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## Police on Camera: The Impact of Watching User-Generated Police Videos on Students' Attitudes towards the Police

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Running head: VIDEO SHARING AND POLICE

Police on Camera: The Impact of Watching User-Generated Police Videos on Students'

Attitudes towards the Police

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Abstract

This research investigated the impact of user-generated videos on students' attitudes towards the police. A survey was conducted at Wilfrid Laurier University in Brantford and was administered to 200 students consisting of a number of control variables such as age, race, police contact, and neighbourhood context, along with measurements of attitudes towards the police. It measured online video viewing habits along with familiarity of three online videos. Multivariate analysis showed that watching user generated videos had little to no impact on students attitudes towards the police. The analysis showed that police contact was the most influential factor in impacting attitudes towards the police. It is therefore important for police to develop positive contact opportunities with the public.

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction

The institution of policing is an integral part of modern society. The police uphold and maintain the law to ensure an orderly and productive society. Most often the police are also people's first contact with the criminal justice system and this contact may shape the public's view of the entire criminal justice system (Vito, Wolfe, Higgins, Walsh, 2011). In order to uphold the law the police need to be able to maintain the trust, respect and confidence of the general public. Decker (1981) has argued that the police organization as a public sector organization needs community support to meet its goals. Murty, Roebuck, and Smith (1990) have suggested that positive images of the police are necessary in order for the police services to function effectively and efficiently. This is especially true with the focus of many police services shifting to community based services. These services focus on police citizen reciprocity and seek to build trust between the police and the community (Frank, Smith, & Novak, 2005). Without cooperation from the public, investigations and the legitimacy of the police could be compromised. Therefore, it is important to understand what factors impact people's attitudes towards policing. Given the prevalence of social media this study tested the impact of viewing user-generated videos of positive and negative police behaviour on students' attitudes towards the police.

#### ***Purpose of the Study***

The purpose of this study was to conduct a survey of students at Wilfrid Laurier Brantford to determine the impact of user-generated police videos on students' attitudes towards

the police. It determined how often these videos are watched, the number of videos watched, whether or not participants believe these videos portrayed the police accurately, whether the majority of videos portray the police negatively, and whether they had any influence on the attitudes of students towards the police. It also looked at individual cases to see how these videos impact student's attitudes of police in these individual cases.

### *Statement of the Problem*

Prior research has shown that factors such as race, police contact, age, type of neighbourhood and media all play a role in the way that people view police work [Weitzer and Tuch (2004), Brown and Benedict (2002), Lai and Zhao (2010)]. The majority of media research has tended to focus on television shows and news broadcasts. However, today there is a new way of receiving information through social media and video sharing websites such as YouTube. People have unprecedented access to all types of video content that they were never able to receive before. Previously the police were able to control the information released to media news outlets and television. Video sharing removes the police's ability to control that information. It is now possible for most Canadians to post videos online, given the availability of the proper technology.

Along with the inability of the police to control what is put online there is also an increased chance of inappropriate behaviours committed by the police being caught on camera and posted online. The vast majority of people in Canada today have immediate access to a camera through their cellphone or other mobile electronic devices. It is estimated that the number of camera cell phones sold globally topped 1 billion in 2007 (Kirk, 2007). Incidences of

inappropriate police behaviour can be seen in cases such as the 2007 Robert Dziekanski incident where a man was tasered by police at the Vancouver International Airport and died as a result, as well as incidences of police misconduct at the G20 summit that was held in 2010 in Toronto. One such incident that occurred at the G20 that became popular on YouTube involved Toronto police officer Adam Josephs, who later became known as “Officer Bubbles”, in which he was seen threatening a person who was blowing bubbles at him. These incidences have the possibility of being viewed around the world and by millions of people. YouTube alone has 800 million unique visitors to it every month (YouTube Demographics, 2013). Over 6 billion hours are watched monthly on YouTube (YouTube Statistics, 2013). One video on YouTube of officer Bubbles had over 993,200 views, with several other videos of this incident also being viewed thousands of times on alternate sites. Videos of Dziekanski have also been viewed thousands of times with one having been viewed over 150,000 times on Youtube. These numbers do not reflect how many times these videos may have been viewed on other websites such as Ebaumsworld or Newsground suggesting that viewership numbers are likely higher than estimated. While only an example of the number of user-generated videos of police it demonstrates that many people are exposed to these videos and their content.

Steve Mann coined the term *sousveillance* which means watching from below (Mann & Ferenbok 2013). This term is used to describe the idea that the watchers are now being watched. This theoretically provides the citizenry with a countering force to the power inflicted by those doing the surveilling such as those in power like the police and the government. Those who are being surveilled may not be able to destroy the methods of surveillance but those being surveilled can now return the watchful eye towards those doing the surveilling and in doing so



reduce its effect. This can reduce the power and authority of the police as those doing the filming may become emboldened to push back against the authority of the police (Robinson 2011).

### ***Importance of Study***

The police themselves have come to recognize the importance and dangers of video sharing and access to cameras. A FBI bulletin by Gwendolwn Waters (2012) warns of the impact that social media can cause to police credibility and safety. According to the article the potential exists for police to be impacted by attacks on their credibility or through “cop baiting”. “Cop baiting is when individuals intentionally create confrontational situations with officers to exploit them for personal or political motives” (Gwendolwn Waters, 2012, p#3). Personal credibility is essential to effective law enforcement. With the advent of social media, a police officer’s character can easily be attacked. Courtroom testimony and investigations are at risk if an officer’s integrity is compromised. Even false information can reach a large audience that might include jurors, internal affairs, or cause irreparable damage to officers’ reputations. According to Waters (2012) “cop baiting” has become a significant problem. Questionable videos of police officers are popular on sites, such as YouTube, and can be financially rewarding to people who file claims or lawsuits. The article warns that for some individuals, a citation or jail time is worthwhile if a cash payoff results. In the article it also warns that cop baiting could become so common because of the potential for financial gain that officers may not know whether they are facing a situation that is a legitimate call for service, staged for personal gain, or exaggerated for someone else’s benefit. This puts officers’ personal and professional well-

being at stake. This may also impact the ways in which officer's deal with situations especially if they feel they may be being provoked for such a reason (Waters, 2012).

The prevalence of video cameras and social media make it important to understand what the impact that these new venues of information have on policing. Police officers may have to be more aware that they are constantly being taped in hopes of maintaining public confidence if it shown that online videos have a negative impact on public perceptions. This is why it is important to understand the impact of such videos. Without public confidence and assistance, maintaining order and civility by policing becomes extremely difficult. Other studies, such as Dowler (2003) as well as Dowler and Zawilski (2007), have studied the way media such as news broadcasts and television shows impact attitudes towards the police. Further, studies like Weitzer and Tuch (2004) have shown the importance of varied demographic factors such as race and neighbourhood, with people from minorities and disorganized neighbourhoods having more negative attitudes towards the police. Research is lacking in the role that the new media, specifically video sharing, plays in impacting police legitimacy.

Police legitimacy is an important aspect in maintaining an effective relationship between the police and the public. Tyler (1990) demonstrated that when people believe the police or the courts are legitimate the public is more likely to comply with their instructions. The key to this point is that legitimacy is distinct from the fear of being punished. Sunshine and Tyler (2003) determined that police legitimacy was not only important in compliance with the law but also impacted the willingness of people to cooperate and assist the police as well as whether the public will empower the police. Their study suggests that legitimacy is a social value that is not based on performance evaluations. The authors suggest that such values have important and

distinct influences on people's support of the police that is distinct from police performance.

This idea is maintained through procedural justice where citizens believe they are treated fairly and with respect.

Procedural justice is the experience of procedurally fair treatment by agents of criminal justice, specifically the police, which is linked to positive attitudes of their trustworthiness and legitimacy as well as the greater likelihood of cooperation with legal authorities and greater conformity to the law (Bradford, Murphy, & Jackson, 2014). Bradford et al. (2014) explain that procedural justice theory explains why people conform to group values and norms. In the case of the police the experience of fairness at the hand of the police has positive impact on the trust, legitimacy, and compliant related behaviours. This occurs because they serve to strengthen the connections to the social groups the police represent, which promotes commitment to group norms and values. Legitimacy of the police is strengthened because procedural justice shows that those in power are wielding it fairly and in justified, measured ways. Ferdik, Wolfe, and Blasco (2014) suggest that procedural justice has been shown in many empirical studies to be a key predictor of police legitimacy. Their own study indicated that perceptions of procedural fairness are significantly positively associated with respondents' evaluations of police legitimacy.

Murphy, Mazerolle, and Bennett (2014) conducted an experimental study to determine the impact of procedural justice on public trust and confidence in the police. They determined that the manipulation of the procedural justice element had a significant impact on public trust and confidence in the police. This effect remained true even when they accounted for the

general perceptions of the police. The study found that trust and confidence in police was related to feelings of obligation to obey and willingness to cooperate with the police.

It is important to learn the impact of user-generated videos on student's attitudes towards the police to determine whether such social media might have a relationship with police legitimacy. This is important because studies indicate that the less trustworthy the police are viewed the lower the perception of their legitimacy. The implication is that if user-generated videos negatively impact the attitudes of members of the public towards the police it could have a significant impact on the effectiveness of the police. Most studies of police legitimacy deal with direct interaction with the police but with the new media videos that portray the police negatively could affect people's attitudes towards the police and can now be viewed by millions of people around the world. The results could be devastating to the police as an effective institution. The studies related to procedural justice focus on face to face interactions while this one will seek to determine if simply viewing police behavior has a similar impact. This study fills the gap in the research by focusing on social media's impact on the public's attitudes towards the police.

There are several harms for policing as described by (Robinson, 2011) caused by the new media. Police officers caught on camera participating in police conduct face more than the possibility of charges being brought against them. If a police officer faces punishment for misconduct that punishment only lasts for a finite time. However the internet could continue to punish the officer for the rest of the officer's life due to what could have been a single mistake in judgement. Another harm mentioned by Robinson is that in some cases the releasing of video to

the internet can make finding an impartial jury almost impossible. Due to the prejudicial impact these videos may have they may become inadmissible in court.

The final harm described by Robinson (2011) that is of great importance to police officers is the potential for retaliation by those on the internet. Robinson describes a case in which a woman was filmed berating a postal worker. Initially the internet was used to expose the injustice and racism the woman had directed towards the postal worker and a dialogue resulted. Then the situation escalated to the point that internet sources were used to track the woman down. Her name was found along with information from her career to real estate and she was forced to endure harassing phone calls from unknown people. The police often undergo harassment by the public and therefore go to great lengths to protect their private information online. This does not mean police officers are immune to such harassment and may become specific targets of online communities such as 4CHAN and Anonymous that do not hold high regard for authority. One such example is that of a New York police officer who allegedly pepper sprayed a crowd without cause. The group Anonymous is made up of a group of computer hackers located around the world that engage in cyber warfare to advance their causes, causes they believe are moral and just (Robinson, 2011), posted the video of the officer online. A blogger enlarged an image and posted it online showing the officer's badge number and released his name along with possible phone numbers and family member identities. Anonymous began a harassment campaign of pizza deliveries; while this may appear harmless this is an invasion of privacy and can cause severe emotional and psychological harms. There are also the financial harms to the pizza companies that take losses on the undelivered pizzas. There is danger that someone may take the retaliation too far and even innocent family members

may be caught up. This could result in innocent people being harmed or even killed, although this is a remote possibility.

If the viewing of these videos is deemed to have an impact on the public's attitudes towards the police these harms, although rather rare, may become all the more prevalent. If the videos impact the public's attitudes negatively the support for the police could be diminished, negatively impacting the effectiveness of the police. The prejudicial impact of these videos would also be determined by learning if the public's attitudes are changed due to the impact of user-generated videos. If attitudes remain unchanged it is likely that the videos hold no prejudicial impact. Thus, it is important to learn whether overall viewership impacts students and whether individual cases have impact.

It is important to understand the influence that non-direct contact with the police has on attitudes of the police. Wentz and Schlimgen (2012) performed a study to determine the impact on people's perception of police caused by indirect contact with the police. Indirect contact comes from hearing or seeing other people's experiences of contact with police. They determined that this variable was the most significant variable in predicting the citizen's perceptions of the police even more so than race, direct contact with police, and neighbourhood context. It indicated that citizens that witnessed more negative interactions with police also viewed the police more negatively, while those that witnessed positive interactions viewed the police more positively. Although, this study focused on direct viewing by citizens of police contact with other people it is important to determine if there is a similar impact with this indirect contact being viewed online through media. This imbalance could have a significant impact on attitudes towards the police if this effect does translate to online viewership. Indirect

contact is becoming more and more common with the advent of the internet. Many people's only contact with the police may come from what they see online. This could greatly impact the effectiveness of the police if this indirect contact begins to impact citizen's attitudes towards the legitimacy and confidence in the police.

Chapter two of this study provides a review of the literature and examines role of media in shaping the opinions of people. The review contains how previous studies have measured attitudes towards the police and the results of those analyses. It discusses how confidence in the police is measured as well as the determinants of police legitimacy. Chapter three is an overview of the measurements used in this study. This chapter discusses how the survey being used was created as well as the types of analyses used. Chapter four contains the bivariate results and discusses important relationships between the independent and dependant variables. It also presents the multivariate analysis that was used to determine the impact of user-generated videos on student's attitudes towards the police. Chapter five provides a discussion and summary of any key findings as a result of the analyses, as well as discusses the limitations and implications of the study.

## Chapter 2

### Literature Review

#### *Media and Attitudes towards the Police*

In today's society the police must be aware of mediated visibility (Thompson, 2005). Thanks to the media, previously hidden practices and events have become public and political events. This is visibility that is no longer restricted to witnessing the here and now. The visibility of a person is no longer restricted to the sharing of the same space and location. The actions and behaviours can now be recorded and transmitted over great distances and become visible to others who would not have witnessed it before. These actions are no longer restricted in time but can be seen over and over again countless times. Popular images may suffer from what is called looping (Surette, 2007). This is the action of one image or video being picked up by multiple sources as it becomes popular on one source. This may cause something that may have only lasted a short time carrying on as it is picked up by more sources creating a perpetuation of the image.

