescue Unit, Number of Individual Subjects by Officer-Perceived Race, 2020-2022

Officer-Perceived Race	Total Number of Individuals by Officer-Perceived Race	Disproportionality	Disparity Relative to White Reference Group
Black	120	9.50	11.45
East/Southeast Asian	11	.31	.37
Indigenous	4	1.1	1.33
Latino	1	.14	.17
Middle Eastern	27	1.57	1.89
South Asian	6	.12	.14
White	196	.83	N/A
Total	365		

Figure 6.9

Halton Regional Police Service Tactical Rescue Unit, Use of Force Incidents Racial Disproportionality, 2020-2022



Note. [a]*N=365*

The results from Halton Region further demonstrate the capacity of militarized policing to exercise a racially disparate effect on the Black community. Sprott and Doob (2014) and Kim (2004) indicated that racialized people are not a monolithic cohort, and there is a substantial degree of variation in how they experience the social world and institutions like the police. The data from Halton presents the most staggering levels of racial disproportionality, as individuals perceived as Black are 9.5 times more likely to be represented in the use of force statistics than their relative share of the population. This disproportionate representation may be partially attributed to more consistent reporting of force rather than an underrepresentation. For example, Peel Region has a crime severity index of 45, London has one of 74.72, and Hamilton's is 56.55 (Statistics Canada, 2024). In contrast, Halton's crime severity index is 23.95, but its tactical unit files more force reports than each of the previously mentioned municipalities despite not having the presence of a criminal environment that could potentially warrant greater applications of force. An alternative explanation is that Halton Regional Police Service's reporting of force

could be higher than other municipalities as a result of its tactical unit potentially attending calls for service that fall beyond its mandate (see Roziere & Walby, 2018). This discussion provides an impetus for engaging in future research to understand the variations in force reporting among police services functioning under the same legislative framework.

Hamilton Police Service

Hamilton Police Service's data also demonstrates the racially disparate nature of use of force by tactical units. However, like other police services, the racially disparate nature of force was experienced by specific cohorts rather than all racialized peoples. Table 6.22 indicates the number of individuals across each racial group. There is a clear gap in the number of Black subjects compared to other racialized groups. There are 82 Black people identified in the use of force reports, which is then followed by 19 East/Southeast Asian and 16 Middle Eastern people. Figure 6.10 demonstrates the racial disproportionality in using force data compared to the Census benchmark data. The overrepresentation of Black individuals in use of force incidents is consistent across police services. The results illustrates that Black people are 4.94 times more likely to be represented in use of force incidents involving the Emergency Response Unit than their proportion of the population would predict. In contrast, White people are 14% less likely to be represented in these statistics despite occupying the majority of individuals involved in these incidents. Consistent with the data from the other police services, there is a slight overrepresentation of Middle Eastern people in the use of force data, as they are 20% more likely to be represented in these incidents than their proportion of the population would predict. These findings, consistent, with the other police services assessed provides support for the critical race argument that militarized policing functions in a race neutral manner that adversely subjects the Black community to social control and state violence (Gamal, 2016).

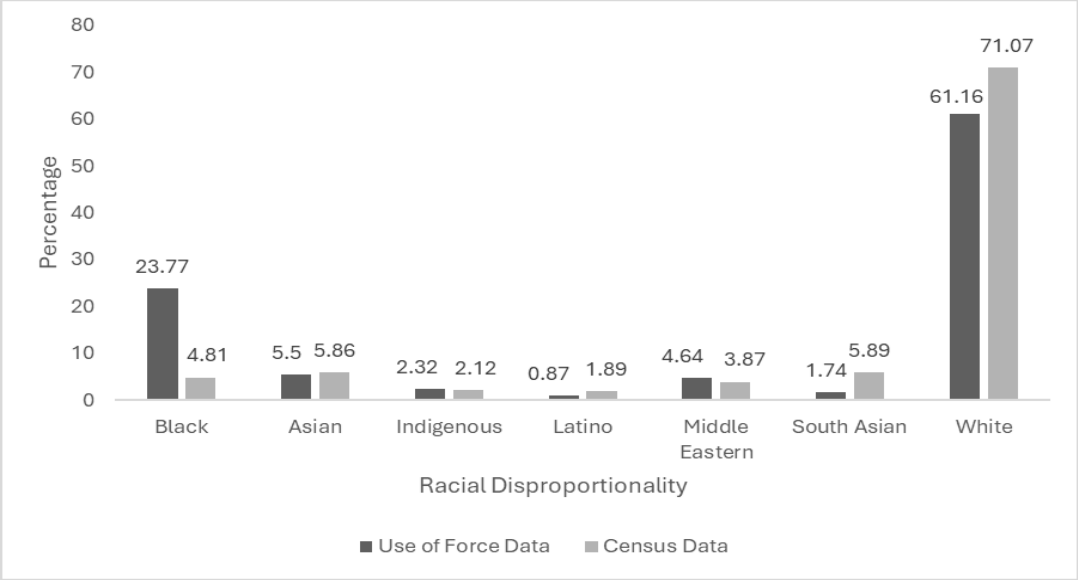
Table 6.22

Hamilton Police Service Emergency Response Unit, Number of Individual Subjects by Officer-Perceived Race, 2020-2022

Officer-Perceived Race	Total Number of Individuals by Officer-Perceived Race	Disproportionality	Disparity Relative to White Reference Group
Black	82	4.94	5.74
East/Southeast Asian	19	.94	1.09
Indigenous	8	1.09	1.27
Latino	3	.46	.53
Middle Eastern	16	1.20	1.40
South Asian	6	.30	.35
White	211	.86	N/A
Total	345		

Figure 6.10

Hamilton Police Service Emergency Response Unit Use of Force Incidents Racial Disproportionality, 2020-2022



Note. [a]N=345

The disparity index also demonstrates the disproportionate representation of Black, East/Southeast Asian, Indigenous, and Middle Eastern people compared to the representation of

White people in the use of force incidents. For example, Black people are 5.74 times more likely to be represented in this data when compared to their White counterparts. Consistent with the data from other police services, South Asians are not represented in the data despite being one of the most numerous racial groups in each of the municipalities assessed. This finding, replicated across each police service, indicates that all groups do not experience the racially disproportionate effect of tactical units. The implications of this findings are considered in greater detail in the discussion section following the presentation of results of the remaining disproportionality and disparity indices.

London Police Service

Table 6.23 enumerates the perceived race of individuals involved in use of force incidents with the London Police Service's Emergency Response Unit. There was a total of 309 individuals who experienced force. Unlike other municipalities, London's data provides the first substantial indication of the overrepresentation of Indigenous peoples in tactical unit use of force incidents. This finding suggests that accounting for regional variation may provide some explanation as to why Indigenous people have not been overrepresented in this use of force data despite longstanding evidence of discriminatory policing (see Dhillon, 2015; Laming, 2023). Furthermore, the data demonstrates a significant proportion of individuals perceived as Black to be among those who experienced the use of force. Figure 6.11 demonstrates that while White people are the majority in use of force incidents, both Black and Indigenous people are grossly overrepresented in force applications. All other racial groups were underrepresented compared to their proportion of London's population.

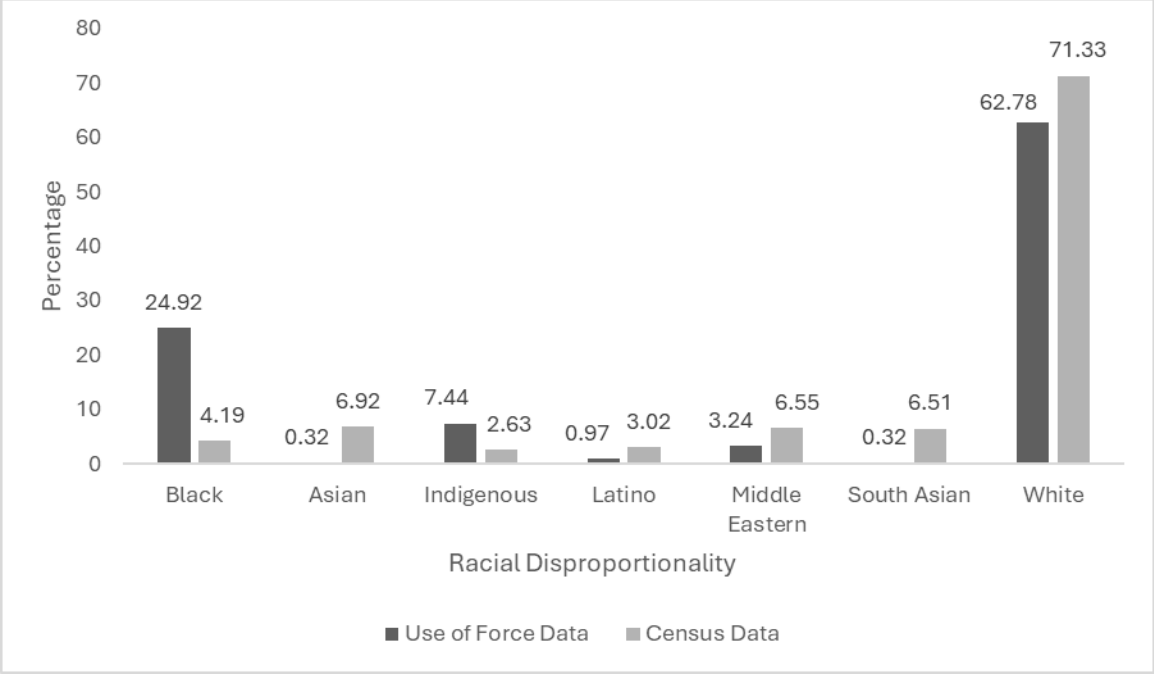
Table 6.23

London Police Service Emergency Response Unit, Number of Individual Subjects by Officer-Perceived Race, 2020-2022

Officer-Perceived Race	Total Number of Individuals by Officer-Perceived Race	Disproportionality	Disparity Relative to White Reference Group
Black	77	5.95	6.76
East/Southeast Asian	1	.04	.05
Indigenous	23	2.83	3.22
Latino	3	.32	.36
Middle Eastern	10	.49	.56
South Asian	1	.05	.06
White	194	.88	N/A
Total	309		

Figure 6.11

London Police Service Emergency Response Unit Use of Force Incidents Racial Disproportionality, 2020-2022



Note. [a]N=345

The results of the racial disproportionality analysis demonstrate that Black people are 5.95 times more likely to be represented in use of force incidents involving the Emergency Response Unit than their proportion of the population would predict. The figure is 2.83 times for Individuals perceived as Indigenous, demonstrating gross racial disproportionality in use of force incidents. The disparity analysis indicates that Black and Indigenous people are 6.76 and 3.22 times more likely to experience force than their White counterparts relative to the proportion of the population.

The London Police Service's data demonstrates a significant degree of racial disproportionality and disparity facing the Black and Indigenous community. However, the police service is well-poised to defend itself from criticisms of discriminatory policing. 95% of the incidents involving the Emergency Response Unit, or 179 of 188 incidents, involved a weapon. The police may adopt the language of crime control and explain the disproportionate application of force due to responding to armed parties. A greater interrogation of the data demonstrates that 155 of 180 subjects (86.11%) of first-identified subjects designated as possessing a weapon had the weapon at hand. 71 of 73 (97.26%) second-identified subjects were coded as having the weapon at hand, and 100% of all 43 third-identified subjects possessed the weapon at hand. However, the London Police Service does not report this distinction in year-end use of force reporting.

I argue that the collection of this data and its public presentation is meant to mitigate claims of racial disproportionality and disparity in the use of force incidents. Rather than relying on signifiers of race through claims of criminality (see Tator & Henry, 2006), the interpretive nature of the weapons possession category on the *Use of Force Report* provides a justification that prevents additional forms of use of force governance from being enacted on the police. The

collection and dissemination of these statistics offer the police a mechanism to promote themselves as agents of social change committed to addressing racial inequality while simultaneously allowing them to engage in the application of militarized policing practices. After this chapter, I further elaborate on this argument by applying critical race perspectives to critique the collection of race-based data.

Waterloo Regional Police Service

Table 6.24 presents the number of individuals who were subject to use of force by the Waterloo Regional Police Service's Emergency Response Team. The Waterloo Regional Police Service encountered the largest number of subjects who experienced an application of force, with 466 individuals identified. Waterloo Regional Police Services provided a variation of the *Use of Force Report* that allowed for the identification of more than three subjects. The total number of subjects was coded per racial group to generate the racial disparity and disproportionality statistics. The results indicate that 317 individuals were perceived as White in this data, followed by 66 Black and 44 Middle Eastern individuals. All other racial groups ranged from 1 to 18 individuals.

Figure 6.12 compares each racial group's representation in use of-force incidents and their relative share in the population. 4.59% of Waterloo Region's population is Black, but 14.16% of use of force incidents involved Black people. Middle Eastern people account for 2.93% of the region's population but were involved in 9.44% of use of force incidents. 72.55% of the population is comprised of White people, and they were near-proportionally represented in use of force incidents, accounting for 68.02% of individuals who experienced force. All other racial groups were underrepresented in use of force incidents involving the Emergency Response Team. The findings largely reflect what was observed among other police services, as Black

people are disproportionately affected by the use of force. The results of the racial disproportionality and disparity analyses demonstrate that Black and Middle Eastern people are 3.08 and 3.22 times more likely to experience force than their proportion of the population would predict. Similarly, these groups are 3.28 and 3.42 times more likely to experience force than their White counterparts compared to each group's representation in the population.

Table 6.24

Waterloo Regional Police Service Emergency Response Team, Number of Individual Subjects by Officer-Perceived Race, 2020-2022

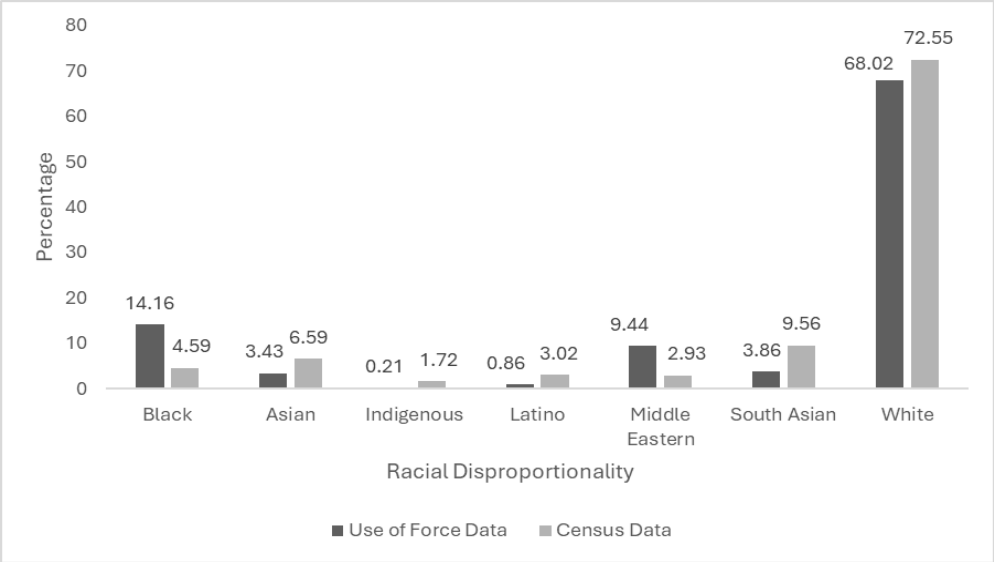
Officer-Perceived Race	Total Number of Individuals by Officer-Perceived Race	Disproportionality	Disparity Relative to White Reference Group
Black	66	3.08	3.28
East/Southeast Asian	16	.52	.55
Indigenous	1	.12	.13
Latino	4	.28	.38
Middle Eastern	44	3.22	3.43
South Asian	18	.40	.43
White	317	.94	N/A
Total	466		

The varying degrees of racial disproportionality facing the Middle Eastern community have consistently emerged in tactical unit use of force incidents. Foster and Jacobs (2022) also found that this cohort is overrepresented in the use of force statistics in their analysis of the Ottawa Police Service's data. Future research must direct attention toward the experiences of police contact among other racial minorities to understand perceptions of how race is experienced. The absence of racial disproportionality does not indicate the absence of race or mitigate its importance as a concept that structures daily life. Sprott and Doob (2014) indicated that racialized groups are not a monolithic category and have different perceptions of the police.

Using this sentiment as a starting point, future research must focus on a broader range of police interactions rather than just use of force.

Figure 6.12

Waterloo Regional Police Service, Emergency Response Team Use of Force Incidents Racial Disproportionality, 2020-2022



Note. [a]N=466

Discussion

The critical race perspective argues that militarized policing functions as a colourblind form of social control applied to the Black community (Gamal, 2016). Despite the absence of explicit racial animus, the use of this policing doctrine has an adverse disproportionate effect on the Black community. The findings of the racial disproportionality and disparity index support this assertion, as use of force incidents involving tactical units disproportionately affect the Black community. Regardless of the municipality, the Black community is grossly overrepresented in use of force incidents. The findings also demonstrate the disproportionate representation of Middle Eastern and Indigenous peoples in some municipalities. Consistent with Sidhu (2024), the application of military technologies on the racialized Other has the propensity to frame racialized cohorts as a war-like enemy.

While the results demonstrate gross overrepresentation, the institution can effectively combat claims of discriminatory policing. The institution can point to the different contextual factors recorded on the *Use of Force Report*, like the execution of a warrant and the potential presence of weapons. The indicators in the *Report* are intended to legitimize use of force and effectively maintain the hegemonic White social location. By highlighting that an individual was the subject of a search warrant, involved in an assault call, or in possession of an unknown weapon, the reporting mechanism communicates that police violence is being applied to individuals and groups that 'threaten' the hegemonic White social location (Tator & Henry, 2006). The subjects of use of force cannot be constructed as victims of police violence but as deserving recipients because of the various contextual factors indicated in the *Report*. The blame for the incident is shifted onto the subject(s) for being involved in criminality, and this approach entirely disregards the sociocultural factors that contribute to these outcomes.

I argue that the overrepresentation of the Black community in the use of force is intended to further bolster differential racialization, as the metrics on the *Use of Force Report* position this racial group as the criminal Other. This approach, however, does not rely on racialized discourses as seen in the past (see Saberi, 2017; Tator & Henry, 2006). Instead, this approach relies on the presentation of what is construed as *objective* data points that substantiate racially discriminatory policing. The critical race approach, coupled with Haggerty's (2001) contributions, argues that the use of actuarial sciences by the police legitimizes discriminatory practices as it utilizes the veneer of objective science to substantiate discriminatory policing practices. Brayne (2017) demonstrated how the LAPD's predictive policing technologies reproduce inequality as they apply objective risk scores to data that is subjectively coded and may stem from discriminatory practices. The use of these statistics and data points ultimately maintains racial disparities but

does so by making appeals to public safety and crime control. The institution effectively combats and justifies its discriminatory governance strategies using this approach.

Chapter 6.4: Multivariate Analysis

The question guiding this portion of the statistical analysis is whether race is a statistically significant predictor of specific force applications. Several conceptually relevant control variables were added to the model to account for the high-risk nature of tactical unit deployments (see Jenkins et al., 2021ab), including weapons possession, warrant execution, weapons calls, mental health calls, high-risk vehicle stops, barricaded persons, and the number of subjects per incident. The models aim to test whether the racial disparities in the use of force persist after controlling for situational contexts that may otherwise explain them. I use firearms pointing, CEW pointing, CEW deployment, and soft physical control as my use of force measures, as they are the most numerous across the data. The range of these applications, in terms of their proximity to firearm discharges, also allows me to assess my hypothesis that Black people would be subject to disproportionate rates of firearms pointing. By using measures that are further distant from lethal force, like CEWs and physical control, I can assess whether the racial disparities in force are uniform or centralized to specific applications.

The models meet the diagnostic assumptions for using logistic regression. I will outline some of these assumptions in greater detail. The number of subjects per incident variable was transformed into a four-response categorical variable (1= one subject, 2= two subjects, 3= three subjects, and 4= four or more subjects), as the continuous variable violated the assumption of linearity among the continuous predictors and the logit-transformed dependent variable (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). There are no remaining continuous variables in the model. Expected cell counts were adequate, as no expected cell count was lower than one, and no more

than 20% of cells have an expected cell count of less than five (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). There were no issues with multicollinearity in the model, as the highest variance inflation factor (VIF) score was 2.67 (Lowery, 2019). Good model fit was demonstrated by a statistically insignificant Hosmer-Lemeshow test result (Hosmer et al., 2013). Finally, influential cases were absent, determined by using Pregibon's delta beta to identify potentially influential cases and performing the model with and without these cases. The coefficients' direction and statistical significance did not change when potentially influential cases were removed (Fox & Weisburg, 2019). The clustering variables (police service) were introduced as controls in the model (McNeish & Kelly, 2019; Phillips & Varano, 2008).

Firearms Pointing

The logistic regression model, featured in Table 6.25, analyzes the effects of subject race, subject weapon possession, the execution of a search warrant, weapons-related deployment, mental health-related deployment, high-risk vehicle stops, barricaded persons incidents, the number of subjects in an incident, and police service on the likelihood of reported firearms pointing. The model explained 26.98% of the variance in the firearms pointing. Incidents involving subjects only perceived to be Black were 63% more likely to feature firearms pointing than incidents involving subjects only perceived to be White (OR=1.63, p=.006). The call context was also statistically significant as warrant executions (OR=3.57, p=<.001), weapons-related calls for service (OR= 2.26, p. <.001), and high-risk vehicle stops (OR= 7.49, p=.01) were statistically significant correlates of firearms pointing. Incidents involving two subjects (OR= 2.93, p=<.001), incidents with three subjects (OR= 2.36, p=.009), and incidents involving four subjects (OR=4.21, p=<.001) were more likely to involve firearms pointing than incidents with a single subject. Durham Regional Police Service (OR=7.51, p=<.001), Halton Regional

Police Service (OR=8.29, p=<.001), and Hamilton Police Service (OR=15.10, p=<.001) were all more likely to report firearms pointing compared to Peel Regional Police. In contrast, Waterloo Regional Police was 55% less likely to report firearms pointing when compared to Peel (OR=.45, p=.001), and York Regional Police Service was 61% less likely to indicate pointing firearms (OR=.39, p=<.001).

Table 6.25

Logistic Regression Predicting Relationship Between Race and Firearms Pointing, All Services

Predictor	b(SE)	Odds Ratio
Race[a]		
Black	.488 (.179)**	1.630
Other Racial Group	.164 (.361)	1.179
Weapon[b]		
Unknown Weapon	.119 (.119)	1.126
Weapon	.719 (.549)	2.052
Warrant	1.271 (.262)***	3.567
Weapons-Related Call	.813 (.196)***	2.256
Mental Health Apprehension	-.162 (.351)	.850
High-Risk Vehicle Stop	2.013 (.166)**	7.489
Barricaded Person	.544 (.844)	1.724
Number of subjects[c]	.	
Two Subjects	1.075 (.193)***	2.930
Three Subjects	.859 (.262)**	2.362
Four or More Subjects	1.439 (.492)**	4.216
Police Service[d]		
Durham Regional Police Service	2.016 (.102)***	7.514
Halton Regional Police Service	2.116 (.100)***	8.298
York Regional Police Service	-.952 (.246)***	.385
Hamilton Police Service	2.715 (.240)***	15.105
London Police Service	.469 (.340)	1.599
Waterloo Regional Police Service	-.801 (.230)**	.448
Constant	-1.023 (.206)***	.359
Pseudo R^2	.2698	

Note. N=1148; [a.] White is the reference category. [b.] None is the reference category. [c] One subject is the reference category. [d.] Peel Regional Police is the reference category. * p< .05 **p. <.01. ***p. <.001

When controlling for various high-risk contexts that may otherwise explain firearms pointing, incidents only involving Black subjects are statistically correlated with firearms pointing, which is the most severe application of force measured in this analysis. These incidents were 63% more likely to feature firearms pointing than those incidents involving White subjects. The bivariate analysis also demonstrated that White subjects had the highest proportion of weapons possession and weapons-related calls for service, which further draws attention to the notion that the kinds of force experienced by Black subjects in interactions with the tactical unit cannot solely be attributed to call context. The results also indicate that call context is a statistically significant correlate of firearms pointing. High-risk situations like warrants, weapons-related calls, the presence of multiple subjects, and weapons possession are positively associated with firearms pointing. The differences in police service reporting are primarily attributable to the context in which these reports are filed. For example, Hamilton Police Service's figure may partially be explained by the fact that the Emergency Response Unit had the highest proportion of incidents indicating search warrants. These results for the police service clusters should not be interpreted as a reduction or an increase in firearms pointing but as the likelihood of reporting firearms pointing. This explanation accounts for the potential of underreporting, considers organizational context, and draws attention to the disparate nature of force reporting practices among police services. Consistent with Bennell et al. (2022), this demonstrates the need for standardized reporting.

