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Female Victims of Police Misconduct: Ignored by Existing Narratives?

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Abstract

The issue of police brutality and use of force has become increasingly prevalent in both mainstream media and sociological research. However, while instances of police brutality against male citizens continue to make international headlines, female victims of police brutality fail to receive attention in both the media and scholarly research. This paper aims to answer the question of whether or not female victimization is being ignored by narratives of police misconduct. Using sociological, feminist, structural, organizational, and cultural approaches, the factors that establish the conditions for female victimization by police will be examined in detail. A variety of studies that highlight the existence of police brutality against women will also be presented and analyzed, which will then be combined with theoretical perspectives to explain the absence of women in this area of research.

Introduction

In recent years, an increased amount of sociological study and research has been focused on police brutality and use of force. Cases of police brutality that have made international headlines include that of Michael Brown, Eric Garner, and Sammy Yatin. This has been an area of interest and controversy for both researchers and the larger society, as many have come to question why it is that so many encounters between police and citizens are resulting in police misconduct. One of the major roles of the police is to protect citizens through order maintenance, but when police use of force is excessive and unnecessary, it can cause individuals to lose trust in the police and the justice system. What has also added to this controversy is the role that race plays in incidents of police brutality. Two decades of studies have consistently shown that black people are more likely than white people to be racially profiled, and therefore it should come as no surprise when the media continues to take hold of stories such as the Michael Brown shooting in order to gain national or potentially international awareness (Withrow, 2011).

As statistics continue to emerge on police misconduct, however, it has become evident that one thing is consistently missing: women. The victimization of women as a result of police brutality appears to be absent from a considerable amount of the current studies on police misconduct. This topic has also failed to receive the attention from mass media that police brutality against males has continually gained. The recent case of Sandra Bland, a Texas native who was found dead in her jail cell shortly after being arrested during a traffic stop, is a rare example of police misconduct involving a woman that made national headlines. The lack of attention on this subject is quite puzzling, as not only is it possible for women to experience the same types of police brutality as men – physical assault, shootings, homicide, interrogation and racial profiling – but there is also the potential for other types of violence, such as sexual assault by police officers.

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This paper begins by presenting a literature review of theoretical perspectives that are important for understanding police brutality against women, as well as the relationship this has with research on police misconduct and the media. I proceed by looking at the current study, explaining the research question and its implication. Following this is a transition into an analytical and critical review of the empirical evidence, using the findings from these studies to answer the research question presented. Finally, this paper will conclude by linking the theoretical perspectives presented with the findings from the empirical studies, and relating this back to the relevance and importance of police brutality against women.

Literature Review of Theories

This section will begin by examining theories of police brutality and use of force from a sociological approach, as Robert Worden (1996) states that understanding police brutality relies at least objectively on some theory of police behaviour. In order to understand police behaviour from a sociological perspective, this approach is based on the idea that police behaviour is based on the social dynamics of police-citizen encounters. Worden (1996) uses the example of Donald Black's sociological theory of law, which states that the "quantity" of the law is impacted by the social characteristics of concerned parties, such as victims or suspects (p. 24). According to Black's theory, police officers are least likely to use force on individuals of lower-status, whether male or female, whose accusers are also of a lower status, but more likely to use force against persons of lower status whose accusers are of a higher status (Worden, 1996). In addition, there are also a variety of structural characteristics that affect how police officers interact with

citizens, including social class, age, seriousness of the offence, and more importantly, gender and race (Worden, 1996).

Where do women typically fit into these categories of police-citizen encounters? While the behaviour of police officers is influenced by social dynamics, officers' expectations of police-citizen encounters differ greatly depending on gender. According to Susan Martin (1988), policemen and male citizens are "status equals", which is an advantage to both the officer and the individual (p. 214). In this encounter, the citizen knows that if he acts like a man, the officer will not have to exert any controlling authority, while the officer feels that he has retained the necessity to use force if necessary. On the other hand, policemen have "double status superiority" over female citizens, and there is a greater social distance (Martin, 1998, 215). While policemen and male citizens are aware of the fact that if they act "man to man" then there should not be any conflict, policemen gain control over female citizens by asserting "act like a lady and I'll treat you like one" (Martin, 1998, p. 214). Female individuals are therefore not of equal status to policemen, but subordinate. In this scenario, policemen will also extend courtesies and exemptions applicable to the female's sex status, and if this strategy is effective, the officer has not only gained control, but also established a sense of "generosity" (Martin, 1998, p. 214). If this strategy happens to fail, however, the officer can simply use force.