Thompson (2005) argues that there are three results from the new mediated visibility, all three that should be a concern for the police. Due to the rise of multiple forms of mediated communication and the numerous media organizations that are independent of the State, the information environment has become firstly more intensive, secondly more extensive, and thirdly harder to control. First the new mediated visibility is more intensive because of the sheer amount of information that is available. There are more and more networks and sources of information available to people today than there ever was in the past. People are no longer



restricted to the information released by the State. Secondly it is more extensive because there are more and more people capable of receiving this information. Cellphones and the internet allow for instant access to new information. The networks have become global and information can be shared across the world instantly. The third and final result of the new mediated visibility is the flow of information has become less controllable given the numerous forms of media and the sheer number of networks available. Political actors such as the police have a much more difficult time maintaining secrecy around their activities; find it much harder to keep control of information and images that become available to the public, and much harder to understand the consequences of such releases and disclosures of information (Thompson, 2005). This lack of control may hinder the police as they are no longer able to leverage information in the same ways that they used to, damaging their ability to capture criminals and enforce the law. With this new visibility it is important to understand the role media plays for shaping people's attitudes towards the police.

The role media plays in shaping people's opinions on varying topics is well documented. Studies have shown that the majority of information in regards to criminal justice is derived from the varying forms of media (Surette, 2007). Very few people have actual day to day experiences with the criminal justice system and when they do it is usually something minor like a traffic ticket. Therefore, when it comes to criminal justice most people are living a mediated experience. This is the comparative experience that an individual has when they experience an event via the media instead of experiencing an event that is actually closer to the actual experience. This mediated experience and event can sometimes replace information from the actual event so what people believe is based on the widespread media portrayals instead of what

actually happened (Surette, 2007). This can be seen in the case of Rodney King or even more recently in the case of Robert Dziekanski. In these cases we only see what goes on during the video. We do not see the events previous to the start of the film. In both cases the videos show the confrontation with the police. They do not show the actions that caused the police to intervene. We do not see if there was a legitimate reason for the police behaviour only the response by the police. There is a chance that before filming started the police believed there was a great of enough threat that they needed to respond the way they did. Therefore, the videos can show a skewed perspective that negatively portrays the police and can influence the opinions and attitudes towards the police of those watching the tapes.

The question then becomes what is the impact of this mediated experience on people's perceptions of policing. Research has tended to focus on the ways in which police are portrayed in the media with two conflicting views emerging. The views are that the police are either viewed positively or negatively in the media. Surette (2007) argues that the view is dependent on the type of media. He states that while docu-dramas and news tabloid programs portray police favourably, print and broadcast news tend to portray the police as ineffective or incompetent.

Using the 1995 National Opinion Survey on Crime and Justice, Dowler (2003) sought to determine the relationship between media consumption and the public's perceptions of police effectiveness. He determined in this study that there was little connection between media consumption and people's perceptions of police effectiveness. He did point out that this may have been due to the fact that the media was not separated by type and as previous research has

shown the type of media impacts how police are portrayed. This would cause both positive and negative portrayals being mixed together and their effects negating each other.

In a later study Dowler and Zawilski (2007) looked at the impact of media consumption and people's perceptions of police misconduct and discrimination. This time the data was collected using the 2000 Law and Media survey. This survey was an improvement on previous research as it provided a comprehensive assessment of media consumption by respondents. Media consumption was separated into crime shows and news broadcasts. They determined that two media variables were related to perceptions of police misconduct. The first variable being that frequent viewers of network news and crime solving shows reported that police misconduct was a common or frequent occurrence. The findings also showed that race and contact with police were significant factors in perceptions of police misconduct. Caucasians were much more likely than minorities to report that misconduct was rare, whereas, those that had been arrested or charged believed that misconduct was common. They also determined that males, the higher educated, and those concerned about property crime were more likely to perceive lower levels of police misconduct. The study then went on to examine the interaction effects of race and income levels more closely. They determined that non-white viewers who were frequent viewers of news broadcasts believed that misconduct was more frequent. Viewers who watched crime solving shows with an income greater than \$50,000 and viewers who made less than \$50,000 and watched crime solving shows believed that police misconduct was frequent. The study determined that the consumption of network news had the most impact on people's perceptions of police misconduct and discrimination. Thus this study shows that watching reports on real life incidents can significantly impact people's attitudes towards the police.

Weitzer and Tuch (2004) also looked at the role that media played in shaping people's perceptions of police misconduct. They determined that repeated exposure to mass media reports of police abuse was one of the strongest predictors of perceptions of police misconduct. People who frequently viewed or watched reports about police abuse believed that the abuse was much more common in their cities and overestimated the amount of abuse in their neighbourhoods. This was common among all races but it affected minorities much more than Caucasians.

Steven and Edmund, and Jeff (2006) examined how citizens' attitudes were affected by the news publicity of a high profile trial of police misconduct. Their study sought to determine how local publicity affects specific attitudes towards the police, neighbourhood police services and police harassment. They collected two waves of data, one from before a high profile incident of police misconduct and one after the trial for the incident was over. Steven et al. then measured the effects of these cases on attitudes towards the police in three ways. The first way was through general news media exposure, second was exposure to news coverage of the high profile case and finally the familiarity with the high profile incident. They then included neighbourhood crime perceptions as a control variable.

The findings of Steven et al. (2006) had a number of determinations. Firstly they determined that high familiarity with the case through increased news coverage did not impact the attitudes towards the police, police services and whether officers harass citizens. They found citizens that were more likely to read the paper did not have more negative attitudes about the police, police services, or harassment of citizens by the police. The consumption of the news did however; affect how citizens viewed the guilt of the officers. The more news a person consumed

the more likely they were to believe the officers were guilty. The crime scale variable showed that as concerns of crime in the neighbourhood increased the general attitudes towards the police and specific attitudes towards police services decreased. This means that people who had greater concerns about the crime in their neighbourhood tended to view the police more negatively than those that did not have those concerns.

### *Measuring Attitudes towards Police*

Attitudes towards the police are often determined through survey data. Attitudes towards police are usually split into two categories: general or specific attitudes. General attitudes refer to general, conventional attitudes while specific refers to individual experience with officers. Brandl and Frank and Worden, and Bynum, (1994) describe the relationship between the two types of attitudes as being causally reciprocal with the one form impacting the other. They did determine though that general attitudes had a greater impact on specific attitudes than the other way around. Measurements of attitudes towards the police generally consist of questions pertaining to perceptions such as trustworthiness, respect, and effectiveness.

Many studies that assess the police follow similar patterns. In Dowler (2002) he sought to determine the impact of media on the perception of police effectiveness in crime prevention. It consisted of three questions used to assess confidence in the police ability to protect, solve and prevent crime. It then had three questions designed to measure police officers' promptness, friendliness, and fairness and the final question consisted of the use of excessive force in their community. In a study by Chow (2012) a survey conducted at the University of Regina on students attitude toward the police consisted of eight questions designed to measure respondent's

assessments of specific areas of police work. This included areas such as use of force, promptness, and effectiveness. The study then asked one final question on respondents overall satisfaction with the police. Other studies that used similar measurements to determine attitudes towards police such as Dunham and Alpert (1988), and Dowler and Zawilski, (2007)

Confidence in the police is often a measurement included in determining attitudes towards the police. It is important to understand the differences between two types of confidence in the police described by Easton (1965) as specific and diffuse. Specific support refers to “a set of attitudes towards an institution based upon the fulfillment of expectations of policies or actions in a specific situation.” (Haas, Keijser, & Bruinsma, 2014). Diffuse support is described as a more durable set of attitudes toward the legitimacy of the institution (Haas, et al., 2014). In this case the citizen may disagree with what happens in a specific situation, but still accepts the authority of the institution as a whole (Easton, 1965). According to Haas, et al. (2014) diffuse support is built up indirectly over a long time, which establishes and maintains the legitimacy of an institution. They state that various authors have demonstrated that specific levels of confidence for various officials of an institution can vary without having much of an impact on levels of diffuse confidence. However, if such incidents are dramatic or occur repeatedly over time diffuse confidence can be significantly reduced.

Haas, et al. (2014) claim that it is important to identify what is meant by confidence. According to them the literature on confidence in police is usually split into either procedural justice (procedural justice model) or effectiveness (instrumental model). The procedural justice model proposes that police legitimacy is dependent on the perceptions of fairness, rather than on the police’s ability to reduce crime and punish criminals. This is the idea that if people are

treated fairly and respectfully they will see the police more legitimately. The instrumental model states that the legitimacy of institutions, like the police, is created and maintained by their effectiveness. This model emphasizes the outcomes more than how people are treated. This model states that as long as police are able to reduce crime and arrest criminals the way the citizens are treated does not matter. There is research that demonstrates that both types may play a role in maintaining confidence in the police (Haas, Keijser, and Bruinsma, 2014).

### ***Race and Attitudes towards Police***

A common thread throughout all literature on the perceptions of police is the role of race. Brown and Benedict (2002) reviewed more than 100 articles on perceptions and attitudes towards police. Their research found that four factors, consisting of race, age, contact with police, and neighbourhood, consistently impacted perceptions of the police. They determined that the most commonly studied race difference was that between Caucasians and African-Americans. The majority of the research indicated that African-Americans viewed the police less favourably than Caucasians. Many of the articles they reviewed found that race was the best predictor of evaluations of police performance. Their research showed that Hispanics viewed the police less favourable than Whites, but more favourable than Blacks.

In a survey conducted by Son and Rome (2004) they determined that minorities were far more likely to report disrespectful treatment by police than Caucasians. In their particular sample African-Americans were twice as likely to report disrespectful treatment. They determined that as the seriousness of the disrespect increased, the more likely African-Americans reported the disrespect than Caucasians. African-Americans respondents were two times as likely

to report verbal abuse, close to five times more likely to report police prejudice, and nine times more likely to report physical abuse than their Caucasian counterparts. The findings by Weitzer and Tuch (2004) were similar in that they found African Americans were also much more likely than Caucasians to believe that police misconduct occurred “very often.” They determined that depending on the question, African-Americans were three to five times more likely to believe that misconduct frequently occurred in their city and at least three times more likely to say that it happened very often in their neighborhood. They also determined that the Caucasians -Hispanic gap exists but not as much as African-Americans.

The final aspect of race and perceptions of police comes down to the race of the officer themselves. Cochran and Warren (2012) using data from the 2005 Police-Public Contact Survey determined that African-Americans are more likely to negatively evaluate police behavior when the stop is initiated by a Caucasians officer. This is true even after controlling for the reported reason the officer gave for the stop. This was not the case when the officer was from an ethnic minority. They found that for stops by minority officer no citizen–race or ethnicity effects occurred, and the main predictor of citizens’ perceptions of the legitimacy of the stop was the explanation the officer gave to the citizen. Cochran and Warren suggest that in part citizens, especially those of minority status, determine officer legitimacy more objectively when they are stopped by minority officers. When the Caucasian officers stop minority citizens police are seemingly viewed more skeptically.

### ***Age and Attitudes towards Police***



Another important factor determined by Brown and Benedict (2002) to impact perception of police was the age of a person. Their research determined that the majority of studies that included age as a variable found that the younger a person was the less favourably they viewed the police. Younger respondents were less likely than older ones to believe that police should deal with crime more aggressively. The young were more likely to think that police use too much force. They were also more likely than adults to believe that the police had dealt with them unfairly. More recently age was also found to be a significant factor in determining citizen's general attitudes towards police by Lai and Zhao (2010) such that as age increased so did the positive attitudes towards police.

### ***Exposure to Police and Attitudes towards Police***

A third feature found by Brown and Benedict (2002) in their review of research that impact people's perceptions of police is the nature of contact that people had with the police. The majority of the studies show that positive contact will improve impressions of police while negative contact will create negative impressions of the police. There is no consensus on whether the one or the other makes a greater impact. Some of the studies in Brown and Benedict's (2002) review indicated that vicarious contact, which is simply witnessing and having knowledge of inappropriate police actions, are correlated with negative perceptions of the police (Thomas & Hyman, 1977). These studies have also shown that those who initiate contact with police are more satisfied with the police but the more contact they have with the police the less satisfied these people become. The studies have also shown that victims of crime who are satisfied with the police handling of their situation have more favourable opinions of police than those who are dissatisfied with the way their case was handled. There is no research on how

people's attitudes towards the police are impacted by having had mixed experiences with the police.

Frank and Smith and Novak (2005) conducted a survey testing people on how they determined their general and specific attitudes toward the police. Open-ended questions were used to test the attitudes and observed for recognizable patterns. They determined that the citizens' explanations for their general attitudes towards the police fell into three broad groupings, the majority of which were based on specific attributes of officers during encounters with the police. The responses did not contain comments about police as a whole but rather references to behaviour of particular officers. They suggest that police may be able to influence citizens' attitudes by increasing positive contacts and with timely, courteous, and respectful service. They also determined that when evaluating police citizen interactions, officer and encounter attributes were cited more often than outcomes. This means that the contact experience, whether negative or positive, influenced citizens' specific attitudes towards the police.

While most studies dealing with contact with police deal with direct contact with the police Rosenbaum and Schuck and Costello, and Hawkins, and Ring (2005) took a look at the impact of direct experience versus vicarious experience with the police and the impact on attitudes towards the police. They collected attitudinal data from before and after contact with police. What they determined was that direct contact with the police within the past year regardless of who initiated that contact was not enough to change the attitudes towards the police. They found this to be consistent across racial and ethnic groups. The study did show that in cases where the contact was initiated by the citizen the quality of that encounter did impact

attitudes. They determined that if this contact was negative it significantly increased negative attitudes towards the police. When the contact was initiated by police and was negative it did not have any impact on the citizen's attitudes. The researchers explain that attitudes towards police are relatively stable and are not easily influenced by a couple of police initiated contacts. Their study revealed evidence of casual influence in the opposite direction. This means that negative attitudes about the police predicted both negative citizens initiated and police initiated encounters.

According to Rosenbaum et al. (2006) four out five Americans don't have direct contact with the police so they sought to determine the impact of indirect experience. What they determined was that vicarious knowledge of police encounters, both positive and negative, was an important predictor of attitudes towards the police. They found that positive information about the police produced larger attitudinal effects than negative information. They surmised that this may be because it is less common and more noteworthy. Overall though they determined that it is more likely that attitudes about the police shaped how the encounters were perceived and not the other way around.

