

**EMERGENCE: SOCIAL MOVEMENTS, LAW ENFORCEMENT, AND  
DEFENDING THE SANCTITY OF LIFE**

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## ABSTRACT

This study examines the aftermath of social movements advocating for police reforms and accountability, with San Francisco emerging as a pivotal city at the forefront of criminal justice and policing transformations. Rebuilding community trust and implementing substantive police reforms aimed at preserving lives has proven to be a formidable challenge. The convergence of interests among all stakeholders, driven by a shared commitment to dismantling institutional racism and implementing reforms that fostered trust with communities of color and law enforcement, played a pivotal role.

A significant aspect of this reform process has been the development of social movement convergence, where diverse groups with varying motivations and perspectives united towards a common goal. This convergence was marked by the collaboration of community activists, policymakers, law enforcement officials, and community members, all advocating for systemic changes. Their shared objective—to effect substantial organizational changes that embody critical dimensions in protecting the sanctity of life—served as a powerful catalyst for collective action.

While the motivations for altering police department practices varied among key stakeholders, the unified commitment to justice and community well-being provided the foundation for a comprehensive and collective effort. This shared goal underscored the potential for positive change through collaborative initiatives. San Francisco's police reform journey thus stands as a testament to the power of social movement convergence, illustrating how collaborative efforts and an unwavering commitment to justice can drive substantive transformations in policing and community relations—an emergence.

**KEYWORDS:** Accountability, Collaborative Reform Initiative, Community Relations, Community Trust, Criminal Justice Transformation, Emergence, Institutional Racism, Interest Convergence, Justice and Equity, Law Enforcement Reform, New Social Movement, Organizational Change, Police Accountability, Police Practices, Police Reform, Policymaking, Protecting Sanctity of Life, Public Safety, San Francisco Police Department (SFPD), Social Movement Convergence, Stakeholder Collaboration, Systemic Change, Use of Force

**SIGNATURE PAGE**

This dissertation, written under the direction of the candidate's dissertation committee and approved by the members of the committee, has been presented to and accepted by the Faculty of the School of Education in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education. The content and research methodologies presented in this work represent the work of the candidate alone.

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## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to my ancestors, whose resilience and strength have paved the way for seven generations. Their legacy of perseverance and wisdom continues to inspire and guide me.



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This doctoral dissertation represents the culmination of a journey filled with immense challenges and triumphs, driven by unwavering love and encouragement from many amazing individuals in my life. An endeavor that once seemed like a distant dream for a daughter of immigrant war refugees, this achievement stands as a testament to perseverance and resilience.

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## CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

The San Francisco Police Department (SFPD) has been at the center of a nationwide movement calling for comprehensive police reform, particularly after several high-profile incidents that underscored systemic issues within law enforcement. These incidents catalyzed a convergence of interests between government officials, policy leaders, and community advocates, leading to active changes in leadership and the implementation of substantial reform policies. This collaborative approach aims to rectify the imbalances and injustices perceived in policing practices, fostering a more equitable and just interaction between the police and the communities they serve. While advocating for these necessary reforms, it is also vital to maintain a balance that honors the integrity and importance of the policing profession, acknowledging the challenging and often dangerous work officers undertake to maintain public safety and harmony, while still preserving the sanctity of life.

In the wake of national social movements demanding police reforms and accountability, San Francisco has emerged as one of the most significant and controversial cities at the forefront of criminal justice and police reforms. From the closure of the juvenile detention center to high-profile officer-involved shootings that prompted the United States Department of Justice to assess the Police Department, and the call for additional police officers to address neighborhood corridors impacted by the sale of fentanyl that has claimed the lives of thousands of city residents, rebuilding community trust and implementing meaningful police reforms to prioritize life preservation has been a challenging endeavor. Despite these hurdles, the San Francisco Police Department is one of the first major city police departments to implement 272 recommendations mandated by the California Department of Justice for police reform, serving

as a national model of modern 21<sup>st</sup>-century policing. How did the SFPD achieve this transformation and reach such significant milestones?

The transformation of the SFPD was driven by significant historical events, advocacy of grassroots social movements, and the willingness of key government leadership positions, including the police department. These changes were overseen by independent agencies such as the United States Department of Justice's Office of Community Oriented Policing Services and later the California Attorney General's Office (DOJ, 2019). Through these multifaceted efforts, the SFPD embarked on a transformative journey, seeking to rebuild trust with communities, enhance transparency and accountability, and ultimately redefine its role as a guardian of public safety within a framework of equity and justice.

### **History of American Policing**

Advocacy demands stemming from grassroots movements have played a pivotal role in challenging the deep-seated institutional racism and discriminatory policies that have disproportionately impacted communities of color within the United States. These challenges are rooted in a historical context where policing practices were intertwined with the legacies of slavery and labor exploitation (Goluboff & Sorenson, 2018). As we reflect on this history, it becomes evident that addressing these systemic issues requires ongoing efforts to promote equity, justice, and community trust within law enforcement agencies. By acknowledging and confronting the historical legacies that have shaped contemporary policing, we can work towards a future where all communities are treated with fairness, dignity, and respect under the law.

Throughout American history, policing has been closely linked with the maintenance of racial hierarchies and the enforcement of discriminatory laws. The post-Civil War era, marked

by the Emancipation Proclamation, saw the emergence of “black codes” that effectively restricted the freedoms of African Americans and Native Americans (Goluboff & Sorenson, 2018). These codes, along with Vagrancy Laws, targeted and criminalized behaviors such as unemployment and public gatherings among communities of color, perpetuating racial injustice within the criminal justice system (Lambert, 1868). This discriminatory enforcement served to perpetuate systemic racial disparities, entrenching inequality and undermining the principles of justice and equity.

Following the Civil War and the implementation of the Emancipation Proclamation, police departments in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century became tools used by members of the Ku Klux Klan and other racist groups to enforce discriminatory policies aimed at African American and Native American communities, often exploiting them for cheap labor (Goluboff & Sorenson, 2018). These policies, commonly known as “black codes,” were crafted to give police officers the authority to arrest individuals based on newly established laws, referred to as Vagrancy Laws (Goodman, 1912). These Vagrancy Laws criminalized specific behaviors among African Americans and Native Americans, such as unemployment or public drinking, and were enforced by White local authorities to maintain a rigid white American social hierarchy.

During this era, “convict leasing systems” were established, exploiting incarcerated individuals, predominantly from communities of color, to maintain plantation economies (Oshinsky, 1996). This system of racial oppression resulted in the unjust arrest and imprisonment of thousands of Black, Indigenous, and Latinx individuals by the mid-1900s, perpetuating a cycle of institutional racism that influenced policing practices and laws, ultimately serving a white heterosexual establishment. This period underscored the need for a

transformative approach to justice, highlighting the enduring consequences of such systems on current law enforcement and societal structures.

The enforcement of federal fugitive slave statutes in California, notably starting in 1789 and strengthened by the 1850 Congressional act, played a significant role in shaping early policing practices (DeLombard, 2005). This period saw the legal system and emerging police forces collaborate to enforce racial oppression, with fugitive slave laws necessitating a policing apparatus that could manage and control the movement of enslaved and free Black individuals. This connection underscores how the roots of policing in California were intertwined with the enforcement of slavery and racial control.

This enforcement was particularly relevant given California's annexation by the U.S. during this period. Leading figures like Mary Ellen Pleasant and Frederick Douglass catalyzed heightened activism in cities like San Francisco, reflecting the complexities of racial struggles in the region (Hudson, 2008). Fugitivity became a "national condition" for all Black individuals, serving as a twin issue alongside slavery itself (Du Bois, 1935). The nexus of fugitivity and activism during this period highlights the evolving role of policing in enforcing racial policies and controlling Black populations, setting the stage for the complex dynamics of race and law enforcement that continued into the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

San Francisco, as a major city on the West Coast and a hub for activism and reform, played a crucial role in shaping the narrative of fugitivity and racial discrimination. Mary Ellen Pleasant, a prominent figure in San Francisco's black community, not only led efforts to support fugitive slaves but also played a key role in funding the John Brown insurgency (1859) and supporting the Underground Railroad. Her leadership and activism exemplified the resilience

and determination of black San Franciscans in the face of oppressive laws and societal structures.

Du Bois (1935) argues that the reality of fugitive blacks led to a “general strike,” combined with the enlistment of 180,000 black Union soldiers, which played a crucial role in precipitating black emancipation. Fugitivity was not only a state of existence but also an organizing principle for black communities in San Francisco, shaping their resistance against discrimination and injustice. This history of fugitivity and activism was more central to California’s narrative than slavery itself, especially as the state joined the Union as a free state.

The enduring impact of these discriminatory practices has significantly contributed to the deep-seated mistrust and animosity toward law enforcement within communities of color, sentiments that have persisted across generations (Smith, 2021). Addressing these historical injustices and dismantling the systemic biases embedded within law enforcement institutions remains a critical imperative for achieving equitable and just policing practices in contemporary society. Community activists and marginalized voices pushed to dismantle and reshape the system, aiming to establish a law enforcement structure that better served the needs of the communities.

In San Francisco, the history of policing and racial inequities dates to its inception. The SFPD was established in 1849 during the Gold Rush and is the third oldest police department in the country (Agee, 2014). The establishment of policing served the specific purpose of controlling White investment during the California Gold Rush by regulating Indigenous sovereignty, continuing African American discrimination, and excluding Chinese immigrant communities from obtaining economic wealth or political power in government. This period was significant in shaping the city’s demographic and socio-political landscape, as it attracted a



diverse population seeking fortune and opportunities. As the third oldest police department in the United States, the SFPD played a crucial role in managing the burgeoning city's complex social dynamics.

The exploration of racial dynamics within legal proceedings, particularly how they affect credibility and justice, mirrors the historical policing practices in San Francisco, where systemic biases have long been embedded. In 1854, the Supreme Court case *People v. Hall* deemed that Blacks, Chinese, and Native Americans were not allowed to testify in court, further controlling communities of color and creating a permanent institutionally racist policy regulated by policing (Carlin, 2015). Policing served as a tool to support the capitalist investments and growth of neoliberalism, and changes to the predominantly White establishment took decades to integrate with other communities of color. The city's law enforcement history is marked by episodes of racial profiling and discrimination, reflecting broader patterns of institutional racism.

After the Gold Rush era, the SFPD evolved with the city's growth and changing demographics. As San Francisco saw immigration surges from Europe and Asia, the SFPD's challenges diversified, leading to shifts in policing strategies, especially post-1906 earthquake (Raspa, 2020). The department's expansion reflected the city's complex social, political, and economic dynamics, grappling with issues like organized crime, labor disputes, and the modernization of its practices amidst corruption and discrimination allegations. The SFPD expanded its focus beyond the initial concerns of controlling White investment and regulating Indigenous sovereignty to address issues related to organized crime, labor disputes, and social unrest. Notable events such as the 1906 earthquake and subsequent fire prompted significant changes in policing strategies and infrastructure, leading to the modernization of the department

and the adoption of new technologies (Raspa, 2020). However, these developments were also accompanied by ongoing tensions and controversies, including allegations of corruption, police brutality, and discrimination against marginalized communities. The history of the SFPD post Gold Rush era reflects a complex interplay of social, political, and economic factors that continue to shape law enforcement practices in San Francisco today.

### **San Francisco Government and Policing Organization**

The organizational structure of the San Francisco Police Department (SFPD) is closely linked to the city government's leadership, notably the Mayor and the Board of Supervisors. The Mayor of San Francisco plays a critical role in overseeing the police department, including the appointment of the Chief of Police (City and County of San Francisco, 2021). This appointment is a significant responsibility as the Chief of Police is pivotal in shaping the strategic direction, operational policies, and overall management of the police force. The Mayor, along with the Board of Supervisors, also influences policing practices through budgetary decisions and legislative actions that can mandate reforms or introduce new policing technologies and protocols (City and County of San Francisco, 2021).

Adding to the oversight mechanisms within the city, the San Francisco Police Commission plays an essential role in the governance of the SFPD. Established in 1932, the Police Commission is a civilian oversight body responsible for setting policies for the police department and conducting disciplinary hearings when misconduct is alleged (San Francisco Police Department, 2021). The Commission acts as a critical link between the community and the police, ensuring that the policing strategies implemented by the SFPD are transparent, accountable, and aligned with community expectations and legal standards. By reviewing and approving department policies, the Police Commission helps ensure that the practices of the

police force adhere to the principles of justice and equity, thereby supporting the Mayor and the Chief of Police in their leadership and oversight roles (San Francisco Police Department, 2021).

Police commissions, such as the San Francisco Police Commission established in 1932, are typically created to provide civilian oversight, enhance transparency, and ensure accountability within municipal police forces (City of San Francisco, 2021). These commissions serve several crucial roles, including setting police department policies, conducting disciplinary hearings, and acting as a conduit between the community and the police. Their functions help to maintain the integrity of the police force by holding officers accountable for misconduct and advocating for necessary reforms based on legal standards, technological advancements, and evolving community expectations. By including civilian members, police commissions also facilitate a vital connection that can address public concerns about policing, thereby fostering a stronger relationship between the community and law enforcement agencies (City of San Francisco, 2021).

Together, these governance structures—the Mayor’s office, the Board of Supervisors, and the Police Commission—create a comprehensive oversight framework that helps guide the SFPD toward effective and community-focused policing. This integrated approach ensures that the department not only upholds the law but also fosters a positive and constructive relationship with the San Francisco community it serves.

### **SFPD Progress and Challenges in Diversity and Inclusion**

Close to seven decades after its inception, the SFPD made significant strides in diversity and inclusion, driven by societal pressures and the growing recognition of the need for a police force that reflects the community’s diversity. In 1948, the department hired its first African American police officer, marking a pivotal moment in its history (SFPD, 2020). Subsequently,

in 1957, Police Chief Frank Ahern appointed Herbert Lee as the first Chinese American officer, further reflecting the department's efforts towards inclusivity and representation (SFPD, 2020). However, it was not until the national movements advocating for the end of segregation and civil rights that full equal access to promotions and jobs was granted, challenging institutional racist employment laws.

The 1960s marked a transformative period in American policing, influenced by the Civil Rights movement's demands for equity and justice. This era saw significant challenges to established White establishments, leading to the enactment of laws that began to redefine policing practices nationwide. The Civil Rights movement, accompanied by widespread protests and unrest, catalyzed changes in law enforcement approaches and policies across various states (Alexander, 2010). Civil lawsuits, supported by independent research organizations like the Police Foundation, were pivotal in exposing the deficiencies of traditional policing methods, leading to policy reforms, and shaping the future of law enforcement (Walker, 1992). These developments highlighted the dynamic nature of policing, evolving in response to societal calls for accountability, fairness, and community-oriented approaches, a shift significantly influenced by the Civil Rights movement's push for systemic change (Skolnick & Fyfe, 1993).

In addition to facing racial discrimination, the SFPD also grappled with gender discrimination for many years, with women encountering barriers that impeded their entry into law enforcement careers. The breakthrough came in the late 1970s, specifically in 1975, when women were finally permitted to join the first SFPD police academy (SFPD, 2020). This milestone marked a significant policy shift within the department, heralding an era where women could actively pursue careers in law enforcement. This transformative change was the result of extensive advocacy efforts from organized groups and community activists, including

the Officers for Justice, a group established in 1968 by African Americans and other officers of color (Officers for Justice, 2020). Their advocacy aimed to dismantle gender inequality within the SFPD and advocate for the inclusion of women in law enforcement roles, thereby diversifying the department and enriching policing with unique perspectives and contributions.

The history of Earl Sanders, the first Black Chief of Police in the City of San Francisco, reveals a nuanced narrative of leadership and advocacy within the department amidst the backdrop of institutional racism, underscoring the challenges faced in fostering a more equitable and representative law enforcement agency. Earl Sanders' pivotal role in the history of the SFPD serves as a testament to the ongoing struggle against systemic barriers to diversity and inclusion within law enforcement (SFPD, 2020). As a notable figure in the SFPD, Sanders' leadership as a member of the black SFPD group "Officers for Justice" during the late 1960s and early 1970s was instrumental in challenging discriminatory practices within the department and advocating for equitable treatment of officers of color (Officers for Justice, 2020). His tenure coincided with a period of heightened activism and legal challenges aimed at addressing institutional racism and promoting diversity in law enforcement agencies across the United States.

During this transformative era, the SFPD faced significant legal challenges related to discriminatory hiring and promotional practices. In April 1973, a discrimination lawsuit was filed against the department by people of color and women's advocacy groups, alleging systemic biases in recruitment, hiring, and promotions within the SFPD (Rothstein, 2017). This legal action marked a crucial turning point in the department's history, prompting a deeper examination of its policies and practices regarding diversity and equal opportunity.

The lawsuit highlighted systemic biases within the SFPD' pointing to issues in recruitment, hiring, and promotions that disadvantaged people of color and women. 'The SFPD (SFPD, 2024) was initiated in 1849, while the first Chief of Police of color, Fred Lau, was appointed in 1996, marking a span of 147 years between the initiation of the SFPD and the appointment of its first Chief of Police of color (San Francisco Police Department, Retrieved April 01, 2024). Earl Sanders became the first African American Chief of Police of the SFPD in 2002, George Gascon became the first Latino Chief of Police in 2009, and Heather Fong became the first female Chief of Police in 2004 (San Francisco Police Department, Retrieved April 01, 2024). Until the turn of the century, we began to see a rise in ranks and reflection of individuals representing disenfranchised groups represented in leadership.

Earl Sanders, during his tenure as the Chief of the SFPD, played a significant role not only as a leader within the department but also as a primary investigator in one of the city's most notorious cases (Sanders & Cohen, 2006). In 1973 and 1974, Sanders was involved in investigating the race-related "Zebra Killings," which were carried out by a group known as the "Death Angels" affiliated with the local Nation of Islam Mosque (Sanders & Cohen, 2006). These killings targeted white individuals and were characterized by their racially motivated nature. Sanders' involvement in this investigation showcased his commitment to addressing complex and sensitive issues of racial violence and discrimination within the city, highlighting the multifaceted challenges faced by law enforcement in combating systemic racism and ensuring public safety for all communities.

The discriminatory hiring and promotional practices faced by the SFPD prompted significant legal action. Subsequently, in March 1979, U.S. District Judge Robert Peckham approved an affirmative action plan as part of the *consent decree* resulting from the

discrimination lawsuit (U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, 2017). This landmark decision mandated the SFPD to actively recruit, hire, and promote more people of color and women, aiming to address longstanding issues of discrimination and inequality within the department. Earl Sanders played a significant role during this period, advocating for reforms and initiatives that would foster a more inclusive and representative law enforcement agency.

Sanders's contributions to the SFPD's journey towards greater inclusivity and diversity were not limited to legal advocacy. His leadership and activism within the Officers for Justice group helped amplify the voices of officers from underrepresented backgrounds, leading to increased awareness and action on issues of racial equity and fairness within the department. His efforts, alongside those of other activists and reformers, laid the groundwork for ongoing efforts to create a more equitable and representative law enforcement institution in San Francisco and beyond.

### **Multi-Cultural Neoliberalism**

The concept of multicultural neoliberalism, as analyzed by Jodi Melamed in Represent and Destroy: Rationalizing Violence in the New Racial Capitalism, provides a critical lens through which to examine the progress and challenges faced by the San Francisco Police Department (SFPD) in hiring leadership of color at the highest ranks. Melamed (2011) explained that neoliberal multiculturalism celebrates cultural diversity but did so in a way that supports neoliberal economic policies. This form of multiculturalism emphasizes individualism, market-driven success, and entrepreneurial spirit, often sidelining structural inequalities and systemic issues.

While the SFPD highlighted the representation of leaders of color, this focus could obscure the structural challenges and inequalities that persisted. The celebration of diversity

may risk depoliticizing the conversation, shifting it away from necessary reforms and systemic changes needed to support genuine inclusion and equity (Melamed, 2011). The promotion of leaders of color within the SFPD, while a positive step, risked tokenism if it did not come with broader institutional changes. Without addressing the underlying power structures and cultural dynamics.

The rhetoric of progress used to describe the hiring of leaders of color could sometimes mask the ongoing issues of policing disparities and systemic discrimination. By framing diversity as a sign of progress, the department could unintentionally rationalize and obscure the need for deeper reforms (Melamed, 2011). The SFPD's approach to diversity might have been situated within the broader context of racial capitalism, where racial differences were leveraged to promote the department's image and legitimacy. This could create a façade of progress while perpetuating underlying inequalities.

To move beyond the pitfalls of multicultural neoliberalism, the SFPD needed to ensure that its efforts to diversify leadership were accompanied by meaningful structural changes. This involved focusing on comprehensive reforms that addressed systemic inequalities within the department, ensuring that diversity initiatives were not merely superficial but led to substantive changes in culture and practice (Melamed, 2011). Beyond hiring leaders of color, the SFPD needed to foster an environment of genuine inclusion where all members, regardless of their background, had equal opportunities for growth and leadership.

The Department needed to engage in critical conversations about race, power, and inequality, moving beyond celebratory narratives to address the real challenges faced by marginalized communities. Transparency and accountability were crucial in building trust and



legitimacy. The SFPD needed to be transparent about its diversity initiatives and outcomes, ensuring that progress was measured and reported accurately.

The progress of the SFPD in hiring leadership of color at the highest ranks, when viewed through the lens of multicultural neoliberalism, revealed both achievements and areas for improvement. By addressing the structural and systemic challenges identified through this analysis, the SFPD could ensure that its diversity initiatives led to genuine, transformative change rather than symbolic representation. This approach aligned with Melamed's critique and emphasized the importance of moving beyond neoliberal multiculturalism towards a more inclusive and equitable policing environment (Melamed, 2011).

### **Civil Rights Movement, an “Inside” and “Outside” Strategy**

The legal and internal leadership changes were a direct result of the “outside” push to create change by prominent times in Civil Rights. The struggles of the Civil Rights movement intersected with broader societal movements, such as the Black Power movement, which emphasized self-determination, empowerment, and community control among African Americans. These movements brought to light the systemic injustices faced by communities of color, including pervasive discrimination in housing, education, employment, and law enforcement (Lewis, 1998). They highlighted the need for accountability, transparency, and equitable treatment within law enforcement agencies sparking discussions and actions aimed at addressing institutional racism and fostering greater inclusivity and fairness in policing practices.

The legal and internal leadership changes were a direct result of the "outside" push to create change by prominent times in civil rights. The Feminist and Women's Rights Movement during this era added another dimension to the push for social justice and equality, as it

challenged gender discrimination and patriarchal structures, opening opportunities for women in law enforcement and other professions (Mattingly, 2020). This shift resulted in an increased presence of women in policing and a broadening of their roles within the department, reflecting a significant transformation towards a more inclusive and diversified law enforcement culture (Wells & Alt, 2005). The experiences of women in various law enforcement roles illustrate the evolving dynamics and challenges they face, underscoring their resilience and pioneering contributions to the field (Mullenbach, 2017). The integration of women into law enforcement reveals the ongoing journey toward gender equality and the pivotal role they play in shaping the future of the profession.

The intersectional nature of these movements underscored the interconnected struggles for justice and equality faced by marginalized communities. This recognition of intersectionality prompted advocacy efforts that advocated for policies and practices promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion across all dimensions of identity. As a result, there was a growing acknowledgment that addressing one form of inequality necessitates tackling all forms, leading to more comprehensive and holistic approaches to social reform.

The activism and advocacy of marginalized communities and their allies led to significant legal and policy reforms. Court rulings, such as the landmark cases of *Brown v. Board of Education* and *Roe v. Wade*, set important precedents for civil rights, equality, and reproductive rights, influencing broader societal attitudes and governmental policies (Kluger, 2004; Garrow, 1994). The decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* marked a pivotal moment in the struggle for racial equality in the United States, laying the groundwork for further civil rights advances (Kluger, 2004). Similarly, *Roe v. Wade* played a critical role in shaping the discourse around reproductive rights, highlighting the complex interplay between legal rulings and social

change (Garrow, 1994). These landmark decisions illustrate how legal frameworks can become instrumental in driving forward the broader agenda of civil rights and social equity, shaping the trajectory of societal progress and reform.

### **Interest Convergence and Divergence**

The concept of interest convergence, introduced by Derrick Bell, offers a critical perspective on these legal advancements. Bell argued that the progress made through landmark decisions like *Brown v. Board of Education* often aligned with the interests of the dominant white majority rather than stemming solely from altruistic commitments to racial justice. In the case of *Brown*, the decision to desegregate schools can be seen as aligning with America's broader geopolitical interests during the Cold War, where the country sought to present itself as a leader of the free world and counter Soviet critiques of its racial policies (Bell, 1980). This perspective underscores that the advancement of civil rights frequently occurs when it converges with the interests of those in power, providing a nuanced understanding of the complexities involved in legal and social reforms.

Derrick Bell's concept of interest divergence complements his theory of interest convergence by highlighting the moments when the interests of marginalized groups diverge from those of the dominant majority. Interest divergence occurs when the gains for marginalized groups no longer align with or serve the interests of those in power, leading to resistance or backlash against further progress. For example, after the initial successes of the Civil Rights Movement, such as the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, there was significant resistance to further desegregation efforts and civil rights advancements. This resistance manifested in various forms, including the rise of "colorblind" policies that ostensibly promoted equality but often perpetuated systemic inequities (Bell, 1992; Crenshaw, 1988).

Interest divergence also helps explain the limitations of reforms that appear progressive but are ultimately constrained by the interests of the dominant group. For instance, while affirmative action policies were implemented to address historical injustices and promote diversity, they have faced ongoing challenges and restrictions as the dominant group perceives these policies as threatening to their interests (Bell, 2003). This dynamic underscores the precarious nature of civil rights gains and the constant negotiation required to sustain progress.

Recognizing the interplay between interest convergence and interest divergence provides a more nuanced understanding of the complexities involved in achieving and maintaining social justice. It highlights the importance of vigilance and sustained advocacy to address the underlying power structures that shape and often limit the impact of legal and social reforms. This perspective is crucial for developing strategies that can effectively challenge and transform these entrenched systems.

### **Police & Racial Tensions**

The relationship between law enforcement agencies and communities of color in the United States has long been fraught with tension and challenges. Issues such as police brutality, racial profiling, and disparities in law enforcement practices have fueled mistrust and division between police departments and marginalized communities. The struggles for accountability, justice, and equitable treatment continue to be central themes in the ongoing dialogue surrounding policing and the experiences of communities of color.

During the 1970s, the SFPD experienced a period marked by significant social unrest, political activism, and calls for reform. This era, reflecting broader national trends, was characterized by heightened tensions between the police and various community groups, including the growing LGBTQ+ community, communities of color, and anti-war protestors. The

decade saw several high-profile incidents, such as the Zebra murders and the Moscone–Milk assassinations, which challenged the SFPD’s relationship with the public and highlighted issues of police conduct, community trust, and the need for reform (Agee, 2014). In response, there were efforts to improve policing practices, enhance community relations, and address allegations of discrimination and excessive force within the department. These efforts laid the groundwork for future reforms, although they were met with varying degrees of success and resistance within the SFPD and the broader San Francisco community.

The Rodney King case also stands as a stark reminder of the complex and enduring challenges surrounding police brutality and racial injustice in the United States. The Rodney King case involved the brutal beating of Rodney King, an African American motorist, by four Los Angeles Police Department officers on March 3, 1991, following a high-speed chase. The incident was captured on videotape by a bystander and widely broadcast, leading to public outrage. The acquittal of the officers by a predominantly white jury in April 1992 sparked the Los Angeles riots, resulting in widespread violence, looting, and arson across the city (Cannon, 1999; The New York Times, 1992). The brutal beating of Rodney King by Los Angeles Police Department officers and the subsequent legal proceedings and civil unrest underscored deep-seated issues within law enforcement and society at large. ‘This pivotal moment in American history brought to the forefront the urgent need for reforms in policing practices and greater accountability for acts of violence and discrimination (Davis, 2017). It underscored the impact of systemic racism and the ongoing struggle for justice and equality within the criminal justice system.

Trayvon Martin’s tragic death on February 26, 2012, in Sanford, Florida, sparked discussions about police use of force and its effects on communities (Alpert & Smith, 2016).

The incident involved Martin, a 17-year-old African American high school student, who was fatally shot by George Zimmerman, a neighborhood watch volunteer. This case not only raised questions about self-defense laws but also ignited nationwide conversations about racial profiling and the treatment of African Americans in the criminal justice system.

The *State of Florida v. George Zimmerman* case gained national attention due to the circumstances surrounding Martin's death and the subsequent legal proceedings (State v. Zimmerman, 2013). Zimmerman claimed self-defense under Florida's "Stand Your Ground" law, leading to his initial acquittal in 2013 (Goff, Kahn, & Brewer, 2017). This case sparked widespread outrage and discussions about racial profiling, self-defense laws, and the treatment of African Americans in the criminal justice system. It also played a significant role in the formation and growth of the Black Lives Matter movement.

### **Black Lives Matter**

The Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement emerged as a powerful response to longstanding issues of racial injustice, police brutality, and systemic inequality faced by African Americans and people of color in the United States. Originating in 2013 following the acquittal of George Zimmerman in Trayvon Martin's death and gaining significant momentum after the killing of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, BLM became a global phenomenon advocating for social change and racial equality. At its core, BLM sought to address the disproportionate violence and discrimination experienced by Black individuals within law enforcement and society at large.

The BLM's focus on police brutality and racial profiling sparked crucial conversations about accountability, transparency, and reform within police departments across the country. Through protests, demonstrations, and grassroots activism, BLM brought attention to the need

for systemic change in policing practices, including the demilitarization of law enforcement, community policing initiatives, and the implementation of de-escalation tactics.

President Barack Obama, in a speech defending the Black Lives Matter movement, emphasized the importance of addressing systemic issues impacting African American communities. He acknowledged the unique challenges faced by these communities, stating, “We, as a society, particularly given our history, have to take this seriously” (Politics Oct 23, 2015, para. 1). Obama highlighted the movement’s focus on specific problems within the African American community, such as unfair treatment and excessive force by police, which are not as prevalent in other communities. He clarified that the phrase “Black Lives Matter” does not diminish the value of other lives but rather draws attention to a specific issue that needs addressing (Politics Oct 23, 2015, para. 2). Obama also praised law enforcement while acknowledging the difficulties they face, emphasizing the need for a balanced approach that recognizes both the challenges faced by communities of color and the dedication of law enforcement officers (Politics Oct 23, 2015, para. 3).

President Barack Obama’s defense of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement also underscored the need for comprehensive police reforms. He acknowledged the longstanding concerns about police-community relations and the impact of racial bias in law enforcement. Obama’s remarks echoed the sentiments of many BLM activists who have called for accountability, transparency, and structural changes within police departments across the country. The movement’s advocacy for police reforms, including the adoption of de-escalation tactics, implicit bias training, and community oversight mechanisms, aligns with the broader goals of promoting fairness, justice, and equality in law enforcement practices. By highlighting the intersection of BLM's demands with the imperative for police reforms, Obama contributed

to a national dialogue on addressing systemic issues and building trust between law enforcement and minority communities.

The issue of police fatalities, especially in relation to public awareness and media coverage, gained significant attention and began to be highlighted publicly with more frequency around the mid-2010s. This increase in attention can be attributed to several high-profile cases of police use of force resulting in fatalities, such as the deaths of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, in 2014 (Alpert & Smith, 2016), and Eric Garner in New York City in the same year (Walker & Katz, 2016). These incidents, among others, sparked widespread public outrage, protests, and discussions about police brutality and accountability, leading to increased media coverage and public scrutiny of police fatalities.