Table 6.26 presents the results of a logistic regression measuring the effects of subject race, subject weapon possession, call-related contextual factors, and police service on the likelihood of CEW deployment. The model explained 44.27% of the variance in CEW

deployments. There is no statistically significant relationship between race and CEW deployments. Mental health-related calls for service were over three times more likely to involve the deployment of a CEW (OR= 3.27, p=<.001) as were barricaded person calls (OR=3.06, p=.007). Calls for service involving two subjects were over 75% less likely to indicate the deployment of a CEW (OR=.247, p=<.001). York Regional Police Service (OR=.307, p=<.001), Halton Regional Police Service (OR=.014, p=.<001), Hamilton Police Service (OR=.004, p= <.001), and the London Police Service (OR=.033, p=<.001), and Waterloo Regional Police Service (OR=.023, p=<.001) were all less likely than Peel Regional Police to report CEW deployment on use of force reports.

Table 6.26

Logistic Regression Predicting Relationship Between Race and CEW Deployment, All Services

Predictor	b(SE)	Odds Ratio
Race[a]		
Black	-.192 (.246)	.824
Other Racial Group	.206 (.277)	1.229
Weapon[b]		
Unknown Weapon	-.060 (.184)	.941
Weapon	.153 (.247)	1.165
Warrant	-.570 (.367)	.565
Weapons-Related Call	-.235 (.261)	.789
Mental Health Apprehension	1.185 (.207)***	3.273
High-Risk Vehicle Stop	-1.878 (.138)***	.152
Barricaded Person	1.121 (.413)**	3.068
Number of subjects[c]	.	
Two Subjects	-1.398 (.247)***	.247
Three Subjects	-1.062 (.602)	.345
Four or More Subjects	-1.201 (.665)	.300
Police Service[d]		
York Regional Police Service	-1.178 (.167)***	.307
Halton Regional Police Service	-4.214 (.128)***	.014
Hamilton Police Service	-5.377 (.149)***	.004

London Police Service	-3.390 (.194)***	.033
Waterloo Regional Police Service	-3.769 (.217)***	.023
Constant	1.280 (.205)***	3.596
Pseudo R^2	.4427	

Note. N=1059; [a.] White is the reference category. [b.] None is the reference category. [c] One subject is the reference category. [d.] Peel Regional Police is the reference category.
* p< .05 **p. <.01. ***p. <.001

Table 6.27 presents the results of a logistic regression measuring the effects of subject race, subject weapon possession, call-related contextual factors, and police service on the likelihood of CEW deployment. The model explained 24.78% of the variance in CEW pointing. There is no statistically significant relationship between race and CEW pointing when controlling for a series of contextual factors. Furthermore, no contextual factors are statistically significant predictors of CEW deployment. There appeared to be a considerable variation in the police reporting of this force application. This is primarily attributed to how different police services report the use of force on a standardized reporting mechanism. Durham Regional Police Service (OR=.097, p=<.001), Hamilton Police Service (OR=.079, p= <.001), and the London Police Service (OR=.395, p=.007) were all less likely than Peel Regional Police to report CEW pointing on use of force reports. Waterloo Regional Police was more likely to report CEW pointing than Peel Regional Police (OR=5.47, p=<.001).

Table 6.27

Logistic Regression Predicting Relationship Between Race and CEW Pointing, All Services

Predictor	b(SE)	Odds Ratio
Race[a]		
Black	-.153 (.197)	.857
Other Racial Group	.-.253 (.290)	.776
Weapon[b]		
Unknown Weapon	.223 (.235)	1.250
Weapon	.266 (.440)	1.305
Warrant	.044 (.276)	1.045

Weapons-Related Call	.238 (.534)	1.269
Mental Health Apprehension	.282 (.156)	1.325
High-Risk Vehicle Stop	.970 (.541)	2.638
Barricaded Person	-.768 (.549)	.463
Number of subjects[c]	.	
Two Subjects	.346 (.375)	1.414
Three Subjects	.224 (.237)	1.251
Four or More Subjects	.284 (.788)	1.329
Police Service[d]		
Durham Regional Police Service	-2.332 (.244)***	.097
Halton Regional Police Service	-.203 (.194)	.815
Hamilton Police Service	-2.534 (.268)***	.079
London Police Service	-.927 (.343)**	.395
Waterloo Regional Police Service	1.699 (.396)***	5.470
Constant	-1.847 (.293)***	3.490
Pseudo R^2	.2478	

Note. N=1142; [a.] White is the reference category. [b.] None is the reference category. [c] One subject is the reference category. [d.] Peel Regional Police is the reference category.
* p< .05 **p. <.01. ***p. <.001

Table 6.28 presents the results of a logistic regression measuring correlates of soft physical control. The model explained 21.20 % of the variance in soft control. Incidents involving individuals from all other racial groups, except Black, are 24% less likely to feature the use of soft physical control than the White reference category (OR=.756, p=.034). Weapons calls (OR=.405, p=<.001), and mental health-related calls (OR=.589, p=.002) for service were less likely to indicate the use of soft physical control. Force incidents involving two subjects were 50% more likely to indicate soft physical control than incidents with only one subject (OR=1.50, p=<.001). Durham Regional Police Service (OR=10.99, p=<.001), Halton Regional Police Service (OR=2.80, p=.<001), London Police Service (OR=19.60, p=<.001), and Waterloo Regional Police Service (OR=8.94, p=<.001) were all more likely than Peel Regional Police to indicate the use of soft physical control on the reporting mechanism. In contrast, Hamilton Police Service was less likely (OR=.416, p=<.001) to indicate soft physical control than Peel Regional

Police. These findings further demonstrate the different reporting standards across police services.

Table 6.28

Logistic Regression Predicting Relationship Between Race and Soft Control, All Services

Predictor	b(SE)	Odds Ratio
Race[a]		
Black	-.077 (.127)	.925
Other Racial Group	-.279 (.131)*	.756
Weapon[b]		
Unknown Weapon	.402 (.306)	1.495
Weapon	.190 (.323)	1.209
Warrant	-.295 (.164)	.744
Weapons-Related Call	-.901 (.209)***	.405
Mental Health Apprehension	-.528 (.172)**	.589
High-Risk Vehicle Stop	-1.348 (1.021)	.259
Barricaded Person	.599 (.349)	1.820
Number of subjects[c]	.	
Two Subjects	.406 (.081)***	1.502
Three Subjects	-.069 (.364)	.932
Four or More Subjects	-.121 (.359)	.885
Police Service[d]		
Durham Regional Police Service	2.397 (.162)***	10.993
Halton Regional Police Service	1.030 (.076)***	2.802
Hamilton Police Service	-.877 (.209)***	.416
London Police Service	2.975 (.229)***	19.601
Waterloo Regional Police Service	2.190 (.193)***	8.940
Constant	-1.839 (.211)***	.158
Pseudo R^2	.2120	

Note. N=1142; [a.] White is the reference category. [b.] None is the reference category. [c] One subject is the reference category. [d.] Peel Regional Police is the reference category.
* p< .05 **p. <.01. ***p. <.001

Discussion

The findings provide mixed evidence of statistically significant racial disparities in the assessed. However, these findings must be considered in a more nuanced light, as they support the theoretical proposition that militarized policing functions as a race-neutral form of social

control that exercises a racially disproportionate effect on the Black community. When controlling for a series of contextual factors, the findings demonstrate that Black people are 63% more likely to have a firearm pointed at them compared to their White counterparts. The evidence of a statistically significant racial disparity only applied to firearms pointing, the most severe application of force assessed (see Foster & Jacobs, 2022). The hypothesis that Black people would disproportionately experience the use of force option most closely linked to lethal force was supported. The absence of statistically significant relationships in CEW deployment, CEW pointing, and empty hand soft control also supports this work's theoretical premise. This result is the function of the differential racialization of Black people that subjects the community to more aggressive policing practices, which are obscured under the guise of institutional discourses of race neutrality that make appeals to crime control and public safety (Gamal, 2016). The critical race perspective would argue that the construction of Black people as being dangerous and as the paradigmatic criminal Other would translate to this stereotype being reflected in police practice (Wortley et al., 2020). More specifically, the construction of Black people as being dangerous or otherwise pose a threat to officer safety would result in more aggressive force applications being applied to them even when considering the contextual aspects of the call.

It is important to note that the analysis of racial discrimination in use of force incidents cannot solely be reduced to questions of statistical significance (Henne & Shah, 2015). The question of how race structures these interactions and the broader sociopolitical context in which this emerges cannot be effectively diagnosed using quantitative measures. It is for this reason that a study of racial discrimination in policing (and other institutions) requires a more comprehensive methodological and theoretical framework that considers the broader cultural and

political context in which these interactions take place and how these institutions effectively colourblind these racial disparities. For critical race theorists, it is not simply a question of whether *race* is experienced but how it is experienced.

Chapter 6.5: Theoretical Considerations

The results of this chapter support the critical race assertion that the tactical unit functions as a colour-blind form of social control over the Black community, containing the perceived threat of Black criminality (Gamal, 2016). Black people were disproportionately represented in use of force incidents. They were more likely to experience use of force options proximal to lethal force when controlling for a range of other contextual factors that could explain firearms pointing. These findings may partially be attributed to differential racialization that portrays Black people as being dangerous, prone to criminality, or inherently risky (Saberi, 2017; Tator & Henry, 2006). The tactical unit occupies the institutional position intended to respond to those groups who occupy the position of the criminal Other. However, the use of militarized policing functions in a colourblind capacity as the institution makes appeals to race neutrality in its practices and its crime control mandate, obfuscating evidence of racial disproportionality.

I argue, using a critical race perspective, that the racially disproportionate nature of police militarization is self-fulfilling. It emerged as part of a broader colourblind framework to exercise social control over a racialized group perceived as dangerous (Coyne & Hall-Blanco, 2016; Gamal, 2016; Meeks, 2006). The social construction of racialized and socioeconomically marginalized communities as places of danger (see Saberi, 2017) provides the institution with a justification to apply militaristic policing strategies, obscuring the underlying racial animus that guides police militarization. When militaristic strategies are applied, and the incidents are resolved without injury to officers, it further reinforces the need for a militarized response against *dangerous communities*. The application of police militarization against the Black

community is justified in the context of a colourblind discourse that appeals to crime control and public safety. Race is effectively used as a proxy for risk and criminality (see Berdejo, 2018) that perpetuates the application of aggressive and racially disparate policing against communities of colour.

I argue that the *Use of Force Report* functions to legitimize police violence and is incapable of producing systemic change, as it produces racialized knowledge. For example, 38.91% of incidents involving Black subjects involved the identification of a police-reported weapon. 47.27% of incidents involved a warrant execution (n=275). These statistics may be used to reinforce the differential racialization of Black people as a criminal threat. These indicators mitigate claims of racial discrimination as they are framed and used as empirical knowledge, legitimizing institutional practices (Haggerty, 2001). The production of this empirical knowledge entirely disregards how these statistics are part of a larger institutional context shaped by asymmetrical power and a sociopolitical context that has allowed for the discrimination of marginalized communities. For example, the tactical unit may be executing low-level warrants involving Black subjects as they are perceived as being more dangerous than non-Black subjects, and this is indicative of racial discrimination. However, the disparities in use of force are maintained as the reporting mechanism does not account for these biases. It only presents the subject regarding their relative risk and relies on indicators that legitimize and justify using force against the criminal Other.

The critical race perspective argues that the collection of use of force statistics is not intended to address systemic discrimination but functions as a mechanism to maintain White supremacy. These statistics produce racialized knowledge that reinforces dominant discourses of the racialized Other and provides an actuarial justification that legitimizes police violence and

police militarization. This actuarial justification reproduces disproportionate harms for the Black and other racialized communities. However, the state cannot be criticized as being racist, as these statistics function as a source of objective knowledge that is presented as a natural fact rather than a social construction (Haggerty, 2001). Rather than relying on discourses that use race as a signifier to address racially disparate policing (see Gamal, 2016; Tator & Henry, 2006), these statistics provide objective knowledge that facilitates its expansion.

Conclusion

This chapter demonstrates the racially disparate nature of use of force incidents involving tactical units. There is a gross overrepresentation of the Black community across all municipalities, whereas others also were marked by the overrepresentation of Indigenous and Middle Eastern people. The bivariate analyses demonstrated that Black people experience force more frequently in proactive (planned) deployments and are more frequently labelled as having an unknown weapon, among other key findings. The multivariate analysis demonstrated that Black people were the most likely to experience firearms pointing, despite controlling for a range of contextual factors that may otherwise explain this force application.

There appears to be a systemic underreporting of the use of force. The York Regional Police Service's use-of-force figures demonstrate a disparity in the total number of force incidents, as their attendance at hundreds of high-risk calls, like warrants, would reasonably result in more than six use of force incidents over three years. Peel Regional Police's Tactical and Rescue Unit deployed flashbangs, which are designated as explosive devices, 132 times, according to their internal documents, but have only reported it once on the *Use of Force Report*. Similarly, Hristova (2024) demonstrated how Toronto Police ETF officers falsified information on a use-of-force report. These issues may emerge due to the low visibility nature of militarized

policing (see Urbanik & Greene, 2020), which creates an institutional environment where force applications go unreported despite an established legal framework. I argue that the police adoption of more specialized militaristic equipment occupies a legal grey zone as the applications of technologies like breaching shotguns and flashbangs could conceivably be regarded as a force application under the legislation but is not treated as such.

The use of a critical race framework argues that the disproportionate representation of Black people in use of force incidents involving tactical units is the result of its intended purpose, the social control of the Black community (Gamal, 2016). I also applied a critical race approach to argue that the actuarial nature of statistics among criminal justice organizations functions as a mechanism to maintain racial discrimination through the expansion of policing practices that exercise a racially disparate effect. The broader implications of this argument are that the reporting mechanism for documenting racial disparities in the use of force will effectively accomplish little to address racial discrimination, as it functions as an empirical tool to generate objective racialized knowledge (Haggerty, 2001). This underscores the issue with using police-generated statistics to identify systemic racism, as the institutional context in which these figures are collected functions to legitimize and expand police power and strategies of governance.

Chapter 7: Qualitative Research Findings

Introduction:

This chapter outlines the qualitative research findings and discusses their implications for understanding the use of police tactical units. The findings address a gap in the literature surrounding police tactical units and further contribute to some of the existing qualitative research investigating citizen-police encounters (see Greene et al., 2021,2022; Urbanik & Greene, 2020). The findings demonstrate that these encounters reproduce and perpetuate various social inequalities based on class, gender, and race. The results illustrate various personal, financial, economic, social, and psychological consequences stemming from encounters with tactical units. The research questions guiding this inquiry are:

1. What financial challenges emerge for participants after interacting with a police tactical unit?
2. What social challenges emerge for participants after interacting with a police tactical unit?
3. What emotional/psychological challenges emerge for participants after interacting with a police tactical unit?
4. What personal challenges emerge for participants after interacting with a police tactical unit?
5. What support(s) do participants rely on following their interaction with a police tactical unit?

Chapter 7.1 presents the sample characteristics and the relevant information regarding their encounters with the tactical unit. Chapter 7.2 draws attention to the experiences of police violence while contextualizing the findings using existing literature (see Brunson, 2007; Greene et al., 2022; Laming, 2023). Chapter 7.3 provides a basis for understanding the experiences of

those participants who were the subject of a botched police operation, where the encounter stemmed from cases of mistaken identity or the tactical unit targeting the wrong home. Chapter 7.4 engages with the psychosocial consequences facing participants, drawing attention to the mental health challenges experienced by participants following their encounters. While focusing on individual experiences of mental health, this section also articulates how Black participants position this trauma in a communal context (see Bryant-Davis et al., 2017; McGuffey & Sharpe, 2015; Smith et al., 2019).

Chapter 7.5 outlines the emergence and reliance on informal support networks participants utilize to navigate the aftermath of these interactions. This literature is contextualized to the various strategies employed in response to police violence (see Hawkins, 2022; Lipscomb, 2020) and demonstrates the lack of social services accessible to marginalized communities. Chapter 7.6 emphasizes the challenges facing the family unit, and Chapter 7.7 outlines the allegations of theft and property damage experienced by participants. These findings further illustrate the expansive nature of these citizen-police encounters and build on the literature in each respective area (see Desmond & Valdez, 2013; Hannem, 2019; Urbanik & Greene, 2020).

Chapter 7.8 explores the stigmatic nature of these encounters, and the results provide evidence to support the premise that these encounters with police transfer a courtesy stigma to families and are a source of social exclusion (see Goffman, 1963; Tinney, 2023; Wiley et al., 2013). Chapter 7.9 outlines participant perceptions of police militarization and further demonstrates how these citizen-police interactions damage perceptions of police legitimacy (see Urbanik & Greene, 2020). The chapter uses an intersectional critical race perspective to understand how these encounters are situated within a racially stratified state.

Chapter 7.1: Sample Characteristics

Like Urbanik and Greene's (2020) study, some accounts of citizen-police interactions occurred more than two decades ago, whereas other respondents were weeks removed from the incident. To ensure participant confidentiality, the timeframe of incidents is characterized as occurring pre- or post-2010, and all participants are assigned a pseudonym. Table 7.1 provides an overview of the different contexts in which participants encountered the tactical unit. An important caveat is that some participants reported experiencing multiple encounters with the tactical unit. While some categories, like the province of the incident, are mutually exclusive, other categories overlap to account for separate encounters with the tactical unit. Direct encounters refer to those where the participant was present during the interaction, and vicarious encounters are those experienced through their social network (Brunson, 2007; Laming, 2023; Urbanik & Greene, 2020).

Table 7.1

Context of Citizen-Police Encounter

Context of Encounter	Total
Warrant*	20
Arrest (Non-Warrant Related)*	6
Mistaken Police Encounter*	4
Contain and Call Out*	5
Direct Experience	22
Vicarious Experience	3
Incident Occurred in Ontario	19
Incident Occurred in Manitoba	4
Incident Occurred in Alberta	1
Incident Occurred in Saskatchewan	1
Incident Occurred Pre-2010	5
Incident Occurred Post-2010	20

Note. [a] n=25. [b] *Some participants report multiple encounters with a tactical unit, including separate incidents of arrests and warrant executions. Some participants mistakenly encountered the tactical unit in warrants or street-level arrests. These categories are not mutually exclusive.

Table 7.2 outlines the demographic variables of the participants. While some participants reported multiple racial identities, such as being of mixed race, a decision was made to rely on

the framework for coding race for intersectional analyses, which was consistent with the data standards of the *Anti-Racism Act*. For example, if a participant identifies as Black and White, the participant's racial identity is coded as Black (Watson & Sidhu, 2023). The sample is primarily comprised of men, with 60% of the sample identifying as male. There was substantial variation in the age of participants; the 30–39-year-old cohort was the largest age group, followed by those aged 50+. This was a unique finding, but not surprising, as it is likely that those of a younger cohort are actively involved in court matters involving their interaction, violating one of the criteria established for selection into the study. Older cohorts are also expected to have a higher lifetime prevalence of encountering tactical units, as they would still have experienced an encounter tactical unit regardless of whether it was recent or from when they were younger.

The sampling strategy, via gatekeeper organizations and snowball sampling, likely resulted in some sampling bias (see Bryman & Bell, 2019; Faugier & Sargeant, 1997; Palys & Atchison, 2014) as I interviewed individuals transitioning away from their involvement in the illegitimate economy. As a result, the sample, to my knowledge, is not comprised of individuals actively involved in street gangs or elements of the illegal economy. While the interview schedule did not specifically engage with questions about class, proxy indicators (signifiers) may be used to establish the participant's socioeconomic status. They were assessed by determining whether participants indicated renting their homes or living in community housing. Two participants indicated that they belonged to the middle class, specifically referring to this socioeconomic bracket when asked the preliminary questions in the schedule. Those who indicated renting and living in community housing were treated as mutually exclusive groups, as the participants provided information about whether they lived in subsidized housing by outlining whether their landlord was a private individual or a community housing corporation.

Table 7.2 provides an early indication of support for using critical race perspectives. Each participant's racial, gendered, and economic background emphasizes relying on an intersectional approach to assess the participants' lived experiences and their relationality to systems of power and social inequality (Hill Collins, 2019).

Table 7.2

Demographic Characteristics of Sample

Demographic Characteristics	**Total**
Male	15
Female	9
Non-Binary	1
Black	13
Indigenous	5
Black and Indigenous	1
White	5
Hispanic	1
18-29	6
30-39	9
40-49	3
50+	7
Community Housing	8
Renting	16
Unknown Housing	1
Owns Housing*	1
Referenced Middle-Class Identity	2

Note. [a] n=25. [b] *One participant indicated owning their home but stated that their family member who encountered the police lived in community housing. A value was added to each category to account for both the participant and the encounter, as the social context of each must be considered to assess issues relevant to the encounter and participant perception.

Chapter 7.2: Experiences of Violence

Interactions with tactical units are unique from other forms of police contact, mainly owing to the militaristic nature of the equipment officers are equipped with (Kraska, 2007; Sidhu, 2024; Urbanik & Greene, 2020). These officers are equipped with assault rifles, submachine guns, or designated marksman rifles, rely on the use of intermediate use of force options like the ARWEN 37 and CEWs, and can execute dynamic entry warrants with a series of breaching tools like battering rams, Halligan (hooley) bars, and the use of distraction devices

(Kappeler & Kraska, 1997; Roziere & Walby, 2018; 2020a; Sidhu, 2024; SIU, 2021; Urbanik & Greene, 2020). The literature on involuntary citizen-police encounters suggests that experiences of violence, or the threat thereof, are commonplace (Brunson, 2007; Brunson & Miller, 2006ab; Brunson & Weitzer, 2011; Gau & Brunson, 2015;2010; Greene et al., 2022; Hitchens et al., 2018; Laming, 2023; Urbanik & Greene, 2020). The experiences of violence reported by the sample were diverse. They ranged from what could be regarded as police use of force, allegations of assault, threats of violence, and vicariously witnessing violence being inflicted upon others. This section outlines the findings on violence and discusses the theoretical implications emerging from these data.

Use of Force

While the definition and measurement of what constitutes use of force is the subject of intense debate within the academic literature (see Bennell et al., 2022; Klahm & Tillyer, 2010; Wortley et al., 2020), this section of the results accounts for actions that may be regarded as necessary in the execution of the officer's duties (see Cyr, 2016). Dinah, a White woman in her 30s, recounts the experience of her partner being arrested by a tactical unit in connection with a warrant execution. Shortly after coming home from work, Dinah reported hearing verbal commands to come outside her apartment unit. Dinah stated:

> I asked who it was, they said "the police". They started knocking on the door. Opened the door and saw guns all in the hallway, they had shields, there were red dots all over my body. They told me to move out of the way, I was distraught, they handed me the warrant. They arrested my child's father and his friend. I asked them to put the guns down, they wouldn't. My [juvenile family member] was next to me… There were guns point in my face. I was in shock, like complete shock. I was lit up like a Christmas tree. (Dinah, White woman, 30s)

Dinah's account is common, as experiences of firearms pointing were nearly ubiquitous across the sample, regardless of why the participant encountered the tactical unit. Several participants indicated being the subject of a contain and call out where police surround a dwelling and order the parties out of the building, often at gunpoint.