Tankebe's (2010) study of public confidence in police trustworthiness, procedural justice and effectiveness based on public experience with corruption in Ghana looked at three aspects of experience with police corruption, personal experience, vicarious experience and subjective evaluations of police anti-corruption measures. They determined that personal experience with police corruption did not have an effect on the public's confidence in the police's effectiveness. On the other hand, the evaluations of attempts to fight corruption were strongly related to the confidence in the police. Vicarious experience of corruption negatively affected the public's

confidence in the police. When it came to procedural justice vicarious experience of corruption was related to the public believing that they would be treated unfairly. Like with effectiveness, evaluations of attempts to fight corruption was positively related to procedural justice, while personal experience had no impact. The results were the same for trustworthiness.

### ***Neighbourhood Context and Policing***

The final feature of Brown and Benedict (2002) review was the neighbourhood in which someone lived. Their research showed that neighbourhoods have different needs and expectations of the police. They found that the studies that included neighbourhoods as a variable showed that there were indeed differences in the perceptions of police between these neighbourhoods. Their review showed that there is no consensus on why there is variation between neighbourhoods. Some studies such as Apple and O'Brian (1983) and Smith et al. (1991) showed that the higher the proportion of African-Americans in a neighbourhood the more negative the perception of the police in that neighbourhood. Others such as Wietzer (1999) showed that race was not a factor when age, gender, income, and race of individuals were controlled (Brown & Benedict 2002). Cao et al. (1996) reported that it was neighbourhood incivility, disorder, and informal collective security and not the ethnicity of the neighbourhood that had the greatest negative impact on perceptions of the police (Brown & Benedict 2002).

Hawdon (2008) tried to explain the neighbourhood impact through the explanation of social capital. Social capital refers to “features of social organizations, such as networks, norms, and trust, which facilitate action and cooperation for mutual benefit” (Putnam, 1993, p. 35).

Hawdon described two types of social capital; bonding and bridging capital. Bonding capital is

the trust between specific individuals such as friends, neighbours and coworkers; while bridging capital expands to people and institutions, such as police, one has few personal connections. Neighbourhoods with people who are high in bridging capital are likely to have connections with the larger social order and are therefore more likely to believe that the police are a legitimate group. Those neighbourhoods lacking in bridging capital are likely to view the larger social order with suspicion and distrust and dismiss the institutions as legitimate, therefore having lower perceptions of the police.

Hawdon (2008) describes four types of neighbourhoods and how the perceptions of legitimacy and trust vary in each neighbourhood. A neighbourhood consisting of high bridging and bonding capital will have an initial trust of the police but due to the closeness of the community an individual officer's behaviour can greatly impact this trust. A high bridging and low bonding neighbourhood is likely to view the police as legitimate but due to the fact that this community is not closely related the behaviour of an individual officer will not greatly influence how the neighbourhood views the legitimacy of the police. Low bridging and bonding neighbourhoods are likely to have poor initial perceptions of the police. Lack of community closeness in such communities mean officers will have a difficult time improving this relationship. The inability of officers to improve the relationship with communities will hamper their ability to perform their job. Communities are less likely to cooperate with the police if they have poor perceptions of the police. The final type of neighbourhood is one that consists of low bridging and high bonding. This type of neighbourhood will see the police as outsiders and have an ingrained distrust of the police. They will seek to protect each other from the perceived

illegitimacy of the police. Individual officer behaviour will be quickly spread to others in the group.

In a study by Cao and Frank, and Cullen (1996) found that community context was the most important factor to influence the publics' attitudes towards the police. They specifically stated that citizens' perceptions of disorder had the greatest impact on their attitudes. It therefore appears that police were held partly responsible for the disorder in the neighbourhoods. They also found that the other community context variable of informal collective security had significant impact on citizen's attitudes towards the police. Informal collective security is the willingness of neighbours to provide protection from crime. Cao et al. (1996) suggest that confidence in ones neighbours creates confidence in the police. This suggests that social bonds may encourage their connection with and positive opinion of the formal institutional settings.

Cao et al. (1996) discuss that the measurements used for neighbourhood context are perceptual rather than objective measures. They report that research using objective measures, such as crime rates, have usually been found to not be able to explain differences in people's attitudes towards the police. They suggest this may be due to the fact that beliefs about local community conditions are likely to be accessed cognitively which may cause them to influence attitudes towards the police. The impact of these perceptions may be really important if the public sees as a problem that is within the control of the police.

### ***Summary***

This study sought to explore the impact of exposure to new forms media such as video sharing on student's general attitudes towards the police. While mainstream forms of media

such as news broadcast and television have been studied there is a lack of research on the new forms of media that have been created with the implementation of the internet. The research question is framed within Thompson's (2005) idea of the 'new visibility'. This is the idea that the viewer society has now become the media producer society. In Goldsmith (2010) he points out that when this new visibility is applied to the public responsibilities of policing, the destabilizing and destructive consequences of this visibility could be jeopardize a favourable police image management. Accounting for this new visibility this study sought to build on previous research that has shown race, age, neighbourhood context, and police contact influence attitudes towards the police. The research has shown that race, age, neighbourhood context, and police contact influence attitudes towards the police. Specifically, the research has shown that ethnic minorities, people of young age, neighbours with poor bonding, and people who have had negative interactions with the police all have more negative attitudes towards the police

### Chapter 3

#### Methodology

##### ***Procedure***

The data for this study was collected using an online survey developed specifically for this research. The sample collected was taken from students at Wilfrid Laurier University. Participants were recruited using in-class announcements and advertisement on campus notice boards at the Wilfrid Laurier University Brantford campus. The data was collected over several months until a sample size of 200 students had been reached. The survey was anonymous and confidential. Ethics approval was received from the Research Ethics Board of Wilfrid Laurier University (REB#3987). Each participant was given an informed consent outlining any possible risks associated with completing the survey. For any participant that did not answer a question they were assigned the mean score for that question. This research will seek to test four hypotheses. The following hypotheses guided the study.

Hypothesis number 1- Students who spend more time viewing online videos of police will have a more negative attitude towards the police than those that spend less time viewing the videos.

Hypothesis number 2 – Students that have more negative attitudes towards the police will view the behaviour of the police in the case studies more negatively than students with more positive attitudes towards the police.



Hypothesis number 3 - Consistent with previous research minority status, young age, poor neighbourhood bonding, and police contact will have more negative influence on participants attitudes towards the police than exposure to user generated police videos.

Hypothesis number 4 - It will be more likely that people with negative attitudes towards the police will have seen the two case studies involving negative actions of the police (Dziekanski and Yatim) than it is that they have seen the positive video involving NYPD officer DePrimo.

### *Demographic/Control Variables*

Ethnicity, age, contact with police, and neighbourhood context were collected. Race was collected through an open ended question in which participants were asked to identify their race. Due to the participants the race was then grouped into either White or Minority. For age the participants were simply asked to place their age in the box. Contact with the police was measured using three questions. The first question asked them when their last contact with the police occurred given the options no contact within the last month, within the past 3 months, within the past 6 months, within past year, more than a year. The second questions asked whether the contact was initiated by the police or if the participant initiated the contact. The third question deals with the experience of their contact with the police. The participants were asked to describe their overall contact experience with police as, very negative, negative, neutral, positive, or very positive. The majority of students that participated in the study were white with

(73.5%). Female students made up 59.5% of the study. Most of the students came from Criminology/Law and society while all other programs only accounted for 18.5% of respondents.

Neighbourhood context was collected using questions adapted from Hawdon (2008) and Schafer, Huebner, Bynum (2003). To determine the type of neighbourhood context the participants live in, five questions were asked. The participants were asked to rate their agreement to the following: (1) "Residents in my neighbourhood are willing to take responsibility for the safety of their own neighborhoods; (2) Residents will share information on ways to work on local problems in their neighborhoods, (3) I trust the people in my neighbourhood", to determine what Hawdon (2008) called bonding capital, the connection between people in a neighbourhood. The participants were then asked two questions in regards to what Hawdon described as bridging capital or the trust of people outside their neighbourhood. These questions were (1) citizens would be willing to work with the police to solve neighborhood issues and (2) I'm suspicious of people I don't know wandering around my neighbourhood. All five of these questions were answered using the five point Likert scale of 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3= neutral, 4= agree, and 5=strongly agree. The participants were then finally asked how they would describe living in their neighbourhood rating it as one of the following: excellent, good, neutral, fair, or poor. Neighbourhood description was measured using a scale ranging from six to thirty with higher scores indicating a greater opinion of the neighbourhood and lower scores representative of lower opinions of their neighbourhood.

Along with the control variables two other demographic variables, gender and program of study, were collected. For participants gender they were asked whether they were male or female. As this survey was conducted at Wilfrid Laurier University, and was focused on

students, each participant was asked their program of study. The program of study was then assigned to group of Criminology/Law and Society, or other. This was measured because it was important to understand if people in Criminology/Law and Society are positively or more critically biased towards the police due to their education when compared to other programs. Due to the study participants being students; income and employment was not collected as it is unlikely that students income and employment vary greatly, and because previous research has shown that these variables have no impact on attitudes towards the police (Brown and Benedict, 2002).

### ***Frequency and Attitudes of Online Video Viewership***

The independent variable for this study is how much a participant watches user generated videos of police behaviour. These videos are located on video websites such as YouTube and Ebaumsworld and do not include videos from reality or fictional shows such as Cops, To Serve and Protect, or CSI. The video content of interest to the study includes videos captured by the general public and posted to video sharing websites. The participants viewing habits were measured in two ways. The first question asked was “*How often do you watch actual police videos on video sharing sites?*” This question had a 5 answer response options ranging from more than once a week, about once a week, a few times a month, less than once a month, or never”. Participants were also asked when the last time it was that they viewed a police video on video sharing sites and asked to select the following: within a week, within a month, within the last six months, within the last year, more than a year ago. The participants were also asked about where they got the majority of their information on the police: internet, television, newspapers, magazines, personal contact, other. This variable was then turned into media as main source.

The participants were then asked if the majority of these videos were accurate portrayals of police, and then asked if the majority of these videos portray the police negatively. These two questions were measured using a five point Likert scale of 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4= agree, and 5=strongly agree. The results indicated that students rarely watched user-generated videos of the police. Very few students agreed that the videos were an accurate portrayal of the police, with most of the students believing the videos portrayed police negatively.

### ***Familiarity with Popular Police Conduct Videos***

The second part of the independent variable measurement was the students' familiarity with three popular online videos. This consisted of three high profile cases in which video of police interacting with the public was readily available. The first case was of Robert Dziekanski, a Polish immigrant who barely spoke English and was tased at the Vancouver International Airport by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and subsequently died in 2007. The security footage along with camera phone video was then posted on the internet on sites such as YouTube and has been viewed hundreds of thousands of times on YouTube. The second case study was that of Sammy Yatim in which, Yatim a young man, was shot and killed on a streetcar by the Toronto Police in 2014. The incident was caught on a camera phone and has been posted to the internet. The third and final case involves NYPD officer Larry DePrimo (2012) who was photographed purchasing boots for a homeless man and one video report on YouTube has been viewed over 1.1 million times (YouTube, 2015). The participants were asked how familiar they were with each case using a 5 point Likert scale consisting of, 1=extremely unfamiliar, 2=unfamiliar, 3= know of, 4=somewhat familiar, 5=extremely familiar. Participants were then

asked if they have seen the online video. Each question was preceded with a brief description of each case. The most familiar of the cases was the Sammy Yatim case which can be expected as it is the most recent of the three cases. In the cases of Yatim and Dziekanski very few students believed that the officers had behaved appropriately.

### *Attitudes towards Police*

The dependent variable in this study was the participant's general attitudes towards the police. The measure consisted of five scales, four of which come from Dunham and Alpert (1988): Officer Demeanor (ODS), Responsibility for Crime Control (RCCS), Discretion (DS), Active Patrol Strategies (APSS). An additional scale Officer Characteristics (OCS)(Webb and Marshall, 1995) was added to supplement the measurement. The Demeanor Scale consisted of eight questions measuring the participant's perception of the general demeanor of the officer or the orientation towards citizens. The Responsibility for Crime Control Scale consisted of two questions concerning the role of the police and citizens in crime control. The Discretion Scale consisted of two questions that measure agreement with the need for variability in enforcing the law and stretching procedural safeguards in some areas or neighbourhoods. The Active Patrol Strategy Scale was comprised of two questions which measure the approval of active patrol strategies, such as stopping people walking down the street or random vehicle checks. Finally the Officer Characteristic Scale consisted of nine questions designed to measure level of agreement with personal and professional characteristics or attributes of police officers. These include characteristics such as honesty, communication skills, prejudice, and so on. A five point Likert scale consisting of (1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree) was used to measure degree of respondent agreement. The answers were adjusted so that higher scores reflected a more positive

attitude towards the police. For the Demeanor Scale questions 3, 5, and 7 were reverse coded while the Officer Characteristic Scale had questions 3, 6, 7, and 9 reverse coded.

Reliability Coefficients for the four scales in the Dunham and Albert were .88 for Demeanor, .71 for Responsibility, .43 for Discretion, and .66 for Patrol. The Webb and Marshall Study reported coefficients of .75 for Demeanor, .85 for Responsibility, .17 for Discretion, .54 for Patrol and .73 for Officer Characteristics. The Cronbach  $\alpha$  reliability scores in this study were .89 for the Officer Demeanor Scale, .87 for RCCS, .23 for Discretion, .66 for Patrol and .84 for Officer Characteristics. The RCCS scale, Patrol scale, and Discretion scale were not used due to the fact that they only consisted of two questions and when combined into one scale the reliability was too low.

Using the case studies, the perceptions of the police for a particular incident were studied. It tested if watching a single video of a police interaction is associated with the way student's view well known cases of incidents involving the police. This was done by asking participants to rate their agreement to the following statement: "As far as I am aware the police behaved appropriately in this case?" The participants then had a five point Likert scale ranging from 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree. Participants were then be asked to respond to this statement "This is the typical reaction of the police?" to determine if this is part of their general attitude towards the police or it is specific to this incident. This question was answered using the same five point Likert scale described above.

