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Greater Brockton’s Perception Towards Police

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Abstract

This project will explore the community of Brockton's perception of the police. This is a case study of the June 2nd to 3rd protest that took place in Brockton, MA that explores connections to national events during the same time, greater Brockton, MA perceptions of police, and reasons people protest against the police. This protest follows the murder of George Floyd by a Minneapolis police officer. The Greater Brockton community and communities all over the United States call for justice and equality. The United States, and Brockton, has been struggling with racial injustices and this project investigates the perceptions of police of the greater Brockton community. This is done through analyzing 101 tweets made after the June 2-3 protest in Brockton, Ma. The 101 tweets are broken down into major themes that helps gauge the feelings and perceptions of the Greater Brockton community towards the police. The goal is to be a step closer to reaching racial justice.
Introduction

The United States has been struggling with racial injustices since as early as the 1600s. A lot of these racial injustices relate to the criminal justice system, and more specifically, the police. It is not uncommon to hear of an African American person having a bad experience with the police for many reasons. It’s not uncommon to hear of an African American being treated unfairly by the police. These inequalities include Black Americans being over policed (Boehme, Cann, & Isom, 2020). One form of being over policed is disproportionate targeting of communities of Color. This has been found to have come from an aggressive type of policing called stop and frisk and zero tolerance policing. This stop and frisk means police officers can search people based on “reasonable suspicion”. Police officers have sometimes increased their presence in communities of color for this reason only. This tactic is used a lot in communities of color to target Black Americans which is why stop and frisk incidents are used more on Black people than White people (Boehme, Cann, & Isom, 2020).

Not only are Black Americans being over policed, but they are also being under policed (Boehme, Cann, & Isom, 2020). Neighborhoods with a lot of people of color may be neglected by the police because crime in these neighborhoods do not tend to affect other communities. Police officers don’t always take calls for services seriously if they are coming from communities of color. This has resulted in Black Americans losing trust in the police meaning that their willingness to call on the police when they need help has decreased (Boehme, Cann, & Isom, 2020).

These inequalities also include police brutality, for example. In 2020 the rate of fatal police shootings among Black Americans was higher than any other race/ethnicity (Harmon,
There were 30 fatal shootings per million of the population as of June 2020. There is a point made that police officers carry a gun, but they don’t always have to shoot, and they don’t always have to shoot to kill. With this knowledge it’s worse to know more of the statistics of African Americans being killed at a higher rate compared to other races.

A 2019 research report (Schwartz, 2020) found that African American men and women, Native American men and women, and Latino men faced a higher lifetime risk of being killed by police than white people. The risk was highest for Black men, who have a 1 in 1000 chance of being killed by police over their life course. For young men of color, police use-of-force is one of the leading causes of death. “Since 2015, police officers have fatally shot at least 135 unarmed Black men and women nationwide, an NPR investigation has found. NPR reviewed police, court and other records to examine the details of the cases. At least 75% of the officers were white” (Thompson, 2021).

This data can be confusing because half of the people shot and killed by police are white, but Black Americans are shot at a disproportionate rate. In the time of this study, Black Americans only accounted for 13% of the population. Yet, they were more than a quarter of the police shooting victims (Huggins, 2011). This is a case study of the June protest that took place in Brockton, MA that explores connections to national events during the same time, greater Brockton, MA perceptions of police, and reasons people protest against the police.
Inequality in the U.S. Criminal Justice System

For years, the dominant culture in the United States has viewed Black Americans as a problem. They have been seen as a problem because they have been seen as the embodiment of crime. They have been seen as more dangerous, more violent, more disrespectful, and in general, beneath people of other races or ethnicities. As a result, Black Americans are not treated and have not been treated equal to white Americans within the criminal justice system (Harmon, 2004). In the book, “The End of Policing”, by Alex Vitale, the author questions if there is an explosive increase in police violence. It is clear to see that African Americans are disproportionately victims of police shootings. Black teens are up to 21 times more likely to be killed by the police than white teens. Racial profiling is also still very widespread, and many communities of color still experience injustice with the police. People of color are seen as people who commit more crime so police feel as though they should receive harsher police tactics (Vitale, 2017, p. 6). Police try to justify this by saying that these communities of color also ask for more police action and presence, but police fail to include that these same communities ask for better schools, parks, libraries, and more jobs. All of which can better the community and decrease crime in the community (Vitale, 2017, p. 6).

These people in communities of color aren’t given the chance to protect themselves against the police. In example of this is from 2012. A Harlem resident, Alvin Cruz, had been stopped and searched by the police without justification (Harmon, 2004). He had questioned the
police officer about why he had been stopped and the response given by the police officer was abusive language. Then he had his arm twisted behind his back by the police officer and was threatened. Although people of color with wealth may go through less of abuse by the police, they are not immune to this type of inhumane treatment. It is critically important to see inequality in the U.S. criminal justice system to understand why protests occurred across the Nation during the summer of 2020 (Harmon, 2004).

Some police officers misuse their power. This can be traced back to years ago when there were slave patrols in the South. The first slave patrols were founded in the southern United States in the early 1700s. By the end of the century, every slave state had slave patrols. According to Dr. Potter (2013), slave patrols accomplished several goals: apprehending escaped slaves and returning them to their owners; unleashing terror to deter potential slave revolts; and disciplining slaves for breaking plantation rules. Described by Turner (2006), slave patrols were a “government-sponsored force [of about 10 people] that was well organized and paid to patrol specific areas to prevent crimes and insurrection by slaves against the white community” (American Bar, 2021, para. 9) in the South. Without warrant or permission, slave patrols could enter the home of anyone—Black or white—suspected of sheltering escaped slaves. After the Civil War ended, the slave patrols developed into southern police departments. Part of the early police’s post–Civil War duties was to monitor the behavior of newly freed slaves, many of whom, if not given their own land, ended up working on plantations owned by whites, and to enforce segregation policies as per the era’s new Black Codes and Jim Crow laws (American Bar, 2021).

The first Black Codes were passed in 1865, shortly after the ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment outlawing slavery. The codes were laws that specified how, when, and where freed
slaves could work and how much they would be paid. Other Black Codes restricted Blacks’ right to vote, dictated how and where they could travel, and where they could live. In the 1880s, new forms of Black Codes known as Jim Crow laws were enacted across southern states. In effect until 1965, these new laws prohibited Black people and White people from sharing public spaces, such as schools, libraries, bathrooms, and restaurants. Black people who broke the law or violated norms during the Jim Crow period were often met with brutality from the police (Mazzone & Rushin, 2016).

The Voting Rights Act and the Civil Rights Act came at a time of social and political upheaval in the 1960s. Opposition to the Vietnam War and other protest movements like the civil rights and prisoners’ rights—signaled that America had entered a new era of challenges to the status quo. In July 1964, civil rights activist Malcolm X fought against what he called New York police’s “outright scare tactics” in responding to racial tensions in the city (American Bar, 2021). During this time of upheaval, the police acted as enforcers of the status quo. Police were now tasked with responding to anyone who pushed back against the existing social, political, and economic structure of America—which seemed to disadvantage the poor and people of color. During the summers of the late 1960s, race riots broke out in cities across the country, and the police responded at times harshly to the riots using dogs, fire hoses, and tear gas (American Bar, 2021).

This injustice and inequality that African Americans face can also be traced back to 1965 voting rights (Mazzone & Rushin, 2016). The VRA represented an extraordinary response to the problem of discrimination against Black citizens who tried to vote. Prior efforts to protect voting rights in the federal courts and through other forms of federal intervention had consistently come up short. Litigation was slow, costly, and dependent upon evidence that often lay in the hands of
violators themselves. These circumstances, which led to the innovations of the VRA, mirror in important respects conditions that exist today with respect to police misconduct. The experience in addressing voter discrimination sheds important light on how to address the problem of police practices that violate constitutional rights particularly of minority citizens (Mazzone & Rushin, 2016).

