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**POLICE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN OF COLOR: ALL GIRLS OF COLOR NEED
SAFETY**

By Salena Tee Gibbs

**A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Master of Arts
The Department of Sociology
The School of Arts and Sciences
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Master of Arts Thesis

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Abstract

This study examined police violence against Black women and other women of color. The intersectionality theory was used to discover how Black women are victims of police brutality. The research question is how Black women can resist police violence to show they are not invisible. Semi-structured interviews were used to examine Black women's perspective of police violence against their population by interviewing women of color who are college students. The findings show women of color were likely unfamiliar with the term intersectionality and its impact on police violence against Black women. Furthermore, women of color are aware that police violence can happen to Black women and other women of color but have little specific knowledge of cases of Black women who have experienced police abuse. They also described their own experiences of police bias that have affected their lives. Study provides limitations as well as suggestions for future research.

Introduction

Women of color have experienced bigotry and violence in America. Battle (2016) found women of color, especially Black women, have encountered extreme race and gender barriers because of the legal system. Police violence has become another form of oppression for Black women (Brunson & Miller, 2006). It has also been suggested police brutality is evidence of institutional and individual racism within the criminal legal system, as people of color are more likely to be victims of police abuse (Shields, 2020; Ucok 2020). Discriminatory behavior in policing has been shown through movements such as the Black Lives Matter, as usually Black men are viewed as victims of law enforcement violence versus Black women (Greene 1999; Incite 2008; Weisburd et al. 2015; Kurtenbach 2017; Ritchie 2017; Sparks 2018; Bloch 2019; Ren et al. 2019; Ucok 2020) unless this violence is specifically sexual in nature (e.g., Brunson & Miller, 2006; Brunson, 2007). In response to a lack of work concerning the experiences of women, this exploratory pilot study seeks to analyze police violence at the intersections of race and gender through an analysis of four qualitative in-depth interviews with women students. In doing so, I interviewed Black women and other women of color about their perspectives on racism in policing, their understanding of intersectionality, the criminalization against women and girls of color, and their experiences with law enforcement.

Literature Review

An Intersectional Analysis of Recognizing Black Women as Victims of Police Violence

Black feminists have turned the tables by using intersectionality and Black radical thought to show that all Black women and other women of color lives matter, too (Gaspar 2019). Additionally, Alicia Garza, the co-founder of the Black Lives Matter movement, has demanded that Black Lives Matter insist on defending Black women who identify as queer, trans, gender nonconforming, undocumented, and disabled folks (Ritchie 2017). More Black women are

resisting police violence by using community organizing and being on the frontlines instead of playing the role as the supporter (Ritchie 2017). As Black women and women of color's experiences of excessive force, racial profiling, stop and frisks, criminalization, and sexual violence are unheard; intersectionality is used to consider that women of color and all marginalized lives who have been violated by police will no longer be tolerated (Ritchie 2017).

Intersectionality is a theoretical framework to understand the social and political identities that either creates privilege or prejudice such as race, gender, sexuality, gender identity, social class, socio-economic status, religion, and more (Crenshaw, 1989; Crenshaw, 1991; Hill Collins, 2003; Gaspar 2019). Intersectionality was termed by scholars, policy advocates, and professors especially well-suited for academic studies (Parent et al. 2013; Gaspar 2019; Collins and Bilge 2020). Intersectionality has been used to look at the grassroots of social justice issues such as anti-violence, reproductive rights, and for other policy discussions (Parent et al. 2013; Gaspar 2019; Collins and Bilge 2020). This theory examines the interlocking intersections of diverse identities of race, class, and gender by explaining the power relations of people's experiences (Parent et al. 2013; Gaspar 2019; Collins and Bilge 2020). Intersectionality is used as an analytical tool to address social issues of the world (Parent et al. 2013; Gaspar 2019; Collins and Bilge 2020). For instance, it has been used to address Black women's roles in social movements as the women's rights and feminist movements often did not include their voices for the right to equality for women as they faced challenges of oppression because of their gender, race, and class whereas white women faced challenges about their gender (Parent et al. 2013; Watters 2017; Gaspar 2019; Collins and Bilge 2020). Sometimes, intersectionality is used to address class and critique the system of capitalism and its exploitation of people with intersectional backgrounds (e.g., give example), especially folks who have diverse identities

must live in this society where capitalism is part of the economic and political system to control America (Parent et al. 2013; Gaspar 2019; Collins and Bilge 2020). However, intersectionality was not the term that was originally used to address the oppressions of identities of race, class, gender, and sexuality. Traditionally, people would use theories such as social feminism that is related to intersectionality investigating the identities of race, gender, and class because they were not addressed before being “coined” by later theorists, such as Crenshaw (1989) (Parent et al. 2013; Gaspar 2019; Collins and Bilge 2020). Later, instead of using the term social feminism, intersectionality became popular in the latter part of the twentieth century through renewed scholarly attention. Modern-day, intersectionality has remained a popular perspective; indeed, social issues arose such as police violence in America while people recognized that Black Americans were being killed by law enforcement but focusing most often on Black men as victims and not Black women (Ritchie 2017; Gaspar 2019; Collins and Bilge 2020).

As mentioned above, intersectionality was first formally coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989), a lawyer and scholar, who realized that people usually do not demand the accountability and vulnerability of African American women and women of color as victims of police racialized violence (Crenshaw et al. 2015; Gaspar 2019). Though, intersectionality is not just used to address police violence but to focus on the issues of gender, race, class, and LGBTQ identities and folks who identify with these identities that experience marginalization (Parent et al. 2013; Gaspar 2019; Collins and Bilge 2020). As people who identify as LGBTQ and/or racial/ethnic groups experience marginalization, they also face violence (Parent et al. 2013; Gaspar 2019; Collins and Bilge 2020). Often, people with marginalized identities are not recognized to see the challenges of oppression they have to face on a daily basis. Historically, intersectionality has examined how white women get credit for feminism and considered victims

of gender-based violence but women of color are not (Watters 2017). Plus, it shows how the civil rights of Black women civil rights are often rejected compared to Black men due to systemic racism and sexism that is uniquely oppressive for Black women, in particular (Watters 2017). Intersectionality is used to examine the overlapping experiences women of color go through. This framework also shows that the visibility for Black women is hard to acknowledge because of the political power that law enforcement uses to marginalize them (Gaspar 2019). Intersectionality highlights discrimination certain people go through that is not addressed by the justice system (Parent et al. 2013; Crenshaw et al. 2015; Gaspar 2019; Collins and Bilge 2020) Police violence is one of those issues because it is seen as just a Black man's issue while not valuing Black women and their experiences of police bias (Incite 2008; Crenshaw et al. 2015; Watters 2017; Ritchie 2017; Gaspar 2019). Intersectionality is used in different contexts to show that women of color are targets of police violence (Parent et al. 2013; Watters 2017; Gaspar 2019; Collins and Bilge 2020). In the United States, despite the disturbing origins of policing and its linkages to slave patrols (Greene and Gabbidon 2005), Black women have continued to be the target of police and state-waged violence.

The History of Oppression of Black Women

There have been many cases of Black men and women murdered by law enforcement officials. However, it seems that society is more likely to emphasize Black men as potential victims of police violence than Black women (INCITE 2008; Noel & Perlow 2014; Battle 2016; Crenshaw et al. 2015; Ritchie 2017; Ritchie & Brown 2017; YWCA 2018; Fischer 2019; Gaspar 2019; Uco 2020). Though, Black women and other women of color have faced tremendous oppression since colonialism showing that Black women have been oppressed for a long-time (Battle 2016; Ritchie 2017).

Slavery and Policing

Black women have struggled with legal protection in the criminal justice system because of experiencing racial, gender, and class discrimination which became established during slavery, resulting in Black women receiving more severe punishment compared to their white female counterparts (Watson et al. 2012; ASA 2013; Nagel 2015; Battle 2016). Slavery was a traumatic time because enslaved African women were forced to undergo torturous violence while being shipped to America (Noel and Perlow 2014 and Ritchie 2017). This included being stripped naked, branded, repeatedly sexually abused by their slave masters, giving birth in the worst conditions, punished for their motherhood, mutilated, overly policed by slave patrols, and beyond (Watson et al. 2012; ASA 2013; Noel and Perlow 2014; Battle 2016; Ritchie 2017). Those who resisted would receive harsh penalties especially by slave patrols, which is another form of policing; they were perceived to be runaways who did not obey the law (Noel and Perlow 2014; Ritchie 2017). For example, a slave named Celia was brought by a plantation owner named Newsom in Missouri (Battle 2016). Celia had faced gruesome physical and sexual violence by Newsom (Battle 2016). She was only fourteen years old (Battle 2016). Newsom would repeatedly rape her until one night Celia fought back and killed him by hitting him over the head twice and burning him (Battle 2016). Police officials interrogated her until she confessed to the crime (Battle 2016). Celia went to trial, was found guilty, and was executed (Battle 2016). This case was called *Missouri v. Celia* (Battle 2016). As a result of her sexuality, race, and gender she was punished because she killed her slave master who repeatedly brutalized her (Battle 2016). This is one example showing a Black woman who faced severe punishment due to killing a white man who raped her frequently.

Ultimately, the rape of Black women was normalized because they were not looked at as human beings (Watson et al. 2012; ASA 2013; Battle 2016; Ritchie 2017). Black women were

viewed as objects and literal property, in the case of chattel slavery, who should be punished for their identity (Watson et al. 2012; ASA 2013; Battle 2016; Ritchie 2017). In the case of enslaved Black women, white slave owners would sexually assault them (Watson et al. 2012; ASA 2013; Battle 2016; Ritchie 2017). On top of that, white slave owners who raped Black women were not punished for these acts due to these state laws (ASA 2013). However, if a Black woman tried to report or rebel against rape or any kind of violence from with their master or from any white man there were consequences (Watson et al. 2012; ASA 2013; Nagel 2015). Another example would be Elizabeth Ross Rite, who was able to document how Black women received severe punishment (Battle 2016). Rite documented that a Black woman was raped by her slave master and when she tried to escape was whipped until her skin came off and later she died due to the whipping (Battle 2016). She was killed because she did not obey the norms of slavery (Battle 2016). Rite's case demonstrates how enslaved Black women faced mistreatment if they resisted state violence (ASA 2013; Nagel 2015; Battle 2016). Plus, slave masters used state violence against Black women because it was allowed during slavery (ASA 2013; Nagel 2015; Battle 2016). Black women during chattel slavery faced harsh punishment implemented by law where systems of oppression such as racism, sexism, and state violence was a common factor during this historical era (Noel and Perlow 2014). However, severe punishment against Black women continued after slavery.