### ***Data Analysis***

Data analysis began by summing the score for the overall attitudes towards the police from section four of the survey collecting the participant's attitudes towards the police. All variables were entered into a correlation matrix to determine any possible relationships between the variables. Only the two scales of Officer Demeanor and Officer Characteristics were used as the other scales reliability was too low or in the case of the RCCS the questions were omitted due to their similarity. The answers were coded from one (Strongly Disagree) to five (Strongly Agree). The higher the scale scores the more positive the student's attitude towards police. Each of the total scores for the two scales were regressed on the predictor variables using a series of ordinary least square regressions to determine which variables impact the Officer Demeanor and Officer Characteristic scales. These items included race, age, gender, program of study, neighbourhood description, and contact with police. For Race white participants were given a value of 1 while all others were assigned a value of 0. Gender was categorized using males having a value of 1 while females were assigned a value of 0. Program of study was broken into two categories of Criminology/Law and Society having a value of 1 and all other programs 0. Police contact was used to determine if the length of time from contact, who initiated that contact, and the overall experience with police contact impacted attitudes. The variable of who initiated contact was given a value of 1 for who initiated the contact and 0 for other. The values for length of time from contact were assigned 1=within the last month, 2=within 3 months, 3=within 6 months, 4=within the last year, 5=more than a year. The independent variables were also regressed on the amount of time spent watching user generated videos of police videos, the last time these videos were watched, media as main source of information, the majority of these videos portray police negatively, and these videos are an accurate portrayal of police. The results of the regression were then compared with peoples overall attitudes towards the police to

determine what variables impacted participant's attitudes towards police. Consistent with previous research race, police contact, neighbourhood description had impacts on people's attitudes towards the police. More negative attitudes towards the police were significantly correlated with minorities, poor police contact experience, and poor neighbourhood bonding.

The final analysis conducted involved the knowledge of the case studies. The control/demographic variables were regressed on respondent's familiarity with the case, their source of information, and whether or not they have seen the video as the independent variables along with whether they believed these videos represented the typical reaction of police, and that the police behaved appropriately. These results were then compared to see if they had the same impact on overall attitudes of the police.



## Chapter 4

### Descriptive and Bivariate Results

The majority of students that participated in the study were White (73.5%). Female students made up 59.5% of the study. Most of the students came from Criminology/Law and society while all other programs only accounted for 18.5% of respondents.

Most of the students' last contact with police had not occurred within the past six months with 41% having not had contact with the police in the last year. This contact was initiated voluntarily 46% of the time, initiated by the police 32.5% of the time, and the rest was initiated by other such as noise complaints by neighbours. The majority of these students described this contact as positive or very positive with only 8.5% of students describing the contact as negative or very negative.

The majority of participants believed that the residents in the neighbourhood took responsibility for the safety of that neighbourhood. The students believed that as far as sharing information on crime control in the neighbourhood they were fairly evenly split among neutral (34%), agree (33%), and disagree (27%). Most of the students described the people in their neighbourhood as willing to work with the police with only 15% either disagreeing or strongly disagreeing. The majority of students described being either satisfied or very satisfied with their neighbourhood. Very few students did not trust the people in their neighbourhood with only 18% stating that they were not able to trust them. Half of the students agreed that they were suspicious of people they do not know in their neighbourhood with 51.5% either agreeing or strongly agreeing.

The descriptive characteristics for the demographic and control variables are presented in

Table 1

Table 1: Demographic/Control Variables ( $N=200$ )

	Frequency	Percent
<b>Ethnicity</b>		
White	147	73.5
Non-White	53	26.5
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	81	40.5
Female	119	59.5
<b>Program</b>		
Law and criminology	163	81.5
Other	37	18.5
<b>Police Contact</b>		
Within Last Month	34	17
Within Last 3 Months	33	16.5
Within Past 6 Months	16	8
Within past Year	32	16
More than a Year	82	41
<b>Nature Of Police Contact</b>		
Police Initiated	65	32.5
Initiated Voluntarily	92	46
Initiated by other	39	19.5
<b>Experience of Contact</b>		
Very Negative	2	1
Negative	15	7.5
Neutral	55	27.5
Positive	74	37
Very Positive	51	25.5
<b>Neighbourhood Responsibility</b>		
Strongly Disagree	4	2
Disagree	44	22
Neutral	62	31
Agree	81	40.5
Strongly Agree	9	4.5
<b>Neighbourhood Sharing</b>		
Strongly Disagree	6	3
Disagree	54	27
Neutral	68	34
Agree	66	33
Strongly Agree	6	3
<b>Citizens Working With Police</b>		

Strongly Disagree	3	1.5
Disagree	27	13.5
Neutral	48	24
Agree	98	49
Strongly Agree	24	12
<b>Neighbourhood Description</b>		
Very Dissatisfied	3	1.5
Dissatisfied	21	10.5
Neutral	24	12
Satisfied	97	48.5
Very Satisfied	52	26
<b>Neighbourhood Trust</b>		
Strongly Disagree	11	5.5
Disagree	25	12.5
Neutral	65	32.5
Agree	74	37
Strongly Agree	25	12.5
<b>Suspicious Of Others</b>		
Strongly Disagree	4	2
Disagree	36	18
Neutral	57	28.5
Agree	63	31.5
Strongly Agree	40	20

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### ***Officer Demeanor Responses***

The Officer Demeanor scale demonstrated that the majority of students believed that officer demeanor is usually positive. The majority of students either agreed or strongly agreed (63.5%) that the police are usually courteous. Approximately 64.5% of students believed that police are usually respectful towards them. Very few students (23%) believed that police used more force than they need. A majority of the students (67.5%) believed that police are usually friendly. Most of the students (63.5%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the idea that police are usually rude. Half of students at 51.5% of students believed that officers give people a chance to explain. Most of the students disagreed or strongly disagreed (66%) that officers enjoy kicking people around. The students appeared to be fairly undecided when it comes to police showing concern when asked questions.

***Officer Characteristics Responses***

The majority of students had positive attitude towards officer characteristics. Half of the students agreed (50.5%) that police are usually honest. The majority of students (54%) agreed or strongly agreed that police are usually physically fit. Few students agreed or strongly agreed that police are prejudiced against minorities (26%). A large percentage of students (63%) strongly agreed or agreed that the police are hardworking. Approximately 62.5% of students believed that the police are well trained. Most of the students (53%) believed that police are able to answer their questions correctly. The majority of students at 59% either disagreed or strongly disagreed that police do not communicate well. Very few students (17%) did not believe the police responded quickly to calls. Only 5.5% of students believed that most police officers are liars.

***Responsibility for Crime Control/Discretion/Active patrol Strategies Responses***

Very few students (16%) believed that only the police can control crime in this area. The majority of students (57%) strongly disagreed or disagreed that police were the only ones that can control crime in their neighbourhood. More students agreed or strongly agreed (47%) that police sometimes need to stretch rules, than student's that disagreed or strongly disagreed (21%). Very few people believed that police were stricter in some neighbourhoods (4%). Students were fairly neutral on whether crime preventing requires random police stops with 33.5% agreeing, 20% neutral, and 30.5% disagreeing. Only 13.5% of students believed that a good police officer patrols aggressively by stopping cars and checking people who look suspicious.

Table 2 provides an overview of the descriptive characteristics of the dependent variables for the sample.

Table 2: Dependent Variable Attitudes towards the Police (N=200).

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>Officer Demeanor</b>					
Police officers are usually courteous	16 (8)	111 (55.5)	48 (24)	21 (10.5)	3 (1.5)
Police officers are respectful towards people like me	26 (13)	103 (51.5)	43 (21.5)	20 (10)	6 (3)
The police use more force than they need to in carrying out their duties.	12 (6)	34 (17)	58 (29)	83 (41.5)	12 (6)
Most police officers are usually friendly.	19 (9.5)	116 (58)	45 (22.5)	17 (8.5)	3 (1.5)
The police are usually rude.	4 (2)	15 (7.5)	53 (26.5)	106 (53)	21 (10.5)
Most police officers give people a chance to explain.	12 (6)	91 (45.5)	65 (32.5)	27 (13.5)	4 (2)
Police officers enjoy kicking people around.	5 (2.5)	13 (6.5)	49 (24.5)	102 (51.5)	29 (14.5)
Police officers show concern when you ask them questions	8 (4)	91 (25.5)	74 (37)	23 (11.5)	3 (1.5)
<b>Officer Characteristics</b>					
Police officers are honest.	15 (7.5)	86 (43)	72 (36)	21 (10.5)	5 (2.5)
The police are physically fit	12 (6)	96 (48)	60 (30)	26 (13)	5 (2.5)
Police officers are prejudiced against minority persons.	8 (5)	42 (21)	70 (35)	70 (35)	10 (5)
Police officers are hardworking,	32 (16)	94 (47)	60 (30)	11 (5.5)	2 (1)
The police are well trained,	21 (10.5)	104 (52)	53 (26.5)	18 (9)	3 (1.5)
Police officers are not able to answer citizens' questions correctly.	2 (1)	18 (9)	70 (35)	97 (48.5)	13 (6.5)
Police don't communicate well	6 (3)	20 (10)	56 (28)	104 (52)	14 (7)
Police officers respond quickly to calls for service.	11 (5.5)	82 (41)	72 (36)	27 (13.5)	7 (3.5)
Most police officers are liars.	1 (.5)	10 (5)	42 (21)	106 (53)	41 (20.5)
<b>Responsibility For Crime Control</b>					
Only the police can control crime in this area.	3 (1.5)	29 (14.5)	51 (25.5)	97 (48.5)	17 (8.5)
Only the police can control crime in my neighborhood.	3 (1.5)	31 (15.5)	50 (25)	95 (47.5)	19 (9.5)
<b>Discretion</b>					
In order to prevent crimes and catch criminals, the police are sometimes required to stretch the search and seizure laws and other procedural safeguards.	7 (3.5)	87 (43.5)	60 (30)	32 (16)	10 (5)
The police are more strict in some neighborhoods than in others	0 (0)	118 (4)	29 (14.5)	8 (59)	42 (21)
<b>Active Patrol Strategies</b>					
In some neighborhoods, crime preventing requires that police	6 (3)	67 (33.5)	40 (20)	61 (30.5)	25 (12.5)

officers stop people walking down the street and ask them where they are going or what they are doing. .A good police officer is one who patrols aggressively by stopping cars and checking people who look suspicious.	0 (0)	27 (13.5)	58 (29)	81 (40.5)	34 (17)
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Note: Percent in brackets.

Tables 3, 4 and 5 provide an overview of the descriptive characteristics for the independent variables.

The majority of students rarely watched user-generated video with 57% rarely and 17% less than once a month. A large portion of the student’s had not watched a video recently with 64% of students having not watched one within the last month. Most of the students believed that these videos were not an accurate portrayal of the police with only 7.5% agreeing that they were. Most students (56.5%) believed that the videos portrayed the police negatively.

Table 3: Independent Variables. Time spent watching User Generated Police Videos (N=200)

	Rarely	Less than once a month	A few times a month	About once a week	More than once a week
How often do you watch police videos on video sharing sites	114 (57)	34 (17)	26 (13)	18 (9)	8 (4)
	More Than a Year	Within A Year	Within last six months	Within Last Month	Within a Week
When was the last time you watched a Police video on video sharing websites	61 (30.5)	26 (13)	41 (20.5)	45 (22.5)	27 (13.5)
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
These videos are an accurate portrayal of the police	0 (0)	15 (7.5)	79 (39.5)	71 (35.5)	35 (17.5)
The majority of these videos Portray the Police negatively	35 (17.5)	78 (39)	56 (28)	30 (15)	1 (.5)

Note: Percent in brackets.

The most familiar of the three videos was the case of Sammy Yatim with 51% of students familiar or somewhat familiar with the case, 36% for Dziekanski, and 28% for Deprimo. In all three cases students received most of their information from the internet with 47% for Dziekanski, 41% for Yatim, 60.5% for Deprimo. The majority of students were fairly neutral on whether the police behaved appropriately in the case with 45.5% neutral for Dziekanski, 42% for Yatim, and 35% for Deprimo. In Deprimo 54% believed the police behaved appropriately, while in Yatim only 10% believed the police behaved appropriately, and in Dziekanski 10% believed the police behaved appropriately. The students were neutral on whether the video portrayed the police negatively with almost 50% of students neutral in all three cases.

Table 4 Variables for Individual Cases of Dziekanski, Yatim and Deprimo ( $N=200$ )

	Extremely unfamiliar	Unfamiliar	Neutral	Somewhat Familiar	Extremely Familiar
How familiar are you with the Robert Dziekanski Tasing	50 (25)	36 (18)	42 (21)	46 (23)	26 (13)
How familiar are you with the shooting death of Sammy Yatim	39 (19.5)	34 (17)	25 (12.5)	57 (28.5)	45 (22.5)
How familiar are you with the NYPD officer Larry Deprimo giving boots to a homeless man	59 (29.5)	49 (24.5)	36 (18)	32 (16)	24 (12)
	Internet	Televisions	Magazines	Newspaper	Other
Where do you get the majority of your information on the Dziekanski case?	94 (47)	46 (23)	1 (.5)	12 (6)	41 (20.5)
Where do you get the majority of your information on the Yatim case?	82 (41)	72 (36.5)	0 (0)	9 (4.5)	31 (15.5)
Where do you get the majority of your information on the Deprimo case?	121 (60.5)	26 (13)	1 (.5)	5 (2.5)	31 (15.5)

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
As far as you are aware the police behaved appropriately in the Dziekanski case?	36 (18)	49 (24.5)	91 (45.5)	19 (9.5)	1 (.5)
As far as you are aware the police behaved appropriately in the Yatim case?	37 (18.5)	54 (27)	84 (42)	17 (8.5)	3 (1.5)
As far as you are aware the police behaved appropriately in the Deprimo case?	5 (2.5)	8 (4)	70 (35)	56 (28)	52 (26)
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Dziekanski is the typical reaction of the police?	12 (6)	49 (24.5)	113 (56.5)	19 (9.5)	2 (1)
Yatim is the typical reaction of the police?	21 (10.5)	55 (27.5)	93 (46.5)	20 (10)	4 (2)
Deprimo is the typical reaction of the police?	18 (9)	35 (17.5)	100 (50)	33 (16.5)	3 (1.5)

Note: Percent in brackets.

The majority of students 63.5% had not seen the Dziekanski video online. The Yatim case had the most viewership at 44% of students having seen the video online. Deprimo was the least viewed of all three videos with 71.5% of students having not seen the video online.

Table 5 Online viewership of Dziekanski, Yatim, Deprimo. (n=200)

	Yes	No
Have you seen Dziekanski online?	70 (35)	127 (63.5)
Have you seen Yatim online?	88 (44)	112 (56)
Have you seen Deprimo online?	55 (27.5)	143 (71.5)



*Bivariate Analysis:*

Correlational analysis was conducted to determine statistically significant relationships between the variables. There were numerous significant relationships. Table 6 presents the correlations matrix.