The VRA represented the culmination of nearly a century of efforts at the federal level to protect the ability of Black citizens to vote. Those efforts started with the Fifteenth Amendment. Ratified in 1870, it provided in Section 1 that the "right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude." Section 2 of the Amendment empowered Congress to enforce the Section 1 command "by appropriate legislation." Pursuant to that power, Congress enacted the Enforcement Acts of 1870 and 1871, which prohibited, by criminal penalty, discrimination by state officials in voter registration as well as certain private interferences with voting (and other federal) rights. Yet neither the clear command of the Fifteenth Amendment nor the early implementing statutes secured voting rights (Mazzone & Rushin, 2016). While state laws no longer specifically limited voting to White citizens, by the 1890s, southern states had enacted literacy tests, registration requirements, property qualifications, good character tests, and other devices designed to prevent Black citizens from voting. Grandfather clauses and selective enforcement of these measures ensured White citizens were able to exercise the franchise. As a result of these tests—and intimidation of and violence towards would-be voters—Black registration and voting rates in the South were very low, typically in the single percentage digits. For so long, Black citizens have been fighting for equal treatment and opportunities and Black citizens are still fighting (Mazzone & Rushin, 2016).
Today when police officers misuse their power this would be considered police misconduct. Police misconduct is also known as inappropriate conduct and illegal actions taken by police officers in connection with their official duties (Stroud Law Firm, 2022). Police misconduct involves the use of excessive force. This is when the police use more than enough force required to, for example, make an arrest of someone. It includes placing a citizen under false arrest. It includes warrantless searches or arrests which means police must have a warrant to search for something or make an arrest unless it is an emergency, otherwise it is illegal. It includes assault upon a citizen. Police misconduct also includes forcing a citizen to have sex in return for not arresting them or giving them a ticket. It includes the violation of the civil rights of a citizen. It includes engaging in fraud or theft. It also includes unlawful murder (Stroud Law Firm, 2022).

Some of the most common forms of abuse from police officers in Boston are falsely arresting someone, falsifying evidence, imprisoning someone without cause, intimidating a witness or suspect, physically harming a suspect, profiling suspects based on race or other characteristics and sexual abuse (Boston Police Misconduct, 2022). One of the most famous examples of police misconduct in Boston is the case of David Woodman. In 2008, police arrested Woodman for having an open container of alcohol when he walked by a group of police officers. Witnesses say that the officers slammed him into the ground where he was held until emergency services arrived. When he was taken to the hospital he was not breathing, and he had no pulse. He suffered severe brain damage and died at the hospital 11 days later. Woodman's family received $3 million for his wrongful death (Boston Police Misconduct, 2022).

How can we fix this? How can communities of color start to receive justice? This could start with police reform to address problems of excessive force, over policing,
and blatant disrespect for the community. This could be done with having police officers get more training. Officers need to get more training in the use of excessive force. A good example of this is the chokehold used on Eric Garner which caused his death. The chokehold was prohibited from being used by officers and it was used anyway.

Another thing that can help is stopping over-policing. Over-policing happens in communities of color because there are more opportunities for crime in these communities (Vitale, 2017). Except, there is only so many for crime because of the social disorganization that exists in these communities. This ties back to these communities not having good education, good libraries, jobs, and clean parks. People that engage in things like getting a good education or having a good job have less time to engage in committing crimes. Keeping the neighborhood clean also helps. When something is clean, people are more likely to keep it clean rather than if something is dirty, people won’t care enough to not continue to make it dirty, or to clean up after themselves. This can be explained by the broken windows theory made by James Wilson and George Kelling. This theory explains how failure to indicate care and maintenance will unleash people’s destructive tendencies (Vitale, 2017, p. 9).

Trayvon Martin and Black Lives Matter

In 2013 George Zimmerman was acquitted on the charges of second-degree murder and manslaughter in the fatal shooting of Trayvon Martin, a seventeen-year-old African American. This incident prompted national outrage at what many perceive to be the unjust treatment of African Americans in the United States, especially in the context of the criminal justice system.
(Garza, 2014). Several other highly publicized deaths of African Americans involving inequality and injustice rapidly followed Trayvon Martin’s death: In Staten Island, New York, Eric Garner was placed in a chokehold when officers attempted to restrain him, and he ultimately died on July 17th, 2014, from complications arising from the chokehold. In Ferguson, Missouri, Michael Brown was fatally shot in a police encounter on August 9th, 2014. In Baltimore, Maryland, Freddie Gray fell into a coma while being transported in a police van, and he died on April 19th, 2015, from injuries to his spinal cord that many believe he sustained while in police custody. In 2016 a grand jury returned a bill of no indictment against the officers charged in the death of Tamir Rice, a twelve-year-old African American who was shot on November 22nd, 2014 (Garza, 2014).

In response to this, The BLM movement was founded by Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi in 2013 in response to the acquittal of George Zimmerman (Garza, 2014). BLM represents a critique of racial injustice in the United States. In addition to more general criticisms regarding the lack of acknowledgment of African American contributions to American society, the movement also specifically protests the devaluing of African American lives within the US criminal justice system (Garza, 2014). In this context, BLM critiques the dozens of deaths of (especially young and male) African Americans resulting from police action. The slogan “Black Lives Matter” also reflects the movement’s criticism of how criminal justice policies disparately impact African Americans. Racial inequality in the criminal justice system has resulted in the “ghettoization” of American prisons (Wacquant, 2000), whereby African Americans are spatially segregated and their life opportunities drastically curtailed. Although the Black Lives Matter movement is broadly committed to fighting injustice, the movement has gained visibility through organized marches protesting the disproportionate targeting of African Americans in the criminal
justice system. The slogan “Black Lives Matter” thus represents a vocal opposition to the criminal justice system’s rendering of African Americans as disposable, a phenomenon manifested most obviously in the deaths of African Americans as a result of police action.

There is a larger context and history of African American men and boys who were killed at the hands of the police, many of whom, like George Floyd (2020), were unarmed. Since 2014, other high-profile deaths include Tamir Rice (2014), Laquan McDonald (2014), John Crawford (2014) Freddie Gray (2015), Walter Scott (2015), Alton Sterling (2016), Philando Castile (2016), Terence Crutcher (2016), Antwon Rose (2018) and others. Black women and girls are also targets of police violence, which sparked the "Say Her Name" movement to get more recognition of how this violence often goes unnoticed. Women who have died as a result of police interactions include Sandra Bland (2015), Deborah Danner (2016), Atatiana Jefferson (2019) and Breonna Taylor (2020) (Black Lives Matter, 2020).

Now when it comes to the Black Lives Matter movement, there are too popular ideologies that come up, both by men still talked about today. Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X are frequently seen as opposing forces in the struggle for civil rights and against white supremacy; King is often portrayed as a nonviolent insider, while Malcolm X is characterized as a by-any-means-necessary political renegade (Gross, 2020).

Malcolm is making the argument that, one, Black people have the right to self-defense and to defend themselves against police brutality. Second part of Malcolm's argument is that because there are anti-colonial revolutions raging across Africa and the Third World in the context of the 1950s and '60s, the Black revolution in the United States is only going to be a true revolution once Black people start utilizing self-defense to end the racial terror they were
experiencing in not just the 1950s and '60s, but historically. And one of the reasons Malcolm makes that argument is because his father and his family had experienced that racial terror. This is where some protesters who believe in the Black Lives Matter movement today may get the idea that using self-defense to end racial discrimination and police brutality will work (Gross, 2020).

A party also believed in African American self-defense against cops and this party was called the Black Panthers. The Black Panther Party, original name Black Panther Party for Self-Defense, was an African American revolutionary party, founded in 1966 in Oakland, California, by Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale (Duncan, 2022). The party’s original purpose was to patrol African American neighborhoods to protect residents from acts of police brutality. The Panthers eventually developed into a Marxist revolutionary group that called for the arming of all African Americans, the exemption of African Americans from the draft and from all sanctions of so-called white America, the release of all African Americans from jail, and the payment of compensation to African Americans for centuries of exploitation by white Americans (Duncan, 2022).

**Police Brutality**

Police brutality can be traced back to earlier times. Interactions between African Americans and urban police departments were initially shaped by the Great Migration (1916–70) of African Americans from the rural South into urban areas of the North and West, especially following World War II (Mazzone & Rushin, 2016). Most white communities, including white police departments, were unaccustomed to the presence of African Americans and reacted with
fear and hostility, attitudes that were exaggerated by racist stereotypes. Police departments acted upon the presumption that African Americans, and especially African American men, possessed an inherent tendency toward criminal behavior. This made them believe that African Americans required constant surveillance and restrictions on their movements (segregation) in the interests of white safety. They wanted to protect whites against Black people. The restrictions on African Americans weren’t just limited to their movements in relation to segregation, but also their voting rights (Mazzone & Rushin, 2016). Even though the Fifteenth Amendment prohibited denying the right to vote based on race, discriminatory practices stood in the way of voting. On March 7th of 1965, violence accompanied the Selma to Montgomery civil rights march on what is now known as "Bloody Sunday" (Mazzone & Rushin, 2016).

The fifty-four-mile march drew attention to interference with Black voter registration. State troopers and residents beat and tear-gassed marchers at Edmund Pettus Bridge. Two days later, Martin Luther King Jr. led a second march that turned back when it arrived at a police barricade at the same bridge. Martin Luther King Jr. and the marchers only completed the march after President Lyndon Johnson federalized the Alabama National Guard to protect the marchers from violence (Mazzone & Rushin, 2016).

