

# A Review of Police Use of Force Policies in Florida

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### Abstract

This research project examines how the adoption of "8 Can't Wait" policies within law enforcement protocols impacts the reduction of police use-of-force incidents. Police use of force has become a prominent issue, especially following tragic cases of civilian deaths in police custody. In response to these incidents, there has been growing pressure to reform law enforcement's approach to handling resistance. This project specifically conducts a systematic review of use-of-force policies across various city and county police departments in Florida. These policies were gathered through public records requests and email inquiries. The study will assess which jurisdictions have implemented the "8 Can't Wait" policy proposals, as well as an additional policy requiring the provision of emergency medical services in urgent situations. After completing the review of these policies, the project will analyze any potential statistical correlations between the policies and reported use-of-force incidents.

### Introduction

Throughout the past decade, there has been a concern regarding the police use of force from the rise of civilian deaths by law enforcement. This has been especially facilitated following the death of

- George Floyd in 2020 caused by police violence. However, there has been little to no research following the reformation of policies despite increasing demand for reform within police agencies.
- The “8 Can’t Wait” Policies were created by the Campaign Zero movement in order to propose effective ways to address the public’s concerns and decrease casualties caused by police officers.

Despite these policies, the effectiveness of these policies are not known. Therefore, our research seeks to answer if the “8 Can’t Wait” policies in law enforcement decrease the use of police force. This way, effort can be taken to adapt policies such as the “8 Can’t Wait” policies into a larger context in the interest of public welfare and civilian safety.

### Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Dr. Tyler McCreary and Ph.D Student Adam Rose for allowing us to join their research study.

### Methodology

This research project focused on collecting data throughout different police jurisdictions in Florida based on county location and area. A total of 339 police departments were reached out to, through email and public records requests, and asked for their Use of Force Resistance Policies. These force policies would be able to tell us their incorporations of “8 Can’t Wait” policies within their jurisdiction. Each policy obtained was analyzed for the presence of the following specific policies: requiring de-escalation, use of force continuum, banning chokeholds and strangleholds, warning prior to shooting, banning shooting at moving vehicles, exhausting all alternatives before deadly force, reporting comprehensively, establishing a duty to intervene, and providing medical intervention. These policies were sought out throughout each document based on their wording and either their absence or presence. Using Excel, each policy was coded based on a 0-2 (sometimes 3) scale based on how they were worded and incorporated into their jurisdictions force policy, if at all. This would be able to let us know the relationship between incidents by police officers and policy better. Additionally, maps were created in order to visually demonstrate the presence of these policies throughout Florida based on the number of reported incidents and policies.

### Preliminary Results

Currently, we have coded approximately 70.7% of the 321 jurisdictions (227). Last year, we saw 56% of the jurisdictions coded, showing an increase in policies obtained. Between these years, we saw the percentage of jurisdictions implementing each policy decrease due to more policies not including the “8 Can’t Wait” policies.

The policies banning chokeholds and requiring warning before shooting, showed suggestive yet weak relationships of their presence compared to the other policies from few statistical significance from the chi-square test.

*Figures 1* indicates the current percent implementation of these policies. Due to difference among our three coders, the percentages of the policies have been averaged.