Duke, a Black man in his 50s, recounted the experience of being arrested following an allegation of his involvement in a gun-related crime the night prior:

> They pointed guns at us. They call you out, tell you to walk out, they instruct you on what to do 'hands up', 'turn around', 'get on your knees', they instruct you. It's a scary event, they have guns pointed at you, one mistake you're gone… Bothered me about what the officer said [wishing Duke had a firearm]. That comment alone was like what? This guy has that mentality, know what I mean? The team they treat you like a criminal from the jump. They are violent and do not see your situation, know what I mean? The lived experience allows us to understand this shit. (Duke, Black male, 50s)

Bing, an Indigenous male in his 40s, reported being the subject of an arrest following an investigation into an assault involving a weapon and recalled his experience of being the subject of a contain and callout:

> ETF had their guns pointed at me. All the gear, bells and whistles, they had it for me. It wasn't necessary to arrest me, I wasn't going to fight. They tracked me across the street because of an alleged assault to my ground floor apartment. There was no need for excessive force. (Bing, Indigenous male, 50s)

Peggy, a White female in her 30s, indicated being the subject of a contain and callout as the police were searching for an acquaintance of her partner who previously spent the night in their family home. Peggy provided an account of her interaction:

> I got out of the shower and saw red and blue lights. Open the drapes and saw the SWAT team. Uhh, okay. I went out with my towel on and no shoes and three dots on me, red ones, they had snipers on the neighbours' houses… They told me to put my hands on my head, walk backwards. I was holding my towel. He said "do you have any weapons?" What did you guys think? That I had a gun in my cooter?... They pointed guns at me when I was coming out of the house, handcuffed me. There was no communication, they left me in the towel. (Peggy, White female, 30s)

Louis, an Indigenous person identifying as non-binary in their 20s, recounts the experience of having been involved in a contain and callout. Louis was not the target of the police operation, as the officers were investigating their brothers for weapons and street gang-related offenses. Louis, like other participants, reported having firearms pointed at them:

> I was in Grade 7, it's 12 AM on a weekend and I'm sitting in a room. My family is awake. I'm just chilling in my room, I isolate myself sometimes. My mom came in from the other room and told me "you have to get up"… My mom said the cell phone kept ringing and it was an "Unknown" number. The police said they had the house surrounded. I wasn't sure why or what was going on. We opened the door and came out one by one. I looked outside and we were surrounded…There were people with snipers aiming at us… I remember them telling us "turn around, hands up, and walk towards them". It was crazy… Guns pointed, SWAT is terrifying. I was the second to last one out and SWAT was everywhere. On the street, behind cars, surrounded us. They weren't quiet when they were announcing shit. (Louis, Indigenous non-binary person, 20s)

Nat, a White male in his 30s, indicated being involved in the street-level drug trade and was in the process of facilitating his exit from the trade [which he has now accomplished]. Nat

indicated needing the money from one final task, that involved procuring cocaine for an associate. Nat stated:

> A friend and associate also stayed at the hotel. I wanted to get out and needed money, so I agreed to help them. I had to get cocaine for my friend. I'm sitting in a car and went to the other friend to get money. I went to the other friend's car and the police showed up. It was tac and guns and gangs…They had guns drawn in plain clothes and tac arrested the other people…they had guns on me and told me I was under arrest for cocaine. (Nat, White male, 30s)

Perry, a Black male in his 30s, also reported having a firearm pointed at him by the tactical unit during an arrest at a recreational facility where he was tracked by police. Perry stated:

> I had no weapon, they pointed guns at me. I went to Maplehurst. They told me in the car what I was being arrested for. It didn't make sense. They had guns pointed. Two handguns pointed at me and the third one arrested me. I don't understand why they needed that, I wasn't armed. (Perry, Black male, 30s)

Chet, a Black male in his 20s, had his family home raided by police in connection to a street gang investigation, where his brother was the target of the raid. Chet was woken by the raid and encountered the tactical unit while in bed:

> Woke up to lasers in my eyes, face, hella noise, the house was getting raided. It was early in the morning. They kicked down the door, threw a flashbang. ETF was there for my brother. The whole neighbourhood got raided, they were trying to sweep up who was affiliated in gangs…I got put in handcuffs. I was asleep, woke up as soon as the door got kicked in. I heard the flashbang, but I don't remember the smell anymore. They thought I was a big man, even though I was just a kid. Whatever they talk about, that's what they do. If they think you're armed and

> dangerous, they treat you like you're armed and dangerous… I just remember "Don't move, don't move, Toronto Police, don't move!" (Chet, Black male, 20s)

Basie, an Indigenous man in his 20s, reported discharging a firearm and attempting to flee the police. This interaction led to a manhunt involving a tactical unit, leading to his arrest:

> The day I got arrested, I fired a gun at them and ran. They knocked the door down with a battering ram…They dragged me down the stairs and looked for the gun. There were at least 8-10 cops, they pointed the rifles at me…Of the violent shit I've had with the police, this was the worst one- the one with SWAT. (Basie, Indigenous male, 20s)

The various accounts demonstrate that regardless of the context of the incident, firearms pointing appears to be common in encounters involving tactical units. There are contexts where the police are responding to an inherently high-risk situation, like that of pursuing an individual who had recently discharged their weapon at police. In contrast, there are also instances where the pointing of firearms appears disproportionate to the incident characteristics as most participants were unarmed at the time of the encounter. Chet's account demonstrates another element of these interactions with police as it outlines two specific applications of force: the pointing of firearms and the use of distraction devices (flashbangs). Chet was not the only individual in the study to have had an encounter where this device was used. Maryam, a Somali woman in her 50s, reports her experience where the police engaged in a dynamic entry warrant execution at her family residence in search of one of her sons:

> I was sleeping, I was watching tv, I was worried. My other son is in kitchen with his dog. We have two rooms, I sleep a little bit. I wake up all night. The door broke. He threw a bomb, big flash and boom (flash grenade). He had helmet, big gun, red light on head. Couldn't see, "go down go down" yelling…[In response to a probing question about

> firearms pointing] Guns? Me, him, everybody, yeah why not? (Maryam, Black female, 50s)

Ella, a Black woman in her 50s whose home was raided in a botched police operation that was intended to target another residence on the street, also reported a distraction device being used in her home. Ella recalls being injured by the device and outlined part of her experience:

> The door was blown off and I heard a loud noise…When the door came off, they tossed a grenade, it was a grenade [flashbang]. My foot got burned and I had to go to the hospital. (Ella, Black female, 50s)

Mercer, a Black male in his 30s, was the subject of a raid stemming from a gang-related investigation. Mercer reported that he and his brother were the targets of the operation. Mercer also reported the use of a distraction device during the encounter:

> My mom's house. Part of a neighbourhood project. A gang sweep. Arrested for guns, drugs, conspiracy charges. I heard a lot of bangs and shouting. I seen guys with machine guns and they arrested everybody in the house. My brother was tasered, they threw a flashbang, my brother has scars from it… I understand why they have it [SWAT]. I understand it's for their safety, but they'll use to their advantage. They'll gun butt you, kick you with the combat boots and tell you to stop resisting. Pointing a gun at your forehead, its traumatizing. They aren't trained to injure, they are trained to kill. (Mercer, Black male, 30s)

Sinatra, a Black male in his 40s, recounted a vicarious experience with the tactical unit in which his male juvenile relative was the subject of a mistaken identity case. Sinatra recounts the experience in which his family member encountered the police and describes the militaristic nature of the arrest:

> He drives 5 minutes or so, hits a red light, went to an apartment complex. He got smashed in by the police truck. His car window was smashed in and boxed in by [tactical unit name removed], they smashed the window in and threw a flashbang. They removed him from the car and put him under arrest. I'm not 100% sure how he was pulled out. (Sinatra, Black male, 40s)

The vicarious experience of Sinatra demonstrates the intently militaristic nature of tactical unit operations, which in this case relied on using a police vehicle in an offensive capacity to engage in a vehicle extraction. What is important to note about these experiences is that these force applications would largely be justified under s.25 of the *Criminal Code*. The capacity of the officers to articulate their decision-making process would presumably make the force 'reasonable' (see Cyr, 2016). While this work refrains from engaging in the broader socio-legal debate about what police actions are 'reasonable' (see Watson, 2023), establishing each incident as falling under the framework of police use of force distinguishes them from other elements of violence occurring during citizen encounters with tactical units.

Allegations of Assault

The existing literature investigating adversarial citizen-police encounters also provides accounts of forms of violence that cannot be considered a legitimate use of force (Brunson, 2007; Greene et al., 2022; Laming, 2023; Urbanik & Greene, 2020). A potential explanation for this occurs in policing activities, like raids or inner-city policing, that generally function in a low-visibility context (Urbanik & Greene, 2020).

Coltrane, a Black male in his 30s, recalls the experience of being the subject of a dynamic entry warrant execution related to his involvement in the drug trade. Coltrane provides an account in which he was the subject of a sustained assault from tactical unit officers following his attempt to flee police apprehension. Coltrane stated:

> A house for the business- a drug house. I heard 'it's the police'. By the time I got to the balcony, I heard a boom. Saw assault rifles, then jumped and landed on a car. I had to jump a fence. Got away temporarily and ran. Wasn't trying to go back to jail and I wasn't trying to figure out what they are trying to do or get shot. Catch me outside running with my hands up. You're not saying I turned and reached for something… I messed up my ankle when I jumped. Five minutes after I hopped the first fence, I was running on a backroad. They were coming from all angles, got me at the top of the train tracks. I got beat up for 10 minutes, it felt like 10 minutes at least. I heard them say, 'this is for making us run, this is for making us chase you… I never did anything to them other than make them run. Nobody pointed a gun at me. A whole lot of other threats and comments. They were saying, keep resisting we're gonna fuck you up some more. Say anything and we'll punch you in the face. They kept calling me tough guy. (Coltrane, Black male, 30s)

Dean, a Black male in his 20s, also indicated being the subject of an assault during a police raid on his residence. Dean did not specify why his home was raided but contended that all charges were dropped. Dean, in response to being asked whether he experienced any forms of violence during his encounter stated, "they kicked my ass. That's regular to me. A lot of people got assaulted. Pointing guns was the least of what they did. Everybody got assaulted." The allegations of assault were also present in Mel's accounts of his experiences with police tactical units. Mel, a Black male in his 50s, has had numerous encounters with a tactical unit from the 1980s to the 2010s. He accounts for a historical (1980s) interaction and a more contemporary (2000s) interaction. Each is detailed in chronological sequence in which they occurred. Mel provided two accounts of experiencing assault by tactical unit officers:

> I used to be involved in pimping. I was in a hotel room and I hear them coming, the door comes off - it got booted down. I hid in the closet, they had their guns drawn and found me. They started beating the shit out of me, didn't let me surrender. They said 'stop resisting' when they were kicking me- I wasn't resisting, I was on the ground. They say that, so they can take the boots to you. (Mel, Black male, 50s)

Mel further described the second instance, which occurred during a police raid:

> The most recent time was in [2000s]. I walked into a crack house to score some dope. When I was in there, I heard a "Bang! Toronto Police Don't Move! Toronto Police Don't Move". I put the crack in my mouth. 8 or 9 cops and people all over the floor. The guy asked me if I had anything sharp, I said "no", but forgot I had a needle in my pocket. The ETF guy was pissed, he punched me in the solar plexus - took the wind out of me. (Mel, Black male, 50s)

Mel's account speaks to the different forms of violence that may occur in low-visibility interactions with police. Perry's contribution also highlights this sentiment. Perry recalls being chased by ETF officers and having both a CEW applied against him and being the subject of an assault. Perry stated:

> I was going through; car hopping and ran from the police [tactical unit]. I went through a ditch and when I came out, I got speared and kicked in the face, I got tasered too by the ETF guy. They wouldn't stop. My [female relative] saw my face and was screaming 'oh my god, your face'- my face was blown up. When I got tasered it felt like I wanted to shit. (Perry, Black male, 30s)

The allegations of assault were not solely limited to the experiences of participants themselves but also extended to include instances in which they observed physical violence

being inflicted upon other individuals at the site of the police interaction. Ambrosius, a Black woman in her 30s, recounts the experience of her home being raided by the police when she was a teenager:

> The SWAT team came into our house. Me and my sister, I remember I was in the shower and my sister was going to go after me. I heard a bang and the door getting kicked down and yelling. They came into the shower and took us out. I'm pretty sure they came up with a gun, they said, "don't worry we're not going to hurt you. The guns were there though… I believe it was drugs. I don't remember if it was mom's boyfriend or the other person in the house. The other person was who they were after and the police thought it was my mom's boyfriend. There were guns in his [mom's boyfriend] face, and I'm pretty sure one of them hit him with a gun. They were down there yelling at him laughing, saying he shit himself. (Ambrosius, Black female, 30s)

Ambrosius' account demonstrates the presence of firearms and militaristic tactics being used in the context of the police operation, illustrating how the officers used the butt end of their weapon to assault her mother's boyfriend. Other research participants also provide accounts of violent behaviours at the site of police encounters. Dinah recounts the experience of watching her partner being aggressively handled by tactical unit officers. Dinah stated:

> I was sitting in the stairwell with [juvenile family member] and the detective. My [juvenile family member] was handed to me. He [her partner] was thrown around in front of me and my [juvenile family member']. It was heart-wrenching, that was my [juvenile family member's] last memory of him. He was tossed like a ragdoll when he was trying to say 'bye'. SWAT are fathers, but they don't care. I

> moved on and turned the page, I don't talk about it. (Dinah, White female, 30s)

Mel also provided another account of witnessing police violence at the site of operations involving the tactical unit and questions the necessity of the violence he observed. Mel stated:

> They roughed up a few people, punches kicks. There was a legit dealer there and they beat the fuck out of him. He wasn't cuffed and they kept yelling "stop resisting!" They knew what they were looking for, he had a gun, he got arrested. There was a girl and another guy, they beat him bad too. When they found the gun they gave him more kicks… Who made you God? Why the violence, you have guns, we are intimidated, why the beatings? We are on the ground and giving up, why beat us. Why would you do that? What were you thinking? (Mel, Black male, 50s)

These distinct accounts of the experiences of violence in citizen encounters with tactical units demonstrate the diversity in which members of the public may experience police violence, as opposed to solely experiencing applications of the use of force (Laming, 2023). These findings further contribute to a substantially large body of literature outlining the extensive nature of physical violence and claims of assault in police encounters (see Brunson, 2007; Brunson & Miller, 2006ab; Greene et al., 2022, 2021; Laming, 2023; Urbanik & Greene, 2020). These findings present several complications for contemporary discourses surrounding police oversight, as these lower-level incidents of violence do not meet the threshold for police oversight investigations (Wortley et al, 2020). The allegations of violence may be investigated internally by a police service, but this relies on the subject to have the capacity and confidence in police to file a report substantiating an investigation. These results are further contextualized in the theoretical application portion of this section.

Threats and Verbal Harassment

One of Laming's (2023) key findings surrounding the experiences of police violence among Indigenous people was the presence of threats and other forms of verbal harassment. This finding is validated by the existing literature on involuntary citizen-police encounters that confirms the use of more subtle forms of violence, like threats and verbal harassment directed towards members of the public (Brunson, 2007; Brunson & Miller, 2006ab; Greene et al., 2022; Laming, 2023; Urbanik & Greene, 2020). The findings of this research also support the premise that verbal interactions between officers and members of the public operate as more subtle forms of violence. Some of the participants in this section report being subject to threats, feeling as if they were being mocked by officers, or fearing the threat of violence during their encounter with the police.

During Duke's encounter with the tactical unit, he indicated being the subject of what he interpreted to be a threat made by one of the tactical officers. The basis of this threat was one in which Duke believed the officer was trying to find a justification for shooting Duke in a gunfight. Duke stated:

> There was an incident involving a gun the night before and ETF raided the house. They came and made a remark, 'you should have came out with what you had [gun] last night.' He wanted me to have a gun on me. They thought I was the suspect. A comment like that, to hear him say that, are you trying to kill me? (Duke, Black male, 50s)

Duke was the only participant who reported being subject to a threat made by the police. However, other participants reported fearing the threat of violence and accounts in which they believed the police were mocking them. Gloria, a Hispanic woman in her 50s, encountered the tactical unit when they were executing a search warrant in her family home. Gloria indicated that

the police received a tip, which proved to be false, that her son had a firearm. Gloria recounts the experience in which she believed that she was being mocked and feared the threat of violence. Gloria stated:

> The guys in grey. They came with a search warrant. There was at least 8 of them. They came around 2:30 to 3 in the morning. It was 5 years ago, and I remember it like it was yesterday. I've never had that in my life. I told my mom I thought we were going to die. My mom grabbed the bible and said, "Jesus is the only God that will punish you". They laughed at her… Somebody said my son had a gun. Thank God my son wasn't home, they would've beaten him up. They didn't point guns at us, but they stood there and said, "if you do something, we're going to kill you". The way they were standing with the rifle, it felt like we were being guarded.

Gloria was not the only participant to indicate they felt threatened or as if they were being mocked. Ella, a Black woman in her 50s, recounts being mocked by police after having her home mistakenly raided. Ella indicated:

> The children are brought up in handcuffs. I kept saying it's going to be okay, relax, relax, relax, they'll shoot you, they'll shoot you…My family huddled together and we started praying. They laughed at us. I eased up and watched the officer. I asked "what's wrong with you guys?" (Ella, Black woman, 50s)

Maryam equated her encounter with the tactical unit as being like the American military operation in Somalia in the early 1990s. Maryam expressed how the threat of violence, emerging from non-compliance, sparked a sense of fear for her. Maryam indicated that "you can't say anything, stand up…In Canada, it's like a war."

The use of militaristic weaponry makes tactical units distinct from other elements of policing, and these findings support the argument that these interactions are characterized by a different threat to safety among members of the public. Gloria's account makes specific mention of the officer's rifles, and Maryam equated the police raid at her home with the American military operation in Somalia. These accounts support Sidhu's (2024) use of a semiotic analysis where it was argued that the ETF's transition to equipment resembling American and Canadian special forces units is intended to frame the contemporary city as a place of war. Maryam perceived the police to occupy the role of soldiers, potentially demonstrating how the blurring distinctions between military and police (Kraska, 2007) also extend to public perceptions.

The presence of threats directed at participants, participants feeling they were being mocked or harassed by the police, and the threat of violence are all themes in accounts that are supported by the literature in the research investigating citizen-police encounters (see Brunson, 2007; Brunson & Miller, 2006ab; Laming, 2023). Like the literature in this area, the qualitative findings demonstrate the expansive nature of violence characterizing involuntary citizen-police encounters. These findings also provide an initial indication, from a qualitative perspective, that militarization is associated with an increased threat level for violence among some people who are subject to these encounters.

Theoretical Considerations

The qualitative findings demonstrate that the most expansive and invasive applications of force appear to be experienced by those with Black family members, like Dinah, or those who identify as Black. This research argues that the tactical unit functions as a form of social control in response to the perceived threat of Black criminality and the racialized Other. Tactical units occupy a colourblind institutional position, and their perceived race neutrality of tactical

obfuscates the disproportionate effect they have on the Black community. The use of police violence is legitimated through fear of the racialized criminal 'Other' (see Gamal, 2016; Saberi, 2017; Tator & Henry, 2006). The colorblind nature of these units effectively positions them to counter claims of racial discrimination despite a noted difference in the disproportionate nature of violence experienced by Black participants.

Extrapolating from the works of Alexander (2011, 2012) and Bonilla-Silva (2006), this research argues that the lack of an explicit racial bias in the mandate of these units obfuscates the expansive nature of violence experienced by Black participants. Garland (2005) demonstrated how lynch mob violence was socially constructed to be justifiable in the context of 'protecting' society from the criminal threat posed by the racialized Other. The critical race perspective would argue that the various applications of violence characterizing these encounters occupy the position previously held by organized racial terror violence but do so in a covert manner that does make explicit mention of race. The expansive nature of the violence experienced by participants in these encounters may be minimized through discourses that portray them as criminal threats, relying on differential racialization, implicitly justifying the use of this violence to protect against society the criminal Other (Kim, 2004; Tator & Henry, 2006).

Due to various intersectional factors, White people who encounter the tactical unit do not occupy the normative position of the White middle and upper class (see Webster, 2008). This may be the result of their class, proximity to racialized people, involvement in criminality, or proximity to criminally involved people (see Linnemann & Wall, 2013; Smith, 2014). Understanding relationality provides an avenue for engaging with the experiences of White people who encounter tactical units. White people who encounter the police do not occupy the normative position of White and are subject to various actions that are reserved for the Other

(Smith, 2014). While these participants may experience less severe applications of violence, their social location subjects them to experiences of police violence. White people who occupy the non-normative position are effectively positioned as the Other or deserving of social control (see Linnemann & Wall, 2013; Smith, 2014; Webster, 2008) and may be constructed as being undeserving of rehabilitation. The racialization of marginalized White people is the means through which applications of police violence are justified to this cohort, as they occupy a similar position to that of the racialized Other.

When considering the intersections of race and class, the participants in this study are effectively positioned as the 'Other.' They threaten the post-modern neoliberal state's dominant economic and racial order (Gamal, 2016; Garland, 1996; Meeks, 2006). The use of an intersectional approach allows for a more significant interrogation of how the use of police violence is legitimated against 'deserving' targets, as racial and economic minorities are construed as risky populations that need to be managed (Gamal, 2016; Meeks, 2006; Saberi, 2017). The expansive and disproportionate nature of police violence is explained using an intersectional approach, as these participants do not have the means to induce any legitimate strains on the police because of their social location. The inability to induce strain on the state because of not being able to afford legal representation or being viewed as a deserving victim contributes to the structural conditions that perpetuate police violence. The use of police violence is further legitimized through institutional and media discourses that rely on narratives of crime control and constructing the criminal Other (see Gamal, 2016; Saberi, 2017; Tator & Henry, 2006).

The differential racialization of specific populations as being a criminal threat broadly positions them as deserving of such applications of violence, even if they are unwarranted. The

use of police violence is legitimized through differential racialization. The use of an intersectional approach allows for an analysis of how race and class shape who is a deserving and undeserving victim of police violence. Racial minorities and White people who do not occupy the normative White social location are deserving recipients of police violence, as they are positioned as threats to middle and upper-class White people.

Chapter 7.3: Mistaken Police Operations

In November 2023, tactical units from both the RCMP and the Edmonton Police Service descended upon James Potts' Edmonton home in response to a kidnapping investigation (Amato, 2023). It was later determined that there was no kidnapping, and the police response emerged because of what is colloquially referred to as a 'swatting' incident (Amato, 2023). In September 2022, the family home of Shauna Macdonald and Michael Kelly was raided by the Brantford Police Service in connection with a drug investigation (Hristova, 2023a). However, the police raided the wrong address as they intended to execute the warrant at a neighbouring building that shared an underground garage with Macdonald and Kelly's buildings (Hristova, 2023a). The residents at each of these addresses experienced various applications of force despite not being the intended target of the police operation (Amato, 2023; Hristova, 2023a).

While the blameworthiness, or the culpability, of the police varies in each context, both incidents are categorized as mistaken police operations. These operations may emerge because of mistaken identity, police responding to a high-risk incident under false pretenses, or are the result of a tactical error made by the police. These incidents do not refer to occurrences where an unfavourable outcome presented itself following police intervention but refer to those incidents in which the subjects of the interaction should not have encountered police. While accounts of

mistaken police operations abound in media narratives of police incidents, the Canadian research in this area is non-existent.

This aspect of the qualitative research outlines the experiences of four participants who were the subject of mistaken police operations. Two of these incidents involved the police raiding the wrong address; one involved a case of mistaken identity, and the other emerged due to a phony 9-1-1 call. I argue that these interactions are not singular interactional level encounters but emerge because of a broader political environment that fails to govern police militarization adequately. Extrapolating from Gamal's (2016) arguments, the lack of effective governance curtailing the reliance on militarized policing is a byproduct of its use as a technique of social control against the racialized Other.