Susan Martin concludes that, in the majority of cases, female citizens are in a lower position than policemen, and therefore Martin's theory on police-citizen encounters can be applied back to Donald Black's theory of law. Employing the two theories

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one can determine that then the accuser (a policeman) is of a high status and the citizen (a female) is of a lower status, the policeman is more likely to use force. This is before other factors such as race, social class, type of neighbourhood the offence took place, and seriousness and visibility of the offence are taken into account, which could force an even larger gap in the social distance between the two individuals.

Furthermore, the next set of theories examines the relationship between females and police brutality from both gender and feminist perspectives. These theories are important to the understanding of this subject because they help explain the ways in which a patriarchal or male-dominated society can oppress women and leave them at a disadvantage.

According to the Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights (2003), any violence or use of force against women, whether by family, the community or society, or state actors can be defined as "gender-based violence", due to the fact that it partially stems from the subordinate status of women in society (p. 1). More specifically, gender-based violence includes any act or threat by a male or male-dominated institution that causes physical, psychological, or sexual harm to a woman (MAHM, 2003). Gender-based violence does not just occur in the private realm, but also in the public sphere, where such violence is maintained by the state through state policies and the actions of agents such as the military, immigration authorities, and most importantly, the police (MAHM, 2003). This organization puts forth the theory that the main problem that leads to gender-based violence, or the use of force against women, is the power inequality between men and women (MAHM, 2003). More importantly, it is also theorized that such

violence is not solely a women's issue, but that it is both "a cause and consequence of gender perceptions" (MAHM, p. 3). By looking at use of force specifically from a gender perspective, as well as using the term gender-based violence, one is able to understand how male-dominated institutions inflict harm over females in a new context. The emphasis is thus no longer on women as victims, but on the unequal power relationships between men and women, which is developed and upheld by gender stereotypes as the underlying cause of violence and force against women (MAHM, 2003).

Furthermore, in "Calling in the Girl Scouts: Feminist Legal Theory and Police Misconduct", Mary Gale attempts to open up the field of feminist legal scholarship on police brutality, as little had been done prior to bring attention to the subject. Gale (2001) asserts that police misconduct is strongly linked to, if not directly produced by, "stereotypic, aggressive, rampant masculinity" and that it "subdues, subordinates, and dehumanizes" females (p. 698). She uses the five major types of feminist theory in order to develop a response to police misconduct. For the purposes of this paper, however, only liberal, cultural, and radical feminism will be examined in relation to police brutality.

Liberal feminism, which Gale (2001) states is the most recognizable within society, bases its theoretical model after the civil rights movements of the 1950s and 60s, and defines sex discrimination as equivalent to racial discrimination. She uses the example of sex equality as decision-making without regard to sex, similar to colour-blindness in racial equal protection theory (Gale, 2001). Liberal feminism's theory and practice are best exemplified in the Women Rights Project of the American Civil Liberties

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Union, which convinced the Supreme Court of the United States that destructive gender stereotypes were being unjustly perpetuated as a result of sex-based discrimination (Gale, 2001). Liberal feminism's overall argument appears to be that sex discrimination is an unreasonable continuation of out-dated prejudices. Therefore, in relation to police brutality, use of force against female individuals can be seen as a result of persistent biases and the perpetuating of gender stereotypes.

On the other hand, cultural feminism disagrees with liberal feminism in that cultural feminism recognizes that there are biological and cultural differences between men and women that make them fundamentally different, and therefore society's treatment of them cannot be completely the same. Cultural feminism argues that women have "nurturing, caring, love, and responsible" qualities that men do not have, and that neither liberal or radical feminism can actually confront patriarchy because both fail to provide an alternative set of values to replace it (Gale, 2001, p. 704). In this sense, male-dominated institutions such as the police are based in environments that create the conditions for hostility and violence and, without any major female influence, policemen are less likely to consider other options before resorting to force (Gale, 2001).