Table 6: Correlation Matrix for attitudes towards police, descriptive/control variables, and viewership of user-generated videos

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Officer Demeanor	-							
2. Officer Characteristics	.781**	-						
3. Police Stop	.196**	.232**	-					
4. Police Aggressiveness	.150*	.124	.502**	-				
5. Tasering Appropriateness	.137	.101	.163**	.127	-			
6. Tasering Reaction Score	-.238**	-.171*	.053	-.060	.328**	-		
7. Yatim Appropriateness	.177*	.146*	.082	.060	.019	.060	-	
8. Yatim Reaction Score	-.409**	-.370**	-.102	-.098	.415**	.495**	.263**	-
9. Deprimo Appropriateness	.231**	.278**	.054	.018	-.149*	-.116	-.112	-.215**
10. Deprimo Reaction Score	.259**	.327**	.153*	.184**	.178*	-.084	.047	-.155*
11. Media As Main Source	-.168*	-.165*	.119	.111	-.013	.003	-.016	.070
12. Media as Major source Taser	-.069	-.069	.090	.030	-.058	.090	.010	.090
13. Media Main Source Yatim	.060	.025	.012	.090	.066	-.047	-.115	-.101
14. Media Main Source Deprimo	.138	.088	.026	.081	.027	.015	-.047	-.024
15. Saw Tasering Online	-.049	.106	-.037	.065	-.130	-.183	-.032	-.125
16. Saw Yatim Online	-.035	.051	.127	-.004	.148*	.085	-.174*	-.084
17. Saw Deprimo Online	.138	.025	.077	.043	.001	.062	.001	.021
18. Neighbourhood Description	.260**	.283**	.067	.168*	.031	-.006	-.078	-.097
19. Police Contact Experience	.512**	.484**	.148*	.085	.059	-.101	.122	-.222**
20. Contact Initiated by Police	-.139*	-.147*	-.074	.031	-.033	.010	.033	.043
21. Police Contact Voluntary	.150*	.132	.007	-.053	-.012	-.083	.000	-.044
22. Police Contact Time	-.117	-.133	-.011	.087	.048	.168*	.089	.191**
23. White Respondent	.250**	.190**	.017	-.016	-.032	-.051	.042	-.104
24. Male Respondent	.143*	.165**	.100	.071	.043	.034	.071	-.056
25. Program of Study	.026	.090	.070	.174*	.037	-.125	-.081	-.201**
26. How often Videos Watched	-.102	-.023	.031	.087	.057	.078	.000	-.001
27. Last Time Videos Watched	-.013	.055	.084	.035	.019	.045	-.037	-.073
28. Police Behaved appropriate	.325**	.311**	.152*	.014	.155*	-.084	.167*	-.218**
29. Videos Accurate Portrayal	-.460**	-.378**	.009	.014	.060	.280**	-.057	.254**
30. Police Portrayal Negative	-.145*	-.113	-.017	-.044	.022	.030	.159*	.124

Table 6 continued

Variables	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
9. Deprimo Appropriateness	-							
10. Deprimo Reaction Score	.094	-						
11. Media As Main Source	-.137	-.047	-					
12. Media as Major source Taser	-.037	-.011	-.137	-				
13. Media Main Source Yatim	-.053	-.019	-.047	.404**	-			

14. Media Main Source Deprimo	.195**	.061	.130	.388**	.495**	-		
15. Saw Tasing Online	.103	-.035	.124	.110	.107	.061	-	
16. Saw Yatim Online	-.112	.047	.075	.010	-.115	-.047	-.032	-
17. Saw Deprimo Online	.256**	-.011	-.005	.104	.034	.341**	.182**	.001
18. Neighbourhood Description	.208**	.151*	-.016	-.041	-.056	.008	.065	-.078
19. Police Contact Experience	.151*	.208**	.163*	-.065	.012	.162*	.034	.122
20. Contact Initiated by Police	.076	.087	.029	-.033	-.077	-.009	-.004	.000
21. Police Contact Voluntary	.023	.006	-.109	.154*	.104	-.055	-.070	-.034
22. Police Contact Time	.070	.009	-.186**	.066	-.067	.051	-.083	.089
23. White Respondent	.175*	-.048	.070	-.119	.006	-.066	-.034	.042
24. Male Respondent	.032	-.011	.197**	-.047	.000	.073	.163*	.071
25. Program of Study	.054	.106	-.072	-.021	.204**	-.021	.026	-.081
26. How often Videos Watched	-.094	.097	-.013	.174*	.139*	.134	.202**	.000
27. Last Time Videos Watched	-.077	.007	.064	.062	.062	.029	.220**	-.037
28. Police Behaved appropriate	-.038	.039	.181*	.032	.091	.092	.077	.167*
29. Videos Accurate Portrayal	-.068	-.119	.108	.253**	.055	.143*	-.097	-.057
30. Police Portrayal Negative	-.159*	-.020	-.082	.242**	.021	.021	-.026	.159*

Table 6 continued

Variable	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
17. Saw Deprimo Online	-							
18. Neighbourhood Description	.004	-						
19. Police Contact Experience	.012	.196**	-					
20. Contact Initiated by Police	.016	-.024	-.180*	-				
21. Police Contact Voluntary	-.134	.071	.275**	-.454**	-			
22. Police Contact Time	.043	.184**	-.122	-.106	.213**	-		
23. White Respondent	-.138	.092	.138	-.082	.038	.055	-	
24. Male Respondent	.131	.268**	.118	-.026	-.149*	.065	.057	-
25. Program of Study	-.139*	.064	.007	.052	.039	.005	.006	-.079
26. How often Videos Watched	.205**	.036	-.079	-.026	-.038	-.008	-.272**	.106
27. Last Time Videos Watched	.261**	.074	.023	.032	-.101	-.018	-.142*	.276**
28. Police Behaved appropriate	-.066	.151*	.168*	.036	.027	.180*	.030	.118
29. Videos Accurate Portrayal	.074	-.053	-.263**	-.188**	.171*	-.055	-.098	-.130
30. Police Portrayal Negative	.034	-.085	-.179*	-.048	.153*	.055	-.103	-.212**

Table 6 continued

Variable	25	26	27	28	29	30
25. Program of Study	-					
26. How often Videos Watched	.042	-				
27. Last Time Videos Watched	-.054	.667**	-			
28. Police Behaved appropriate	.057	.033	.029	-		
29. Videos Accurate Portrayal	.025	.125	.049	-.118	-	
30. Police Portrayal Negative	.007	.135	.002	.056	.401**	-

Note \*p<.05, \*\*p<.01

### *Officer Demeanor Correlations*

The correlation matrix reveals that Officer Demeanor scale is positively related to Police Contact Experience, Police Contact Initiated Voluntarily, White Respondent, Male Respondent, Neighbourhood Description, and whether the police behaved appropriately in the last video watched. In the case studies the Officer Demeanor scale was positively related to Deprimo Appropriateness, Deprimo Reaction score, and Yatim Appropriateness.

Officer Demeanor scale and Police Contact Experience have a Pearson correlation coefficient that shows a statistically significant positive linear relationship between the two variables,  $r = .512$ ,  $p = .01$ , two tailed. The correlation would indicate that as student's attitudes towards officer demeanor increases positively so does their positive experience with police contact. The Pearson correlation coefficient for Officer Demeanor scale and Police Contact Voluntary shows a statistically significant positive linear relationship between the two variables,  $r = .150$ ,  $p = .05$ , two tailed, indicating that if students contact with police is voluntary the more positive their attitudes towards police demeanor. Officer Demeanor scale and Police Behaved Appropriate variables have a Pearson correlation coefficient that shows a statistically significant positive linear relationship between the two variables,  $r = .325$ ,  $p = .01$ , two tailed. This would indicate that the more positive a student's attitude towards officer demeanor the more likely they are to believe that police behaved appropriately in the most recent user-generated police video that they watched.

Officer Demeanor scale and White Respondent variables have a Pearson correlation coefficient that shows a statistically significant positive linear relationship between the two

variables,  $r = .250$ ,  $p = .01$ , two tailed. This indicates that White Respondents are more likely to have more positive attitudes towards officer demeanor. The Pearson correlation coefficient for Officer Demeanor scale and Male Respondent shows a statistically significant positive linear relationship,  $r = .143$ ,  $p = .05$ , two tailed. This correlation indicates that Male respondents have more positive attitudes towards officer demeanor. The Pearson correlation coefficient for Officer Demeanor scale and Neighbourhood Description scale shows a statistically significant positive relationship between the two variables,  $r = .260$ ,  $p = .01$ , two tailed. This indicates that the more positive the students attitudes towards officer demeanor the more positive their attitudes towards their neighbourhood.

The two variables of Officer Demeanor scale and Deprimo Appropriateness have a Pearson correlation coefficient that shows a statistically significant positive linear relationship between the two variables,  $r = .231$ ,  $p = .01$ , two tailed. This indicates that students with more positive attitudes towards officer demeanor are more likely to believe that officer Deprimo behaved appropriately in this case. The Pearson correlation coefficient for the Officer Demeanor scale and Deprimo Reaction score shows a statistically significant positive relationship between the two variables,  $r = .259$ ,  $p = .01$ , two tailed. The correlation would indicate that students with more positive attitudes towards officer demeanor the more likely they are to believe that the Deprimo case is a typical reaction of the police.

Conversely, Officer Demeanor scale was negatively related to Contact Initiated by Police, Media as Main Source, Videos an Accurate Portrayal of the Police, and videos portray police negatively. For the case studies Taser Reaction score and the Yatim Reaction score were also negatively related to the Officer Demeanor scale.

Officer Demeanor scale and Media Main Source variables have a Pearson correlation coefficient that shows a statistically significant negative linear relationship between the two variables,  $r = -.168$ ,  $p = .05$ , two tailed. This correlation indicates that the more students get information on police from sources other than the media the more negative their attitudes towards the officer demeanor. The two variables Officer Demeanor scale and Contact Initiated by Police Pearson correlation coefficient show a statistically significant negative linear relationship between the two variables,  $r = -.139$ ,  $p = .05$ , two tailed. This correlation would indicate that if the students contact with police is initiated by the police the students are more likely to have negative attitudes towards the officer demeanor.

The two variables Officer Demeanor scale and Videos an Accurate Portrayal have a Pearson correlation coefficient that shows a statistically significant negative linear relationship between the two variables,  $r = -.460$ ,  $p = .01$ , two tailed, indicating that the more positive a student's attitude towards officer demeanor the less likely they are to believe that the last user-generated video they watched was an accurate portrayal of police. The Pearson correlation coefficient for Officer Demeanor scale and Police Portrayed Negatively shows a statistically significant negative linear relationship between the two variables,  $r = -.145$ ,  $p = .01$ , two tailed. This indicates that the more positive the student's attitudes towards officer demeanor the more likely they are to believe that the police were not portrayed negatively in the last user-generated video they watched.

The Pearson correlation coefficient for the Officer Demeanor scale and Taser reaction score variable shows a statistically significant negative linear relationship between the two variables,  $r = -.238$ ,  $p = .01$ , two tailed. This correlation would indicate that students who have

more positive attitudes towards officer demeanor are less likely to believe the Taser video is a typical reaction of the police. The two variables of Officer Demeanor scale and Yatim Reaction score have a Pearson correlation coefficient showing a statistically significant negative linear relationship between the two,  $r = -.409$ ,  $p = .01$ , two tailed. The negative relationship would indicate that the more positive the students attitude towards officer demeanor the less likely they are to believe that Yatim is a typical reaction of the police.

### ***Officer Characteristics Correlations***

The correlation matrix reveals that Officer Characteristic scale is positively related to Police Contact Experience, White Respondent, Gender, Neighbourhood Description, and whether the police behaved appropriately in the last video watched. In the case studies the Officer Characteristic scale was positively related to Deprimo Appropriateness, Deprimo Reaction score, and Yatim Appropriateness.

Officer Characteristics scale and Police Contact Experience have a Pearson correlation coefficient that shows a statistically significant positive linear relationship between the two variables,  $r = .484$ ,  $p = .01$ , two tailed. This means that the more positive a student's attitude towards police characteristics the more likely their police contact experience was positive. Officer Characteristics scale and White Respondent variables have a Pearson correlation coefficient that shows a statistically significant positive linear relationship between the two variables,  $r = .190$ ,  $p = .01$ , two tailed. This indicates that the more positive the attitude towards the officer characteristics the more likely the respondent is to be Caucasian. The Pearson correlation coefficient for Officer Characteristics scale and Male Respondent shows a

statistically significant positive linear relationship,  $r = .165$ ,  $p = .05$ , two tailed. The correlation indicates that the more positive the attitude towards police characteristics the more likely the student is to be male. The Officer Characteristics scale and Police Behaved Appropriate variables have a Pearson correlation coefficient that shows a statistically significant positive linear relationship between the two variables,  $r = .311$ ,  $p = .01$ , two tailed. This correlation would indicate that the more positive the student's attitude towards police characteristics the more likely the student is to believe that the police behaved appropriate in the last user-generated video they watched.

The two variables of Officer Characteristics scale and Deprimo Appropriateness have a Pearson correlation coefficient that shows a statistically significant positive linear relationship between the two variables,  $r = .278$ ,  $p = .01$ , two tailed. This indicates that the more positive a student's attitudes towards officer characteristics the more likely they are to believe that officer Deprimo behaved appropriately in this case. The Pearson correlation coefficient for the Officer Characteristics scale and Deprimo Reaction score shows a statistically significant positive relationship between the two variables,  $r = .327$ ,  $p = .01$ , two tailed. The correlation indicates that the more positive the student's attitudes towards officer characteristics the more likely they are to believe that the Deprimo video is a typical reaction of the police. Officer Characteristics scale and Yatim Appropriateness variables have a Pearson correlation coefficient that shows a statistically significant positive linear relationship between the two variables,  $r = .146$ ,  $p = .05$ , two tailed. This would indicate that the more positive the student's attitudes towards police characteristics the more likely they are to believe that the police behaved appropriate in the Yatim video

Conversely, Officer Character scale was negatively related to Police Contact Experience. Contact Initiated by Police, Media as Main Source, Videos an Accurate Portrayal of the Police. For the case studies Tasing Reaction score and the Yatim Reaction score were also negatively related to the Officer Demeanor scale.