The forms of police brutality to which this situation gave rise changed and generally not limited to physical assault and excessive use of force (Augustyn, Duignan, & Moore, 2020). They also included unlawful arrests, verbal abuse, threats, sexual assaults against African American women, and police homicides. Police were also sometimes complicit in drug dealing, prostitution, burglaries, protection schemes, and gun-smuggling within African American neighborhoods (Augustyn, Duignan, & Moore, 2020).
Unfortunately, police brutality still happens today. On June 4th of 2020, a 75-year-old white man had suffered from a fracture in his skull by the hands of the police. Seventy-five-year-old Martin Gugino went to a Black Lives Matter protest in Buffalo (Becker, 2021). There was a thirty-nine second video shot by a reporter which shows Gugino being pushed by an officer. Gugino is then pushed by another officer which causes Gugino to take a couple of steps back then fall. He hit his head on the concrete and blood started to come out of his ear. He had to be taken to a hospital where he spent a month and discovered he had fractured his skull. The police officers were suspended without pay and later charged with felony second degree assault (Becker, 2021). They were later found not guilty and were able to return to work.

Police brutality can even be seen during 2005 when hurricane Katrina hit. When hurricane Katrina hit, people were nervous, anxious, and scared. This caused survival instincts to kick in, meaning people were stealing from stores to provide food and other products for themselves and their family members. Something like this is expected and understandable in such a way that you begin to sympathize with everyone looting to take care of themselves and others. The police didn’t see it this way and were told by the authorities to shoot looters (Bates, 2021). This led to the killing of two unarmed Black civilians. The police were supposedly responding to a call of an officer being under fire and later tried to cover the incident up. Five officers involved later pleaded guilty to obstruction of justice, conspiracy, and civil rights charges (Bates, 2021).

Black looters were not only killed, but also judged for taking things for survival. African Americans and people in poverty were either predominantly carrying the burden of suffering, or the media coverage was focusing almost exclusively on them. Race and class played major roles in who was left behind. There were two news service photographs, both carried by Yahoo! News
and other Internet news outlets. It showed people wading through chest-deep water in the New
Orleans area with supplies taken from grocery stores. Many viewers noticed the seeming
disparity of the darker-skinned people being described in the caption as “looting a grocery store,”
while the lighter-skinned people were described as “finding bread and soda from a local grocery
store”. Both people were doing the same actions, yet their actions were seen differently because
of the color of their skin (Mikkelson, 2005).

Photographs consistently put Anglos in the role of helper and African Americans in the
role of helpless victim, supporting previous stereotyping literature, such as African Americans
being lazy and not self-reliant (Mikkelson, 2005). There were significant aspects of modern
racism in the coverage of Hurricane Katrina. The depictions were often coded in ways similar to
what has been found in the literature. And as mentioned, the depiction of passive African
Americans receiving handouts reinforces the stereotype that African Americans lack self-
reliance. The overwhelming representation of White military and social service personnel
“saving” the African American “refugees” may be one of the most significant themes in images
of people in the coverage (Mikkelson, 2005).

Minorities are stereotypically represented in either a passive role as the mere targets of
decisions and actions or as breaking norms and laws, that is, as being deviant and a threat to ‘us’
(the assumed white audience). Whites as a group are represented as victims or as taking action
against such deviance. This systematic negative portrayal of minorities contributes to, ‘...
negative mental models, stereotypes, prejudices and ideologies about the others, and hence
indirectly to the enactment and reproduction of racism’ (Van Dijk, 2000, p. 48). News media
tend to reinforce the interests of dominant groups and reinforce current social orders and
institutions. Chomsky (1998) asserts that the purpose of the media is to defend the agendas of
privileged groups and reify the image of minorities as criminals and welfare leeches (Mikkelson, 2005).

Police Brutality Against Black People in the News

It’s not surprising to know that Black people suffer from police brutality more often. In July 2014, police said they caught Eric Garner, a 43-year-old Black man, illegally selling loose cigarettes and gave him a warning. On July 27th, police said that Eric Garner had been caught breaking the law and was arrested. A bystander recorded this arrest which showed a white police officer wrapping his arm around the neck of Eric Garner who was unarmed. Garner struggled saying he could not breathe, and he was soon unconscious (Dungca, Abelson, Berman, Sullivan, 2020).

Michael Brown was 18 years old when he was killed. On August 9, 2014, police said that Brown was a suspect in a robbery of cigars from a convenience store. Brown’s friend Dorian Johnson, a witness, said that Brown had put his hands up and had even begun to get down to the ground. Officer Darren Wilson shot and killed the unarmed teenager (Dungca, Abelson, Berman, Sullivan, 2020).

On October 20th of 2014, police responded to a report of someone trying to break into vehicles. Upon arrival they found 17-year-old Laquan McDonald who they began to follow. McDonald had a knife and used it to slash a police car’s tire. When another officer, Jason Van Dyke, arrived at the scene, he got out of his car and started shooting, hitting McDonald 16 times. Police camera footage showed McDonald moving away from Van Dyke when he began shooting (Dungca, Abelson, Berman, Sullivan, 2020).
Tamir Rice was only 12 years old when she was killed. On November 22nd of 2014, a caller in Cleveland reported that someone was playing with a gun and scaring people. The caller said that the gun was probably fake, and that the person was possibly a child. Police responded to the call and officer Timothy Loehmann got out of the car and opened fire on the 12-year-old, killing him. The two officers were not indicted (Dungca, Abelson, Berman, Sullivan, 2020).

In South Carolina, Michael Slager, a white police officer, killed Walter Scott on April 4, 2015. Walter Scott was pulled over for a routine traffic stop and began to run. Slager chased Scott into a nearby lot. A bystander recorded the encounter and captured Slager firing his gun at Scott as he ran (Dungca, Abelson, Berman, Sullivan, 2020).

In another traffic stop on July 19, 2015, a Cincinnati police officer pulled over a car driven by Samuel DuBose, which ended in another death. DuBose had been pulled over near a school’s campus for failing to display a front license plate. The officer’s body camera shows that the officer had told DuBose to take off his seatbelt. Instead DuBose started the car and officer Ray Tensing pushed his gun through the open car window and shot DuBose in the head (Dungca, Abelson, Berman, Sullivan, 2020).

Freddie Gray was 25 years old when he died. On April 12th of 2015, Freddie Gray was arrested by the police in Baltimore who said he had a switchblade. A bystander shot a video showing Gray being dragged by the police into the vehicle while he was moaning in pain. By the time they got to the police station Gray was not breathing. He died a week later from spinal injuries sustained from being transported to the police station. Gray had been put into leg restraints with no seatbelt and was not given medical attention when he asked for it (Dungca, Abelson, Berman, Sullivan, 2020).
On July 5, 2016, police officers in Baton Rouge shot and killed 37-year-old Alton Sterling which was recorded by a bystander. Officers had responded to a call near a convenience store about a man threatening someone with a gun. The recording showed the officers telling Sterling to put his hands on the hood of a car and when Sterling did not, a struggle occurred. One of the officer’s yelled Sterling was going for a gun. In one of the officer’s body cameras, the footage shows the officer yelling profanities at Sterling and saying they would shoot him in the head (Dungca, Abelson, Berman, Sullivan, 2020).

Thirty-two-year-old Philando Castile was pulled over in Minneapolis by officer Jeronimo Yanez on July 6th of 2016. Yanez thought Castile fit the description of a suspect in a recent robbery. Yanez approached the vehicle. Castile was upfront and honest with the police officer and told Yanez that he had a firearm on him. Yanez told Castile not to pull out the gun, and Diamond Reynolds in the passenger seat said that Castile did not reach for the gun. Still Yanez fired seven shots into Castile with Diamond Reynolds in the passenger seat and her four-year-old daughter in the back seat (Dungca, Abelson, Berman, Sullivan, 2020).

On February 23, Ahmaud Arbery was jogging near his home in Georgia when Gregory McMichael, a retired police detective, and his son began following Arbery in a truck. McMichael claimed Arbery looked like a person suspected in local break ins. He had yelled at Arbery to stop so they could talk (Dungca, Abelson, Berman, Sullivan, 2020). Arbery had run around the vehicle when a shot was heard on a camera recorded by Bryan who had followed the father and son in his own vehicle. Arbery struggled with Travis, McMichael’s son, when another two gunshots rang out and Arbery fell to the ground. Bryan said after Arbery was down he heard Travis call Arbery a racial epithet (Dungca, Abelson, Berman, Sullivan, 2020).
Breonna Taylor, a twenty-six-year-old Black woman, was killed on March 13th. Police officers used a battering ram to enter her home in Louisville as part of a narcotics investigation (Dungca, Abelson, Berman, Sullivan, 2020). Taylor’s boyfriend Kenneth Walker shot at the officers hitting one in the leg in fear that their home was being broken into by intruders. The police fired more than 20 shots, eight of them hitting Taylor and killing her (Dungca, Abelson, Berman, Sullivan, 2020).