After slavery, in the emancipation era (1863), Black women were still violated by the law (Ritchie 2017). Formerly enslaved women continued to be restricted from their rights, raped, policed by law enforcement, and were commonly arrested for minor crimes because of slave codes (ASA 2013; Woods 2013; Battle 2016; Hartman 2016; Millward 2016; Winant 2016; Gabriel 2017; Ritchie 2017). This meant that formerly enslaved people would be fined, arrested

and/or put in prison for violating these code which were designed to target them for offenses such as vagrancy (ASA 2013; Woods 2013; Battle 2016; Hartman 2016; Millward 2016; Winant 2016; Gabriel 2017; Ritchie 2017). Consequently, Black folks, especially women, were likely to get arrested after the Civil War ended (ASA 2013; Woods 2013; Hartman 2016; Millward 2016; Winant 2016; Gabriel 2017; Ritchie 2017). As Ritchie (2017:29) explains in their results, “By 1888, black women were 5.8 times more likely to be arrested than white women and were disproportionately charged with public quarreling and using profane language and drunk and disorderly conduct and occupying/keeping a house of ill repute”. Black girls and women kept getting arrested due to fear of Black crime increasing, especially when the Thirteenth Amendment passed that abolished slavery except when convicted of a crime (ASA 2013; Woods 2013; Hartman 2016; Millward 2016; Winant 2016; Gabriel 2017; Ritchie 2017). During this era, Black women were viewed scientifically as deviant sexual beings who wanted to hurt white people and not feminine but more masculine (ASA 2013; Woods 2013; Hartman 2016; Millward 2016; Gabriel 2017; Ritchie 2017). These depictions caused more arrests and killings of Black women, including lynching by law enforcement for crimes such as prostitution, larceny, or for being loud (ASA 2013; Woods 2013; Hartman 2016; Millward 2016; Gabriel 2017; Ritchie 2017). When it came to motherhood, they were more likely to be perceived as unable to raise their children. In other words, it was hard for Black women to raise their children in a world where they are a threat (ASA 2013; Woods 2013; Battle 2016; Hartman 2016; Millward 2016; Gabriel 2017; Ritchie 2017). In all, slavery was cruel for Black women in terms of being treated like property and overly policed.

Jim Crow

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Jim Crow laws were implemented

where segregation existed in the United States and everything was “separate but equal” specifically, for African Americans (Ritchie 2017). Separate but equal was administered in the supreme court case *Plessy v. Ferguson* 1896 ruling racial segregation is not unconstitutional (Harris 2014; Ritchie 2017; Ucok 2020; Combs 2021). States were allowed to use this law to keep white and African Americans apart (Harris 2014; Ritchie 2017; Ucok 2020; Combs 2021). However, being separate was not equal at all because this law led to more racial bias as white people were treated equal while African Americans were treated unequal (Harris 2014; Ritchie 2017; Ucok 2020; Combs 2021) Segregation was the cause of inequality against African Americans because they had to be separated from the white population since they were looked at as second-class citizens (Harris 2014; Ritchie 2017; Ucok 2020; Combs 2021). Subsequently, African Americans were banned from sitting next to white people in movie theaters, water fountains, in schools, and other places (Ritchie 2017; Ucok 2020; Combs 2021). As Jim Crow laws emerged, law enforcement had to follow these rules in terms of segregation and racial discrimination (Harris 2014; Ritchie 2017; Ucok 2020; Combs 2021). Subsequently, police officers would use brutal force against African Americans (Ritchie 2017; Ucok 2020). This also included Black women. Black women were also victims of police brutality during Jim Crow. For instance, there was a case when a Black woman named Mrs. Lena Fausset who accidentally bumped into a police officer (Ritchie 2017). The officers beat her (Ritchie 2017). Officers used their power of authority to beat Black folks and women if they looked “suspicious” (Haley 2013; Harris 2014; Ritchie 2017; Jones 2018; Norwood 2018; Combs 2021). Again, sexual violence continued to be utilized by police (Haley 2013; Harris 2014; Ritchie 2017; Jones 2018; Norwood 2018; Combs 2021). Cases such as that of Recy Taylor, a Black woman who was gang raped by white uniformed officers in Alabama, and Nannie Strayhorn, who got a ride by Virginia officers

who drove her to a deserted location and raped her repeatedly, are examples of police sexual violence against Black women during Jim Crow (Ritchie 2017). There were likely many more cases of Black women sexually violated by officers but often they did not get documented. Plus, officers were unpunished for their crimes while Black women were forced to not say anything to authorities because they would not believe them due to their race and gender (Haley 2013; Harris 2014; Ritchie 2017; Jones 2018; Norwood 2018).

Jim Crow segregation laws were challenged by the Civil Rights movement, including Black women who wanted equal opportunity. Though, law enforcement usually would not tolerate this behavior by using violence against those who disobeyed segregation laws. Often, police would use violence against Black women who resisted Jim Crow segregation (Haley 2013; Harris 2014; Ritchie 2017; Jones 2018; Norwood 2018). For example, Ella Ree Jones refused to give her seat up to a white man on a bus that was segregated (Haley 2013; Harris 2014; Ritchie 2017; Jones 2018; Norwood 2018). To teach her a lesson, white officers pulled her off the bus and beat her with a pipe while slamming her to the ground (Ritchie 2017). Later, she was sent to jail (Ritchie 2017). Fannie Lou Hammer is another example. Hammer, a freedom fighter, fought against Jim Crow laws in the South where she was beaten, stripped naked, and sexually assaulted by police (Ritchie 2012; Haley 2013; Harris 2014; Ritchie 2017; Jones 2018; Ucock 2020; Combs 2021). One officer actually said to Hammer, “You bitch, we’re going to make you wish you were dead” (Ritchie 2017:34). In all, Black women faced law enforcement violence during Jim Crow segregation as some resisted against it to fight for Black liberation. Historically, Black women have tried to gain momentum by promoting social justice while facing state violence (Battle 2016). Black women are still trying to regain their freedom especially when being overly policed, mistreated by law enforcement, and not receiving any

justice by the criminal justice system while their murderer is acquitted or set free (Battle 2016). Research suggests that police violence against women of color is not a new problem (Gaspar 2019). Gaspar (2019) explains that police use of force against Black women and women of color is utilized based on capitalism. The domination of power is used to control marginalized individuals, especially Black women, through violence, military tactics, economics, and policing to restrict the humanity of the Black community (Gaspar 2019).

Stereotypes

For decades, African American women have been stereotyped by society to dehumanize them in terms of policing (Hitchens 2017; Whitesel 2017; Ucok 2020). Stereotype is when someone and/or people have a belief of a category of other people (Hitchens 2017; Whitesel 2017). People usually stereotype a particular group based on their identities such as their race, gender, and class (Hitchens 2017; Whitesel 2017; Ucok 2020). More often, people of color, specifically, African Americans are likely to be stereotyped by individuals, politicians, and some white people (Hitchens 2017; Whitesel 2017; Ucok 2020). Often, Black men are stereotyped as aggressive and violent by some white individuals including law enforcement. However, Black women are also stereotyped by police officers. Police officers have used racialized gender stereotypes toward Black women to use violence against them (Ucok 2020). Racialized gender stereotypes are used by officers who look at Black women as second-class citizens (Hitchens 2017; Ritchie 2017; Whitesel 2017; Ucok 2020). These stereotypes are used because of some of the atrocities Black women went through during Slavery to Jim Crow that correlate to how they are racially profiled in America, specifically, by police (Watson et al. 2012; Ashley 2014; Ritchie 2017).

Black women were always expected to take care of white families and face traumatic

reproductive conditions such as giving birth in the fields without proper treatment while going back to work and being separated from their families (Watson et al. 2012; Ashley 2014; Ritchie 2017). This relates to the racialized gender stereotypes that law enforcement use against Black women because they are usually looked at as the mammy that is not cared for in society (Watson et al. 2012; Ashley 2014; Hitchens 2017; Ritchie 2017; Whitesel 2017; Ucok 2020) Worst of all, Black women are mistreated by police officers because they are likely to believe in the stereotypes that Black women do not deserve equal treatment or respect as they have to take care of their household while facing racial and gender discrimination (Watson et al. 2012; Ashley 2014; Hitchens 2017; Ritchie 2017; Whitesel 2017; Ucok 2020). This correlates to Black women being labeled as superhuman or unable to feel pain in today's society because they were treated poorly during slavery and throughout history of racism (Watson et al. 2012; Ashley 2014; Hitchens 2017; Ritchie 2017; Whitesel 2017; Ucok 2020). These labels are still used in modern society especially when Black women experience violence (Watson et al. 2012; Ashley 2014; Crenshaw et al. 2015; Ritchie 2017).

Other stereotypes that have been formed that predict Black women's behavior are the mammy, Jezebel, and Sapphire (Watson et al. 2012; Ashley 2014; Ucok 2020). The mammy stands for Black women who portray as the caregiver to her family including white families while being poorly treated by society (Watson et al. 2012; Ashley 2014; Crenshaw et al. 2015; Whitesel 2017; Ritchie 2017; Hitchens 2017; Ucok 2020). Jezebel means that Black women tend to be labeled as overly sexualized and prone to seduce white men that connects to slavery when their slave owners would rape them (Watson et al. 2012; Ashley 2014; Crenshaw et al. 2015; Whitesel 2017; Ritchie 2017; Hitchens 2017; Ucok 2020). Society does not like deviant sexualities. Unfortunately, Black women's sexuality is characterized as deviant (Watson et al.

2012; Ashley 2014; Ritchie 2017). Lastly, Black women are considered as the Sapphire. Sapphire is derogatory towards Black women as mean, aggressive, loud, and always angry (Watson et al. 2012; Ashley 2014; Crenshaw et al. 2015; Whitesel 2017; Ritchie 2017; Hitchens 2017; Ucok 2020). All of these stereotypes connect to police violence against Black women because their lives are in danger in terms of police interactions where officers may see them as a threat (Crenshaw et al. 2015; Whitesel 2017; Ritchie 2017; Hitchens 2017; Ucok 2020). Some police officers may see Black women as a threat because when they are talking in a certain way that may seem aggressive or rude as well as engaging in inappropriate behavior while demonstrating bad parenting, officers might assume they are disobeying the law that leads to suspicion of them pursuing a crime (Watson et al. 2012; Ashley 2014; Hitchens 2017; Ritchie 2017; Whitesel 2017; Ucok 2020). This can lead to racial profiling, harassment, verbal and physical violence, sexual assault, and murder (Watson et al. 2012; Ashley 2014; Hitchens 2017; Ritchie 2017; Whitesel 2017; Ucok 2020). This is based on the stereotypes of the mammy, Jezebel, and the Sapphire as some people may still think Black women are portrayed this way especially police officers (Watson et al. 2012; Ashley 2014; Hitchens 2017; Ritchie 2017; Whitesel 2017; Ucok 2020).

Whitesel (2017) found an example of this in the case of Eleanor Bumpurs, who was a heavyset 65-year-old Black woman and mother. She was killed by New York City police officers in 1984 as a result of trying to evict her due to nonpayment of four months of rent. Bumpurs' death led to protests in inner cities. She claimed that she can hear people in the walls, and the government was coming to get her, especially, when New York City housing authorities would give her eviction notices knowing that she was economically disadvantaged (Hitchens 2017; Whitesel 2017). Police did not see her as a human being; instead they saw her as an angry Black

woman (Whitesel 2017). This shows that police will use force on an innocent Black woman with a mental disability because of oppression, black vulnerability, identity, and stereotyping (Whitesel 2017; Hitchens 2017; Ucok 2020). Generally, stereotypes are used against women of color because this is what America has proclaimed to be as normalized (Watson et al. 2012; Ashley 2014; Ucok 2020). This intersects with police abuse of power because police officers are more likely to use stereotypes against women of color as a reason for using violence (Watson et al. 2012; Ashley 2014; Hitchens 2017; Ritchie 2017; Whitesel 2017; Ucok 2020).

Policing Women of Color in the War on Black America

As there has been an increase of police racial profiling, violence, mass incarceration, and criminalization in recent years, there is little data on policing girls and women of color (Ritchie 2017). Studies have shown that young Black men who come from disadvantaged communities more often have negative police experiences, higher arrests, and are more likely to be incarcerated (Brunson and Miller 2006; Brunson and Miller 2006; Brunson 2007). It has been found that Black men living in urban communities with higher poverty rates and crime are likely to experience aggressive policing, police misconduct, and police violence (Brunson and Miller 2006; Brunson and Miller 2006; Brunson 2007). This has a lot to do with neighborhood policing because often when police are patrolling an area, it is more likely they will patrol areas that are disadvantaged (Brunson and Miller 2006; Brunson and Miller 2006; Brunson 2007; Miller 2008). It is most likely Black men are at greater risk of police misconduct because they often live in disadvantaged areas with high crime rates such as drug selling and using, assault, and murder (Brunson and Miller 2006; Brunson 2007; Miller 2008). Although, women of color also have bad police experiences due to the same perception as they have more negative police interactions, higher arrest rates, and a rise in incarceration rates as they live in urban communities with

extreme poverty, more crime, and gentrification (Incite 2008; Richie 2012; Crenshaw et al. 2015; Ritchie 2017).