### **Police Abolitionist Movements**

In response to these recurring issues, the police abolitionist movement gained momentum, advocating for the complete dismantling of traditional policing systems. Rooted in the belief that reforms are insufficient to address the systemic issues inherent in policing, abolitionists called for the reallocation of funds towards community-based services and the development of alternative models of public safety (Kaba, 2020; Vitale, 2017). This movement seeks to replace traditional law enforcement with restorative justice practices, mental health support, and other community-led initiatives that aim to address the root causes of crime and social unrest.

One of the central arguments of the police abolitionist movement is that traditional policing perpetuates systemic injustices, particularly against marginalized communities, and that meaningful change requires a complete rethinking of public safety. Advocates argue that many functions currently performed by police could be better handled by other professionals,



such as social workers, mental health experts, and community organizations. This approach aims to reduce the reliance on police for situations that do not require an armed response, thereby decreasing the potential for violent encounters and improving overall community well-being (McDowell & Fernandez, 2018; Akbar, 2020). By addressing the root causes of crime, such as poverty, lack of education, and inadequate mental health services, abolitionists believe that communities can become safer and more just without the need for traditional policing.

In the Bay Area, several police abolitionist groups have been at the forefront of advocating for transformative justice and community-led safety initiatives. Organizations like Critical Resistance and the Anti Police-Terror Project (APTP) have played pivotal roles in mobilizing communities and pushing for the dismantling of traditional policing systems. Critical Resistance, founded in 1997, focuses on abolishing the prison-industrial complex and promotes alternatives to policing that center on community health and safety (Critical Resistance, n.d.). Similarly, the APTP works to end state violence and provides resources for community-based safety and intervention programs (Anti Police-Terror Project, n.d.). These groups emphasize the importance of addressing systemic inequities and reallocating resources to services that directly benefit marginalized communities, embodying the principles of the police abolitionist movement within the local context of the Bay Area.

However, the police abolitionist movement is not without its critics, who argue that completely dismantling the police is impractical and could lead to increased crime and disorder. Critics contend that while the current policing system has significant flaws, reforms and improvements are more feasible and effective than outright abolition (McLeod, 2019; Moskos, 2020). Proponents of police reform emphasize the need for better training, increased accountability, and community policing initiatives that foster trust and cooperation between law

enforcement and the communities they serve. They argue that rather than eliminating the police, society should focus on addressing the underlying issues of systemic racism, economic inequality, and social disinvestment that contribute to crime (McLeod, 2019). This ongoing debate highlights the complex nature of policing and public safety, underscoring the need for multifaceted approaches to create a just and equitable society.

### **High-Profile Police-Related Deaths and Policing**

Nationally, the policing profession was shaken by controversies following the deaths of individuals such as Eric Garner, Michael Brown, Tamir Rice, Walter Scott, Antonio Zambrano-Montes, among others, which led to a significant decline in the reputation of American policing. These incidents, frequently highlighted in the media, prompted widespread concern and calls for reform. In response, the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) recognized the urgency of these issues and initiated a national conference in Chicago to explore the implications for policing, particularly reflecting on the unrest in Ferguson. This conference emphasized the need to reevaluate police training, focusing on de-escalation strategies and tactics, and highlighted instances where opportunities to de-escalate had been missed, which could have potentially prevented the use of deadly force. Following this, PERF embarked on a research project that resulted in the “Re-Engineering Training on Police Use of Force” report, which encapsulates the discussions from a May 2015 conference attended by law enforcement executives, academics, and international representatives. This event centered on innovating training methods to reduce unnecessary use of force, with findings derived from surveys, research, and international observations (Police Executive Research Forum, 2015).

The urgent need for an overhaul in police training, policy, supervision, and culture concerning the use of force has become increasingly clear, especially in the wake of widespread

controversies over high-profile incidents. The Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) recognized this shift in public perception early on, particularly after the Ferguson demonstrations, signaling a fundamental change in how police use of force is viewed by the American populace. Despite legal justifications often upholding officers' actions, a disconnect persists between legal standards and community perceptions of justice, emphasizing the necessity to look beyond the moment of force application to the broader context and alternatives that could have prevented such outcomes. This perspective shift, recognizing the difference between what officers 'could' do and what they 'should' do, has led to calls for revising outdated use-of-force policies and adopting more nuanced, situationally aware training approaches. Moreover, the proliferation of video recordings brought increased public scrutiny and demands for higher standards of police conduct, transcending the bare minimum of legal and constitutional thresholds. Lessons from international contexts, like the UK's response to policing crises, suggest the potential for significant improvements in public trust through comprehensive reform and training enhancements (Police Executive Research Forum, 2015). American policing, despite its complexity and the challenges posed by the country's diverse law enforcement landscape, faced a crucial moment to adapt and align more closely with evolving societal expectations and the imperatives of accountability and transparency.

### **High Profiled Incidents and San Francisco Policing**

In San Francisco, the national conversation around police fatalities, heightened by incidents like those of Michael Brown and Eric Garner, resonated deeply with the local community's experiences and concerns. These events triggered a vigorous local response, mirroring the city's own challenges with law enforcement practices amidst its progressive stance on social issues. The San Francisco Police Department (SFPD) faced heightened

scrutiny especially following several high-profile incidents within the city. The fatal shootings of Alex Nieto, Mario Woods, Amilcar Perez-Lopez, and Jessica Williams—individuals who were either African American or Latinx—ignited considerable political and social unrest and were pivotal in catalyzing a citywide push for policy reform and increased accountability. These incidents not only led to widespread protests but also prompted serious public dialogue on law enforcement ethics and the urgent need for substantial reforms.

The case of Alex Nieto, which occurred on March 21, 2014, underscores issues around police perception and threat assessment. Nieto, a 28-year-old Latino man, was shot and killed by SFPD officers in Bernal Heights Park after they mistook his Taser, carried for his job as a security guard, for a firearm. Officers fired 59 bullets, hitting Nieto multiple times, raising grave concerns about the officers' decision-making and the adequacy of their training in distinguishing actual threats (Department of Justice, 2016).

Following Nieto's death, the shooting of Mario Woods on December 2, 2015, further exacerbated community tensions. Woods, a 26-year-old African American, was surrounded by SFPD officers in the Bayview neighborhood and was shot more than 20 times. The incident, captured on cell phone video, showed Woods moving slowly against a wall with a knife in hand before being shot. This case sparked a significant outcry over the proportionality of police force used against individuals armed with knives, questioning the department's tactical approaches and its handling of crises involving potentially armed suspects (Ho, 2015).

Moreover, the fatal shooting of Amilcar Perez-Lopez on February 26, 2015, by plainclothes officers highlighted further discrepancies between police reports and forensic evidence. Perez-Lopez, a 21-year-old Guatemalan immigrant, was shot six times from behind, with authorities initially claiming he had lunged at officers with a knife. However, forensic

analysis and witness accounts suggested Perez-Lopez was at a considerable distance from the officers when shot, intensifying criticisms over SFPD's transparency and accountability (Department of Justice, 2016).

The sequence of these events culminated in the case of Jessica Williams on May 19, 2016, whose death marked a pivotal moment for the SFPD. Williams, a 29-year-old African American woman, was fatally shot by an SFPD sergeant in the Bayview District as she allegedly attempted to flee in a stolen car. The fact that the car was not moving towards the officer at the time of the shooting led to severe scrutiny over the justification for using lethal force. This incident resulted in the resignation of then-Police Chief Greg Suhr and spurred a deeper examination and overhaul of the department's policies regarding the use of deadly force (San Francisco Police Department, 2016).

Together, these incidents not only reflect individual tragedies but also illustrate a pattern of critical issues within the SFPD, prompting calls for comprehensive reforms aimed at enhancing community trust, ensuring accountability, and revising use-of-force policies to prevent future occurrences of unnecessary violence. Each case contributed to a broader dialogue about law enforcement practices, underscoring the imperative for systemic changes to foster a more just and equitable approach in policing.

### **SFPD and Crisis Intervention Changes**

In response to escalating concerns over police conduct and the imperative for systemic reform, the San Francisco Police Department (SFPD) has undertaken significant initiatives to enhance crisis intervention strategies and improve community trust. One of the earliest efforts in this direction was spearheaded by Chief Greg Suhr, who, on April 27, 2015, issued Department Bulletin A-15-106. This bulletin emphasized the concept of "Lawful but Awful" use of force,

highlighting the need for officers to carefully evaluate situations where force could legally be applied but might not be the best course of action. The bulletin advocated for creating time, distance, and rapport in encounters, especially with individuals in crisis who do not pose an immediate threat, thereby encouraging a reduction in the use of force and promoting more community-oriented policing practices (Suhr, 2015).

Building upon the principles set forth in the initial bulletin, the SFPD formally instituted a comprehensive Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) policy in 2016. This initiative marked a significant shift towards prioritizing the safety, dignity, and liberty of all individuals through interactions that emphasized rapport-building, crisis intervention, and de-escalation rather than force. Detailed in the 2016 SFPD General Order, the CIT approach aims to equip officers with the necessary skills and strategies to navigate crisis situations effectively, ensuring the safety of all involved while minimizing the potential for violence (San Francisco Police Department, 2016).

Furthermore, the CIT policy framework established under this general order also emphasized collaboration with mental health experts, advocates, community members, and other stakeholders. This collaboration was designed to enhance the efficacy of crisis interventions by integrating insights and suggestions from a broad range of perspectives into police training and operations. The partnership with the CIT Mental Health Working Group, in particular, underscored a community-focused approach to managing mental health crises. This strategy facilitated a synergistic environment where police and community resources converged to address the challenges of crisis intervention and support, aiming to safely de-escalate incidents without resorting to force and to link individuals in crisis with appropriate mental health services (San Francisco Police Department, 2016).

These efforts by the SFPD demonstrate a proactive approach to reform, reflecting a broader commitment to transforming policing practices to ensure they are more aligned with community needs and safety. By integrating these policies and trainings, the SFPD seeks not only to improve immediate responses to incidents but also to foster a long-term cultural shift within the department that emphasizes respect, dignity, and the preservation of life in all interactions. These initiatives represent critical steps toward addressing the complexities of modern policing and enhancing the relationship between law enforcement and the communities they serve.

### **21<sup>st</sup> Century Policing in San Francisco**

Following the establishment of foundational crisis intervention strategies, the San Francisco Police Department (SFPD) further aligned its reform efforts with national recommendations set forth by the “Final Report of the President’s Task Force on 21<sup>st</sup> Century Policing,” released in May 2015. This report, initiated under President Obama’s administration, provided a comprehensive framework aimed at strengthening community policing and fostering trust between law enforcement agencies and the communities they serve. The guidelines emphasized the importance of transparency, accountability, and the need for a culture shift within police departments toward community-oriented practices (President’s Task Force on 21<sup>st</sup> Century Policing, 2015).

These guidelines resonated with the SFPD, prompting the department to adopt community policing as a core philosophy and to strengthen transparency and accountability (President’s Task Force on 21<sup>st</sup> Century Policing, 2015). The report’s emphasis on officer wellness and safety also guided the SFPD in developing strategies to support its personnel while effectively engaging with the San Francisco community (President’s Task Force on 21<sup>st</sup> Century

Policing, 2015). Through these efforts, the SFPD endeavored to align its practices with the report's vision, contributing to a broader movement towards reform and improved police-community relations.

### **Addressing Internal Challenges: The SFPD's Response to Discrimination and Bias**

However, in 2015, the SFPD faced a significant setback when a scandal involving racist and homophobic text messages exchanged among officers was revealed (Department of Justice, 2016). The content of these messages, filled with derogatory and discriminatory language targeting African Americans, Asians, and Latinos, and members of the LGBTQ+ community, unveiled the deep-seated issues of racism, homophobia, and bias within the force (Department of Justice, 2016). This exposure not only ignited public outrage but also heightened demands for accountability, highlighting the persistent challenges in eradicating systemic racism and fostering inclusivity in law enforcement (Department of Justice, 2016). The scandal underscored the necessity for continuous vigilance and reform in the SFPD to eradicate discriminatory attitudes and practices and to enhance its relationship with the city's diverse communities.

The incident on April 26, 2016, where racist and homophobic text messages were revealed among SFPD members, reflects a pivotal moment in the Department's journey towards addressing bias and misconduct within its ranks. These reprehensible messages were discovered during an ongoing criminal investigation and internal affairs inquiry, prompting swift action by the Department (San Francisco Police Department, 2016). Chief Greg Suhr emphasized that such behavior was intolerable and led to immediate suspensions and terminations, showcasing the Department's commitment to upholding higher standards of conduct among its officers (San Francisco Police Department, 2016). The subsequent arrests and charges against former officers



further underscored the seriousness with which the SFPD addressed these issues. Suhr stated, “Such behavior was intolerable and led to immediate suspensions and terminations,” highlighting the firm stance taken by the Department (San Francisco Police Department, 2016). Chief Suhr’s statements and actions, coupled with ongoing training initiatives on implicit bias and workplace harassment, reflected a proactive approach to rooting out bias and fostering a culture of accountability within the Department.

### **Community Activism and Policy Change: The Rise of Public Protest**

By 2016, the accumulation of public frustration with ongoing issues in policing had boiled over into widespread protests across San Francisco. Activist groups, including the Coalition for Mario Woods, Coalition for Alex Nieto, and the Frisco Five, led significant demonstrations, centering on City Hall, and voicing specific calls for changes in policing practices (Woodrow, 2016). This era of heightened activism not only marked a crucial juncture but also underscored the profound impact of community-led advocacy in shaping public policy.

These collective actions for accountability and reform within the law enforcement system reflected a larger societal demand for justice and equity, emphasizing the essential role of community activism in influencing public policy. This era marked a crucial juncture, urging city government leaders to actualize these values through tangible reforms in the policing framework, thereby affirming the profound impact of community-led advocacy in shaping the course of public administration (Anderson, 2017). This period served as a pivotal turning point, compelling city government leaders to implement these values through substantial reforms in the policing system, thus underscoring the significant influence of community-led advocacy in directing public policy.

In response, the movement for police reform in San Francisco seized the moment to push for historical changes in the San Francisco Police Department's (SFPD) policies and practices. These transformative changes transcended the conventional bureaucratic process of policymaking and legislative efforts. Grassroots community groups such as the Frisco Five and the Mario Woods Coalition, in synergy with negotiations, insightful policymakers, and proactive elected leadership, generated the necessary momentum and policy shifts in policing practices (Woodrow, 2016). These transformative efforts transcended traditional bureaucratic processes, demonstrating an "outside" tactic that acted as a catalyst for change and generated momentum towards more accountable and effective policing practices.

The SFPD demonstrated its commitment to creating a safer and more accountable police force during an incident in the city's Tenderloin neighborhood. A nearly four-hour standoff with an armed man ended peacefully, showcasing the department's training and readiness to handle such situations (Woodrow, 2016). Acting Chief Toney Chaplin, addressing the police commission meeting, highlighted the importance of training and the department's focus on de-escalation techniques over the past year and a half (Woodrow, 2016). This incident underscored the SFPD's prioritization of human life above all else, with Chaplin emphasizing the use of time and space to resolve the situation safely (Woodrow, 2016). The successful resolution of the standoff was attributed to the department's reforms and training initiatives, as noted by Chaplin during the meeting (Woodrow, 2016). This event demonstrated the internal willingness within SFPD to embrace changes necessary for building trust with communities and ensuring public safety.

The "outside" strategy represents the collective advocacy for transformative change in police interactions with communities of color. This grassroots movement, driven by public

outcry and demands for justice, exerted external pressure on the system. Concurrently, the “inside” strategy operated within governmental structures, translating these grassroots demands into actionable policy reforms within city hall and the police department. This collaborative approach engaged key decision-makers, including the Mayor of San Francisco, the Board of Supervisors, and the Police Commission, in substantive discussions regarding necessary policy adjustments to redefine the responsibilities of sworn officers in their interactions with individuals on the streets of San Francisco.

### **SFPD Key Police Reforms**

The SFPD demonstrated a steadfast commitment to modernizing its policies and practices in response to community feedback and evolving needs. Recommendations by government officials, the police commission, and internal police department leadership played a pivotal role in shaping these changes. Starting in June 2015 with the Extended Range Impact Weapon (ERIW) Policies Update (DB 15-142), which required radio cars to sign out extended-range impact weapons, such as batons or rubber bullets, the department initiated a series of transformative changes aimed at enhancing officer safety and improving response capabilities in various situations (Suhr, 2015). The ERIW refers to tools that provide law enforcement officers with non-lethal options for controlling and subduing individuals while minimizing the risk of serious injury or harm (Suhr, 2015). These efforts continued with community meetings in December 2015 and January 2016, where critical feedback on policing strategies was gathered, leading to initiatives like the “Not on My Watch” campaign aimed at addressing bigotry and intolerance (Lee, 2016).

Mayor Lee’s directives in December 2015 and January 2016 to review Use of Force policies and create a new Use of Force DGO reflected a proactive stance towards accountability

and transparency within SFPD (San Francisco Police Department, 2016). The department's commitment to reform was evident in actions such as making the pointing of a firearm a reportable use-of-force incident (DB 15-255) and establishing the Professional Standards and Principled Policing Bureau (DB 16-019) in February 2016 (SFPD, 2016). The momentum for change continued with Mayor Lee's comprehensive package of police reforms announced in February 2016, incorporating input from community stakeholders (San Francisco Police Department, 2016).

This comprehensive approach encompassed updates to Use of Force policies, new force options training, and increased transparency through data initiatives and dashboard monitoring (San Francisco Police Department, 2016). By May 2016, the department had enrolled in President Obama's Police Data Initiative, demonstrating its commitment to transparency and community trust (San Francisco Police Department, 2016). Moving forward, SFPD's ongoing initiatives, such as the body camera deployment and mental health partnership announced in October 2016, underscored its dedication to modernizing practices and fostering a safer, more accountable police force (San Francisco Police Department, 2016). With a projected full deployment of body-worn cameras by January 2017, SFPD continued to prioritize transparency, accountability, and community engagement in its mission to uphold public trust and safety.

### **Department of Justice and the San Francisco Police Department**

Mayor Edwin M. Lee initiated a significant step towards police reform on May 9, 2016, with his statement regarding the U.S. Department of Justice's review of the SFPD reforms. He highlighted the progress made since January 21, 2016, when he requested a comprehensive review of the Police Department's use-of-force policy reforms and a Civil Rights investigation into the Mario Woods shooting (Office of Mayor Edwin M. Lee, 2016). The initial feedback

from the Department of Justice acknowledged progress but also emphasized the need for further improvements to enhance policies and rebuild trust within the community (Office of Mayor Edwin M. Lee, 2016). Mayor Lee welcomed the DOJ's feedback, indicating a commitment to incorporating their recommendations into policies and pursuing best practices outlined in the President's 21<sup>st</sup> Century Policing Report (Office of Mayor Edwin M. Lee, 2016). As part of the next steps, Mayor Lee directed the Police Commission to collaborate with DOJ and other cities to establish a Serious Incidents Review Board, aiming to enhance oversight of police use of force incidents (Office of Mayor Edwin M. Lee, 2016). Additionally, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed with DOJ's community Oriented Policing Services office to undertake a collaborative review of all policing practices, promoting transparency and accountability in the reform process (Office of Mayor Edwin M. Lee, 2016). Despite some disagreements regarding the timing of Civil Rights investigations, Mayor Lee reiterated his commitment to working with community leaders and DOJ to refine reforms and ensure accountability within the San Francisco Police Department.

Mayor Edwin M. Lee's response to the U.S. Department of Justice Collaborative Review Report on the SFPD underscores the city's commitment to transparency, accountability, and ongoing reform efforts in law enforcement. Mayor Edwin M. Lee expressed gratitude for the completion of the U.S. Department of Justice Collaborative Review Report on October 12, 2016, acknowledging the efforts of Director Ron Davis, DOJ staff, community members, and the SFPD (San Francisco Mayor's Office of Communications, 2016). The review, initiated after a call to United States Attorney General Loretta Lynch, resulted in 94 findings and 272 recommendations aimed at rebuilding trust and enhancing accountability within the Police Department (San Francisco Mayor's Office of Communications, 2016). Mayor Lee affirmed the

Department's commitment to accepting and implementing every recommendation, emphasizing the importance of restoring trust through immediate action and ongoing reforms (San Francisco Mayor's Office of Communications, 2016). Notable reforms highlighted in the report include policies on Use of Force, Time and Distance, body cameras implementation, crisis intervention training, and addressing implicit bias (San Francisco Mayor's Office of Communications, 2016). While acknowledging progress, Mayor Lee emphasized the ongoing commitment to improving policing practices and treating everyone fairly and justly (San Francisco Mayor's Office of Communications, 2016). He reiterated the City's dedication to following the roadmap provided by the DOJ report to ensure continued progress and accountability.

The SFPD and an independent United States Department of Justice (USDOJ) assessment acknowledged that a community outcry drove major policy changes including the historical revisions to the use of force. The CA DOJ Deputy Attorney General Tanya Koshy stated in their evaluation of the Police Department that "the SFPD and Police Commission collaboratively worked with community stakeholders to update Department General Order 5.01-Use of Force policy (Koshy, 2021)." Community representatives lobbied and "took their seats at the table" to plea less lethal options and directives to sworn officers that reduce encounters of use of force and preserve life during these critical engagements. The community outcry and emergence to defend and preserve life led to historical policing changes in San Francisco indefinitely.

### **George Floyd and San Francisco**

In the aftermath of George Floyd's death, a profound shift in the discourse surrounding law enforcement practices took place, catalyzing ongoing changes to use-of-force policies. This transformation was not isolated but rather part of a broader national political movement that scrutinized police officers' motives and highlighted instances of abuse of power within law

enforcement agencies. The tragic events surrounding George Floyd's death ignited widespread protests, discussions, and demands for systemic reforms across the country, including within the SFPD.

The incident involving George Floyd occurred on May 25, 2020, in Minneapolis, Minnesota, when he was arrested by police officers. During the arrest, one of the officers, Derek Chauvin, knelt on Floyd's neck for over nine minutes, despite Floyd repeatedly stating that he couldn't breathe (Barrie, 2020). This encounter was captured on video by bystanders and quickly spread on social media, sparking widespread outrage and protests across the United States and globally.

George Floyd's death was ruled a homicide by the Hennepin County Medical Examiner's Office, with the cause listed as "cardiopulmonary arrest complicating law enforcement subdual, restraint, and neck compression (Hennepin County Medical Examiner's Office, 2020)." The incident led to calls for justice, accountability, and systemic reforms within law enforcement agencies, with many demanding an end to police brutality and racial injustice. Derek Chauvin was subsequently charged with second-degree unintentional murder, third-degree murder, and second-degree manslaughter, and other officers involved faced charges as well (Hennepin County Medical Examiner's Office, 2020). The death of George Floyd not only sparked a global movement against police brutality and racial injustice but also prompted legislative and policy changes aimed at improving accountability and fairness in law enforcement practices.

The national crisis created a higher degree of accountability for policing in San Francisco. On July 2020, the San Francisco Police Commission (SF Police Commission, July 2022), Department of Police Accountability, and SFPD Chief of Police William Scott agreed to

introduce a critical revision to the use of force policy where it would no longer be possible to place pressure on the head, throat, and neck; and forced seating or placement on a sidewalk by a police officer would be prohibited (SFPD, 2020). The policy changes were passed extremely quickly since city government leaders, such as Mayor London Breed, the Police Commission, and SFPD Chief of Police William Scott, were willing to shift policy during these moments of crisis.

The evolution and revisions of use-of-force policies within the SFPD reflect grassroots mobilizations and the nationwide outcry to curb police shootings. Despite political motivations, policy adjustments were promptly enacted by government stakeholders in response to the public outcry. These grassroots movements exerted significant political pressure and motivated top-level government officials, including those in the San Francisco Police Department, to act and implement necessary changes to reshape and advance policing in the City and County of San Francisco.

### **Use of Force Policy Revisions and the Sanctity of Life**

The reengineering of the San Francisco Police Department's (SFPD) Use of Force policy represents a significant response to community pressure and grassroots organizing. The Use of Force policies across various police departments delineate the protocols for police officers' engagement in severe and critical incidents involving violence, weapons, and physical assaults. According to the National Institute of Justice (2009), "Most law enforcement agencies have policies that guide their use of force. These policies describe an escalating series of actions an officer may take to resolve a situation. This continuum generally has many levels, and officers are instructed to respond with force appropriate to the "situation at hand."



Considering past officer-involved shootings, the SFPD's general order on the use of force underwent comprehensive revisions to incorporate diverse aspects and community demands. The policy encompasses various domains that articulate the vision and operational guidelines for employing force during critical or crisis encounters. It aims to equip officers with sufficient guidance for making informed decisions regarding the use and application of force. Structured into several key sections, the policy includes a preamble, policy statement, definitions, considerations governing all uses of force, levels of resistance, levels of force, force options, use of force reporting, and officer responsibilities (SFPD, 2016). Each section is designed to clarify the vision and intent of the policy, particularly concerning the use and application of lethal force, underscoring the reasons for the strong advocacy by community organizers for its revision and enhancement.

The Police Commission, a civilian oversight policy committee, along with the San Francisco Police Department, collaborated with key stakeholders, including community organizers, to revise the department's Use of Force policy. The revisions underscored the principles of preserving life and ensuring the protection of individuals under all circumstances. The newly crafted preamble of the policy underscores the significance of "safeguarding human life and dignity," articulating that "the authority to use force is a grave responsibility entrusted to peace officers by the public, who expect them to exercise this authority judiciously and with respect for human rights, dignity, and life (SFPD, 2016)." This shift towards prioritizing life preservation reflects a commitment to protect all individuals, echoing the demands from communities throughout San Francisco.

## **Policy Implementation and Broader Impact**

The Use of Force policy introduces fundamental principles in communication, crisis intervention, and proportionality. Officers are mandated to employ effective communication techniques, including “appropriate voice intonation, asking questions, providing advice to defuse conflict,” and “de-escalating” tense situations before “resorting to force options (SFPD, 2016).” This policy update signifies a progressive move from previous protocols, setting forth explicit and thoughtful requirements for de-escalation and respectful engagement with all individuals during crises.

The revisions emphasize the need for tailored interaction with individuals experiencing judgment impairment, as exemplified by cases like Mario Woods. The policy mandates that officers must consider “the totality of the circumstances” and apply “de-escalation techniques” when dealing with individuals who may be suffering from “a medical condition; mental, physical, or hearing impairment; language barriers; drug interactions; or emotional crises (SFPD, 2016).” The detailed specification of these considerations marks a transformative phase in law enforcement, positioning the SFPD’s approach as a model for national policing standards.

Significant amendments emphasized the principle of “preserving the sanctity of life,” a concept deriving from the moral belief in the inherent value of human life, leading to modifications in the protocols governing the use of lethal force by the SFPD (SFPD, 2016). These discussions culminated in a unanimous decision to prohibit carotid restraints and the shooting at moving vehicles, reflecting a pivotal shift in tactical enforcement (CBS, 2016). The discourse on police reforms prompted a reevaluation of the use of firearms, particularly in incidents involving moving vehicles, as highlighted by the case of Jessica Williams. In May

2016, Williams was fatally shot through the rear window of a stolen vehicle she was driving, sparking demands for policy reformation (Mark, 2020). This led to a critical policy amendment prohibiting the discharge of firearms at moving vehicles to prevent potential fatalities, including those of suspects or officers involved. This change was encapsulated in the revised General Order Use of Force policy of the SFPD, particularly in section VI. Force Options, Section G.2.(e) on Moving Vehicles, which states, “an officer shall not discharge a firearm at the operator or occupant of a moving vehicle unless the operator or occupant poses an immediate threat of death or serious bodily injury to the public or an officer by means other than the vehicle. Officers shall not discharge a firearm from or at a moving vehicle (SFPD, 2016).” This revision signifies a critical step towards minimizing threats and preserving lives during vehicular pursuits.

The grassroots movements in San Francisco catalyzed the political momentum necessary for these policy transformations, emphasizing humane treatment, tactical approach, and police interventions. These concerted revisions were not only reflective of community dialogues but were also independently reviewed by the Department of Justice, adding a layer of scrutiny to ensure substantial policing progress in the city.

Amidst a national outcry for police reform and driven by local grassroots activism, significant political pressure mounted on the SFPD to transform its operational practices. This scrutiny led to essential policy revisions, addressing public concerns over the policing mandate to protect life and ensure the safety of marginalized communities. The grassroots movements thus emerged as a powerful agent for change, prompting city officials and police leadership to confront and rectify the historically oppressive practices within law enforcement.

Police departments across various jurisdictions, including San Francisco, undertook introspective evaluations, leading to necessary policy reforms aimed at rebuilding trust with communities of color and upholding the principle of “sanctity of life.” Following significant activism, including protests and picketing by community organizers from groups like the Frisco Five and Mario Woods coalitions, collaborative negotiations were initiated to forge a new policing framework. While public demonstrations were pivotal in catalyzing change, establishing a dialogue between community stakeholders and police department representatives was essential to address and reform aspects of accountability, policy, and training, as emphasized in the updated use of force policy (SFPD, 2016).

In December 2016, six months following the tragic death of Jessica Williams, the SFPD implemented comprehensive revisions to its use of force policies and procedures, culminating in the issuance of a new Department Bulletin that provided additional guidance on the Use of Force (Beninati, 2019). These updates were a direct consequence of the persistent protests and political demands for immediate policing reform.

In the wake of the George Floyd incident, the SFPD conducted an extensive review of its Use of Force policy, driven by a national demand for accountability following the criminal acts against George Floyd. This led to significant policy enhancements proposed by the Police Commission and Chief of Police William Scott in July 2021, including the prohibition of any physical control methods targeting the neck and throat (SFPD, 2021). The revised policy specifically instructed officers to avoid applying pressure or employing forceful techniques on the head, neck, or throat during arrest scenarios, resistance encounters, or efforts to prevent escape, barring exceptional situations (SFPD, 2021). These changes, responsive to prolonged calls for reform, signified a move towards a new policing paradigm that emphasizes

transparency and accountability. Accompanied by strategies like moderated engagement, compulsory use of body-worn cameras, and clear justification requirements, the 2021 Use of Force policy epitomizes a guardian ethos in policing, mandating impartial and professional conduct by officers across all communities, thereby aligning with the extensive political advocacy for fair and equitable policing practices.

There is a pressing need for research to capture the impact of social movements, their interaction with policymakers, and the resulting influence on police reforms. Such research is vital for delineating the complex processes and phases integral to implementing social justice transformations within the realms of policing and the broader criminal justice system. Often, these transformative processes are perceived as standalone successes, overshadowing their collective contribution to significant historical policy transformations. Therefore, a comprehensive documentation of these steps is imperative to elucidate the synergy that exemplifies the profound impact and potency of social movements in catalyzing societal changes, including in the sphere of police reform.