There are a lot more cases of police brutality against Black people in the news. These are just some of the most famous cases that have sparked either protests or an uproar across the United States. Just looking at these cases alone it is clear to see the injustice these victims and their families have received. African Americans have years of pent-up anger built up inside because of the injustices received which can also help explain their perceptions of police. Police are supposed to serve and protect but, in these cases, these people needed protection from the police.

Perceptions Of the Police

There is an importance of the race and ethnicity of the citizen and officer in determining attitudes toward the police due to problematic interactions. The idea of deference exchange refers to people of lower status deferring to those of higher status (Weaver, 1970). For example, the rich expect to be deferred to by the poor. In policing situations, these societal norms for deference exchange can break down. Officers expect to be deferred to by citizens occupying a lower or damaged status. Minority citizens sometimes fail to give this expected deference because to advance the expected deference is to risk signaling acceptance of the unequal racial
stratification of society. Minority citizens come into conflict with the police more often than citizens of other races and ethnicities (Weaver, 1970). This conflict may partially result from the problematic deference exchange between a minority citizen and police officers of any race or ethnicity. The deference exchange between minority citizens and the police is complicated by the history of oppressive treatment by police. This could lead to perceptual differences of policing behavior. Other research has also found a difference between the behavior of citizens of different races when encountering officers of different races (Weaver, 1970). One study found that minority officers were less likely to make White citizens compliant, while White officers were more likely to make minority citizens compliant. This is challenged by another study that found White officers struggled with noncompliant minority citizens (Weaver, 1970).

This perception of police is further analyzed in an article, “I’m afraid of cops”, by Jennifer Cobbina-Dungy. Aggressive order maintenance police strategies are disproportionately concentrated in economically distressed neighborhoods (Terrill & Reisig, 2003). The US National Academies’ Committee on Proactive Policing (Natl. Acad. Sci. Eng. Med. 2018, p. 1) defines proactive policing as referring to “all policing strategies that have as one of their goals the prevention or reduction of crime and disorder and that are not reactive in terms of focusing primarily on uncovering ongoing crime or on investigating or responding to crimes once they have occurred.” Although efforts are designed to control crime, policies focused on a historical pattern of racialized criminalization. This shapes attitudinal responses often fueling resentment toward law enforcement (Rios, Prieto, & Ibarra, 2020). Because police practices vary by geographical location, the over-representation of Black individuals among the urban poor means that this group is more likely to experience the harsh enforcement styles of policing. (Anderson 1999; Brunson & Miller, 2006a, 2006b). Diverse experiences among individuals who reside in
distressed areas include greater levels of being watched and detained, racially profiled, searched and arrested, officer misconduct, slower response time and less police services, becoming the recipient of physical and deadly force, and perceptions that police in general treat people differently based on race.

Even though direct personal encounters with police shape attitudes toward law enforcement – secondhand information from other people or the media also plays a role. It was found that Blacks and Latinos were more likely to learn about experiences with the police primarily through family, friends, and neighbors while Whites were more likely to receive such reports through the media. Evidence also reveals that high profile media cases of police violence increase minorities’ distrust of the police (Weitzer, 2002).

Another article called, “Race differences in public satisfaction with and trust in the local police in the context of George”, by Daniel Pryce and Randy Gainey says that race, age, gender, education, income, and experiences with police were all significantly related to community members’ satisfaction with police. Black residents were significantly more likely than whites and members of other racial groups to express lower levels of satisfaction with police. Findings support research showing that blacks were significantly more likely to report both direct and vicarious experiences as well as knowledge of such experiences in their communities (Weitzer & Tuch, 2005). The effect of race (being black/African American) was strong and statistically significant suggesting that differences in perceptions from whites is based on more than just recent experiences.

Age, race, education, income, and experiences with police all predicted trust in the police. Indeed, being black was the strongest predictor of trust in the police, as Black people were significantly more likely than White people and members of other racial groups to be distrustful
of police (Pryce & Gainey, 2021). Only race and age were significant predictors of support for the way the police have handled peaceful protests in the wake of George Floyd’s death. This finding suggests that the differences between blacks and whites in the way they perceive the police in dealing with protests has much to do with knowledge or indirect exposure to negative police encounters in the community. These developments thus create an ostensibly perpetual cycle of mistrust between police and local communities, especially communities of color. It is therefore important for officers to understand that both negative direct and vicarious experiences with police hurt police–community relations, leading to lower levels of satisfaction with and trust in police.

Brockton Police Department

The Brockton police department has a website and on that website you can learn more about the police department. You can report a crime on that website. You can also learn more out their purpose. The website also lists their mission and what they believe (About Brockton Police, 2017).

Their purpose is to provide the highest quality of police services by having the community work with the police department to improve life in Brockton while maintaining respect for individual rights and dignity. It is very important that members of the community understand and accept the responsibilities that come with improving the quality of life. This includes regulations, operating instructions, policies, procedures and practices. Each member of the department is also required to accept the responsibility for the achievement of the mission.
Their mission has been developed into six services. The first service is to create a safe atmosphere by investigating criminal activity and improving traffic safety. The second service is to promote community policing by having a relationship between the police department and the community, residents, and business owners. The third service is to respond to all service calls as deemed necessary and to treat everyone with respect of their rights. The fourth service is to privately and publicly uphold the highest standards of the law enforcement profession. The fifth service is to improve the ability for officers to do their tasks with training and equipment. The last service is to create an environment for officers to continue their education for self-improvement.

They believe that the city is filled with many individuals who have their own distinctive cultural values, lifestyles, and customs. The city is very diverse, but everyone shares the need for protection and service through impartial law enforcement. The recognition of individual dignity is vital in society. It is the department’s job to make sure everyone’s rights are protected and respected (About Brockton Police, 2017).

**Brockton Police Department’s Scorecard**

There is a website with police scorecards on it that are an evaluation of issues within the police department. These scorecards are made to hold officials accountable for implementing solutions to better the department. Brockton’s police scorecard is an evaluation of police funding, accountability, and funding. They also include Brockton’s approach to law enforcement. All scores range from 0 to 100 percent with scores closer to 0% being worse.
Police funding is at 49% overall. Fines and forfeitures are at a 78%. Police presence and over-policing, which is based on officers per population, is at 24%. Misconduct settlements were incomplete.

Police violence is at a 54%. Force used per arrest and unarmed victims of deadly force per arrest were incomplete. Deadly force per arrest was at 31%. Racial disparities in deadly force are at 84%.

The sub sections under police accountability were misconduct complaints upheld, excessive force complaints upheld, discrimination complaints upheld, and criminal misconduct complaints upheld. Unfortunately, those sections were incomplete. Although, they were able to gather enough information in general to be able to tell that overall police accountability is at 29%.

The approach to law enforcement is 58%. The arrest rate for low level offenses is 47%. These low-level offenses included drug possession which was 3%. Arrests for violent crime is 12%. Homicides solved is 37%. Racial disparities in drug arrests are 91%.

There were some key findings. One was that there were 4 killings by police. This is higher than 69% of Massachusetts police departments. Another one was that there were 29,366 arrests made. Arrests for low level, non-violent offenses from 2013 to 2019 were 50%.

The site was able to identify police violence by race. At the time, the population of the jurisdiction was 40% Black, 11% Latinx, 12% other, 34% White, and the rest was unknown. The police department demographics at the time was 71% White, 21% Black, 8% Latinx, and the rest
unknown. People arrested included 61% of Black people, 12% Latinx, 33% White people, and the rest is other and unknown. People killed included 75% of White people and 25% other.

There were different percentages of homicides unsolved by race. Homicides of Black victims unsolved was 62 percent. Homicides of Latinx victims unsolved was 100 percent. Homicides of White victims unsolved was 29 percent (Campaign Zero, 2022).

**Brockton Police Demographics**

As of 2016, it was reported that the Brockton Police Department had only 2.5% of minority supervisors. As of 2016, the Brockton Police Department also had 183 sworn officers. There were 167 males and 16 females. Over 120 of them were White. A little less than 40 of them were Black. A little less than 20 of them were Hispanic. Little to none of the officers were Asian.

Of these 183 sworn officers, there were 123 White males and 8 White women. There were 31 Black males and 5 Black females. There were 12 Hispanic males and 3 Hispanic females. There was 1 Asian male and no Asian females.

A police department should be reflective of the people they are serving to help build trust for relationships between the community and the police. This isn’t the case because as of 2016, 46.7% of the population of Brockton was White. The Brockton population was 31.2% Black. The Brockton population was 10% Hispanic, and it was 12.1% other (About Brockton Police, 2017).
The same could be said about the Minneapolis police department. In the Minneapolis metropolitan area, where former police officer Derek Chauvin was recently convicted of murder in the death of George Floyd, about 26% of the people are racial and ethnic minorities. Yet people of color hold fewer than 12% of police jobs across 15 counties in the metropolitan area, which includes St. Paul, Bloomington and a dozen surrounding counties in Minnesota and Wisconsin (Kelly, Kim, Deliso, Nichols, Manthey, 2021).