Wrong Address

Two of the participants in this research encountered police due to an operational error where police targeted the wrong address. Lena, a White woman in her 40s, was the subject of a mistaken contain and callout operation. The intended target of the operation was a neighbouring residence, but the police targeted her home instead. Lena recounted the experience of being subject to the operation:

> I was laying on the couch, watching TV and saw red and blue lights. I got up and I peeked out the window and saw the SWAT team's truck. The officer was speaking over the loudspeaker…I looked out the front door and was confused. SWAT told me to come outside, they had guns pointed at me. I was grabbing my jacket. My son was in the washroom and he had 3 guns pointed at him [from outside home]. My son left out the front door. I went outside and 3 guns were pointed at me. When door opened, they said "turn around", "hands up". I was shaking, I said "do what the officer says, walk backwards." (Lena, White woman, 40s)

As with other participants who were the subject of a contain and call-out, Lena indicated having a firearm pointed at her. She provided additional details about her interactions with the police and discussed her perceptions of the incident:

> 9:30 to 10:00 PM, I found out it was a gun raid from the detective part of the team. I feel violated, blindsided, no disclosure. They went about things wrong. Pointing a gun at me is violence, I'm completely unarmed. You need to do your homework, because I'm traumatized from the incident… Feels like they need to do more surveillance and identify the residents. The police did an undercover sting with Canada Post and saw who took the package, they needed to do a background check… They went about this all wrong. I understand the job, but they need to do their homework. They need to ensure the safety of other occupants, what happened to protect and serve?... They fucked up, plain and simple. Do your homework. (Lena, White woman, 40s)

Ella, a Black woman in her 50s, also provides an account of a mistaken police operation. A search warrant was supposed to be carried out at a neighboring property. However, the tactical unit raided her home instead. Ella outlines how the incident initially unfolded:

> I was laying there and I hear boom, boom, boom, boom. I thought something was happening next door. I thought what the heck is happening. The door was blown off and I heard a loud noise… It was the police! They came gave me a warrant and were looking for my next door neighbour. They handcuffed me. I was afraid my son was going to run [as a result of a medical condition]. They go upstairs and the kids are screaming "mom!". The children are brought up in handcuffs. I kept saying it's going to be okay, relax, relax, relax, they'll shoot you, they'll shoot you (Ella, Black female, 50s)

Ella then recounted the process in which the police determined they were in the wrong residence and, like Lena, addressed the severity of the error and expressed her frustration at the fact that something of this nature unfolded. Ella indicated:

> The police realized it was the wrong house at the end of it all…Do your homework! Know what you're doing before you do it, because when do it - it can't be undone. We are strong and have God. Imagine if someone got hurt, what if my son lunged at the officer. How are you going to do a drug bust and not know there are children in the house? How do you get the wrong house. They didn't care, because of the area. There's a lot of stigma. Everybody there is garbage… I still remember the explosion, I auto reacted to get up. 1,2,3 door gone, I look at the door, people coming rushing in grey and black, there was smoke too, coughing. Around 6 officers two pointed guns at me. There needs to be video of what occurs during the attack [raid]. They totally botched it, they set out to hurt me. (Ella, Black female, 50s).

The experiences of Ella and Lena demonstrate the adverse consequences of militarized policing for those at the core of these interactions. Both participants had various applications of force applied to them, with Ella being burned by a distraction device. The tactical unit has the unilateral capacity to apply force during these dynamic interactions with the public. If a party subject to a mistaken police raid were to resist or engage in any act of non-compliance, likely trying to explain that they are not the intended target of the operation, they would be met with more invasive applications of force. These accounts of citizen-police interactions provide a competing account of police militarization to the dominant narratives and justifications supporting militarized policing (Cyr et al., 2020; Jenkins et al., 2021ab).

Mistaken Identity

Sinatra's juvenile relative was the subject of a vehicle interdiction stemming from a faulty identification. The role of the tactical unit in this case was limited to the apprehension of his relative, but a series of policing errors contributed to this mistaken operation:

> SWAT just arrested him…[police service] detectives ran the surveillance and the operation, they misidentified him. SWAT only did the arrest, they thought he was somebody else. Picture the housing complex, [location redacted], it's a busy place. They had a football field of time to ID the suspect, why allow him to enter the vehicle? Why would you call [tactical unit name] to make a more high-risk arrest? It's a form of state-escalated violence. Why allow suspects to enter vehicles? (Sinatra, Black male, 40s)

Sinatra's account raises a series of issues that must be further considered. This interaction with the tactical unit was the result of an error made by investigating detectives, and this would lead to an inference that some tactical unit encounters are downstream of other policing interactions. The tactical unit may not have any reason or the necessary intelligence to doubt the information presented by officers. In this case, the tactical officers are executing a function of their mandate, despite it resulting in a catastrophic error. Sinatra provided additional insights into why and how this interaction unfolded in the manner it did, as he stated:

> I understand how the system works. The SWAT team was operating under the assumption that my [relative] was the suspect… A miracle he [relative] did not get killed. [Tactical unit] didn't botch it, there was no further escalation. We need to focus on the systemic piece. Imagine if this was a White suspect in an upper middle-class neighbourhood. Would this have happened?

Sinatra went on to further discuss that the police service involved in this interaction demonstrated a "sincere acknowledgment and they had a desire to repair…they acknowledged it was their mistake". Sinatra's perspective on the interaction offers an avenue for the application of an intersectional perspective as he draws on systemic discrimination and highlights the intersections between race and class. Furthermore, Sinatra's account demonstrates how the involvement of heavily militarized policing elements may contribute to more adverse outcomes for those in contact with the police. As previously indicated, his relative was violently extracted from a vehicle and subject to various use of force applications, including the use of a distraction device. The intersections between race and class are further explored in the concluding section of this chapter as they allow for an application of critical race perspectives.

Faulty 9-1-1 Calls

Seth, an Indigenous and Black male in his 50s, was the subject of a police takedown as a result of a faulty 9-1-1 call indicating he had a firearm. Seth's encounter with the tactical unit emerged as a result of the police having faulty information. Seth provides an overview of the circumstances that led to his interaction with the police and highlights the context of the interaction. Seth stated:

> Had an upstairs apartment. I went to give my neighbour sugar. There was a man there and he started arguing with her (neighbour). I told him to leave. A man called 9-1-1 saying that I had a gun on me. Outside smoking and saw a bus with people holding cameras. I saw red dots on my shirt. They told me to pull up my shirt and turn around. I got on the ground, and they arrested me, I never had a gun. They went up into the house and dragged my roommate out. (Seth, Black and Indigenous male, 50s).

After being released, Seth outlined his communications with the police in which they attempted to explain the situation and its context:

> The cops apologized. Not ETF. They explained that they have to attend these types of calls. The patrol sergeant apologized to me and said I was lucky I didn't get shot. There was a lot of them, maybe 12 officers - 9 for sure. They had two beams on my chest. (Seth, Black and Indigenous male, 50s).

While Bolduc's (2016) assertion that the proliferation of militarization and militarized practices is a broader symptom of the risk society, the contribution also provides a different lens through which some forms of mistaken police operations unfold. As Seth indicated, the police suggested that the tactical unit must respond to these calls, implying they do not have discretion. For example, the case study suggested by Amato (2023) is mired by circumstances that make it difficult to criticize the police. The police are operating under the assumption that a kidnapping suspect has the potential to kill hostages and rely on the element of surprise. Conversely, the work of Hristova (2023a) allows researchers to squarely assign blame to the officers engaging in executing a search warrant at the wrong address. These operational errors amount to a failure in planning and surveillance and are preventable.

Theoretical Considerations

Botched police operations stem from a broader political and sociocultural environment that fails to govern police militarization adequately. This inability to curtail police militarization includes the operational contexts in which tactical units are used (see Roziere & Walby, 2018) and the equipment they purchase for use in these operations (see Sidhu, 2024). The consequence of this inability to curtail police militarization is that a greater proportion of the citizenry will encounter tactical units. The risk perspective argues that militarized policing is used as a primary

response to calls for service to account for risks (Bolduc, 2016). This preoccupation with risk mitigation subjects individuals to encounters with the tactical unit, some of which may result from a mistaken police operation. This was evident in the case of Seth, as the police were responding to what they believed was an inherently dangerous situation, albeit the result of a faulty 9-1-1 call. However, this perspective is limited in its capacity to comprehensively explain the issue of mistaken police operations as it does not engage with the broader sociopolitical context of citizen-police encounters.

The critical race perspective argues that the inability to curtail the expansion of police militarization is by design, as this policing doctrine serves a broader function of controlling risky populations under the guise of race neutrality (Gamal, 2016). Gamal (2016) argued that the rapid expansion of police militarization functions as a colourblind means to police the Black population. The inability to effectively curtail police militarization, despite evidence of mistaken police operations, stems from the premise that this policing practice is being applied to specific cohorts the state intends to govern (Gamal, 2016; Meeks, 2006). Police militarization is legitimated through appeals articulating the threat of the criminal Other. The threat of crime is a racialized signifier that functions in a more covert manner to justify the expansion of aggressive practices of social control against specific minority groups (Gamal, 2016; Saberi, 2017; Tator & Henry, 2006). Furthermore, those who are most likely to encounter the police do not have the economic capacity to induce strain on the institution, further solidifying its practices.

The urban environment, especially in the context of social housing, may be framed as a place of danger (see Meeks, 2006; Valverde, 2006). Those who encounter the police have limited access to recourse for interactions where they have been the victim of some form of misconduct (see Urbanik & Greene, 2020). Sidhu (2024) articulated that the adoption of military weapons

and equipment used by special forces units positions these communities as places of war. The use of an intersectional approach demonstrates the relevance of critical race perspectives for understanding the emergence of mistaken police operations. I argue that these operations are a natural consequence of the expanded use of militarized policing to respond to the perceived criminality of racial and economic minorities.

Sinatra articulated that his juvenile relative encountered the police in the capacity he did because of his social location. Sinatra specifically indicated that a violent vehicle interdiction would not have taken place if the subject was an upper-class White person rather than a Black male in community housing. Similarly, Ella suggested that the police did not care that they raided the wrong home because the community is stigmatized due to its socioeconomic status. Lena is a renter and did not have the capacity to afford effective legal representation to pursue redress for the mistaken police operation. Meeks (2006) argued that the expansion of police militarization exerts social control over a growing underclass stemming from the reduction of the welfare state.

An intersectional perspective supports the premise that tactical units are among an array of strategies to govern the Other and that a consequence of their use is that mistaken operations may occur. Despite the various accounts of mistaken police operations and the adverse consequences stemming from these encounters, police militarization is legitimated as a result of its application to the Other. Extrapolating from Garland (1996), there is no political will to curtail police militarization as it is a strategy of crime control applied to the Other rather than the Self. The critical race perspective would argue that it is only when the interests of normative White society and the Other converge that police militarization will be effectively curtailed (Bell, 1980). The application of an intersectional critical race perspective is then supported by the

premise that these mistaken police operations emerge from a broader sociopolitical environment where economic and racial minorities are regarded as a threat that needs to be effectively managed by the state (Gamal, 2016; Meeks, 2006; Saberi, 2017; Tator & Henry, 2006).

Chapter 7.4: Trauma and Mental Health

The qualitative research also investigates the consequences surrounding trauma and mental health stemming from citizen-police encounters involving tactical units. Interactions with these officers involve various encounters that use specialized weaponry, tactics, and equipment. For example, Urbanik and Greene (2020) articulated how tactical units use battering rams, distraction devices, and a range of other tactics when executing warrants. An emerging body of literature identifies the traumatic potential of involuntary encounters with law enforcement for those with direct and vicarious experiences of contact (Aymer, 2016; Briere & Runtz, 2023; Bryant-Davis et al., 2017; Gillikin et al., 2016; Hawkins, 2022; Lipscomb, 2020; Klein & Lopez, 2022; Lopez et al., 2018). However, there is a relative dearth of literature investigating the traumatic nature of encounters with tactical units. The literature also demonstrates the racialized dispersion of trauma and mental health stemming from citizen-police interactions (Briere & Runtz, 2023; Gillikin et al., 2016; Hawkins, 2022; Klein & Lopez, 2022; Sewell & Jefferson, 2016; Smith Lee & Robinson, 2019; Wilson et al., 2023; Venta et al., 2022).

Bryant-Davis et al. (2017) and Sharpe (2015) argued that racialized people experience racialized appraisals of trauma, which rely on making meaning of events situated by their status and identity in a racially marginalized group. A growing body of research now engages with racialized appraisals to understand traumatic events facing a community (McGuffey & Sharpe, 2015; Smith Lee & Robinson, 2019). This research investigates the issues of mental health and trauma through both an individual and collective lens. The findings highlight that mental health concerns are pervasive across the sample and manifest themselves in nightmares, flashbacks,

feelings of hypervigilance, and anxiety. Some participants have received formal diagnoses due to their encounters with tactical units.

Mental Health at the Individual-Level

The findings illustrate the pervasive nature of trauma and mental health at the individual-level as numerous participants illustrated the adverse effects of these encounters on their lives. Dinah described the extensive challenges following the police raid on her home.

> I was scared of going back to the house, I have PTSD. I was afraid of noises, people probably thought I was assaulted. I'm better now. I moved to the other side of the country. I'm afraid of [city], I'm afraid of the police. The police harassment, all of it. It didn't need to go down like that. I should've got counselling, but I moved on. I'm good, but I'm not. I have to think about my [juvenile relative], for a long time I didn't want anybody close to me. There are still days where I can't talk about what happened. We had a child together, I was a girl trying to save the guy from the hood. I just focus on raising [juvenile relative]. I put my mental health on the backburner and had to keep going. I regret not getting help, and I think about how I'm going to explain this to my [juvenile relative] (Dinah, White female, 30s)

Dinah discussed her juvenile relative several times throughout her account and other participants also made mentions of their familial ties when discussing the traumatic nature of their encounter. For example, Duke indicated:

> After it all happened, I don't know going through the situation and seeing my child's mom get caught up in it, I had other things going on in my mind. She had to go through the same treatment. How they treated me was how they treated her. She was pregnant and had guns pointed at her. I thought about it when it was fresh. Not impacting me now - has it in the past? Yeah. (Duke, Black male, 50s)

Duke also indicated that the experience of his arrest, which involved the tactical unit, is still something that he thinks about. One aspect of the incident he recalls was perceiving an implicit threat from a tactical officer who made a comment about hoping that Duke possessed a firearm:

> Bothered me about what the officer said. That comment alone was like what? This guy has that mentality, know what I mean? The team they treat you like a criminal from the jump. They are violent and do not see your situation, know what I mean? The lived experience allows us to understand this shit. (Duke, Black male, 50s)

Several participants highlighted the trauma they experienced and discussed the impact it has on their day-to-day lives. For example, Dean (Black male, 20s) indicated "I won't drive next to the police, I pull into the plaza. Feel paranoid and afraid of the police, the experiences, all police are assholes." This general feeling of fear and hypervigilance was prevalent among the sample. Similarly, Lena (White female, 40s) indicated she is "paranoid around police lights…I keep having flashbacks and replay everything in my head [silence]. I had a hard time sleeping." These two excerpts from the interviews highlight a general pattern of hypervigilance and experiences of flashbacks and nightmares. Others indicated:

> Brief moments, I had nightmares and flashbacks. Every time I see police, it's a steady thought in the back of my mind. I live with it every day. I wouldn't say I let it stop or affect me from doing things. (Coltrane, Black male, 30s)

> I keep looking through windows to see if they are there. Like holy fuck, it's so triggering. Not something you can just shake… Would've been beneficial to get help. We fucked you up, let's help. They literally only want to cause harm. A fear of cops and cop cars [pause]. I'm in trouble when I see cops. Anxiety and depression,

really struggling. I started going to school even less, because I couldn't cope. (Louis, Indigenous non-binary, 20s)

I had nightmares about it in [year]. I had nightmares about getting shot by the police. The barrel looks so big, I hear a big loud bang and wake up…I had nightmares and flashbacks. Flashbacks when I see SUVs, because they drive in unmarked cars. Police driving by in trucks reminds me of ETF. It's not fight or flight, but just flashbacks of the experience. I always pay attention around unmarked SUVs. (Seth, Black and Indigenous male, 50s)

For me it was like yesterday. I have nightmares about it, I thank God he wasn't there. I'm terrified of opening the door, I cover the peephole. Every time I hear a siren, I'm terrified of them coming to my home. It has been going on since it happened… Nobody takes the time to listen to us. I'm [age] years old and I carry this trauma. People don't understand the shit they go through, they don't know what it's like in my shoes. Unless you understand the trauma, you will never understand what we face. SWAT, TAVIS, the police, they're goal is to fuck you families to put kids in jail; instead of giving them a future and a family. That's how I see it… Sometimes you have to suck it up and leave it. I cry on my own and take care of it. Who can you tell when you're on your own? (Gloria, Hispanic woman, 50s)

Until now I can't sleep. You see my eyes, I'm scared. I feel safety when I go outside, not inside my home. Sometimes I don't want to take shower, I'll break my leg. Every noise scares me. I have depression anxiety. Always eating. Muscles, everything tight… I'm coming here for better life, but I'm in hell, hell, hell. Here I don't see my future. I tell people back home - if you bring kids here, when

> they grow up, you cry like I cry. Dignity here is gone. (Maryam, Somali woman, 50s).

> I'm pretty upset, I just remember wanting to eat Chinese food. The whole thing was traumatic. They took my mom and we had to go to a friend's. I was scared. It was traumatic - us as kids seeing these big ass guns not knowing what's going on. I feel like for me, I could tell the stories. It might affect me, but I can't say it doesn't. The memory is still there, but I don't let my past affect my future… More emotional than angry feelings. Maybe when I was younger, I relived them busting into the shower. (Ambrosius, Black woman, 30s)

Other participants in the research described a series of strategies they attribute to remaining hypervigilant of the potential of police raids. Sammy is an Indigenous male in his 20s who vicariously experienced a police raid that his father was the target of and indicated he maintains a degree of hypervigilance surrounding what he says over the phone:

> I was scared that my phone was being tapped, but I had to figure it out on my own. I still have this underlying suspicion about being followed or tapped. Is the worry justified? I don't know. (Sammy, Indigenous male, 20s).

The general level of hypervigilance demonstrated by Sammy was also frequent among those with direct experiences with the police. Other participants report engaging in a series of defensive strategies and remaining vigilant of the police, while others describe a tremendous sense of fear when seeing the police.

> I always wake up at 4 [AM]. Between 4-7, I always wake up because I thought they would come. I never slept good. You don't realize the effects until you talk about it eh? I always this way and now I turn it into a positive. I'm up early and early at work. (Chet, Black male, 20s)

> I'm traumatized. I still feel that way. If I come home late at night at a certain time, I'm waiting for the door to get kicked down. I wait to fall asleep until late, because they usually like to do it [raid] in the morning. All mental you know? Has me thinking about jail and shit…Anxiety and paranoia. Can't sleep, pacing, looking out the window, looking at people, watching the camera of the downstairs. I think about it every day. (Oscar, Black male, 30s)

> I have night terrors. I've been abused and kicked in the head. I keep having dreams about the experience… I re-enact the situation in my head. 9 times out of 10, I'm paranoid, you know? My heart drops when I see the police and it feels like I'm being followed… I relive the experience. I have night terrors, constantly feel like I'm going back. I don't want to feel the boot, I don't want to feel the tight handcuffs. I'm afraid of the police, I see them and I think they are there for me. My heart drops. It races and I have anxiety (Perry, Black male, 30s)

The research findings are largely consistent with the existing literature, which suggests that adversarial contact with police has a traumatic potential (see Briere & Runtz, 2023; Gillikin et al., 2016; Hawkins, 2022; Klein & Lopez, 2022; Sewell & Jefferson, 2016; Smith Lee & Robinson, 2019; Wilson et al., 2023; Venta et al., 2022). Interestingly, these challenges also emerged for those individuals who witnessed a tactical unit operation. Two of the participants in this research witnessed the operations of a police tactical unit but were not the direct target of the operation nor had any family members who were the subject of the operation. Oscar is a Black male in his 30s who witnessed a communal raid in his neighbourhood and Nancy is a White female in her 20s who witnessed the police engage in a standoff with an empty home on her street. Their accounts demonstrate the traumatic nature of vicarious encounters with tactical units:

> ETF came in groups. Heard loud bangs in the morning. Battering rams and flashbangs going off. Saw the aftermath. I stayed inside. I thought they were going to raid me, I thought I was going to go to jail too. I'm a young guy and they [police] think of me as 'one of them'. Saw people loaded into vans and vehicles, kids taken to Children's Aid. It was uncomfortable, I was scared, alone, powerless. Just because everybody I knew was getting locked up… I was diagnosed with PTSD in [year]. It all boiled over, everything from the dime bag. Just knowing they can kick off doors at 5 AM in the morning. They took people from home. People who are not part of the life, that's the reality of it. I'm not feeling myself. The exposure to police violence and profiling. I had to be strong for my grandmother (Oscar, Black male, 30s)

> My chest is tight just thinking about it. It doesn't feel good. If I stayed living there longer, I would have been affected more. It would be nice to have an acknowledgement that their presence causes harm. My whole body felt tense and anxious. When I see police, I feel that way. I don't think about it day to day. It was a short-term challenge, moving away made it easier. (Nancy, White female, 20s)

The findings highlight the devastating consequences of police militarization and suggests this is an area of policing requiring additional scrutiny and research. In addition to the individual-level trauma, a subtheme emerged in this literature that was exclusive to Black participants. Several Black participants situated their individual trauma in relation to the experiences of the Black community and the systemic discrimination they face.

Communal Trauma

The literature on trauma and mental health also draws attention to the potential for trauma extending to the larger community and highlights the particularly racialized nature of this

issue (Bryant-Davis, 2017; McGuffey & Sharpe, 2015; Sharpe, 2015; Smith Lee & Robinson, 2019; Waldron, 2021; Williams, 2021; Wilson et al., 2024). Bryant-Davis et al. (2017) suggested that race-based trauma possesses an intergenerational component where contemporary incidents of violence are contextualized to the historical violence experienced by a group of people. The literature refers to the capacity of an individual to situate their individual trauma in relation to the collective racial group as a racialized appraisal. (McGuffey & Sharpe, 2015; Sharpe, 2015; Smith Lee & Robinson, 2019). Among Black participants, a number of respondents made reference to larger systemic issues facing the Black community and viewed their experience with police as an extension of systemic discrimination.

Some participants expressed these challenges in relation to a general understanding among the Black community that adverse experiences with police are the norm. For example, Dean (Black male, 20s) indicated that the first time he saw a gun was when he was a child and one was pointed at him by an ETF officer. Dean recounts the traumatic nature of the experience and discusses it in relation to violence facing the Black community, “Looking at a 12 gauge. Not from being robbed. First time seeing a gun was from ETF. It’s racial profiling. I’m scared and want to run away. Our people don’t make it home.” The consequences stemming from encounters from the tactical unit was also outlined by Duke, Ambrosius, and Mercer:

> They came and took whoever they thought they should take. I saw lot of people get caught up and never got back. Some are on park benches, some committed suicide. That raid changed my view because they didn’t care who they were affecting. (Mercer, Black male, 30s)

> Because we are this colour, it doesn’t mean we’re criminals. Understand who we are, what we experience, understand trauma, loss, grief. Why would a Black kid pick up a gun and shoot

> somebody? Every case is different. Even though the actions are similar, understand what led to it. There's things that happen, look at it from a wider lens. (Duke, Black male, 50s)
>
> In the Black community, I shouldn't say this, it's the norm, people understood it…I feel like police have too much power in a sense. Certain situations they're coming in with all the force. (Ambrosius, Black female, 30s).

Sinatra was the most direct in making the link between trauma stemming from police violence and anti-Black racism. Sinatra indicated:

> It's racial profiling, it's trauma. This work is in the abstract, I wasn't directly connected to it. This made it hit close to home. They didn't think this could happen in Canada. People think they won't face interaction because they didn't do anything wrong. I feel hopelessness, anger, when does this end? I'm concerned for all Black community members; it's communal trauma. It's based on identity. This could happen to any of us… People who are marginalized are not believed. This is a communal experience for the Black community. We have the "it is what it is" way of rationalizing it. In most cases, there is no recourse. People in the community can't say they haven't met Black men without negative experience with the police. Sometimes they blame themselves for what happened. This is the experience of being Black in Canada, on the extreme end. We have to mitigate risks for everybody in the community. (Sinatra, Black male, 40s).

Sinatra discusses the consequences stemming from the interaction between his juvenile relative and a tactical unit in the context of a racialized appraisal (Sharpe, 2015). Dean, Duke, Mercer, and Ambrosius all articulated the individual-level challenges they experienced in reference to the broader concept of communal trauma stemming from police violence. The idea

of a communal trauma facing the Black community further highlights the need for additional research in this area. The research findings demonstrate the pervasive nature of trauma and mental health challenges facing participants and serve to demonstrate further how the institution of policing has expansive adverse effects on the Black community (Saberi, 2017; Tator & Henry, 2006).

Theoretical Considerations

The findings demonstrate the traumatic nature of the encounters with police tactical units and how this is situated in the individual and communal context. The communal trauma experienced by members of the Black community challenges the institutional discourses of race neutrality in contemporary policing practices (see Monaghan & Molnar, 2016; Samuels-Wortley, 2021, 2022b). Participants drew on a collective history of anti-Black racism and contextualized their individual encounters as part of a larger narrative. The effects on Black participants, from an individual and communal aspect, draw further attention to the argument that the tactical unit now occupies a colourblind role as an agent of social control developed to respond to the threat of Black criminality (see Gamal, 2016). While the adverse effects of these encounters are noted, this is not the first research to demonstrate the traumatic potential of citizen-police encounters on the Black community (see Bryant-Davis, 2017; McGuffey & Sharpe, 2015; Sharpe, 2015; Smith Lee & Robinson, 2019; Waldron, 2021; Williams, 2021; Wilson et al., 2024). The broader question emerges as to why this trend continues despite institutional claims of race neutrality.