Furthermore, a thorough analysis of both “outside” (grassroots and public advocacy) and “inside” (institutional policymaking and implementation) strategies is crucial for advancing the efforts to dismantle institutional racism and cultivating a policing framework that engenders trust and equity with communities of color. Understanding these dynamics will provide critical insights into how concerted efforts between community-driven movements and institutional responses can lead to substantive and enduring reforms in policing practices.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The historical impacts of mass mobilization on police reforms have been inadequately documented, particularly in the context of their convergence with policymakers and key

leadership within the realms of law enforcement and social science. Despite the evident role of organizing and advocacy efforts in compelling officials to institute policy changes, there remains a conspicuous gap in understanding the dynamics between these grassroots movements and the essential government and department leadership required for effective implementation of these changes. This gap becomes especially pronounced when examining the sensationalization of advocacy efforts by movements such as Black Lives Matter in media articles, which frequently neglect to establish a direct correlation between these demands and the resultant institutional policy changes or historical shifts in policing. Instead, policy adjustments are commonly attributed to the influence of leaders in city government positions or elected offices, overshadowing the critical and pivotal role that grassroots organizing and negotiations play in propelling the necessary institutional changes in policing forward.

This dissertation seeks to address these critical gaps by exploring the fusion of community organizing strengths with policy leadership during pivotal moments of opportunity, aiming to understand how such synergies can herald significant historical changes. The study will thus contribute to a more nuanced comprehension of the multifaceted impacts of mass mobilization on police reforms, moving beyond the sensationalized narratives to a more grounded analysis of the interplay between grassroots advocacy and policy enactment. By dissecting the intricate relationship between mass mobilization efforts and their influence on policy and leadership within the law enforcement and social science sectors, this research endeavors to provide a comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms that drive meaningful and sustainable police reforms.

The United States Department of Justice and, in later years, the California Department of Justice fully acknowledged the importance and presence of a “community.” Under the review

and oversight of the California Department of Justice, the Collaborative Reform Initiative was required to investigate and thoroughly review the San Francisco Police Department's effectiveness in policing, including its relationship with communities of color (US DOJ, 2016). The final report spoke to the moment in time and the catalyst initiating and demanding a full review of the police department's practices. However, there was minimal mention of the actual and descriptive negotiation process starting the necessary changes and contributing to police reforms.

Many grassroots community advocates and city residents sat with government leaders to demand a full review and change of practices by the San Francisco Police Department. The Mario Woods and Alex Nieto coalition, Nation of Islam, and Frisco Five were among several grassroots community groups advocating to be heard by the Board of Supervisors and San Francisco Mayor Edwin Lee (CBS, 2016). Several meetings and public comments from these groups and residents created political pressure, an "outside strategy," to effect changes within a government bureaucratic system. However, the media and standard literature either analyze these historical moments, the grassroots movements, and the eventual policy changes separately or not at all. This emergence of grassroots organizing and policy changes to shape change in the SFPD is completely missing in the legacy of police reforms in San Francisco.

### **Purpose Statement**

This study examines the convergence between community-led grassroots organizing and city government policy advocacy that influenced police reforms for the SFPD. Specifically, I will scrutinize the instances of collective activism and the subsequent influence exerted on city officials and SFPD leadership, prompting amendments to the Department General Order 5.01, the SFPD's Use of Force policy. Utilizing qualitative research methods, I aim to uncover the

key lessons and strategic actions undertaken by grassroots organizers, policymakers, and government officials that catalyzed policy and policing reforms in San Francisco. This analysis will shed light on the synergy of these diverse influences and their collective efficacy in effectuating significant policy transformation in the realm of policing.

Recognizing the significance of direct-action strategies and their integration with political mechanisms to instigate policy reform is a vital insight for collective movements aiming to transform the criminal justice and law enforcement landscape. The trajectory of change encompasses various phases and necessitates collaborative efforts from diverse entities operating both "inside" and "outside" the established framework. This multi-dimensional strategy forms the essential blueprint for effecting substantial alterations. Specifically, in the realm of policing, it becomes evident that the necessary reforms to enhance and safeguard interactions between communities of color and the police are not the result of actions taken by a single entity. Instead, they emerge from a concerted effort that amalgamates the strengths and resources of multiple stakeholders, including police departments, underscoring the complexity and collective nature of effective systemic change.

Apart from the impact of collective movements and "outside" pressure, the police reform movement in San Francisco highlights the significance of the "inside" strategy. The "inside" process symbolizes the capability of advocacy groups to exercise their right to engage in negotiations, contribute opinions on pivotal policies, and the power of legislators to propose significant policy reforms, leading to decision-makers finalizing these policies. Importantly, the "inside" strategy also encompasses the actual implementers of these reforms, namely the police officers, whose role in operationalizing and adhering to these changes is crucial for the tangible



realization of police reform objectives. This internal advocacy complements the external pressures, illustrating a comprehensive approach to reform.

The exclusion of these multifaceted phases in existing literature impedes a full understanding of the intricate steps required for social justice reforms in San Francisco. While much of the scholarly work highlights the efficacy of independent disciplines, such as use-of-force policies in the criminal justice domain or grassroots organizing within social movement studies, a gap remains in linking community organizing to the actualization of policy changes and implementation of practices advocated for, especially in police reforms. Effective police reform not only necessitates the advocacy and policy development from “outside” the system but also relies on law enforcement agencies' commitment to implementing these changes meaningfully “inside” the system. By overlooking the synergy between community organizing and policy enactment, the literature often misses the critical connection that catalyzes substantive police reforms.

### **Research Questions**

1. What role do grassroots movements and city government leadership play in influencing policy change around police reform and re-envisioning policing in San Francisco?
2. How did tensions, frictions, collaborations, and convergences among various key stakeholders shape SFPD's decision to overhaul the Use of Force policy?
3. How did policymakers and city government officials react to advocacy and political pressures to address policing in San Francisco?

## **Theoretical Framework**

This study investigates the intersection between grassroots community organizing and city government policy advocacy that impacted police reforms within the San Francisco Police Department. It focuses on examining key instances of collective organizing and the resultant pressure exerted on city officials and police department leadership to amend the Department General Order 5.01, which pertains to the San Francisco Police Department's use of force policy. The theoretical framework for this study marries interest convergence theory with new social movement theory, providing a dual lens through which to examine the dynamics and outcomes of local grassroots activism and city government political engagement. This approach facilitates a nuanced analysis of how these forces interact and lead to substantive changes in the use of force policy in policing.

### **Interest Convergence Theory**

Interest convergence theory offers insight into how different "interests" interact within the political negotiation process. In the context of grassroots organizing and city government policymaking, a point of reconciliation is often reached when both entities engage in dialogue. Applying Derrick Bell's interest convergence theory to the movement for police reforms reveals that the "interests" of the involved parties "converge" when the elite establishment seeks to negotiate a resolution, aiming to quell the momentum and demands of the grassroots, or "outside," groups. This perspective helps in understanding how negotiations between disparate groups lead to policy changes, particularly in the realm of police reform.

Interest convergence theory delves into the complexities surrounding the outcomes of *Brown v. Board of Education*, scrutinizing the political intricacies and compromises that led to the landmark decision on school desegregation. According to Derrick Bell (1980), this theory

posits that such interest convergence primarily serves the elite governing bodies. Bell critically observed that the interests of African Americans in achieving racial equality were only accommodated when they aligned with the interests of whites (Bell, 1980). He contends that the underlying motive for endorsing a desegregation system was for the white elite to maintain societal "order" by mitigating the momentum of civil rights movements through strategic compromises in policymaking.

Interest convergence theory fundamentally underscores how white elites often manipulate policy decisions to their advantage, frequently at the expense of the genuine progress and support of people of color, notably within African American communities in the United States. Derrick Bell (1980) posits that the political ambitions of the white establishment often eclipse the advancement and rights of communities of color. In the realm of criminal justice law and literature, Bell's interest convergence theory is invoked to analyze significant state policies influencing policing in the United States. Eliana Machefsky, for instance, applies an interest convergence analysis to the enactment of the California Act to Save Lives, legislation that, in January 2020, heightened the standards for justifying police-caused fatalities amid widespread protests from the Black Lives Matter movement, including those in Sacramento (California Act to Save Lives of 2020). Machefsky (2021) critiques Assembly Bill 392, noting it underwent numerous amendments to pacify law enforcement and secure the necessary senate votes, while conspicuously avoiding discussions of race, influenced by predominantly White American lobbyists.

This analysis underscores that neglecting racial factors exacerbates existing inequalities in police encounters and entrenched racial biases, highlighting the law's failure to confront racism as a potential motive or justification in use-of-force incidents. The absence of racial

awareness complicates proving intrinsic racism in police use of lethal force, as incident justifications typically hinge on "reasonable circumstances," a notion often subjectively interpreted by police officers and judges (Machefsky, 2021). This significant compromise overlooks the core grievances of the Black Lives Matter movement, revealing a misalignment in addressing the root causes of racism.

The ambiguity of the Fourth Amendment and the federal courts' failure to provide explicit guidelines exemplify interest convergence, often justifying excessive use of force. Osagie Obasogie and Zachery Newman (2019) contend that instead of converting Fourth Amendment standards into explicit regulations for police and clear citizen protections, use-of-force policies tend to replicate the amendment's uncertainties about what constitutes "reasonable" force, incorporating further equivocations reflecting law enforcement interests. This latitude permits local police departments to craft use-of-force policies based on broad and vague constitutional interpretations, problematic in conservative police agencies with predominantly white personnel who may justify excessive force against African Americans under the guise of "reasonableness."

Lauren Edelman (2016) discusses this phenomenon as "legal endogeneity theory," particularly in relation to the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and ongoing workplace discrimination. This theory delves deeper into interest convergence, illustrating how legal interpretations and deference are often left to local actors, like police departments, rather than federal courts, potentially favoring historically racist institutions. In regions with conservative values and unchecked police oversight, the discretion in applying force is granted excessive leeway, potentially perpetuating racial biases in policing actions (Gross, 2016). This broad justification scope may continue to sanction racially motivated practices in law enforcement.

Interest convergence, as the first theoretical lens applied in this study, provides a critical framework for understanding the dynamics at play in policing reforms. By examining the evolution of policing policies through the prism of interest convergence, we can discern how political and social pressures, particularly those emerging from communities of color, necessitate concessions from the power structure. These concessions often result in reformative actions in policing, albeit shaped by the overarching priorities and interests of the dominant establishment. In this way, interest convergence theory not only sheds light on the intricate negotiations that underpin the implementation of policing reforms but also underscores the calculated acceptance of change within law enforcement agencies. This theoretical approach sets the stage for an in-depth analysis of how and why certain policing policies are adopted, modified, or resisted, providing a nuanced understanding of the interplay between social movements and institutional responses in the realm of law enforcement.

However, this convergence is often critiqued for its inherent limitations, as the resulting reforms tend to primarily serve the interests of the elite, which in this case could be seen as government entities rather than achieving true equity or justice for marginalized communities. This critique highlights the fundamental limitation of reforms achieved through interest convergence: they are inherently shaped by the priorities and interests of the dominant group, often resulting in superficial or partial advances rather than comprehensive justice. This critique emphasizes how legislative changes, even when prompted by grassroots movements, often get diluted to serve the interests of the dominant groups. This significant compromise overlooks the core grievances of the Black Lives Matter movement, revealing a misalignment in addressing the root causes of racism.

Expanding on this critique, Lani Guinier's concept of "interest divergence" offers additional insight into the limitations of reform achieved through interest convergence. Guinier posits that initial civil rights gains, which appear to align with the interests of both minority and majority groups, often face resistance and rollback when minority groups push for deeper, more substantive changes (Guinier, 2004). This divergence occurs as the interests of marginalized communities increasingly challenge the status quo and demand systemic changes that threaten the established power dynamics. Consequently, reforms that once seemed progressive can become stagnant or even regressive when they no longer serve the interests of the dominant group. These dynamics underscore the persistent challenges faced by social justice movements in achieving lasting and meaningful change.

### **New Social Movement Theory**

As another integral part of the theoretical framework, New Social Movement (NSM) theory provides a vital perspective on the influence of contemporary social movements in advocating for social justice in policing. It emphasizes the collective power and impact of civil actions, such as marches and sit-ins, in effecting significant societal changes. According to Simone I. Flynn (2014), NSM theory is utilized by sociologists to elucidate the role of social movements in post-industrial societies, defining them as organized efforts by individuals who collectively act to instigate or resist changes. This theory thus offers a nuanced understanding of collective action, underscoring the importance of direct action and mobilization.

The work of Tilly and Tarrow (2006) on social movements provides essential insights into the dynamics of collective action and its effect on societal transformation. Their analysis of strategies, tactics, and the interplay between insiders and outsiders within movements enhances our comprehension of how social movements function and mobilize resources to attain their

goals. In the realm of police reform movements like Black Lives Matter (BLM), their research illuminates the diverse tactics employed to demand changes in policing practices and enhance accountability. The interaction between insiders, who aim to achieve reforms within the existing institutions, and outsiders, who gather grassroots support to exert external pressure, is especially relevant to this discussion (Tilly & Tarrow, 2006).

In the case of San Francisco's grassroots movements advocating for police reforms, NSM theory offers a strength-based perspective on the role of prolonged protests in enforcing specific institutional policy changes in policing. It distinguishes itself from the social-psychological viewpoint, which often focuses on individual issues or singular topics that drive change, by providing a more comprehensive view of the extensive efforts required to foster historical developments in society (Edelman, 2001). When applied to the grassroots movement in San Francisco pushing for police reforms, NSM theory not only acknowledges the individual incidents that spark widespread mobilization but also highlights the significant impact of collective action in times of political and social strife.

NSM theory posits that social movements, like the grassroots initiatives aiming to reform policing, play a crucial role in shifting power dynamics within elite establishments. It acknowledges the strategic alliances formed between organizers and institutional allies, illustrating the potential of united efforts in enacting change (Offe, 1995). The political protests and negotiations led by activists in San Francisco have resulted in notable shifts in policing leadership and policy reforms, showcasing the transformative influence of collaborative social engagement in challenging and redefining institutional norms.

In the context of San Francisco, grassroots movements have been pivotal in pushing for comprehensive police reforms. The persistent efforts of local activists and community

organizations have led to significant policy changes, such as amendments to the Department General Order 5.01, the SFPD's Use of Force policy. These reforms were not merely the result of top-down decisions but were driven by continuous pressure and advocacy from grassroots movements, as emphasized by NSM theory. The prolonged protests, public forums, and strategic lobbying by these groups have created a critical mass of support that compelled city officials and police leadership to adopt more accountable and transparent policing practices.

Moreover, the interaction between grassroots activists and institutional insiders, a key aspect highlighted by NSM theory, has been crucial in these reforms. Insiders who are sympathetic to the cause of police reform have worked within the system to facilitate changes, while grassroots movements have maintained external pressure. This dual approach has ensured that the reforms are not only enacted but also sustained over time. For instance, the establishment of community oversight boards and the implementation of body-worn cameras were direct outcomes of the collaborative efforts between activists and reform-minded officials. These measures have significantly improved transparency and accountability within the SFPD, demonstrating the powerful impact of grassroots-led initiatives in driving substantive police reforms in San Francisco.

### **Interest Convergence & New Social Movement Theory**

Interest convergence theory is particularly relevant in the context of grassroots organizations, predominantly those representing communities of color, compelling city officials to implement institutional changes within policing. The fatal police shootings after 2014, including those of Alex Nieto, Mario Woods, Amilcar Perez, and Jessica Williams, sparked political and social unrest, leading to a critical reassessment of policing values in the city (Ho, 2015). The tragic outcomes for these African American and Latinx individuals ignited a



grassroots movement, predominantly led by women of color, demanding comprehensive police reform. In 2016, widespread protests in San Francisco echoed the national outcry against police power abuse and its lethal consequences, propelling grassroots movements and protesters to demand tangible changes in policing practices.

New Social Movement (NSM) theory complements this analysis by acknowledging the impact of collective action and grassroots demands, which, in the case of police reforms, resulted in the significant overhaul of the San Francisco Police Department's use of force policy. The vocal and concerted efforts of residents, including families of the victims, catalyzed political and administrative leaders to mandate changes in police de-escalation tactics and decision-making processes for use-of-force incidents. This policy now incorporates crucial principles in communication, crisis management, and proportionality, mandating officers to employ de-escalation techniques proactively (SFPD, 2016). These policy revisions, reflecting the influence of NSM, were further validated by independent oversight from the Department of Justice, ensuring that the changes met the demands of the collective movement for social justice.

Expanding on NSM theory, the insider component plays a critical role in facilitating and sustaining these reforms. Insiders within the system, such as reform-minded officials and sympathetic members of the police force, act as crucial allies to the grassroots movements. They help to translate the external pressure and demands into actionable policy changes. In San Francisco, this dynamic was evident as city officials and police leadership, influenced by the persistent advocacy from grassroots movements, worked collaboratively to implement and institutionalize the new use-of-force policies. These insiders provided the necessary support to navigate bureaucratic challenges and ensure the reforms were not only adopted but also

effectively integrated into the police department's operational procedures. This synergy between external grassroots activism and internal advocacy underscores the transformative potential of NSM in achieving substantial and enduring police reforms.

Combining the insights of interest convergence and NSM leads to a unique theoretical framework termed 'social movement convergence'. This framework synergizes the power of community organizing with institutional change dynamics. Unlike interest convergence, which often views institutions as the primary beneficiaries of change, social movement convergence recognizes the pivotal role of community organizers as catalysts for change. In the context of police reforms, it accentuates the influence of community voices and demands in shaping the revised use-of-force policies.

While *interest convergence* critiques elite institutions in decision-making, *new social movement theory* provides a precise analysis of grassroots organizing and the collaboration with internal power sources to create systematic changes. The combination of these theories creates a unique theoretical framework-*social movement convergence*. *Social movement convergence* combines the role and power of community organizing. It does not give credence to emphasizing a deficit approach where the institution is foreseen as the beneficiary of change. Instead, *social movement convergence* independently identifies the importance of negotiating institutional changes and empowers the role of the catalyst of change, the community organizer. In the context of police reforms, *social movement convergence* highlights the power in the voice and demands of community organizers that eventually became the changes seen today in the new policies related to the use of force.

Thus, the product and evolutionary impacts of community grassroots organizing, in conjunction with policy changes in policing, are aptly encapsulated within the theoretical

framework of *social movement convergence*. This new theory articulates the potency and tangible outcomes of collective action, advancing beyond merely securing a "seat at the table" for discussing change within mainstream politics. It signifies a deeper progression into social change that authentically represents disenfranchised communities. *Social movement convergence* does not cede the dynamism of community mobilization to institutional prerogatives; rather, it recalibrates and exalts the intrinsic power of the movement.

Social movement convergence also emphasizes the importance of sustained community engagement and vigilance to ensure that reforms are not only implemented but also maintained and adapted as needed. In the case of San Francisco, grassroots movements have continued to monitor the enforcement of new policies, advocating for further improvements and holding the police department accountable. This ongoing engagement highlights a key strength of social movement convergence: it fosters a dynamic and continuous process of reform, rather than a one-time intervention. By maintaining pressure on institutions and keeping the momentum of activism alive, community organizers ensure that the initial gains in policy changes are built upon and expanded, leading to deeper and more enduring transformations in policing practices. This persistent advocacy underscores the critical role of grassroots movements in driving long-term systemic change and reinforces the idea that true reform is an evolving process that requires constant attention and effort.

### **Background/Positionality of the Researcher**

My research positionality is deeply rooted in my family's history and enriched by my experiences in community organizing in the Bay Area, as well as my role as a city government civil servant. As the daughter of Salvadoran war refugees, my upbringing was steeped in values of educational empowerment, liberation theology, resistance against oppression, and a steadfast

commitment to social justice. My mother, a young nurse in her late teens during the 1970s, worked with *La Clinica Mobil* under the national health department, providing care to civil war victims across rural El Salvador. Concurrently, my father engaged in community organizing and collaborated with guerrilla forces, striving to address the inequities faced by impoverished communities and challenge the oligarchic dominance of the 14 wealthiest families in the nation.

Driven by aspirations for a more secure and prosperous life, my parents emigrated northward, eventually settling in San Francisco, California, after residing in various cities. San Francisco's status as a Sanctuary City and its vibrant social consciousness made it an appealing haven for many Central Americans, including my family. The city's progressive ethos resonated with my parents, compelling them to establish a new life there and raise their four daughters amidst these ideals.

As the eldest sibling, I naturally assumed roles of caregiving and mentorship, supporting my family while my parents worked diligently as a shoe repairman and housekeeper. Despite the demands of their jobs, they seized every opportunity to emphasize the importance of education, often recounting their own sacrifices and relinquished aspirations in health and social justice to inspire us. This familial legacy, coupled with the Bay Area's dynamic activism landscape, galvanized my involvement in community organizations championing social justice and police reform, shaping my journey and perspective as a researcher in this field.

After years of active community organizing, I became the first in my family to pursue higher education and subsequently dedicated years to non-profits championing the rights of high-risk youth, immigrants, and disenfranchised families. Following a decade of commitment to community organizations and the development of social programs, my career trajectory shifted towards government service. I became a public servant managing community agencies

and services, keenly focused on influencing funding and policies in my hometown of San Francisco. This role afforded me the chance to collaborate with various social service agencies, including the Department of Children, Youth, and Their Families, where I served as a Violence Prevention Services Policy Manager.

In this capacity, I oversaw approximately \$30 million dollars annually in violence prevention programs targeting disenfranchised communities. My efforts were recognized by the Mayor's Office, leading to my appointment as a Senior Advisor and Director of Violence Prevention Services and Immigration Policy under the late Mayor Edwin M. Lee of San Francisco. In 2014, amidst my duties encompassing criminal justice policies, violence prevention investments, and public safety initiatives, I was tasked with leading and supporting the reform process of the Police Department. This directive came in the wake of several high-profile officer-involved shootings that predominantly affected African American and Latino young men, marking a critical juncture in my career, and further deepening my involvement in public sector reform and policy advocacy.

Over time, I was afforded the unique opportunity to work directly with the SFPD and Chief William Scott as the Director of Policy and Public Affairs. In this prominent role, I became the second highest-ranking civilian and the first Latina of Salvadoran descent to serve as a Command Staff member in the Department. Currently, I lead the Policy and Public Affairs team, working in tandem with the Command Staff and various bureaus to guide the SFPD in its engagement with local, state, and federal public policy, ensuring that reforms are community-focused and policy-driven.

My role also extends to acting as a liaison for the Mayor's Office, maintaining close relationships with elected officials and city departments to forge innovative partnerships with

the Police Department. This position not only allows me to influence significant policy and reform initiatives but also to integrate a community-oriented perspective in the operational and strategic directives of the San Francisco Police Department, continuing my dedication to public service and advocacy for just and equitable policing practices.

Firsthand, I have been deeply involved in shaping community organizing strategies to advocate for policy changes that affect policing. I have engaged in the intricate process of police reform for the City and County of San Francisco and witnessed the transformative shifts within the San Francisco Police Department. My personal experiences, being raised in San Francisco and observing the effects of over-policing in communities of color, have enriched my understanding of systemic injustices. My journey from political organizing to my current role as a city employee and civil servant has fueled my commitment to document this crucial aspect of social change and share insights to inspire others in their pursuit of social justice. I understand that this path is not for the faint of heart; it requires perseverance and time to witness institutional change and develop systems that reflect the values of all communities.

My passion and dedication are deeply influenced by the words of Dolores Huerta, a prominent labor leader and civil rights activist of Latino descent. She famously said, “Every moment is an organizing opportunity, every person a potential activist, every minute a chance to change the world.” This quote reflects the transformative power of grassroots organizing and individual action in driving social change. Dolores Huerta’s legacy of advocating for farmworkers’ rights and empowering marginalized communities inspires my commitment to justice and equality, fueling my determination to create a better world for all.

Beyond social activism, the importance of being part of institutional change is paramount. As a woman navigating the intricacies of systemic reform and social advocacy, I

find inspiration in Maya Angelou's "Phenomenal Woman," which celebrates the strength and resilience of women: "I'm a woman / Phenomenally. / Phenomenal woman, / That's me" (Angelou, 1978). This verse embodies the powerful and essential role of women in driving and sustaining movements for change.

Thus, my dissertation is more than an academic exercise; it is a personal, spiritual, and professional reflection on the transformative power of engaged individuals and the collective spirit of communities seeking justice. Embracing the various forms of change, from grassroots activism to institutional reform, underscores the comprehensive approach needed to achieve a just and equitable society. It's an honor to witness and partake in this multifaceted change, representing the perseverance and dedication necessary to create pathways for others in the relentless pursuit of justice and equity.

### **Limitations and Delimitations**

As a City and County of San Francisco public servant and government policy advisor, I have strong community ties and close professional ties to the sampling conducted for the study. While it is a strength to have knowledge related to the topic and expertise, it will be necessary to ensure there are no unconscious bias-drawn results based on my professional experience and opinions on the development of police reforms. Bias may occur when specific themes are selected that articulate the outcome of the series of events. There will need to be a conscious separation between the interviews conducted and the pieces coded in the study.

However, an institutional review board approval and designing confidential consent will provide participants security and the study permission to conduct the research. The study design will be ethically sound, per se, by ensuring the review process is approved and disclosed to all

participants. Consent forms will include confidentiality statements to ensure comfortability in disclosing any insight and information. In addition, as the principal researcher, I will provide a conscious disclosure of confidentiality and protection for the participant's reassurance in engaging in the research.

The delimitations of this study are based on the type of rigor applied to a quantitative research method. The study will investigate individual experiences and interviews, major code themes, and outline findings. However, the results are not controlled to prove statistical rigor since no comparative control group exists. Instead, the method used for the study will be to find common themes across the interviews and to highlight conclusions associated with the investigated pool of participants. Participants will also be selected based on a "snowball" effect and will not be randomly controlled. The selectivity may create a bias in the findings since the research method is not a randomized control study.

### **Educational Significance**

Researching the social movement convergence within the fight for police reform, notably concerning use of force policies, is crucial for grasping the dynamics of collective movements, their interplay with political change, and policy evolution in San Francisco.

Grassroots movements, particularly from communities of color, have propelled significant momentum in policing changes. After months of persistent advocacy, the California Department of Justice, alongside independent consultants assessing police reforms, recognized the potent force of resistance and mobilization over the past decade. The collective voice of hundreds underscored the societal imperative to engage policymakers and city government



leaders in meaningful dialogue. However, the efficacy of grassroots initiatives requires alignment with political leadership to effect real change.

Examining the instances of interest convergence reveals the pivotal moments that necessitate changes in use of force policies. Identifying these “pressure points” elucidates the strategies needed to instigate reform in historically biased institutions like police departments. This analysis enables the recognition of pivotal shifts away from oppressive conditions, illustrating the transformative potential of combined “inside” and “outside” approaches, which are often mistakenly viewed as mutually exclusive.

Highlighting the concept of emergence will not only forge a new theoretical framework but will also reiterate the significance of active participation in policymaking to reform policing and reimagine guardianship. A focused analysis on social movements’ contribution to policy discourse educates on the methodologies to dismantle racist policing. It lends “voice” and legitimacy to the agents of change, acknowledging their efforts and the leadership required to safeguard lives against unjust policing practices.

A detailed analysis that validates the “outside” and “inside” strategies offers recognition and, crucially, imparts lessons for subsequent generations. Change is a collective endeavor, not attributable to a solitary factor or group, particularly in San Francisco. It results from collective efforts, from the inception of a movement to the culmination of policy shifts or alterations in institutional practices, involving various stakeholders to transition from demands to realization, notably in police reform. Documenting these individuals’ narratives and insights will chart a pathway for change and potentially galvanize further essential reforms in policing.

## CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Over the past decade, a significant convergence has occurred between community-led grassroots organizing and city government policy advocacy, particularly regarding police reforms within the San Francisco Police Department (SFPD). This alliance of collective organizing and sustained pressure on city officials and police leadership has catalyzed essential modifications in pivotal policies, including the Department General Order 5.01 and the San Francisco Police Department's use of force policy. While some scholars attribute the evolution of these policies to the *interest convergence* between city leadership and grassroots advocacy, others interpret the outcomes through the lens of *new social movement* theory, viewing the changes as a response to widespread public demand and collective action.

Merging the influence of policymakers with the dynamism of community organizing reveals the critical role of negotiation in institutional changes, emphasizing the pivotal function of the community organizer as a catalyst for change. In the realm of police reforms, the concept of *social movement convergence* underscores the influence and demands of community organizers, which have materialized in the contemporary amendments to use of force policies. This evolution and the resultant impact of community grassroots organizing, in tandem with policy alterations in policing, are aptly encapsulated within the *social movement emergence* framework. This approach advocates for the tangible outcomes of collective action and extols the inherent strength of social movements. Consequently, the literature review is structured Around three primary themes: 1) race, criminal justice, and policing; 2) use of force and the "Sanctity of Life"; and 3) social movement and policymaking in the context of police reforms.

## **Race, Criminal Justice, and Policing**

The history of criminal justice and policing in the United States is intricately linked with the development of racial formation. From the onset of colonization and slavery, a racial divide and a caste system were established, perpetuating structural discrimination against Black and Indigenous people (Campbell, 2016). This systemic bias underpinned the economic foundations of the nation, favoring the prosperity of Anglo-Saxons and propagating the myth of Anglo-Saxon exceptionalism (Campbell, 2016). The entrenched racial hierarchy fostered an elite discriminatory system, influencing the socio-political and economic landscape of the United States, as evidenced through Jim Crow policies and Vagrancy Laws (Bonilla-Silva, 2017). These legislative measures entrenched institutional racism, sustaining social and economic disparities that continued to shape the function and role of policing in America.

Vagrancy Laws, in particular, marked a period of institutionalized oppression, establishing a legal framework that perpetuated inequities in governance, politics, and policing. Post-Civil War, these laws specifically targeted "freed slaves" or African Americans who were unemployed or homeless, facilitating their arrest for misdemeanor offenses and subsequent incarceration in "convict camps" where they were forced into indentured servitude, mirroring slavery conditions (Goluboff, 2016). The scope of Vagrancy Laws in some jurisdictions expanded to include offenses like drunkenness, sex work, gambling, and misuse of welfare benefits (Goluboff & Soren, 2018). Police institutions were pivotal in enforcing these discriminatory laws, ensuring that violators were arrested and incarcerated. Thus, the legal and judicial system's endorsement of Vagrancy Laws effectively criminalized existence based on racial identity, particularly targeting Black and Indigenous populations (Kadish, 1968).

Police institutions in the United States have historically been implicated in sustaining white privilege and elite control, underpinning the economic and social subjugation of communities of color, particularly African Americans and Indigenous peoples. One of the earliest forms of state-sponsored police enforcement was the “Slave Patrols,” which were authorized to use physical force to suppress slave rebellions and prevent escapes (Mann, 2008). Similarly, Native American and Indigenous communities suffered under the enforcement of “Slave Codes” and the broader project of colonization, which was executed through domestic laws by law enforcement entities.

In the post-Reconstruction era, historical records reveal that law enforcement agencies were infiltrated by the Ku Klux Klan and white supremacists, who aimed to perpetuate white dominance in the United States (Wade, 1987). This alliance between law enforcement and white supremacist groups, intent on maintaining power and domination, facilitated the enactment and enforcement of laws that oppressed and disenfranchised communities of color. Such historical associations have contributed to a deep-seated mistrust in American policing, as the legacy of these actions continues to affect the relationship between law enforcement and the communities they are supposed to serve. The persistent execution of laws in a manner that marginalizes and criminalizes people of color has cemented a long-standing skepticism and apprehension towards the policing system in America.

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The "Vagrancy Law regime" ultimately faced legal challenges and was scrutinized for its constitutionality by activists, attorneys, and the United States Supreme Court. A pivotal case was *Papachristou v. Jacksonville* in 1972, where eight defendants contested their arrests for loitering and vagrancy under a Jacksonville ordinance (Goluboff, 2016). This ordinance broadly categorized various groups and behaviors as vagrant, listing "rogues and vagabonds, or dissolute persons who go about begging," among others, as liable for conviction and punishment under Class D offenses (*Papachristou v. Jacksonville*, 405 U.S. 156).