**Brockton Demographics**

As of 2019, the Brockton population was at about 96 thousand. White people made up about 36.1% of this population. Black people made up about 45.6% of the population. American Indian people made up less than 1% of the population. Asian people were less than 2% of the population (U.S. Census, 2022).

**Brockton Now**

To fully understand the community and its perspectives towards the police, it is important to understand the type of community we live in right now. Brockton is currently going through a tough time. Every week we are facing one or more difficulties with most of the hardships discussed below happening in October. Everyone is kept up to date with the news from Brockton Enterprise.
On September 4th, of 2021, a 16-year-old had been shot at a large house party. Brockton police had been alerted to shots being fired after having already received calls about a loud party a little earlier. While officers were responding to this, they had gotten multiple calls about someone being shot. Sadly, the 16-year-old boy had been pronounced dead on the scene.

On October 7th, of 2021, an armed suspect had shot and killed himself after injuring a police officer and killing a civilian. The civilian had been found dead inside of a car earlier in the day and that is when police had been alerted to a man with a gun. The suspect, wearing what appeared to have been a Nazi patch had held himself up inside of the home he lived in and had fired shots down at the police from a second-floor window. An officer was shot twice. This hours long standoff ended with the suspect shooting himself (Bossa, 2021).

On October 19th, of 2021, numerous gunshots were fired in the early evening. It is believed that two vehicles were involved in the gunfire. Nineteen shell casings were recovered that day from the scene. Fortunately, no injuries were reported. This case is still being investigated (Shepard, 2021).

On October 20th, of 2021, it was reported that Brockton High School had been put into a stay in place order after a video was brought to the administration’s attention. It was a snapchat post that showed a student with a magazine clip in their waist band. The student was immediately pulled from class and questioned by the administration, and they learned the snapchat post was originally made in September and posted earlier on the day of the stay in place order. The student had been referred to the school police and will be facing criminal charges and school disciplinary measures. This stay in place order was instituted after another stay in place
order had already been issued on October 8th, at the Brockton High School, because a student had brought a gun to school (Chery D, 2021).

On October 25th, of 2021, Brockton High School got metal detectors in wake of the recent gun incidents. The school had an emergency meeting on October 23rd to get the walk-through metal detectors approved. These walk-through metal detectors were an upgrade for the school from the previously handheld metal detectors they were using since the October 8th incident of the student bringing a gun to school. With this new practice they also welcomed a new principal (Chery D, 2021).
METHODOLOGY

A case study is a research methodology, usually seen in social and life sciences. There are multiple definitions of case study research, but a simple accurate one would be that a case study is an intensive study about a person, a group of people or a unit, which is aimed to generalize over several units (Heale, R, & Twycross, 2018). The researcher examines in-depth data relating to several variables. Researchers describe how case studies examine complex phenomena in the natural setting to increase understanding of them (Heale, R, & Twycross, 2018).

This case study is about analyzing and understanding community perceptions and local media coverage surrounding the 2020 protest in Brockton during the evening of June 2nd into June 3rd after the death of George Floyd. On May 25, 2020, Minneapolis police officers received a call about a Black man, later identified as George Floyd, using a counterfeit twenty-dollar bill. After police arrived, George Floyd ended up handcuffed and face down on the ground with Officer Derek Chauvin pressing his knee into Floyd’s neck. He had a knee on Floyd’s neck for about nine minutes while bystanders shouted for him to stop. Video shows Floyd crying “I can’t breathe” multiple times before going limp. He was later pronounced dead at a hospital. On May 26th, 2020, police issued a statement saying Floyd died after a “medical incident,” and that he physically resisted and appeared to be in medical distress. Minutes later, a bystander’s video was posted online. Police released another statement saying the FBI will help investigate. Chauvin and three other officers — Thomas Lane, J. Kueng and Tou Thao — were fired and protests began. Mayor Jacob Frey called for criminal charges against Chauvin. Protests led to unrest in
Minneapolis, with some people looting and starting fires. These Protests then spread to other cities, eventually leading to protests in Brockton (Associated Press, 2022).

This study gauges how the community of Brockton feels about the police using the social media app called Twitter. Twitter is an American microblogging and social networking service on which users post and interact with messages known as "tweets" (Twitter). Registered users can post, like, and retweet tweets, but unregistered users can only read those that are publicly available. Using twitter features, this study takes a closer look at the tweets posted from June 2nd, 2020, to June 4th, 2020, in Brockton connected to the protests about George Floyd. The content of these tweets allows an examination of the greater Brockton community perception of the police in the wake of George Floyd’s death. Tweets are analyzed and thematically coded according to what was said, how it was said, and what it means in relation to this specific study. This is called content analysis. Content analysis is the study of documents and communication artifacts, which might be texts of various formats, pictures, audio or video. Social scientists use content analysis to examine patterns in communication in a replicable and systematic manner (Wikimedia Foundation, 2022).

To find these twitter posts, this study used some of twitter’s helpful features. This study used the hashtag Brockton to pull up tweets from Brockton. Then the dates June 2nd to June 4th were used to filter out all of the tweets that were not made on those dates. With both features twitter was able to pull up most tweets made about the George Floyd protest in Brockton.

CASE STUDY
The Brockton protest of June 2-3, 2020 came after the police murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis and protests began to emerge nightly across the United States (Associated Press, 2022). On May 25, George Floyd was killed in police custody. George Floyd was a 46-year-old Black man who had been arrested for buying cigarettes with a counterfeit $20 bill at a convenience store. The store employee had called 911 and when the police had arrived Floyd was taken into custody at the scene. One of the police officers, Derek Chauvin, a White man, had kneeled on Floyd’s neck for at least 8 minutes and 15 seconds. Within this time period Floyd had said multiple times that he could not breathe, and a crowd gathered around urging the police officer to get off Floyd’s neck. Floyd had also called out for his mother and eventually lost consciousness. The police officer continued to kneel on Floyd’s neck as other police officers stood around and said nothing. This horrific death of an unarmed Black man sparked Black Lives Matter protests and protests against police brutality in Minneapolis and over a hundred of other cities including Brockton. In 2016 Brockton, MA employed 183 police officers. The majority of these officers, 72% were white, while the Brockton population is 42% white (About Brockton Police, 2017) (U.S. Census Bureau, 2022).

On June 1st of 2020, seven days after the death of George Floyd, a protest was organized by Dejah McCottrell, a resident of Brockton fighting for policing change. Dejah McCottrell, with the help of Brockton’s mayor, police chief and city councilors, was able to organize a peace rally with about 1,000 people. Dejah spoke of fighting against racism at the protest (Berke, 2020). At the end of the day after protesting, more protesters stood outside of Brockton police’s headquarters confronting Brockton police who wore helmets and held batons standing in formation. Protesters shouted, “Black lives matter”, “I can’t breathe,” and “No justice, no peace”. Other people shouted anti-police statements. As it got later in the day, some people
began throwing bottles and rocks at the police. The police responded by throwing tear gas canisters into the crowd and firing pepper balls. It didn’t stop there.

Later into the night a few members of the crowd smashed the windows of a nearby Dunkin Donuts and set the building on fire. This was not the only building to be vandalized. Windows of the Brockton District Court were also smashed. Other buildings also had windows smashed along with “BLM” and other messages spray painted on them. Some rioters even attempted to loot a T-Mobile store. This looting was anticipated following the protests that had happened in Boston where a lot of stores were looted later at night. This had caused most stores this day to close early or take preventive measures like boarding up their doors. The night after Dejah McCottrell organized a cleanup of more than 30 volunteers to pick up glass, rubber bullets, signs, and empty gas canisters (Berke, 2020).

This situation was a rare occurrence for Brockton and so it received a lot of media coverage from different sources. Some of these sources were biased and used a lot of different languages that are discussed below. This means that some sources will contradict each other. Some of these sources were also from reporters who were at the protest.

The “USA Today News” source painted the protest in a positive light and focused on how the protest was peaceful before the rioting. In this article there was said to be an estimated crowd of more than 1,000 people organized by Deja McCottrell. The police joined in chants of “I can’t breathe” and “say their names.” At night some protestors had marched to the police station demanding the barricade of officers to kneel in solidarity. As officers ignored their demands, some protesters began to throw rocks and aim fireworks at the police. The next morning a cleanup was organized by McCottrell to pick up trash.
The “Boston 25 News” source painted the protest in more of a negative light. This source focused more on the rioting that happened after the peaceful protest. This article quickly mentions how some protests in other places as well as Brockton turned violent after nightfall. It describes how protesters threw objects and lighting flares, and fireworks, at the police outside of the Brockton police station. Later they smashed the windows of a Dunkin Donuts and set it on fire. It says that police had to move in with tear gas. It also describes how the protesters were yelling and cursing at police officers and how other businesses were also vandalized. A brick was thrown at a news crew. A 23-year-old man was arrested on charges of assault and battery of a police officer and disorderly conduct. This article barely mentions the peaceful protest that took place during the day.