Critical race perspectives draw attention to the role of power and how systems of White supremacy are reproduced through various institutional practices and discourses (Bell Jr., 1995; Delgado & Stefancic, 2007; Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Hayman Jr., 1995; Sandrin & Palys, 2022). Tator and Henry (2006) demonstrated that institutional figures from the Toronto Police

Service monopolized the time at police services board meetings to limit the number of deputations members of the Black community could make. The goal of this approach was to prevent allegations of racial profiling from being documented in the public record. This demonstrates that the production of knowledge is inherently rooted in social power (Brynn & Gleen, 2024). Canada's evidence-based policing community does not conduct research investigating the adverse consequences of policing, effectively silencing racialized knowledge (Walby, 2022). Their research is primarily used to legitimize institutional discourses through academic research (Samuels-Wortley, 2022a; Walby, 2022). The use of counterstories challenges the asymmetric production of knowledge and places race at the forefront of the analysis to demonstrate the discriminatory impact of policing and highlight the importance of race (Samuels-Wortley, 2021).

I argue that the shift in the production of knowledge that places race at the core of the inquiry will not substantively affect the range of institutional discourses that reinforce the White social location. Media and institutional discourses framing the Black community as a criminal threat insulate the police from criticism for using aggressive policing practices (Saberi, 2017). The construction of the Black body as a criminal threat legitimates the use of militaristic weaponry and tactics in the context of crime control, positioning Black people as a threat to the values and order of White society (Gamal, 2016; Saberi, 2017; Tator & Henry, 2006). While the findings provide substantive evidence of the psychosocial effects of encounters with tactical units, these challenges are experienced by the racialized Other. When considering the emergence of communal trauma facing the Black community, a critical race perspective would suggest this is the intended function of militarized policing. There is a notably colourblind dimension to militarized policing in which there is no explicit racial animus. The intended function of this

policing strategy is that of a novel form of social control directed against the Black community, and the harms stemming from this practice are deflected or otherwise minimized in the name of crime control.

Chapter 7.5: Lack of Formal Supports

Outland et al. (2020) discussed the lack of formal support and limited access to resources for most victims of police violence. These victims are largely relegated to the use of informal support networks to manage the various challenges they may have experienced because of their interaction with police. The literature also demonstrates the reliance on informal support networks, primarily among the Black community, to navigate the consequences of these encounters (Brunson, 2007; Feagin & Sikes, 1994). Laming's (2023) research, placing an emphasis on the vicarious and direct experiences of police violence, also highlights the importance of understanding how informal support networks are used, and how accounts of police violence are shared among peer and family groups.

This section of the qualitative findings builds on the contributions of Outland et al. (2020) and demonstrates the lack of formal support accessible to participants in their community. Furthermore, another thematic category in this section identifies the emergence of informal support networks as an avenue for some individuals to address the challenges stemming from their encounter with a tactical unit. This section of the research dovetails with the previous section, as it demonstrates how individuals at the core of these interactions with tactical units do not have the necessary institutionalized support to assist them in navigating the traumatic nature of these interactions.

Lack of Formal Supports

Duke discussed the lack of culturally relevant programming for Black adolescents experiencing police trauma. He discusses how his work as a service provider is premised on addressing the gaps he observed when accessing supports stemming from his encounter with a tactical unit. Duke indicated:

> There are no counselors. You don't get anything in jail, I saw the judge. When you go through the system, they don't give you anything know what I mean? Different issues - trauma, loss, grief, it's normal. Treat us like criminals that's it. You get conversations with people in jail who have experienced the same thing. We are different, but I can relate to the experience. People who haven't been through that experience don't believe it's real - know what I mean?…It's just us, we are the support. We are able to understand youth suffer from trauma, loss, grief. We see the symptoms and work on that platform. We work with high-risk individuals; 95% of them, even the females. They're understanding trauma, but there are other things there. We're from a community where death is normal. It's nothing to me, I'm so numb to it now. (Duke, Black male, 50s)

While Duke does not provide a reason as to why he believes there are few culturally relevant supports, Sinatra takes a more critical stance in discussing his perspective on why this is the case:

> I'm often the support. It's not often I get to seek support, I'm the one offering support. It weighs on you, it gets heavy. The police are not responsible for repair. In the absence of formal supports, people have to go to the police. The stance of the provincial government is that the police are right. There is no political appetite for contradicting themselves. The support needs to be community-based… What else

> other than hugs? The repair is almost impossible. (Sinatra, Black male, 40s)

Sinatra invokes a lack of political appetite in implementing and funding community supports to police violence and highlights the challenges associated with repairing the harm, something that he indicated having extensive personal experience with. The lack of culturally relevant and trauma-informed services is also buttressed by participant accounts discussing the inherent challenges associated with accessing conventional supports. These include perceptions of service providers dismissing the claims of participants or concerns surrounding the challenge of accessing conventional supports in marginalized communities. The contributions of Gloria and Ella each indicate this in greater detail:

> If we see counselling, everybody in Regent will know. I don't have trust in them. I have looked for help, but for my kids - they battled it and didn't seek help. Son with depression, a daughter with anxiety and depression. It's not easy living in a low income neighbourhoood, you're being judged, language barriers, abuse in the community, constantly fighting your own battles… You have to be cautious about what you're going to say and what you're going to do. They assume everybody in housing is on welfare or collecting. It's important for people to know. The system is not supporting families who were traumatized, it's enough for people to stay silent. We need to speak up because it is getting worse and worse. (Gloria, Hispanic female, 50s)

> The counsellor told me I was overreacting, the ER used to say "we know who you are, have a seat." No sympathy for us. CopWatch was the only people who really helped us, they were amazing… I went to the therapist and I paid her to revictimize me. She got CAS involved again. It just feels like people were upset because a Black lady was

> causing problems- who the hell does this Black woman think she is. Stay in your lane lady. That's what it felt like all the time. (Ella, Black female, 50s)

The accounts of Ella and Gloria further highlight the challenges associated with accessing formal support and demonstrate how elements of class and race intersect with the ability to respond to trauma (Feagin & Sikes, 1994).

Reliance on Informal Support Networks

The emergence of informal support networks is central to the understanding of police violence, especially among marginalized and racialized communities, as this is one measure through which people develop vicarious experiences of police contact (Brunson, 2007; Brunson & Miller, 2006ab; Feagin & Sikes, 1994; Gau & Brunson, 2010, 2015; Laming, 2023). The idea of using one's social network as a form of social support is something that emerged with regularity across numerous interviews. Oscar was asked about the supports he accessed to navigate the challenges he faced following his interaction with the tactical unit. Oscar indicated:

> None, just the streets. Turn back to what you know. It's not like the community centre had any programs for us. Friends have experienced this. I wouldn't talk to a counsellor about none of that stuff. Counselors will tell me what I already know. Get a job, get out of jail, get out of the streets, I already know that. (Oscar, Black male, 30s)

Rosemary, a Black female in her 50s, whose home was the subject of a search warrant stemming from an allegation that her husband was in a possession of a firearm, discusses her reliance on informal supports and further illustrates why she does not want to access formal supports. A number of participants also echoed similar sentiments:

> There were no formal supports for us. I relied on family, whatever family I had. I know I should go to therapy, but I don't want to be analyzed. I don't find people who come and talk to me about this experience. (Rosemary, Black female, 50s)

> Friends are the support. I went to a psychiatrist, makes me feel crazy- talking about things you don't want to talk about. Dealing with it on my own, no alcohol or drugs (Dean, Black male, 20s)

> A bag of weed. I wouldn't say I keep it to myself. I don't talk about it out of the blue. I'll talk about it with my friends if the topic come up. Yeah, like they've experienced similar things. (Coltrane, Black male, 30s)

> None. I talk about it with friends. (Ambrosius, Black female, 30s)

> [Support person] has helped a lot of people. A lot of support through [Name of support person]. They have an understanding with a lot of us. I feel safer here than going out there. I guess it's because I'm comfortable with her. I don't open to anybody, I have trust issues. I've been through hell and back. I pick and choose who I trust - I put barriers around me. (Gloria, Hispanic female, 50s).

The accounts provided by the participants highlight the general reliance on informal support networks as a means of responding to the traumatic nature of the encounters involving tactical units. The findings also provide two unique explanations as to why informal networks emerge as a stopgap measure for accessing support. There is an absence of conventional supports accessible to participants and these supports may be stigmatizing or are not culturally responsive to their needs. Informal networks emerge as a source of support as they may be more familiar to participants or are structured around a shared experience. These findings provide support for the formation of peer support networks or other community-based supports that are more responsive to the needs of individuals who have encountered police.

Theoretical Considerations

The critical race perspective contextualizes tactical units as a colourblind strategy that exerts social control over the Black population (Gamal, 2016). Saberi (2017) and Gamal (2016) each articulated how the use of aggressive policing practices is legitimated in the context of crime control, with media portrayals of crime expressing race using various signifiers. The urban racialized poor are constructed as criminal threats that need to be managed in a political environment where a growing underclass emerges as a result of the deterioration of the post-War welfare state (Davis & Shaylor, 2020; Herbert, 2001; Meeks, 2006). Using a critical race perspective, I argue that the absence of formal and culturally relevant supports is (a) a byproduct of the discourses advocating for control of the racialized Other and (b) maintains the race-neutrality of contemporary policing.

The state delegitimizes police violence, and policing as an institution, by allocating resources for those who are the subject of adversarial encounters with the police. Police violence is delegitimized as it reshapes the social location of its recipients from the Other to the Self, reconceptualizing the victim as a member of society rather than an external criminal threat (see Garland, 1996). Allocating resources to those who experience adversarial and aggressive policing implies they were undeserving of this experience and undermines the justification for the expansion of these practices, which are rooted in racialized discourses of crime control (Gamal, 2016; Saberi, 2017; Tator & Henry, 2006). The absence of formal supports legitimizes police violence as it maintains the social construction of its recipients as the Other and tacitly communicates that those who encounter the police in this capacity are risky populations that need to be effectively managed (Herbert, 2001; Meeks, 2006). The absence of resources allows the state to maintain the status quo, as it does not have to wrangle with competing discourses of

legitimate and illegitimate policing. The absence of these supports frames all police practices and their use of violence as legitimate.

Allocating resources to racially marginalized communities who disproportionately experience adversarial encounters with the police challenges the race neutrality of the institution's practices. Gamal (2016) articulated that contemporary police militarization functions as a mechanism to control the Black community while making appeals to its crime control function to insulate the institution from claims of systemic racism. Saberi (2017) and Tator (2006) posited similar arguments in the context of communal police surveillance and racial profiling. By offering racialized communities resources to navigate the consequences stemming from encounters with the police, the state implicitly acknowledges the racialized effects of policing. Acknowledging the racialized effects of police practices challenges the race neutrality of the institution, as this tacitly acknowledges that the police occupy a position of racialized social control. However, the race neutrality of policing can be maintained in the absence of resources for these formal supports. The police cannot be framed as acting in a racially biased manner as their practices are legitimated through colourblind discourses using expressions of race as signifiers for crime control (Gamal, 2016; Meeks, 2006; Saberi, 2017; Tator & Henry, 2006). By refusing to acknowledge the racially disparate effects of policing, the state allows for the institution to continue using colourblind discourses and practices that privilege the White social location.

Using an intersectional framework also provides an analytical lens to understand the reliance on informal supports among participants. The participants in this section are racialized and primarily of lower socioeconomic status. In addition to not having culturally relevant supports (see Crenshaw, 1991), the participants are largely unable to afford private counseling.

Using an intersectional perspective demonstrates that the adverse effects of these policing strategies are experienced along class and racial lines (Hill Collins, 2019; Meeks, 2006; Saberi, 2017). Extrapolating from Meeks (2006) and Saberi (2017), the lack of culturally relevant and formal supports in the community is a byproduct of a political and sociocultural environment that frames the Other as being undeserving of support and justifies the use of militarized policing as a strategy to govern the urban underclass.

Chapter 7.6: Disruptions to the Family Unit

The findings illustrate a series of challenges to the family unit, in the context of the interpersonal dynamics within the family and disruptions to housing. The existing literature suggests family units may experience challenges to parenting, face interpersonal difficulties with one another, face the threat of children's welfare agencies removing their children from the home, and lose access to housing as a result of contact with elements of the justice system, including the police (Brunson & Weitzer, 2011; Desmond & Valdez, 2013; Fox-Williams, 2019; Greene et al., 2021; Hannem, 2011, 2019). The findings illustrate the gendered and class-based nature of these challenges further substantiating the need for an intersectional perspective to understand how racial inequality operates interdependently with other forms of social inequality (Hill Collins, 2019).

The Threat of Child Welfare Agencies

Several female participants experienced the threat of losing their children as a result of the involvement of children's welfare agencies following their encounter with a tactical unit. This consequence operated in the context of women facing the threat of being reported to child welfare agencies used by police to coerce cooperation or being the subject of investigations by these agencies (Greene et al., 2021). Like Greene et al. (2021), this research demonstrates the

gendered and class-based nature of encounters with police tactical units. Dinah reported being threatened with the prospect of child welfare agencies taking her child away, even though she indicated she was being cooperative. Dinah indicated:

> They said they were going to call CAS and it felt like they were taunting me. It scared the shit out of me. I felt violated, I was respectful and cooperative. (Dinah, White female, 30s)

While Dinah's interaction with the tactical unit stemmed from a police investigation into her partner, Ella's home was raided during a mistaken police operation. Ella reported experiencing the threat of losing her children as a result of increased scrutiny by a child welfare agency following the raid on her home. The increased scrutiny emerged as she was precariously housed following the raid, as her family was unwilling to reside in the home where the raid occurred. Ella indicated:

> I was under the microscope to the max, I was at the shelter for 6 weeks, I had to be a good parent, CAS got involved and I felt revictimized. I'm fighting for my reputation, but I could've lost my children if they really wanted to push. Where were you when the police traumatized us? Where were you when my kids needed you?... We all had to make changes to survive. The kids felt like they were raid children. Everywhere we went, we weren't treated properly. I felt the spotlight was on me wherever I was. (Ella, Black female, 50s)

When considering Ella's account, it is important to note that this increased scrutiny emerged as a result of the consequences stemming from the encounter with the tactical unit, as opposed to being directly related to the encounter. This contribution demonstrates that the challenges to the family unit must also be considered as it relates to how they navigate the consequences stemming from these encounters. Peggy also reported the threat of losing her

children following her interaction with a tactical unit and this arose as a result of a custody battle with her mother. Peggy indicated:

> My family was disappointed in me after this. Like, my mom filed for custody and I had a custody battle with my mom - I almost lost my kids. (Peggy, White female, 30s)

While Greene et al. (2021) specifically focused on the experiences of inner-city women, this research also finds that some men employ defensive strategies to avoid this threat to the family unit. Chet noted how many of his peers, whose homes were also subjects of a communal gang raid, experienced interactions with child welfare agencies. Chet, however, employed a defensive strategy to avoid this challenge:

> When I went home, it always hit me. My mom was crying, my brother was gone - he did a year and a half to 2 years. I kept it from school. The school I went to, there was 2 of us. The other guy it happened to went to Children's Aid. I was paranoid, because he went to foster care. The teachers asked, I lied though. I said we were helping out with the raid. (Chet, Black male, 20s)

These findings provide insight into one of the distinct challenges facing families following their interactions with tactical units. Like Greene et al. (2021), this research finds that this issue primarily affects socioeconomically marginalized mothers and families. The contributions of this research further support the idea that experiences with tactical units are gendered interactions and that men and women may experience these encounters in different capacities and contexts.

Parental Challenges

The findings also illustrate that individuals with children must navigate various challenges related to their role as parents. In addition to navigating the interaction with a tactical

unit, parents indicate prioritizing their children's well-being. This further contributes to the literature demonstrating the unique impact citizen-police encounters have on parenting. The existing literature demonstrates how women employ gendered presentations to navigate the threat of child welfare agencies and that some parents teach their children strategies to navigate police encounters safely (Greene et al., 2021; Fox-Williams, 2019; Weitzer & Brunson, 2013). This research also contributes to the literature examining the adverse effects of criminal justice system contact on families (Hannem, 2011, 2019). The accounts of participants demonstrate the far-reaching nature of the interaction on the roles of participants as parents:

> I don't talk about it with my [juvenile relative]. I just said [male family member] is on a timeout, I wasn't calling it jail… They had guns bigger than my kid. I don't know what army they came with. My [juvenile relative] is terrified of the police. She says, "[caregiver title] there is a cop next to us." As a [caregiver], I have to tell her that not all cops are bad. I needed to get her out of the city and away from the energy. (Dinah, White female, 30s)

> I'm terrified for my son, I'm glad his girlfriend wasn't here. I talked to him about it and he said everything is okay. He said it sucked and he is mentally traumatized. It could be he's not ready to talk about it, doesn't hit them [kids] right away. It hit me right away. (Lena, White female, 40s)

> My children won't talk about anything. Oh yeah, [son's name] is still looking around over his shoulder. He's paranoid and traumatized. They won't talk about it, he won't even talk to me about it. With other people he is paranoid. If he sees me talking with somebody across the street he tried to stop me. That's how paranoid he is. (Rosemary, Black female, 50s)

> Parenting, this has an impact on me as a parent. My [juvenile relative] is 11 years old. I tell them, when there are police, you tell your parent. Comply, don't talk to them, ask for your parents. My fear is that if I equip him with compliant behaviours, he can still get harmed. (Sinatra, Black male, 40s)

> I tell kids to dress properly, they use that to target you. Police have it in their heads that they are the troublemakers even if you're not involved and have nothing to do with them… Because they see Black people as troublemakers. No matter the age or man or woman. They just see us as troublemakers. (Rosemary, Black female, 50s)

When considering the influence of race, Sinatra and Rosemary's accounts demonstrate how Black parents instill conduct norms in their children to navigate future encounters with police (see Fox-Williams, 2019; Weitzer & Brunson, 2013). These accounts demonstrate the various challenges facing parents as they assume the additional responsibility of ensuring their children's emotional and psychological well-being. When considering the absence of formal supports, as indicated in the previous section, this finding illustrates how individuals with children face another distinct challenge stemming from their encounter with police. Parents may have to decide to prioritize their children's well-being over addressing other consequences stemming from these encounters.

Hannem (2011, 2019) identified the consequences facing families who are experiencing incarceration, with an emphasis on disruptions to relationships between family members. Participants reported experiencing conflict with other family members because of their encounter with a tactical unit. Some participants reported experiencing strained relationships, whereas others reported a deterioration of their family unit. The participants indicated:

> I had a strained relationship with my father; he was upset and ashamed. He died before the [legal resolution]. I don't think he ever

> believed me; I was guilty by association. He used to say, don't be like your sister [Ella] on the [media source]. I was fighting for my reputation, fighting to prove my innocence to him. (Ella, Black female, 50s)
>
> My family was affected by the raids and strained our relationship. The trauma led to addictions and homelessness. [Pause]. I'm the only one not experiencing homelessness. More and more consequences. The trauma led to strained relationships between family members. (Louis, Indigenous non-binary person, 20s)
>
> It still affects me, I can joke about it now, but when I think about it, it's tough…there is a rift in the relationship. Like I don't know if he is still up to the same thing [selling cocaine], it's awkward sometimes… There is more distance between me and my dad because of this, and it almost ended our relationship. (Sammy, Indigenous male, 20s)

The findings demonstrate the challenges facing parents and children or family members of individuals who are the subject of police raids. These findings support the idea that the adverse consequences stemming from police contact extend to the entire family unit, rather than being isolated to the individual at the core of the interaction (Fox-Williams, 2019; Greene et al., 2021; Weitzer & Brunson, 2013). Hannem's (2011, 2019) work on incarceration and the challenges facing families should be more heavily incorporated into policing research to provide greater insights into disruptions to the family unit.

Disruptions to Housing

Desmond and Valdez (2013) demonstrate how contact with police contributes to the evictions of economically marginalized and racialized residents of rental units and those in subsidized housing. Landlords and other third-party actors use contact with the police as a

justification to evict residents from their housing. The findings of this research demonstrate that encounters with tactical units are associated with disruptions in housing. As previously noted, many participants are of lower socioeconomic status and either rent or live in subsidized housing. The findings demonstrate that individuals and families experience the threat of eviction following these encounters:

> The landlord told me he wanted me to leave a week later after I got the door fixed. I didn't know my rights. The other tenants were complaining about what happened and he wants me to leave. (Seth, Black and Indigenous male, 50s)

> I felt embarrassed, felt confused, felt lost. Because, why did they choose to come and wreck our house and take my brother? The other effects that happened…they kicked us out of housing, we were in community housing…We were living in a townhouse. We got kicked out like 6-8 months later. We tried to fight it. We prolonged it until we found a place. We didn't have to pay for the damage. I guess because it happened on a large scale? (Chet, Black male, 20s)

> The landlord kicked us out. I had to go through bail, my child's mom had to go through bail. The landlord doesn't want us there and we didn't want to stay there. You know what happens right? Once you get targeted, you become a target. (Duke, Black male, 50s)

> We moved afterwards, well we got evicted. Either my parents pay for it or they got kicked out. (Louis, Indigenous non-binary person, 20s)

> We were evicted…not allowed to go back in and get our property…our property was going to be repossessed…Lost the apartment, not the property… (Nat, White male, 30s)

> My family got evicted. Family got kicked out and had to start from scratch. We were paying subsidized rent and had to pay market rent because of me and my brother. (Oscar, Black male, 30s)

> I got evicted from housing. Toronto Community Housing. I just left. I tried to right it, but they wanted to evict us (Rosemary, Black female, 50s)

The results indicate that certain participants, like Duke, would have chosen to move regardless of whether they were evicted. At the same time, Chet's family fought the eviction from community housing until they were able to find an alternative. Other families experienced evictions following their encounters and did not have the capacity to prolong this consequence. Extrapolating from Desmond and Valdez (2013), landlords and community housing agencies are enacting a form of third-party policing by evicting families who encounter the police. Beyond these involuntary evictions, Dinah's and Ella's accounts demonstrate that the violation of their physical space by the tactical unit changes the nature of their spatial relationship with their home. They indicated:

> I didn't go home, I couldn't. I emptied my savings account and was in debt. No matter how many times I painted the walls and furniture it never went back to home. (Dinah, White female, 30s)

> After it all settled, I just said to myself "we can't stay here". We are afraid of the people next door. I needed time to think, I sent the twins to school. I needed time to think. I started calling shelters, and it just felt like everybody is against you. I was fighting to be heard and understood… The shelter didn't understand. My home isn't safe, the police are my enemies, they hurt me. I wasn't treated like a victim…I don't know how I survived, there was so much happening. They pointed guns at all of us. I had to function for myself and my children. I went to the housing office and they looked at me like shit,

> and accused me of threatening someone. I got painted as the "angry Black woman"… We had to move out of social housing. I struggled with high rent, I couldn't afford it. Nobody helped us. (Ella, Black female, 50s)

Dinah and Ella voluntarily left their home because of the traumatic nature of the encounter with the police. The participants experienced financial challenges from this decision, highlighting the unique intersections between class, gender, and race. Some participants lost access to their housing, others faced the financial challenges of having to pay market rent rather than subsidized rates. In contrast, some could no longer live in their homes as a result of the traumatic nature of the encounter with police. These findings suggest that future research must investigate the intersections between involuntary citizen-police interactions and housing.

Theoretical Considerations

I argue that evictions following encounters with a tactical unit function as a novel form of social control embedded within a larger network of policing that exercises a colourblind effect. The tactical unit is just one element of this policing network that exerts social control over racialized communities. While this research has articulated how LAPD SWAT was initially developed to counter the growing influence of the Black Panther Party (see Gamal, 2016; Hall & Coyne-Blanco, 2016), it was not the only mechanism of social control applied. Higginbotham et al. (2023) illustrated how the *Mulford Act* was passed in response to the Black Panthers' use of open carry to engage in community patrols, prohibiting the carrying of firearms in public. The justification provided for the legislation relied on discourses of crime control and social order.