Women of color makeup over 50% of the prison population in the United States (Ritchie 2017). Women's incarceration rates have grown similarly to those of Black men (Ritchie 2017). Data has shown that Black, Latinx, and other women of color are more likely to be incarcerated for drug violations (INCITE 2008; Ritchie 2017). Ritchie (2017:44) observes that "Between 1986 and 1991, the number of Black women in state prison for drug offenses nationwide increased by more than 800 percent." Black women are more likely to be locked up (Ritchie 2017). Mass incarceration and criminalization of Black women is important in this context because the first contact of the justice system that leads to incarceration is law enforcement (Ritchie 2017). The reason for high incarceration rates for women of color is they are more likely to be arrested for drug crimes (INCITE 2008; Yates & Whitford 2009; Crenshaw et al. 2015; YWCA 2018) Drug crimes are when people commit a crime that involves drugs such as drug dealing and using (INCITE 2008; Yates & Whitford 2009; Crenshaw et al. 2015; YWCA 2018). Women of color are criminalized for drug crimes because drugs often surface in their neighborhood especially if living in a low-income area (INCITE 2008; Yates & Whitford 2009; Crenshaw et al. 2015; YWCA 2018). If you live in a low-income area with an increase of drug crimes, there is more likely to be police presence (INCITE 2008; Yates & Whitford 2009; Crenshaw et al. 2015; YWCA 2018). Consequently, law enforcement patrol these areas where people of color are more likely to reside (INCITE 2008; Yates & Whitford 2009; Crenshaw et al. 2015; YWCA 2018) Police will use racist and sexist tactics such as stops and frisks, racial profiling, illegal searches, stripped searches, policing gender, and more against a person of color and/or woman of color if they suspect, or witness them using and selling drugs as well as drug

possession (INCITE 2008; Yates & Whitford 2009; Crenshaw et al. 2015; YWCA 2018) This kind of policing is used due to the war on drugs (INCITE 2008; Yates & Whitford 2009; Crenshaw et al. 2015; YWCA 2018).

The war on drugs began in the 1970s during Richard Nixon's presidency (Goode 2002; INCITE 2008; Kuzmarov 2009; Yates and Whitford 2009; Noel and Perlow 2014; Crenshaw et al. 2015; and Ritchie 2017; Boghosian 2020) Police officers would determine who was a drug user, especially African Americans and other low-income communities of color (INCITE 2008; Noel and Perlow 2014; Crenshaw et al. 2015; and Ritchie 2017). People of color were under surveillance while facing traumatic police law and order tactics such as stop and searches, police raids, and arrests for drug offenses that gave them mandatory minimum sentences (INCITE 2008; Kuzmarov 2009; Noel and Perlow 2014; Crenshaw et al. 2015; and Ritchie 2017). This meant that some people of color are more likely to be viewed as a criminal by some police officers especially when selling and using drugs (Goode 2002; INCITE 2008; Kuzmarov 2009; Yates and Whitford 2009; Noel and Perlow 2014; Crenshaw et al. 2015; and Ritchie 2017; Boghosian 2020). Women and LGBTQ+ people of color were systematically profiled as drug users compared to white women (INCITE 2008; Yates and Whitford 2009; Ritchie 2017; YWCA 2018). Again, imprisonment rates for Black and Latinx women for drug crimes increased (INCITE 2008; Noel and Perlow 2014; Crenshaw et al. 2015; Ritchie 2017). Ritchie (2017) explains that "Black, Latinx, and Indigenous women make up a grossly disproportionate share of women incarcerated for drug offenses, even though whites are nearly five times as likely as Blacks to use marijuana and three times as likely as Blacks to have used crack" (Ritchie 2017: 47). There were racial disparities of women of color facing imprisonment for drug violations that is often not right when white individuals have committed the same crime. Again, policing is part

of this because often women of color were arrested for drug offenses as a consequence of officers targeting them as part of policing drug users (Goode 2002; INCITE 2008; Kuzmarov 2009; Yates & Whitford 2009; Crenshaw et al. 2015; YWCA 2018; Boghosian 2020). Women of color are still facing drug law policing as their arrests rates likely have risen. Ritchie (2017:47) describes this with data that shows, "From 2010 to 2014, women's drug arrests increased by 9 percent while men's decreased by 7.5 percent. These disparities were even starker at the height of the drug war. Between 1986 and 1995, arrests of adult women for drug abuse violations increased by 91.1 percent compared to 53.8 percent for men". Nevertheless, women of color were often arrested for drug violations. In today's society, we continue to see more cases of women of color being arrested and often killed because police assumed they were involved in a drug crime.

Women of color are more likely to be subjected to stops and searches because officers would often suspect them as drug users or transporting drugs (INCITE 2008; Crenshaw et al. 2015; Ritchie 2017; YWCA 2018). Again, these searches often include intensive strip or body cavity searches (INCITE 2008; Ritchie 2017; YWCA 2018; Boghosian 2020). Black women often experience brutal searches from officers that were inappropriate by checking their body parts and physically assaulting them (Goode 2002; INCITE 2008; Crenshaw et al. 2015; Ritchie 2017; YWCA 2018; Boghosian 2020). Some officers have sexually harassed, sexually assaulted, and physically abused Black women if suspecting and/or caught doing drugs (Goode 2002; INCITE 2008; Crenshaw et al. 2015; Ritchie 2017; YWCA 2018; Boghosian 2020). For example, INCITE (2008) explains a case of a woman,

Danni Tyson was arrested on a subway train on her way to pick up her daughter from swim practice, and subsequently strip-searched at a Manhattan police station. During the search, she was asked to lift up her breasts to show that she was not hiding drugs, and subjected to racialized ridicule" (INCITE 2008:30).

In this situation, the victim was stripped and searched in a public space because officers suspected that they had drugs. The officers violated their constitutional rights. All women of color including Latinx, Native, and Asian women faced unexpected strip searches, racial profiling, harassment, and abuse by police as part of the war on drugs protocol (Ritchie 2017). More often, this was a constant routine for women of color to be searched even if it involved full body cavity searches. There have been some reports of women describing that certain male officers have aggressively searched or arrested them (Goode 2002; INCITE 2008; Kuzmarov 2009; Yates and Whitford 2009; Noel and Perlow 2014; Ritchie 2017; and YWCA 2018). Even if they had revealing clothes, menstruating, or pregnant (Goode 2002; INCITE 2008; Kuzmarov 2009; Yates and Whitford 2009; Noel and Perlow 2014; Ritchie 2017; and YWCA 2018). Pregnant women were frequently surveilled in the context of the war on drugs, especially, those who were drug abusers (Goode 2002; INCITE 2008; Kuzmarov 2009; Yates and Whitford 2009; Noel and Perlow 2014; Crenshaw et al. 2015; Ritchie 2017; and YWCA 2018). Mothers of color were more likely to be arrested and convicted for drug possession and child abuse in terms of taking drugs while pregnant (INCITE 2008). Sadly, women and women of color are not given restorative justice treatment (INCITE 2008). Instead, they would be shackled, beaten, or often murdered (INCITE 2008; Noel and Perlow 2014; Crenshaw et al. 2015; Ritchie 2017). Some officers would also use sex as an extortion for women who were drug abusers as opposed to getting arrested (Ritchie 2017). Overall, policing in the war on drugs era was enforced against Black women if they are concealing or ingested any drugs (Goode 2002; INCITE 2008; Kuzmarov 2009; Yates and Whitford 2009; Noel and Perlow 2014; Crenshaw et al. 2015; Ritchie 2017; and YWCA 2018). Law enforcement would target these women since they are part of the drug economy in low-income communities of color (Ritchie 2017). Still, these statistics usually

are not found constantly. On that note, policing women of color as drug mules needs to be considered to address police violence against women of color (Crenshaw et al. 2015; Ritchie 2017; YWCA 2018; Boghosian 2020).

Research shows statistics of women of color experiencing police encounters (Noel and Perlow 2014). There are complaints against police departments by women and women of color. As Noel and Perlow (2014) states, “According to the University of Chicago’s Campus Catalyst Student’s Review of a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), of IPRA’s data on female complainants, over 71% of these victims are African women, and over 87% of all complaints by women are from women of color” (2014:5). This shows that there are complaints against police misconduct by Black women and women of color that are less likely to be evidence of women of color being victims of police violence.

Policing Black Women’s Bodies on the Streets, in Schools, and Neighborhoods

Black women are more likely to be mistreated by police because of their race, gender, sexuality, and sexual deviance that leads to physical and sexual violence. Fischer (2019) explains how Black women were policed during the 1960s and 1970s based on sexual offenses they committed in Boston during a time when the city was trying to control urban crime. Black women faced discrimination by society and law enforcement especially for committing victimless crimes such as prostitution more than white women (Fischer 2019). As the city tried to decriminalize victimless crimes, police officers did not like the idea and women of color were more likely to get arrested as well as physically assaulted by authorities (Fischer 2019). This shows that police abuse of power is used to profile sexual or non-sexual Black women on the streets to objectify them as non-human (Crenshaw 2015; Fischer 2019). In contrast, policing Black women’s bodies is a gender-specific issue and part of racialized policing (Ritchie and Brown 2017). On top of that, as Black women are policed by law enforcement in society, they

are also policed on the streets, in schools, and neighborhoods especially young Black girls and other girls of color.

Policing young girls of color is an issue that corresponds to police violence. Young girls of color routinely struggle with racialized gender policing. Some officers have profiled and used aggressive force on Black girls no matter their age. Police have assaulted young Black girls from those who are teens or younger (Crenshaw et al. 2015; Ritchie 2017; YWCA 2018). Importantly, it matters where they are profiled. Young girls of color are policed in environments such as schools, their communities, neighborhoods, and elsewhere. It is salient to know where young girls of color are policed because it shows how their safety is viewed as irrelevant in certain places. In the events of police violence and activism in the 21st century, as riots erupted in Ferguson and other urban cities in the United States, there was some media attention on police violence against young girls of color (Ritchie 2017). Some of these events took place in where the victims reside or in their own neighborhood. This type of police harassment happened to Tatyana Rhodes and other black residents (Ritchie 2017).

The Rhodes were having a family cookout one summer where they invited close relatives and friends. (Ritchie 2017). The party was held in an all-white neighborhood in McKinney, Texas (Ritchie 2017). Other white residents complained about the supposedly loud noise and that too many people were at the gathering (Ritchie 2017). They also called the party members including Black youth derogatory names and racist words (Ritchie 2017). One white resident even hit Tatyana and police got involved (Ritchie 2017). However, this caused even more problems because officers who responded to the call and arrived at the location when the altercation was over, began aggressively arresting youth of color (Ritchie 2017). Other white youths were able to record the incident and realized that officers were only attacking people of

color at the party (Ritchie 2017). One of them was Dajerria Becton, who was at the time fourteen years old (Ritchie 2017). She was violently forced to the ground by officer Eric Casebolt. Other teens tried to stop the officer but instead he pulled out his gun and chased them. Other officers eventually stopped him. Hence, he went back to Dajerria and continued to point his gun at her while shoving her to the ground wearing a bikini, kneeling on top of her back with his full body weight, and yelling at her. Dajerria was so scared she started to cry (Ritchie 2017). This event got a lot of media attention because it was recorded and showed an officer using aggressive force on a young Black girl. Usually, when society sees actual footage of police violence against Black girls there is not much attention or outrage. Though, in this case there was a lot. The Black Lives Matter movement and activists protested against this type of police abuse causing the officer Casebolt to resign but there was no legal action or conviction (Ritchie 2017). It is more likely that young Black girls can be violently arrested in communities that they live in especially in an all-white atmosphere where normally people of color are not always welcomed. Accordingly, this is a consequence of residential segregation and zero-tolerance policing (Ritchie 2017).