The “10 Boston” source also painted the protest in a negative light. This source failed to cover the peaceful part of the protest and focused more on the clashing that happened after it became dark. It discussed how protesters threw fireworks at police officers who responded with deploying pepper spray and tear gas. Glass bottles were also thrown at police officers and police officers began to fire rubber bullets at protesters.

The “WCVB 5 ABC” new source painted the protest in a negative light as well. The article barely discussed how peaceful the protest was before it starts to talk about how it escalated. It says police fired tear gas and pepper spray into groups of protests after fireworks and water bottles were thrown at them. A state trooper and several officers suffered minor injuries from bottles, rocks, and other objects being thrown at them. It talks about how the mayor said there was property damage to some local businesses downtown as well as the courthouse. The mayor said how some of the damage to businesses had been anticipated so some businesses had boarded up their entrances beforehand.
Findings
These findings include the themes found from the examined 101 tweets. Overall, the tweets showed the following themes in relationship to the June 2-3, 2020, Brockton protest: negative perception and distrust of the police, fear of the police, and feelings about the Black Lives Matter Protest. There were very few tweets that showed the police as a teammate rather than a rival. Themes are organized with tweets showing negative perceptions, distrust, and fear of the police with a 2 at the end. The tweets showing feelings about the Black Lives Matter are highlighted in pink or green. Overall, the most common theme found in the 101 tweets were negative posts and negative perceptions of the police which suggests that the police needs to repair the relationship between them and the Greater Brockton community.

Negative Perceptions of Police

Overall, the vast majority of twitter posts were negative about toward the police. Many posts referred to the events of the day/evening as a peaceful rally and focused on fear of the police and fear of what the police will do in response to peaceful protestors. Many posts also focused on the type of gear and guns that police were carrying. There was a very small number of posts that said anything positive toward the police.

One negative post said, “A peaceful march is underway in #Brockton where dozens are walking from the Police HQ to City Hall and back. I asked one woman why she braved the rain today. She told me she’s fighting for a better future for her young sons so they don’t have to fear the police. #WBZ” This post shows that some of the community fears the police. This woman says that she doesn’t want her sons to fear that the police will cause harm to them. This woman believes that the only way for this to happen is for the system to change.
Another negative post said, “The cops/National Guard/State Police are antagonizing the BROCKTON PROTESTORS - why does the news act like the Brockton Protestors aren’t being pushed to retaliate - why do they have dogs? Why do the cops need automatic weapons with shields and full body armor? #Brockton” This post shows that some of the Brockton community distrusts the police. This post is communicating that the police officers are the reason why the protest didn’t remain peaceful.

Another negative post said, “Police in Brockton pepper sprayed themselves #brockton #Brocktonprotest #Brocktonpolice #Bostonprotest #BlackLivesMatter #BLMprotest” This post also displayed a video of the police spraying pepper spray into the air which ended up blowing back into their faces because of the direction the wind was blowing. This post was ultimately made to make fun of the police’s actions. This post shows that some of the community looks at the police as unintelligent.

One positive post said, “Peaceful protest tonight in #Brockton MA. Hundreds of people showed. So did the local and state police as well as the military. #BlackLivesMatter” This post displayed the police as being supportive of the Black Lives Matter protest. This post shows that some of the community thinks that the police is supportive. It also shows that some of the community sees the police as companions.

Another positive post said, “Amidst all the chaos in #Brockton last night, this picture should not be missed. A young man fist bumping an officer. @7News” This tweet also came with an image of the young man and officer bumping fists. This post showed the police as a friend. This post shows that some of the community trusts the police.
Feelings about BLM

The people of Brockton showing support of the Black Lives Matter Movement shows the people standing together and coming together during the protests. This shows solidarity. This being a major theme means that most people in Brockton share the same beliefs of the Black Lives Matter Movement. One tweet that shows this says, “#Brockton was LOVE. Brockton was BLACK. We were THERE. FUCK what THEY say. I specifically wanted to document to show how TOGETHER we are. #BlackLivesMatter #NoJusticeNoPeace”.

Although most tweets showed support for the Black Lives Matter Movement, there were few who didn’t show support for the movement. One post that shows this says, “He looks very peaceful. Definitely not there to fight after the city just officially gave the crowd orders to disperse. #Brockton #bostonriots #AllLivesMatter”. This post was tweeted with a video posted of a guy at the protest being overcome with emotion about the matter and displaying anger. You can see the guy shouting at the police officers looking visibly upset. This tweet uses sarcasm and then says that all lives matter which undermines the Black Lives Matter Movement.

Feelings About the Protest

People believed the protesting happening in Brockton was peaceful, which was very different from what the news was reporting. Some people believed the protesting in Brockton was peaceful until the protesters were pushed to be more aggressive by the police. This shows that the people of Brockton don’t trust reporters on this specific matter. This also shows that most of the people of Brockton believe in peaceful protesting. One tweet that shows this says, “DON'T LET THE MEDIA SPIN THIS, POLICE WERE PEPPER SPRAYING PEOPLE
BEFORE ANY FIREWORK WAS THROWN. THE POLICE HAVE FULL PPE, ALL OF US HAD MASKS, AND NONE OF US WERE ARMED UNTIL THE POLICE STARTED ESCALATING.”

Although some people believed the protest in Brockton was mostly peaceful, there were others who thought otherwise. Out of the 29 tweets that discussed whether the protest was peaceful or not, 16 people thought the protest was not peaceful. One post that shows this says, “Rioters have just started a fire in Brockton, MA #riots2020 #riots #Brockton”. The person that made this tweet didn’t even refer to the event as a protest. They called it a riot. They called the protestors rioters. They also mentioned how someone started a fire.

Feelings About Police Officers

Some of these tweets showed that greater Brockton community doesn’t support the police. This could be for many reasons. Some people could fear them. Other people could simply just not trust the police officers. One tweet that shows this says, “The cops/National Guard/State Police are antagonizing the BROCKTON PROTESTORS - why does the news act like the Brockton Protestors aren’t being pushed to retaliate - why do they have dogs? Why do the cops need automatic weapons with shields and full body armor? #Brockton.”

There were also few people who showed that they do like police officers. A tweet that shows this says, “Police Chief: Our officers were tremendous last night, they were compassionate. You can see by the number of arrests that that was not our goal. @boston25 #brockton”. This post was made by a news reporter who interviewed the police chief. This post shows that one person likes police officers because they complimented them on their behavior
during the protest, but of course this post is biased because this comment was made by the police chief.
Discussions and Conclusions

The purpose of this thesis was to examine the community of Greater Brockton’s perceptions towards the police and why. This is a case study of the June protest that took place in Brockton, MA, that explores connections to national events during the same time, greater Brockton, MA perceptions of police, and reasons people protest against the police. It was critical to determine how the community felt about the police considering all the protests surrounding the death of George Floyd by a police officer, and all of the Black Lives Matter movement actions. Police officers states purpose is to protect and serve, and it is important to know if the community feels protected. This was able to be done through looking at and analyzing 101 tweets written after the Brockton protest that took place on June 1st of 2020.

These 101 tweets were analyzed, and themes related to negative perceptions and distrust of the police, fear of the police, and feelings about the Black Lives Matter Protest were found. One interesting thing that was noticed was the mismatch between the perceptions in the tweets versus the way the media covered and discussed the events. In the section labeled “Case Study”, three out of the four media outlets discussed portrayed the protest as being hectic and out of control. These media outlets portrayed the protest in a negative light. They focused more on the chaotic parts of the protest that happened after the peaceful rally took place the entire day. The media outlets painted the protesters as people who were looking for trouble. They made the protesters look like people who had no real interest in peaceful protesting, the Black Lives Matter Movement, and fighting for racial equality.

This is a connection that is also seen nationwide in relation to the George Floyd protests that took place. The rally that happened in Boston, Massachusetts took a turn for the worse when protestors clashed with the police. The media outlets focused on the stores that were broken into
and stolen from, damaged police vehicles, and trash barrels on fire (Fox & Hilliard, 2020). Not one media outlet focused on all the emotions protestors were going through. In Minneapolis, media outlets wrote about stores that were looted and buildings that were on fire (Romo, 2020). Not one media outlet focused on why the community was so angry and why community members were acting out. The community is not being heard until they are damaging property.