Officer Characteristics scale and Police Contact Experience have a Pearson correlation coefficient that shows a statistically significant positive linear relationship between the two variables,  $r = .484$ ,  $p = .01$ , two tailed. This means that the more positive a student's attitude towards police characteristics the more positive their police contact experience. The two variables Officer Characteristics scale and Contact Initiated by Police Pearson correlation coefficient show a statistically significant negative linear relationship between the two variables,  $r = -.147$ ,  $p = .05$ , two tailed. This correlation would indicate that if the students contact with police is initiated by the police the students are more likely to have negative attitudes towards the officer characteristics. Officer Characteristics scale and Media Main Source variables have a Pearson correlation coefficient that shows a statistically significant negative linear relationship between the two variables,  $r = -.165$ ,  $p = .05$ , two tailed. This correlation indicates that the more students get information on police from sources other than the media the more negative their attitudes towards the officer characteristics. The two variables Officer Characteristics scale and Videos an Accurate Portrayal have a Pearson correlation coefficient that shows a statistically significant negative linear relationship between the two variables,  $r = -.378$ ,  $p = .01$ , two tailed. This correlation indicates that the more positive a student's attitude towards officer characteristics the more likely they are to believe that the last user-generated video is not an accurate portrayal of police behaviour.



The Officer Characteristics scale and Taser Reaction score have a Pearson correlation coefficient that shows a statistically significant negative linear relationship between the two variables,  $r = -.171$ ,  $p = .05$ , two tailed. The correlation indicates that the more positive the students attitudes towards officer characteristics the less likely they are to believe that the Taser video is a typical reaction of the police. The two variables of Officer Characteristics scale and Yatim Reaction score have a Pearson correlation coefficient showing a statistically significant negative linear relationship between the two,  $r = -.370$ ,  $p = .01$ , two tailed, indicating that the more positive the student's attitude towards officer characteristics the less likely they are to believe that the Yatim video is a typical reaction of the police.

### ***Multiple Regression***

A series of Ordinary Least Square regressions were conducted to determine the impact of demographic factors, police contact, neighbourhood description and online viewing habits on attitudes towards the police. The regression was run using simultaneous entry. In all cases the Durbin Watson test was close to two indicating that there was no autocorrelation between the variables. Tests for multicollinearity were conducted for each regression model; no variance inflation factor scores or tolerance scores were high enough to suggest the presence of multicollinearity

### ***Overall User-generated Viewership Regression***

Table 7: Ordinary Least Square Regression for Variables Predicting Attitudes Towards Police (N=200)

Model 1: Officer Demeanor Scale	Model 2: Officer Characteristics Scale

Variable	B	SE B	$\beta$	B	SE B	$\beta$
(Constant)	20.611			19.671		
How often videos watched online	-.011	.347	-.002	.117	.347	.028
Last time videos watched	.029	.285	.008	.198	.285	.057
Videos accurate portrayal of police	-2.252	.401	-.367*	-1.492	.401	-.255*
Videos portray police negatively	.588	.346	.108	.458	.345	.088
Media as main source	-.781	.730	-.064	-.796	.730	-.068
Age	-.023	.074	-.018	.095	.074	.080
White Respondent	1.878	.691	.158*	1.290	.691	.113
Male Respondent	.305	.656	-.035	.443	.658	.043
Last contact with Police	-.085	.202	-.025	-.187	.201	-.058
Police initiated	-.387	.656	-.035	-.492	.655	-.046
Contact experience	2.022	.338	.361*	1.894	.338	.354*
Neighbourhood description	.870	.325	.159*	.964	.325	.184*
Program of study	.315	.762	.023	1.280	.762	.099

Note \* $p < .001$

For Officer Demeanor scale the F value was 11.266, the  $R^2 = .411$ , and  $R^2$  adjusted = .401. Results of the ordinary least squares (OLS) regression showed that the Officer Demeanor scale was significantly negatively associated with Videos an accurate portrayal of police,  $\beta = -.367$ ,  $t(200) = -5.619$ ,  $p < .001$ . This would indicate that the more students believe that user-generated police videos are an accurate portrayal of the police the lower their opinion on officer demeanor. Officer Demeanor scale's ordinary least square regression shows a statistically significant association with White respondent,  $\beta = .158$ ,  $t(200) = 2.717$ ,  $p < .001$ . This regression would indicate that white students have a significantly higher opinion of police officer demeanor. The Results for the ordinary least square regression of the Officer Demeanor scale showed there was

a statistically significant association with Police Contact experience,  $\beta = .361$ ,  $t(200) = 5.987$ ,  $p < .001$ . The regression shows that the more positive the contact experience a student has with police the more their positive attitude towards officer demeanor increases. Ordinary least square regression of Officer Demeanor scale showed a statistically significant association with Neighbourhood Description,  $\beta = .159$ ,  $t(200) = 2.677$ ,  $p < .001$ . This indicates that the greater the student's attitude towards neighbourhood description the more the increase in their positive attitudes towards officer demeanor.

For Officer Characteristics scale the F value was 9.099, the  $R^2 = .389$ , and  $R^2$  adjusted = .346. Results of the ordinary least squares (OLS) regression showed that the Officer characteristics scale was significantly associated with Videos an accurate portrayal of police,  $\beta = -.255$ ,  $t(200) = -3.725$ ,  $p < .001$ . This would indicate that the more students believe that user-generated police videos are an accurate portrayal of the police the lower their opinion on officer characteristics. The Results for the ordinary least square regression of the Officer characteristics scale showed there was a statistically significant association with Contact experience,  $\beta = .354$ ,  $t(200) = 5.611$ ,  $p < .001$ . The regression shows that the more positive the contact experience a student has with police the more their positive attitude towards officer characteristics increases. Ordinary least square regression of Officer characteristics scale showed a statistically significant association with Neighbourhood Description,  $\beta = .184$ ,  $t(200) = 2.968$ ,  $p < .001$ . The regression indicates that the greater the student's attitude towards neighbourhood description the more the increase in their positive attitudes towards officer characteristics.

*Dziekanski Taserung Regression*

Table 8: Ordinary Least Square Regression for variables predicting attitudes towards police in the Dziekanski Taser Case (N=200)

Variable	Model 1: Officer Demeanor Scale (N=200)			Model 2: Officer Characteristics Scale (N=200)		
	B	SE B	$\beta$	B	SE B	$\beta$
(Constant)	14.810			15.569		
Age	.127	.069	.104	.186	.070	.159**
Program of Study	-.022	.761	-.002	.974	.780	.076
White Respondent	2.118	.674	.178**	1.311	.690	.114
Male Respondent	.844	.630	.079	.673	.646	.066
Neighbourhood description	.717	.320	.132**	.861	.328	.164**
Police contact experience	2.396	.322	.430*	2.176	.330	.404*
Tasering appropriateness	1.145	.342	.201*	.767	.350	.139**
Tasering Reaction	-1.974	.428	-.283*	-1.074	.438	-.159**
Have you seen the online video?	1.360	.636	.125**	-.504	.652	-.048
Media as major source tasering	.665	.699	.054	.177	.716	.015

Note \*p<.001, \*\*p<.05

For the Dziekanski case and Officer Demeanor scale the F value was 11.931, the  $R^2 = .361$ , and  $R^2$  adjusted = .331. Results of the ordinary least squares (OLS) regression showed that the Officer Demeanor scale was significantly positively associated with white respondents in the Dziekanski taser case,  $\beta = .178$ ,  $t(200) = 2.833$ ,  $p < .05$ . This would indicate that white students have more positive attitudes towards officer demeanor in the Dziekanski taser case than students of different races. Officer Demeanor scale's ordinary least square regression shows a statistically significant association with Neighbourhood description,  $\beta = .132$ ,  $t(200) = 2.432$ ,  $p < .05$ . This regression would indicate that students that rate their neighbourhood higher have a significantly higher opinion of police officer demeanor. The results for the ordinary least square regression of the Officer Demeanor scale showed there was a statistically

significant association with Police contact experience,  $\beta = .430$ ,  $t(200) = 7.073$ ,  $p < .001$ . The regression shows that the more positive the contact experience a student has with police the more their positive attitude towards officer demeanor increases.

Ordinary least square regression of Officer Demeanor scale showed a statistically significant association with Taser ing appropriateness score,  $\beta = .201$ ,  $t(200) = 3.15$ ,  $p < .001$ . This indicates that the greater the student's belief that police behaved appropriate in the Dziekanski taser ing case the more the increase in their positive attitudes towards officer demeanor. Results of the ordinary least squares (OLS) regression showed that the Officer Demeanor scale was significantly negatively associated with Taser ing reaction,  $\beta = -.283$ ,  $t(200) = -4.483$ ,  $p < .001$ . This indicates that the more students believe that the Taser ing case is a typical reaction of the police the less likely they are to have positive attitudes towards the police. Officer Demeanor scale's ordinary least square regression shows a statistically significant association with having seen the Dziekanski video online,  $\beta = .125$ ,  $t(200) = -1.185$ ,  $p < .05$ . The regression would indicate that student's that have seen the video online have a significant higher positive attitude towards officer demeanor.

For the Dziekanski case and Officer Characteristics scale the F value was 9.332, the  $R^2 = .353$ , and  $R^2$  adjusted = .315. Results of the ordinary least squares (OLS) regression showed that the Officer characteristics scale was significantly positively associated with the age of the respondents in the Dziekanski taser ing case,  $\beta = .159$ ,  $t(200) = 2.63$ ,  $p < .05$ . This would indicate that the older students have more positive attitudes towards officer characteristics in the Dziekanski taser ing. Officer characteristic scale's ordinary least square regression shows a statistically significant association with Neighbourhood description,  $\beta = .164$ ,  $t(200) = 2.630$ ,  $p <$

.05. This regression would indicate that students that rate their neighbourhood higher have a significantly higher opinion of police officer characteristics. The results for the ordinary least square regression of the Officer characteristics scale showed there was a statistically significant association with Police contact experience,  $\beta = .404$ ,  $t(200)=6.336$ ,  $p < .001$ . The regression shows that the more positive the contact experience a student has with police the more their positive attitude towards officer demeanor increases.

Ordinary least square regression of Officer characteristics scale showed a statistically significant association with Tasering appropriateness score,  $\beta = .139$ ,  $t(200)=2.038$ ,  $p < .05$ . This indicates that the greater the student's belief that police behaved appropriate in the Dziekanski tasering case the more the increase in their positive attitudes towards officer characteristics. Results of the ordinary least squares (OLS) regression showed that the Officer characteristics scale was significantly negatively associated with Tasering reaction in the Dziekanski tasering case,  $\beta = -.159$ ,  $t(200)=-2.314$ ,  $p < .05$ . This indicates that the more students believe that the Tasering case is a typical reaction of the police the less likely they are to have positive attitudes towards the police.

#### *Yatim Case Regression*

Table 9: Ordinary Least Square Regression for variables predicting attitudes towards police in the Yatim case ( $N=200$ )

Variable	Model 1: Officer Demeanor Scale ( $N= 200$ )			Model 2: Officer Characteristics Scale ( $N=200$ )		
	B	SE B	$\beta$	B	SE B	$\beta$
(Constant)	16.044			17.473		

Age	.094	.068	.076	.159	.067	.135**
Program of Study	-.628	.770	-.047	.509	.765	.039
White Respondent	1.626	.656	.137**	1.029	.653	.091
Male Respondent	-.008	.608	.000	.205	.605	.020
Neighbourhood description	.939	.314	.172**	1.007	.313	.193**
Police contact experience	1.960	.322	.350*	1.867	.320	.349*
Yatim appropriateness	1.378	.325	.245**	1.151	.324	.214*
Yatim Reaction	-2.184	.358	-.361**	-1.707	.356	-.295*
Have you seen the online video?	.188	.621	.018	.999	.618	.099
Media as major source Yatim	.828	.773	.061	-.127	.769	-.010

Note \*p<.001, \*\*p<.05

For the Yatim case and Officer Demeanor scale the F value was 16.025, the  $R^2 = .459$ , and  $R^2$  adjusted= .430. Results of the ordinary least squares (OLS) regression showed that the Officer Demeanor scale was significantly positively associated with white respondents in the Yatim case,  $\beta = .137$ ,  $t(200)=2.477$ ,  $p < .05$ . This would indicate that white students have more positive attitudes towards officer demeanor in the Yatim case than students of different races. Officer Demeanor scale's ordinary least square regression shows a statistically significant association with Neighbourhood description,  $\beta = .172$ ,  $t(200)=2.988$ ,  $p < .05$ . This regression would indicate that students that rate their neighbourhood higher have a significantly higher opinion of police officer demeanor. The results for the ordinary least square regression of the Officer Demeanor scale showed there was a statistically significant association with Police contact experience,  $\beta = .350$ ,  $t(200)=6.089$ ,  $p < .001$ . The regression shows that the more positive the contact experience a student has with police the more their positive attitude towards officer demeanor increases.

Ordinary least square regression of Officer Demeanor scale showed a statistically significant association with Yatim appropriateness score,  $\beta = .245$ ,  $t(200)=4.235$ ,  $p < .05$ . This

indicates that the greater the student's belief that police behaved appropriate in the Yatim case the more the increase in their positive attitudes towards officer demeanor. Results of the ordinary least squares (OLS) regression showed that the Officer Demeanor scale was significantly negatively associated with Yatim reaction,  $\beta = -.361$ ,  $t(200) = -6.095$ ,  $p < .001$ . This indicates that the more students believe that the Yatim case is a typical reaction of the police the less likely they are to have positive attitudes towards the police demeanor.

For the Yatim case and Officer Characteristics scale the F value was 13.383, the  $R^2 = .415$ , and  $R^2$  adjusted = .384. Results of the ordinary least squares (OLS) regression showed that the Officer Characteristics scale was significantly positively associated with the age of the respondents in the Yatim case,  $\beta = .135$ ,  $t(200) = 2.364$ ,  $p < .05$ . This would indicate that the older students have more positive attitudes towards officer characteristics in the Yatim case. Officer characteristic scale's ordinary least square regression shows a statistically significant association with Neighbourhood description,  $\beta = .193$ ,  $t(200) = 3.221$ ,  $p < .05$ . This regression would indicate that students that rate their neighbourhood higher have a significantly higher opinion of police officer characteristics. The Results for the ordinary least square regression of the Officer characteristics scale showed there was a statistically significant association with Police contact experience,  $\beta = .349$ ,  $t(200) = 5.832$ ,  $p < .001$ . The regression shows that the more positive the contact experience a student has with police the more their positive attitude towards officer demeanor increases.