As young girls of color are policed in neighborhoods they are also policed in schools. For more than a decade, there have been strict policies on cops in schools. Since the 1990s, policies were implemented to ban guns from schools establishing the Gun-Free Schools Act (INCITE 2008). However, when school shootings started to happen, such as the Columbine High School Massacre in Colorado, more tough policies were used in school systems to make public schools safe (INCITE 2008). Ultimately, schools that were located in communities of color were more likely to have the strictest zero-tolerance policies (INCITE 2008). Not surprisingly, more armed police were placed in urban schools. Youth of color were under surveillance in schools in order for officers to maintain school discipline (INCITE 2008). Though, youth of color were not just

disciplined for gun possession but also for other delinquent acts such as skipping class, truancy, saying bad words, tardiness, suspension, and disrupting class that can often lead to an arrest (INCITE 2008). Now, schools are institutions for profiling, arresting, and criminalizing adolescents of color that also relates to the concept of the school to prison pipeline (INCITE 2008). Research has found that youth of color feel unsafe in schools due to officers targeting them with metal detectors or abusing their personhood while thinking they are delinquent (INCITE 2008). This includes young girls of color. Girls of color are likely to get arrested in schools especially for misbehaving (INCITE 2008, Ritchie 2017, and YWCA 2018). Girls of color and other students of color are disproportionately arrested in schools compared to white students (INCITE 2008 and Ritchie 2017). The YWCA (2018) has found that young Black girls and other racial/ethnic students suspension rates are higher than white peers. If young girls of color are suspended from school or arrested by cops while in school, they are more likely to drop out. This increases the chance that they are likely to be adjudicated in the juvenile justice system (YWCA 2018).

Whenever Black girls are arrested or charged in schools it is most likely that they were disturbing class on school grounds (Ritchie 2017). Unfortunately, other young girls of color face police disparities and violence in schools. Native, Asian, Muslim, Latino, and LGBTQ students are arrested and detained on school grounds while experiencing unreasonable searches by security officers (INCITE 2008 and Ritchie 2017). When queer students are arrested in schools it is likely because of their gender identity or sexual orientation (INCITE 2008 and Ritchie 2017). Muslim girls are often harassed or profiled in schools if their religion is shown, especially, with their Hijabs (INCITE 2008 and Ritchie 2017). Native girls are four times more likely to be arrested in schools (Ritchie 2017). These rates are higher compared to white girls (Ritchie 2017).

Asian students have also been harassed by school police officers in response to their racial/ethnic background (INCITE 2008 and Ritchie 2017). Predictably, Black girls and other girls of color face police discrimination in schools that objectifies their safety while officers are supposed to protect them from harm.

Police Sexual Misconduct Against Women of Color

Police sexual misconduct is an issue in terms of police violence against Black women and women of color because there have been some number of cases of police officers who have raped and/or sexually assaulted Black women due to their identity. Police sexual misconduct is described as law enforcement committing sexual violence against a person (Goldman et al. 2011; Stinson et al. 2014; Stinson et al. 2014). Police sexual misconduct includes rape, sexual assault, sexual harassment, sexually coercing someone to engage in a sexual act against their will, sexual touching without using penetration such as touching someone inappropriately, unwanted sex, non-consensual sex, and sexual deviant behavior by law enforcement officers (Goldman et al. 2011; Stinson et al. 2014; Stinson et al. 2014). Research has found that police officers commit sexual violence against people because police work tends to be an opportunity where officers are not always supervised when patrolling an area and usually operate by themselves on their shifts (Goldman et al. 2011; Stinson et al. 2014; Stinson et al. 2014; Ritchie 2017). Ultimately, they interact with people especially if they find someone who is suspicious or actually engaging in an illegal activity (Incite 2008; Goldman et al. 2011; Stinson et al. 2014; Stinson et al. 2014; Ritchie 2017). Sometimes, they interact with people who do not commit crimes or are victims of a crime (Goldman et al. 2011; Stinson et al. 2014; Stinson et al. 2014; Ritchie 2017). Some officers are likely to commit sexual violence because they may interact with people in isolated places where no one can publicly see them committing these offenses (Incite 2008; Goldman et al. 2011;

Stinson et al. 2014; Stinson et al. 2014; Ritchie 2017). Often, sexual violence can be committed by other criminal justice officials and in places such as correction officers in jails, prisons, and/or people held in custody, welfare offices, detention centers, and mental health institutions (Richie 2012). Consequently, some officers may commit sex crimes against people who seem vulnerable members of society and will not report them because they are law enforcement and fear retaliation (Incite 2008; Goldman et al. 2011; Richie 2012; Stinson et al. 2014; Stinson et al. 2014; Ritchie 2017). Those potential victims are often Black women and other women of color.

Police sexual violence tends to be a much worse issue for Black women and other women of color because they are likely to be victims due to their race and gender identities compared to white women (Incite 2008; Richie 2012; Ritchie 2017). However, when discussing police brutality, sexual violence does not come up all the time because some people only see police brutality as a Black man's issue where a white cop is beating up a Black male (Incite 2008; Ritchie 2017). This is due to the media highlighting certain cases of police brutality often showing footage of Black men who are cisgender/heterosexual getting attacked by an officer (Incite 2008; Ritchie 2017). Though, when a woman of color is sexually assaulted or harassed by an officer it is often not taken seriously as a result of only a few victims coming forward, making a complaint against an officer as well as an officer not being charged or convicted of their perpetration, and sexual violence is not considered to be a form of police brutality (Incite 2008; Goldman et al. 2011; Stinson et al. 2014; Stinson et al. 2014; Ritchie 2017). Police sexual violence against women of color has been an issue for decades because it has been used as a form of power over them that has been rooted in history since slavery (ASA 2013; OAESV 2013; Battle 2016; NOW 2018; Ucock 2020).

During slavery, white colonizers, slave plantation owners, and slave patrols which was a

form of policing would rape Native and Black women to terrorize and take away their dignity (Watson et al. 2012; ASA 2013; OAESV 2013; Ashley 2014; Battle 2016; NOW 2018; Ucok 2020). This includes enslaved Black women being raped to bear children and/or Native women being treated as inhumane (Watson et al. 2012; ASA 2013; OAESV 2013; Ashley 2014; Battle 2016; NOW 2018; Ucok 2020). Black women continued to experience sexual violence and objectification in the Reconstruction Era and during and after Jim Crow (Watson et al. 2012; ASA 2013; OAESV 2013; Ashley 2014; Battle 2016; NOW 2018; Ucok 2020). Consequently, in contemporary times, women of color still face sexual violence that is often ignored by society and social policy especially if the perpetrator is a police officer (Richie 2012; Watson et al. 2012; ASA 2013; OAESV 2013; Ashley 2014; Ritchie 2017). This has created stigma for women of color as they face sexual violence from police officers.

There is social stigma of Black women and sexual violence because the crimes of sexual violence against Black women tends to get ignored because of their race, gender, and sexuality (Crenshaw 1991; Richie 2012; Watson et al. 2012; OAESV 2013; Ashley 2014; Now 2018). This has been the case because of the social controls of racism, sexism, and heterosexism in the criminal justice system and society (Crenshaw 1991; Miller 2008; Richie 2012; Watson et al. 2012; OAESV 2013; Ashley 2014; Now 2018). Since women of color are stereotyped as sexually aggressive, hypersexualized, and, promiscuous, when they experience rape and/or sexual assault and want to take legal action against their perpetrator, the justice system often times have failed them due to women of color viewed as not capable of being raped (Miller 2008; Watson et al. 2012; OAESV 2013; Ashley 2014; Battle 2016; Hitchens 2017; Whitesel 2017; Now 2018; Ucok 2020). Therefore, Black women including transgender and other women of color often have to advocate for themselves in terms of preventing sexual violence not just by

police officers but also in their own communities (Crenshaw 1991; Richie 2012; OAESV 2013; Ritchie 2017; Now 2018). Miller (2008), addressed that young African American girls who live in urban communities with high poverty rates, crime, and more police patrolling these areas are likely to experience gendered violence. As young African American girls live in the hood, they often live by the street code where there are perceptions of gender (Miller 2008). The perception is girls of color are exposed to violence as they feel and are at risk even if they engage in deviant behavior or not (Miller 2008; Richie 2012). Sexual harassment and assault is two of those risks. It has been found that it is normalized for young African American girls to be sexually harassed in their neighborhoods and at school by their own peers (Miller 2008; Richie 2012). When it does happen, there are not many consequences for these actions in terms of school and community responses (Miller 2008; Richie 2012) Sexual harassment against young Black girls more often is not taken seriously due to neighborhoods that are extremely disadvantaged and the stereotype that Black girls most likely asked to be harassed (Miller 2008). Also, young African American girls have experienced sexual victimization as they have been raped and/or sexually assaulted by being pressured into having unwanted sex by their male peers, sexually coerced, sexually abused by older men or a family member, and being a victim of running a train. Running a train is urban slang that is similar with the term 'gang rape' where it is common for a group of boys to forcibly or coerce one girl to have sex with them (Miller 2008). This shows that young Black girls and women are at risk of sexual violence regardless of police interactions. On that note, Black women and other women of color face sexual violence by people in their communities such as Black men, family members, peers, older men, and other people (Crenshaw 1991; Miller 2008; Richie 2012; OAESV 2013; Now 2018) However, Black girls and women are more likely to face sexual violence by white men including police officers or other criminal

justice officials that is part of the political intersections of rape and male violence (Crenshaw 1991; Miller 2008; Richie 2012; OAESV 2013; Now 2018). Even though police sexual misconduct has been hard to address, research has shown that it is used against minority women and other disadvantaged people.

Statistics show that women are likely to experience sexual violence where one in five women are sexually assaulted (OAESV 2013; NOW 2018). However, there is also little data on sexual violence committed by law enforcement against Black women, LGBTQ individuals, and women of color (Incite 2008; Ritchie 2017). Although, Noel and Perlow (2014) found that with the crime rate comparisons between law enforcement and the general public, police officers are more likely to commit crimes of sexual assault. The results show that as of 2010, rates of 67.8 of police officers have committed sexual assault whereas only 28.7 of people from the general public committed this crime (Cato's Institute 2010; Noel and Perlow 2014; Crenshaw et al. 2015). States such as Missouri and Florida found cases that were investigated where police officers committed sexual misconduct (Incite 2008). Apparently, sexual misconduct was reported to be a problem by other officers but there was nothing done to address this issue by the criminal justice system (Incite 2008). Nevertheless, some statistics show police committing sexual misconduct but the data do not reveal if Black women are the victims. Yet, when they are the victims it has been reported that one-third of them will report to the authorities while others will not because of the fear of not being believed. Also, if their perpetrator was a police officer they are more likely to not go to the police as a result of the lack of trust when an officer abused them in the first place. This includes fear of the same officer using violence against them again if they do report the incident (Incite 2008). For instance, in 2001, two teenagers who were Latina and transgender women, were forced to perform oral sex on officers who stopped and approached

them because the police threatened to arrest them if they did not do what they were told (Incite 2008). Sadly, they did not report the incident because they feared retaliation from the police due to their race, gender identity, and immigration status (Incite 2008). This shows that women of color make the decision to not report incidents of police sexual misconduct as a result of their marginalized identities and police abuse of power. Often, police will target women of color who do not follow the gender norms of society, especially those who commit crimes (Incite 2008; Ritchie 2017; Fischer 2019).