Finally, Gale (2001) argues that radical feminism observes society as "intentional, hierarchical, rigidly structured, and self-reinforcing male domination and entitlement", illustrated by the violent, sexualized, and systemic economic and social demotion of women to and by men (p. 706). Further, it maintains that the law, in combination with cultural factors, is extremely gendered to maintain male power and female servility (Gale, 2001). In short,

men use the law as a tool to hurt women. As a result, radical feminism does not see gender as sex differences, but rather as sexual oppression and inequality, and tries to discover new ideas regarding the law in order to end male domination and allow women the opportunity to find their own voice (Gale, 2001). In the case of police brutality, policemen are able to use force as both a method of control and oppression over female citizens. Consequently, women are not only forced into submission, but the law also then treats this submission as evidence as subordination and fails to respect them as moral agents (Gale, 2001).

After analyzing the different types of feminist theory, Gale states that police misconduct appears to be caused, or at least considerably intensified, by the hyper-masculine police culture that exists today. She argues that the most obvious solution to this problem is to de-gender or re-gender police work, and that because biological sex forecasts behavioural and cultural gender for individuals, the way in which police work can be re-gendered is to hire more policewomen and advance them into leadership positions. (Gale, 2001). By adhering to the more traditional feminist theories, Gale proposes that the only real way to deconstruct the hyper-masculine environments of police forces is to hire as many female employees who are on the top end of the policing hierarchy.

Furthermore, the paper will now move to a set of theoretical perspectives that are more structural in nature. In "Those Who Take Us Away", the Human Rights Watch focuses on indigenous women and girls who experience police violence in Canada (2013). Violence experienced by indigenous women and girls, particularly police brutality, is associated with broader patterns of discrimination that have existed for ages in

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British Columbia, as well as in Canada as a whole. Specifically, the Human Rights Watch states that it is important to note that the context in which indigenous females are exposed to local and institutional violence is one of structural discrimination, which is linked to social and economic inequality (2003). This inequality often starts during childhood and continues into adulthood, whether from poverty, housing insecurity, unemployment, or all of the above (Human Rights Watch, 2003). In addition, the Human Rights Watch (2003) also explains that when police brutality against women occurs in an environment where individuals in the community already have a deeply fractured relationship with the police, this can have a very negative and potentially damaging effect. While the feminist perspectives on police brutality discussed previously examined the inequality that women experience based on their gender, the experiences of indigenous women with police violence indicate that they have issues to tackle. As mentioned in Donald Black's theory of law, factors such as race, social class, type of neighbourhood, etc. can all affect the individual. However, it is even harder to avoid becoming a victim of police brutality when there are multiple structural factors that establish barriers to achieving this.

Is police brutality inevitable? That is the question Holmes and Smith (2008) pose in "Race and Police Brutality: Roots of an Urban Dilemma." These authors also examine the structural factors that contribute to police brutality. Holmes and Smith (2008) state that while police violence is tragic, it is also a very normal side effect of intergroup relations (p. 125). The adverse conditions of life in impoverished minority neighbourhoods are foreign to many people, as they look to the police to control society and establish social and geographic

boundaries (Holmes and Smith, 2008). Those who live in communities of poverty, however, lead very different lives with little opportunity. However, while structural factors can force individuals to live in communities with socially disorganized conditions, the authors conclude that it is unclear whether any organizational changes within police organizations could impact the social conditions that activate the processes associated with police brutality (Holmes and Smith, 2008).