Ordinary least square regression of Officer characteristics scale showed a statistically significant association with Yatim appropriateness score,  $\beta = .214$ ,  $t(200) = 3.559$ ,  $p < .001$ . This indicates that the greater the student's belief that police behaved appropriate in the Yatim case



the more the increase in their positive attitudes towards officer characteristics. Results of the ordinary least squares (OLS) regression showed that the Officer characteristics scale was significantly negatively associated with Yatim reaction,  $\beta = -.295$ ,  $t(200) = -4.790$ ,  $p < .001$ . This indicates that the more students believe that the Taser case is a typical reaction of the police the less likely they are to have positive attitudes towards the police.

### *Deprimo Case Regression*

Table 10: Ordinary Least Square Regression for variables predicting attitudes towards police in the Deprimo case (N=200)

Variable	Model 1: Officer Demeanor Scale (N= 200)			Model 2: Officer Characteristics Scale (N=200)		
	B	SE B	$\beta$	B	SE B	$\beta$
(Constant)	7.645			9.046		
Age	.126	.073	.102	.203	.068	.172*
Program of Study	.093	.806	.007	.974	.755	.075
White Respondent	1.948	.725	.164**	1.053	.679	.093
Male Respondent	.511	.657	.048	.797	.615	.078
Neighbourhood description	.592	.344	.108	.572	.322	.109
Police contact experience	2.269	.346	.406*	1.999	.324	.374*
Deprimo appropriateness	.586	.348	.108	.904	.326	.174**
Deprimo Reaction	.924	.370	.151*	1.247	.346	.213*
Have you seen the online video?	-.356	.769	-.030	.047	.719	.004
Media as major source Deprimo	.727	.780	.059	-.242	.731	-.020

Note \* $p < .001$ , \*\* $p < .05$

For the Deprimo case and Officer Demeanor scale the F value was 10.947, the  $R^2 = .367$ , and  $R^2$  adjusted = .333. Results of the ordinary least squares (OLS) regression showed that the Officer Demeanor scale was significantly positively associated with white respondents in the

Deprimo case,  $\beta = .164$ ,  $t(200) = 2.685$ ,  $p < .05$ . This would indicate that white students have more positive attitudes towards officer demeanor in the Deprimo case than students of different races. The results for the ordinary least square regression of the Officer Demeanor scale showed there was a statistically significant association with Police contact experience,  $\beta = .406$ ,  $t(200) = 6.563$ ,  $p < .001$ . The regression shows that the more positive the contact experience a student has with police the more their positive attitude towards officer demeanor increases. Results of the ordinary least squares (OLS) regression showed that the Officer Demeanor scale was significantly associated with Deprimo reaction,  $\beta = .151$ ,  $t(200) = 2.498$ ,  $p < .001$ . This indicates that the more students believe that the Deprimo case is a typical reaction of the police the less likely they are to have positive attitudes towards the police demeanor.

For the Deprimo case and Officer Demeanor scale the F value was 12.242, the  $R^2 = .393$ , and  $R^2$  adjusted = .361. Results of the ordinary least squares (OLS) regression showed that the Officer characteristics scale was significantly positively associated with the age of the respondents in the Deprimo case,  $\beta = .172$ ,  $t(200) = 2.988$ ,  $p < .001$ . This would indicate that the older students have more positive attitudes towards officer characteristics in the Deprimo case. The Results for the ordinary least square regression of the Officer characteristics scale showed there was a statistically significant association with Police contact experience,  $\beta = .374$ ,  $t(200) = 6.175$ ,  $p < .001$ . The regression shows that the more positive the contact experience a student has with police the more their positive attitude towards officer demeanor increases.

Ordinary least square regression of Officer characteristics scale showed a statistically significant association with Deprimo appropriateness score,  $\beta = .174$ ,  $t(200) = 2.775$ ,  $p < .05$ . This indicates that the greater the student's belief that police behaved appropriate in the Deprimo case

the more the increase in their positive attitudes towards officer characteristics. Results of the ordinary least squares (OLS) regression showed that the Officer characteristics scale was significantly negatively associated with Deprimo reaction,  $\beta = .213$ ,  $t(200) = 3.601$ ,  $p < .001$ . This indicates that the more students believe that the Deprimo case is a typical reaction of the police the less likely they are to have positive attitudes towards the police.

## Chapter 5

### Discussion

The purpose of this study was to determine if online viewership of user-generated videos of the police had an impact on students' attitudes towards the police. A review of the literature had suggested that various forms of media had little impact on how people viewed the police (Dowler & Zawilski, 2007). Research suggests that variables such as race, age, neighbourhood context, and police contact significantly impact how the police were viewed (Brown & Benedict, 2002). With the advent of new media it is important to understand its impact on institutions such as the police. To do this, four hypotheses were tested. The four hypotheses were as follows: (1) Students who spend more time viewing videos of police online will have a more negative attitude towards the police, (2) Students that have more negative attitudes towards the police will view the behaviour of the police in the case studies more negatively than students with more positive attitudes towards the police. (3) Consistent with previous research race, age, neighbourhood context, and police contact will have more influence on participants attitudes towards the police than exposure to user generated police videos. (4) It will be more likely that people with negative attitudes towards the police will have seen the two case studies involving negative actions of the police (Dziekanski and Yatim) than the positive one involving NYPD officer DePrimo.

Hypothesis number 1 was tested using correlation and ordinary least square regression. The correlation index shows that there was no relationship between how much a student viewed the user-generated videos and their attitudes towards the police. This is consistent with other

research on media and the relationship with attitudes towards the police. Dowler (2003) indicated that the media had little impact on how people viewed police effectiveness. Dowler (2003) was focused on the instrumental method which is focused on police effectiveness as a major factor in determine people's attitudes towards police. This study on the other hand mainly focused on the procedural justice model with the two scales being used focusing on individual traits of officers yet was still consistent in finding that watching user-generated videos had little impact overall on attitudes towards the police..

The majority of students believed that the police were viewed negatively in the majority of police videos, so it was thought that there would be a negative relationship between online-viewership and attitudes towards the police. This hypothesis is consistent with research by Rosenbaum et al. (2006) that indirect experience with the police shapes attitudes towards the police. This finding however, indicates that indirect experience, at least in the case of online videos, has no impact on how the police service as an institution is viewed. This is good news for the police as it indicates that at least as far as the police as an institution is concerned user-generated videos are not a threat to negatively impact the attitudes of citizens towards the police as a legitimate institution. This does not however remove the danger to the individual officers involved. The individual officers may still face retribution from organizations like Anonymous who already appear to have negative attitudes towards the police.

Rosenbaum et al (2006) suggested it was much more likely that the attitudes towards the police shaped how the experience of the person's contact with the police was viewed. It is very likely that the ways the police are viewed in the user-generated videos are more likely shaped by the attitudes of the people watching the videos. This can be seen in the fact that the majority of

the students in the study did not believe that the user-generated videos were accurate portrayals of the police. Only 7.5% of the students that answered the survey believed that these videos were accurate portrayals. The multiple regression in fact indicated that there was a significant negative relationship between these videos as an accurate portrayal of the police and both the Officer demeanor scale and the Officer characteristics scale. This indicates that the more students believed the videos to be accurate the lower their attitudes towards the police. This may become a problem for the police in the future as the possibility of these videos becoming more common increases. If there is a shift in the belief that these videos are an accurate portrayal of police there may be a shift in attitudes towards the police, but that would have to be tested at a later date.

Hypothesis number two surmised that the way the students viewed the police in the case studies would be a reflection of their attitudes towards the police. This was tested by running multiple regression between the attitude towards the police scales and the belief that the police behaved appropriate in each case study. In all three case studies there was found to be a significant relationship between the attitude towards the police scales and the belief that the police behaved appropriately. In fact the more the students believed that the police behaved appropriately the greater their attitudes towards the police.

It is likely though that the students with more positive attitudes towards the police were adjusting their answers due to their positive attitudes towards the police. This can be seen in the two negative cases of Yatim and Dziekanski. In these two cases despite the belief that the police behaved appropriately was positively related to the police, the thought of it being a typical reaction of the police was negatively related to attitudes of the police. This means that the more

someone believes that the videos are typical reactions of the police the poorer their attitudes towards the police. This appears to be two contradictory results. It would be thought that if people with positive attitudes towards the police found the police to behave appropriately in the cases they would also believe the cases to be typical reactions of the police. The multiple regression indicates that the belief that these videos are typical reactions are negatively associated with attitudes towards the police. One explanation for this can be that students with more positive attitudes towards the police are trying to cover for the police by saying the officer behaved appropriately but truly believing that they had not. This may be a bias created by their already positive attitudes towards the police.

Hypothesis three stated that the results would be consistent with previous research that race, age, neighbourhood context, and police contact will have more influence on participant's attitudes towards the police than exposure to user generated police videos. For the most part all factors except age were shown to have significant relationships with student's attitudes towards the police with at least one of the scales. Age may not have been a factor due to the fact that this study was conducted with students whose ages did not vary significantly enough to get a result.

Race has been a consistent factor shown to have an impact on attitudes towards the police throughout the literature (Brown and Benedict, 2002; Weitzer and Tuch, 2004). In this study Whites were found to have significant more positive attitudes towards police demeanor than minorities. Weitzer and Tuch (2004) found that Whites tend to have more positive attitudes toward the police and inclined to deny the existence of police misconduct. This may help to explain the contradiction in the case studies between the typical reaction of the police and the idea the police behaved appropriately. Race did not however have an impact on the Officer

Characteristics scale. This could be due to the fact that the Officer Characteristic scale dealt with personal traits while the Officer Demeanor scale dealt with traits that would be experienced when interacting with the police. This is contrary to previous research such as Webb and Marshall (1995) that showed that the OCS scale was impacted by race. It may be that in this study other factors played a greater role than race as to make race's impact negligible.

Neighbourhood context played a significant factor in attitudes towards the police. This means the more positive the neighbourhood context the greater the attitudes towards the police. This can possibly be explained using the instrumental method and the idea of police effectiveness as a predictor of attitude towards the police. Students that report feeling safe or having good neighbourhoods may believe that the police are doing a good job. They have less interaction with the police and less experience with crime and therefore may have more positive attitudes towards the police. Cao, Frank, and Cullen, (1996) reported that perceptions of disorder, incivility, and informal collective security provide the greatest explanation as to the role neighbourhood context plays. This is important to understand as many of the factors in neighbourhood context are outside the control of the police. This makes neighbourhood context a difficult variable for police to improve if they wish to create more positive attitudes towards the police.

The final factor in previous research determined to have an impact on people's attitudes towards the police is contact with the police. This study found that the contact experience a student had was the most important factor in determining attitudes towards the police. The more positive this experience the greater the attitude towards the police regardless of who initiated the contact or when the contact occurred. This provides support for the procedural model and is



supported by research by Murphy, Mazerolle, and Bennett (2014). This is an important variable for police to understand as it is one that is most easily controlled. Tyler (1990) demonstrated that when people believe the police or the courts are legitimate they are more likely to comply with their instructions and Ferdik, Wolfe, and Blasco (2014) suggest that procedural justice has been shown in many empirical studies to be a key predictor of police legitimacy. It is therefore, important for the police to be perceived as fair and honest and this can be done through their interactions with the public.

Hypothesis number four was that will be more likely that people with negative attitudes towards the police will have seen the two case studies involving negative actions of the police (Dziekanski and Yatim) than the positive one involving NYPD officer DePrimo. This was not the case for any of the case studies. In fact the only time having seen the video online was significantly related to attitude towards the police was the Officer Demeanor scale and the Robert Dziekanski case and more students with positive attitudes towards the police had seen this video. This may be due to the fact that very few people had seen the video online and with the majority of students having positive attitudes it made it more likely that they had seen it online. It is interesting to note as well that the Dziekanski case was a less familiar case to the students than Yatim despite having more hits online. More of the students had also seen the online video of Yatim than of Dziekanski. This may be despite the fact that the Dziekanski case had garnered mass media attention, the age of the students made it so they were unfamiliar with the case. As expected the DePrimo case was the least viewed. This is most likely because it did not garner the attention the other two cases did and was only reported on a few times by mainstream media.

The lack of attitudes towards police being impacted by these online videos can be explained by Easton (1965) differences between specific and diffuse confidence. The online videos are an example of specific confidence being tested. These are individual cases that happen at a specific time and to a specific officer. Haas, Keijser, and Bruinsma (2014) explained that feelings towards a particular officer or member of an institution can vary without having an impact on how that institution is viewed overall. Diffuse confidence is built up over time and can affect how specific incidents are viewed. This may explain why despite officers being portrayed negatively in user-generated videos students were still willing to state that they believed the police officers behaved appropriately in cases that portray the police negatively. So it is important that police build up this confidence and this can be done through their interactions with the public. Haas, Keijser, and Bruinsma (2014) do warn that if incidents that affect specific confidence happen again and again and are dramatic than diffuse confidence may be impacted. That means just because this study indicates that user-generated videos do not impact attitudes towards police the police should not be concerned with them.

Although this study showed that watching these videos did not have a direct impact on attitudes towards the police it does not mean that continual watching these videos won't have a cumulative impact. Cultivation theory suggests that high frequency viewers of television are more susceptible to media messages and the belief that they are real and valid. Heavy viewers are exposed to more violence and therefore are affected by the Mean World Syndrome, the belief that the world is a far more dangerous and worse place than it actually is (Gerbner and Gross, 1976). This idea has now been adapted to incorporate the idea that media shapes the way we

view the world. Although this theory is not necessarily supported by the literature, advertisers find repeated exposure works for selling products.

Repeated exposure to user-generated videos of the police could have a detrimental effect on attitudes towards the police according to Cultivation Theory. This could create a “Mean World View” of the police where people believe that police misconduct is far more common than it really is. The videos online portray the police in a negative light far more often than it does positively. In this type of world view people could become less trusting in the police and feel less inclined to help the police. This could seriously impact police effectiveness as they rely on citizen cooperation when investigating crimes. People may not wish to contact police when they are victims of the crime for fear of being treated poorly by the police. This allows for the offender to go unpunished and may allow for them to continue victimizing others. It may also allow for offenders to become more daring if they believe that their crimes will not be reported to the police. It may also result in clashes and attacks on police as has recently been seen with incidences in Baltimore, Ferguson, and New York.