Police officers are more likely to sexually assault Black women and other women of color who commit crimes such as sex crimes, sexual deviance, and sex work (Incite 2008; Ritchie 2017; YWCA 2018; Fischer 2019). Women and LGBTQ folks who engage in these offenses are likely to be victims of police sexual misconduct because they are considered to be less important in terms of their identity (Incite 2008; Ritchie 2017; YWCA 2018; Fischer 2019). Police officers have also extorted sex with individuals who engaged in victimless crimes (Incite 2008; Ritchie 2017; YWCA 2018; Fischer 2019). This meant that officers who interacted with women or gender non-conforming individuals who engaged in sex crimes would use their power of authority by threatening to arrest them with the exchange for sex (Incite 2008; Ritchie 2017; Fischer 2019). Research has found that 30% of women who work as exotic dancers and 24% of women who engaged in prostitution and/or sex work reported that police officers sexually assaulted them (Incite 2008). This is exacerbated by anti-prostitution laws where some states ban street-level prostitution and sex work (Ritchie 2017; YWCA 2018). Sex crimes are illegal in certain states. It is likely that police officers will arrest women especially Black women if they are engaging in prostitution and/or sex work (Incite 2008; Ritchie 2017; YWCA 2018; Fischer 2019). Importantly, if officers see them carrying condoms that will often strip search them or do

body cavity searches as officers demand arrestees to remove all clothing to search them in public spaces if they suspect if they have contraband or engaged in sex crimes (Incite 2008; Ritchie 2017; YWCA 2018; Fischer 2019). Plus, they are less likely to be believed if they report the incident, make a complaint, or take legal action since they are working in the sex trade (Incite 2008; Crenshaw et al. 2015; Ritchie 2017; YWCA 2018; Fischer 2019). For instance, in 2005, a Black transgender woman reported being arrested and charged for prostitution because they were on a street corner and carrying condoms (Incite 2008). They were stripped searched inappropriately three times, including vaginally, and then raped by the officers (Incite 2008). They also believed they were attacked because of their gender identity (Incite 2008). When they tried to take legal action against the officer, nothing happened because the victim was engaging in illegal activity (Incite 2008). Another example would be Charnesia Corley. Charnesia was in her early twenties, was violated by an officer because they thought that they smelled marijuana in her car (Ucok 2020). After the officer did not find anything in her vehicle, he forced her to do a body cavity search by making her get undressed including taking off her bra and underwear then putting his fingers in between her legs which led to sexual assault (Ucok 2020). These women did not get national media attention and the officers. In all, police will use sexual violence against women of color who engages or is believed to be engaging in sex crimes especially in secluded locations where there are no witnesses from the public including in police cars, stations, on the streets, and in their own homes (Ritchie 2017). As Black women and other women of color have been victims of police sexual violence, officers are not held accountable for their actions (Incite 2008; Ritchie 2017).

Police officers who have committed police sexual misconduct often do not face arrest, charges, conviction, let alone sentencing (Incite 2008; Goldman et al. 2011; Stinson et al. 2014;

Stinson et al. 2014; Ritchie 2017). Research has found that only a few percent of police officers have been charged for police sexual misconduct (Incite 2008; Goldman et al. 2011; Stinson et al. 2014; Stinson et al. 2014; Ritchie 2017). As of 2002, 400 cases were documented evaluating the concept of driving while female where police officers used sexual harassment and assault during traffic stops (Incite 2008). However, most of these officers did not face criminal sanctions (Incite 2008). Ernest Marsalis is an example of an officer who did not face criminal conviction for police sexual misconduct. He was a Chicago police officer who sexually abused Black women including kidnapping and raping a 19-year old African American woman (Incite 2008; Crenshaw et al. 2015; Ritchie 2017). He was fired from the force but never faced prosecution (Incite 2008; Crenshaw et al. 2015; Ritchie 2017). Though, there have been a few cases of officers who have faced prosecution and been sentenced for committing police sexual misconduct. One of them is Daniel Holtzclaw, an Oklahoma police officer who was sentenced for life imprisonment for raping 13 Black women (Crenshaw et al. 2015; Ritchie 2017; YWCA 2018). One of those women was a 57-year old grandmother who was on her way home one night when a police officer stopped her while driving (Crenshaw et al. 2015; Ritchie 2017; YWCA 2018). The officer stripped-searched her in public to see if she was carrying any drugs (Crenshaw et al. 2015; Ritchie 2017; YWCA 2018). When they found nothing, they forced the victim to perform oral sex on them (Crenshaw et al. 2015; Ritchie 2017; YWCA 2018). The victim filed a complaint which led an entire investigation where criminal justice officials and prosecutors found that Holtzclaw had sexually assaulted many other women but not just any women, Black women (Crenshaw et al. 2015; Ritchie 2017; YWCA 2018). The reason other women did not come forward was they had some type of criminal record and/or unpaid fines from the court (Crenshaw et al. 2015; Ritchie 2017; YWCA 2018). Holtzclaw would use this against their victims to

sexually assault them and violate their human rights (Crenshaw et al. 2015; Ritchie 2017; YWCA 2018). As the 57-year-old grandmother did not have a criminal record at all and she was able to file a report and pursue criminal actions against her perpetrator that open the doors for this investigation and to bring justice for women who have been violated by Holtzclaw by convicting and sentencing him for his wrongdoings (Crenshaw et al. 2015; Ritchie 2017; YWCA 2018). This demonstrates that not many police officers have been held accountable for committing sexual misconduct against women of color but there have been many officers who have committed this same offense but never faced criminal charges only termination from the force. This shows that there needs to be better ways to investigate reports and complaints of police sexual misconduct (Goldman et al. 2011; Stinson et al. 2014; Stinson et al. 2014). Therefore, policies should be implemented for police departments to ban sexual misconduct committed by police officers.

Studies have shown that many police departments do not have policies that prohibit sexual misconduct from law enforcement. Ritchie and Brown (2017) found that more than half of the police departments in the United States have no policies or training that address police sexual misconduct against the public. This includes policies that prohibit sexual activity while on and off duty, rape and/or sexual assault including penetration, sexual harassment such as requests for sexual favors, the threat of sexual favors, unwelcomed touching, and sexual language (Ritchie and Brown 2017). Additionally, there are no policies that prohibit sexual misconduct against women of color (Ritchie and Brown 2017). There needs to be policies that bans all kinds of sexual misconduct in police departments including better investigations when someone wants to file a complaint or report where there is a thorough investigation of criminal cases that involve sexual allegations against an officer (Goldman et al. 2011). For the most part, police sexual

violence against Black women and other women of color is a form of police brutality that has been viewed and addressed by feminist scholars and activists but it is not a concern in the context of Black Lives Matter (Ritchie 2017).

Policing Gender and Gender Non-Conforming Individuals

Police violence is often seen as a problem for Black heterosexual, cisgender men who are either beaten or killed by a white male police officer (Incite 2008; Crenshaw et al. 2015 Ritchie 2017; YWCA 2018). It is often not viewed from the perspective of a lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and gender non-conforming individual of color (Incite 2008; Crenshaw et al. 2015; Ritchie 2017; YWCA 2018). Though, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and gender non-conforming people of color are at risk of experiencing police violence such as police harassment, arrests, beatings, physical assault, excessive force, rape, and sexual violence including lack of protection in their community and by law enforcement (Incite 2008; Richie 2012; Crenshaw et al. 2015; Ritchie 2017; YWCA 2018). It appears policing gender has been practiced by law enforcement to enforce that gender should be binary (Incite 2008; Crenshaw et al. 2015; Ritchie 2017; YWCA 2018). This is the idea that there are only two specific genders: woman and man or sex male and/or female (Incite 2008; Crenshaw et al. 2015; Ritchie 2017; YWCA 2018). People who did not live by these gender norms would face criminalization or be labeled as a criminal or deviant because they are not behaving, expressing, and acting as the sex they were assigned at birth or gender that is categorized by society (Incite 2008; Crenshaw et al. 2015; Ritchie 2017; YWCA 2018). For instance, there have been laws that prohibit cross-gender clothing when people are dressed in the opposite gender (Incite 2008; Crenshaw et al. 2015; Ritchie 2017; YWCA 2018). Police would enforce these laws against people who did not follow the gender binary (Incite 2008; Crenshaw et al. 2015; Ritchie 2017; YWCA 2018). Enforcing

these laws have been used since colonization.

During the years of colonization, Indigenous people who impersonated another gender by cross-dressing would face terrible abuse by colonizers such as being arrested, beaten, tortured, stripped, humiliated, and murdered (Incite 2008; Ritchie 2017). Laws enforcing the gender binary continued to be used during slavery, the Civil War, and the reconstruction era (Incite 2008; Ritchie 2017). As abolitionists were trying to abolish slavery and fight for racial and class equality, laws were also implemented to control the distinction of sex and gender (Incite 2008; Ritchie 2017). This included policing cross-dressing (Ritchie 2017). In the nineteenth century, the normative was to police not just the distinction between men and women but also gender behaviors that looked inappropriate especially when feminists dress-reformers and activists would pose as another gender that does not match their biological sex (Incite 2008; Ritchie 2017). Again, this type of enforcement dealt with the scrutiny of objectifying individuals in terms of their gender identity such as checking to see if they talked or looked too masculine and feminine, the presence or absence of facial hair, if they wore makeup, dressed in promiscuous clothing, and so on (Incite 2008; Ritchie 2017). In addition, when it came to enforcing cross-dressing laws, it also affected people of color including Black, Brown, immigrants, and Asian individuals (Incite 2008; Ritchie 2017). Those who dressed or tried to look more feminine or masculine would be subjected to criminal arrest leading to violence (Incite 2008; Ritchie 2017). In the twentieth century, law enforcement continued to perpetrate brutal harm against gender non-conforming people such as butch lesbians of color, transgender women and men, and drag queens who did not live by the gender norms (Incite 2008; Ritchie 2017). During the late 1960s, the Gay rights movement emerged starting when the Stonewall riots happened when transgender women of color and other gender non-conforming folks decided to take matters into

their own hands and fight back against the police who would often terrorize them (Ritchie 2017). Moreover, activists such as Audre Lorde, a Black lesbian woman and poet and Sylvia Rivera a Puerto Rican trans woman and revolutionary of the Stonewall uprising explained that if you were trying to impersonate another gender by dressing in female attire or boy clothing, or if females did not wear dresses but instead jeans, or if men wore clothes that looked to girly, would automatically go to jail (Incite 2008; Ritchie 2017). Historically, cross-dressing was banned and enforced by law enforcement where gender non-conforming individuals could face arrest or worse (Ritchie 2017). From the 1980s to the present, policing gender is still often used for those who do not express their gender that society has given them (Ritchie 2017). Some police will look for evidence if a person is cross-dressing or is expressing another gender to make an arrest (Incite 2008; Crenshaw et al. 2015; Ritchie 2017; YWCA 2018). For instance, a Black transgender woman named Meagan Taylor decided to check into a hotel in Iowa while traveling with a friend (Ritchie 2017; YWCA 2018). When the front desk checked their ID, they noticed that their sex identification did not match the gender she was expressing when she arrived at the hotel (Ritchie 2017; YWCA 2018). The front desk assumed she was engaging in prostitution and called the police (Ritchie 2017; YWCA 2018). When the officers arrived, they were very disrespectful towards them and forced her and her friend to remove some clothing to check for evidence if they were engaging in prostitution (Ritchie 2017; YWCA 2018). They found nothing, but they both were still arrested for committing fraud because of their ID and carrying medication that did not have a prescription (Ritchie 2017; YWCA 2018). Another example would be when a transgender man was arrested during a protest in San Francisco (Ritchie 2017). The officers asked for his driver's license and realized that their biological sex was legally male but was still placed in a holding cell (Incite 2008). Then, an officer wanted to double check his

gender identity by taking them out of their cell and demanding if they show them a real license because they believed the suspect had fraud identification (Ritchie 2017). Furthermore, another officer decided to check their private parts to see if they had genitals or was a real man by groping on their crotch and chest (Incite 2008). These patterns of policing gender based on clothing are essential when discussing police violence against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer women and people of color. Thus, as gender clothing and cross-dressing are found to be a problem by law enforcement, it also has been discovered that officers have policed LGBTQ people of color based on using public facilities such as bathrooms.