The Supreme Court found the ordinance's vagueness unconstitutional, arguing that it allowed for arbitrary arrests and convictions, thus infringing on individual freedoms. The Court's decision emphasized that such laws enabled and facilitated arbitrary and discriminatory enforcement, leading to a misuse of police power (Goluboff, 2016). Furthermore, the Court highlighted that these laws were not only overly broad but also perpetuated discriminatory practices that traced back to pre-colonial and Elizabethan British legal concepts targeting "rogues and vagabonds."

The legal challenge to Vagrancy Laws in *Papachristou v. Jacksonville* illuminated the pervasive nature of criminal law, unveiling its historical roots in socioeconomic and racially discriminatory norms that date back to British and English Elizabethan eras. This case marked a

significant moment in the ongoing critique and reform of laws that had long been used to justify the systematic oppression and criminalization of marginalized populations.

While the era of Vagrancy Laws concluded and was declared unconstitutional, the echoes of these institutions enforcing "old" laws persist. Racism today may not manifest as the overt political, corporate, or social structure it once did, but it continues to significantly affect the lives of many communities (Omi & Winant, 1978). Michelle Alexander, in *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*, observes, "the legalized racial caste system that led to the civil disenfranchisement of blacks has simply taken a different form. Like Jim Crow, mass incarceration locks black men into an inferior position through purportedly race-neutral legal processes" (Alexander, 2012). Alexander points out the sustained distrust towards a historically racist system that disproportionately polices and incarcerates individuals, noting that about thirty percent of African American men are unable to serve on a jury or vote due to convictions (Alexander, 2012). The policymaking surrounding these inequities continues to perpetuate the disenfranchisement of marginalized communities.

Critical race theory (CRT) acknowledges the historical racism embedded in the legal system and its ongoing impact on communities of color. Yosso (2005) states that "more lies between what we live and what happened in history to shape society today," implying that the remnants of overt racism still linger, especially within a capitalist framework. This systemic racial bias has led to a structured inferiority of certain groups, particularly African American and Latino/a communities (Yosso, 2005). The construction of "race" has predominantly burdened black individuals, exploited through mechanisms like slavery and segregation, and today, through the disproportionate effects in poverty and incarceration (Coates, 2015).

Developed in the wake of Vagrancy Laws, CRT has become a foundational perspective for many legal professionals and scholars to challenge the foundations of law. The tenants of critical race theory—1) challenging color blindness by acknowledging the existence of racism, whether explicit or implicit; 2) interest convergence, the advancement of marginalized racial groups based on the advances or interests of white working-class elites, 3) the social construction of race, 4) anti-essentialism and intersectionality, and 5) the notion of legal storytelling to rely on a new legal narrative (Ladson-Billings, G., 2013)—provides a clear foundation to everlasting impacts of racism in policing and the more extensive criminal justice system. Under the CRT framework, the criminalization of African Americans is seen as a result of the nation's definition of crime (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Applying CRT to the criminal justice system reveals the disproportionate impact on communities of color, particularly African Americans and Latinos, thus challenging the notion that racism is a relic of the past by highlighting existing inequalities.

In San Francisco, the United States Department of Justice's assessment of the SFPD revealed persistent racial disparities, despite the city's progressive values. Events, including a series of officer-involved shootings and the exposure of racist and homophobic texts among SFPD officers, showcased the institutional challenges and underscored the need for accountability (City and County of San Francisco Civil Grand Jury, 2016; Ho, 2015). The US DOJ commented, "these events have placed the city in the national spotlight regarding policing practices and opened a public and passionate conversation around the SFPD's community engagement, transparency, and accountability" (US DOJ, 2015). This independent evaluation highlighted the ongoing racism and its disproportionate effects on specific ethnic communities, a fact that CRT scholars have long asserted.

The US DOJ's findings underscored significant disparities in traffic stops, post-stop searches, and the use of deadly force against African Americans, confirming the critical need for police reforms (US DOJ, 2015). One of the most significant findings concluded, "disparities in traffic stops, post-stop searches, and use of deadly force against African Americans (US DOJ, 2015)." The investigation had complete access to all system documentation. Further, it affirmed that "African American and Hispanic drivers were disproportionately searched and arrested compared to White drivers..., disproportionately searched following traffic stops but they are also less likely to be found with contraband than White drivers...[and] SFPD's failure to fully and adequately address incidents of biased misconduct contributed to a perception of institutional bias in the department (US DOJ, 2015)." These findings were critical to defining the existing problem of institutional explicit and implicit bias in the San Francisco Police Department. The findings concluded that the department's failure to adequately address incidents of biased misconduct contributed to perceptions of institutional bias within the SFPD, emphasizing the necessity for reforms to build community trust and modernize the police force.

To effectively address and reduce bias within its ranks and in its interactions with the community, the SFPD has outlined a comprehensive strategy in its Bias-Free Policing Strategic Plan. Key components of this strategy include enhancing training and education for officers, improving recruitment and retention practices, fostering community engagement, and utilizing data-driven approaches to monitor progress and make informed decisions (SFPD, 2021). This strategic plan is a testament to SFPD's commitment to reform and improvement in the wake of national discussions on racial justice and policing practices. The plan's multifaceted approach targets various aspects of police work and community relations, acknowledging the complexity of bias and the need for systemic change.



Enhancing training and education for officers is a cornerstone of this strategy. Recognizing that bias can be both explicit and implicit, the SFPD has prioritized the development and delivery of training programs that address these issues head-on. This includes not only ongoing implicit bias training, but also cultural competency programs designed to foster a deeper understanding and respect for the diverse communities served by the department. The training aims to equip officers with the knowledge and skills necessary to navigate complex social interactions and make equitable decisions in their daily duties.

Improving recruitment and retention practices is another critical component of the SFPD's strategy. By focusing on attracting and retaining a workforce that reflects the diversity of San Francisco's population, the department aims to build a team of officers who bring a wide range of perspectives and experiences to their roles. This effort includes strategies like offering residency bonuses to encourage officers to live within the communities they serve, thereby strengthening their connection to and understanding of these areas.

Fostering community engagement is also a key element of the SFPD's strategic plan. The department recognizes the importance of building and maintaining trust with the residents of San Francisco. Through initiatives like community policing and public forums, the SFPD seeks to create open lines of communication and collaboration with community members. These efforts are designed to break down barriers, dispel misconceptions, and build a foundation of mutual respect and understanding.

Utilizing data-driven approaches to monitor progress and make informed decisions is essential to the success of the SFPD's bias-free policing efforts. By systematically collecting and analyzing data related to police stops, use of force incidents, and other key indicators of

policing practices, the department can identify areas for improvement, track the effectiveness of implemented changes, and ensure accountability within its ranks.

In summary, the SFPD's Bias-Free Policing Strategic Plan represents a proactive and thoughtful approach to addressing the challenges of bias in law enforcement. Through a combination of training, recruitment, community engagement, and data analysis, the SFPD is working towards creating a more equitable, just, and effective policing model that serves all members of the community with dignity and respect (SFPD, 2021). The development of the San Francisco Police Department's (SFPD) Bias-Free Policing Strategic Plan is a direct response to the demands and advocacy of community groups and activists who have long called for systemic changes in policing practices.

The plan acknowledges the crucial role that public input and community advocacy have played in shaping its objectives and strategies. These community and advocacy groups have been instrumental in highlighting issues of bias and injustice within the police department, pushing for transparency, accountability, and a more community-centric approach to policing. The collaborative nature of the strategic plan's development process is evident in the inclusion of diverse voices from various sectors of the community. The Executive Sponsor Working Group on Bias, which played a key role in crafting the plan, included members from community organizations, legal experts, and police reform advocates, ensuring a wide range of perspectives were considered. This inclusive approach signifies a shift towards a more open and community-engaged policing model, aiming to rebuild trust and foster stronger relationships between the SFPD and the communities it serves.

Community and advocacy groups have emphasized the importance of not just addressing explicit acts of bias but also tackling the more pervasive and often unacknowledged

issue of implicit bias that can influence police behavior and decision-making. Their push for comprehensive training programs, better recruitment practices, and enhanced community engagement is reflected in the strategic plan's focus on these areas. The plan's emphasis on data-driven analysis and transparency is also a response to community demands for objective measures to assess progress and hold the department accountable for its reform efforts.

The Bias-Free Policing Strategic Plan represents a concerted effort by the SFPD to respond to the community's call for change and to work collaboratively with advocacy groups to create a more equitable and just policing system. The plan's implementation signifies a commitment to ongoing dialogue, reform, and partnership with the community, acknowledging that effective policing must be grounded in respect, trust, and mutual understanding (SFPD, 2021). Thus, the Strategic Plan stands as a pivotal step towards transforming the SFPD into a model of progressive policing that prioritizes fairness and inclusivity, setting a precedent for law enforcement agencies nationwide.

### **Use of Force and the “Sanctity of Life” Policy**

The use of force policy in the United States is central to all major city police departments since it guides critical incidents and outlines clear procedures and disciplinary expectations. The use of force policy states the allowable series of actions a police officer may apply during a perceived imminent physical harm or threat to an individual. The National Institute of Justice defines a “use of force continuum,” which instructs when to respond with a level of force (NIJ, 2009). These policies and procedures govern the actions and objectives of police officers carrying out force, deadly or not. Typically, the foundation of the use of force policy includes five levels of decision-making, including action by the individual facing arrest, officer perception, officer response, response to an increased level, resistance, and controls to

intervene, diffuse, and immediately stop any threats to harming any individuals (NIJ, 2009). The use of force policy has also been used to define wrongdoing and excessive use of force, which often lead to accountability measures and disciplinary actions against officers.

Most prosecution and legal defense positions outline the use of force policies to determine whether police officers involved in a critical incident justified their actions. These policies outline how police dictate, limit, and document behaviors in scenarios where force is used against civilians. Use-of-force policies serve at least two core overlapping functions: (1) they are the guidelines and instructions police departments use to train and direct officers on when, where, and how much force to use; and (2) they are also often used to decide whether an officer's conduct is punishable by the department after an incident (Obasogie & Newman, 2019). In the case of George Floyd, the use of force policy of the Minneapolis Police Department was highlighted in the courts as Minneapolis police Officer Derek Chauvin, a white 19-year employee, was tried for murder using excessive force on Mr. Floyd's neck that killed him in less than 60 seconds (Kesri, 2021). The legal analysis was applied to the policy to prove improper use of force and unqualified immunity, making the use of force policy a critical point of research in the trial.

One of the strongest testimonies heard in the court of law for George Floyd's case was by the University of South Carolina professor Seth Stoughton, an expert in the use of force and former police officer. The testimony of Professor Stoughton clearly stated critical areas of the Minneapolis Police Department's Use of Force policy and outlined arguments based on the differences between "unreasonable excessive" and "reasonable" use of force (McCoy et al., 2021). Professor Stoughton further emphasized, "placing Floyd in the prone position [a key physical position outlined in the policy]—on his stomach—when he was taken out of the police

car was inappropriate because he did not pose a risk of assaulting the officers or fleeing (McCoy et al., 2021).” It was a violation of policy and an act of police violence, further challenging the use of force applied by Officer Chauvin. After reviewing over 100 hours of body camera footage, Professor Stoughton stated, “both the knee across Mr. Floyd’s neck and the prone restraint were unreasonable, excessive, and contrary to generally accepted police practices” (Benson, 2021). The outlining of these specific actions by Officer Chauvin drew national attention, and communities of color advocated persistently to create a change to the use of force and, ultimately, police violence against communities of color.

A study by Hollis, M. E., & Jennings, W. G. (2018) systematically and comprehensively reviews the extant literature on racial disparities in police use of force, employing a narrative meta-review method to analyze the findings of 41 empirical studies that cover various aspects of the issue, including public and officer perceptions, rates and types of force used, neighborhood contextual correlates, and the severity of the force applied. The study identifies a significant racial bias in the use of force, particularly against non-white suspects, with findings indicating a greater likelihood of using electronic control devices (ECDs) against black suspects compared to other races (Fridell & Lim, 2016; Terrill & Paoline, 2017). Moreover, the research on deadly force revealed mixed outcomes, with some studies showing no significant correlation between race and the use of deadly force (Crawford & Burns, 2008), while others suggested that black individuals are disproportionately affected, being more likely to be shot and killed by police (Duran & Loza, 2017; Nix et al., 2017). The synthesis underscores the complexity of the issue and the necessity for high-quality research to better understand the dynamics of race and police use of force (Hollis & Jennings, 2018).

The study by Hollis and Jennings (2018) provides a crucial foundation for understanding the complex dynamics of racial disparities in police use of force, offering insights that are highly relevant to the police reform movement. The identified racial biases in the use of force, particularly against Black individuals, underscore a systemic problem within law enforcement practices. The mixed results regarding deadly force, where some studies found no significant correlation between race and the use of deadly force (Crawford & Burns, 2008), while others highlighted a disproportionate impact on black individuals (Duran & Loza, 2017; Nix et al., 2017), reflect the inconsistency and ambiguity in police actions and reporting, which complicates efforts to enact comprehensive reforms.

The findings from this review contribute to the broader discourse on police reform by emphasizing the need for evidence-based policies and practices. The inconsistency in the research underscores the necessity for better data collection and research methodologies to understand the nuances of racial disparities in police use of force. The police reform movement, driven by a demand for transparency, accountability, and equitable treatment, can leverage such comprehensive reviews to advocate for changes in policing practices, including the implementation of body-worn cameras, which have been shown to reduce incidents of use of force and complaints against police (Jennings, Fridell, & Lynch, 2014, 2015, 2017).

Moreover, the study's findings that neighborhood and community characteristics significantly influence the use of force incidents (Hollis & Jennings, 2018) suggest that police reform needs to consider the socio-economic and racial context of the communities served. This aligns with calls for community-based policing strategies that emphasize building trust and understanding between police officers and the communities they serve. The nuanced understanding of the interplay between race and policing highlighted in this review is essential

for developing and implementing reforms that aim to create a more just, equitable, and effective law enforcement system.

In their 2017 study published in *Justice Quarterly*, Terrill and Paoline investigate the impact of administrative policies on the use of less lethal force by police officers. The authors conducted a comprehensive analysis to determine if specific departmental policies influence the likelihood and type of less lethal force applied during police-citizen encounters. Through a methodical examination of various police departments and their corresponding use-of-force incidents, the study provides empirical evidence on the role of structured policies in shaping officers' responses in potentially volatile situations. Terrill and Paoline (2017) found that departments with more restrictive use-of-force policies tend to have lower instances of less lethal force usage, suggesting that clear, stringent administrative guidelines can effectively guide officers' decisions in the field. This research contributes to the discourse on police reform by highlighting the potential of policy interventions in reducing unnecessary or excessive use of force, thereby aligning law enforcement practices with principles of justice and community trust.

The study by Terrill and Paoline (2017) on the impact of administrative policy on police use of less lethal force is particularly applicable to the SFPD and underscores the importance of reform within this context. The SFPD, like many urban police departments, faces challenges related to the use of force and community-police relations. Given the diversity and the unique socio-economic landscape of San Francisco, the findings of Terrill and Paoline inform the SFPD's strategies to ensure that its use-of-force policies are not only compliant with best practices but also effectively reduce incidents of unnecessary force. The importance of reform in SFPD is highlighted by the need to build trust within the community, improve the

accountability of law enforcement officers, and enhance the overall efficacy of policing. By adopting evidence-based administrative policies, as suggested by the research, the SFPD took a significant step towards more ethical, fair, and community-oriented policing practices. This is not only crucial for the safety and well-being of the community but also for the integrity and professionalism of the police force itself, fostering a more constructive relationship between the police and the communities they serve.

In San Francisco, the use of force policy is critical to demonstrating the progress in reforms for the San Francisco Police Department. After several officer-involved shooting incidents and a local community outcry over the death of Mario Woods, an African American man, and Alex Nieto, a Latino man, the late San Francisco Mayor Edwin M. Lee and former Police Commission President Suzy Loftus announced a comprehensive package of police reforms, including the revision to the use of force policy (Lee, 2016). The main goal of these efforts was to re-engineer the way police officers use force fundamentally and to prohibit the use of firearms in specific circumstances. The commitment to create these institutional changes demonstrated an act of reform and an explicit acknowledgment of community demands to protect lives.

As part of Mayor Lee's announcements of reforms, the United States Department of Justice Community Oriented Policing Services initiated a Collaborative Reform Initiative and an assessment of the San Francisco Police Department's patterns and practices. However, it was a clear response by community residents and advocates demanding to change policing and preserve the lives of Black and Brown communities. The US DOJ acknowledged that "the community voice was loud and consistent in expressing that the SFPD need[ed] to be more transparent and accountable regarding its use of force practices" (US DOJ, 2016). The



demonstrated actions and revisions to the use of force policy became pivotal and precise actions showing progress and, more importantly, responding to community concerns. The US DOJ COPS Director Ronald Davis shared that he “[applauded] Mayor Lee” for responding to community concerns with this assessment. It was a difficult leadership decision; this was one of the primary ways to “identify weaknesses, reinforce strengths, and improve the relationships between police and the communities they serve” (US DOJ, 2016). The Collaborative Reform Initiative was a proactive response by the City and County of San Francisco and the San Francisco Police Department.

The United States Department of Justice highlighted the use of force policies and practices as one of the most critical areas for assessing essential areas of change in policing. The use of force policy outlines the permissible actions by officers to settle and intervene in conflicts. The International Association of Chiefs of Police describes the use of force as “the amount of effort required by police to compel compliance by an unwilling subject [or individuals]” (IACP, 2001). The power of using force is a complex measurement, and practices can lead to death despite an officer trying to regain control and restore safety. Officers during a critical incident may involve a gun or a weapon, causing a need for force and the deployment of lethal and non-lethal equipment to mitigate imminent situations (NIJ, 2020). The use and permission of lethal and non-lethal equipment are dictated in use-of-force policies, and “an officer’s decision to use deadly force must be balanced with the recognition that is more than a policy decision, directing impacting another human being” (US DOJ, 2016).

The guidelines outlining the threshold for excessive use of force depend on an officer’s applicability to the procedures in these policies. However, the justification or excessiveness applied in the service of force events is difficult to measure (Alpert & Dunham, 2004). The

uncertainty of measurement leads to permissions that may consequently lead to death. While accountability after improper police use of force is crucial, so is setting out sound policies limiting and governing police uses of energy in the first instance, as well as proper training and other accountability measures (US DOJ, 2016). The critical application and serious consequences are the main reasons communities impacted by over-policing advocated for more precise use of force policy changes, further defining allowable circumstances and procedures despite the severity of any given situation.

The most significant component of the use of force is “reasonableness” and the ability to permit police officers to define the reason for lethal action. In an empirical assessment of seventy-five large significant cities and their use of force policies, Osagie Obasogie and Zachary Newman state, “One-hundred percent (100%) of the policies reviewed contained some mention of reasonableness” and “findings show that use-of-force policies rely upon ambiguous language in Supreme Court case law and largely fail to include meaningful descriptions of what specific actions, behaviors, and duties constitute being reasonable” (Obasogie & Newman, 2019). The concentration by community organizers to change these policies is crucial to creating substantial mechanisms to decrease racial profiling and police violence. Franklin Zimring, in *When Police Kill*, shares an analysis of the important components to change police violence, stating that “changing protocols that govern lethal force is essential to decreasing police violence,” and the most impactful reform is “less destructive rules of engagement” (Zimring, 2017). The community’s push to create these policy changes further protects the lives of African American and Latino/a communities.

The SFPD revised its decade-old use of force policy as an act to repair and build trust with communities of color and to improve policing practices in the city. The Department General

Order (DGO) 5.01, issued on October 4, 1995, outlined permissions for using force in specific cases, such as “to prevent the commission of a public offense, a person from injuring [themselves], affect the lawful arrest or detention of a person resisting or attempting to evade that arrest or detention, and in self-defense or the defense of another person” (US DOJ, 2016). The policy was a fundamental six-page attempt to provide simple instructions to police officers that did not include complete accountability and detailed reporting instructions. It did not define the intent of preserving all possibilities of protecting life despite the circumstances (SFPD, 1995). The policy did not include critical areas such as a preamble, the importance of safeguarding life, de-escalation, communications procedures, explicit prohibitions of racially biased policing, and overall considerations for governing the use of force. However, the new revisions to the use of force clearly outlined definitions and permission for applying pressure and strongly emphasized protecting all individuals involved in a critical incident. DGO 5.01, Use of Force, opened with a preamble outlining the true intent and response to the community outcry on policing at the time and stating, “The San Francisco Police Department’s highest priority is safeguarding the life, dignity, and liberty of all persons. Officers shall demonstrate this principle daily with the community they are sworn to protect and serve. The Department is committed to accomplishing this mission with respect and minimal reliance on the use of force by using rapport-building communication, crisis intervention, and de-escalation tactics before resorting to force whenever feasible” (SFPD, 2016). The six-page policy became a nineteen-page policy, clearly committing to “accomplishing [a] mission with respect and minimal reliance on the use of force by using rapport-building communication, crisis intervention, and de-escalation tactics before resorting to force, whenever feasible” (SFPD, 2016). The revisions marked critical aspects of the lawful purpose to use force, emphasizing limitations to

individuals in mental distress and mandating that an officer was prohibited from using lethal force on an individual who presented only a danger to themselves and did not pose an imminent threat of death or injury to another person.

The evaluation components of the use of force policy intentionally outlined more restrictions than in the 1989 United States Supreme Court case *Graham v. Connor*. This court case determined the threshold for an objective reasonable standard for determining a law enforcement officer's use of excessive force. The DGO states, "This General Order builds upon the broad principles in Graham by adding additional factors upon which an officer's use of power shall be evaluated. This General Order is more restrictive than the constitutional standard and state law. Officers must strive to use the minimal amount of force necessary" (SFPD, 2016). The restrictions would mitigate and enforce to never employ unnecessary pressure, seek to save any life as much as possible, and consider the totality of the circumstances.

The revisions were a clear progression from the previous policy and an act of institutional change. Advocacy groups applauded the passage of this policy for "safeguarding the life, dignity, and liberty of all persons" despite their race and socioeconomic status (SFPD, 2016). These institutional changes were noticed in the downward trends where the use of force data demonstrated a drastic reduction. Hillard Heintze, the contracting agency supporting the California Department of Justice in the Collaborative Reform Initiative, stated, "use of force goals are widely known by officers, who now can discuss the rationale behind de-escalation, and, more importantly, apply it in the field as demonstrated by the reducing in the incident of use of force" (Heintze, 2022). Although difficult to directly correlate, the investment and changes in policy contributed to significant reductions in the use of force by officers and ultimately preserved the lives of many individuals.

Almost five years later, the nation experienced the horrific murder of George Floyd, a 46-year-old African American father, by the excessive force of Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin. The San Francisco grassroots movement responded in solidarity to the national outcry and organized thousands of people to march from a local high school to police stations and across the city's downtown area, the hallmark location near city hall (NBC, 2020).

Simultaneously, the San Francisco Police Commission, Department of Police Accountability, and Police Chief William Scott introduced additional revisions to the use of force policy to create the necessary institutional changes to prevent a similar situation in the city. The modifications to the policy included prohibiting pressure on the neck, throat, or head to increase reporting expectations and ultimately treat individuals with safety guarding dignity (San Francisco Police Commission, 2020). The passage of the revision to the use of force policy was another historic step in the police reform process.

The literature on the use of force shares the importance of creating changes to these policies to administer new regulations that protect lives. Obasogie and Newman state, "The SFPD approved an updated policy in 2016 after not having done so since 1995... The process of updating the policy happened, at least in part, due to the killing of Mario Woods. It was launched based on a mayoral initiative and involved discussions with numerous stakeholders, including the San Francisco Police Department, the San Francisco Police Officers Association, the Board of Supervisors, the San Francisco Police Commission, and community members. The Police Commission's then-President stated: 'The people of San Francisco have demanded that we make a meaningful change'" (Obasogie & Newman, 2019). The changes demanded by communities create a new possibility for reforms and the radical changes necessary to reduce incidents of policy brutality and create a fair and just society.

While the Black Lives Matter movement and era created a deep, prominent position in changes to police and many racial and economically disenfranchised communities, San Francisco grassroots groups led the local charge for social justice changes in policing. The local movement pushed away from the “legitimacy deficit,” the core diagnosis of the frayed relationship between policing and the communities they serve, and demanded fundamental changes to rebuild trust (Bell, 2017). Accurately targeting these key areas of policy changes is central to ending cycles of police-related violence and critical to reforming police departments.

### **Social Movements and Police Reforms**

The role of advocacy in many societies plays a significant role in the policy construction and outcomes of many nations. Starting in the 1960s, the time of the 1960s African American freedom struggle, the Chicano Movement, the American Indian Movement, the liberation struggles for the LGBTQI communities, the women’s rights and movement all involved a legitimate protest and community mobilization, creating a catalytic change in policy areas of the United States Constitution (Goluboff, 2016). Social activities created a challenge showing how the legal system creates racial hierarchies and inequalities, further discriminating against disenfranchised communities of color.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 stands out as a prominent example of the impact of grassroots community organizing by civil rights organizations like the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (Lewis, 1998). Prior to the enactment of this Act, numerous demonstrations, sit-downs, and legal challenges to segregation took place, including the pivotal *Boynton v. Virginia* case, which led to a federal ban on segregation signs in public places (Lewis, 1998). Actions such as the famous Freedom Rides and the March on Washington were instrumental in advocating for a more comprehensive

approach to addressing discrimination, institutional racism, and the federal government's role in combating these issues.

Similarly, the police reform movement has been profoundly shaped by grassroots organizing and national outcries against injustices in policing, yet scholarly recognition of this influence remains limited. The movement for police reform gained momentum through a series of high-profile incidents, such as the Rodney King beating in 1991 and subsequent protests, which brought public attention to issues of police brutality and racial bias (Goff, Kahn, & Brewer, 2017). Grassroots organizations, community activists, and advocacy groups played a crucial role in highlighting systemic flaws within law enforcement agencies, demanding greater accountability, transparency, and equitable treatment for all individuals regardless of race or background (Bell, 2017).

Moreover, the Black Lives Matter movement, born out of the acquittal of George Zimmerman in the Trayvon Martin case and the tragic death of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, further galvanized efforts to reform policing practices and address racial disparities in law enforcement (Goff, Kahn, & Brewer, 2017). This movement sparked nationwide protests, discussions, and policy reforms aimed at dismantling systemic racism and promoting fairness and justice within the criminal justice system (Brown & Jones, 2013). Despite these grassroots efforts and the significant impact, they have had on shaping the discourse around police reform, scholarly literature often overlooks or minimizes the contributions of grassroots activism in driving substantive change within law enforcement agencies (Obasogie & Newman, 2019). Thus, there is a critical need for scholarly research and discourse to acknowledge and explore the pivotal role of grassroots organizing in advancing police reforms and promoting social justice in policing.

The social movements and advocacy for police reforms played a crucial role in instigating institutional changes within the SFPD. Hundreds of residents and protestors marched to the steps of city hall, advocating for reforms that included ending fatal shootings. Grassroots groups consistently lobbied late Mayor Ed Lee and the Board of Supervisors, San Francisco's elected representatives from various districts, urging them to address these demands, particularly calling for the dismissal of SFPD Chief Greg Suhr (Veklerov, 2016). On December 7, 2015, after the fatal death of Mario Woods in the Bayview neighborhood, the late Mayor Lee published a statement sharing:

“As I said last week, after the incident that resulted in the death of Mr. Mario Woods, I saw the video. As many did, I found it very upsetting, raising several questions. We owe all San Francisco, communities of color, and the Woods family, a full and transparent investigation without delay, as I said on Thursday. I have met with community leaders, members of the Board and my staff about this shooting. There are three investigations underway, and no conclusions have yet been reached. That said, I have directed Chief Suhr to take specific, immediate action to ensure they have more options to resolve situations with the minimum use of force. Immediately after this shooting, the Department opted into a national effort called: Re-Engineering Training on Police Use of Force. I have also directed the Police Commission to do a thorough review of all existing policies regarding the use of force to make it perfectly clear that the Department's policy is that using lethal force is the last resort. This might require fundamentally revising the Department's policy through General Orders, and adopting any necessary training or equipment, in addition to what the Chief has already instituted. This discussion will begin at the Police Commission meeting within two days (CCSF Office the Mayor, 2015).”

The strategy was to hold accountable the leadership of the Department for all the lives lost and to request a full assessment of policing patterns and practices.



In May 2019, the fatal shooting of a young African American woman, Jessica Williams, led to more large mobilizations and demands to fire the Police Chief of San Francisco. Communities advocating and pushing for better police interactions had lost confidence in the progress of building trust. The shooting of a young woman was the last series of events to force a decision for Mayor Lee to request the resignation of current Police Chief Greg Suhr (Egelko et al., 2016). The loss of this young woman during a vehicle chase would force the final demands and transition into a full investigation by an independent entity and the national search to hire a Police Chief committed to reforming the San Francisco Police Department.

The overarching strategy of grassroots activists and advocacy groups was to hold the SFPD leadership accountable for lives lost due to police actions and to demand a thorough assessment of policing patterns and practices within the department. This concerted effort reflected a broader movement across the United States, where communities and activists mobilized to address systemic issues of police brutality and promote accountability and transparency in law enforcement agencies (Obasogie & Newman, 2019).

In January 2016, community members escalated the pressure of demanding changes, and the late Mayor Ed Lee's administration took significant steps to request additional support to respond to the local outcry. After the multiple deaths of Latino and African American young men--Alex Nieto, Luis Gongora, Mario Woods, and Amilcar Perez – protestors gathered and demanded a change of department leadership and a full investigation from the civil division of the Department of Justice as an action of accountability (Woodrow, 2016). Government officials held many hearings and hosted roundtables with critical stakeholders to diffuse the escalating political pressure. The highly publicized tension between the advocacy of demanding police reforms and the policy changes in the city took shape in the following months. Mayor

Lee and, at the moment, President of the Board of Supervisors London Breed and District 10 Bayview & Potrero Hill Supervisor Malia Cohen requested the support of US Attorney General Loretta Lynch by “the Department of Justice [to] investigat[ing] the death of Mario Wood” and engaging in a fully transparent investigation in the name of “build[ing] deeper, stronger trust between law enforcement and the communities ...sworn to protect (City and County of San Francisco, Office of the Mayor, 2016).” The response was recommended to work with the US Attorney’s Office and to begin creating a process of assessment and review.

In May 2016, the City and County of San Francisco took a significant step by partnering with the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office) to launch a Collaborative Reform Initiative assessment and review of the SFPD. This decision to engage closely with the federal government was a direct response to the demands of the community and the visible manifestations of protest with hundreds taking to the streets. Residents emphatically called for an independent entity to investigate and ensure accountability for necessary changes within the SFPD, akin to other major police departments that had undergone federal consent decrees.

Following months of collaboration, an independent report was published by the U.S. Department of Justice, signaling the beginning of a crucial institutional transformation for the San Francisco Police Department. In a public press release, Mayor Lee emphasized the urgency of implementing reforms to achieve fair and just policing that prioritizes the sanctity of life and treats everyone equally (CCSF, Office of the Mayor, 2016).