After reading the tweets, it is clear to see the mismatch between the perceptions in the tweets compared to the media outlets. Out of the 29 tweets that discussed whether the protest was peaceful or not, 14 of the tweets mentioned the protest being peaceful. These fourteen tweets discussed how the Greater Brockton community came together to fight for the same cause. It discussed the peaceful protesting happening during the day, and one tweet even mentioned a protester fist bumping a police officer.

It was also found that most members of the community had negative perceptions of the police whether it was distrust, or fear. This shows that the relationship between police officers and the Greater Brockton community needs to be repaired. The relationship between police officers and a community is important because police officers may need the community’s help to solve crimes. A community member can be a witness to a crime, or could even have a tip about a crime, but they won’t help police officers if they feel as though they cannot confide in the police. How can a community count on police officers they don’t trust? How can the Brockton police do the full extent of their job without the help of the community?

These negative perceptions of the police are partly the cause of the nationwide protests that happened after the murder of George Floyd. African Americans feel like they need to fight for justice and change against the police because if they don’t, they will never receive it. This fight for equality hasn’t started with George Floyd nor has it ended with George Floyd. George
Floyd is one of the many people who died at the hands of the police and haven’t gotten justice. African Americans are tired of having to hear one story after another of a Black man, Black woman, or Black child being murdered by the police officers who are supposed to protect everyone equally. African Americans are tired of being treated unequally compared to other races.

Although tweets were analyzed after a protest to gauge the reactions and feelings of the greater Brockton community, further research should be done to explore the community’s perceptions of the police. There could be a survey made to be given to community members asking questions about how content they are with police officers. It would also help to interview some members of the community to hear their exact words about how they feel about the police officers. It is possible that this information can be used to make changes within the policing organization that could begin to build a more positive relationship between the police and community.
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Appendix A

1. Police in Brockton pepper sprayed themselves #brockton #Brocktonprotest
   #Brocktonpolice #Bostonprotest #BlackLivesMatter #BLMprotest

2. #Brockton is the city w/ the highest proportion of Black residents, has the least
   representative local gov’t, and is in the county w/ the highest proportion of Trump voters
   in MA. POC across MA need to unite to protect each other.

3. I swear to fuck, the news trying to say the cops and protesters are evenly matched, ONE
   SIDE HAS FUCKING WATER BOTTLES, THE OTHER SIDE HAS WEAPONS OF
   WAR. #Brockton

4. If local news could stop suggesting that hitting a cop in riot gear with an empty water
   bottle is reason to respond to peaceful protestors with rubber bullets and tear gas, that
   would be great. #Brockton

5. Coming home from work in #brockton & ended up straight in the middle of the protests.
   The police began crowd control and turned us around. A protester was helping us turn
   around when he was pepper sprayed by the police. After turning around my car was
   struck by an unknown object

6. #Brockton stood strong tonight

7. cops just launched a gas projectile into a crowd of peaceful protesters, live on TV - there
   was no violence, and no justification for it, they were just chanting #brockton

8. This is what the news didn’t cover in #Brockton

9. Peaceful protest tonight in #Brockton MA. Hundreds of people showed. So did the local
   and state police as well as the military. #BlackLivesMatter
10. The protest came by my house about an hour ago, everything was peaceful. No one was out of control, and I even jumped in and walked with them for a while. #brockton

11. Why is there a small battalion facing off with 15 protestors? How much is this costing?
   DEFUND THE POLICE. #brockton #bostonprotesrs

12. #Brockton was LOVE. Brockton was BLACK. We were THERE. FUCK what THEY say. I specifically wanted to document to show how TOGETHER we are.
   #BlackLivesMatter #NoJusticeNoPeace

13. Just watched the whole Brockton Protest unfold, it was peaceful one minute until someone threw a water bottle and ran away, then some fireworks that came from the distance, and you even heard people yell “it’s not us!” Sounds a little set up if you ask me #Brockton

14. Solidarity | Compssion | United

   #Brockton

   #WeAreChange

   #TakeAKnee

15. Obscene and unnecessary use of force by @BrocktonPolice. Why is this necessary???
   Who are you protecting? #BlackLivesMatter #Brockton

16. Demonstrators are shouting insults at police in helmets outside #Brockton police dept.
   #wcvb

17. Rioters have just started a fire in Brockton, MA #riots2020 #riots #Brockton

18. #Boston police take a knee with protesters this evening. Meanwhile #Brockton police and staties refuse to have even an open dialect with protesters…
19. #BREAKING: @BienickWCVB reports projectiles and tear gas has been fired into the crowd of protesters outside #Brockton police station. #BrocktonProtest

20. Idk who shorty is from Brockton for the protest today, but I felt that!! Thought I’d share! #protests2020 #Brockton

21. He looks very peaceful. Definitely not there to fight after the city just officially gave the crowd orders to disperse. #Brockton #bostonriots #AllLivesMatter

22. The cops/National Guard/State Police are antagonizing the BROCKTON PROTESTORS - why does the news act like the Brockton Protestors aren’t being pushed to retaliate - why do they have dogs? Why do the cops need automatic weapons with shields and full body armor? #Brockton

23. Scenes from the #Brockton peace rally tonight. Calls for justice and conversation and for peace. Anyone stirring up trouble after the fact we’re there to cause trouble and make this movement look bad. Fuck white supremacy

24. They youth in my city refuse to be silenced. They arent finished yet. #BlackLivesMatter #Brockton A blk gentlemen spoke to them abt helping them organize & bld a great protest & they were happy that an adult took the time to listen to them & offer help.

25. Amidst all the chaos in #Brockton last night, this picture should not be missed. A young man fist bumping an officer. @7News

26. A metal object was thrown at police motorcycles in #Brockton @959watdfm

27. #BREAKING: Riots also now in #Brockton, #Massachusetts

#blacklifematter #BlackLivesMatter #nycprotests #GeorgeFloyd #blacklifematters #BlackOutDay2020 #blackouttuesday #blackoutday #BlackOutTuesday #blackoutuesday #Minneapolis #NYCProtest #NYC #GeorgeFloydWasMurdered #NewYork #DC
28. BOSTON PEOPLE - they’re tear gassing people in brockton right now. they’re going to bring out the rubber bullets next. DON’T LET THIS GET IGNORED BECAUSE IT’S NOT BOSTON. support the small cities too. support brockton protestors.

29. MA people, we need to watch and amplify what's happening in #brocktonprotests

#Brockton

30. DON'T LET THE MEDIA SPIN THIS, POLICE WERE PEPPER SPRAYING PEOPLE BEFORE ANY FIREWORK WAS THROWN. THE POLICE HAVE FULL PPE, ALL OF US HAD MASKS, AND NONE OF US WERE ARMED UNTIL THE POLICE STARTED ESCALATING

31. I was at the #Brockton march. It was completely peaceful until cops escalated with pepper spray. #BlackLivesMatter

32. This guy at the #Brockton rally tells the news that he and his buddies are with a “private EMT company.” They are all wearing steel plated body armor and carrying backpacks. They wanted to “set the narrative straight” with the news crew. #BlackLivesMatter

33. But #Brockton is where many Black American and Black immigrant families have been displaced from traditionally redlined neighborhoods in Boston.

34. A few images from #Brockton tonight are only a very small sample of what we witnessed tonight. There is a lot more to the big picture. It's been a very long day and night, please know @Enterprise_Marc and I will be sharing much more soon...

@NancyWCVB

35. Anyone on the streets in Brockton tonight, stay safe, I love you, and give'em hell. I wish i was there with y'all. #Brockton
36. In #Brockton police have now broke the protest line and fired tear gas and sprayed large pepper spray canisters while a small group of protesters are intermittently throwing water bottles and fireworks. #boston

37. Oh shit the Dunkin Donuts is on fucking fire #Brockton

38. RAW: Moments ago @boston25 video captures the moment Dunkin’ donuts being set ablaze during Brockton Protests #Brockton #brocktonprotests @BrocktonPolice @PetesWire

39. Can’t wait to load up on fireworks on the 4th of July and light them off on my street with no repercussions whatsoever. It’s ok, seriously. Just watched the #Brockton Grand-Finale and nobody was arrested. Thank you @MassGovernor ! The family will love it !

40. Standing in solidarity with our sisters and brothers in #Brockton

41. Fake news @WCVB reporter @AdamBagni just referred to the #Brockton protesters as looters & rioters with no looting actually going on. Yet the entire live news broadcast they’ve been calling it peaceful. Which one is it adam ?