Moreover, in "Police Sexual Misconduct: A National Scale Study of Arrested Officers", Stinson et al. (2014) discusses the opportunity structure within police work that provides the basis for legitimate policing, but also for acts of sexual deviance and violence against citizens. The authors argue that a number of factors add to this framework, including lack of supervision, citizens of vulnerability, and late-night working hours (Stinson et al., 2014). Many police officers have plenty of opportunities to take advantage of citizens, whether it is low visibility or the threat of authority an officer exudes. At the same time, in "To Serve and Pursue: Exploring Police Sexual Violence Against Women", Kappeler and Kraska also use a structural perspective to examine police brutality, but focus specifically on police sexual assault. Kappeler and Krasker (1995) state that the larger society seems to believe that women do not suffer direct and systematic abuse by police officers, despite decades of research on the topic. Like in the previous article, these authors agree that there are opportunity structures that enable police deviance and that they can be used to help understand police violence. The authors continue to discuss how existing police literature has continued to indirectly assume that police are a "desired sexual commodity" who are regularly enticed by women who are

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willing to trade sexual favours in exchange for leniency (Kappeler and Krasker, 1995, p. 88). This theory of "consensual sex" means that other more victim-based theories of police sexual violence are less likely to emerge, and presents police officers as passive actors who are being corrupted, not the ones doing the corrupting (Kappler and Krasker, 1995, p. 88). By combining a unique opportunity structure such as this with police authority and power and isolated police-citizen encounters, Kappeler and Krasker (1995) contend that these factors enable the sexual harassment of females by police officers (p. 89).

Finally, Regina Lawrence (2000) establishes a theory about the role the media plays in shaping police brutality in "The Politics of Force: Media and the Construction of Police Brutality." According to Lawrence (2000), the media plays a large role in determining what the general public learns about the daily interactions of criminals and the underclass with street cops, as well as what the middle class public discovers about other groups' experiences with the police (p. 28). While news media is typically concerned with crime, it is not generally concerned with police behaviour in fighting crime, and therefore police brutality is only an "issue" after a very controversial incidence of police use of force (Lawrence, 2000, p. 28). Moreover, the paper also discusses the "voice" to the public within police brutality cases. According to Lawrence (2000), the most common voice in the news to discuss police use of force is the "official" voice, which includes police officers, lawyers, elected officials, (p. 37). These official voices often affirm that the citizen in question was "uncooperative" or "combative" in an effort to place responsibility for the use of force on the suspect (Lawrence, 2000, p. 37). On the other hand, one's individual claims are not considered official and are therefore not given much credit. Regardless of what actually happened in a police-citizen encounter, police preserve the power, in most cases, to explain to the public what happened, while the citizen's version of the events fails to make it into the observations of the public (Lawrence, 2000, 38). Taking this into consideration, it becomes clear that "official" accounts of police use of force are typically very one-sided.

In addition, Lawrence (2000) centers her argument around the high profile case of Rodney King, a Black American motorist who was repeatedly beaten by several Los Angeles Police Department officers following a high speed chase in 1991. Lawrence (2000) argues that there are three main conditions that allowed for this case to become a major news event: the narrative power of the videotape that captured part of the event, the political chaos and turmoil between the LAPD Chief and the Mayor, and the similarity of the incident to the Southern brutality of police in past civil rights events (p. 72). Lawrence asserts that while these factors are specific to the Rodney King case, one can look at these visual, political, and historical elements to help explain why some brutality cases gain media attention and others do not.

The Current Study

Do the existing narratives on police brutality and misconduct ignore the victimization of women by police officers? This is the research question that this paper will answer. If the answer to the question is yes, then several other questions arise as a result. Why do the existing narratives on police brutality and misconduct ignore the victimization of women? What is it about police brutality against men that warrants attention that police violence against women

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does not? Why does mass media fail to publicize cases of female victimization by police officers? Is it simply a matter of gender, or do other factors have an impact?

This subject and research question is important for a number of reasons. Much investigation has been done on police brutality and the use of force against men, but women lack a presence in this area of research. By presenting this issue, it is possible to determine what kind of failing or gap in our social structure has allowed for women to endure the same types of police brutality as men, but with minimal awareness on the subject. In addition, in a society where police misconduct continues to be a subject of controversy, any information that can add to the debate of whether police abuse of power is an actual problem or not can be of interest and assistance. Whether by racial profiling, police shooting and use of force, or misconduct in general, citizens continue to lose their trust in law enforcement as incidents of police misconduct continue to surface. The police are supposed to engage in crime control, order maintenance, and provide a range of services to the community (Griffiths, 2012). When citizens fail to feel protected by police, and instead have a sense of suspicion and doubt, it creates an "us against them" mentality. As a result, this has a very negative effect on the relationship between law enforcement and citizens within a society.