LGBTQ people and women of color are often penalized for using sex-segregated bathrooms (Incite 2008; Ritchie 2017). The reason for this matter is because law enforcement will enforce or use discretion if they see a trans person of color using a public restroom that does not match their gender identity (Incite 2008; Ritchie 2017). For example, after the events of Hurricane Katrina, Sharlie Arpollo Vicks, a Black transgender woman was arrested and held in a holding cell for six days for using a women's shower in an evacuation center (Ritchie 2017). However, there are no laws that prohibit people from using the bathroom that does not match their gender identity, but police may carry out punishments in terms of sex and gender differences (Incite 2008; Ritchie 2017). Furthermore, in 2004, an African American woman who was not trans but was a masculine female and played for a women's football, was violently arrested for using a women's bathroom in a restaurant in Washington D.C (Incite 2008; Ritchie 2017). These incidents and examples show that bathroom policing is utilized in the context of policing gender non-conforming people who do not go by the gender binary. In spite of bathroom policing, gender non-conforming individuals experience police arrest as a consequence of classification anxiety (Ritchie 2017). Classification anxiety is when police will use racialized

gender policing against LGBTQ people of color where they question and demand proof of their identity (Incite 2008; Crenshaw et al. 2015; Ritchie 2017; Owens et al. 2018; YWCA 2018).

LGBTQ individuals experience more negative police interactions than other folks, especially with having more than one identity (Incite 2008; Crenshaw et al. 2015; Ritchie 2017; Owens et al. 2018; YWCA 2018).

Further, some LGBTQ individuals significantly experience higher rates of negative police interactions if they identify with other identities such as race, being low-income, and different locations like urban or suburban areas (Owens et al. 2018). This is due to living in a heterosexist society when police officers classify their anxiety against gender non-conforming folks during daily routine police interactions because they believe gender is unchangeable (Incite 2008; Crenshaw et al. 2015; Ritchie 2017; YWCA 2018). For example, In Oklahoma in 2010, Allen Galbreath who is a Black gender non-conforming individual who is a ballet dancer, who wore high heels, and makeup was harassed and arrested by police for disorderly conduct (Ritchie 2017). They were arrested because of her behavior and disturbing the peace which there was no evidence that police found (Ritchie 2017). Allen believed she was arrested due to her race and gender identity (Ritchie 2017). They filed a civil lawsuit against the officer because they were violating their rights (Ritchie 2017). Sadly, they lost the lawsuit because the jury agreed with the officer in terms of the policy of broken windows policing where it includes if people commit disorderly conduct with the exception of gender expression (Ritchie 2017). Nonetheless, some police officers classify their anxiety if they see or interact with an LGBTQ person of color (Incite 2008; Crenshaw et al. 2015; Ritchie 2017; YWCA 2018). Often, when LGBTQ individuals interact with the police, it can be negative of how they were in contact with the police. Luthur et al (2021) found that 6% of LGBQ people were stopped by the police in a public space, 19%

stopped while driving, 12% stopped by police as a passenger in a car, 6% interacted with police if involved in a car accident, and 21% interacted with police if they needed help compared to the general population. Yet, some LGBQ individuals especially females were not satisfied with the police interactions (Luhur et al. 2021). Results show that 22% of LGBQ individuals did not contact the police again (Luhur et al. 2021). Furthermore, female LGBQ people were less satisfied when interacting with police with 69% less satisfied compared with the general public of 85% (Luhur et al. 2021). Female LGBQ folks who were white and non-white were less likely to call the police again with the result of 33% of female LGBQ folks and 22% and 21% of white and non-white LGBQ individuals (Luhur et al. 2021).

Patterns of police harassment of LGBTQ+ people of color have also emerged in other work in this area. In her qualitative study with LGBTQ+-identified people from the Newark metropolitan area, Shields (2021) also found the most LGBTQ people of color sampled (*N* 98) recalled negative interactions with police. Further, when asked about their behaviors surrounding reporting, the majority of participants, or two-thirds, recounted they would only call the police if they were in a serious situation, while the vast majority would not reach out to the police if they were victimized in an anti-LGBTQ bias incident. Overall, it appeared those sampled avoided contacting the police in Newark because of a fear of negative consequences or prior negative interactions with police due to their status as LGBTQ minority citizens (Shields 2021). Concerningly, some participants expressed doubts the police would help if they asked, or were hesitant due to experience, feared prior negative contacts with police or negative consequences that might arise from police interactions, or described the police as unresponsive and uncaring (Shields 2021). For instance, some participants explained when in violent situations with their partner, when responding, the police laughed at the victims because they

were in a same-sex relationship (Shields 2021). Others described instances of LGBTQ youth having experienced violence on the streets and police were not called because they knew police would approach it as just nothing or troubling harassment, such as the use of derogatory words (Shields 2021). These concerns and experiences were especially severe for transgender and gender non-conforming individuals, who feared mistreatment by police through misgendering, transphobic language towards them, or stereotyping them as sex workers (Shields 2021). These findings can be extrapolated and applied to policing Black women because LGBTQ+ communities are also disproportionately subjected to contact with the police (Brunson and Miller 2006; Incite 2008; Ritchie 2017; Hodge and Sexton 2018). LGBTQ folks can be criminalized for dressing differently, expressing another gender, or even being involved in a traffic stop, or being in a car (Brunson and Miller 2006; Incite 2008; Ritchie 2017; Hodge and Sexton 2018). More often, police officers' discretion for policing LGBTQ people especially, those of color, can lead to direct violence rather than verbal, physical, and/or sexual.

Some police officers have used verbal, physical, and sexual violence against LGBTQ people of color as a form of street justice (Incite 2008; Richie 2012; Crenshaw et al. 2015; Ritchie 2017; YWCA 2018), meaning that LGBTQ and gender non-conforming individuals are subjected to verbal assaults in the form of physical violence while being called derogatory names such as *faggot*, *freak*, *tranny*, *he/she*, *whore*, and *bitch* (Incite 2008; Richie 2012; Crenshaw et al. 2015; Ritchie 2017; YWCA 2018). For instance, Duanna Johnson, who was a Black trans woman was arrested for prostitution for walking home at night where police found no evidence of them engaging in sex crimes (Incite 2008; Richie 2012; Crenshaw et al. 2015; Ritchie 2017; YWCA 2018). The officer Bridges McRae who arrested her called her names such as “he/she” and “faggot” and then badly beat her, including pepper spraying the victim while another officer

held her down because she refused to answer to the transphobic slurs (Incite 2008; Richie 2012; Crenshaw et al. 2015; Ritchie 2017; YWCA 2018). As the officer was prosecuted and sentenced to two years in jail, Johnson was found dead, having been shot (Incite 2008; Richie 2012; Crenshaw et al. 2015; Ritchie 2017; YWCA 2018). Yet, there have been other cases like this where an officer has used verbal and physical abuse against LGBTQ women of color. In Boston, a Black butch lesbian was aggressively arrested for disruptive behavior (Incite 2008). The victim complained to the officers about their aggressiveness, and one officer responded “You want to act like a man, I’ll treat you like a man.” (Incite 2008:7). The officer punched them in the chest while calling her a bitch (Incite 2008). Back in 2006, a group of Black lesbians and gender non-conforming women who are also known as the New Jersey Seven were physically assaulted and threatened to be raped because of their race, gender, and sexual orientation (Richie 2012; Crenshaw et al. 2015; YWCA 2018). Officers ripped one woman’s hair out, the other burned another woman with a cigarette, and one got choked by another officer (Richie 2012; Crenshaw et al. 2015; YWCA 2018). Accordingly, they were arrested and charged because they responded to the police who were harassing them by defending themselves (Richie 2012; Crenshaw et al. 2015; YWCA 2018). In 2007, all of the women went to trial and were found guilty by an all-white jury because the courts said they committed gang assault even though the police assaulted them first (Richie 2012; Crenshaw et al. 2015; YWCA 2018). Plus, they were labeled as a lesbian wolfpack (Richie 2012; Crenshaw et al. 2015; YWCA 2018). They were sentenced to 11 years imprisonment (Richie 2012; Crenshaw et al. 2015; YWCA 2018). However, they were acquitted due to a campaign that led to a new trial and shorter sentences (Richie 2012; Crenshaw et al. 2015; YWCA 2018). Therefore, LGBTQ people of color tend to experience more and more police abuse while the abusive officers are not punished because of anti-queer

bias in the justice system (Richie 2012; Crenshaw et al. 2015; Ritchie 2017; YWCA 2018) As LGBTQ people of color experience police violence, it has been found that they also have a higher risk of experiencing hate-motivated crimes by police officers and/or other community members who are anti-LGBTQ (Meyer 2010 and Meyer 2012).

Meyer (2010) found that LGBT people of color and white individuals who identify as LGBT have experienced severe hate-motivated violence. However, results show that poor and working class LGBT people of color were more likely to experience less hate-motivated violence compared to their white LGBT peers (Meyer 2010). Surprisingly, LGBT people of color did not think that due to their race and class these two identities were also a reason they experienced violence (Meyer 2010). Often, LGBT people of color believed the violence they experienced was not that serious whereas white LGBT people explained they experienced severe hate-motivated violence (Meyer 2010). LGBT people of color experience violence as a result of people who have hatred towards queer individuals with multiple marginalized identities (Meyer 2012). Yet, other research has shown that LGBT people of color do not see how their intersectional identities can be the root cause of experiencing violence (Meyer 2010 and Meyer 2012). Meyer (2012) found LGBTQ people of color undervalued their intersectional identities when they experienced violence. Black and Latino respondents viewed that anti-LGBTQ violence happened because of negative perspectives of their racial community (Meyer 2012). Furthermore, LGBTQ people of color experienced anti-queer violence in different forms but it depends on their social status as Black lesbians and Black gay men do not see the severity of the violence they endured (Meyer 2012). This shows that there is a lack of understanding or being able to identify intersectionality as some LGBTQ people of color do not realize having multiple marginalized identities can likely be a predictor of them experiencing anti-queer violence (Meyer 2010; Meyer 2012). My study

has similar results as participants could not verbally articulate intersectionality while identifying with multiple marginalized identities as some have experienced some form of police bias.

Participants did not have severe bad experiences with police bias but often believed that they encountered police because of their race but did not include race, gender, and class. Regardless, LGBTQ people of color experience police and hate-motivated violence. Sadly, LGBTQ people of color continue to experience violence especially from law enforcement.