Figure 1: Presence of Each Policy in Currently Coded Jurisdictions

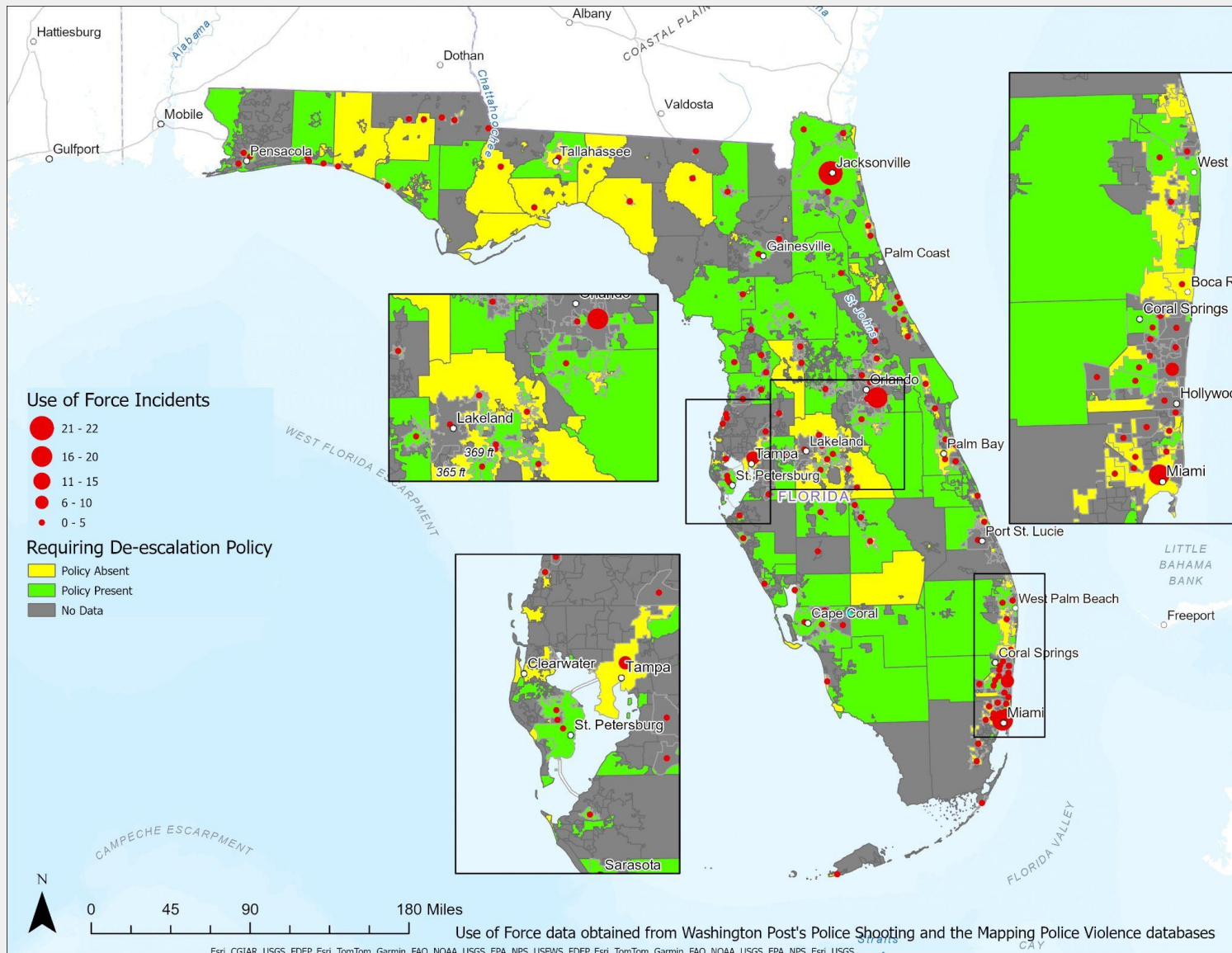
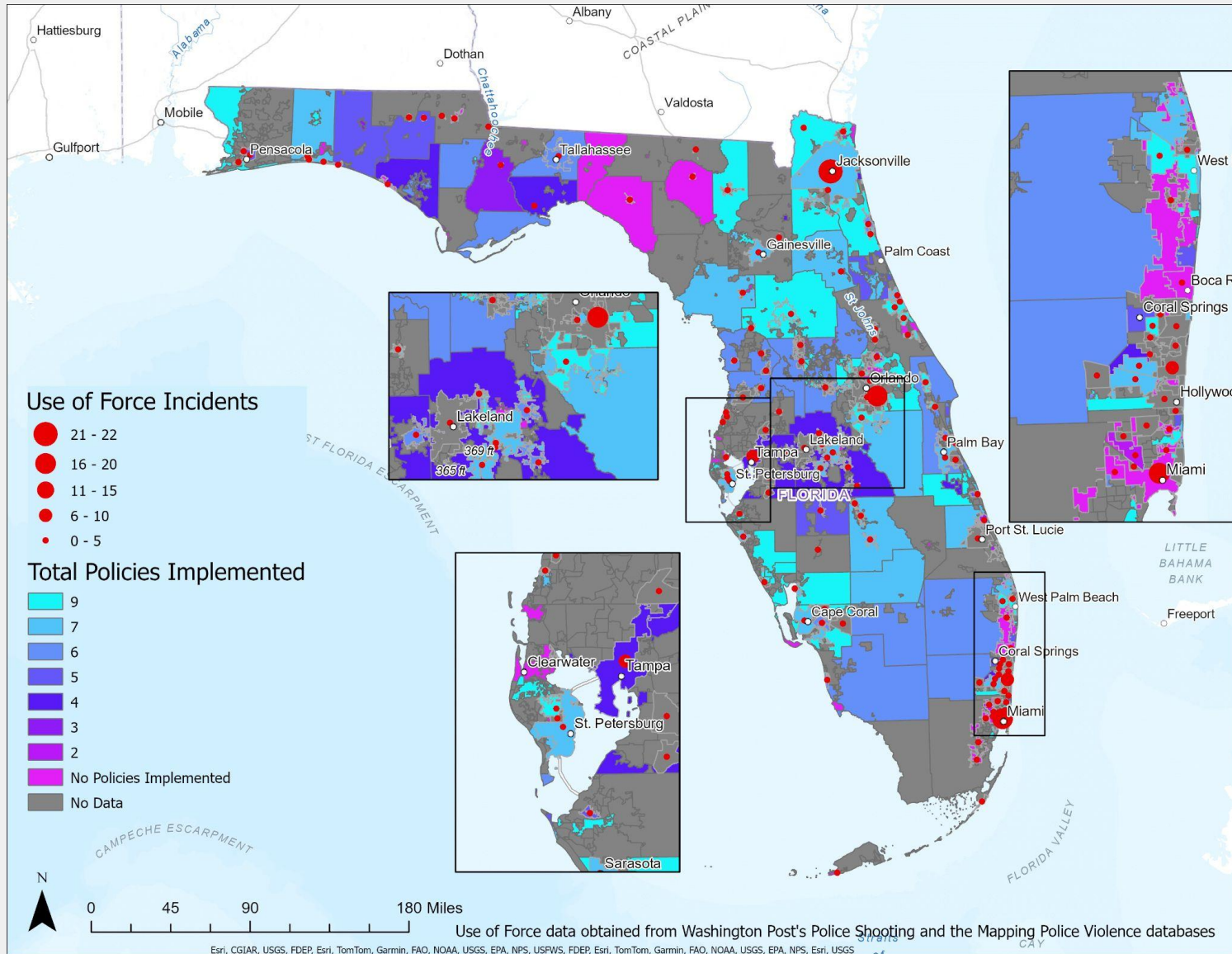
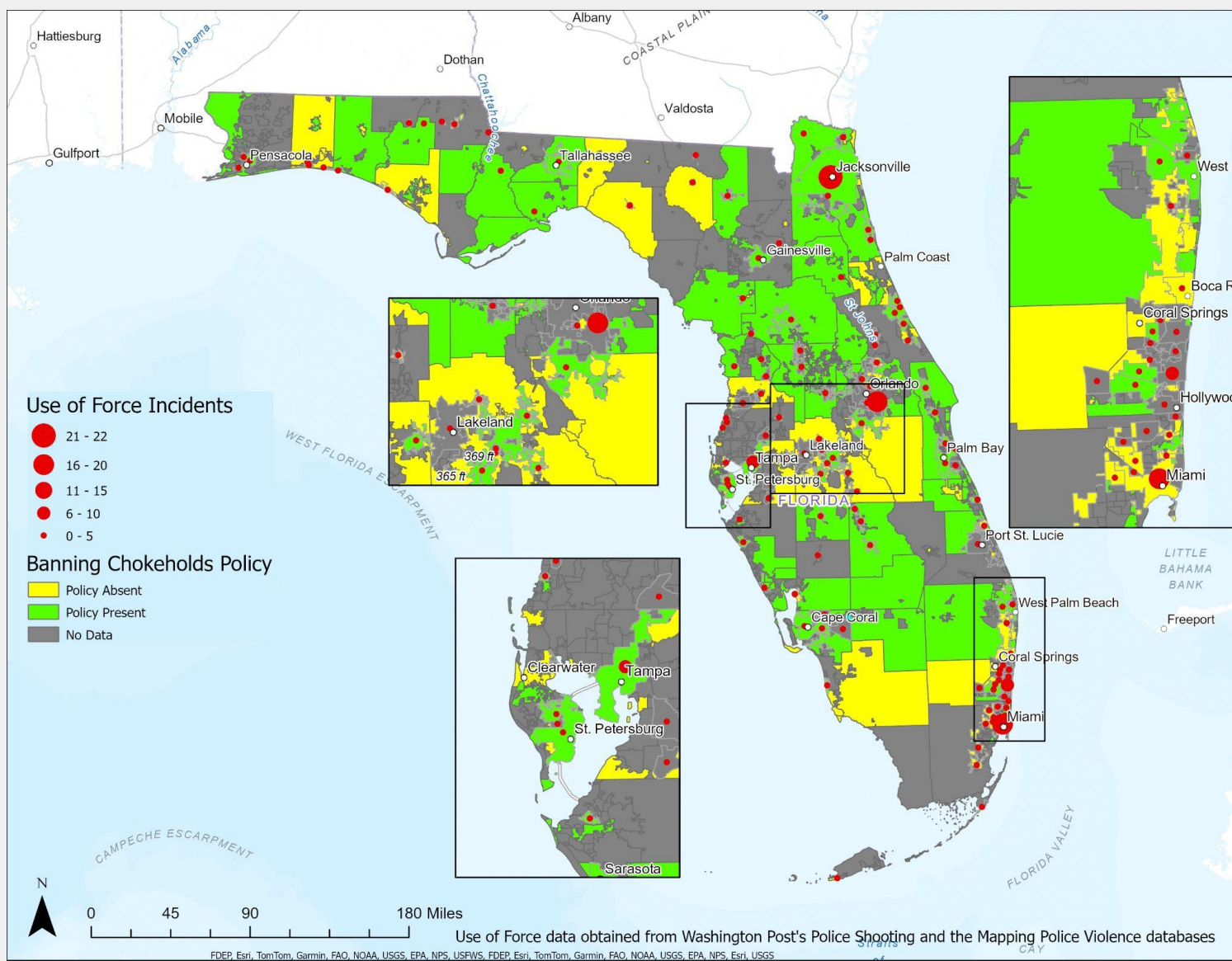
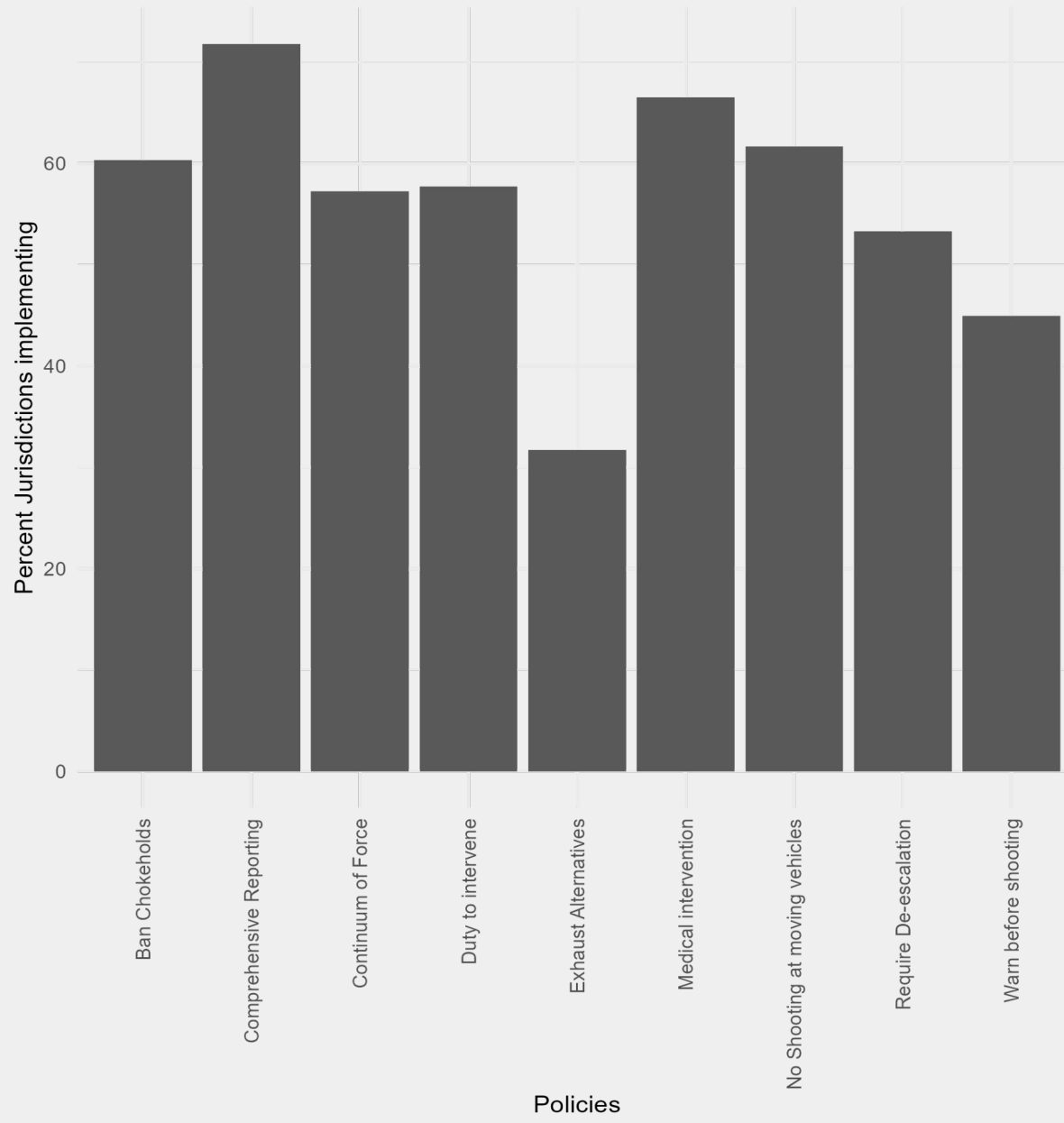


Figure 2: Number of Use of Force Incidents reported by the Mapping Police Violence Project for law enforcement agencies in Florida and the presence or absence of certain policies

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. These three maps address banning chokeholds, total force policy implementation, and de-escalation policies.

Our preliminary statistical analysis based on a subset of the results thus far suggests that there are some relationships between policies and incidents, however, we need access to all policies throughout the state to make a conclusion. 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.

QR:  
Coding  
and  
Maps



### 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. Additionally, the presence and absence of a variable did not appear to affect the outcome. However, different demographic factors may impact the presence of certain policies throughout different jurisdictions as well, impacting the patterns and results of our research.

- 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 full sample are finalized, we will be able to compare our results with Terrill & Paoline, who have used a similar methodology, to better inform our conclusions.

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