While the continual release of studies and research on police brutality may create more distrust of the police by citizens, it is also a way to make law enforcement more accountable. As the subject of police misconduct continues to gain attention and public outcry, police organizations are required to take responsibility for their actions and their behaviour becomes highly scrutinized. There is, however, still a very long way to go, as women appear to be left out of the discourse on police misconduct.

In order to answer the research question presented, the next section of the paper provides an analytical and critical review of the empirical evidence provided. More specifically, it begins by presenting statistics concerning women's experience with police brutality, whether in physical, emotional, and/or sexual ways. I will focus particularly on statistics of sexual abuse, which is perceived solely as a women's issue. At the same time, the data will be used to help determine why it is that the victimization of women by police is not represented in existing narratives, whether this is the result of individual choice, the community's choice, or the actions of the state or social institutions. I conclude this paper by linking the findings back to the theoretical perspectives presented in order to determine whether the empirical data supports or opposes the sociological, gender feminist, structural, and organizational perspectives discussed.

Analytical and Critical Review of Empirical Evidence

The following analytical and critical review of empirical evidence examines police violence and brutality against women in a general sense before narrowing in focus to examine race, social class, and sexual violence. To begin, violence against women is a universal problem that is occurring across all cultures and social groups. According to the Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights (2003), violence against women, which they define as gender-based violence, is the "most pervasive yet least recognized human rights abuse in the world", and this includes violence by police officers (p. 1). It is clear that there is an

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inequality among men and women in relation to power and violence, as illustrated in one studied from 2001 that indicated that while 18.5% of a police force consisted of women, 96.6% of police brutality, violence, and use of force (McCall, 2005). In a more recent study, the 2010 National Police Misconduct Statistics and Reporting Project reported that the most common form of police misconduct continues to be excessive force (Cato Institute, 2011).

However, all of this information begs the question: where do women fit into this? Are there statistics that indicate that women are experiencing brutality from police officers, or are there only a handful of cases of police brutality against women that are just creating a moral panic within the larger society? Statistics do in fact reveal that women are experiencing police brutality, despite the lack of exposure they receive. In the Cato Institute's (2011) national report on police misconduct, statistics reveal that in cases of police brutality against women, 56.9% involved physical force (i.e. strikes, throws, choke holds, baton strikes), 13.2% involved a combination of force types (physical force, firearms, and Tasers), and 15% resulted in a death as a result of physical force. Further, in 2013, a study revealed that the amount of men and women stopped and searched by police officers was quite even. In particular, 55.7% of black men and 53.4% of black women were stopped and searched (Gross, 2015). In the same study, it was found that black women are more likely to be over-policed and under-protected (Gross, 2015). While research in the past has been concerned with the idea of "Driving While Black", which refers to the racial profiling of Black drivers, as a result of women being harassed and abused during traffic stops, several scholars are starting to adopt the term "Driving While Female" (Stinson et al., 2014). In a "Driving While Female" situation, an officer will typically ask for sexual favours, in exchange for reduced or dropped charges or not being taken to jail. In some cases, this can escalate to sexual harassment, sexual assault, and even murder (Stinson et al., 2014). Also, while instances of Driving While Black only affect Black men, incidents of Driving While Female affect women of any race.

As of June 2015, Black women had been victimized by community violence more than any other group in the United States (Gross, 2015). Along with the statistics, several controversial cases of police assault and murder – such as Reika Boyd, Michelle Cusseaux, Tanisha Anderson, Shelly Frey, Yvette Smith, Eleanor Bumpurs, Natasha McKenna, and Janisha Fonville, – have caused women to establish movements such as *Say Her Name* and *Black Lives Matter* (Asoka and Chatelain, 2015). The goal of these movements is to bring awareness to the victimization of women by police officers on the ways in which this has impacted the lives of not only Black women, but women of all races and cultures. *Say Her Name*, for example, documents and analyzes women's experiences with police brutality in order to highlight what society is losing when they ignore this problem, such as reinforcing gender inequality (Asoka and Chatelain, 2015).

