

A Review of Police Use of Force Policies in Florida

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Abstract

The project seeks to answer the question, *does the presence of '8 Can't Wait' policies in law enforcement protocols decrease incidents of police use of force?* This project conducts a systematic review of police use of force policies across different city and county police jurisdictions in Florida, collected via email and public records requests. It evaluates which jurisdictions have adopted the "8 Can't Wait" policy proposals, as well as an additional policy mandating the provision of emergency medical services in the event of physical harm. Once this systematic review is complete, an analysis will be done for possible statistical correlations between policies and reported

incidents of police use of force, as well as any demographic trends in areas of high police use of force. The project brought the use of force by law enforcement under increasing public debate.

Consequently, there have been expanding conversations about acts seen as unjustifiable or excessive in interactions between officers and civilians, and an increasing demand for reform in police agencies' approach to the use of force (Ariel et al., 2015).

In response to reform conversations, scholars have suggested reforms as effective ways to address these concerns. These include:

- Requiring officers to use force continuums
- Mandated reporting of the display of firearms
- Requiring body-worn cameras
- Implicit bias training
- External review boards
- Increased social interaction

(Craig & Blount-Hill, 2022; Wolfe et al., 2020; Worden et al., 2018; Wright & Headley, 2020; Hough et al., 2010; Jay et al., 2017).

In 2016, the Campaign Zero movement conducted a survey of ninety-one police use of force policies from agencies in major US cities, and proposed a set of eight reform suggestions under the name of "8 Can't Wait" aiming to decrease police violence incidents in the United States through reforms to gaps found in

Methodology

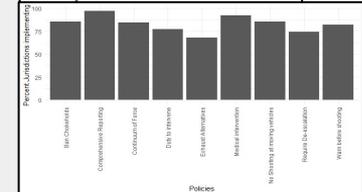
1. Contacted each law enforcement jurisdiction in the state of Florida, 339 total, and requesting their Use of Force or Response to Resistance Policy.
2. Collected policies were analyzed using Nvivo software for the "8 Can't Wait" items: (1) requiring de-escalation, (2) employing a use of force continuum, (3) banning the use of chokeholds and strangleholds, (4) providing a warning prior to shooting at a civilian, (5) banning shooting at moving vehicles, (6) requiring officers to exhaust all reasonable alternative means before resorting to deadly force, (7) establishing a duty to intervene and stop other officers from using excessive force, and (8) ensuring comprehensive reporting of each time force is used or threatened to be used. We also analyzed for an additional item, (9) medical intervention, which was not included in "8 Can't Wait."
3. Then, using Excel, we coded each policy on a 0-2 scale based on how present they were in each jurisdiction analysis. Each jurisdiction was analyzed by three individuals to establish intercoder reliability.
4. Maps were created using GIS software to demonstrate the presence of these policies overlaid with reported uses of force by law enforcement officers since July 2022. Such incidents were obtained by previous voluntary self-reporting by jurisdictions along with reports contained in the Washington Post's Police Shootings database and the Mapping Police Violence Database.

Both Poisson and negative binomial distribution models were used (Terrill & Paoline 2016) to determine any relationships between the presence of these policies and the number of previously reported incidents.

Preliminary Results

Currently, we have coded approximately 36% of the 339 jurisdictions. Figure 1 indicates the current percent implementation of these policies. Due to differences among our three coders, the percentage presence of the policies have been averaged.

Figure 1: Presence of Each Policy in Currently Coded Jurisdictions



The maps (Figure 2) demonstrate where the currently coded policies and incidents are located, providing a visualization of the relationship between the presence of policies and use of force incidents.

Our preliminary statistical analysis based on our very small subset of the results thus far suggests that there are some relationships between policies and incidents, but we need to complete our coding to more definitively state these relationships. As of now, the comprehensive reporting policy is the statistically significant policy that is related to a decreased likelihood of a use of force incident.



Coding and Maps

Figure 2: Number of Use of Force Incidents reported by the Mapping Police Violence Project for law enforcement agencies in Florida and the presence or absence of certain policies



Discussion

As of this date, the current results provide a proof of concept for the completed research project. This serves as a continuation of previous research, but it will be at a larger scale with all of Florida's law enforcement jurisdictions included in its scope. Having a larger sample size has the advantage of allowing more robust statistical tests, and it will be able to more correctly identify patterns that the current research question is asking as well as other analyses beyond the initial question.

Currently, with these preliminary results and maps, the relationship between the policies and the amount of reported incidents appears complicated. This indicates that simply changing policies may itself not be sufficient to reduce the amount of reported use of force incidents, and likely requires being complimented by other initiatives. However, this will need to be confirmed with statistical testing done with a larger sample as well as controlling for population size differences across jurisdictions.

When the results of the study are finalized, we will be able to compare our results with Terrill & Paoline, who have used a similar method of analysis. We will make temporal comparisons to better inform our conclusions.

conduct a research study.

I would like to thank Dr. Tyler McCreary, and Ph.D student Adam Rose for allowing us to join their research study and for teaching us how to

conduct a research study.

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