42. Idk who this man is from #Brockton but he’s a real one

43. We have plenty of funds left from funds collected for the Boston action through our Boston Mutual Aid team. If you need a Lyft/Uber/gas money DM us!!!! #brockton #brocktonprotest

44. A peaceful march is underway in #Brockton where dozens are walking from the Police HQ to City Hall and back. I asked one woman why she braved the rain today. She told me she’s fighting for a better future for her young sons so they don’t have to fear the police. #WBZ

45. Cleaning up graffiti in #Brockton @wbz
46. GO HOME!!! THEY HAVE STARTED TEAR GASSING, STAY SAFE #brockton

47. I love my city! #Brockton

48. Scanners sound panicked. Leave now. #BostonProtests #bostonprotest #bostonriots #bostonriot #bostonwatch #boston #BROCKTON #brocktonprotest

49. ‘They want to kill us’: Police in Massachusetts slammed for tear-gassing black protesters #Brockton

50. Overall real prod about how #Brockton and @BrocktonPolice have conducted themselves during the protest...literally moments after these “EMTs” were on screen somebody threw a firework at the police...and never saw these people ‘here to help’ again

51. Reporter: "luckily, it appears no windows have been broken" Oh, good, WON'T ANYONE THINK OF THE OBJECTS?? #Brockton #BlackLivesMatter

52. #BROCKTON PROTECT BLACK BODIES. PROTECT YOUNG BLACK BODIES. NATIONAL GUARD SPECIAL FORCES 12 READY ALL OVER. #BOSTONPROTEST

53. #BREAKING: projectiles and tear gas has been fired into the crowd of protesters outside #Brockton police station. #BrocktonProtest

54. Proud to be from the blackest city in Massachusetts. #Brockton

55. Police on the move.. breaking up protesters in #Brockton #WBZ Live coverage right now on CBSN Boston and WBZ-TV https://boston.cbslocal.com/live/

56. #brockton artists, time to open some eyes

57. 01:12- Dumpster Fire 582 Warren Ave, Brockton. #brockton #brocktonprotest

58. Police Chief: Our officers were tremendous last night, they were compassionate. You can see by the number of arrests that that was not our goal. @boston25 #brockton
59. What is being displayed in Brockton right now is powerful and emotional. These
   protestors are kneeling and asking for peace. #Boston #Brockton

60. 10 minutes to curfew in #boston They have fired tear gas at protestors in #brockton

   Commuter rail station in Brockton is shut down- trapping people in this area.

   #brocktonprotest BLACK LIVES MATTER AND ACAB

61. If you are in #Brockton and need a ride message me!!! #brocktonprotests

62. Brockton protest didn’t start off crazy. The media didn’t cover the start of a beautiful
   gathering within the community that lasted a while before things escalated. The only
   thing these news outlets care about is putting Brockton in a negative light.

   #brocktonprotest #Brockton

63. #Brockton trending i love to see it

64. PEOPLE IN #BROCKTON DO NOT LAUNCH FIREWORKS AT POLICE. DO NOT

   GIVE THEM A REASON.

65. Proud of my city #Brockton

66. #brockton protests have been incredibly peaceful- calling in the national guard to

   Brockton was a crazy over reaction - the protest remains peaceful

67. If you’re in #Brockton please go home. police are bringing in swat & national guard

   getting ready for arrests. know your rights. do not fight. if they do not give you your

   Miranda rights you can not be charged. GO HOME. NOW.

68. I will say one more thing about the protest: People wanted to be heard and

   understood...and the police stood there stone faced, hands on weapons. #Brockton
LISTEN: The owner of a @dunkindonuts in #Brockton that was set on fire & had all the windows smashed last night speaks out this morning. @JCuocoNews is in the city this morning covering what happened. #7news

WATCH: In this video, you can see the actual moment a Dunkin on N. Montello is lit up in flames in #Brockton. I'll show you the damage, and why protesters say this is NOT what they wanted to happen, all morning on @wpri12

"how many do you need? 5? 10?" "send me everything you got" #BostonProtests

#bostonprotest #boston #BROCKTON #brocktonprotest

Launching fireworks at police IS NOT a peaceful protest! The demonstration at West was peaceful. This is rioting! Go home and don’t destroy our city!! #Brockton

#BrocktonProtest

#brockton aggressive police surrounding the mall. Do not go over there. Simply turned in and out and was met with police following us.

To the people saying the national guard cleared everyone out in under 30 minutes in #brockton, we are clearly not looking at the same intersections.

#Brockton Mayor Robert Sullivan spoke this morning outside a @dunkindonuts that was damaged by vandals overnight. He condemned the officers involved in the death of #GeorgeFloyd and said change is needed, but also that, "Change can't be through violence." https://bit.ly/3ct6dxL

Crew finally wrapped up and left after boarding up this #Brockton @dunkindonuts after rioting Tuesday night (that followed peaceful protest at a middle school). Police say “there’s a possibility” of something tonight. They’re on alert for it. Follow @WFXTMalini tonight @boston25
77. Cape Verdians #Brockton #peacefulprotest @veiga508 #blacklivesmatter stay strong!

78. This is my city. They were throwing fireworks and firecrackers at the police. This was NOT what we were doing today. There are ppl there working on de-escalating & it seems to be working. #Brockton #BLM

79. Massachusetts' traffic is so fucked up, we have traffic jams in the middle of riots

#Brockton

80. Be safe #Brockton. If anyone knows if there’s a #bailfund for Brockton/ Plymouth county, hit me up.

81. Dystopian rabbit hole: watching aircraft circle #Brockton tonight via https://tar1090.adsbexchange.com (which I can barely work) because @hypervisible retweeted @jsrailton.

82. Day 2.....Protests at the #Brockton police department have started. Is justice served by burning, destroying business? #thought

83. Unreal scene in #Brockton. Our Malini Basu had something thrown at her while reporting. @WFXTMalini

84. LIVE coverage of protests in #Boston and #Brockton. Protest at Boston Police HQ is currently "loud but peaceful" according to @ToddKazakiewich of @WCVB.

Unfortunately, things have taken a turn for the worse in Brockton, my home town.

#GeorgeFloyd

85. My hometown. My junior high school. I am so proud to be a Boxer tonight. #Brockton
86. "We want peace. They aren't hearing anything." Brockton Protestor speaking on police on @WCVB  "They are paid to not care." Boston police are kneeling, Brockton police refuse.

LISTEN TO THE PEOPLE. #Brockton #TakeAKnee

87. Significant police presence in #Brockton tonight. @MassStatePolice there, which says "officers from the Southeastern Massachusetts Law Enforcement Council and National Guardsmen are also assisting with operations."

88. We are live right now on CBSN Boston with the situation unfolding in Brockton:

http://CBSBoston.com. #Brockton #GeorgeFloyd

89. Seeing the police crack down on peaceful protestors in Brockton is breaking my heart. City w/ highest %population of black people in MA and is one of the communities hardest hit by COVID-19. Those protestors have heart and courage and deserve better #Brockton #BlackLivesMatter

90. In #Brockton, people threw firecrackers at law enforcement. Here in #Mattapan, effin neighbors across the street are hurling them toward our house. I'd just like to take out the trash without having a heart attack. #everyfreakingnight #sincemidmay #massholes

91. It would be nice if any of the news stations in Brockton showed the perspective from the protestors and not behind the cops. @WCVB @7News @wbz #Brockton #BlackLivesMatter

92. The Brockton we woke up too this morning will not be the same Brockton we wake up to tomorrow... it’s time for change. #Brockton

93. I’m proud of the people protesting. I’m in awe of their bravery. People are angry but also eloquent. If that makes sense. #brockton
94. @WCVB "rioters, looters whatever...." then you say its been peaceful: then its a peaceful protest. Please dont mis-report. #BlackLivesMatter #Brockton

95. Hold Strong #brockton The media wants you to riot & loot. Keep doing what you’re doing by being peaceful! Don’t give the media & news outlets what they want!

96. The terminology the media is using to describe the #brockton protests is sorely misrepresentation. I’m seeing nothing but peaceful protesters bending a knee asking for the police to bend a knee in solidarity. There also NO looting or disturbances in Brockton protests.

97. @WCVB please report what the protesters are doing the officers look like they’re ready for a war protesters kneeled and police pepper sprayed them . #BlackLivesMattter #Brockton

98. @wcvb Tell your reporter to stop sounding so disappointed that no one was hurt or taken into custody. #PartOfTheProblem #BlackLivesMattter #Brockton #BostonProtests #boston

99. @maura_healey why are police DOGS being brought to protests in #Brockton?! This is so wrong. So triggering. And DEMANDS a response!!! what year are we in??!! #BlackLivesMattter @MassGovernor

100. #brockton has had one of the highest covid rates in MA - another evidence of systemic racism and @MassGovernor ignoring and failing poor black and brown people. And now violently repressing when they stand up against police violence.

#DefundThePolice now.
101. Don’t let the media fool you #Brockton has been peaceful and nonviolent all day long. For all protesting. No riots. No looting. Yet here we are. #BlackLivesMatter

#RIPGeorgeFloyd