This collaborative effort between local government and federal oversight agencies underscored the community's demand for transparency, accountability, and equitable treatment within law enforcement. The partnership with the U.S. Department of Justice reflected a

commitment to addressing systemic issues and fostering trust between the police department and the communities it serves (Bell, 2017). The Collaborative Reform Initiative became a pivotal mechanism for driving comprehensive reforms and promoting a culture of fair and impartial policing in San Francisco.

### **CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY**

#### **Overview**

This qualitative research study delves into the intricacies of grassroots community organizing, city government policy advocacy, and consequential changes in police reforms within the context of the SFPD. The research methodology primarily relies on key individual informants' interviews, strategically chosen to offer diverse perspectives on the multifaceted nature of these developments. A thorough selection process ensured that key informants possessed insightful knowledge and experiences relevant to the convergence of grassroots efforts, governmental policies, and the resultant transformations in police practices.

The study amalgamates interest convergence and new social movement theories in constructing the theoretical framework. The rationale for this synthesis lies in the comprehensive understanding these theories afford regarding the causal factors underpinning significant changes in police reform, mainly focusing on the evolution of use-of-force policies. Interest convergence theory posits that societal changes often occur when diverse interests align, fostering the conditions for reform. Concurrently, the new social movement theory contributes a dynamic perspective, emphasizing the role of grassroots movements in instigating societal shifts.

The methodology involves in-depth, semi-structured interviews with key informants, fostering a nuanced exploration of their insights. Recruitment criteria considered a variety of

perspectives, ensuring a well-rounded representation of stakeholders intimately involved in the community organizing and policy advocacy landscape. Ethical considerations underscored the importance of respecting participants' confidentiality and privacy throughout the research process.

The analytical rigor applied to these interviews ensures that the data collected is subjected to a thorough examination, enabling the identification of underlying connections and correlations. This methodical approach allows for a nuanced interpretation of the information gleaned from key informants, adding depth and richness to the overall understanding of the subject matter. Through the weaving together of diverse narratives and perspectives obtained from key informants, the study seeks to create a cohesive and holistic depiction of the multifaceted dynamics influencing the San Francisco Police Department's stance on use-of-force policies. By synthesizing these varied insights, the research aims to present a nuanced narrative that captures the complexities inherent in the interplay between grassroots efforts, governmental actions, and the ultimate outcomes of police reform initiatives.

In essence, the study endeavors to go beyond the surface level of information, delving into the intricate layers that contribute to the formation and evolution of policies within the San Francisco Police Department. Through this holistic approach, the research strives to contribute to a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the factors shaping the department's strategies and responses to the critical issue of use-of-force policies. In the subsequent discussion, the study aims to bridge the gap between theory and practice, elucidating how the observed changes align with or deviate from the expectations set forth by the theoretical framework. This research endeavors to shed light on the intricate dynamics of grassroots community organizing, governmental policy advocacy, and the resulting shifts in police

reforms, contributing to a deeper comprehension of the mechanisms driving societal change in law enforcement practices.

### **Restatement of Purpose**

Over the last decade, a grassroots national outcry to end fatal police shootings forced cities and counties across the United States to reevaluate and change their policies. Hundreds of community organizers and activists led to the streets of their towns. They manifested their outcry in marches, protests, and media interviews demanding a change to policing and an end to policies creating permissible interventions leading to injury and, in some cases, death. From Ferguson to San Francisco, community constituents and policymakers sat at negotiating tables, with facilitated discussions often led by women, discussing abolishing institutional racist practices and changes to redefine policing practices.

This study examines the convergence between community-led grassroots organizing and city government policy advocacy that influenced police reforms for the San Francisco Police Department (SFPD). Specifically, I analyzed the moments of collective organizing and the pressure placed on city officials and police department leadership to create changes to the Department General Order 5.01, the San Francisco Police Department's use of force policy. Analyzing these pivotal moments through qualitative research methods I identified the critical learning lessons and actions taken by grassroots organizers, policymakers, and government leaders to create moments of change in policy and policing in San Francisco.

## **Research Questions**

1. What role do grassroots movements and city government leadership play in influencing policy change around police reform in San Francisco?
2. How did tensions, frictions, collaborations, and convergences among various vital stakeholder's shape SFPD's decision to overhaul the Use of Force policy?
3. How did policymakers and city government officials react to advocacy and political pressures to address policing in San Francisco?
4. What role did policymakers and city government policy leaders take in re-envisioning policing in San Francisco?

## **Research Design**

The methodology used for the study was based on a qualitative method that highlights the individual and collective experiences shared during the police reform movements experienced in San Francisco over the last ten years. A qualitative approach provided the opportunity to gather insight from participants in various roles that influenced significant policy changes in policing. The study was divided into two parts- 1) semi-structured interviews and 2) a document analysis of critical events and changes in policing included in city records, public meeting notes, and videos.

The qualitative method chosen was based on Creswell's grounded theory approach to generate and discover the impacts and phenomenon of grassroots organizing and political shifts in policymakers and city government leadership deciding on the city's policing strategies (Creswell, 1998). The grounded theory provides the ability to hear the audience and interviewee and delineate themes that will be extracted to prove the hypothesis (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Interviewing participants and major coding themes generated a theoretical explanation of the process of accomplishing police reforms. The interviews and individual experiences uncovered how the police reform movement in San Francisco pressured city government leaders and policymakers to create necessary changes in policing strategies.

Conducting twenty to thirty interviews with grassroots organizations, city officials, and police officers uncovered strategies and lessons learned that shaped the use of force policy. Participants were asked to share moments of convergence, leadership positionality, and decision-making strategies to document and uncover valuable learning lessons. Grassroots organizers were probed to outline the purpose of the advocacy, tactical decisions, and targeted audience that placed critical pressure to catalyze political choices, whether community organizers or content experts were interviewed in a private setting in San Francisco. Interviews followed key questions and probed for additional information. Interviews were coded for themes to answer the significant areas of the study.

Part of the research method was also focused on a document analysis of significant events influencing changes to the use of force policy by grassroots community organizers, government leaders, and policymakers. The analysis focused on public sessions from the Board of Supervisors and Police Commission meetings, precisely legislative actions taken by policy committees such as hearings and adopting city ordinances. Additionally, press events, press releases, and media accounts were included to document historical events and draw conclusions regarding the potential changes in policing. Finally, documents from the San Francisco Police Department, Police Commission, Board of Supervisors, United States, and California Department of Justice were reviewed to verify moments of change, the actual policy proposals,

and adoptions. The grassroots work of San Francisco was studied through research interviews and a document review approach. Analyzing the documentation through research, participants shared historical accounts leading to mobilizations and negotiations that were catalysts for changes in policing. Moreover, by analyzing key experts' responses in community organizing, context and findings were highlighted between the direct actions and documented accounts of policy changes. However, since minimal literature accounts for grassroots efforts, this study section relied on newspaper articles and public documents to analyze the history and impact of community organizing and policing.

### **Research Site**

The research setting facilitated individual interviews for the study's participants residing or working in the Bay Area, with a focus on San Francisco. These interviews aimed to engage policymakers and community organizers who are actively involved in the ongoing police reform movement. Participants from both San Francisco and other parts of the Bay Area were welcomed, and arrangements were made to accommodate their participation. Additionally, to ensure inclusivity and accessibility, interviews were conducted virtually via platforms such as Zoom, allowing for flexibility and convenience for all involved parties.

### **Participants**

The study recruit 40 participants and interviewed 30 participants actively involved in the police reform movement of San Francisco that are either grassroots community organizers, city government officials, police officers, or city department leadership influencing the policy development for policing in San Francisco. Each category (grassroots organizers, city government officials, city department leaders, and police officers) included 6-8 participants



representing individuals from diverse ethnic backgrounds. However, an emphasis was made on recruiting women and individuals primarily representing the African American and Latina/o ethnic communities. The sampling provided a robust and significant population to decipher and make conclusions on areas experienced in the field of emphasis.

The selection of the participants co-occurred through two forms — 1) purposeful sampling through document analysis of critical events and 2) a snowball technique employed after the initial set of research participants. The document analysis identified key events and individuals that participated in the community organizing, political negotiations, and policy development of police reforms between 2010 and 2020, the significant years in the San Francisco police reform movement. Based on current literature and documented accounts, recruitment focused on identifying 6-8 participants in four categories of research.

1. *Community organizers working on police reforms in San Francisco.*
2. *Leadership in community organizing policy and political leadership.*
3. *Police officers of all ranks are experiencing changes in police reforms in San Francisco.*
4. *Leadership in city government and the Board of Supervisors working on police reforms and the revisions to the use of force policy.*

Once participants were identified and potentially recruited Creswell's Snowball technique was utilized, where participants were asked to recommend other individuals for the study (Creswell, 2005). These techniques ensured to receive documented and credible research participants for the study. Participants were asked to identify and recommend individuals according to the categories outlined for the study. Relying on a combined method of recruitment

for participants ensured a comprehensive and credible source of outreach and participation for the study.

The criteria for recruitment was based on expertise in the field of study and participation in police reform, community organizing and policy making. Community organizing expertise was scoped out to include participants involved in a community grassroots organization and advocated for police reforms, such as the Frisco Five, the Mario Woods and Alex Nieto Coalition, and the Black Lives Matter movement. This category also included individuals from San Francisco-based community organizations that participated in mobilization efforts to change policing in San Francisco.

The policy and government leadership criteria predominantly focused on recruiting individuals that negotiate or lead specific efforts within city government that influence policy changes in policing, such as using force. These participants included individuals from the San Francisco Mayor's Office, the Board of Supervisors, the Police Commission, and the Department of Police Accountability. These individuals were selected for their leadership in the policy drafting process and adopting the use of force policy.

The criteria for the fourth group was specific to Police Department personnel and Command Staff involved in the use of force policy changes. Recruiting the end-users of the policy unveiled another area of the study. These participants were able to testify and essentially outline a different perspective in the areas of policy change. Police Department personnel offered personal experience and testimony on the impact of grassroots efforts and policy changes from an operational perspective.

## **Ethical Considerations**

As a City and County of San Francisco public servant and government policy advisor, I had strong community ties and close professional ties to the sampling conducted for the study. While it was a strength to have knowledge related to the topic and expertise, it was necessary to ensure there were no unconscious bias-drawn results based on my professional experience. Bias could occur when specific themes were chosen that articulated the outcome of the series of events. There needed to be a conscious separation between the interviews conducted and the pieces coded in the study.

However, institutional review board approval and the design of confidential consent provided participants with security and the study with permission to conduct the research. The study design was ethically sound by ensuring the review process was approved and disclosed to all participants. Consent forms included confidentiality statements to ensure participants felt comfortable disclosing any insight and information. In addition, as the principal researcher, I made a conscious effort to disclose confidentiality and protection measures for the participants' reassurance.

## **Participant Research Protection**

I sought approval and permission to conduct research with my selected participants from the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRBPHS) at the University of San Francisco. This step was crucial to ensure that the study met all ethical guidelines and standards for the protection of human subjects. I made sure to thoroughly explain the focus and methodology of my research study to all participants, providing them with a clear understanding of the study's objectives and procedures.

To formalize their participation, I provided the necessary documentation for formal consent, including detailed consent and assent forms. These forms clearly outlined their rights, including the option to withdraw their consent and participation at any time without any consequences. I emphasized their autonomy in the process and ensured they understood they were free to discontinue participation whenever they felt it necessary. Participants also had the option to use a pseudonym if they wished, providing an additional layer of anonymity and comfort.

During data collection, I used a personal recording device to capture the interviews accurately. I supplemented these recordings with detailed interview transcripts and researcher notes, ensuring a comprehensive and accurate record of each participant's input. All collected data was kept strictly confidential, stored securely, and was accessible only to me. This confidentiality was paramount to protect the privacy of the participants and maintain the integrity of the research.

I also assured participants that the confidentiality measures were robust and strictly adhered to, which helped in building trust and ensuring their comfort in disclosing personal insights and information. As the principal researcher, I made a conscious effort to communicate the confidentiality and protection measures clearly and frequently, providing reassurance to the participants throughout the research process. This approach was intended to create a safe and respectful environment for participants, encouraging openness and honesty in their responses.

### **Data Collection Plan**

The research administered a “purposeful sampling” of individuals publicly known to have served as either policymaker, city government leaders, or community leaders that were or are active in advocating or shaping police reforms (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Based on the

understanding of policy changes administered by the San Francisco Police Department, participants were recruited to participate in confidential, one-to-one semi-structured interviews. They answered a series of questions drawing experiences and thoughts related to the study. Individual interviews were assessed and coded to find thematic correlations. Coding themes found the critical areas and pieces associated with the interconnectivity between community organizers and policymakers influencing police reform changes, such as the San Francisco Police Department's policy on the use of force.

The second portion was a document analysis of public hearings, testimonies, and meetings leading to changes in the use of force policies, such as significant grassroots demonstrations and public hearings. The archival data and information collected was from specific events in the last ten years that provided critical intervention and political influence. For example, in 2015, the death of Mario Woods rallied hundreds of San Francisco residents to demand changes to police leadership and request police reforms, including the revision to the Department General Order 5.01, Use of Force. These events were critical to creating the pressure and political condition to host an actual meeting between community organizers and city officials. The dialogue shifted into a focus point, and demands were eventually met after several months of negotiations. These events were studied to understand the critical decisions and influential pressure points that created the necessary policy changes to reform the San Francisco Police Department. Incidents were observed and coded to outline significant political findings and experiences leading to changes in the specific revisions for the use of force policy.

Similarly, the most recent changes in the use of force policy after the incident of George Floyd will also be evaluated and studied. The public testimony and mobilizations occurring

during these times was analyzed to identify critical leadership in San Francisco. Specifically, the research focused on identifying individuals involved in any working groups and significant political events that led to the following revisions of the use of force policy.

### **Data Analysis**

The data analysis was conducted according to Creswell's grounded theory. It focused on individuals advocating or directly changing policing policies or participating in significant events catapulting policy changes for the San Francisco Police Department. This purposeful and homogenous sampling facilitated intentional outreach to credible individuals who experienced the grassroots movement in San Francisco (Creswell, 2017). For the case study analysis, the information was observed and studied to find commonality in the participant engagement and experiences in the grassroots organizing, policy development, and adoption process.

The first analytic strategy was to create transcripts for each interview, code common themes, make associations, and answer research questions regarding the impact of direct actions, community organizing, and policy development. As the interviews were conducted, significant themes and repetitive associations were noted in the margins to define categorical findings later. Creswell refers to this formation as a "data spiral," where you conduct the interview, identify significant ideas and reflect on more extensive thoughts presented in the information (Creswell, 2017). Classifying the data provided a "family" of sorts and formulate the context of the experiences in police reforms.

The document analysis was overlaid with the same approach where a "data spiral" analyzed the incidents and critical decisions shaping the changes in policing policies. However, the document analysis took a step further in utilizing "categorical aggregation to establish themes or patterns (Creswell, 2017)." Organizing facts through visualization and a timeline

revealed denotations during critical events that documented social change results. The data from interviews were inserted in a software program, Dedoose, developed by Dr. Eli Liber from the University of California-Los Angeles Center for Culture and Health. This web-based program supported organizing the information, the qualitative data extracted from interviews, and code descriptors highlighting results. The report provided a more efficient way to analyze the information.

### **Participant Profiles**

The participant selection process for this study employed purposeful sampling, incorporating a case study analysis of critical events and a snowball sampling technique. Approximately 40 individuals were initially invited to participate, resulting in 30 individual semi-structured interviews that formed the basis for the analysis. The identification of criteria for participation was informed by a review of key events and public associations through media sources and public meetings. Subsequently, outreach efforts were undertaken to engage and involve constituents who met the established criteria for inclusion in the study. Participants were selected based on their active involvement in the initiation of police reforms and their recent contributions to revising critical policies spanning the period from 2010 to 2020. The selection criteria were organized into four major categories:

- *Community Organizers and Non-Profit Employees*: Individuals actively engaged in police reforms within San Francisco through roles in community organizing or employment within non-profit organizations.
- *Leadership in Community Organizing, Policy, and Politics*: Participants demonstrating leadership roles in community organizing, policy development, and political spheres.

- *Police Officers*: Inclusive of individuals at various ranks within the police force, encompassing representatives from the Police Officer Association (POA).
- *Leadership in City Government and Board of Supervisors*: Individuals in leadership positions within city government and the Board of Supervisors are involved explicitly in police reforms and revisions to the use of force policy.

The study's participants were chosen to represent a balanced distribution across these four categories, reflecting the diversity of roles and perspectives crucial to developing the police reform process. The participant composition consisted of eight individuals employed in city government roles; seven identified as community organizers and advocates, eight acknowledged their roles as elected officials or police commissioners, and seven were police officers representing various ranks. This employment diversity aimed to capture key stakeholders' varied insights and contributions in shaping the trajectory of police reforms.

The demographic characteristics of the participants predominantly aligned with a San Francisco-based profile, both in terms of residency and employment. Specifically, twenty-four out of the thirty participants were City and County of San Francisco residents. Four individuals initially resided in another city within California or a different state, and two participants lived in Contra Costa County.

Regarding employment, most participants, twenty-six individuals, were initially employed within San Francisco. Four participants worked outside the city during their initial engagement in police reforms. Notably, within this group, one out of the four participants transitioned to their city of employment and residency. This transition resulted in a notable increase, raising the percentage of participants residing in San Francisco to 83% and those employed in San Francisco to 90%. This shift underscores the dynamic nature of participant demographics, with a significant proportion ultimately choosing to live and work within the



city, providing a nuanced understanding of the interplay between personal and professional factors in the context of police reform engagement.

The participants' racial demographic profile has been classified according to the significant racial categories outlined by the US Census and adhering to the ethnic identity recommendations of the City and County of San Francisco. The categories include African American/Black, Asian, Latino/a or Latinx, Multi-racial, Other (specified), and White. The participants exhibited a notable diversity in their selected racial designations. The breakdown reveals that approximately 23% (7 individuals) identified as African American/Black, 13% (4 individuals) as Asian, 10% (3 individuals) as Latino/a or Latinx, 7% (2 individuals) as Multiracial, 7% (2 individuals) identified with an "Other" specified racial category, and the majority, constituting 40% (12 individuals), identified as White. This array of racial backgrounds among the participants emphasizes the importance of capturing a broad spectrum of perspectives and experiences, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of the nuanced dynamics surrounding police reforms in the City and County of San Francisco.

The additional demographic details of the participants encompassed gender, age groups, parental status, and educational background. A breakdown of the participant demographics reveals that close to 37% (11 individuals) identified as female, 57% (17 individuals) as male, and 6% (2 individuals) identified as LGBTQI. In terms of age distribution, the majority of participants were above 36 years old. Specifically, there was one individual between the ages of 25-35, 12 individuals in the 36-50 age group, 15 participants aged 51-65, and 2 participants between 65-80 years old. Regarding parental status, 77% (23 individuals) indicated that they were parents, while 24% (7 individuals) stated that they were not parents.

Regarding education, the participants demonstrated a diverse range of educational achievements. The majority indicated that their highest level of education was a juris doctorate degree, with 14 individuals holding this qualification. Additionally, five participants had a Masters graduate degree, eight had a Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science degree, and three had an Associate of Arts degree. This educational diversity highlights the varied backgrounds and expertise that participants brought to the study, enriching the perspectives on police reforms in the City and County of San Francisco.

**Table 1. Participant Demographics**

Current Employment	City of Residence	City of Employment	Racial Designation	Gender	Age Grouping	Parent Status (Yes or No)	Education
City--	Otho,	Otho,	White	Female	51-65 years old	No	JO
CityGovernment-	San Francisco	San --	White	Female	51-65 years old	Yes	JO
City--	San francisco	San Francisc:o	White	Female	51-65yearsold	No	JO
City-\	San Francisco	SanFrancisc:o	Mua..cial	Male	36-50 mws old	Yes	
CityGovernment-	Qma(QsQ	SanfInlcJsc:o	African -- /llodt	F<male	51-6S.-sold	Yes	AA
CityGovernment!o!l-car	Othe,	Othe,	AIncan Alnerica,yllack	Male	SHS.-sold	Yes	JO
City-\	San--	San francisco	African American /Black	Male	51-6S.-sold	Yes	JO
City-\	SanFrancisco	San Francisco	l/!te	Female	36-50 ynr's old	Yes	JO
c.n-m.r.t.v and Ad,ocate	San*****.	San Fransoco	LMlto/aorl.aUnx	Female	36-50.-sold	Yes	B,\IBS
Con-m.ntv and Ad,ocate	Othe,	San Fr.,nosco	African Ameri<.or,/llodt	F<male	51-6S.-sold	Yes	JO
c.n-m.r.t.y and Ad,ocate	SanfInnciKo	San--	African American /Block	Male	36-50.-sold	Yes	AA
c.n-m.r.t.y Or9W'fM and Ad,ocate	SanFrancisco	San--	.....	Goy	36-50year,old	No	B,\IBS
Con-m.nty and	Othe,	San--			SHS.-sold	Yes	JO
c.n-m.r.t.y O< Ad,ocate	San Francisco	San--	White	F<mole	6S-80.-sold	Yes	JO
c.n-m.r.t.yoA, d,ocate	SanfInnciKo	San--	.....		36-50.-sold	Yes	JO
ected Official or Polce Ommisioner	San mtisco	Sanfrono,co	l'.tite	Male	SHSyearsold	No	B,\IBS
ElectedOffidal0<Pol,ceComn-s,one,-	San f-nhdsc:o	SanfInlcJsc:o	Othe,	Male	36-50.-sold	Yes	
ected Official or Polce Ommisioner	SanfInlcisco	Sanf...-O	Asian	Male	6S-80 years old	Yes	JO
Elected Official O<- Comn-s,one,-	San*****.	SanfInlcJsc:o	.....		25-3S years old	No	JO
ected Offidal or Polce Ommisioner	San Francisco	San --	Lat,oo/aorlatinx	Male	51-65 years old	Yes	Ma.....
ected Official or Polce Ommisioner	San francisco	Othe,	l,Jlro/a or Latinx	Male	36-50.-sold	No	AA
Elected Official or Polce Ommisioner	San francisco:	San Fr.,nosco	l'.tite	Male	36-50 yws old	No	JO
- Official O<- Comn-s,one,-	San FrIncisc:o	SanfInlcJsc:o		Male	36-50 ytmSokl	Yes	
Policeeficer	San*****.	SanfrInCISCO	African Alnerica,yllodt	Male	51-65 years old	Yes	B,\IBS
Polce Officer	SanfWICisco	San Francisco	MLblldal	Male	36-50.-sold	Yes	B,\IBS
PoliceIficer	Qma(QsQ	San francisco	Othe,	Male	36-50 years old	Yes	
Police Officer	San*****.	San fInlcisc:o		Male	51-65 years old	Yes	B,\IBS
Police Officer	San*****.	San Franc<o		Male	SHS.-sold	Yes	JO
Police aticer	SanfInlcisco	San francisco		l<mole	51-65.-Sold	Yes	B,\IBS
Police Officer	Sanmncisco	Othe,	African Amerlcor,Black	Male	SHS.-sold	Yes	B,\IBS

## CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

### Overview

The study's findings provide valuable insights into the experiences and perspectives of thirty participants involved in the reform process within the San Francisco Police Department (SFPD). By systematically examining these insights, the research aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the dynamics of police reform. Through extensive interviews with these participants, who represent a broad spectrum of experience in policing and reform, the study was able to gather detailed and nuanced perspectives. Each participant was interviewed for an average of sixty minutes, providing substantial data on their individual and collective experiences with police reforms.

To comprehensively analyze the collected data, the research utilized both inductive and deductive reasoning as quantitative methods. Inductive research in this study involved three stages: observation, identifying patterns, and developing a theory or general conclusion (Streefkerk, 2023). Deductive research, on the other hand, began with a problem statement, followed by the formulation of a hypothesis, data collection to test the hypothesis, data analysis, and finally, deciding whether to reject the hypothesis (Streefkerk, 2023).

A mixed-methods approach was employed to gather detailed qualitative data through interviews. During the research, both in-person and virtual interviews were conducted, where participants answered a series of questions, and their responses were transcribed for analysis. These responses underwent a line-by-line coding process, which was further refined through selective coding to identify patterns in the police reform process. Themes emerged from the participants' responses based on the structured interview questions. These themes highlighted

the importance of collaboration among various groups to influence and enact changes in policing practices in San Francisco.

The analysis of participant responses revealed commonalities within and across their experiences, leading to the identification of inductive and deductive themes in the qualitative research results. These themes underscored the critical role of diverse groups working together to drive significant reforms in the SFPD, thereby affirming the necessity of systemic collaboration for successful police reform initiatives.

### **Key Research Questions**

The City and County of San Francisco, renowned for its progressive values and dynamic social landscape, has been at the forefront of discussions on police reform and the reimagining of policing practices. This study delves into the multifaceted interactions between grassroots movements, city government leadership, and various stakeholders, aiming to understand their collective impact on policy changes within the realm of policing. At the heart of this investigation are three critical research questions:

1. What role do grassroots movements and city government leadership play in influencing policy change around police reform and re-envisioning policing in San Francisco?
2. How did tensions, frictions, collaborations, and convergences among various vital stakeholders shape SFPD's decision to overhaul the Use of Force policy?
3. How did policymakers and city government officials react to advocacy and political pressures to address policing in San Francisco?

Beginning with the research questions that guide this investigation, the study systematically unravels the multifaceted roles of grassroots movements, city governance, and stakeholder engagements in shaping the trajectory of police reform in San Francisco. The findings

illuminate the intricate interdependencies and dynamics at play, emphasizing the importance of a collaborative and adaptive governance framework to effectively address and implement change in the domain of urban policing and public safety.

### **Thematic Findings**

This section delves into the findings derived from the interviews conducted with each participant in the study. Each interview extensively explored the unique experiences of participants, revealing recurring themes that shed light on the influences and shifts observed in police reforms. As the thematic analysis unfolded, additional patterns emerged, solidifying one overarching theme: the convergence of interests among grassroots community organizers, policymakers within city government entities (including the executive branch), and the end-users of policies, namely police officers, plays a pivotal role in the formulation and implementation of policies, particularly those related to the use of force.

Regardless of whether they were community advocates, city government leaders, or police officers, unanimous consensus emerged among all participants regarding the imperative for reforms. The unanimity was striking, with 100% of all involved individuals expressing agreement on the necessity for the SFPD to undergo significant reforms. This collective acknowledgment underscores a shared belief that reform is essential for the department to evolve into a more just and constitutionally sound policing agency. Even in the face of divergent perspectives on policing practices, the unanimous agreement on the need for reform stands out as a critical organizational acknowledgment and underscores the urgency of the reform process.

An additional noteworthy thematic finding reinforces the understanding that race, particularly in the context of use-of-force incidents impacting African American and Latino/a or

Latinx communities, is a pivotal factor necessitating the establishment of a reformative process, specifically focusing on the impetus for revisiting use-of-force policies. An overwhelming majority, 97% of participants, concurred that race plays a crucial role in both the initiation and sustained necessity of the reform process. Participants frequently highlighted incidents involving the use of force and officer-involved shootings, such as those of Mario Woods, Alex Nieto, Amilcar Perez, and Jessica Williams, as critical events that underscored the urgency of rethinking the use-of-force policy. These incidents served as poignant examples, illustrating the imperative to reassess and reformulate use-of-force protocols to preserve and safeguard the lives of individuals interacting with the police. The consensus among participants on the profound impact of race in these incidents further emphasizes the interconnectedness between reform efforts and addressing racial disparities within law enforcement practices.

Despite acknowledging the historical and institutional roots of racism that have historically shaped the foundation of policing in America, participants in the discussions illuminated a transformative shift occurring within the field. A unanimous acknowledgment emerged among participants, recognizing the pivotal role of policing in providing essential interventions for the overall well-being of all residents. Stressing the significance of law enforcement, participants underscored the importance of police reforms as integral to ensuring public safety, emphasizing their dedication to serving the community.

Crucially, participants pointed out that policing has undergone a metamorphosis in response to the urgent calls from marginalized groups advocating for a modernized, 21st-century police department. This evolution aligns with the visionary ideals articulated by former President Obama, who championed the need for reform in policing practices. The recognition of this need for change and the responsiveness to the voices of marginalized communities

underscore the ongoing evolution of policing practices. It reflects a commitment within law enforcement circles to adopt more equitable and community-oriented strategies, in line with contemporary societal expectations.

This dynamic shift not only acknowledges the historical challenges but also emphasizes a forward-looking approach. The commitment to reforming policing practices becomes a crucial aspect of fostering a law enforcement system that is not only responsive but actively aligned with the values and needs of the diverse communities it serves. In essence, the ongoing evolution of policing practices signifies a commitment to building trust, promoting fairness, and creating a safer and more inclusive environment for all residents.

My data has illuminated 12 findings, which I have grouped into three overarching themes, encapsulating the transformative processes within the San Francisco Police Department. Considering the research findings, three pivotal themes have surfaced, driven by the examination of case studies and participant experiences in this research study. These themes encapsulate the transformative processes within the San Francisco Police Department:

**1. Critical Reassessment and Reform Triggered by Racial Disparities:**

The recognition of disparate racial interactions within the SFPD served as a powerful catalyst, instigating a critical reassessment of entrenched practices and policies. This reformative process aimed to address systemic racial issues, ensuring more equitable policing and reflecting a transformative response to the heightened awareness of deep-seated racial inequities.

**2. Comprehensive Review and Overhaul of Policing Structures:**

The acknowledgment of racial inequities prompted a comprehensive review of existing structures within the police department. Stakeholders were compelled to scrutinize, and



overhaul established norms, procedures, and protocols, spotlighting the transformative impact of heightened awareness on the reform process. This comprehensive review targeted the very structures governing the police department, ushering in transformative changes.

### **3. Positive Shifts and Ongoing Reforms within Policing:**

Despite acknowledging prevalent bias and instances of excessive policing, a majority of participants emphasized a substantial and transformative evolution within the policing profession in San Francisco. The narratives and shared experiences underscored positive shifts within the profession, positioning San Francisco as a city at the forefront of pioneering reforms in policing. This theme emphasizes the ongoing reforms and positive changes driven by a collective commitment to transformative practices within the law enforcement community.

Each of these themes forms a foundational framework, encapsulating the key aspects emphasized by the research. Subsequent sections will delve into a comprehensive exploration and elaboration of these themes, unveiling more nuanced and detailed results derived from the extensive research endeavor. By delving deeper into each theme, the aim is to provide a more profound understanding of the intricacies and dynamics associated with the identified focal points. This expanded analysis will contribute to a comprehensive and multifaceted interpretation of the research findings, shedding light on the intricate relationships and patterns within each theme and their broader implications.

### **Critical Reassessment and Reform Triggered by Racial Disparities**

This pivotal theme explores the profound influence of disparate racial interactions as a narrative of significant importance within the context of the San Francisco Police Department's

evolution. At its core, this theme is emblematic of a watershed moment, where the acknowledgment of disparate racial interactions served as a powerful catalyst for change. The recognition of these racial inequities became the impetus that propelled a meticulous and introspective evaluation of entrenched practices and policies within the department.

The process of critical reassessment was not merely a superficial endeavor; rather, it represented a deeply reflective examination of the systemic racial issues permeating the fabric of law enforcement practices. The intention behind this reformative process was twofold: to rectify historical injustices and to lay the groundwork for a more equitable and just policing system. This transformative response emerged organically from an intensified awareness of the deep-seated racial inequities that had, for far too long, shaped interactions within the police department.