The use of evictions following contact with police operates under the same discourses of crime control (Desmond & Valdez, 2013). Toronto Community Housing (TCHC) (2024) publicly listed several reasons why residents may be evicted and indicated that "eviction may be pursued

immediately in very serious situations, generally involving serious impairment of safety or serious criminal activity". The use of evictions following an encounter with a tactical unit is problematic as the individual(s) have not been found guilty of an offence, the entire family unit may not be involved in the criminal offence being investigated by police, and Roziere and Walby (2018) demonstrated that these units are more frequently responding to calls that are generally reserved for patrol officers.

Except for one participant, all the participants in this study who lived in community housing were Black. Many participants indicated facing eviction following their encounter with a tactical unit. However, TCHC's eviction policy does not explicitly mention race, but the policy is contextualized under the guise of public safety and crime control. Despite the disparate effects of this policy against the racialized poor, its use is legitimated as a result of its emphasis on crime control and public safety. Extrapolating from the arguments of several authors (see Gamal, 2016; Herbert, 2001; Meeks, 2006; Saberi, 2017; Tator & Henry, 2006), the findings illustrate that the use of evictions in response to encounters with the tactical unit function as a novel form of social control applied to the urban Black underclass. The critical race perspective drives the argument that the use of evictions is a colourblind form of social control that maintains the normative White social location. This is the case as the use of third-party policing provides the state with a greater capacity to exert social control over racialized people rather than solely relying on the criminal justice system (Desmond & Valdez, 2013).

Meeks (2006) posited that police militarization occupies an institutional position that allows the state to manage a growing urban underclass. Hill Collins (2019) argued that employing an intersectional perspective demonstrates how social inequality varies based on individuals' and groups' distinct social locations. I argue that the consequences stemming from

encountering police tactical units vary across different elements of social location, offer an analytical lens for understanding how these citizen-police encounters further perpetuate social inequality.

Participants who identified as parents indicated having to prioritize the well-being of their children over other consequences stemming from the encounter. The marginalized socioeconomic position of these participants, coupled with the absence of formal supports, forced parents to adopt an additional caretaking dimension as they did not have access to resources to assist their children in navigating these encounters. However, there are additional class and race-based dimensions that amplify this responsibility.

All the women in this study encountered the police because of the actions of men they were in proximity to, including family members and neighbours. Furthermore, many of the mothers in this study identified as single mothers. Using an intersectional perspective demonstrates that the consequences of these encounters are gendered in addition to the class-based nature of these interactions. Women face a series of challenges stemming from their role as mothers, that men do not face in the same capacity. Women were often faced with navigating the consequences. Dinah indicated having to explain to her juvenile relative why their male family member was no longer home. Lena and Rosemary both reported worrying about the mental health of their children. Ella, Peggy, and Dinah also reported having to navigate the threat of losing custody of their children. These experiences were not articulated among the majority of male participants. Similarly, women did not report being the subject of alleged assaults, although some witnessed these acts of brutality. Building on the contributions of Greene et al. (2021), using an intersectional perspective demonstrates that encounters with tactical units are gendered.

Using an intersectional perspective also highlights how these interactions take on a racial component. For example, Sinatra and Rosemary each described how they had to instill conduct norms in their children to navigate future encounters with the police (see Fox-Williams, 2019; Weitzer & Brunson, 2013). The necessity of instilling conduct norms stems from the racially disproportionate nature of policing and is a challenge unique to racialized participants. White parents, who faced a series of class and gender-based inequalities, did not indicate having to teach their children how to navigate future police contact. Extrapolating from Weitzer and Brunson (2013), this is the result of the Black community navigating systemic discrimination from the police in an intergenerational capacity. Using an intersectional perspective demonstrates how these interactions also have a unique effect on racialized people, in addition to the class and gender inequalities faced by other participants. Furthermore, this allows for a greater and more comprehensive analysis of social inequality as it demonstrates how one's social location influences their encounters with the police.

Chapter 7.7: Property Damage and Theft

Several interviews revealed allegations of theft and property damage. Roziere and Walby (2020a) also indicated the presence of property damage as being a fixture of the warrant executions carried out by tactical units. Like Urbanik and Greene's (2020) findings, participants in this study understood that warrant executions involve extensive searches. However, the concerns that emerged in relation to property damage stem from what participants perceived to be the unnecessary, malicious, or intentional destruction of property. The damage may include broken furniture, damaged doors and doorframes, burn marks from the deployment of distraction devices, and damaged personal effects, among other things (Roziere & Walby, 2020a; Urbanik & Greene, 2020).

Property Damage

The extent of the property damage varied across participants. When elaborating on the damage sustained to his [juvenile relative's] vehicle, Sinatra shared a vicarious experience of property damage, which outlined the potentially traumatic nature of property damage for families. Sinatra was familiar with a shooting involving a tactical unit in the community and indicated:

> Look at [name of person shot by police] family. There are bullet holes and blood throughout the house, the police are not fixing the damage. The family is left to suffer in the home. (Sinatra, Black male, 40s)

Sinatra's account provides evidence of property damage stemming from a use of force incident. Other participants reported varying degrees of damage to their homes and belongings, which resulted in many having to pay for damages. The participants indicated:

> We all know when they raid your home, they destroy things. They trashed everything. For the most part it was just trashing the place, my mom had to pay the landlord for the door, it wasn't our house. (Ambrosius, Black female, 30s)

> They destroyed everything until my mom's room. She [mom] started wilding, a girl cop came and it calmed down. It's like that place where you can go and hit TVs and break shit. They weren't breaking it, but they were tossing it. (Chet, Black male, 20s)

> They tore up the house. Pulled things apart, they didn't take it apart - you could tell they pulled it apart. They broke things. I was locked up. Things were broken for sure, my child's mom told me…They broke up my house. Some things you have to throw away. I don't know how much it cost, but we had to fix everything. (Duke, Black male, 50s)

There was a big burn in the floor from the grenade…They cut out the roof in the kitchen. I don't remember all the damage, they flipped everything. A lot of work to put it back together if I tried to stay. I didn't consider staying, I didn't consider staying. Something bad happened to us there, there is no way. I made a decision for my kids. They wouldn't want to stay there. (Ella, Black female, 50s)

The house was completely destroyed, the doors, windows, sofas, toybox…SWAT kicked both doors down and the house was ransacked… There was $5000 to $6000 in damage, but I refused to pay. I dealt with them. No burn marks or anything like that [from the flashbang], just them smashing the door. I don't know why they smashed the window? Everything was destroyed, but there was nothing of value…It was completely destroyed. Even the IKEA furniture and bedframes were destroyed. I can understand that they are looking for money and drugs, but to destroy everything? It's all we had…it did seem excessive… (Nat, White male, 30s)

Everything was flipped. Things were destroyed that didn't need to be. The bed is flipped and torn apart. It was hateful. Anything and everything. Picture frames, bed frames broken, we couldn't use them again. It made no sense. Why did they do that with this? We had to clean everything. We threw out so many things… Honestly, what did I do? They destroyed my innocent room. That was my only place. My room never felt the same again. Is this all going to happen again, I always look outside windows now to see if they are there. (Louis, Indigenous non-Binary person, 20s)

They ransacked the house. The gun was on top of the bed in the main room. I haven't been back to the house. It was a huge mess… [when asked of how he learned of this] Somebody I know told me this, the door is broken. (Basie, Indigenous male, 20s)

> Ransacked the house looking for evidence and suspects. It was my uncle's house. (Bing, Indigenous male, 40s).
>
> I got an eviction notice and kicked out the next day. Building asked to pay for damages, somebody paid it. (Dean, Black male, 20s).
>
> Tore through the house, they went through absolutely everything. They put my work phone in the evidence bag, they left with phones in the evidence bag. They went through my underwear. (Dinah, White female, 30s).

Like Urbanik and Greene's (2020) research, some participants reported property damage they believed to be unnecessary. Several participants ultimately questioned the motives of officers, while others acknowledged the quasi-punitive nature of these searches. Participants reported extensive damage to their homes, with some indicating thousands of dollars worth of damage and others advising that their landlord wanted them to pay for the damage sustained to the property. Regardless of the context in which these interactions occur, their low visibility nature presents a challenge for holding police accountable for property damage, which is made even more difficult when search warrants are involved. An additional implication stemming from these findings is that some participants were required to pay for the damages, sustaining a financial cost, and were then evicted from their property.

Theft

In March 2023, a drug trafficking case was thrown out after the judge ruled that there was reasonable evidence suggesting Toronto Police officers stole thousands of dollars from the accused during the police operation (Alberga, 2023). Urbanik and Greene (2020) also reported the rather routine nature of theft of personal items and valuable goods that were not reported in lists of seized evidence. There were several accounts where allegations of theft emerged in the interviews.

In response to a probing question of whether anything was stolen, Dean indicated: “What do you think? The money is gone, not in evidence - these guys are freaks.” While Louis could not confirm that money had been stolen, they indicate: “I’m sure something was stolen, there was money missing.” Mel stated, “they stole my scratch ticket.” Nat further indicated, “Don’t trust the police, the gang unit and tac stole money. It was part of the game. They know and I know.” The most detailed explanation of theft emerging at the site of the police operation emerges from Dinah’s account, where she stated:

> They stole money, $5000, not from illegal proceeds, it was my money. They never put it in evidence. They didn’t find anything except a small bag of weed and a joint… They robbed me. It was smack in the face. They left the [container holding the cash] where I stored my cash on the floor, it was smack in the face. They left it there for me to see they found the money (Dinah, White female, 30s)

While Chet did not elaborate on his experiences of police raids, as an adult, he did indicate an experience of theft during one of these encounters. Chet situated the theft within the broader context of the power police have during searches of property. Chet indicated:

> In this game, they’re winning. I view it as perks. They view everyone as dangerous and a killer. If you have 8 grand, they say you had 4. Where does the rest go? Every time I hear stories about them they always short it, they always short it. (Chet, Black male, 20s)

While not occurring to the same degree as participants in Urbanik and Greene’s (2020) research, this may be attributed to this study focusing on experiences greater than raids. The findings from this section of the analysis further contribute to the existing evidence in the literature of allegations of theft (Brunson, 2007; Urbanik & Greene, 2020). Considering that

many of these searches are preceded by pre-dawn raids, it is likely that the low visibility nature of these citizen-police interactions contributes to this issue.

Theoretical Considerations

While the police have the capacity to engage in invasive searches of homes, Roziere and Walby (2020a) highlighted numerous conditions in which charges against accused parties have been stayed due to excessive property damage that violated the accused's Charter Rights. Similarly, Alberga's (2023) reporting also demonstrated that charges were stayed against an accused due to police theft. I argue that allegations of theft and extensive property damage occupy an extrajudicial character, as they function as a quasi-punishment for perceived criminality. Extrapolating from Garland (2005), I argue that theft and property damage are informal criminal punishments and are shaped by the broader sociopolitical context that frames the racialized Other as a criminal threat.

Theft and excessive property damage are forms of group deviance committed by police that function as informal criminal punishments. These quasi-punishments maintain a power division between the punisher and the punished and reinforce the inferior, or subhuman, position of the criminal Other. Theft and excessive property damage are not regarded as acts of racial violence, as tactical units occupy a race-neutral role. However, Gamal (2016) illustrated the expansion of militarized policing tactics in the context of policing the criminal threat stemming from the racialized Other during the *War on Drugs*. While the tactical unit occupies a colourblind role, the critical race perspective suggests theft and excessive property damage are byproducts of a larger sociopolitical and sociocultural context that frames the criminal Other as a subhuman threat. The construction of the criminal other as being subhuman subjects racialized people and marginalized Whites to these informal criminal punishments.

The critical race perspective argues that these acts of group deviance, though not legally tolerated, are implicitly legitimized through their application against the racialized criminal Other. Like other elements of aggressive policing (see Saberi, 2017), the activities of police are legitimated through their application in the context of crime control and protecting hegemonic groups. The application of informal criminal punishments by the police maintains the normative White position, as it frames racialized and marginalized White people as deserving recipients of these acts. Extrapolating from the work of Garland (1996), the most expressive forms of justice would be applied to the Other and reinforce the position of the self and the state as the normative one. In contrast, the criminal Other is subject to expressive and punitive forms of justice in both an informal and formal capacity.

The allegations of theft and property damage challenge the dominant institutional narratives and position tactical units as a source of social harm. The use of a qualitative approach emphasizes the lived experiences of individuals subject to these police encounters and provides an avenue for knowledge production that challenges traditional narratives of policing. Samuels-Wortley (2022b) demonstrated the utility of counterstory telling in an analysis of the experiences of Black and Indigenous youth to challenge dominant institutional narratives of race neutrality. Similarly, Samuels-Wortley (2022a) used a counterstory to challenge the dominant narrative of Canada's evidence-based policing community that positions it as a being free of racial and theoretical bias.

The use of counterstories elevated the lived experiences of those participants who experienced theft and property damage and established a knowledge base of these actions facing individuals who otherwise do not have access to the institutional means to draw attention to these issues (Brynn & Gleen, 2024). Furthermore, the issues of theft and property damage cannot be

identified using a statistical approach as the very construction of data collection instruments and the variables they measure are intended to justify a particular practice or institutional strategy (see Haggerty, 2001). This is a limitation of relying on police-reported data. Feasibly, future research may engage in surveys with individuals who have experienced raids to enumerate allegations of theft. However, this proposed research would have to navigate the hidden nature of this sample of individuals. There is no organizational impetus among the police to document the amount of property damage occurring at the site of raids, as this data would subject them to further governance. In contrast, they would document the reason for the search warrant executions to legitimize and perpetuate its use as a policing strategy. Using counterstories provides a methodological means to produce knowledge that challenges the inherent dominance of institutional narratives and modes of knowledge production (Samuels-Wortley, 2022b).

Chapter 7.8: Stigma

Encounters with tactical units may be inherently public in certain instances. In the Ejaz Choudry case, there was a large police presence at his apartment unit, with multiple sets of ladders leading to his balcony and separate groups of officers at his balcony and front door. Furthermore, tactical units carry out search warrants in the early hours of the morning as a means of securing a tactical advantage over the sleeping residents of a dwelling (Roziere & Walby, 2020a). Similarly, during a contain and callout, the tactical unit surrounds a structure and orders all participants out over a loudspeaker. Parts of these police operations may be heard or observed by neighbours, often with little context of the nature of the interaction.

Extrapolating from Goffman (1963), individuals who encounter tactical units may be ascribed a *spoiled identity* where they are reduced to negative attributes. In this case, the negative attribute is that of a criminal. Similarly, the families of those who encounter tactical units may

also face *guilt by association* where the stigma of criminality is attached to them. Individuals who encounter the police may experience social exclusion as a result of these encounters (Goffman, 1963; Tinney, 2023; Wiley et al., 2013). This aspect of the qualitative findings demonstrates the stigmatic potential of encounters with tactical units.

Many respondents indicated experiencing increased hostility from neighbours and others in their community following the interaction with a tactical unit. Some participants noted that the presence of the tactical unit contributed to the perception that they were dangerous criminal actors. The participants indicated:

> People viewed me differently. They assume you're guilty by association. The bells and whistles brings on a showcase of events. I felt ostracized by the other tenants. Yeah, of course there is a stigma. It is more immediate, over time you block it out - at least I did anyway. It was more about them not talking to me. Cold staring, people are talking about you, people assume the worst because of a SWAT team - they think criminal, illicit, high end drug dealing. My foster parents think I did something wrong, the stigma plays into your family ties too. (Bing, Indigenous male, 40s)

> Our neighbours treated me differently…He tried to talk to me with understanding, but said he didn't feel safe with us. I tried to explain but he said that they [police] don't do that for just anybody. The police wouldn't have come like that for just anybody. I felt judged. The neighbour in front said she can't believe people used meth, sold meth. She thought who the hell is my neighbour that the police come in with like that, you must be a pretty bad guy…I didn't want to be seen, talk to them, I was embarrassed and ashamed… My ex-wife and family lost all trust in me, they basically said that the SWAT team doesn't just kick in anybody's door. It just seems excessive. (Nat, White male, 30s)

> The neighbours already judged me. The way they were looking at us, it was embarrassing. Without ever knowing you, they judge you. Instead of asking, calling, texting you about why the people with big guns are at your house, they just judge you. Even from that day, this is why my son says, "mom, I don't want to stay at home"- it breaks my heart, it breaks my heart - because of the situation- when you're supposed to protect them. (Gloria, Hispanic female, 50s)

Respondents indicated experiencing increased hostility and losing prosocial relationships. Participants indicated:

> Where I lived, they kind of shunned us. That certain section, they took pride in not letting guys hang out. After that happened, they shunned us. The kids didn't play with us anymore. I started going outside more. My group of friends made me think less about it, because I was always playing sports. (Chet, Black male, 20s)
> I wouldn't say I was supported. I caught some dirty looks. Where I was living at the time, I didn't really talk to my neighbours. They didn't say anything, but the looks, they know who I am. (Coltrane, Black male, 30s)

> They put black tape over the peepholes. None of the neighbours talked to me. People would see me and be sheepish. Did you think I did it, are you scared of me? People were always weird around me. It was embarrassing, going to the garbage chute. Everybody in the building, all 17 floors knew they came to my house. (Dinah, White female, 30s)

> I lost friends at school, because everyone said "I changed". But I couldn't explain how this affected me. Kids treated me differently at school after it happened. I felt isolated from the neighbours. I didn't feel good around the neighbours…'Oh my God, it's the people who

> got arrested and had SWAT surrounding their house. (Louis, Indigenous non-binary, 20s)

Finally, some participants appeared to ascribe a stigma to themselves due to what they perceived as the humiliating nature of the encounter. This may have stemmed from the stigmatic nature of the incident and the individual believing they were being labelled in a particular manner:

> We all had to make changes to survive. The kids felt like they were raid children. Everywhere we went, we weren't treated properly. I felt the spotlight was on me wherever I was. (Ella, Black female, 50s)

> I'm humiliated. I don't want to go outside. This summer is going to suck. The neighbours saw, the news didn't report the right thing. They could've came to the apartment to confirm I was not connected. I would have given them permission. (Lena, White female, 40s)

> I saw them walking around the apartment, it was very embarrassing. I'm not involved in any crime, I was just working. There were people outside looking at me, there was people standing outside - it was summer. They used to nod their heads at me talk to me, now they see me as something different. I had to move. I felt isolated. I explained to some people. Some accepted it, others did not. People saw me and gave me side glances. (Seth, Black and Indigenous male, 50s)

I argue that the stigmatic nature of interactions with a tactical unit functions as a degradation ceremony. These encounters meet all five conditions for a degradation ceremony, highlighted by Garfinkel (1956). The individual's transgressions are made public through the nature of the interaction with the tactical unit, and (2) the police function as an authority figure, and their presence implicitly announces the transgression. (3) The audience may view the police as legitimate representatives of the group as a result of their institutional role, (4) the individual

is publicly punished as a result of being held at gunpoint or removed from their home in handcuffs, and (5) the stigma facing the individual effectively removes them from the community.

Theoretical Considerations

The stigma related to interactions with tactical units draws attention to the concept of Whiteness and the construction of a marginalized White identity. White people no longer occupy the normative middle and upper-class White position when they become associated with a signifier differentiating them from the in-group (Linnemann & Wall, 2013; Smith, 2014; Webster, 2008). These signifiers may include belonging to a different social class, living in public housing or being homeless, using hard drugs like amphetamines, or being involved in the criminal justice system group (Linnemann & Wall, 2013; Smith, 2014; Webster, 2008). I argue that interactions with a tactical unit are a signifier that reshapes their identity as that of the Other.

The results demonstrate the inherently stigmatic nature of these encounters and how several White participants were effectively shunned from their community or the subject of increased hostility. While their socioeconomic class or involvement in criminality may have already differentiated them from the normative White community, the interaction with the tactical unit further differentiated them from other people within their community. These interactions with the tactical unit and the stigma attached to them operate as a vehicle through which marginalized status is assigned to individuals, thus removing them from the normative White social location. Critical perspectives draw attention to the marginalized White identity and how violence and other forms of aggressive treatment are legitimated against this group, as they do not occupy the hegemonic social location. While Bhopal (2023) argued that even

marginalized White people possess a degree of privilege, Webster (2008) suggested that marginalized White people may experience similar treatment to that of racialized people.

White people in this research have also experienced the adverse consequences of encountering tactical units to varying degrees. The question then emerges as to how tactical units could be conceived of as a colourblind strategy of racial control. The interrogation of Whiteness demonstrates that White people who encounter the tactical unit do not occupy the normative White social location and are differentially racialized as being inferior (Smith, 2014; Webb, 2019; Webster, 2008). The contention that tactical units occupy a colourblind form of social control is supported as they are also used against White people who threaten the normative White position.

Chapter 7.9: Perceptions of Police Militarization

The research on involuntary citizen-police encounters also explores citizen perceptions of police legitimacy and how certain elements of involuntary interactions may adversely influence the perceptions of police held by participants (Brunson, 2007; Brunson & Miller, 2006ab; Gau & Brunson, 2010, 2015; Urbanik & Greene, 2020). However, there is a dearth of research when it comes to investigating the perceptions of police militarization by those who encounter tactical units. Participants shared their perceptions of tactical units and police militarization more broadly when asked about their perceptions of police and if there any changes they would recommend to tactical units. The participants questioned the necessity of police militarization and shared their perceptions of discriminatory policing,

Questioning the Necessity of Police Militarization

Salter (2014) argues that police militarization emerges as a result of armament culture, which includes elements of popular culture that glorify militaristic equipment. Tactical units'

adoption of militaristic equipment is regarded as a means for police to attain a hypermasculine status and frames them as warfighters (Salter, 2014; Sidhu, 2024). Participants largely viewed tactical units as an occupying military force engaged in warfare. Coltrane indicated:

> When you have that many people, that many cops - you don't need those big guns. I'll give you the benefit of the doubt, you don't know what you're necessarily walking into, but when there is that many officers - you don't need big guns. You're not GI Joe and you're not fighting a war in Afghanistan. (Coltrane, Black male, 30s)

Coltrane was not the only participant to draw reference to the militarized equipment, with an emphasis on firearms and equipment, as other participants also questioned the necessity of the degree of tactical unit militarization:

> You need to demilitarize. There is no need to be dressed like SEALs. It's a step in the wrong direction. There is more need for training and transparency. (Sinatra, Black male, 40s).

> Don't come with this excessive force, GI Joe Army. You're better off not kicking the door and using lasers on your guns. Not everybody is dangerous and armed - I don't know like- sometimes they raid sometimes they don't. They called us out one time, but that's because we had a lot of guys. (Chet, Black male, 20s)

> Tell them to fuck themselves. I hope your kids go through what you put many children through. Be more lenient. At least not damaging people's property. Breaking down their door, you think they are paying for it? Breaking people's property, you think they are paying for that? Scaring people's kids, thinking this is some Call of Duty bullshit… I understand it's for their safety, but they'll use to their advantage. They'll gun butt you, kick you with the combat boots and tell you to stop resisting. Pointing a gun at your forehead, its traumatizing. They aren't trained to injure, they are trained to kill. (Oscar, Black male, 30s)

> It kind of changed. I liked talking to them and getting to know them. After the raid, I don't waste my time. The badge and the gun changes them; they forget they are human beings too. If you get cut, you bleed the same colour as me. If you bleed green, I know you're not the same as me - maybe some kind of alien (laughs)…I don't know I never thought about that, I never really thought about it. Did you have to break down the door? We would have opened the door. You come into a house full of kids like that? Use your common sense. I work, you come into the house like we have cocaine and guns. Take away their guns. Dressing up like soldiers is not necessary. People aren't throwing grenades at them. Why are you bulking up? Not everybody has guns. Don't just believe what people tell you about who has what. Know the people before you go and blow down the door. (Rosemary, Black female, 50s)

The participants' responses condemn the adoption of militaristic hardware, describing it as disproportionate. They also question the necessity of the tactical unit's involvement compared to their perceived levels of subjective risk. The broader implications of these findings are that the proliferation of militaristic equipment may damage participants' perceptions of police legitimacy. Urbanik and Greene (2020) found that perceptions of police legitimacy were undermined when participants believed the police were not engaging in their duties in a procedurally just manner. These findings provide an avenue for future research investigating perceptions of militarization and procedural justice.