In relation to the *Black Lives Matter* movement, Kali Gross (2015) states that while the current American presidential candidates say they are concerned with inequality and injustice, they are ignoring the role of Black women in police brutality. While Senator Rand Paul stated that this is a "generation of Black men", Hilary Clinton specifically argued that "African-American men are still far more likely to be stopped and searched by police" (Gross, 2015).

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According to the Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights (2003), the state can be seen as responsible for establishing a tolerance of gender violence. While the state can perpetuate gender violence through the enactment of discriminatory laws, there are unfortunately also instances where the state fails to implement the proper measures that would aid in the elimination of gender violence (MDHR, p. 2).

Like the experiences of Black women, indigenous women and girls have been left in the dark to deal with the effects of police brutality. In Canada, indigenous women and girls are more likely than other Canadian women to die from the result of violence, and the history of Canadian indigenous women is plagued by police violence and abuse (Human Rights Watch, 2013). In 2012, the Human Rights Watch, along with the Vancouver-based organization Justice for Girls, conducted five weeks of field research in small towns in British Columbia. In total, 87 interviews were conducted, speaking with 42 indigenous women and girls ranging in age from 15 to 60 (Human Rights Watch, 2013). In general, both community activists and victims of abuse who were interviewed stated that they believe RCMP officers bring "a general presumption of criminality to their interactions with indigenous girls in the north", and that indigenous women are often targeted for no apparent reason (Human Rights Watch, p. 32). For example, a woman who was punched in the face by an officer who presumed she was a gang member in 2011 recounted how, instead of having any association with a gang, she simply liked to use eye makeup to draw hearts and dots around her eyes. When she filed a complaint about the assault, the police told her that the assault was justified because the "tattoos" on her face suggested she was "gang-related" (Human Rights Watch, p. 32).

Moreover, looking solely at the girls interviewed under the age of 18, the Human Rights Watch (2013) was about to document eight events of police assault and excessive force against women in a handful of small communities. Examples of these incidents included: a 17-year-old who was physically assaulted in the back of a police car after running away from four gang members, a 15-year-old whose arm was broken by an officer after responding to a domestic dispute, a 12-year-old who was severely injured by a police attack dog, and a 16-year-old who was hit on the back of the head and on both of her legs with batons after having a verbal confrontation with an officer (Human Rights Watch, 2013). Incidents of physical abuse were also documented as occurring during arrests, while in custody, and within jail cells. Further, some interviewers acknowledged that police had employed the use of Tasers, one of the more lethal forms of weapons that police use. For example, police failed to provide proper reasoning for the use of a Taser in 2007 when a constable used a 50,000-volt Taser on a 15-year-old girl, which resulted in the RCMP statement that police officers needed clarification on when the use of Tasers could be administered (Human Rights Watch, p. 34). In addition to physical assault, there is also the issue of sexual violence by police officers. In 5 out of the 10 towns analyzed in this study, indigenous women discussed their experiences of being sexually harassed and assaulted by police officers, some involving multiple officers (Human Rights Watch, 2013). Many of the women interviewed recounted disturbing incidents of sexual assault by RCMP officers, such as a woman who was taken outside of town by several officers, sexually assaulted, and threatened with her life if she told anyone

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(Human Rights Watch, p. 2). Even worse, several women suffered physical, verbal, and sexual abuse all in the same encounters.

The Human Rights Watch (2013) states that police use of force against women appears to be the result of "poor policing tactics, over-aggressive policing, and insensitivity to the welfare and vulnerability of victims" (p. 23). Police sexual assault against women, on the other hand, can be defined as a "deliberate criminal act", and is believed to only be perpetrated by officers who are under the impression that they will never have to answer for their crimes (Human Rights Watch, p. 23). The Independent Investigations Office, which was recently developed to aid in the civilian investigation of police misconduct, is one way in which the government is trying to deal with the issue of police brutality (Human Rights Watch, p. 4). However, since the IIO only deals with physical abuse, there is a key factor that is missing: rape and sexual assault. This causes problems for females, as it sends a very loud message that police assaults against women are not important.