The reformative measures undertaken were not superficial adjustments but rather a comprehensive reevaluation and restructuring of the very foundations that governed policing in San Francisco. Policies and practices were scrutinized with a discerning eye, and proactive steps were taken to dismantle any structures that perpetuated racial disparities. The commitment to systemic change was embedded in the acknowledgment that true transformation necessitated a departure from the status quo.

This theme, therefore, is not merely a chronicle of events but a testament to the resilience and adaptability of a law enforcement agency grappling with its historical legacies. It signifies a deliberate shift towards dismantling institutional barriers, fostering inclusivity, and charting a course toward more just and equitable policing. The critical reassessment sparked by racial disparities laid the groundwork for a profound transformation within the San Francisco Police Department, reflecting a commitment to a future where justice and equality are at the

forefront of law enforcement practices. Catalyzing the reform process within the San Francisco Police Department.

*Finding 1: Disparate racial interactions within the SFPD served as powerful triggers, prompting a critical reassessment of entrenched practices and policies, catalyzing a significant reform process that aimed to address systemic issues and ensure more equitable policing.*

Participants in the research generously shared a mosaic of personal experiences, witness testimonies, and data, collectively shedding light on the stark realities faced by certain groups impacted by disparate outcomes in policing. Numerous individuals recounted these experiences, emphasizing key events such as the Rodney King incidents, the Los Angeles Riots, and the recent tragic loss of George Floyd, in order to vividly recall and underscore the pervasive mistreatment by police officers.

The focus on policing in the United States and the disparities affecting African American and Latino/a or Latinx communities stands out significantly as exemplars of the disparities in law enforcement. At the crux of the complexities inherent in American law enforcement history is the candid and striking statement delivered by an Anonymous Appointed Official: "Policing throughout the course of history, at least in America for the last hundred years, has been rooted in really racist bias, and in some cases, legally." This assertion serves as a poignant acknowledgment of the pervasive racial biases deeply embedded within the foundations of law enforcement practices. The ensuing exploration unravels the profound challenges that have indelibly shaped the trajectory of policing, laying bare a disconcerting pattern of systemic racism that has influenced strategies and behaviors throughout history. The recognition of this historical context becomes pivotal, prompting a critical examination of deeply rooted biases and compelling an understanding of the complexities that surround policing practices in America.

The reverberations of such incidents resonated deeply within the city of San Francisco, eliciting poignant expressions from participants who conveyed their personal sentiments regarding the disparate impacts on the African American community. In contemplating the state of policing in this context, Chief William Scott's perspective proves invaluable. He contextualizes the imperative for reform, articulating,

"What brought us to that point in San Francisco was a series of officer-involved shootings that some of which were met with controversy by members of our community, and they caused us to really reevaluate our policy."

This acknowledgment underscores the driving force for change, recognizing that instances of police shootings, coupled with community controversy, instigated a necessary reassessment of law enforcement policies.

Scott further emphasizes the timeline of this introspection, noting, "In 2020 after the George Floyd incident, there was a nationwide worldwide call for reform on many policing use-of-force policies." This global outcry acted as a catalyst, resonating with local concerns, and further intensifying the push for reform within the San Francisco Police Department. Importantly, Chief Scott notes the proactive stance taken by the department, stating, "Fortunately for us, a lot of the reforms that were recommended by departments all across the country and activists and government entities, the SFPD had already implemented by that point. So, we were ahead of the game." This proactive approach reflects the department's commitment to staying ahead of evolving challenges, having implemented key reforms before they became central points of discussion in the wake of national and international incidents.

Since 2015 and going into 2016, and notably in 2020, San Francisco has been at the forefront of acknowledging and responding to the urgent calls for reform. Chief Scott's insights provide a glimpse into the department's responsiveness to community concerns, global events,

and the continuous evolution of policing standards. The San Francisco Police Department's forward-looking approach underscores its commitment to adapting policies to align with contemporary expectations and fostering a more accountable and community-oriented law enforcement paradigm.

Yolanda Jackson, the Executive Director of the Bar Association of San Francisco, shed light on the profound impact of incidents like the killing of Mario Woods, stating,

"Mario Woods, I think that was the killing that happened right around the time that we started this work. And for the black community in particular, they only make up what it was at the time, 5 or 6% of the population, but yet they were something like, again, 60 or 70% of the jail population. And unless you subscribe to this notion that most black people are criminals, and that's why those data points look like they do, which I do not subscribe to that, then it has to do with something else. It has to do with bias in the system."

Jackson's insightful perspective draws attention to the stark disparities in the criminal justice system, highlighting the disproportionate representation of the black community. By challenging the narrative that perpetuates stereotypes, she underscores the urgent need to confront and rectify systemic biases within the legal system, advocating for a more equitable and just approach to criminal justice.

*Finding 2: The recognition of deep-seated racial inequities following disparate racial interactions led to a comprehensive review of existing structures within the police department, compelling stakeholders to scrutinize and overhaul established norms, procedures, and protocols, highlighting the transformative impact of heightened awareness on the reform process.*

At the core of the quest for justice and equity within the SFPD lies the profound recognition of deep-seated racial inequities stemming from disparate interactions. This acknowledgment acted as a catalyst, propelling the law enforcement agency into a phase of extensive introspection. The ensuing comprehensive review of existing structures within the

police department compelled stakeholders to meticulously scrutinize and overhaul long-established norms, policies, procedures, and protocols. This concerted effort reflects the transformative impact of heightened awareness, as it catalyzed a reform process aimed at rectifying systemic issues and fostering a more equitable and accountable approach to policing. In the crucible of this heightened consciousness, the journey towards restructuring law enforcement practices unfolded, setting the stage for a nuanced exploration of the multifaceted themes central to this transformative process.

The initiation of police reforms is a complex and multifaceted process that demands both political will and community engagement. As emphasized by Aaron Peskin, President of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors,

"You have to have civilian elected officials who are willing to appoint police chiefs that are open to police reform. You have to have a board of supervisors that is willing to hold people accountable and to be courageous and stand up to crazy right-wing out-of-touch racist [groups]."

This insightful quote underscores the pivotal role of civilian leadership in steering the trajectory of law enforcement reforms. It not only emphasizes the importance of appointing police chiefs who are receptive to reformative measures but also highlights the necessity of a steadfast board of supervisors committed to accountability and courageous decision-making. The collaborative effort between elected officials and community leaders becomes imperative in navigating the complexities of police reform, creating a framework that promotes transparency, accountability, and responsiveness to the evolving needs of the community.

In the ongoing pursuit of transformative changes within the San Francisco Police Department, Chief of Police William Scott's reflections hold profound significance. Offering invaluable insights, he asserts, "Yes, I think, well, what I believe is based on the data, the

research, the assessment that was conducted by the United States Department of Justice, which was requested, by the way, by the city and county of San Francisco. This department needed to reform and evolve in many areas..." Chief Scott's recognition of the pivotal role played by data and research, especially the assessment conducted by the United States Department of Justice, underscores a commitment to evidence-based decision-making in the pursuit of reform. The initiation of this comprehensive research and analysis, prompted by the city and county of San Francisco, serves as a foundational step in acknowledging the imperative for systemic change within the police department.

Expanding upon Chief Scott's sentiments, the research analysis played a pivotal role in identifying key areas requiring reform and evolution. The data-driven approach enabled a nuanced understanding of the challenges faced by the San Francisco Police Department, facilitating a targeted and strategic reformative process. By embracing the findings from the United States Department of Justice's assessment, the city and county of San Francisco demonstrated a proactive commitment to addressing systemic issues. The research analysis served as a catalyst for informed decision-making, laying the groundwork for a comprehensive and transformative reform agenda. This evidence-based approach not only informs policy changes but also instills a culture of accountability and adaptability within the law enforcement framework, positioning the SFPD on a trajectory of continuous improvement and community responsiveness.

As the SFPD underwent a transformative process spurred by the expectations of the community and political stakeholders, Officer Deshawn Wright's perspective underscored the essential need for continuous adaptation within the policing profession. Wright astutely emphasized,

"Yes, with everything in life, nothing should ever stay stagnant. I believe every profession must continually adapt because, as human nature is always evolving, one must strive for efficiency and excellence by keeping pace with change, and this involves constant work on policy."

This insightful quote served as compelling evidence supporting the dynamic nature of law enforcement, emphasizing the imperative for ongoing adaptation to effectively address the evolving challenges of contemporary society. Wright's emphasis on the continuous improvement of policies highlighted a dedication to staying ahead of change, ensuring that law enforcement remained responsive, efficient, and aligned with the evolving needs and expectations of the community. In the broader context of transformative initiatives within the San Francisco Police Department, this perspective accentuated the significance of policy evolution as a cornerstone for fostering a resilient and forward-thinking policing paradigm.

*Finding 3: In San Francisco, participants agreed that the escalation of use of force incidents and a series of critical and lethal encounters involving African American and Latino individuals exerted pressure to instigate essential changes in policing. This pressure specifically called for reforms in policies, including revisions to the use of force policy.*

In the intricate tapestry of San Francisco's policing dynamics, the findings of this research illuminate a prevailing consensus among participants, signifying a pivotal aspect of the city's law enforcement landscape. The shared agreement among participants resonates with the recognition that the escalation of use-of-force incidents and a sequence of critical and lethal encounters, disproportionately involving African American and Latino individuals, has precipitated a compelling need for transformative measures within the realm of policing. This discernible pressure, collectively acknowledged by diverse stakeholders, distinctly highlights the imperative to catalyze essential changes in policing policies. Specifically, the research underscores a compelling call for comprehensive reforms, emphasizing the necessity for meticulous revisions in policies, particularly in the domain of use of force. As we delve into the



intricate contours of this research finding, we navigate through the nuanced perspectives that converge on the urgency for fundamental shifts in San Francisco's law enforcement practices.

Embedded within the fabric of San Francisco's evolving policing landscape is a noteworthy observation articulated by Angela Chan, a Former San Francisco Police Commissioner. Chan astutely notes,

"I think because of the public pressure created by the organizing around Alex Nieto, Mario Woods, and Jessica Williams, that also created some pressure people in the room, including SFPD, to work more seriously and to prioritize revising the use of force policy and updating it."

This insightful perspective underscores the significant impact of public pressure and community mobilization around specific incidents involving Alex Nieto, Mario Woods, and Jessica Williams. The collective pressure generated by these events not only resonated within the wider community but also reverberated within institutional spaces, prompting a more earnest commitment and prioritization from stakeholders, including the SFPD. Chan's observation becomes a critical research lens, highlighting the dynamic interplay between public activism, institutional responsiveness, and the imperative for policy revision within the complex realm of law enforcement.

Within the nuanced examination of San Francisco's policing evolution, Debra Kirby, a California Department of Justice consultant through Hillard Heintz, now known as Jenson Hughes, offers insightful perspectives. She notes, "Well, I think a range of things influenced right originally. I think Greg Suhr [former SFPD Police Chief] saw the challenges that his department was facing and knew that it needed help." Additionally, Kirby emphasizes, "I also think that the advocacy very much was clear in this regard to Mario Woods." These astute observations contribute to the multifaceted understanding of the factors shaping the trajectory of

law enforcement reforms in San Francisco. Kirby's insights underscore the recognition within the police leadership of the challenges at hand, prompting a realization of the need for external support. Moreover, the acknowledgment of advocacy, particularly concerning incidents like Mario Woods, further delineates the dynamic interplay between community activism and institutional responsiveness, illuminating a critical facet of the ongoing reformative efforts in the city.

In illuminating the intricate dynamics of San Francisco's policing landscape, Omerede Hamilton, a Community Organizer and Advocate of Police Reforms, provides a compelling layer to our understanding. Hamilton's reflection, "I think that when Mario Woods died, I think that when Alex Nieto died, I think that what happened to George Floyd, I think that it took a lot of tragedy to kind of move that needle in my opinion," encapsulates the profound impact of tragic incidents such as those involving Mario Woods and Alex Nieto, alongside the broader national tragedy of George Floyd's death. Hamilton's perspective underscores the catalytic role that these incidents played in prompting a seismic shift in public consciousness and the collective call for reform. The acknowledgment of the cumulative effect of these tragedies becomes a crucial element in comprehending the impetus behind the transformative changes within San Francisco's policing practices, offering valuable context to the multifaceted research findings.

In shedding light on the dynamics of collaborative reform within the San Francisco Police Department, an Anonymous Police Officer underscores the pivotal role played by highly controversial shootings of African American individuals. The officer candidly states,

"I think it played a huge role; it absolutely was the foundation of collaborative reform. Well, I mean, a lot of this stemmed from some highly controversial shootings of African American individuals, so to say that that didn't have an astounding impact would be

naive. That's basically the crux of it. The DOJ came in after, was it the Mario Woods, yeah, after the Mario Woods shooting. So, Mario Woods is an African American man, and that prompted a lot of our reform, which is fantastic."

This perspective highlights the catalyzing impact of specific incidents, particularly the Mario Woods shooting, as a catalyst for collaborative reform. The officer acknowledges the profound influence of these events, emphasizing their instrumental role in instigating transformative changes and welcoming the intervention of the Department of Justice in the pursuit of meaningful reform within the San Francisco Police Department.

Jason Cunningham, a city government worker for the San Francisco Police Department, provides a poignant perspective on the disparities within policing, stating, "Mario Woods was a black man shot in the Bayview legally by review of the District Attorney but, you know, there's the lawful but awful. Policing felt different depending on your race or ethnicity." Cunningham's observation underscores the nuanced challenges experienced by individuals of different racial backgrounds within the realm of law enforcement.

In a parallel sentiment, Julie Tran, a member of the San Francisco BAR Association, probes the circumstances surrounding Mario Woods' tragic death, stating, "Why was Mario Woods killed?" Tran delves into the complexities of accountability and reform, recounting an off-the-record discussion with an SFPD Command Staff Member,

"I asked him off the record, I said, you know, what would have happened if you would have been there? And he said he'd be alive today. I said, okay, that's what we need to fix."

Tran's dialogue emphasizes the need for systemic change and highlights the potential for different outcomes with improved circumstances and leadership, urging a critical examination of the issues within the San Francisco Police Department.

David Lazar, the SFPD Assistant Chief of Operations, encapsulates the broader national sentiment surrounding disparities, unfairness, and injustices in policing, emphasizing the pervasive biases that communities of color have experienced. His observation resonates with the overarching theme of reform and the imperative to address systemic issues within law enforcement. As we reflect on the comprehensive research journey into the transformative changes within the San Francisco Police Department, Lazar's insights underscore the broader context of nationwide challenges. The recognition of these issues becomes instrumental in shaping a path forward for law enforcement agencies, fostering an environment of trust, fairness, and equity. The journey of reform undertaken by the SFPD serves as a microcosm of the broader national discourse, highlighting the ongoing commitment to fostering positive change and addressing the complex dynamics of policing in contemporary society.

### **Comprehensive Review and Overhaul of Policing Structures**

Within the framework of my research findings, a pivotal revelation emerged as the acknowledgment of racial inequities instigated a comprehensive review of established structures within the San Francisco Police Department. This acknowledgement compelled stakeholders to meticulously scrutinize and subsequently overhaul entrenched norms, procedures, and protocols, showcasing the transformative impact that heightened awareness had on the reform process. The recognition of racial disparities served as a catalyst for an in-depth examination of existing frameworks, reflecting a commitment to dismantling systemic issues within the police department. This comprehensive review, driven by the imperative to address deeply rooted inequities, exemplifies the proactive response to societal concerns and the commitment to fostering a more equitable and just law enforcement system in San Francisco.

*Finding 4: The comprehensive impetus for police reforms in San Francisco, driven by historical perspectives, personal experiences, and contemporary trends, signifies a paradigm shift in law enforcement, necessitated by mandates and external pressures, with the CA Department of Justice Collaborative Reform Initiative playing a central role in reshaping the Police Department towards a modernized, community-centric ethos.*

The multifaceted impetus for comprehensive police reforms in San Francisco, driven by historical perspectives, personal experiences, and contemporary trends, reflects a collective recognition among participants that the evolution in policing was necessitated by mandates and external pressures, marking a paradigm change prioritizing constitutional ideals and community service. The CA Department of Justice Collaborative Reform Initiative emerged as a pivotal force, extending beyond procedural adjustments, fostering a cultural shift within the agency. This initiative laid the foundation for a modernized police force committed to supporting and respecting all communities, particularly those of color. Former Police Commissioner Angela Chan echoed this sentiment, emphasizing the imperative for improvement across police departments nationwide, stating, "Yes, absolutely. And this isn't just San Francisco. It's every single police department in the country." The Collaborative Reform Initiative stands as a beacon of systemic change, highlighting the commitment to a law enforcement ethos aligned with the principles of equity and community-centric policing.

Michael Dirden, a consultant and evaluator for the reform process from the CA Department of Justice, provided insightful reflections on the transformative journey of the SFPD. Dirden remarked,

"In 2016 at the point they [SFPD] were, they [SFPD] were, they [SFPD] were in pretty bad shape. And they [SFPD] had a community that was, uh, hurting from a number of significant issues involving the use of force."

This candid assessment underscores the critical state of the SFPD, and the challenges faced by the community in 2016. The acknowledgment of the department's difficulties and the

community's distress lays the groundwork for understanding the urgency and necessity of the subsequent reform process initiated by the CA Department of Justice. Dirden's perspective provides valuable context to the multifaceted efforts undertaken to address issues surrounding the use of force and highlights the crucial role of external evaluators in steering the department towards positive transformation.

*Finding 5: The unanimous agreement among research participants emphasized the critical need for police reforms, highlighting the universal challenges faced by police departments nationwide and the imperative for improvement in policing practices disproportionately affecting marginalized communities.*

In the pursuit of a deeper understanding of contemporary policing challenges, the research findings reveal a unanimous agreement among participants, underscoring the critical need for transformative reforms within law enforcement. This collective recognition not only sheds light on the universal challenges faced by police departments across the nation but also emphasizes the imperative for improvement in policing practices, particularly those that disproportionately impact marginalized communities. As we delve into the multifaceted dimensions of this research, the resonating call for reform becomes a focal point, driving our exploration into the complexities surrounding policing and the shared commitment to fostering positive change in the broader landscape of law enforcement.

In response to inquiries regarding the necessity of police reforms for the San Francisco Police Department, a unanimous consensus emerged among participants, emphasizing the critical need for transformative changes. Aaron Peskin unequivocally affirmed this sentiment, stating, "Yes, absolutely. The SFPD has been a more sentient, sophisticated department than others in other American cities, but there have been no shortages of individual instances as well as institutional behaviors that have been very troubling." This collective acknowledgment sets the stage for a comprehensive exploration of the imperative for reform within the San Francisco

Police Department, recognizing both its strengths and the areas demanding enhanced scrutiny and improvement.

The shared perspective of an Anonymous Police Officer unfolds as a narrative of professional and personal maturation within the San Francisco Police Department. The officer candidly remarks,

"Initially NO, I didn't know anything; that's more of a personal weakness, I think at the time or a maturation level, hmm right... like I was focusing on catching 'bad guys,' and if you wanted to implement policies that made it harder for me to catch 'bad guys,' you know I don't think that people necessarily understand the why behind it. Once I had an opportunity to grow up a little bit, got promoted to Sergeant, started seeing, you know, there's some, you know, an equity in how people are treated, you know, and then as I became a Lieutenant, now I'm in charge of an entire platoon or an entire watch, it's like YEAH there's a lot of things that need to change..."

This personal narrative significantly contributes to the broader comprehension of the department's transformation, emphasizing the imperative for adaptive and equitable policing practices.

The commitment to transformative change within the SFPD is echoed in the reflections of key figures. SFPD Deputy Chief of the Administration Bureau emphasizes, "I believe we did. And as we've said throughout the process from Chief Suhr and moving through Chief Scott, it's not about checking a box, it's about continuing." This sentiment underscores a continuous dedication to improvement, emphasizing that the reform process is not merely a procedural requirement but an ongoing commitment. Furthermore, SFPD Assistant Chief of Operations, David Lazar, adds a historical context when asked to answer if reform was needed, stating, "It did for several reasons, you know, we are an old institution going back now 174 years..." His insight highlights the historical depth of the institution and the evolving perspectives within the

leadership, emphasizing a more contemporary focus on the day-to-day responsibilities and the imperative for change. Together, these perspectives contribute to a nuanced understanding of the multifaceted approach to reform within the San Francisco Police Department.

*Finding 6: The reform process became emblematic of an organizational evolution within the SFPD, embodying a commitment to transparency, community collaboration, and continuous improvement, actively striving to foster a safer, more just, and inclusive environment for every resident in San Francisco.*

The reform process within the SFPD stands as a symbol of organizational evolution, reflecting a steadfast commitment to core values such as transparency, community collaboration, and continuous improvement. The unanimous agreement among 100% of research participants underscored the critical need for police reforms to not only enhance but also construct a more resilient and community-oriented San Francisco Police Department. This transformative journey has been marked by a dedication to fostering a safer, more just, and inclusive environment for every resident in San Francisco. As the SFPD navigated the complex landscape of reform, it became evident that the initiative was not merely a checklist of changes but rather an ongoing commitment to reshaping the department's practices and culture. This introductory paragraph sets the stage for an in-depth exploration of the multifaceted reforms that have propelled the SFPD towards a more progressive and community-oriented approach to law enforcement.

The evolution of policing practices within the SFPD was significantly influenced by broader shifts in national policy. As Aaron Peskin aptly remarked, "And the reality is that the Obama administration opened the doors to this concept, and San Francisco was very, very willing to walk through those doors." This acknowledgment underscores the collaborative and receptive stance of the city towards innovative approaches to law enforcement, aligning itself with the evolving paradigm initiated at the national level. The SFPD's willingness to embrace



reformative measures reflects a commitment to staying abreast of progressive policies and fostering a responsive and accountable policing framework.

In the landscape of policing reforms, an anonymous police officer, sheds light on the dynamics at play, stating, "It's a sort of forcing the hand, of course, with an upward push. We're going to engage in these reforms. And a lot of that is in a good way." Rivera's perspective captures the nuanced interplay of external pressures and the internal commitment to change within the law enforcement community. The notion of "forcing the hand" suggests a catalyst for transformative measures, indicating an upward trajectory in the pursuit of reforms. This dynamic interaction between external influences and internal dedication underscores the complex process of instigating meaningful change in policing practices.

Diana Rosenstein, the Department of Police Accountability's Staff Attorney and Legal Team Manager, critically assesses the impact of the U.S. Department of Justice's directives on the San Francisco Police Department, stating, "Well, the most critical was the 272 recommendations that came down from the US Department of Justice that, basically told SFPD, you need to change or else because prior to that there were there was this constant..." Rosenstein's assertion underscores the significance of the Department of Justice's recommendations as a pivotal force demanding comprehensive reforms within the San Francisco Police Department. The number and nature of these recommendations signified a turning point, compelling the department to reevaluate and revamp its practices in alignment with broader standards and expectations.

*Finding 7: Grassroots movements, exemplified by the Black Lives Matter movement, emerged as powerful catalysts for change, challenging systemic inequalities and police injustices nationwide, reshaping the discourse on policing, and compelling society to confront issues that were previously overlooked or downplayed.*

The emergence of grassroots movements, exemplified prominently by the Black Lives Matter movement, has played a pivotal role as a potent catalyst for transformative change. These movements have not only challenged systemic inequalities and police injustices on a national scale but have also reshaped the discourse surrounding policing practices. By compelling society to confront issues that were previously overlooked or downplayed, these grassroots movements stand as influential forces driving conversations and actions toward a more equitable and just policing system.

Diana Rosenstein's perspective on the drivers of change in policing and law enforcement practices underscores the transformative influence of everyday individuals. According to Rosenstein, the initial impetus for change emanated from "Everyday people... And it wasn't until people became organized and started to protest, and also those same people started to attain positions of power, that they began to influence change." This viewpoint emphasizes the grassroots origins of reform, highlighting the power inherent in collective action and the subsequent impact on institutional structures and policies.

During a pivotal period in San Francisco marked by a series of officer-involved shootings, an Anonymous Participant, a former City Government Worker, provides insightful observations. They underscore the significance of the circumstances, stating,

"So, I think, again, in San Francisco when there was a series of officer-involved shootings, there was pressure, I think, locally, but also nationally, to be able to respond in a better way."

They highlight the dual pressure at both local and national levels, indicating a collective urgency to address the challenges posed by these incidents. Moreover, they emphasize the city leadership's deep concern for adopting a more modernized approach and incorporating improved techniques to enhance the relationship between the police department and diverse

communities, particularly in the difficult circumstances surrounding many officer-involved shootings. This perspective provides a nuanced understanding of the complexities that shaped the city's response during this critical period, shedding light on the necessity for comprehensive reform and community engagement.

In reflecting on the pivotal role of grassroots movements during challenging times in San Francisco, Angela Chan emphasizes the significance of organizing and advocacy. Chan articulates,

"I think organizing is really, really important...I think that's some of the roles of a grassroots organizer advocate is to educate community members about what's happening, to educate them about their rights and also to engage them on ways they can navigate the system and get their perspective and their questions out."

Her insights underscore the crucial function of grassroots organizers and advocates in empowering communities through education and engagement. Chan specifically references, "And so I think that going back to the series of SFPD shootings, starting with Alex Nieto, going to Mario Woods... Jessica William. When that was happening, that was really, I think, led by grassroots organizers and advocates and concerned community members that spoke out." During these tumultuous events, the efforts were notably led by grassroots organizers, advocates, and concerned community members who spoke out against injustice, contributing to the broader discourse and call for reform within San Francisco's policing landscape.

The multifaceted landscape of policing reform in San Francisco is intricately woven with the threads of grassroots organizing and community engagement. As highlighted by Angela Chan, the role of grassroots organizers and advocates proved pivotal during challenging periods marked by SFPD shootings involving individuals like Alex Nieto, Mario Woods, and Jessica William. Their efforts, rooted in educating communities about their rights and

navigating systemic challenges, brought forth a collective voice against injustice. As the city grappled with a series of officer-involved shootings, including those that gained national attention, Anonymous Participant's observations shed light on the local and national pressures on city leadership to respond more effectively. The words of Ahsha Safai, a member of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, resonate as a poignant reminder that grassroots organizing remains an indispensable element in the ongoing conversation about shaping a more just, transparent, and community-oriented policing paradigm. "Grassroots organizing is an essential part of the conversation," Safai aptly articulates, underscoring the enduring impact of community-driven initiatives in fostering positive change within the realm of law enforcement.

*Finding 8: The collaborative and inclusive nature of the reform initiative played a pivotal role in shaping a broader narrative of community-oriented policing, marking a departure from traditional top-down approaches and empowering diverse stakeholders, including community members, to actively participate in shaping the future of policing in San Francisco.*

The evolution of policing practices in San Francisco is emblematic of a transformative journey marked by collaborative and inclusive reform initiatives. Departing from conventional top-down approaches, the reform process has been instrumental in fostering a community-oriented policing model. The initiative's pivotal role lies in its ability to empower diverse stakeholders, including community members, as active participants in the shaping of San Francisco's policing future. This paradigm shift emphasizes a commitment to transparency, accountability, and a shared responsibility between law enforcement and the communities they serve.

The collaborative and inclusive nature of the reform initiative played a pivotal role in shaping a broader narrative of community-oriented policing, marking a departure from traditional top-down approaches and empowering diverse stakeholders, including community members, to actively participate in shaping the future of policing in San Francisco. Shamann

Walton, a member of the Board of Supervisors, underscored the significance of collective action, stating,

"Most big organizations organized, they galvanized and brought people together, raised money to push for more reforms and to bring in attorneys and bring in decision-makers and bring in folks who had the power in the positions to push those policies until they became law and indoctrinated in certain areas across the country."

This sentiment encapsulates the concerted efforts to influence systemic change by engaging various stakeholders and leveraging resources to drive policy reform within the policing landscape.

In the complex landscape of police reform in San Francisco, the diverse array of perspectives emerged as a crucial driving force, shaping the discourse and influencing the trajectory of change. As Rachael Kilshaw, Retired Police Commission Secretary and SFPD Sergeant, highlighted,

"We have a lot of varying perspectives and those are all important. But I think they're the ones that actually, if it's something that the department themselves hasn't started initiating, then that's where the pressure comes when these moments in time and history happen, where you've got to rise to the occasion."

Kilshaw's insights underscore the dynamic interplay of internal and external pressures that catalyzed the reform process, emphasizing the importance of diverse perspectives in navigating and responding to pivotal moments in the history of the San Francisco Police Department.

The candid reflection of an Anonymous Police Officer sheds light on the intricate process of policy development within the San Francisco Police Department:

"Whoever was having those conversations were able to get the key stakeholders to the table to where the Police Department could co-produce a policy with important stakeholder input from the California Department of Justice, input from the Department

of Police Accountability, input from the police commissioners, so that was a huge lift considering you had so many people at the table."

This acknowledgment underscores the collaborative ethos that defined the reformative journey, emphasizing the importance of engaging diverse stakeholders in shaping policies. The multifaceted input from various entities, including the California Department of Justice and police accountability structures, signifies a commitment to transparency, accountability, and a comprehensive approach to reform. As the department navigates the complex landscape of modern policing, such collaborative efforts stand as a cornerstone, ensuring that policies are not only effective but also reflective of the diverse perspectives and needs of the community.

### **Positive Shifts and Ongoing Reforms within Policing**

Despite recognizing the existence of prevalent bias and instances of excessive policing, a prevailing sentiment among the majority of participants highlighted a notable and transformative evolution within the policing profession in San Francisco. The narratives and shared experiences not only acknowledged the challenges but also underscored positive shifts within the profession, positioning San Francisco as a city at the forefront of pioneering reforms in policing. The nuanced perspectives provided by participants reveal a collective acknowledgment of the need for change, coupled with a commitment to steering the trajectory of law enforcement toward a more equitable, accountable, and community-oriented future. This recognition of both challenges and progress reflects a dynamic and ongoing dialogue within the city, where stakeholders are actively engaged in shaping the future of policing through meaningful reforms and a commitment to fostering positive change.

*Finding 9: The collaborative approach involving diverse entities within and outside the system forms a foundational structure for a redefined and modernized approach to policing,*

*emphasizing the collective contributions of grassroots organizers, city policymakers, and law enforcement leadership.*

The collaborative approach, characterized by the active involvement of diverse entities within and outside the system, serves as the cornerstone for a redefined and modernized approach to policing in San Francisco. This collective framework underscores the importance of fostering a synergistic relationship between grassroots organizers, city policymakers, and law enforcement leadership. By encouraging meaningful engagement and dialogue among these stakeholders, the collaborative model aims to harness a comprehensive range of perspectives and expertise, fostering a more holistic understanding of the challenges and opportunities within the realm of law enforcement. The synergy between grassroots organizers, who amplify community voices and advocate for systemic change, city policymakers, who shape legislative frameworks and allocate resources, and law enforcement leadership, which implements reforms and operational adjustments, creates a dynamic interplay that is essential for the sustainable transformation of policing practices. This collective effort reflects a commitment to building a policing model that is not only responsive to the needs of the community but also adaptive, transparent, and grounded in principles of equity and justice.

In line with this collaborative ethos, Paul Henderson, Executive Director of the Department of Police Accountability, highlights the significance of heeding the voices of disenfranchised communities. He notes,

"The current Mayor has talked about, and even in the past Mayor Lee talked about, believing the disenfranchised communities that had experiences that didn't translate to the broader population. Hearing from those individuals and believing them or seeing the facts I think allows you to do things that can be influential."

This acknowledgment underscores the pivotal role played by community narratives and factual insights in shaping policies that address the unique concerns and experiences of marginalized communities, thereby contributing to a more inclusive and responsive policing paradigm.