Perceptions of Discriminatory Policing

Several participants contextualized the use of tactical units as a discriminatory policing strategy intended to target racialized communities. The responses of participants draw attention to the disparate use of tactical units in response to racialized communities (see ACLU, 2014; Gamal, 2016; Meeks, 2006; Mummolo, 2018) and the use of tactical units in response to the

crimes of the economically marginalized (see Meeks, 2006). Dean invoked a critical history of policing and provided insight into tactical units as form of social control primarily targeting the Black community:

> Think about where it came from, the slave patrol. The badge of the slave patrol turned to police. If you know history, you know what they are. (Dean, Black male, 20s)

Other participants made specific reference to their race. They discussed how they perceive the tactical unit as being a form of policing intended to foster the social control of Black people. Several participants articulated this position:

> My neighbours are having a party and for a noise complaint at 10 PM, why are you coming with a big ass gun? The gun was bigger than him and he struggling to put it in the truck. You felt that threatened to need that caliber of gun. I felt because they were coming into the hood, where there are Black people, they used full force. They wouldn't do this in a White neighbourhood. Why was that needed for a noise complaint? (Ambrosius, Black female, 30s)

> You didn't have to use that force, I would've never lifted a hand to you guys. I didn't go for a gun. It feels like I'm down South, you know? Make yourselves known, the guns aren't always necessary. (Perry, Black male, 30s)

> Because we are this colour, it doesn't mean we're criminals. Understand who we are, what we experience, understand trauma, loss, grief. Why would a Black kid pick up a gun and shoot somebody? Every case is different. Even though the actions are similar, understand what led to it. There's things that happen, look at it from a wider lens…They are way overequipped. All that taxpayer money to treat you like a terrorist. They come way too hard. The

> taxpayers money. I understand it for some reasons. For a sixteen year old you heard has a gun, it's too much. (Duke, Black male, 50s)
>
> It's problematic and they do it all the time. I have no fear of being shot or experiencing anything [violence] from the police. I'm White, I'm not Black in America, I'm not Indigenous in the North End [Winnipeg]. I have a different upbringing if that makes sense?... I don't know who you think these people are that you need a tank…Most of the time these drugspots are just kids playing gangster. They use it in low income areas because nobody can sue. It seems ridiculous… No logical reason. It seemed they were doing it to cause harm. We're the cops, you're the bad guys, so fuck you. (Nat, White male, 30s)

Other participants discussed the tactical unit beyond race and articulated it as a broader strategy to police the urban poor. The participants indicated:

> SWAT doesn't change. They discriminate against homeless people and drug users, we can't fight back. Everybody thinks it's just another day. It was always a joke to us after if we didn't get arrested, we laughed to cope with raids (Mel, Black male, 50s).
>
> They aren't needed, but they were needed in my situation. I had a weapon and shot at them. I don't think they should be used to patrol the ghetto bro. They think they are top shit, go around and terrorize everybody. They drive around like regular beat cops, but shut down the block for calls (Basie, Indigenous male, 20s).
>
> What makes you want to throw someone in jail or detail somebody for something trivial? What in your upbringing makes you want to do that to someone in low income housing; who is not supposed to make it - but is working. Maybe a more formal approach to discuss the intention and finding the safest and cleanest way of doing it instead of kicking down doors and looking for action. I guess that

> defeats the purpose of a raid, but the way they do it is very dangerous for everybody. (Mercer, Black male, 30s)

These findings indicate that participants believed the tactical unit to be a form of social control applied to groups occupying the position of the Other. Perry specifically invoked the imagery of the Deep South. Duke and Ambrosius each contextualized the militarization of tactical units under the broader framework of racialized social control, and Nat indicated that his position as a White man protects him from police violence that is otherwise reserved for racialized people. The findings further contribute to the theoretical argument that tactical units occupy a position of social control directed towards racialized and economically marginalized groups (Gamal, 2016; Meeks, 2006).

Perceptions of Police

Several works in the area surrounding citizen-police encounters draw attention to how public perceptions of the police may change through the perceived legitimacy of police action (see Gau & Brunson, 2010; 2015; Urbanik & Greene, 2020). Maryam discussed how her perception of police changed:

> Before, I trusted the police. Before, I had a restaurant, I had no problems. I respect the police. Before I thought it was the kids- I told people the police were not bad. Now, the police are bad- don't trust…I don't trust you guys- what you did to my son. What are you doing guys? You do bad and wrong things. I don't lie. I watch my son, call police if he doesn't follow rules. I don't do bad things because of my religion. (Maryam, Somali, 50s)

> I understand they have to do their job, I get that. I wish they were a little bit different. They're doing what they have to do. I understand it, I just don't agree with it. They were rough. I wish they didn't use that much force. Nobody resisted. It was excessive when there is a

kid around. You need to do something different. Like allow parents the chance to say goodbye. She is screaming, reaching for him, and they tossed him around like a ragdoll. You're hurting him, it was unnecessary. I stayed quiet. My mind goes back and forth. I can't argue for him. It comes down to the kid. If we were home alone, fine rough him up- not in front of the kid. (Dinah, White female, 30s)

For me, that's bullying and intimidation, but we can't say shit. If you fucking do something, we're going to get killed. If you do something, you're fucked, I'm sorry- but that's the reality. Living in a poor neighborhood, the stigma it's huge; you're already painted as a bad person. Nobody takes the time to listen to us. I'm 57 years old and I carry this trauma. People don't understand the shit they go through, they don't know what it's like in my shoes. Unless you understand the trauma, you will never understand what we face. SWAT, TAVIS, the police, they're goal is to fuck your families to put kids in jail; instead of giving them a future and a family. That's how I see it. (Gloria, Hispanic woman, 50s)

I feel like, what's the thought process? I want to understand their thought process. It doesn't make sense. How do you justify in your head what happened and what you do to people. Traumatize kids. Where do you think this is okay? How do you process this? Like, you're making things up to connect the dots…Give money for the community resources. Start taking training to be more compassionate. Like you guys have a home so it's crazy that you destroyed mine. Like break somebody's door down during a wellness check? They can't think past that, because they have power. Use that extra money on the armored car? That's crazy. (Louis, non-binary Indigenous person, 20s)

All this planning, money, and manpower went into this and it didn't make us feel any safer. There are still drugs in the area, there is still

> violence. The police are not responding to the issues in the community. The SWAT team was not necessary. I don't know why they were there, there was no communication with any of us. They wrecked the boulevard and they don't fix it. You wreck a nice fence and stairs? It seemed like overkill…Your tactics aren't working. Money needs to be invested in the community. You can't make it safer if you don't make people's lives safer. (Nancy, White female, 20s)

> They forget we are human. Not all of us have done something wrong, we have families to go home to and lives to live. They treat us like dirt. We are all humans. #1 there should be a body camera during the raid- it's protection for everybody. I think they overuse weapons because they are not trained well enough to look for threats. We need specialists with mental health training, police just attract bullies. (Peggy, White female, 30s)

The findings illustrate that the participants question the legitimacy of various police practices, either by framing them as procedurally unjust (see Urbanik & Greene, 2020) or by questioning their efficacy in addressing crime. Participants challenged what they believed the police worldview was and how this limits the capacity to form meaningful connections with the public. Some respondents question the decision to allocate resources to militarized policing elements and indicate a desire to have funding funneled to measures that address the underlying causes of crime or provide alternatives to traditional policing.

Theoretical Considerations

The findings provide greater support for the assertion that the tactical unit functions as a colourblind form of racialized social control. Several participants suggested that the tactical unit functions to control the Black community. Nat, a White male, specifically indicated that his position as a White male safeguarded him from violence that Black or Indigenous people may

experience. Other participants questioned the disproportionate nature of militarized policing and its application to Black people and the Black community. The contributions of participants directly contradict the dominant institutional narratives of race neutrality. The findings articulate the position that the use of tactical units functions as a form of racialized social harm. The qualitative accounts support Gamal's (2016) assertion that the contemporary nature of militarized policing functions as a strategy of social control applied to the Black community.

The use of counterstories also provided those with lived experience to guide the production of knowledge and challenge the institutional claims of race neutrality. The qualitative data allowed participants to express their perceptions of the racially discriminatory nature of tactical units. Participants expressed how they believed race structures these interactions with police and this method placed race at the forefront of the analysis (Samuels-Wortley, 2022b). Using the counterstory methodology also allowed participants to outline the various harms they have faced due to their interaction with the tactical unit. The use of counterstories offers an avenue to challenge the dominant institutional narratives of police tactical units, primarily espoused by the evidence-based policing community (see Cyr et al., 2020; Jenkins et al., 2021ab; Towns et al., 2023). By placing race at the forefront of the analysis and using an intersectional approach, these accounts of participants allow for an identification of how this policing practice is structured by and reproduces social inequality.

Conclusion:

Cyr et al. (2020) indicated that the proliferation of the militarization of policing in the Canadian context does not warrant the same level of concern as in the American context, owing to a series of institutional safeguards and the standardization of training. The qualitative data demonstrates the wide-ranging social, psychological, economic, and personal effects stemming

from encounters with tactical units. I argue that tactical units are a significant source of social harm and their use perpetuates various social inequalities on the lines of race, gender, and class. The findings demonstrate (a) the expansive nature of violence, (b) the emergence of mistaken police operations, (c) psychological and mental health challenges facing participants, (d) the absence of formal support for individuals who encounter tactical units, (e) significant disruptions to the familial dynamics and housing, (f) allegations of theft and excessive property damage, (f) the stigmatic nature of these encounters, and (g) negative perceptions of police militarization.

The theoretical contributions of this research support Gamal's (2016) assertion that militarized policing occupies a colourblind institutional role that exercises social control over racialized communities. The appeals to militarized policing are made under the guise of crime control and public safety, where the threat of Black criminality is used as a signifier justifying the expansion of this and other discriminatory policing practices (Gamal, 2016; Herbert, 2001; Meeks, 2006 Saberi, 2017; Tator & Henry, 2006). The qualitative research challenges institutional narratives of race neutrality and draws attention to the various harms stemming from this practice.

The qualitative results, however, will not bridge the gap between critical and advocacy/evidence-based scholars (see Kraska, 1999; Samuels-Wortley, 2022b). The evidence-based policing literature will appeal to the crime control function of tactical units and provide statistical justifications or accounts from institutional figures to justify its expansion. However, this literature ignores the broader sociopolitical context of how crime control is used as a signifier to express race implicitly. Furthermore, this literature fails to acknowledge that statistics are a social accomplishment that is collected in a neoliberal institutional context that allows criminal justice organizations to make a political justification substantiating their practices

(Haggerty, 2001). I am not arguing that tactical units do not have a crime control function, and the critical literature in this area has not made these assertions either (see Roziere & Walby, 2018). Instead, I argue that there needs to be a more significant curtailment of militarized policing because of its capacity to induce harm to the public and reproduce various forms of social inequality.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

Police militarization and use of force are critical issues in the broader discussion of police reform in Canada. While the existing literature in this area provides an analysis of the deployment of tactical units (see Jenkins et al., 2021ab; Roziere & Walby, 2018, 2019), the procurement of militarized equipment (see Sidhu, 2024; Towns et al. 2023), and case law surrounding dynamic entry (see Roziere & Walby, 2020a), no analysis has effectively engaged with the use of force or the racialized nature of these interactions in the Canadian context. This dissertation presented an analysis of the lived experiences of individuals who encountered a tactical unit, provided the first enumeration of tactical unit use of force in the Canadian context and assessed racial disparities in these use of force incidents. The implications of this research must be considered effectively in a broader discussion about the continued reliance upon militarized policing strategies and the devastating impact this has on communities of colour.

Chapter 8.1: Discussion

Qualitative Research Findings

The qualitative aspect of this research involved 25 semi-structured interviews with individuals who vicariously or directly encountered a police tactical unit. The findings clearly illustrate the extensive nature of the consequences stemming from militarized policing, with an emphasis on the extralegal implications of these encounters. Participants reported experiencing an array of financial challenges arising from these encounters, like the destruction and loss of personal property, damage to their place of residence, loss of access to social housing, some participants experienced theft, and others reported having to pay to repair financial costs sustained.

The findings also demonstrated a range of interpersonal and social challenges experienced by the participants. Some participants reported experiencing ostracization as a result

of the stigmatic nature of the encounter, many participants reported experiencing an array of mental health challenges stemming from the traumatic nature of these encounters, participants experienced threats of losing their children, and some individuals experienced disruptions within their family units. A lack of culturally responsive institutionalized community support further underscores these challenges as many participants indicated relying on informal support networks to navigate these challenges. Finally, members of the Black community situated their trauma and mental health challenges using racialized appraisals that linked their individual experiences to the broader history of anti-Black discrimination.

Participants also shared their perspectives on militarization. Some participants described their experience as similar to an interaction in a war. In contrast, others questioned the necessity of militarization, and Black participants suggested the use of militarized policing is intended to serve as a form of social control over the Black community. These perceptions further highlighted the experiences of violence in these encounters as participants also reported experiencing a range of violent and hostile behaviours during their interactions with tactical units.

A critical race perspective argues that militarized policing occupies a colourblind function that exercises social control over the Black community, using the discourses of crime control and public safety (Gamal, 2016). Invoking crime control and public safety discourses further buttresses institutional discourses that espouse race neutrality (Monaghan & Molnar, 2016). The qualitative interviews served as counter stories, which are accounts that demonstrate the experiences of racism (Samuels-Wortley, 2022a). Participants outlined how they believed that militarized policing retains an intrinsically racist function, and many Black participants specifically invoked their race in the context of understanding their interactions. The qualitative

accounts of participants provide a broader understanding of how individuals locate their experiences and connect to the broader experiences of harm experienced by the community. In contrast, some White participants noted that their social location would protect them from harm, whereas they believed this would not be the case for Black and Indigenous peoples. As a result of how participants viewed the proliferation of militarization, the activities of the tactical unit, and the context of their encounters, the qualitative element of this research supports the critical race perspective that militarized policing retains a racialized function (see ACLU, 2014; Coyne & Hall-Blanco, 2016; Gamal, 2016; Meeks, 2006).

Quantitative Research Findings

This dissertation provides the first enumeration of tactical unit use of force in the Canadian context. The quantitative element of this research relied on freedom of information requests to investigate racial disparities in use of force. The results demonstrate that Black people more frequently encounter tactical units in proactive (planned) deployments, are most frequently characterized as having an unknown weapon, less frequently possess weapons than their White counterparts, and disproportionately experience firearms pointing. The results of the racial disproportionality and disparity analysis also revealed that Black people are grossly overrepresented in use of force statistics relative to their proportion of the population and to their White counterparts. Finally, the multivariate analysis demonstrated that, when controlling for a range of contextual variables, Black people were still more likely to experience firearms pointing than their White counterparts.

The results also imply a number of distinct concerns surrounding the *Use of Force Report*. There appears to be a systemic underreporting of force applications, as evidence from Peel Regional Police and the York Regional Police Service demonstrates a significant disparity in

the number of high-risk calls attended and reported rates of use of force. I argue that the proliferation of police militarization has outpaced the reporting metric. There are numerous categories of force, like the deployment of the ARWEN37, the use of ballistic shields, and the use of flashbangs that largely escape the legislative requirements established in the *Police Services Act*. For example, Peel Regional Police's internal data demonstrates the application of over 130 distraction devices in its calls for service. However, its use of force reporting only indicates the use of this incendiary device on one occasion. The contributions of this finding further demonstrate the Use of Force Report's inability to accurately summate the extent and nature of force applied by tactical units, as these findings should only be regarded as the 'tip of the iceberg.'

The quantitative findings support the application of critical race perspectives. The rates of racial disproportionality and disparity in the data, the statistically significant relationship between race and firearms pointing, and the coding of incidents involving Black people as being riskier (i.e. unknown weapon rather than no weapon) support the premise that the tactical unit occupies a colourblind position to exert social control over the Black community. I also argue that the *Use of Force Report* functions as a mechanism that not only legitimizes police militarization but creates racialized knowledge that allows for its expansion. The use of indicators that present subjects as dangerous ultimately reinforces the crime control discourses mobilized by the institution, thus obfuscating the presence of systemic discrimination. Building on Haggerty's (2001) contributions, I argue that the reporting metric is incapable of addressing systemic discrimination as it legitimizes and justifies use of force. I argue that more research exploring the sociopolitical context of use of force and differential racialization allows for a nuanced understanding of how race is experienced and how it structures interactions with police.

Implications

The Canadian literature on police militarization has primarily ignored the harms stemming from this policing doctrine, except for select works that explored experiences of inner-city raids (see Greene et al., 2021,2022; Urbanik & Greene, 2020). This dissertation research demonstrates the substantial harms of militarized policing on individuals and communities. These harms are further compounded by a lack of formal support for members of the community who are navigating adversarial and potentially violent interactions with the police. Furthermore, it is worth noting that the harms stemming from militarized policing elements and its use of force disproportionately affect the urban underclass and the racialized. The various harms demonstrated in this research and the numerous issues related to the governance and reporting of use of force suggest that previous claims of effective institutional safeguards preventing the expansion of police militarization are overstated.

Beyond the impact that this form of policing has on communities, the proliferation of militarized policing also has the potential to displace community policing and undermine the efforts of the police to establish relationships with various marginalized groups (Sidhu, 2024). The results further support the argument that police militarization transforms marginalized and racialized communities into places of war and its residents deserving of aggressive policing practices (Saberi, 2017; Sidhu, 2024; Tator & Henry, 2006). The qualitative findings support this assertion as many of the residents believed that the police effectively treat their communities as war zones and view them as military-like enemies rather than members of the public. Brunson (2007) demonstrates how individuals also vicariously experience police violence through their peer groups or interactions with the community. As such, the presence of overtly aggressive

militarized policing has the potential to undermine the capacity of the police to build relationships with marginalized communities and address the harms of systemic discrimination.

Chapter 8.2: Limitations

One of the primary limitations stemming from this research is that the author cannot access occurrence reports like Wortley et al. (2020). This limits the analysis of use of force incidents as critical contextual variables that may explain police use of force are not accounted for in the analysis. Furthermore, there were a number of issues with the use of freedom of information research as the request from the London Police Service included incidents that did not involve tactical units, which required using a criterion sampling to only screen for those incidents that mentioned the Emergency Response Unit. As such, it is possible that a small minority of individual reports filed by tactical officers were discarded. However, the conservative approach used in this research ensures the validity of the findings as it only examines tactical unit cases. The process is overly cost-prohibitive as the total request cost totalled over $4000. Finally, there appeared to be missing and duplicate use of force reports, as previously indicated, for each police service sampled in this dataset. Whether these issues stem from clerical errors or the result of varying data retention policies, the work demonstrates that researchers should be aware that freedom of information requests may not produce the totality of the data requested. Future research needs to rely on other avenues of triangulation, like SIU reports, to construct a more thorough database of use of force incidents.

While the use of handwritten notes captured a significant portion of information, it is likely that the consistent stop-and-start nature of the interviews contributed to fatigue among participants and may have prevented them from sharing additional insights. Future iterations of this research must incorporate a digital recorder to prevent researcher and participant fatigue.

With this being noted, all the participants understood the researcher's efforts to safeguard their confidentiality and take accurate notes of what was being said during the context of the interviews.

Chapter 8.3: Conclusion

The findings of this research inform a number of distinct recommendations related to the collection and analysis of use of force data and potential directions for policy. While this research also advocates for the development of a provincial and national use of force database (see Bennell et al., 2022), its recommendations are intended to address the issues stemming from use of force incidents involving tactical units. The recommendations are outlined in list form.

1. Mandating the reporting of distraction devices, ballistic shields, the drawing of carbines, designated marksman rifles, submachine guns, and sniper rifles on the *Use of Force Report*.
2. Mandating the collection of information relative to the warrant execution, like the kind of warrant executed (contain and call out, dynamic entry, breach and assess etc.) on the Use of Force Report
3. Mandating the public release of all use of force reports submitted by a police service in a given year, with redacted protected information and incident narratives. Considering that the use of force reports may be accessed through freedom of information requests, the public release of these reports functions as a mechanism of police accountability and transparency.
4. Separate reporting of use of force incidents involving the tactical unit by police services to the public and police services boards. Rather than presenting tactical unit use of force as an aggregate, combined with that of uniform patrol officers, the racial disproportionality and disparity of these incidents should be presented separately.
5. The curtailment of the proliferation of militaristic weaponry and equipment. As a result of the inability of the current reporting mechanisms to account for adoption of more militaristic weaponry and equipment, this acquisition of this equipment should be

curtailed until reporting mechanisms allow for their coding in interactions with members of the public.

6. Redirection of financial resources to community-based programming and community policing initiatives. Dedication of resources to marginalized communities to address mental health concerns among community members.
7. Formation of a research liaison position within freedom of information offices to coordinate the release of information systematically. The current model for processing freedom of information requests for research requests poses difficulties in situations where analysts do not understand what forms are being used or when they are unaware of what forms their police service collects.
8. Bolstering the capacity of oversight bodies to sanction public service organizations that do not comply with MFIPPA. A mechanism through which this could be accomplished is by rewarding the costs of the request back to the requester when these organizations violate an element of the *Act*.

The use of freedom of information requests in this research posed a series of unique challenges. The most prolific of these challenges was the inability of the Toronto Police Service to process the request for records and its violation of numerous provisions of *MFIPPA*. The inability of the country's largest municipal police service to respond to a relatively straightforward request for documents prepared for the *Ministry of the Solicitor General* produces a range of concerns with the overall process for engaging in freedom of information research with the police. The requested documents have likely been destroyed due to the service's data retention policies, and their contributions to this research have been effectively mitigated. The issue researchers face in using freedom of information research is that these organizations may employ various techniques to stall or otherwise 'run out the clock' to prevent access to these documents.

Similarly, the process of navigating freedom of information research can be made cost-intensive due to the complexity of the request or by design. For example, the Toronto Police

Service advised that each of their use of force reports are filed by hand, whereas Hristova's (2024) reporting demonstrates the presence of an electronic form filed by the service. I was advised that the process would be time-consuming and likely expensive. While I had the capacity to file a complaint and pursue the matter further through the Office of the Privacy Commissioner, this would contribute towards an antagonistic relationship between myself and the freedom of information analysts and may prevent my capacity to engage in further brokerage for access to information. Similarly, I have been able to advise numerous researchers on freedom of information research and navigating the Office of the Privacy Commissioner. They have encountered non-compliance after rulings from the Privacy Commissioner in their favour, which further demonstrates the need for a more robust system to ensure compliance with the legislation for police services. As such, my eighth recommendation in this report is to award financial compensation to researchers and individuals unduly prevented from accessing information. Finally, the work also proposes establishing a research liaison position within freedom of information units to facilitate a more efficient process for requesting large volumes of police files.

The research recommendations are primarily tied to building more transparency through the improved collection and reporting of statistics. The issue with this approach is that it is undermined by the fundamental premise that the statistics do not accurately represent police use of force and may include various misrepresentations (see Ericson, 1982; Hristova, 2024). These statistics function as a double-edged sword in that politically motivated actors may manipulate them to justify the expansion of governance strategies against various racialized and socioeconomically marginalized cohorts (see Haggerty, 2001; Tator & Henry, 2006). While the reporting mechanism is structured in a manner that may minimize evidence of racial disparities

in use of force applications, this research still finds statistically significant associations between race and specific force applications. Considering the issue of underreporting and the potential for misrepresentation (see Hristova, 2024), the racial disparities are likely more problematic than the findings illustrate.

While there are numerous issues with the collection and reporting of use of force data, these recommendations must be considered in light of the contemporary sociopolitical context. Lived experiences of racism are not the means through which this issue is understood, as the state employs a quantitative lens to understand systemic discrimination. As such, critical researchers must rely on the use of statistics to demonstrate statistical evidence of racial disparities in various outcomes while also developing the capacity to effectively critique how these statistics are collected to obscure the presence of racism. Through this engagement with quantitative statistics, researchers can effectively challenge the various techniques state institutions use to collect statistics in a self-serving function (see Haggerty, 2001). It is vital to consider using quantitative approaches in critical research because the researcher must have an ontological understanding of power and its structuring effect on social institutions (Garcia et al., 2018; Strunk, 2024). While the use, collection, and interpretation of statistics is subject to various limitations explored in this research, they are the primary means through which researchers must articulate the presence of systemic discrimination.

I engage with this issue by briefly summarizing how this research strengthens the understanding of police militarization using a critical race lens. The inherent criticism of this research is that I take a deliberate approach in directing the reader's attention to the capacity of militarized policing in executing a racially discriminatory nature. I acknowledge that militarized policing maintains a functional public safety purpose. There are instances where the deployment

of a tactical unit ensures the safety of officers, the public, and those in contact with the police. My research has not made any claims disputing the function of this form of policing. However, my research draws readers' attention to the broader sociopolitical context in which militarized policing functions.