While it is clear that indigenous women have experienced various forms of physical and sexual abuse by police, the Human Rights Watch also identifies a number of obstacles in documenting and examining police violence against this vulnerable group. Many of the females who were interviewed expressed their fear of being exposed to the police (Human Rights Watch, 2013). In the beginning of this study, the Human Rights Watch had an even higher number of females who wanted to share their story, but once they learned that the research would be published (although anonymously), their fear of police retaliation outweighed their desire to speak.

The topic of police sexual violence, which was brought up in the previous analysis of indigenous women and police brutality, opens the door to an entire area of discussion on the oppression of women. Police sexual violence is one area in which women can establish themselves apart from men within this area of discussion, yet their suffering still fails to gather attention.

In a national study on officers arrested for police sexual misconduct, Stinson et al. (2014) explain how police sexual violence is a "hidden" crime that continually goes unreported, therefore making it difficult to study (p. 1). After analyzing 548 arrest cases of 398 officers from 2005-2007, the author's findings suggest that police sexual misconduct often includes serious types of sex-related crimes and that the victims of these crimes are often under the age of 18 (Stinson et al., 2014). As for the offender, while corporals, sergeants, or lieutenants were responsible in 73 of the cases, the majority of the offences were committed by street-level officers (Stinson et al., 2014). This is not surprising, as street-level rank officers are more likely to be working in the field, patrolling the streets, and working late hours. Of the cases examined, Stinson et al. (2014) found that forcible rape was the most serious and common offence charged (21.4%), followed by forcible fondling (19.5%), statutory rape (10.8%), forcible sodomy (9.9%), and child pornography (7.1%). In cases where the female was a minor, the offence was more likely to occur off-duty, but in cases where the victim was an adult, the incident was most likely to happen on-duty (Stinson et al., p. 17). While the findings from this study present a wide range of data for pinpointing police sexual misconduct, the others admit that this is just the "tip of the iceberg" (p. 24). For years, the

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absence of data on this subject has left scholars extremely behind. Despite the use of methods such as surveys, interviews, and content analysis, research tends to be limited, as sample sizes remain small and cases, whether by the decision of the victim or not, fail to gain exposure (Stinson et al., 2014).

On a similar note, in "The Police Violence We Aren't Talking About", Zoe Carpenter argues that police sexual misconduct against women is being overshadowed by cases of police brutality against men. She focuses on the example of Daniel Holtzclaw, who between February and June of 2014 sexually assaulted seven women while on duty, including a 57-year-old grandmother (Carpenter, 2014). Holtzclaw's arrest, however, was within the same timeline of the Michael Brown shooting, and therefore his case received little to no media attention. According to Carpenter (2014), 9 percent of police misconduct reports in 2010 involved sexual abuse, making it the second-most reported type of police misconduct, next to excessive force. At the same time, however, there are officers like Holtzclaw who are repeat offenders that manage to slip under the radar. Carpenter agrees that there needs to be more data collection on the subject to bring awareness to the issue. As for prevention, she also suggests that law enforcement agencies have a "zero tolerance policy" regarding sexual violence, and that it be mandated that information about officers who are fired or resign due to sexual misconduct must be shared and made available to the public.

When women in their everyday lives can become victims of police sexual violence, the odds are even higher for female offenders, who are often in danger of police misconduct. Between 2005 and 2008, Cottler et al. (2014) enlisted women into an HIV intervention study, with the goal of assessing which risk factors led to the trading of sex, a form of police sexual misconduct. 70% of the women interviewed were Black, and the remainder of the women were White. Of the 318 participants, 25% reported having a lifetime of police sexual misconduct (Cottler et al, 2014). Of those who reported abuse, 96% had sex with an officer on duty, 77% had repeated exchanges, 31% had been raped by an officer, and 54% were offered favours in exchange for sex (Cottler et al., 338). Victims also reported that 87% of these officers kept their promises (Cottler et al, 338). Based on the data presented, it has become clear that the status of the female is not a major factor. Regardless of if the female is an innocent bystander or involved in the criminal justice system, she is just as susceptible to police sexual misconduct.

Conclusion

Do the existing narratives on police brutality and misconduct ignore the victimization of women by police officers? Based on the empirical data presented, the answer is yes. Despite the lack of research and awareness on this topic, scholars who have dedicated efforts to researching police brutality and misconduct have concluded that female victimization by police officers is occurring just as much as police brutality against men, yet fails to receive the same amount of attention.