The transformation of the San Francisco Police Department's use of force policy reflects a confluence of diverse influences, as articulated by Angela Chan. Angela Chan:

"Before, including press coverage, the mayor's office, POA community advocates and organizers, nonprofits. I distinguished those two because sometimes you could be an organizer not be an employee and a nonprofit so I kind of have those two different buckets. And voters, I think all of those different influencers can impact and did impact the police department use of force policy. I think it was the confluence of all those things that led to it."

Chan's nuanced perspective underscores the interconnected roles played by various stakeholders, emphasizing the complexity and collaborative nature of the reform process that led to meaningful changes in policing practices.

Lawanna Preston, a City Government Employee in the San Francisco Police Department, sheds light on the influential factors behind the reform initiatives, stating, "Some of the people in the political position weighed in. But I think the police commission was the driving force, particularly as it relates to DGO 5.01." She emphasizes the pivotal role of the Police Commission in spearheading reforms, especially concerning DGO 5.01. Additionally, Preston acknowledges the impact of external organizations such as the Democratic Party and ACLU, indicating their influence on city leaders and the Police Commission. This multifaceted involvement of both internal and external entities underscores the collaborative and comprehensive nature of the reformative efforts within the San Francisco Police Department.

*Finding 10: Community organizers and advocates, actively involved in formulating and advocating for specific policy changes such as SFPD's Department General Order 5.01 on the*



*Use of Force, played pivotal roles in driving systemic changes in policing policies, contributing to a more just, accountable, and community-oriented approach.*

The transformative shifts in policing policies, particularly exemplified by the evolution of SFPD's Department General Order 5.01 on the Use of Force, have been significantly shaped by the concerted efforts of community organizers and advocates. Beyond merely raising awareness, these individuals have actively engaged in the formulation and advocacy for specific policy changes, marking a departure from traditional approaches. Their endeavors center on driving systemic changes in policing policies, fostering a more just, accountable, and community-oriented approach to law enforcement. As we delve deeper into their impactful contributions, a nuanced understanding emerges of the multifaceted roles that community-driven initiatives play in reshaping the landscape of policing in San Francisco.

When asked about the influences in changes to the use of force policy, Board of Supervisors, Rafael Mandelman, stated, "Particular shootings, mass protests, engagement by policy advocates, a genuine desire to try to root out discrimination and bias and reduce negative impacts of policing in communities of color." The confluence of specific incidents, widespread protests, advocacy efforts, and a sincere commitment to addressing issues of discrimination and bias formed a multifaceted backdrop that motivated reforms and aimed at mitigating the adverse effects of policing, particularly in communities of color.

The formulation of the use of force policy stands as a tangible outcome of the collective advocacy push and a shared commitment to prioritize life preservation within law enforcement practices. An anonymous officer emphasized,

"The carotid restraint. I think the biggest... it's a policy that gives our officers specific direction with little or any... what's their word for wiggle room? The biggest impact that this policy will have on our department is leveraging our ability to accurately

communicate the use of force data and then use that data to make comprehensive analysis and change to our Police Department."

This statement underscores the significance of the policy, particularly in providing clear guidance to officers while emphasizing the potential for enhanced data-driven decision-making and transformative changes within the Police Department.

In research interviews probing opinions on the major changes to the use of force policy, clear correlations emerged with aspects of advocacy and community organizers' demands during the initial push for police reforms. Elements such as life preservation were actively requested and pursued by various city leaders, including police officers and government officials. Supervisor Ahsha Safai offered his perspective on the policy's most critical aspects, stating, "Crisis intervention training. De-escalation. I think that crisis intervention and de-escalation training has been one of the most important and significant developments within policing and police reform." Similarly, Jason Cunningham highlighted the most substantial changes, emphasizing, "Really around time space de-escalation, sanctity of life, and kind of a duty to not escalate." This underscores the multifaceted nature of the policy changes, with a focus on crisis intervention, de-escalation, and a commitment to preserving life, reflecting a collaborative effort to address the evolving needs of policing and community expectations.

The elements of the use-of-force policy, as deliberated by those with a seat at the table, delineated key aspects aimed at enhancing policing and preserving life during critical incidents. DPA Managing Attorney Diana Rosenstein emphasized the impactful changes, stating, "Generally speaking, it was the implementation of time and distance and de-escalation. And SFPD really went above and beyond that and decided, like, this is the baseline we're going to try to do better. So, I do think that the idea of stepping away from the bare minimum and really implementing de-escalation, the idea of reassessing the need for force at every level and

documenting it is really significant." This highlights a departure from minimal requirements and a commitment to going beyond, specifically focusing on de-escalation techniques, continuous reassessment of force necessity, and thorough documentation—a significant leap toward fostering a safer and more accountable policing environment during critical incidents.

The recognition and appreciation of the evolutionary process from advocacy to policymaking form a crucial part of San Francisco's history and the implementation of police reforms. In reflecting on the transformative journey, Debra Kirby pointed out the innovative nature of the use-of-force policy in 2016, noting its embrace of the sanctity of life—a concept relatively unique at the time. As we find ourselves in 2023, Kirby remarked on the visible growth and progress made since then, underlining the commitment to continuous improvement.

The dedication to incorporating diverse perspectives and the tireless efforts to strike a balance have propelled the SFPD into a national model. Debra Kirby emphasized this point by stating,

“San Francisco was a leader then and now. The policy around not publishing booking photos was very progressive and innovative, and what we're seeing on disengagement coming out of this city... powered by the policy development process in San Francisco, which meant that there were degrees of leadership that had touched and advocated and helped to propel those policies forward.”

This underscores San Francisco's proactive and pioneering approach to policy development, influencing not only its local landscape but also serving as an influential force on a broader scale.

*Finding 11: Law enforcement agencies, positioned at the heart of the system, play a pivotal role in the reform process by spearheading internal reforms, instituting procedural changes, and implementing updated policies, serving as the driving force for transformative change and aligning practices with evolving standards of accountability, transparency, and community engagement.*

In this dynamic landscape, law enforcement agencies navigate the complex terrain of societal expectations, steering the reform process with a commitment to fostering not only internal improvements but also external relationships. As the vanguards of change, they act as the impetus for transformative shifts, realigning their practices to harmonize with evolving standards of accountability, transparency, and active community engagement. This multifaceted approach underscores the critical role of law enforcement in sculpting a more responsive, just, and community-oriented policing framework.

Law enforcement leadership plays a crucial role in implementing operational reforms and fostering open communication channels with advocates and community groups. Bill Hing, a Former Police Commissioner, emphasizes the significant role played by Chief Scott and his command staff in this collaborative approach. Hing notes,

"Well, I think they play a big role, and I think that's because of what I know of the Chief then, what I know and I haven't looked recently at his command staff, but what I know of who I think is still in the command staff, that is, he's brought people on who are willing to listen to the advocates now as you know some of the community groups." Hing's insight highlights the importance of leadership that is receptive to the perspectives of advocates and community groups, fostering an environment where diverse voices contribute to shaping effective and equitable policing strategies.

An anonymous officer extends appreciation, stating,

"I would take this opportunity to thank the Chief [Scott] for having the courage to recognize that we needed a new policy but also recognize that the Chief [Scott] was not going to allow external partners to write that policy for us." This acknowledgment sheds light on the delicate balance between acknowledging the need for institutional change and maintaining the autonomy to draft internal policies. Within the Police Department, certain individuals demonstrated foresight by realizing the necessity for a revised

policy. Despite encountering resistance from previous subject matter experts and within the department itself, these key figures understood the imperative for change, aligning not only with industry standards but also with the unique context of San Francisco as a major metropolitan police force. Their foresight becomes even more crucial, given the global recognition of the SFPD as a leading force in law enforcement.

Police Commissioner Kevin Benedicto aptly emphasizes the vital role played by the SFPD in confronting the challenges that policing faces nationwide. His statement, "There are a lot of challenges that policing faces across the country. The SFPD has worked aggressively and proactively," underscores the importance of the SFPD taking the lead in addressing these challenges head-on. The commitment to proactive and aggressive measures positions the department as a beacon of innovation and resilience within the broader law enforcement landscape. This leadership role signifies not only a responsiveness to evolving demands but also a proactive engagement with the complexities of contemporary policing.

Furthermore, Board of Supervisor Rafael Mandelman contributed his insights on the SFPD, stating, 'The department has done a lot of work, a lot of it's successful, to address some of the challenges that were identified nearly a decade ago.' This acknowledgment reinforces the collaborative and forward-thinking approach of the SFPD, emphasizing the continuous efforts to address longstanding issues and adapt to the evolving landscape of policing. The engagement with these challenges further underscores the department's commitment to proactive reform and sustained improvement.

The participants' consensus underscores a notable and transformative evolution in the policing profession, elevating it to an honorable vocation in San Francisco, indicative of

positive shifts and ongoing reforms within the law enforcement landscape, fostering a thriving coexistence of public safety and policing.

*Finding 12: The participants' consensus underscores a notable and transformative evolution in the policing profession, elevating it to an honorable vocation in San Francisco, indicative of positive shifts and ongoing reforms within the law enforcement landscape, fostering a thriving coexistence of public safety and policing.*

The collective agreement among participants resonates with the recognition of a significant and transformative metamorphosis within the policing profession, redefining it as an honorable vocation within the distinctive context of San Francisco. This shared perspective reflects positive shifts and ongoing reforms, illustrating the dynamic evolution of the law enforcement landscape. The acknowledgment of policing as an honorable pursuit suggests a commitment to principles that prioritize public safety while fostering a harmonious coexistence between law enforcement and the community. This paradigm shift signifies a shared commitment among participants to contribute to a more progressive and community-oriented approach to policing in San Francisco.

In alignment with the collective sentiment, SFPD Assistant Chief of Operations David Lazar offers a distinct perspective that reinforces the honorable nature of the policing profession. His insightful viewpoint highlights the nobility inherent in the work carried out by those dedicated to law enforcement. As an integral figure within the San Francisco Police Department, Lazar's stance further emphasizes the transformative evolution within the policing profession, affirming its status as a noble pursuit in the unique context of San Francisco. This shared acknowledgment among participants, including key figures like Assistant Chief Lazar, contributes to a narrative of positive change and ongoing reforms, reinforcing the commitment to an honorable and community-centric approach to policing.

Building upon the shared consensus and the reflections of key participants, Board of Supervisor Myrna Melgar adds her voice to the discourse on policing. Her succinct yet powerful statement, "It's a basic service. It is absolutely necessary," encapsulates the fundamental role of policing as an essential and indispensable service within the fabric of society. Melgar's perspective emphasizes the intrinsic necessity of law enforcement in ensuring the well-being and safety of the community. In echoing the sentiments of others, including Assistant Chief David Lazar, the evolving narrative not only recognizes the transformative journey of the policing profession but also emphasizes its fundamental importance in the broader framework of public service. This multifaceted perspective further enriches the ongoing dialogue surrounding positive shifts and continuous reforms within the landscape of law enforcement in San Francisco.

Approaching 70% of the study's participants resoundingly conveyed a shared perspective—policing had experienced a substantial and transformative evolution, emerging as an honorable vocation. This consensus reveals a collective acknowledgment of the positive shifts within the profession. Board of Supervisor Ahsha Safai, echoing this sentiment, emphasized the notable changes, stating, "General policing has changed and evolved. San Francisco has been somewhat of a trendsetter in terms of police reform." Safai's observation not only highlights the evolution but positions San Francisco as a city at the forefront of pioneering reforms in policing. The sentiment prevalent among participants echoes an overarching appreciation for the tangible changes that have unfolded within the policing landscape in San Francisco.

Former Police Commissioner Bill Hing echoed this sentiment, stating,

"I have grown to really respect the Police Department. I was convinced then, and I'm still convinced that the vast majority of police officers in San Francisco deserve a lot of

credit and respect because it's a hard job. I think that the Police Department is often asked—police officers are often asked—to address issues that they have no control over. I really am convinced that the vast majority of police officers are good, and I support them."

Hing's perspective underscores the complexities faced by police officers, acknowledging the challenges that extend beyond their control while affirming the dedication and character of the majority.

The convergence of these perspectives forms a comprehensive narrative, highlighting not only the acknowledgment of positive changes within the profession but also positioning San Francisco as a beacon of innovation in policing reform. This shared sentiment sets the stage for a more in-depth exploration of the specific reforms, initiatives, and strategies that have contributed to this transformative narrative within the city's law enforcement community.

An anonymous police officer, in a candid interview, shared profound insights into his experiences and perspective on the challenges inherent in the policing profession. An anonymous police officer,

"Most people look at it as hey, you know, this is anti-law enforcement, this is anti-this, this is anti-that... I look at it as I've spent my entire career devoted to protecting the constitutional rights of people so the fact that these individuals are out there expressing their First Amendment activities and feel safe to do so, I take that as awesome."

These perspectives contribute to a nuanced understanding of policing in San Francisco, showcasing a commitment to constitutional rights and a proactive approach in the face of challenges.

### **Findings for Research Question #1**

What role do grassroots movements and city government leadership play in influencing policy change around police reform and re-envisioning policing in San Francisco?



Grassroots movements and city government leadership stand as pivotal forces in shaping policy changes and re-envisioning the landscape of policing in San Francisco. The grassroots movements, often driven by the impassioned voices of the community, bring attention to systemic issues and advocate for transformative reforms. Simultaneously, city government leadership holds the key to implementing these changes through legislative measures, budget allocations, and the establishment of oversight mechanisms. The dynamic interplay between the grassroots and the city government creates a powerful synergy that fosters a more responsive, accountable, and community-oriented approach to policing. As residents mobilize for change, and elected officials champion policies reflecting the community's aspirations, San Francisco's journey towards a reimagined and equitable policing system becomes a collaborative endeavor, driven by the shared vision of a safer and more just city for all.

Examining the influence of community grassroots organizations, a consensus among research participants emphasizes the substantial impact these groups wielded in propelling necessary changes in policing. Board of Supervisor, Rafael Mandelmann, underscored their significance, stating,

“Huge in San Francisco. And I think they have really driven the conversation, you know, from the bar association to other advocacy groups, the ACLU, Electronic Frontier Foundation, groups that are particularly devoted to either police reform or police abolition.”

Their engagement goes beyond mere activism; these organizations have been instrumental in shaping the discourse around policing, engaging with legal bodies like the bar association and collaborating with established advocacy groups such as the ACLU and Electronic Frontier Foundation. Their concerted efforts in championing either reform or abolition of policing practices highlight the diverse approaches within the broader movement for change.

In this complex ecosystem of reform, city government leadership emerges as a crucial partner in translating grassroots aspirations into tangible policy changes. The synergy between community-driven movements and elected officials creates a platform for dialogue, legislation, and systemic adjustments. City government leaders, equipped with the authority to enact structural changes, collaborate with grassroots organizations to address the multifaceted challenges within the policing system. The convergence of these efforts signifies a cooperative and comprehensive approach, embodying the shared commitment to ushering in an era of more accountable, equitable, and community-centered policing in San Francisco.

Advocacy groups have emerged as dynamic catalysts, exerting crucial pressure to instigate the much-needed changes in policing. Chief Scott acknowledged the significant role played by grassroots organizers and activists, stating,

"I believe grassroots organizers and activists play a significant role in moving us forward. I believe that although this department took on the reform initiative on a voluntary basis, there were a lot of voices that went into, I think, applying their voice and pressure on the department to go in that direction. I think those things are not bad things. I mean, those are things that sometimes, at times, are adversarial and can even seem adversarial. At the end of the day, I think that's a necessary part of pushing these types of issues forward. And many of those voices demanded change."

In the intricate tapestry of policy transformation, these advocacy groups serve as vocal agents of change, amplifying community concerns and pressing for reforms that align with societal expectations. Their adversarial stance at times becomes a necessary force, challenging the status quo and driving a collective demand for accountability and equity in policing. While it might seem confrontational, this pressure creates a constructive tension that propels the discourse on police reform, ensuring that the diverse voices within the community are heard and their demands are addressed.

This intersection between grassroots activism and the voluntary reform initiatives undertaken by the police department demonstrates a nuanced relationship where external advocacy serves as a driving force for internal change. The coexistence of these dynamics signifies a broader acknowledgment within the system that constructive tension, propelled by community voices, is an indispensable component in the continuous evolution and improvement of policing practices in San Francisco.

City government leadership emerges as a linchpin in the intricate machinery of police reform, a facet underscored in the research findings. According to Peskin,

"You have to have civilian elected officials who are willing to appoint police chiefs that are open to police reform. You have to have a board of supervisors that is willing to hold people accountable."

This articulation illuminates the pivotal role that elected officials play in shaping the trajectory of policing in San Francisco. The appointment of police chiefs and the accountability measures implemented by the board of supervisors are integral elements that can either catalyze or impede the reform process.

Former Commissioner Chan echoed a similar sentiment, emphasizing the significance of aligned city government leadership. She stated,

"I think when city government leadership is aligned, there are much more people speaking out about a specific issue, then much more likely there's going to be an openness, a political space to change, to engage in police reform."

This alignment within city leadership creates a conducive environment for change, where the collective voice of the community aligns with the political will to foster reform. These moments of alignment become pivotal junctures, signaling a broader convergence between decision-makers and advocacy groups, providing the impetus for substantial transformation in policing policies and practices.

In essence, the synergy between advocacy groups and city government leadership forms a crucial nexus where change is conceived and implemented. The alignment of these entities not only ensures that the reform initiatives have the necessary political backing but also fosters an environment where the concerns raised by grassroots movements are acknowledged, validated, and translated into tangible policy adjustments. The interplay between these spheres, marked by decision-makers engaging with advocacy groups, serves as a fulcrum for large-scale changes in the policing landscape of San Francisco.

Within the unique context of San Francisco, the symbiotic relationship of listening and collaboration between city government leadership and community advocacy groups emerges as a potent catalyst for substantial changes in policing. As highlighted by Kirby,

"the city has been a partner to collaborative reform since it started. Mayor Lee was one of the original proponents for the program and really worked to bring somebody in DOJ in particular. And when the US DOJ stepped away, he was at the table trying to get that outside oversight for the city for the department."

This commitment and involvement from city leadership underscores the pivotal role played by elected officials in championing collaborative reform initiatives. The persistent efforts to secure external oversight indicate a proactive stance towards transparency and accountability within the policing structure.

The interplay between city government and advocacy groups creates a dynamic ecosystem where the voices of the community are not only heard but actively integrated into the reformative dialogue. This collaboration becomes even more critical when federal oversight is involved, as in the case of the U.S. Department of Justice. The dedication of city leaders to maintain this collaborative approach, even in the absence of federal involvement, signifies a sustained commitment to external scrutiny and community-driven reform. These instances of

collaboration represent a proactive engagement that transcends bureaucratic hurdles and fosters an environment conducive to ongoing dialogue and responsiveness.

The profound impact of this collaboration becomes evident in the tangible changes observed in policing practices. The concerted efforts of both city government and community advocacy groups result in an amalgamation of perspectives, policy adjustments, and implementation strategies that collectively contribute to a transformed and more community-oriented approach to policing in San Francisco. This collaborative model, rooted in active listening and mutual cooperation, stands as a testament to the potential of shared decision-making and partnership in reshaping the landscape of law enforcement for the betterment of the community.

The role of key stakeholders in driving reforms within the SFPD is illuminated by the insights of Lawanna Preston, SFPD Director of Labor Relations. According to Preston, the Police Commission emerged as a pivotal force in steering reforms, particularly in the context of Directive General Order (DGO) 5.01. This directive holds significant implications for shaping use-of-force policies and procedures within the department. Preston's acknowledgment places the Police Commission at the forefront, emphasizing its instrumental role in crafting and implementing crucial reforms.

Furthermore, the dynamic interplay between city leadership and influential organizations adds another layer to the intricate landscape of policy influence. Preston underscores the influential role that the Mayor's Office should play in shaping the direction of the Police Commission. This implies that the political will and advocacy from the Mayor's Office can significantly impact the reformative trajectory of the Police Commission. Additionally, the sway of organizations like the Democratic Party and the American Civil Liberties Union

(ACLU) in influencing city leaders and the Police Commission highlights the multifaceted nature of policy development. The intricate dance between political entities and advocacy organizations underscores the collaborative nature of policy reform, where external influences play a crucial role in shaping the internal dynamics of law enforcement practices.

In essence, Preston's insights reveal a web of influence and collaboration where the Police Commission, the Mayor's office, and influential organizations collectively contribute to the reformative agenda. The delicate balance between internal and external forces underscores the importance of a cohesive approach, where various stakeholders work in tandem to instigate meaningful changes in the SFPD. This collaborative model exemplifies a comprehensive strategy that integrates diverse perspectives, ensuring a more inclusive and community-centric approach to policing in San Francisco.

### **Findings for Research Question #2**

How did tensions, frictions, collaborations, and convergences among various vital stakeholders shape SFPD's decision to overhaul the Use of Force policy?

The revisions to the use-of-force policy in San Francisco were not born in isolation; they were shaped by a confluence of factors that spanned public discourse, media narratives, and high-profile incidents like the officer-involved shootings, particularly that of Mario Woods. From the inception of the public dialogue, these incidents became pivotal moments that compelled a critical examination of existing policies and practices within the SFPD. The media played a crucial role in amplifying these incidents, bringing them to the forefront of public consciousness and catalyzing the call for reform.

As highlighted by Melgar, the high-profile and well-publicized nature of these incidents contributed to the urgency surrounding the need for policy revisions. The incidents, such as the

tragic shooting of Mario Woods, served as powerful catalysts that prompted a collective demand for change. Public awareness and outcry were instrumental in pushing these incidents beyond local narratives, turning them into emblematic cases that symbolized broader systemic issues within the SFPD. The intense scrutiny and public pressure created a compelling backdrop against which the revisions to the use-of-force policy gained momentum.

The necessity for reform was not merely a response to individual incidents but was also rooted in a broader acknowledgment of historical and systemic issues. The incidents served as flashpoints that illuminated deeply ingrained problems within the police department. The recognition of these issues paved the way for a more comprehensive and nuanced discussion around policy revisions. It became evident that addressing the use-of-force policy in isolation was insufficient; a holistic reform approach was imperative to address the systemic challenges within the SFPD.

The journey towards revising the use-of-force policy in San Francisco was a multifaceted process shaped by public discourse, media influence, and the profound impact of high-profile incidents. The revisions were not a knee-jerk reaction but a response to the collective realization that systemic issues needed to be addressed. The incidents, such as Mario Woods' shooting, became emblematic of larger problems, propelling the call for reform into a widespread movement for transformative change within the SFPD.

During the critical period centered around discussions on the use of force, an anonymous community organizer and advocate highlighted the pivotal role played by various stakeholders. An anonymous community organizer and advocate shared,

”Well, especially during that the period of time around the use of force I think they had a key role in asking questions, in holding hearings. So I see it as a, I see advocates, the police commission, elected officials, they all together provide a kind of checks and

balances that enable the public and those problems to be aired and resolved, hopefully in really positive ways.”

Their insights underscored the essential contribution of advocates, the police commission, and elected officials, collectively forming a system of checks and balances. This collaborative effort aimed to facilitate public discourse and address concerns, ideally resulting in positive resolutions. The involvement of these diverse players became instrumental in steering the narrative towards the creation of essential changes within the policing framework.

Advocates, with their dedicated role in questioning existing practices and organizing hearings, brought a level of scrutiny that was imperative for fostering transparency. The dialogue initiated by these advocates not only shed light on critical issues but also prompted a reevaluation of established norms. A city worker shared,

“public pressure, I think the communities of color rose up and said enough is enough and started protesting the use of force and it got national attention and put a ton of pressure on the city to do better and the advent of the cell phone.”

The advocacy groups acted as a voice for the public, ensuring that concerns were heard and addressed in the pursuit of positive outcomes.

### **Findings for Research Question #3**

How did policymakers and city government officials react to advocacy and political pressures to address policing in San Francisco?

City government officials and policymakers in San Francisco respond to advocacy and political pressures with a nuanced approach aimed at addressing the complexities surrounding policing. The acknowledgment of public concerns and advocacy initiatives serves as a catalyst for proactive engagement and policy revisions. City government officials, including the Police



Commission and elected representatives, recognize the influence of advocacy groups and community-driven movements in shaping the discourse around policing.

The political pressures generated by these groups prompt policymakers to reassess existing policies, engage in dialogue with community leaders, and actively seek solutions that align with public expectations. This collaborative and responsive approach demonstrates a commitment to democratic processes and reflects the city's dedication to fostering a policing system that is transparent, accountable, and in harmony with the diverse needs of its residents. The continuous interaction between policymakers and advocacy groups underscores the dynamic nature of the decision-making process, where the voices of the community play a vital role in shaping the direction of policing policies in San Francisco.

The Police Commission, functioning as an independent oversight body, further reinforced the accountability structure. Their role in examining police conduct, scrutinizing policies, and recommending changes added an extra layer of impartial evaluation to the process. By contributing to the checks and balances system, the Police Commission played a crucial part in ensuring a comprehensive and well-informed revision of the use-of-force policy.

Elected officials, responsive to the demands of the public and advocacy groups, participated in negotiations and discussions aimed at instigating substantive changes. Their engagement demonstrated a commitment to systemic reform and a willingness to respond to the concerns raised by the community. The collaboration between elected officials, advocates, and oversight bodies highlighted the interconnectedness of these entities in effecting positive transformations within the policing paradigm.

The Board of Supervisors played a crucial role in shaping the direction of police reform in San Francisco. Kirby states,

“I would argue that early on the influence was felt in the way that the department was funded, and the permissions granted to set up the structures to address reform. The Board of Supervisors they hold they hold the purse strings right.”

According to Kirby, their influence was particularly evident in the allocation of funding and the permissions granted to establish structures dedicated to addressing reform. The power held by the Board of Supervisors, especially in controlling financial resources, underscores their pivotal role in determining the trajectory of reform initiatives. By overseeing budgetary allocations and providing the necessary permissions, the Board of Supervisors wielded significant influence over the implementation and success of reform measures within the police department. This acknowledgment emphasizes the interconnected nature of policymaking and budgetary decisions, reinforcing the role of the Board of Supervisors in driving meaningful changes in the realm of policing in San Francisco.

In essence, the collective efforts of advocates, the police commission, and elected officials served as catalysts for reshaping the narrative around the use of force. By working in harmony, these stakeholders contributed to a dynamic dialogue that not only identified problems but actively sought resolutions. The multifaceted approach adopted by these key players reflects a commitment to a more transparent, accountable, and community-centric policing system, ultimately striving for positive and enduring change.

### **Synthesis of Findings**

In conclusion, the examination of grassroots movements and city government leadership in influencing policy change around police reform in San Francisco reveals a complex and dynamic interplay between various stakeholders. The symbiotic relationship between grassroots activism and city government leadership emerges as a potent catalyst for substantial changes in policing, emphasizing the importance of collaboration, active listening, and mutual cooperation.

Grassroots movements, driven by impassioned community voices, play a pivotal role in bringing attention to systemic issues and advocating for transformative reforms. These movements, often collaborating with legal bodies and established advocacy groups, act as dynamic catalysts, exerting crucial pressure to instigate much-needed changes in policing. The adversarial stance of these advocacy groups becomes a necessary force, challenging the status quo and driving a collective demand for accountability and equity.

City government leadership, on the other hand, acts as a linchpin in the intricate machinery of police reform. Elected officials, including the Board of Supervisors, play a crucial role in shaping the trajectory of policing by appointing police chiefs, implementing accountability measures, and influencing budgetary decisions. The alignment of city government leadership with grassroots aspirations ensures that reform initiatives have the necessary political backing and fosters an environment where community concerns are acknowledged, validated, and translated into tangible policy adjustments.

The collaboration between city government and advocacy groups creates a dynamic ecosystem where the voices of the community are actively integrated into the reformative dialogue. This collaboration becomes even more critical when federal oversight is involved, indicating a sustained commitment to external scrutiny and community-driven reform. The profound impact of this collaboration is evident in the tangible changes observed in policing practices, showcasing the potential of shared decision-making and partnership in reshaping the landscape of law enforcement for the betterment of the community.

The findings related to the Use of Force policy overhaul highlight that the revisions were not isolated events but shaped by a confluence of factors, including public discourse, media influence, and high-profile incidents. Recognizing historical and systemic issues within the

SFPD prompted a comprehensive and nuanced discussion around policy revisions. Tensions, frictions, collaborations, and convergences among various stakeholders, including advocates, the Police Commission, elected officials, and the media, were crucial in steering the narrative toward essential changes within the policing framework. This collaborative effort aimed to facilitate public discourse, address concerns, and result in favorable resolutions.

Policymakers and city government officials in San Francisco respond to advocacy and political pressures with a nuanced approach, recognizing the influence of advocacy groups and community-driven movements in shaping the discourse around policing. Acknowledging public concerns catalyzes proactive engagement and policy revisions, reflecting a commitment to transparent, accountable, and community-centric policing. The continuous interaction between policymakers and advocacy groups, reinforced by the role of the Police Commission and elected officials, underscores the dynamic nature of the decision-making process. The interconnected efforts of these critical players serve as catalysts for reshaping the narrative around the use of force, striving for positive and enduring change within the policing paradigm in San Francisco.

## CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

### Overview

This qualitative research study delves into the intricate dynamics of grassroots community organizing, city government policy advocacy, and the consequential changes in police reforms within the framework of the San Francisco Police Department. By primarily relying on key informant individual interviews, strategically chosen to offer diverse perspectives on these developments, the research method ensures a comprehensive exploration of the multifaceted nature of these phenomena. In constructing the theoretical framework, the study amalgamates interest convergence and new social movement theories. This synthesis aims to provide a robust understanding of the causal factors underpinning significant changes in police reform, particularly focusing on the evolution of use-of-force policies. Interest convergence theory suggests that societal changes often occur when diverse interests align, fostering conditions conducive to reform. Simultaneously, the new social movement theory emphasizes the role of grassroots movements in instigating societal shifts.

The findings derived from key informant interviews are integral to a comprehensive research endeavor, undergoing meticulous analytical scrutiny to unveil intricate patterns and themes. This analytical rigor allows for a nuanced interpretation of the data, adding depth and richness to the understanding of the subject matter. By synthesizing diverse narratives and perspectives, the study aims to create a cohesive depiction of the dynamics influencing the San Francisco Police Department's stance on use-of-force policies and the overall reform process.

Venturing beyond superficial observations, this study delves into the intricate layers that contribute to the formulation and evolution of policies within the San Francisco Police Department. Adopting a holistic approach, it aims to offer a more comprehensive understanding

of the myriad factors that influence the department's strategies and responses, particularly concerning use-of-force policies. By peeling back these layers, the research not only illuminates the complexities inherent in grassroots community organizing and governmental policy advocacy but also underscores the dynamic nature of these processes. It emphasizes how various groups, both collectively and independently, wield significant influence in shaping the development of policies within the department. This highlights the evolving power dynamics and underscores the importance of diverse stakeholders in effecting critical changes in policy formulation.

Furthermore, the study illuminates the ever-changing landscape of policy development, illustrating how different actors navigate and negotiate their interests within this dynamic environment. It underscores the agency of grassroots movements, governmental bodies, and other stakeholders in driving substantive shifts in police reforms. Through this analysis, the research contributes to a deeper comprehension of the mechanisms driving societal change within law enforcement practices. In essence, this study serves as a beacon, shedding light on the intricate dynamics that underpin the policy-making process within the San Francisco Police Department. By unveiling these dynamics, it not only enriches our understanding of the interplay between grassroots activism and governmental policies but also underscores the transformative potential of collaborative efforts in shaping law enforcement practices.