The contemporary iterations of penal populism and crime control use urban crime as a proxy for race and racialized criminal threats (Alexander, 2011; Gamal, 2016; Saberi, 2017; Tator & Henry, 2006). The justification for militarized policing is formulated mainly in response to crime occurring in racialized urban centres and in response to the threat of the racialized 'Other' (see Gamal, 2016). The application of critical race theory to police militarization in Canada offers a nuanced lens to examine the application of this form of policing. The sociopolitical context of crime control functions in a racialized manner and advocates for the expansion of aggressive policing practices against racialized communities while using crime as a proxy (see Saberi, 2017; Tator & Henry, 2006). A natural consequence of this shift in crime control is that economic and racial minorities in urban centres are portrayed as a criminal threat that requires the use of policing mechanisms intended to maintain the normative position of 'Whiteness'. Police militarization functions as part of the operational apparatus through which the racialized appeals to crime control are enacted, and this is evidenced through the grossly disproportionate representation of the Black community in use of force statistics.

The contribution of this work further enriches the study of systemic discrimination in Canadian policing practices in various capacities. Rather than solely interrogating racial disparities in outcomes, this work draws attention to several discourses used to justify the application and proliferation of militarized policing and how these function in a colourblind capacity to obfuscate racial disparities. Viewing police militarization through a functionalist lens

highlighting its public safety capacity implicitly detaches it from the broader discussion surrounding systemic racism in policing. While a range of other policing practices are analyzed using the lens of systemic racism (see Laming, 2023; Owusu-Bempah & Luscombe, 2020; Samuels-Wortley, 2022b; Wortley & Owusu-Bempah, 2022), discussions surrounding police militarization have not effectively engaged with this issue. This work demonstrates how functionalist explanations neglect engaging with the racialized nature of policing practices, which further contributes to its colourblind construction. My research demonstrates that even when controlling for risk-based contextual variables, racial disparities still exist in the application of force. My research findings provide evidence that situates the discussion of police militarization in Canada as a mechanism of racialized social control that functions as one component of a broader sociopolitical context that relies on crime as a colourblind signifier of race. The contributions of my research are that it draws further attention, for future research, to the discourses used to justify the expansion of police militarization and how these are rooted in colourblind appeals, highlighting its public safety components and downplaying its racially disproportionate effects.

The implications of this research are not solely limited to the Canadian context and speak more broadly to police militarization research. The engagement with critical race approaches further contributes to Kraska's (2007) typologies of militarization as it encourages future research to interrogate racial disparities in each of the dimensions of police militarization. Using a critical race approach allows researchers to interrogate how racial disparities emerge in each typological component identified by Kraska (2007) and allows for a richer discussion on the zemiological harms stemming from police militarization. Similarly, the use of a critical race approach allows for a richer analysis of how the expansion of and justifications for police

militarization are linked to the racialized nature of penal populism. Investigating the sociopolitical context in which these discourses emerge allows for a more nuanced discussion of how race is used as a proxy for criminality and how the discourse of colourblindness removes explicit racial animus from these public policy decisions (Alexander, 2011; Gamal, 2016). I argue that the incorporation of a critical race approach to the study of police militarization situates this institutional practice as a byproduct of a system of racialized social control, challenging the singular functionalist explanations for its expansion, normalization, and proliferation typically advanced in the *evidence-based policing* scholarship.

My research further demonstrates why critical race scholars should sustain their engagement with quantitative methods and statistical analysis. By relying on the use of these methods, researchers can deconstruct the veneer of objectivity associated with these methods while also utilizing a research methodology that more closely aligns with the normative thresholds for demonstrating systemic racism (Garcia et al., 2018; Lopez et al., 2018b; Samuels-Wortley et al., 2022b). Engaging with the normative quantitative thresholds for demonstrating systemic racism further enriches the application of critical race theory, as it allows researchers to provide statistical evidence of discrimination and situates it as a systemic issue rather than an aberrative personal experience. By engaging with these thresholds, researchers can also discuss the limitations of relying on a solely quantitative approach to assessing this issue and encourage using a mixed methods approach. For example, solely relying on measures of statistical significance to identify the presence of systemic racism dismisses lived experiences of racism and reduces a complex social phenomenon to a numeric outcome (Glynn & Breen, 2024; Henne & Shah, 2015; Samuels-Wortley, 2021). Similarly, my research has demonstrated how the structure of reporting mechanisms may obfuscate statistical evidence of racial disparities. I argue

that critical race scholars must deconstruct these methodological divides and incorporate mixed-methods analysis to provide a richer understanding of systemic discrimination. This approach allows for an interrogation of how reporting mechanisms are structured to minimize evidence of racial discrimination and may lead to the imposition of more accurate reporting mechanisms. By relying on improved reporting mechanisms, researchers can more thoroughly interrogate the presence of systemic discrimination using quantitative means. Similarly, the continued integration of qualitative approaches allows for investigations into how race is experienced, and how individuals use race as an analytical tool to contextualize their experiences.

Beyond the focus on race, this research also drew attention to how various intersectional components of one's identity were part of individuals' experiences with militarized policing elements and drew the attention of researchers to the use of an integrated theoretical framework that examines policing through an intersectional lens. Beyond the contributions of police militarization functioning as a form of colourblind racialized control, situated within a broader sociopolitical context that portrays the racialized 'other' as a criminal threat, this research also employs the use of counterstories to understand individual participant perceptions of the function of militarization and lived experiences of racism. This research also contributes to the literature advocating for adopting mixed-methods approaches investigating the impact of race and challenging the capacity of positivistic research to reproduce racialized systems of knowledge production (Brynn & Gleen, 2024). Similarly, the work also extrapolates from Said's (1978) contributions to demonstrate how race-based statistics functions as a form of racialized knowledge production. Finally, the broader implications of this work are that it is among the first to introduce the issue of race into the contemporary Canadian debate surrounding police militarization.

The newest iteration of the *Use of Force Report* addresses many of the intended recommendations proposed in this section. This dissertation research identifies a gap in the existing Canadian literature investigating militarized policing, race and policing, involuntary encounters with police, and police use of force. The broader significance of this research extends to the discussion on the future of policing in the Canadian context and underscores the need for reform. The research findings offer insights into the harms posed by militarized policing and document its racially disproportionate effects. Future research must critically engage with the proliferation of militarization in Canadian policing and engage with the harms emerging from this genre of policing. The militarization of policing is a central issue in the Canadian context, and a large body of critical scholarship must continue its interrogation.

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Appendix A: Use of Force Report

Ontario — Ministry of the Solicitor General

Use of Force Report

Police Services Act

Fields marked with an asterisk (*) are mandatory. Check more than one box in each section, where appropriate.

Police Service *	Location Code (if applicable)

Part A

Date (yyyy/mm/dd) *	Time Incident Commenced (24 hour) *	Time Incident Terminated (24 hour) *

Report Type *

☐ Individual — Length of Service (years completed) _____ Rank _____

☐ Team — Type of Team _____ Number of Police Officers Involved _____

Type of Assignment *

☐ Drugs ☐ Foot Patrol ☐ General Patrol ☐ Investigation ☐ Off-duty ☐ Traffic

☐ Other (specify) _____

Type of Incident *

☐ Alarm ☐ Break and Enter ☐ Domestic Disturbance ☐ Homicide ☐ Other Disturbance

☐ Robbery ☐ Serious Injury ☐ Suspicious Person ☐ Traffic ☐ Weapons Call

☐ Other (specify) _____

Police Presence at Time of Incident *

☐ Alone

☐ Police Assisted (specify #) _____

Attire *

☐ Civilian Clothes

☐ Uniform

Number of Subject(s) Involved in Incident *

☐ Animal/No subject (e.g., unintentional discharge)

☐ One ☐ Two ☐ Three ☐ Other (specify #) _____

Perceived Subject Race *

What race category best describes the subject(s)?
(Select only one per subject)

	1	2	3
Black	☐	☐	☐
East/Southeast Asian	☐	☐	☐
Indigenous	☐	☐	☐
Latino	☐	☐	☐
Middle Eastern	☐	☐	☐
South Asian	☐	☐	☐
White	☐	☐	☐

Type of Force Used *

(include all options used during incident and rank in sequence of use)

	Rank	Was Force Effective? Yes	No
☐ Aerosol Weapon	_____	☐	☐
☐ Empty Hand Techniques – Hard	_____	☐	☐
☐ Empty Hand Techniques – Soft	_____	☐	☐
☐ Firearm – discharged	_____	☐	☐
☐ Firearm – pointed at person	_____	☐	☐
☐ Handgun – drawn	_____	☐	☐
☐ Impact Weapon – Hard	_____	☐	☐
☐ Impact Weapon – Soft	_____	☐	☐
☐ Other (e.g., conducted energy weapon, less lethal shotgun, "ARWEN") (specify)▼	_____	☐	☐

Reason for Use of Force *

☐ Accidental ☐ Destroy an Animal ☐ Effect Arrest ☐ Prevent Commission of Offence ☐ Prevent Escape

☐ Protect Public ☐ Protect Self ☐ Other (specify) _____

Type of Firearm Used (if applicable)

	Number of Rounds Discharged
☐ Revolver	_____
☐ Rifle	_____
☐ Semi-automatic	_____
☐ Shotgun	_____
☐ Other (specify)▼	_____

Distance * (between you and subject/animal at the time the decision was made to use force)

	Animal	1	2	3
Less than 2 metres	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 to 3 metres	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 to 5 metres	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 to 7 metres	☐	☐	☐	☐
7 to 10 metres	☐	☐	☐	☐
Greater than 10 metres	☐	☐	☐	☐

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Alternative Strategies Used (if applicable)

☐ Concealment ☐ Cover ☐ Verbal Interaction ☐ Other (specify) _____

Weapons Carried by Subject(s) *

	1	2	3
Baseball Bat/Club	☐	☐	☐
Knife/Edged Weapon	☐	☐	☐
Revolver	☐	☐	☐
Rifle	☐	☐	☐
Semi-automatic	☐	☐	☐
Shotgun	☐	☐	☐
None	☐	☐	☐
Unknown	☐	☐	☐
Other (specify) ▼	☐	☐	☐

Location of Subject's Weapon
(At time decision was made to use force)

	1	2	3
At hand	☐	☐	☐
Concealed on person	☐	☐	☐
In-hand	☐	☐	☐

Total Number of Rounds Fired by Subject(s) (if applicable)

Location of Incident *

Outdoors ☐ Laneway ☐ Motor Vehicle ☐ Park ☐ Roadway ☐ Rural ☐ Yard ☐ Other (specify) _____

Indoors

Private Property ☐ Apartment ☐ Hallway ☐ House

Public Property ☐ Commercial Site ☐ Financial Institution ☐ Public Institution ☐ Other (specify) _____

Weather Conditions *

☐ Clear ☐ Cloudy ☐ Fog ☐ Rain ☐ Snow/Sleet ☐ Sunny ☐ Other (specify) _____

Lighting Conditions *

☐ Dark ☐ Daylight ☐ Dusk ☐ Good Artificial Light ☐ Poor Artificial Light ☐ Other (specify) _____

Person Injured

	Medical Attention Required?		Nature of Injuries			
	Yes	No	Minor	Serious	Fatal	Unknown
Self	☐	☐	☐	☐		
Other Police Officer	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Third Party	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Subject 1	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Subject 2	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Subject 3	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Narrative: (If no occurrence report) – Do not include personal names or information.

Reviewed by Supervisor? ☐ Yes ☐ No	Recommended Post Traumatic Incident Counselling? ☐ Yes ☐ No	Recommended Other Training? ☐ Yes ☐ No	Date (yyyy/mm/dd)	Reviewed by Training Analyst? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Part B

Incident Number	Officer Involved (name, rank and badge number) *
Date of last use of force refresher training (yyyy/mm/dd)	Would you like to participate in an interview with a training sergeant/ analyst to discuss this incident and/or use of force training? ☐ Yes ☐ No
Additional Training Recommended By: ☐ Training Analyst ☐ Supervisor	Type of Training Recommended

Print Form

Appendix B: Interview Schedule

Introductory Remarks:

Hello, my name is Tandeep Sidhu, and I am a PhD student at the University of Waterloo. I am a student in the Sociology and Legal Studies department and I study the use of police SWAT teams in the province of Ontario. My supervisor for this project is Dr. Owen Gallupe, This project has received ethics clearance from the University of Waterloo's Research Ethics Board (#44580). If, at anytime, you have any questions please let me know.

Prior to outlining the purposes of the study, I would like to indicate that your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You are welcome to skip questions at any time, you are welcome to stop your participation at any time, you may reschedule the remainder of the interview at any point, and you do not have to answer any questions you are uncomfortable answering. Your identity and participation in the study is confidential as I am not associating your name with any of the written reports or documents that emerge from this study. Your responses to specific questions will not be used to identify you specifically, but are used to summarize patterns of responses among participants. I will provide you with your gift card at this point in time, which is yours regardless of how much of the interview you complete or if you choose to stop the interview early. At the conclusion of our interview, I will provide you with the opportunity to review the handwritten notes and you can advise me of any changes you would like made to the document or any points of clarification you would like to add.

I thank you for meeting with me today and for taking the time to participate in this study. Before we get started, I will give you a brief overview of what the study aims to accomplish and what it is investigating. This study examines the experiences of individuals who have encountered a police SWAT team and explores the challenges they have faced since their encounter. I would like to have the opportunity to interview you, to learn more about your experiences and how you have been affected by your interaction with police. I will ask several questions over the course of our time together, and the reason for why I ask these questions is to develop a stronger understanding of how SWAT teams affect members of our community.

This interview allows you to share your experiences with a police SWAT team and how they have impacted you. Your participation in the study is kept confidential, and your name will not be associated with your responses. I may use direct quotes to outline what you have said, but your responses will not be identifiable to you. I would clarify that I am not quoting every one of

your responses, but my intent is to focus on specific patterns or ideas that emerge across all of the interviews I am conducting.

The interview will take approximately 45-60 minutes to complete. I am going to share the informed consent form with you and this document outlines what the risks and benefits of participating in this study are, what I am doing to address mitigate or prevent harm and provides an overview of how your data will be managed and destroyed. I will be providing you with a list of resources in the community that you may access following our interview if you find the content of our interview emotionally distressing. The paper version of the notes taken today will be destroyed once the notes are transcribed into a secure Microsoft Word document. Furthermore, the electronic notes associated with this interview will not have your name associated with them and will be secured using encryption software. Your participation in this study is voluntary and you can stop at any time. I will give you the opportunity to review and verbally consent to the consent form. Did you have any questions or concerns about the study, or anything that we have discussed so far?

Introductory Statement:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the study. Our interview will now begin, and I will ask you a few questions to better familiarize myself with you.

Interview Schedule

Warm Up Questions:

1. What made you want to participate in this study?
2. What is your overall perception of the police?
3. Can you tell me more about yourself as a person?
4. How old are you? This information is used to categorize your responses with other respondents of a similar age, to observe patterns among different age groups.
5. How would you identify your racial background? This information is used to categorize your responses with other respondents of a similar racial background, to observe patterns within and between different racial groups.

6. What gender do you identify with? This information is used to categorize your responses with other respondents of a similar gender identity, to observe patterns within and between different gender identities.
7. On a scale of 1-5, with 1 being the least and 5 being the most, how much do you trust the police?
8. On a scale of 1-5, with 1 being the least comfortable and 5 being the most comfortable, do you feel comfortable calling the police for assistance?

Transition Statement #2:

Thank you for sharing. I want to better understand your experience with the police and see what impact (if any) it has had on you.

Central Questions and Probing Questions:

1. Can you describe, for me, what happened on the day you encountered the SWAT team?
    a. Was the SWAT team looking for you or somebody else?
    b. Where did this experience take place?
    c. Can you tell me, if you remember, of how you felt after the encounter? How long did you feel this way?
    d. Did you witness any violence?
2. Can you tell me about any challenges you face, or continue to face, because of your encounter with the SWAT team?
    a. Were you provided with any supports by the police or a victim services agency?
    b. What emotional or mental challenges, if any, did you experience?
    c. What other challenges, if any, have you endured because of this experience?
    d. If this happened in your home, did you pay for any damage caused by the police?
    e. How did your community react to this situation? Did you feel supported by your community? Why or why not?
    f. What supports did you rely on, if any, to address the challenges you faced?
3. Have your perceptions of the police, changed because of this experience? If so, how?

a. If you could say anything to the officers who you met on that day, what would you like them to know?
b. Based on your experience(s), would you recommend any changes to police practices? If so, what?

Transition Statement #3:

Thank you for sharing. I know this must have been difficult, but I want to now focus on your goals for the future

Cool Down Questions:

1. How did this overall process make you feel?
2. Is there anything that I did not ask you, that you wanted to share?
3. What are your goals for the future?

Transition Statement #4:

Thank you for sharing. I want to take the opportunity to go over some final details.

Conclusion:

I thank you for trusting me with your experiences. Please use that list of resources, I provided earlier, if you need them. Remember, they are free to use and confidential. If you have any questions for me, my contact information is included on your copy of the consent form. Do you know of anybody who would like to participate in this study? If so, I will give you a flyer that provides them with my contact information. Do you have any questions or concerns at this moment? I will now provide you with the opportunity to review the handwritten notes and you can advise me of any changes you would like made to the document or any points of clarification you would like to add.

Appendix C: Informed Consent Form

UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO

March 2, 2023

Dear Potential Participant,

Research Overview:

This letter is an invitation to consider participating in a research study I, Tandeep Sidhu, am conducting as part of my PhD degree in the Department of Sociology and Legal Studies at the University of Waterloo under the supervision of Dr. Owen Gallupe. I would like to provide you with more information about this project and what your involvement would entail if you decide to take part.

The role of police tactical units, otherwise referred to as SWAT teams, has come under increased scrutiny in recent years. The purpose of this study, therefore, is to understand how the activities and use of SWAT teams may be affected by markers of social diversity like race, gender, and the presence of mental health conditions. This study seeks to understand the experiences of individuals who have directly or indirectly encountered police tactical units. This may include a person who has directly encountered a tactical unit or family members of a person who may have encountered the tactical unit.

This study will focus on the personal, legal, economic, and/or other challenges you have experienced as a result of encountering a police tactical unit. I believe as a result of your experience with the police, you are in a unique position to speak on how this has affected your life. I would like to request your participation in an interview with myself, where I will ask you questions about your experience with the SWAT team.

Risks:

There are known risks pertaining to your participation in this study. There is a potential that you may find some of the questions, or the interview experience, emotionally and/or psychologically distressing as I will ask you to recount your experiences with the police tactical unit. In addition to the emotional and psychological risk, there is a risk that you may feel that you have lost a sense of status or feel stigmatized as a result of having to relive your experience with the police tactical unit.

There are a number of different strategies used to mitigate the known risks. You will be provided with a comprehensive list of local organizations that may provide you with immediate and long term supports to address any emotional or psychological challenges that emerge as a result of your participation. Furthermore, your participation in this study is kept confidential and pseudonyms are used to mitigate the risk of you being identified. Your name will not appear in any thesis or report resulting from this study, however, with your permission anonymous quotations may be used. Furthermore, your name will not be associated with your responses. Great caution will be exercised when using anonymous quotations. This research will exclude any statements that use

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language or scenarios that may specifically be identifiable to you through linkages of time and place. The handwritten notes will be destroyed after the anonymized responses are electronically transcribed. Finally, you may stop your participation at any time, skip questions you are not comfortable answering, or reschedule the remainder of your interview for any reason.

Benefits:

There are several benefits also associated with your participation in this study. You may find the experience of participating in this study to be empowering. You are provided the opportunity to share your experience in terms meaningful to you, provide your insight on the use of police tactical units, highlight the complexities of the challenges you have faced as a result of this encounter and this research may contribute towards greater changes in police-community relationships.

Financial Remuneration:

You are provided with a $40 gift card for your participation in the study, and the degree of participation is in no way associated with the remuneration. The amount received is taxable. It is your responsibility to report this amount for income tax purposes

Participation Information:

Participation in this study is voluntary. It involves an interview of approximately 45 minutes to 1 hour in length to take place in a mutually agreed upon location. You may wish to complete this interview in-person or using Microsoft Teams.

With your permission, I will be taking handwritten notes during the interview to capture key information in your responses. The interview will be recorded by hand to facilitate collection of information. No audio devices will be used to record your responses. Shortly after the interview has been completed, I will show you a copy of the notes to give you an opportunity to confirm the accuracy of our conversation and to add or clarify any points that you wish. **Your identity and participation in the study will be kept confidential**. The notes are not linked to your name or your consent form.

You may decline to answer any of the interview questions if you so wish. **You may decide to withdraw from this study at any time during the interview without any negative consequences by advising the researcher. Furthermore, you may ask to withdraw from the study in the following 48 hours after your participation in the interview, at which point your interview responses will be destroyed.** Choosing to decline answering specific questions or withdrawing from the study will have no effect on the financial remuneration provided through participation in this study. You are also welcome to reschedule your interview at anytime.

The interview may be conducted over an online platform, like Microsoft Teams. Microsoft Teams has implemented technical, administrative, and physical safeguards to

protect the information provided via the Services from loss, misuse, and unauthorized access, disclosure, alteration, or destruction. However, no Internet transmission is ever fully secure or error free.

The electronic anonymized notes are retained on an encrypted hard drive, located in a locked office, and are kept for a minimum of seven years. The handwritten notes will be destroyed immediately after the responses have been transcribed. I would like to reiterate that the notes do not have any personally identifying information on them, as they are anonymized and pseudonyms are used. **If you would like for your responses to be removed and destroyed entirely from the study, please contact me and I can arrange for your responses to be destroyed.**

Data collected during this study will be retained in a locked office in my supervisor's office. Only researchers associated with this project will have access to the handwritten notes (prior to their destruction) and the digitized version of these notes.

Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in circumstances where the researcher is made aware of child abuse or a potential threat to a vulnerable person. The limits to confidentiality emerge in the context of a duty to report.

You are entitled to have any accommodations necessary to facilitate your involvement in the study as per the Ontario Human Rights Code.

This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through a University of Waterloo Research Ethics Board (REB #44580) If you have questions for the Board contact the Office of Research Ethics, at 1-519-888-4567 ext. 36005 or reb@uwaterloo.ca.

For all other questions or if you would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please contact me by email at t9sidhu@uwaterloo.ca You can also contact my supervisor, Professor Owen Gallupe at ogallupe@uwaterloo.ca

I very much look forward to speaking with you and thank you in advance for your assistance in this project.

Yours Sincerely,

Tandeep Sidhu

VERBAL CONSENT FORM

By verbally consenting, you are not waiving your legal rights or releasing the investigator(s) or involved institution(s) from their legal and professional responsibilities.

I have read the information presented in the information letter about a study being conducted by **PhD Candidate Tandeep Sidhu (under the supervision of Dr. Owen Gallupe)** of the Department of **Sociology and Legal Studies** at the University of Waterloo. I have had the opportunity to ask any questions related to this study, to receive satisfactory answers to my questions, and any additional details I wanted. I am aware that I may withdraw from the study without penalty at any time, during the interview, by advising the researchers of this decision. I am aware that I can withdraw from the study in the following 48 hours following my participation in the interview.

This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through a University of Waterloo Research Ethics Board (REB **#44580**). If you have questions for the Board contact the Office of Research Ethics, at 1-519-888-4567 ext. 36005 or reb@uwaterloo.ca.

For all other questions contact **Tandeep Sidhu at t9sidhu@uwaterloo.ca or Dr. Owen Gallupe at ogallupe@uwaterloo.ca**

Confirmation Questions with Participant

Your participation in this study is voluntary?

☐YES ☐NO

The researcher has explained the risks associated with the study and the safeguards used to mitigate risk?

☐YES ☐NO

The researcher has outlined your rights as a research participant (right to stop participation, reschedule interview, skip questions, or withdraw from the study)

☐YES ☐NO

Do you agree to allow your anonymized study data to be stored and used for future research as described in the Letter of Information?

☐YES ☐NO

I agree to have my interview responses recorded by hand.

☐YES ☐NO

I agree to the use of anonymous quotations in any thesis or publication that comes of this research.

☐YES ☐NO

I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the study, at anytime during the interview and within 48 hours of participation in the interview, and ask that my data be destroyed

☐YES ☐NO

With full knowledge of all foregoing, I agree, of my own free will, to participate in this study.

☐YES ☐NO