One of the major theoretical perspectives relied on notions of gender and feminism to examine police brutality against women. It is hard to examine police brutality against women without considering gender and the inequalities that exist between men and women. Mary Gale's discussion of liberal, cultural, and radical feminism can all

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be applied to several of the studies presented, especially in regards to police sexual misconduct. As Donald Black stated, policemen have a "higher status", and they use that status in order to get women to behave how they want. Many of the women who are victims of police misconduct, both physical and sexual, are vulnerable, as the various studies showed officers take advantage of minors, female offenders, and women of minority. Radical feminism's claim that police brutality is the result of policemen who feel the need to assert control and authority over women is evident in almost all of the studies. For example, in the study of indigenous people in British Columbia by the Human Rights Watch, one woman was raped before being told by officers that she would be killed if she said anything about the assault. In addition, many of the victims in this study, as well as the study by Stinson et al., were minors or young adults, and were therefore more likely to comply with the authoritative demands of their offender. In the study by the Human Rights Watch, it was also discussed how many women were afraid to come forward with information about police misconduct, out of fear of police retaliation. As the communities examined in this study were quite small, these women most likely felt that they would be easily discovered again and targeted as a result of speaking out.

In Gale's feminist approach, she puts forth the idea that the hostility and aggressiveness of police cultures can only be combated if female officers take over and have more leadership roles in the police force. At first glance, this seems like an problematic idea, as having an all-female police organization would result in a series of other problems, and based on existing gender stereotypes, citizens would feel even more unsafe than they do currently. At the same time, however, is there currently a

better alternative that could help break down the hostile environment of police institutions? It is obvious that there needs to be more active female police officers within the law enforcement system. Gale's suggestion that more women need to be in positions higher in the hierarchy, however, may be opposing to Cottler et al.'s argument that the vast majority of police misconduct occurs at the street-level.

It is also clear from several of the studies examined that structural factors such as race play a major role in police misconduct. Power inequalities already exist as it is between males and females, and where factors such as race and social class are added into the mix, there are even more obstacles for women to deal with. Black and Indigenous women are the main racial minorities discussed within the empirical data. When it comes to Black women, they already possess stigmas that lead to racial profiling and "Driving While Black", and therefore their role as women only adds to a series of existing biases. As for Indigenous people, the study conducted by the Human Rights Watch examined a number of structural factors that add to the "broad patterns of discrimination" highlighted in the theoretical perspectives. Women in these communities often live in disadvantaged neighbourhoods where the cycle of poverty is extremely hard to break. Police officers who work in these regions are able to take advantage of these women, as they have no real stake in society that would give their claims credibility.

Furthermore, Regina Lawrence highlights the role of the media, and the empirical evidence offers further explanation for why police brutality against women does not garner media attention. Lawrence argues that the police are one of the actors that have an "official voice" in relation to

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what the media presents to the general public about crime, and that individual claims do not have as much credibility. Carpenter states that many police officers who commit sexual violence against women are often repeat offenders, such as Daniel Holtzclaw, yet he was able to assault seven women before being arrested, and it still did not make media headlines. Unless it is an "official voice", general public does not seem to take much interest, and obviously law enforcement agencies are not going to reveal any information that even hints at police misconduct. Furthermore, in "To Serve and Pursue: Exploring Police Sexual Violence Against Women", Kappeler and Kraska argue that most of the empirical evidence on police misconduct that is used in research studies is evidence gathered from police officer accounts, and thus the evidence is often skewed in their favour. The voice of the victim, therefore, is absent from mainstream media, which only allows for the cycle of police violence to continue.

Police brutality and misconduct against women is an extremely important topic, and as is clear from the empirical evidence presented, needs to be addressed. Police violence, whether physical or sexual, is much more than an issue of gender equality, as it is also maintained by structural factors such as race and social class, as well as the role of the media. While law enforcement agencies attempt to repair the relationship between police and citizens due to a lack of trust, their first step should instead be to address the issue of police misconduct and brutality against women. Only after this is achieved will police organizations be able to begin recovering its broken relationship with citizens and the larger society.

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