As of 2015, LGBTQ people especially transgender individuals have interacted with police where an officer used some form of violence against them (Incite 2008; Richie 2012; Crenshaw et al. 2015; Ritchie and Brown 2017; Ritchie 2017; Uco 2020). Thus, it has been found Native and Black trans people are more likely to experience verbal and physical abuse by law enforcement (Ritchie 2017). Importantly, officers have used sexual violence against LGBTQ people of color. LGBTQ people of color have reported that officers have used inappropriate searches to check an individual's gender identity (Ritchie 2017). This includes groping on someone's chest or genitals to identify their "real" gender (Ritchie 2017). For example, a transgender individual was forced by a police officer to take off their clothes including their pants to bend over so the officer could see their genitals in a precinct in New York (Ritchie 2017). LGBTQ individuals also experience sexual humiliation by police because of their gender identity. This shows that some police officers do not know how to interact with people who identify as LGBTQ. However, when they do, it is most likely that they will use unlawful excessive force and violence. Some police departments do not address these issues in their policies.

Ritchie and Brown (2017), found that only thirty percent of police departments in the United States prohibit discrimination against people based on their gender and sexual orientation

in terms of interacting with LGBTQ individuals. Sixteen percent of police departments had a policy that directed police to respect people for their gender identity while fourteen percent of departments ban illegal searches based on gender identity and assigned gender (Ritchie and Brown 2017). Only nine percent had a policy that mandates safe placement for LGBTQ individuals including addressing hormone treatment while in police custody (Ritchie and Brown 2017). So, in order for LGBTQ people of color to be safe and not face violence there should be more police departments with policies that bans bias against gender non-conforming folks. Above all, gender non-conforming individuals are likely to experience police violence that is often not addressed when trying to prevent police brutality against minorities.

Say Her Name Movement

The Say Her Name started as a Hashtag in 2015 and developed into a social movement to include Black women and women of color into the conversations of police brutality (Ucok 2020). This movement was created to introduce an intersectional analysis of women of color facing violence and bring awareness to those whose visibility has been objectified by society (Ucok 2020). Say Her Name is a term that addresses the gender inclusion of racial justice to prevent Black women from being outcast of ending police violence (Crenshaw et al. 2015 and Ucok 2020). It is a movement that includes Black women and girls to understand the powerful message that their bodies are overpoliced due to their marginalized identities. Black women are more likely to be stopped and killed by police than white individuals (Crenshaw et al. 2015; Gaspar 2019; Ucok 2020; Ritchie 2017). The Say Her Name movement aims to address the gender-specific issue of police brutality against communities of color by demanding justice for Black girls and women of color who are not recognized as victims of police violence (Crenshaw et al. 2015; Gaspar 2019; Ucok 2020; Ritchie 2017). Since this movement is still new, it has made some effort to advocate for Black women and girls who have lost their life because of

racist police brutality (Crenshaw et al. 2015; Gaspar 2019; Ucok 2020; Ritchie 2017). This movement has shown society that racial and gender justice should exist for Black Girls because Black Girls Lives Matter as well (Crenshaw et al. 2015; Gaspar 2019; Ucok 2020; Ritchie 2017). Say Her Name has shown that Black Girls Lives Matter too by addressing a few stories of Black women who have been killed by police such as Sandra Bland and Breonna Taylor.

Sandra Bland was arrested, pinned, and slammed to the ground after officers pulled her over for failing to signal while changing lanes with a video that shows the incident (Crenshaw et al. 2015; Ritchie 2017). She told officers they were making a huge thing out of nothing (Crenshaw et al. 2015; Ritchie 2017). The situation escalated when the officer demanded her to get out of the car and she refused (Crenshaw et al. 2015; Ritchie 2017). She was taken to jail, and charged with assault (Crenshaw 2015). She was found dead a few days later in her cell (Crenshaw 2015). Breonna Taylor is a recent case of shooting an unarmed Black woman and her boyfriend when officers entered the wrong apartment due to a routine drug bust. Yet, these are a small sample of cases involving Black women and women of color getting killed by police officers. The Say Her Name movement is doing their best to spread awareness about Black women's safety and preventing police violence in their communities. However, more progress needs to be made. This project explicitly highlights the Say Her Name movement because it is an essential piece of our history as some society members try to end police brutality, Black women and girls have a voice as well. As Black women and other women of color can be victims of police violence, it is important to address the intersections of race and gender while exploring women of color's views on racialized gender policing including their experiences of police bias.

Methods

The goal of this project was to examine women of color's perspective on racialized

gender policing. Semi-structured interviews were used by asking participants about their knowledge on police violence against women and girls of color, the Say Her Name movement, their interpretation of intersectionality, and experiences with police encounters. Study participants were recruited through email. This was done by emailing faculty, staff, and student organizations on campus to see if they know any potential study participants by sharing a recruitment email that was used to recruit participants.

In total, four participants were interviewed. In each interview, I asked participants about their demographics and background information, and then, moved to broadly-formulated questions that focused on the main purpose of the research with open-ended follow up questions. Each interview lasted for 45 minutes to an hour. All participants were asked voluntarily to be part of the interview process by indicating their informed consent and signing a consent document, as is required by Rhode Island College. Participants were also asked if they would like to be audio-recorded for the interview which was explained on the consent form. There were other options if participants did not consent to be recorded, such as taking notes. Any participant could withdraw from the study before and after the interview at any time without it being held against them. There was no reimbursement for participating in the study.

The participants were students who attended Rhode Island College. Each participant was part of this research to explore their perspective on police violence against Black women and women of color, intersectionality, and their experiences with police bias. Each participant helped us learn about the law enforcement experiences Black women and women of color have gone through. With the recruitment process, this system was not effective because I only recruited four participants. All the interviews were completed and recorded on zoom between the months of December 10, 2021-March 7th, 2022. Participants were asked about their demographics and

other background information. Two participants identified as Black and/or African American while one identified as bi-racial and one as Afro-Latina. They all identified as female. The age-range of participants were 20-26. All four participants lived in Rhode Island while two were born in other states and two were born in another country. Each participant was identified by a number such as participant 1 or 2.

Findings

The Meaning of Intersectionality

In this research, I found that all four participants were aware of their multiple identities but they were not clear about the term intersectionality. For example, one participant shared:

Participant 1: Okay, so, I haven't had much, you know, on that topic, but I think it's when, like, different aspects of like, someone's social identities or something comes together. I think like, race, sexual orientation, gender, social status and stuff. It all kind of connects together. That's what I see it as, I'm be honest, I haven't had much, much on that, you know, topic. But that's kind of how I, I see it, as you know, like, compare and contrast graphs, just with different you know, like, social identities. That's the way I can see it in my head.

Another participant explained the same thing while others said they had no knowledge at all about intersectionality. Again, since I only interviewed four participants, I only was able to get their opinions about intersectionality. However, a few participants tried their best to explain intersectionality and how it should be used when addressing police violence against women of color. For instance, when I asked one participant about their opinion of the Black Lives Matter movement in terms of intersectionality, they explained that as they are a supporter for the Black Lives Matter movement they need to take intersectionality seriously as they often advocate to prevent police violence against Black men more than Black women,

Participant 2: My opinion is a little different because I don't love the Black Lives Matter organization. I am a big supporter of Black Lives Matter and having just rights for Black Lives Matter, but I feel like the organization is capitalizing off of something that is a lot more serious, and I don't really appreciate that. But I think for those that are part of it,

that are, you know, well intentioned, and, you know, are advocating and are doing it, you know, for the right reasons and advocating for the right reasons, and the right people. Intersectionality is important, because it comprises people from a lot of different marginalized groups. It is not just Black men and Black women, you're gonna have people in there that are maybe disabled, people from the LGBTQ community. You are gonna find a lot of things there. It's not just Black and White anymore. It is a different experience, being a Black woman versus a Black man, when looking at police brutality. It is a different experience being a Black disabled, or a Black person with a mental health issue, dealing with a police officer than someone that doesn't have to struggle with that. So, you are gonna see a whole bunch of different people supporting the movement, and a whole bunch of different motives. Then, you have to keep in mind that even white people are supporting the movement and some of them are well intentioned while others have an overinflated savior complex. So, you are gonna see all different types of people. I guess, for me, it would depend on the day that you asked me how I'm feeling about it. But, today, I mean, intrinsically linked, as well. And I think that all perspectives are valuable, in providing something for the cause.

Then, when I asked them about finding if the movement tends to fight for Black men who have been victims of police violence more than Black women, they explained that the movement fights for what seems to matter the most in terms of police violence against a certain demographics of people,

Participant 2: That's a tough question, because I feel like they fight for whatever's the most relevant to the media, or whatever's going to gain the most attraction, because at the end of the day, as much as an organization as a nonprofit or not, organizations still have to uphold metrics, still have to gain attention, still have to meet certain quotas, in order to be funded in order to uphold support. So I think in terms of the organization, they're going to take the thing that's gonna be the most egregious, and that's what they're going to run with. And I think, like we already kind of covered, like, Black women in general, aren't, aren't covered as much by the media, you know, as much. And that could be embedded with the fact that when we're talking about intersectionality, that in general, women were seen as less valuable than men. So it might not even necessarily be just a race issue, it could be a gender issue. So in that regard, like Yeah, I do think they fought, they fight for Black men more, but I also feel like the cases that we've seen, you know, in recent years, have been Black males. And I think it's because as a society, we have socially constructed that men's lives are more important. In your left shifting, but it's the sad reality of where we're at right now.

This participant explained that intersectionality is important as people support the Black Lives Matter movement and all kinds of people from different racial groups are supporting the movement with either good or bad intentions. Thus, understanding the importance of the many

intersectional identities such as people who identify as LGBTQ, mentally disabled, and women of color might be at risk of experiencing police brutality. They also described that it depends on how the movement advocates for others in terms of racial and gender justice where they believe it is a good movement but on other days it can be hard to understand what they are advocating for. On that note, they believe that the Black Lives Matter organization oftentimes advocate to prevent police violence against Black men over Black women because of media attention where ¹certain cases that involve a Black man getting beaten or killed by a police officer may get more media headlines. However, the media will pay less attention to cases that involve a Black woman experiencing police brutality because their intersectional identities are not valued enough. Therefore, a few people may understand intersectionality and its importance to addressing police violence against Black women but it is not the main concern for certain individuals, organizations, and social movements.

The Attention to Black Women and Police Violence

Police violence against Black women is often not a topic of conversation. Participants have explained that police brutality against Black women is an unknown topic because they only knew a few women of color who have been violated or killed by a police officer. For instance, one participant explained,

Participant 3: My knowledge about [police using violence against Black women or any other women of color]. It happens a lot more than we think most likely. Um, there are two situations that I saw. Um, there was one I don't remember her name. But she had short hair. Oh my god, I just had it...and she had short hair and she was under the care of police officers and then she ended up dead but they still took pictures of her trying to act like she was alive. Do you know what I'm talking about?

¹As will be outlined below, this study was intended to serve as a pilot study for later work in this area, allowing for refinement and development of a subsequent refined interview guide. Additionally, like much research conducted between March of 2020 and 2022, COVID-19 and its aftermath limited my ability to successfully conduct qualitative fieldwork, conduct interviews, and generate a larger sample; indeed, COVID-19 safety protocols related to in-person interviews, by definition, made certain portions of my protocol difficult to implement.

Then we continued the conversation by describing an example of a case of police violence against a Black woman.

Interviewer: Was it like on like, was it on the news and stuff like that. Was she still alive or had a mental disability or anything like that?

Participant 3: No

Interviewer: Oh okay. Is it Sandra Bland? or no.

Participant 3: Yes, Sandra Bland. That was her. I'm so mad because I felt like oh, they just left that um situation. And they kicked it to the curb and nothing was being done. So, her then um there was also the one that was fatally shot in her room. Um, yeah, her to she was fatally shot in her room. What's her name? Oh my god. Why am I not remembering any of these names? Um. She was shot in her house because they thought she was the intruder. I think.

Interviewer: Was it Breonna Taylor?

Participant 3: Oh, yeah. You are right. Thank you.