One issue with media consumption, especially user-generated videos is context of the videos is missing. When one watches videos online they do not see what led up to the incident. The people watching do not see what caused the police to behave the way they did in the incident, they only see what is shown. The videos may only show police striking a subject but may fail to show that the subject was initially resisting arrest or perhaps has a weapon. Context of a video can give a whole different meaning to what is going on in the video. Without context in the video more and more videos could be seen as portraying the police negatively adding to

the possibility of a “Mean World View” of the police, where the police are seen as a violent organization that is more of a harm to the public than a good.

An important issue to consider when viewing videos is the idea of framing. Framing is the idea that media focuses attention on certain events and places them within a frame of meaning (Goffman, 1974). Essentially it is the idea that how something is presented to the audience influences how people view that information. The media frames information by making a conscious choice on how they present ideas, events, and topics that they cover. This framing can be from a simple as a headline to what images are presented. In the social media world this framing can be done by the one make the posting. They can present an image by choosing what it is they present. In user-generated videos it can be as simple as the title given to the video. A title such as “police officer assaults citizen” already presents the idea that the citizen was innocent and the cop is committing some sort of crime. The same video could have the title “citizen resists arrest” presenting the police officer as have reacted reasonable. These videos can also be framed through clever editing that only show certain aspects of an incident. There is nothing to govern how citizens present messages with the new social media. This makes it difficult for police to counter these messages as they may be restricted in what evidence can be presented till after an investigation and by that time the damage could already be done.

### ***Limitations***

There are several limitations associated with the study. The first limitation is that as this study was conducted using students at a university it cannot be generalized to the public. It is also possible that because the majority of students came from either the Criminology program

and Law and Society program they were predisposed to more positive attitudes towards the police, although the correlations showed that program of study had no impact on attitudes towards the police. Another limitation of this study may be the neighbourhood context scale. While the other scales were adopted from other studies where they had been shown to be reliable the neighbourhood context scale was created specifically for this study using Hawdon (2008) as a guide and cannot be guaranteed to measure actual neighbourhood context.

Another limitation with this study is that of causation. Although a relationship between the variables can be determined it is impossible to determine in which direction this relationship flows. It is very possible that people have prior negative attitudes before watching these videos. It is also possible that it is in fact people with negative attitudes that are seeking these videos out. It cannot be determined if watching these videos are what cause the negative attitudes.

The survey conducted may contain some validity issues. Self-reported surveys require that participants recall information and report it honestly and accurately. It is possible that some of the students may not have reported accurate information. This study also consisted of 59 questions and an introductory page that may have resulted in fatigue or students not taking the study seriously. The study also contained some scales that were not used in the final study due to their poor reliability. It is possible to remove these scales to help reduce fatigue.

### ***Direction for Future Research***

There are several possibilities for future research in the area of attitudes towards the police and the new social media. One of these possibilities is to conduct an experiment to determine the impact of these videos. This can be done by measuring attitudes towards the

police of participants before they watch videos, then have them watch videos, separated by positive and negative, and then measure their attitudes after to see if there is a change. This could be used to measure both specific and general attitudes towards the police.

Another possibility for research is to conduct a qualitative analysis of comments posted on user-generated videos. This could be used to help determine the attitudes of people who are watching these videos by whether they justify or condemn the actions of the police. An analysis could also be conducted to compare the differences in comments in videos in which the police are portrayed negatively and ones in which they are portrayed positively. In this comparison the amount of views and comments for each type of video could be compared.

One last possibility for research is to do a content analysis of the videos online. It could be researched to determine what videos receive the most viewership. The analysis could look for specific attribute or theme that is common throughout the most watched videos. A comparison could also be done comparing whether the videos involve procedural actions, such as arrests or rescues, or whether they involve things such as acts of kindness, like in the Deprimo case. This could be used with Cultivation Theory to help determine if these videos might add to a “Mean World View”.

### ***Implications for Police***

In the world of policing there have already been some significant changes as a response to social media. Some police forces have started to adopt body cameras for their officers. This can have a double impact of both protecting the police and changing the way the police react to situations. The police now have a tool that can counter videos that have been edited and posted

online. This can protect the police by showing the whole story and adding context to the video. It also impacts how the police behave. The police must now understand that their every action and decision is being recorded and is up for review. They must think before they act that can lead to police making more informed decisions. The problem with this is it may cause hesitation in the reaction by the police where a split second decision could be the difference between life and death.

Another implication for the police is the development of units to specifically deal with social media. Police must learn how to most effectively use this resource to present a positive image of the police. They must understand the implications of user-generated videos to properly counter the negative impacts of the police that are sometimes presented by user-generated videos. They must also understand that many people can be reached through social media and this can be effective tool for police not only as a way to stay in contact with the community, but as a useful tool for investigation.

The final implication for police is the fact that according to previous research (Brown and Benedict, 2002) and this study the most important factor in determining attitudes towards the police is previous contact with the police. The police must understand that they need to develop good relationships with the public early on. This can be done both through daily interactions while on the job, but also through community involvement. Police services must become active in the communities they serve. This can be done by participating in community events, not just by providing security but by being active participants.

### ***Conclusion***

The purpose of this study was to determine the impact of user-generated videos of police on students' attitudes towards the police. It was conducted using a survey implemented at Wilfrid Laurier University in Brantford. Bivariate and multivariate analysis was used to determine the impact of a number of variables on attitudes towards the police. Findings were consistent with previous research showing that media has little impact on people's attitudes towards the police. It found that police contact experience was the variable to have the greatest impact on attitudes towards the police. Race and neighbourhood context also played a role in determining attitudes towards the police. This study could be used to guide future research and expanded to the general public to determine if these effects remain the same. A future study could also be conducted to determine if and how attitudes towards the police impact the way user-generated videos are viewed.



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## INDEX

### ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE POLICE AND VIDEO SHARING

Page #1

#### INTRODUCTION AND STUDY PURPOSE

I am a graduate student in the Criminology department of Wilfrid Laurier University supervised by Dr. Dowler and we would like to invite you to participate in a research study. The purpose of this study to determine if viewing videos on video sharing websites impact student's attitudes towards the police

#### INFORMATION

The questionnaire will take about 15 minutes to complete. About 200 people in total will be enrolled in the study. You will not be asked to provide your name for the study and all of your responses are anonymous. The questionnaire begins with several demographic questions and then you will be guided through the rest of the survey.

#### RISKS

It is unlikely that you will experience discomfort during the completion of the survey. It is possible that participation in a research study may provide an opportunity to become aware of feelings or attitudes within ourselves that can be surprising or unexpected. If you feel discomfort or distress as a result of responding to questions within the study, I encourage you to speak to the researcher and/or to contact counseling services for support. At Laurier Brantford, Counseling services make be contacted at: 519 756-8228 ext. 5889 or [studentservicebrantford@wlu.ca](mailto:studentservicebrantford@wlu.ca)

#### BENEFITS

The benefit of the research is the opportunity to understand the impact that new social media sources impact attitudes towards an integral part of our society, the police. This study is intended to be used in the completion of the researcher's Thesis. It is possible that you might experience intrinsic value in assisting students with the study as well as make self-discoveries as a result of responding to questions.

#### CONFIDENTIALITY

All of your responses are anonymous and no identifying information will be collected. Only the student researcher will have access to your responses. All data will be kept on password protected computer that only the researcher has access to. Only grouped findings will be reported. All physical and digital data will be destroyed at the conclusion of the study in accordance to university guidelines. The results of the study will be used in a final report that the graduate student will present as part of their thesis work. Results may also be presented in academic conferences.

#### CONTACT

If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, or you experience adverse effects as a result of participating in this study you may contact the researcher, Nathan Smith, B.A., Department of Criminology, Laurier Brantford, [smit9356@wlu.ca](mailto:smit9356@wlu.ca).

#### PARTICIPATION

Your participation in this study is voluntary; you may decline to participate without penalty. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty and without loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you withdraw from the study, every attempt will be made to remove your data from the study, and have it destroyed. You have the right to omit any question(s)/procedure(s) you choose.

#### CONSENT

By selecting the box below you consent to participating in the study.  
I consent to participating in the study.

**Demographics**

Question 1. What is Your Age?

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Question 2. What is your ethnicity?

White / Caucasian

Spanish / Hispanic / Latino

Black / African American

Asian

Middle East

Aboriginal

Other

Question 3. Gender?

Male

Female

Other

Question 4. Program of Study?

---

**Police Contact**

Question 1. When was the last time you had contact with the police?

Within the last month

Within the past 3 months

Within the past 6 months

Within past Year

More than a year

Question 2. What was the nature of this contact?

Police Initiated

Initiated Voluntarily

Initiated by other

Question 3. How would you describe your overall contact experience with the police?

Very Negative

Negative

Neutral

Positive

Very Positive

Page #4

Neighbourhood Context

Question 1. Residents are willing to take responsibility for the safety of their own neighborhoods.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Question 2. Residents will share what they are learning about working on local problems in their neighborhoods.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Question 3. Citizens would be willing to work with the police to solve neighborhood issues.

Strongly Agree  
Agree  
Neutral  
Disagree  
Strongly Disagree

Question 4. How would you describe living in your neighbourhood?

Very Satisfied  
Satisfied  
Neutral  
Dissatisfied  
Very Dissatisfied

Question 5. I trust the people in my neighbourhood.

Strongly Agree  
Agree  
Neutral  
Disagree  
Strongly Disagree

Question 6. I'm suspicious of people I don't know wandering around my neighbourhood.

Strongly Agree  
Agree  
Neutral  
Disagree  
Strongly Disagree



Page #5

## **ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE POLICE**

### **Demeanor**

Question 1. Police officers are usually courteous.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Question 2. Police officers are respectful toward people like me.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Question 3. The police use more force than they need to in carrying out their duties.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Question 4. Most police officers are usually friendly.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Question 5. The police are usually rude.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Question 6. Most police officers give people a chance to explain.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Question 7. Police officers enjoy kicking people around.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Question 8. Police officers show concern when you ask them questions

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

**Officer Characteristics**

Question 1. Police officers are honest.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Question 2. The police are physically fit.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Question 3. Police officers are prejudiced against minority persons.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Question 4. Police officers are hardworking,

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Question 5. The police are well trained,

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Question 6. Police officers are not able to answer citizens' questions correctly. .

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Question 7. Police officers don't communicate very well.

Strongly Agree  
Agree  
Neutral  
Disagree  
Strongly Disagree

Question 8. Police officers respond quickly to calls for service.

Strongly Agree  
Agree  
Neutral  
Disagree  
Strongly Disagree

Question 9. Most police officers are liars.

Strongly Agree  
Agree  
Neutral  
Disagree  
Strongly Disagree

**Responsibility for Crime Control**

Question 1. Only the police can control crime in this area.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Question 2. Only the police can control crime in my neighborhood.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

**Discretion**

Question 1. In order to prevent crimes and catch criminals, the police are sometimes required to stretch the search and seizure laws and other procedural safeguards.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Question 2. The police are more strict in some neighborhoods than in others.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

**Active Patrol Strategies**

Question 1. In some neighborhoods, crime preventing requires that police officers stop people walking down the street and ask them where they are going or what they are doing.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Question 1. A good police officer is one who patrols aggressively by stopping cars and checking people who look suspicious.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

**Video Sharing Viewing Habits**

The following section is in regards to your viewing habits of user generated videos on video sharing websites such as Youtube and Ebaumsworld. The videos these questions are in regards to are police videos that are uploaded by the general public. They do not include videos from shows like cops or mainstream media.

Question 1. How often do you watch police videos on video sharing sites?

- More than once a week
- About once a week
- A few times a month
- Less than once a month
- Rarely

Question 2. When was the last time you watched a police video on video sharing sites?

- Within a week
- Within the last month
- Within the last six months
- Within a year
- More than a year ago

Question 3. These videos are an accurate portrayal of all police

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Question 4. The majority of these videos the police portray the police negatively.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Question 5. Where do you get the majority of your information on the police?

- Internet
- Television
- Newspaper
- Magazines
- Personal Experience
- Other, please specify... \_\_\_\_\_

Question 1: Please give a brief description of the most recent user-generated police video you saw.

---

Question 2. As far as you are aware the police behaved appropriately in this case?

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Question 3. This is the typical reaction of the police?

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree



**Case Studies**

The following are questions in regards to three incidents involving the police that was caught on video.

**Dziekanski Taser**

This case involved a Polish immigrant at the Vancouver International Airport who was tasered by the police and died in 2007

Question 1. How familiar are you with the Robert Dziekanski, RCMP Taser case?

Extremely Familiar

Somewhat Familiar

Heard Of

Unfamiliar

Extremely Unfamiliar

Question 2. Where do you get the majority of your information on the case?

Internet

Television

Magazines

Newspapers

Other, please specify... \_\_\_\_\_

Question 3. As far as you are aware the police behaved appropriately in this case?

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Question 4. This is the typical reaction of the police?

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Question 5. Have you seen the online video?

Yes

No

**Sammy Yatim Streetcar Shooting in Toronto**

This case involves the shooting death of Sammy Yatim on a Streetcar by the Toronto Police in 2013

Question 1. How familiar are you with the Sammy Yatim shooting death?

- Extremely Familiar
- Somewhat Familiar
- Heard Of
- Unfamiliar
- Extremely Unfamiliar

Question 2. Where do you get the majority of your information on the case?

- Internet
- Television
- Magazines
- Newspapers
- Other, please specify... \_\_\_\_\_

Question 3. As far as you are aware the police behaved appropriately in this case?

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Question 4. This is the typical reaction of the police?

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Question 5. Have you seen the online video?

- Yes
- No

**NYPD Officer Larry DePrimo**

NYPD Officer Larry DePrimo is seen giving boots to a homeless man in 2012.

Question 1. How familiar are you with NYPD Officer Larry DePrimo giving boots to a homeless man?

- Extremely Familiar
- Somewhat Familiar
- Heard Of
- Unfamiliar
- Extremely Unfamiliar

Question 2. Where do you get the majority of your information on the case?

- Internet
- Television
- Magazines
- Newspapers
- Other, please specify... \_\_\_\_\_

Question 3. As far as you are aware the police behaved appropriately in this case?

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Question 4. This is the typical reaction of the police?

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Question 5. Have you seen the online video?

- Yes
  - No
- Page #13

Thank-you for completing the Survey

If you have any questions feel free to contact me at [smit9356@mylaurier.ca](mailto:smit9356@mylaurier.ca)