This participant only knew two cases of women of color who have been killed by law enforcement which were Breonna Taylor and Sandra Bland. This was the same for other participants as well. This shows that some people are unaware of police violence against Black women. However, each participant was able to talk about their own experiences of police bias.

Police Bias

Participants expressed that they have experienced some type of police bias in their lifetime. Though, most participants explained that it was someone they knew, not their own situation. Yet, one participant explained a situation, when I asked them if they had ever witnessed and/or experienced police bias, that they were involved in when they went out one night with friends and got pulled over by a police officer,

Participant 4: Well, with my friends we have gotten pulled over. I've gotten pulled over in the car with my friends that were of color. And the police, they were being mean. I was in so much fear that my friends were going to go to jail for no reason. I was the one who was driving my friend's car and it was not inspected. Then, my other friend, the one that was sitting in the passenger seat, is this big, big dude. But the thing is that they're both dark skinned, even though they're Hispanic and the cop was being extremely difficult. Everything they would say the police thought they were having an attitude. So, I finally stepped in and explained that they were taking me home. She had a flat tire almost and her transmission was going because the car started slowing down on its own. I also explained we were all college students, so I gave him my ID. Then the officer let us go. If I wouldn't have done that, even though I'm not white, I'm just Hispanic, just like my friends. We would have all gotten in trouble that day.

Then I asked the participant if they found that during that encounter you were stopped based on their identity. They specified that,

Participant 4: Oh, yeah, we were definitely stopped because we were Hispanic kids in a car at 12 o'clock in the morning. Mind you, the guy in the passenger seat he's in law school in Florida. And like everything started off on the wrong foot, because he was like, even though it shouldn't be, he was, um, you know, like...telling him his rights, and which he's, oh, like, that's fine to do. But like, it wasn't helping the situation because the cop wasn't having it, you know.

As this conversation went on, I asked what the participant did to prevent this kind of police bias from happening again. The respondent expressed that,

Participant 4: Nothing, there was nothing I could have done other than talk to him and tell him like, I was basically like, telling him like, we're good kids, like, we go to school like, you know, we just this just happened. And we didn't know the type of thing like that. But other than that, that was it.

In this situation, the participant described getting pulled over while the officer was being rude as

² Other studies also found that as they examined intersectionality in the context of learning others' intersectional identities, participants were not able to articulate intersectionality as they did not think their experiences with systemic racism was not severe including police violence. A few studies also had a small sample size of participants. For instance, Lisa Bowleg examined Black gay and bisexual men experiences of intersectionality. Results show that each participant had differences with their intersectional identities as they face stereotypes, heterosexism from their own community and others, racial microaggressions, being masculine to avoid any suspicion of their sexual orientation, and discrimination. On top of that, it was hard for them to separate their intersectional identities as they identify with being not just gay or bisexual but Black and with their sexual orientation. However, intersectionality was found challenging in this context in terms of micro and macro levels of racism and racial microaggression as Black gay and bisexual men faced racial discrimination in the general public and from white LGB community members. Yet, there were only 12 participants in this study as nine identified as gay and three as bisexual where most were highly educated with a few participants having a master's degree. Therefore, sample size was too small to discover the intersectionality experiences of Black gay and bisexual men.

the participant explained to them that they were just on their way home. Yet, the officer did not care for that excuse. The participant also described that they were stopped based on their identity because they all were Latino in a car driving late at night. Meanwhile, the participants' friends had darker skin and one who seemed to look like a threat. They were afraid of getting arrested for no reason. On top of that, nothing was done to prevent this situation from happening again. Therefore, the participants did not face police bias directly but they were in a difficult situation where a police officer was not friendly to a group of people of color as they found it suspicious that they were out late at night suspecting they were up to no good. Hence, they did not take into consideration that the owner's car was breaking down.

Policy Implications

This study is worth examining because it addresses the issues of police violence against Black women and women of color. There has been little research on this topic. This study attempts to show that police violence is not just a Black man's issue but for women of color especially Black women. However, this study still lacks generalizability because of the small size. Also, participants could not articulate intersectionality as it is the main subject of why police violence against Black women is so important. This study will be repositioned as a pilot study because we tried our first attempt by seeing what Black women and other women of color knew about police violence against their community and how intersectionality plays a role.

³Intersectionality was hard for participants to explain because not everyone knows the

³ There were only four participants who were interviewed for this study. The reason for only interviewing four participants is, as I recruited participants who were Rhode Island College students and identified as a woman of color, the recruitment process was to email faculty, staff, and student organizations who knew any students that would be interested in participating in my research as the main goal was to examine a young Black women's perspective on police violence against their community, their understanding of intersectionality, and their experiences with police bias. While recruiting students, four were only interviewed because the pandemic is still in effect as COVID 19 cases were increasing even after 2020 when the pandemic started. It was challenging to interview more students as society is still facing COVID 19. Though, as I was able to talk to four people to understand how Black women can resist police violence to show they are not invisible, this research will continue to

term. Intersectionality is identifying multiple marginalized identities as some people may identify with more than one. For example, as some folks identify as Black and man others might identify as Black and woman. Other people might identify as LGBTQ, low income, and/or disabled. However, some people identify with more than one of these identities as often times they experience oppression. Apparently, intersectionality is not a wide known term even for people of color and other folks who are considered a marginalized group. Some people may not know what intersectionality is because it is not a term that is used in everyday life even though people of color and LGBTQ folks experience discrimination and oppression by some white individuals. Participants in this study were also those people who could not explain the meaning of intersectionality. They only heard of the term from college classes but could not explain the definition or why is it important in terms of police violence against Black women. Therefore, intersectionality is not a term that people know and should not be assumed that all folks who are marginalized know it because too often people of color, LGBTQ, and low-income individuals may not realize the obstacles they face due to systemic racism. Not all people of color and LGBTQ people are not always marginalized nor know what it means. Sometimes, they believe when they experience systemic oppression that it is not due to their identities but it does play a part. As intersectionality was not often acknowledged by participants, the sample size made it even more difficult to understand how Black women and other women of color face police violence.

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First, is looking at collective policing especially from police departments because it would be wise to examine community policing and how it has been effective to prevent police violence. This includes looking at diversity and inclusion regarding campus police and incoming law enforcement who are joining the force can also make an impact in this research as it can show how police are trained in terms of not being biased and encounters with women of color. Also, examining young Black girls of color in the school system and their experience with police violence because too often there are school resource officers in schools especially in urban communities where young students of color are likely to have negative contact with those officers because of their bad behavior, fighting, suspension, and getting expelled. Often, officers have used violence against young Black girls of color in schools that was mentioned in the literature review. This also could include asking Black women what their experience with police at a young age. Second, since this study was based on using semi-structured interviews, it would also be good to collect data electronically by using surveys and/or a criminal justice database.

This can be helpful to get the perspective of Black women and their views of police violence in their community while learning about their experiences with police bias as some participants might have a hard time doing an interviewing, they have the option of answering questions online. Therefore, to approach this study in the future would be to do a mixed-methods data analysis as doing interviews is a great first attempt to explore police violence against Black women and questioning their experienced with police bias, yet, online data is also another great attempt to build upon the first round of data and get more results of why intersectionality and police violence against Black women is an important topic to understand multiple-marginalized identities and the system of oppression affecting those identities. Also, electronic data is another useful tool to utilize as COVID-19 is still increasing. Lastly, having more interview questions that goes deep into the research and not just only having basic questions about intersectionality, police violence, the Say Her Name movement, and police bias but sparking a conversation and having more open-ended questions that participants can actually understand more.

Discussion and Conclusion

This study demonstrates that participants believe the Black Lives Matter movement should use intersectionality when addressing police violence because Black men, women, and women of color can be victims of police abuse. The Black Lives Matter movement must acknowledge identities such as race, gender, sexual orientation, social class, religion, and more. The reason is because police brutality is not just a Black male's issue and/or broadcasting cases that involve Black men getting beaten by police needs more media attention but showing how people with multiple marginalized identities are at risk of experiencing police violence. Sadly, the attention to Black women experiencing police violence is not well-known for some women of color as they did not know many cases of police brutality against women of color. Importantly,

most of the participants in this study experienced some form of police bias from someone else's experience. However, it still affected their lives. With these results, to answer the research question of how Black women can resist police violence to show they are not invisible is challenging because too often Black women and other women of color might be unaware of police violence in their communities that may affect their well-being. Women of color often have a hard time advocating for themselves when there is little support in their community, the government, social movements, and more. Plus, when some women of color are not familiar with racialized gender policing, they can become targets of racial and gender violence. Oftentimes, it does not matter if they experience violence by law enforcement and/or society because women of color tend to be victims of violence but it is not always addressed as an issue. Therefore, for Black women to resist police violence to show they are not invisible would take not just women of color but for everyone including Black men, white individuals who are allies, and other groups who are marginalized to come together and be supportive to break the silence and prevent police violence against women of color.

This study shows that there needs to be more in-depth research, advocacy, and acknowledgement of police violence against women and girls of color. There were some limitations to this research. The first limitation was that there were only, again, four participants who participated in my study. A much bigger sample size would have provided a better in-depth analysis for my results. Next, I only recruited Black women and other women of color who attended Rhode Island College. It would have been better if I recruited other individuals outside of the institutions such as people who work for non-profit organizations that advocate for social justice and/or women of color who live in urban inner-cities. Also, Black girls in the school system and how they face police brutality because they more often experience negative police

interactions while in school. In addition, examining campus-police for incoming law enforcement regarding diversity and inclusion would also be beneficial by getting the perspective of law enforcement on the issues of the lack of diversity in the field and their view on police violence against Black women. Finally, using electronic data collection instead of just doing interviews. The last limitation is the recruitment process was done by emailing students, faculty, and staff at Rhode Island College by sharing the purpose of my study. There could have been other ways to recruit participants such as creating a flier. For future research, there should be better collective ways to address police violence against women of color including how to approach this community and asking them about their knowledge and experiences of police violence.

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Appendix A.

Interview Guide

1. Which race/ethnicity best describes you?
2. What is your gender? Pronouns if applicable
3. What is your age?
4. Where are you from?
5. How long have you lived in Rhode Island?
6. Do you have any hobbies?
7. Where do you work? Do you work full-time?
8. How long have you been a student at RIC?
9. What is your definition of police brutality?
10. Do you think police violence is an issue in America and in Rhode Island? How so?
11. How has police violence affected communities of color?
12. Do you think race and racism contributes to police brutality? Explain?
13. Would you agree or disagree that police are likely to racially profile folks based on their identities? If so Explain?
14. What is your knowledge on police using violence against Black women and other women of color?
15. Have you found that law enforcement is more likely to use excessive force on Black men or women?
16. Do you think police target Black women and other women of color? Why or Why Not?
17. What is your definition of intersectionality?
18. How does intersectionality help to understand that Black women are also victims of police violence?

19. What do you think of the Black Lives Matter Movement in terms of intersectionality?
20. Have you found that the movement tends to fight for Black men who have been victims of police violence more than Black women?
21. What are ways the movement can use intersectionality to prevent police violence?
22. What is your understanding of the Say Her Name movement?
23. How has the movement tried to bring awareness of the lack of safety Black women receive from police?
24. What are the ways the movement has shown society why Black women and other women of color bodies are disproportionately subjected to police violence?
25. As a Black woman, how does the presence of police in your neighborhood make you feel?
26. Have you ever witnessed police bias? Explain
27. Have you ever experienced police bias? Explain
28. Did you find that during that encounter you were stopped based on your race and gender?
29. What did you do to prevent this kind of police bias from happening again?
30. Were there legal actions that took place?
31. How did this event impact you?
32. How can Black women and other women of color moving forward prevent police violence in their communities?