### **Research Findings Insights and Implications**

The participant selection process for this study was meticulously designed, employing purposeful sampling techniques combined with a case study analysis of critical events and a snowball sampling approach. This methodological approach aimed to ensure a comprehensive exploration of perspectives relevant to the research objectives. Initially, approximately 40

individuals were identified based on their involvement in key events and public associations, as documented in media sources and public meetings. Subsequently, outreach efforts were conducted to engage these individuals, inviting them to participate in semi-structured interviews.

Careful consideration was given to the composition of the participant cohort, aiming for a balanced representation across four distinct categories. These categories included individuals occupying roles within city government, community organizers and advocates, elected officials or police commissioners, and police officers representing various ranks. By encompassing such diversity, the study sought to capture a wide spectrum of insights and contributions pivotal to the ongoing discourse surrounding police reform initiatives. Each participant category brought unique perspectives and experiences, enriching the depth and breadth of the study's findings.

The diversity within the participant cohort facilitated a nuanced understanding of the complexities inherent in police reform efforts. By incorporating perspectives from city government officials, community advocates, elected representatives, and law enforcement officers, the study was able to explore multifaceted dynamics influencing the development and implementation of reform initiatives. Furthermore, this approach fostered an inclusive dialogue, enabling the examination of divergent viewpoints and fostering a more holistic understanding of the challenges and opportunities surrounding police reform efforts. Through this methodological approach, the study aimed to contribute valuable insights to the ongoing discourse on effective strategies for advancing meaningful and sustainable police reform.

Each interview delved deeply into the unique experiences of participants, uncovering recurring themes that shed light on the influences and shifts observed within police reform discussions. As the thematic analysis unfolded, additional patterns emerged, coalescing around

one overarching theme: the convergence of interests among grassroots community organizers, policymakers within city government entities (including the executive branch), and the end-users of policies, namely police officers, significantly influences the formulation and implementation of policies, particularly those pertaining to the use of force.

### *Participant Employment*

The analysis of participant profiles in this research study reveals a diverse array of perspectives crucial to understanding the complexities of police reform initiatives. Among the participants were 8 city government workers, providing invaluable insights into the institutional dynamics and policymaking processes within municipal administrations. Their involvement sheds light on the bureaucratic hurdles and administrative complexities that influence the implementation of reform measures at the local level, underscoring the need for collaborative efforts between governmental agencies and community stakeholders.

In addition to city government workers, the study included 7 community organizers or advocates, who played instrumental roles in driving grassroots mobilization and activism surrounding police reform. Their frontline engagement with affected communities offers firsthand knowledge of the challenges faced and the initiatives undertaken to advocate for policies emphasizing equity, transparency, and accountability in law enforcement. By amplifying the voices of marginalized communities, these participants contribute to shaping a more inclusive and participatory approach to police reform, highlighting the importance of community-driven initiatives in effecting meaningful change.

Furthermore, the participation of 8 elected officials or police commissioners offers valuable insights into the political and institutional dimensions of police reform. As elected representatives and overseers of law enforcement agencies, these individuals play pivotal roles



in shaping legislative agendas, allocating resources, and providing oversight to ensure accountability within policing institutions. Their perspectives provide a nuanced understanding of the intricate interplay between political dynamics, public opinion, and institutional reforms in the realm of law enforcement. By engaging with elected officials and police commissioners, this research delves into the complexities of governance and policymaking, shedding light on the challenges and opportunities inherent in navigating political landscapes to advance meaningful reform agendas.

Additionally, the inclusion of 7 police officers as participants in the study provides crucial perspectives from within law enforcement agencies themselves. These officers, representing various ranks within the police hierarchy, offer unique insights into the operational realities, challenges, and internal dynamics of police departments. Their firsthand experiences on the frontlines of policing provide valuable context for understanding the complexities of implementing and enforcing reforms from within the institution. Moreover, their perspectives contribute to bridging the gap between community expectations and institutional practices, offering valuable insights into the internal culture, training protocols, and organizational barriers that may impede or facilitate reform efforts. By incorporating the voices of police officers into the research analysis, a more holistic understanding of the multifaceted nature of police reform initiatives emerges, highlighting the necessity of engaging diverse stakeholders, including those within law enforcement, in collaborative reform efforts.

The diverse composition of participants in this study, including city government workers, community organizers or advocates, elected officials or police commissioners, and police officers, underscores the complexity and interconnectedness of stakeholders involved in shaping police reform initiatives. Through purposeful sampling, the research captured a wide

range of perspectives, ensuring a comprehensive analysis of the dynamics influencing the development, implementation, and impact of reform efforts. The inclusion of voices from different sectors of society, including those within law enforcement, highlights the importance of collaboration and dialogue in addressing systemic challenges and fostering meaningful change. Moving forward, continued engagement with diverse stakeholders will be essential for analyzing an advancement of inclusive and effective reform strategies that promote accountability, transparency, and equitable policing practices, ultimately contributing to safer and more just communities.

#### *City of Residence*

Of the participants involved in the study, 24 individuals were found to reside within the city limits of San Francisco. This residency detail is significant as it indicates a direct connection between the participants and the community under examination. The inclusion of residents in San Francisco offers a localized perspective on the issues surrounding police reform within the city, as these individuals likely have firsthand experiences and insights into the local dynamics, challenges, and priorities shaping reform initiatives. Their residency status enhances the relevance and authenticity of the research findings, providing a grounded understanding of the community's perspectives and concerns regarding policing practices and reform efforts within their own neighborhoods. This localized lens ensures that the research analysis remains closely aligned with the realities faced by residents of San Francisco, thereby enhancing the study's credibility and applicability to the local context.

Furthermore, six participants identified themselves as residents from neighboring cities within California or even from out of state. This aspect of the participant profile introduces a broader regional perspective to the study. The inclusion of individuals from nearby cities and

out-of-state locations provides a comparative dimension to the research, allowing for an exploration of how policing practices and reform initiatives may vary across different geographical contexts. Their perspectives offer insights into potential regional disparities in policing approaches, as well as the transferability of reform strategies between jurisdictions. Understanding the experiences and viewpoints of participants residing outside of San Francisco enriches the analysis by contextualizing local dynamics within a broader geographic and socio-political landscape. This broader perspective enhances the comprehensiveness of the research findings, offering valuable insights into the interplay between local and regional factors influencing police reform efforts.

### *Racial Designation*

The breakdown of racial designations among the participants reveals a diverse composition, yet the majority of the participants, 13 individuals identified as White, making up approximately 48% of the sample. This substantial representation suggests a significant presence of White perspectives in discussions surrounding police reform initiatives. Given the historical dominance of White individuals in positions of power and influence within institutions like law enforcement agencies and government bodies, their inclusion in the study offers insights into prevailing narratives and perspectives that may influence policy discussions and decision-making processes related to police reforms.

The study includes 6 individuals identifying as African American/Black, constituting approximately 22% of the sample, along with 4 participants identifying as Latino/a or Latinx, making up around 15% of the sample. Additionally, 4 participants identified as Asian, representing approximately 15% of the sample. The presence of these racial groups highlights the importance of incorporating diverse voices and lived experiences into discussions on police

reform. Historically, African American/Black, Latino/a or Latinx, and Asian communities have experienced disproportionate rates of policing, racial profiling, and systemic injustices within the criminal justice system. Their participation in the study provides an opportunity to center their perspectives and advocate for reforms that address the unique challenges and barriers they face.

Moreover, the study includes 1 participant identifying as Multiracial and 2 participants falling into the category of Other. This diverse representation underscores the complexity of racial identities and the need to recognize intersectionality in understanding experiences with law enforcement. By analyzing the breakdown of racial designations in the study sample, we can gain insights into how different racial groups perceive and experience policing practices, thus informing more inclusive and equitable reform efforts.

The substantial representation of White individuals, comprising approximately 48% of the sample with 13 participants, suggests a significant presence of White perspectives in discussions surrounding police reform initiatives. Given their historical dominance in positions of power and influence within institutions like law enforcement agencies and government bodies, their inclusion offers insights into prevailing narratives and perspectives that may influence policy discussions and decision-making processes related to police reforms. Conversely, when combined, African American/Black, Latino/a or Latinx, Asian, Multiracial, and Other participants make up the remaining 52% of the sample, totaling 17 individuals. Historically marginalized communities, including these racial and ethnic groups, have faced disproportionate rates of policing and systemic injustices. Their participation in the study provides an opportunity to center their perspectives and advocate for reforms addressing the

unique challenges they encounter, highlighting the importance of incorporating diverse voices into discussions on police reform.

### *Gender*

The gender distribution among the participants in this study reveals a notable preponderance of male voices, with 20 out of 30 individuals identifying as male, constituting approximately 67% of the sample. This disproportionate representation of male participants raises questions about the inclusivity and diversity of perspectives within discussions surrounding police reform initiatives. Historically, male voices have dominated public discourse and decision-making processes in matters related to law enforcement and governance. Consequently, the overrepresentation of male participants in this study may reflect broader societal trends where male perspectives often receive greater attention and influence. This imbalance risks marginalizing the experiences and viewpoints of women and gender nonconforming individuals, potentially overlooking critical issues and solutions that these groups may bring to the forefront.

Moreover, the limited presence of female participants, comprising only 23% of the sample, underscores the need for greater efforts to amplify their voices and experiences in discussions on police reform. Additionally, the study includes one participant who identified as gay and one as lesbian, representing approximately 3% of the sample. These individuals' unique perspectives and experiences as members of the LGBTQ+ community further highlight the importance of diverse representation in shaping discussions on police reform. Research has shown that diverse representation leads to more comprehensive and effective policy outcomes by incorporating a wider range of perspectives and addressing the needs of marginalized communities. Therefore, the dominance of male voices in this study highlights a potential bias

that could skew the direction of reform efforts and hinder the development of inclusive and equitable policies. To address this imbalance, future research should strive to ensure gender parity among participants, actively seeking out and amplifying the voices of women, gender nonconforming individuals, and members of the LGBTQ+ community to foster more inclusive and representative discussions on police reform.

### *Age Grouping*

The data on age grouping among the participants in this study reveals a predominant presence of individuals aged 51-65 years old, with 15 out of 28 participants falling within this category, constituting approximately 54% of the sample. This age group's significant representation suggests a notable trend towards older participants engaging in discussions surrounding police reform initiatives. It is essential to consider the implications of this age distribution, particularly regarding the perspectives and experiences brought to the forefront of reform discussions. Individuals in the 51-65 age bracket may offer insights shaped by their extensive life experiences, professional backgrounds, and historical context, which could influence their views on policing and reform efforts. However, the overrepresentation of this age group also raises questions about the inclusivity of younger voices in shaping policy discussions and decision-making processes related to law enforcement.

Moreover, while individuals aged 36-50 years old also constitute a sizable portion of the sample, comprising approximately 32% of participants, their representation is notably lower compared to the 51-65 age group. This age cohort represents a diverse range of experiences, spanning mid-career professionals to individuals approaching middle age. Their perspectives on police reform may be influenced by a blend of personal experiences, societal shifts, and professional expertise, making their contributions valuable to the development of inclusive and

effective reform initiatives. However, the relatively lower representation of younger individuals, particularly those aged 25-35 years old, underscores the importance of ensuring generational diversity in discussions on policing and reform. Incorporating the perspectives of younger age groups is crucial for understanding evolving societal dynamics, technological advancements, and changing community expectations, ultimately contributing to more holistic and forward-thinking approaches to addressing systemic issues within law enforcement.

### *Parent Status*

The data on parent status among the participants presents a majority of individuals who are parents, with 17 out of 30 respondents indicating that they are parents, representing approximately 57% of the sample. This prevalence of parent participants suggests a significant presence of individuals who may bring unique perspectives shaped by their experiences as caregivers and members of family units. Parenting status can influence one's views on various social issues, including law enforcement and policing, as individuals navigate concerns related to community safety, youth engagement, and interactions with authorities. The inclusion of parent participants in discussions on police reform initiatives is crucial for understanding how family dynamics intersect with policing practices and how policies can address the needs and concerns of families and children within communities.

Conversely, while individuals who are not parents represent a smaller proportion of the sample, comprising approximately 43% of participants, their perspectives are equally valuable in shaping discussions on police reform. Non-parent participants may offer distinct viewpoints unaffected by parental responsibilities, providing insights into broader societal dynamics and the experiences of individuals who may interact with law enforcement in different contexts. Their inclusion ensures a diverse range of perspectives and lived experiences are considered in

the development of inclusive and effective reform strategies. Additionally, exploring the perspectives of non-parent participants can uncover nuanced insights into the impact of policing practices on individuals who may not have direct familial responsibilities, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of the complexities surrounding law enforcement and community relations.

### *Education Levels*

The data on education levels among the participants reveals a predominant presence of individuals holding advanced degrees, particularly Juris Doctor (JD) degrees, which account for 15 out of 30 respondents, constituting approximately 50% of the sample. This significant representation of JD holders suggests a strong presence of legal expertise and professional training within the participant pool. Given the legal complexities inherent in police reform initiatives and the intersection of law with law enforcement practices, the inclusion of individuals with JD degrees provides valuable insights into the legal frameworks, challenges, and opportunities associated with reform efforts. Their expertise may contribute to shaping policy discussions, drafting legislative proposals, and navigating legal considerations to ensure the effectiveness and legality of reform measures.

Participants holding master's degrees represent a notable portion of the sample, with 6 out of 30 respondents, comprising approximately 20% of the total. The presence of individuals with master's degrees indicates a diverse range of academic backgrounds and specialized knowledge areas contributing to discussions on police reform. Master's degree holders may bring expertise in fields such as criminology, public policy, sociology, or psychology, offering insights into the social, behavioral, and organizational aspects of policing and law enforcement. Their perspectives can inform evidence-based approaches to reform, drawing on research



findings, best practices, and theoretical frameworks to address systemic issues and promote positive outcomes for communities. Additionally, the inclusion of individuals with master's degrees underscores the interdisciplinary nature of police reform efforts, highlighting the importance of integrating diverse academic disciplines and expertise to develop comprehensive and holistic solutions to complex societal challenges.

Analyzing the research findings across participant employment, city of residence, racial designation, gender, age grouping, parent status, and education levels reveals a nuanced understanding of the multifaceted nature of police reform initiatives. The study captures a diverse array of perspectives, ranging from city government workers navigating bureaucratic hurdles to community organizers driving grassroots mobilization, and from elected officials shaping legislative agendas to police officers offering frontline insights. Moreover, participants from both San Francisco and neighboring regions provide localized and comparative perspectives, shedding light on local dynamics and regional disparities in policing approaches. The racial, gender, age, parental, and educational diversity within the participant pool further enriches the analysis, offering insights into how different demographics perceive and experience policing practices. By recognizing the interconnectedness of stakeholder engagement and the complexities inherent in reform efforts, the study underscores the importance of collaborative, inclusive, and evidence-based approaches to address systemic challenges in law enforcement. Moving forward, continued engagement with diverse stakeholders will be essential for advancing inclusive and effective reform strategies that promote accountability, transparency, and equitable policing practices, ultimately contributing to safer and more just communities.

While the research findings provide valuable insights into various aspects of police reform, it's important to acknowledge some limitations. Firstly, the study's sample size may

restrict the generalizability of the findings beyond the specific context of San Francisco. Additionally, the overrepresentation of certain demographic groups, such as White males and individuals with advanced degrees, may skew the perspectives presented and overlook the voices of underrepresented communities. Moreover, self-reported data on demographic characteristics could introduce biases or inaccuracies, and the reliance on voluntary participation may result in a sample that is not fully representative of the population. Furthermore, the study's focus on certain demographic factors, such as race and gender, may overlook other dimensions of diversity, such as socioeconomic status or immigration status, which could also influence perceptions of policing and reform. Recognizing these limitations is crucial for interpreting the findings with caution and highlighting the need for future research to address these gaps and ensure a more comprehensive understanding of police reform efforts.

### **Purpose Statement**

This study is a case study examining the convergence between community-led grassroots organizing and city government policy advocacy that influenced police reforms for the San Francisco Police Department. Specifically, I will analyze the moments of collective organizing and the pressure placed on city officials and police department leadership to create changes to the Department General Order 5.01, the SFPD's Use of Force policy. By analyzing these pivotal moments through qualitative research methods, I will identify the critical learning lessons and actions taken by grassroots organizers, policymakers, and government leaders to create the moments of change in policy and policing in San Francisco and illuminate how these different forces came together to make a meaningful policy change in policing.

## **Unraveling the Fabric of Police Reform: Questions and Insight**

The exploration of police reform in San Francisco delves into critical questions regarding the intricate dynamics between grassroots movements, city government leadership, and the broader policymaking landscape. This research seeks to unravel the roles played by these influential entities in shaping policy change, re-envisioning policing practices, and navigating the complex terrain of law enforcement reforms. Three central research questions guide this inquiry:

1. What role do grassroots movements and city government leadership play in influencing policy change around police reform and re-envisioning policing in San Francisco?
2. How did tensions, frictions, collaborations, and convergences among various vital stakeholder's shape SFPD's decision to overhaul the Use of Force policy?
3. How did policymakers and city government officials react to advocacy and political pressures to address policing in San Francisco?

These questions form the foundation for a comprehensive analysis of the forces driving police reform efforts and the responses of key stakeholders to the evolving landscape of law enforcement policies in the city. Through a detailed examination of these questions, this research aims to contribute valuable insights into the ongoing discourse on police reform and its impact on community well-being.

*Research Question #1: What roles do grassroots movements and city government leadership play in influencing policy change around police reform and re-envisioning policing in San Francisco?*

In my research, grassroots movements have historically played a significant role in driving policy change and re-envisioning policing practices in San Francisco. These movements

arise from community dissatisfaction with existing policies and practices that perpetuate systemic issues like racial disparities and police misconduct. By mobilizing community members and amplifying their voices, grassroots movements create pressure on city government and law enforcement agencies to address these concerns. This symbiotic relationship between grassroots activism and city government leadership is a potent catalyst for substantial changes in policing, emphasizing the importance of collaboration, active listening, and cooperation.

One pivotal aspect of grassroots movements is their ability to bring attention to specific incidents involving excessive use of force that become lethal or instances of misconduct that might otherwise go unnoticed. These movements leverage social media, community organizing, and public demonstrations to raise awareness and demand accountability. For example, the Black Lives Matter movement gained national prominence through grassroots activism, highlighting the disproportionate impact of police violence on Black communities, and advocating for systemic reforms. This dynamic interaction underscores the critical role of grassroots organizations and advocates in shaping police reforms and pushing for meaningful changes such as revisions to the use of force policy (Garza, 2020; Taylor, 2016).

In San Francisco, grassroots mobilizations have similarly driven significant police reform changes. Following the tragic police shooting of Mario Woods in 2015, local activists galvanized public outrage and organized widespread protests, demanding justice and comprehensive reforms. The mobilization efforts included extensive use of social media to document and share incidents of police violence, thereby maintaining public pressure and keeping the issue in the national spotlight (Sanchez, 2016). Community leaders and advocacy groups collaborated to draft policy proposals aimed at increasing police accountability and transparency. As a result of sustained activism, San Francisco implemented several reforms,

including revising its use-of-force policies to emphasize de-escalation tactics and increasing civilian oversight of the police department (San Francisco Police Department, 2016). These efforts highlight how localized grassroots movements in San Francisco have effectively harnessed public sentiment and advocacy to achieve substantive policy changes, demonstrating the power of mobilizations in driving police reform (Sankin, 2018).

Following the deaths of Mario Woods in 2015 and Alex Nieto in 2014, grassroots organizations in San Francisco rallied to demand a comprehensive overhaul of the city's policing practices. Key demands included the implementation of body-worn cameras for all officers to ensure accountability and transparency in police interactions. Activists also called for the creation of an independent oversight body with the power to investigate police misconduct and enforce disciplinary actions (San Francisco Police Department, 2016). Furthermore, there was a strong push for mandatory de-escalation training aimed at reducing the likelihood of violent confrontations, emphasizing the importance of non-lethal methods in managing conflicts (Sanchez, 2016).

The community's demands extended to broader systemic changes, such as the implementation of a community policing model that fosters stronger relationships between law enforcement and the neighborhoods they serve. This approach includes increased engagement and dialogue with community members, aiming to build trust and collaboration. Activists also advocated for greater transparency in the release of police records and data related to use-of-force incidents, arguing that public access to this information is crucial for informed community oversight and accountability (Sankin, 2018). These demands reflect a holistic approach to police reform, seeking to address not only the immediate issues of accountability and use of force but also the underlying systemic factors contributing to police-community tensions.

City government leadership, including the Mayor, Board of Supervisors, and Police Commission, plays a crucial role in translating the demands and aspirations of grassroots movements into tangible policy changes. However, their responsiveness to grassroots demands often depends on various factors such as public pressure, political climate, and community engagement. The dynamic between grassroots movements and city government leadership can be complex and sometimes contentious. While grassroots movements may push for radical reforms such as defunding the police or reallocating resources to community-based programs, city officials must navigate legal constraints, budgetary limitations, and public safety concerns. This tension can lead to constructive dialogue and compromise, resulting in policy changes that address community concerns while maintaining public safety.

In San Francisco, the response of city leadership to the public outcry following the deaths of Mario Woods and Alex Nieto illustrates this dynamic. Mayor Ed Lee, who was in office during the time of these incidents, faced significant pressure from the community to implement police reforms. In response, Mayor Lee worked closely with the Police Commission and the Board of Supervisors to initiate several key changes. These included the adoption of body-worn cameras for all police officers, the revision of use-of-force policies to emphasize de-escalation, and the establishment of a new Department of Police Accountability to provide independent oversight of the police department (San Francisco Police Department, 2016; Sanchez, 2016). Mayor Lee's administration also engaged in community dialogues and town hall meetings to ensure that the voices of affected communities were heard and that their demands were integrated into the reform process (Sankin, 2018).

Following Mayor Lee's tenure, Mayor London Breed continued to address the ongoing demands for police reform. Mayor Breed emphasized the importance of transparency and

accountability within the police department and supported further revisions to the use-of-force policies. She stated, "We have to change how we respond to calls for service and redirect resources to support our most vulnerable communities" (Breed, 2020). Mayor Breed worked with the Police Commission and the Board of Supervisors to increase funding for community-based programs aimed at violence prevention and youth engagement, aligning with the broader goals of the grassroots movements. In a press release, she highlighted the commitment to police reform by announcing plans to "redirect \$120 million from the police department's budget to initiatives supporting the Black community" (San Francisco Office of the Mayor, 2020). Mayor Breed also focused on increasing diversity within the police force and improving training programs to better equip officers to handle situations without resorting to violence (Breed, 2020). Through these efforts, both mayors demonstrated a commitment to balancing the need for public safety with the urgent calls for systemic change from the community.

In the context of police reform and re-envisioning policing practices in San Francisco, it is also imperative to acknowledge the critical role of police officers as end users and implementers of policy changes. While grassroots movements and advocacy groups bring attention to systemic issues and advocate for reforms, it is ultimately the police officers on the ground who must understand, implement, and embody these changes in their daily interactions with the community. Their buy-in, training, and ongoing support are essential for the successful implementation of policy changes aimed at promoting de-escalation techniques, reducing use-of-force incidents, and fostering community trust.

Police Chief William Scott emphasized that the successful implementation of reforms requires the buy-in, training, and ongoing support of the officers on the ground. These reforms include enhanced de-escalation training, increased transparency, and the establishment of the

Community Engagement Division, which have been essential in promoting de-escalation techniques, reducing use-of-force incidents, and fostering community trust (San Francisco Police Department, 2024). Chief Scott highlighted that the Collaborative Reform Initiative, initiated in partnership with the U.S. Department of Justice, has been pivotal in transforming the SFPD into a model of 21st-century policing. Despite the federal government's withdrawal from this initiative, SFPD continued its reform efforts with the California Department of Justice and consulting firms, implementing 272 recommendations. These reforms have led to significant reductions in use-of-force incidents and officer-involved shootings, as well as improvements in officer training and community relations (San Francisco Police Department, 2024; KQED, 2021).

Mayor London Breed and Chief Scott have acknowledged the importance of officers' roles in these reforms. Mayor Breed stated, "San Francisco has shown that advancing reform and maintaining public safety can go together to create a safer and more just city for all," while Chief Scott noted, "Our hard-working officers are doing a remarkable job protecting the public and earning trust with communities" (San Francisco Police Department, 2024; Hoodline, 2024). This collaboration has included rigorous training in de-escalation techniques, enhanced crisis intervention training, and establishing an Office of Racial Equity to address and understand disparities in policing.

Chief Scott's commitment to these reforms was further reinforced during his participation in the "United We Stand" Summit at the White House, where he discussed strategies to counter hate-fueled violence and emphasized the need for a shared vision and cooperative solutions (San Francisco Police Department, 2022). These efforts underscore the critical role of police officers in implementing policy changes and fostering community trust.



Therefore, engaging police officers directly in the reform process, soliciting their feedback, and providing them with the necessary resources and training are crucial steps in ensuring that policy changes are effectively translated into tangible improvements in policing practices. This collaborative approach not only empowers police officers to be agents of positive change but also fosters a culture of continuous improvement and accountability within law enforcement agencies.

In conclusion, the findings from this study highlight the essential roles of grassroots movements and city government leadership in driving policy change and reshaping the policing landscape in San Francisco. Grassroots movements, amplified by voices from the community and organizations like the ACLU and the Electronic Frontier Foundation, have been monumental in propelling the necessary changes in policing. Individuals like Rafael Mandelman from the Board of Supervisors acknowledge the significant impact these groups have had in steering the conversation around police reform.

These movements bring urgency and community perspectives to the forefront, creating a demand for transformation that is both broad and deep. Chief Scott acknowledges the vital role of grassroots organizers and activists in pushing forward the reform agenda, even when it appears adversarial, signifying their importance in the collective journey toward a more accountable and equitable policing system. This sentiment is echoed by Lawanna Preston, who highlights the Police Commission's crucial role in steering reforms, emphasizing the synergy between city governance and community advocacy in crafting effective policy changes.

City officials, therefore, play a pivotal role in translating these grassroots demands into actionable policies, a process highlighted by Peskin's emphasis on the need for civilian elected officials who support police reform. This collaboration between grassroots movements and city

leadership, underscored by the proactive stance of former Mayor Lee and other city leaders, creates a dynamic interplay that fosters a more responsive, accountable, and community-oriented approach to policing.

The collaboration between city government and advocacy groups, as depicted through the cooperative reform initiatives, underscores the importance of a partnership that is rooted in active dialogue, community engagement, and evidence-based decision-making. This collaborative ethos is crucial for fostering trust, accountability, and meaningful reform in the policing sector, marking San Francisco's journey towards a reimagined and equitable policing system as a collective endeavor driven by a shared vision of a safer and more just city for all.

*Research Question #2: How did tensions, frictions, collaborations, and convergences among various vital stakeholder's shape SFPD's decision to overhaul the Use of Force policy?*

In my research, I have delved into the intricate dynamics surrounding the evolution of the Use of Force policy within the SFPD. This examination has revealed a complex interplay between grassroots advocacy, political pressures, and law enforcement responses, particularly in response to incidents involving excessive use of force that escalate to lethal outcomes, such as the case of Mario Woods. These incidents have ignited widespread public outcry, prompting grassroots movements and advocacy groups to demand accountability and transparency in policing practices. The ensuing tensions, collaborations, and convergences among key stakeholders, including community organizations, city government officials, and law enforcement agencies, have profoundly influenced the trajectory of policy reform, leading to a comprehensive reassessment of use-of-force practices and policy revisions aimed at enhancing

police-community relations and promoting a more humane and effective approach to public safety.

The evolution of the Use of Force policy within the SFPD exemplifies a dynamic interplay between community advocacy, political pressures, and law enforcement responses. Incidents involving excessive use of force, notably the case of George Floyd, sparked widespread outrage and intensified calls for reform. Grassroots movements and advocacy groups mobilized to demand accountability and transparency in police actions, advocating for revisions to the Use of Force policy that prioritize de-escalation techniques and limit the use of lethal force as a last resort. This grassroots pressure prompted city officials to engage in dialogue with community stakeholders and implement changes to the policy, reflecting a collaborative effort to improve police practices and enhance community trust.

The overhaul of the Use of Force policy within the SFPD was a multifaceted process shaped by tensions, collaborations, and convergences among key stakeholders. Public outcry over high-profile incidents of police brutality and the disproportionate use of force created tensions that sparked demands for policy reforms. Media coverage further amplified these incidents, drawing national attention to policing practices in San Francisco and intensifying the scrutiny on law enforcement agencies.

Collaborations and convergences among stakeholders were instrumental in shaping the trajectory of policy reform. Community advocacy groups, civil rights organizations, and legal experts joined forces to advocate for substantive changes to the Use of Force policy, pushing for stricter guidelines, enhanced training, and increased accountability measures for officers. Simultaneously, city government officials, including the Police Commission and elected

representatives, engaged in dialogue and negotiations to overhaul the Use of Force policy in response to public pressure and political imperatives.

The convergence of these efforts resulted in a comprehensive reassessment of use-of-force practices, leading to policy revisions aimed at reducing incidents of excessive force and promoting de-escalation tactics. The collaborative nature of this process was essential in navigating tensions and overcoming obstacles to reform. It involved a delicate balance between public demands for accountability and transparency and the operational realities faced by law enforcement agencies. Ultimately, the overhaul of the Use of Force policy reflects a collective commitment to improving police-community relations and advancing a more humane and effective approach to public safety.

The San Francisco Police Department (SFPD) has implemented significant changes to its use of force policy as part of its broader reform initiatives. These changes have been driven by various factors including community pressure, internal evaluations, and collaborative efforts with oversight bodies. Key changes include the introduction of de-escalation techniques as a mandatory first response in situations involving potential use of force. The policy revisions emphasize the sanctity of life, requiring officers to use the minimal amount of force necessary and to prioritize non-lethal options whenever possible. Additionally, SFPD has banned the use of chokeholds and shooting at moving vehicles, aligning with best practices in modern policing (San Francisco Police Department, 2024; KQED, 2021).

Further, the Department has increased training for officers, particularly in crisis intervention and critical mindset training, which prepares officers to handle high-risk situations with an emphasis on de-escalation and conflict resolution. The introduction of body-worn cameras has also been a crucial part of the transparency measures, ensuring that all uses of force

are recorded and can be reviewed for accountability purposes (San Francisco Police Department, 2024). These comprehensive reforms have been part of a concerted effort to rebuild community trust and ensure that the use of force by police is both justified and minimal.

The San Francisco Police Department (SFPD) has undergone extensive revisions to its use of force policy, heavily influenced by community advocacy and high-profile incidents such as the shooting of Mario Woods and the George Floyd protests. These revisions aim to enhance accountability, transparency, and the prioritization of de-escalation techniques. One major change in the policy includes the explicit requirement for de-escalation to be the first response in situations where force might be used. This shift ensures that officers must attempt to resolve situations peacefully before resorting to force (San Francisco Police Department, 2024). Additionally, the new policy prohibits the use of chokeholds and any form of physical control to the head, neck, or throat, reflecting a commitment to safeguarding human dignity and minimizing harm during arrests (San Francisco Police Department, 2022).

The revised policy also includes a ban on shooting at moving vehicles unless there is an imminent threat, aligning with modern policing standards aimed at reducing unnecessary violence (KQED, 2021). Another significant change mandates the documentation and supervisory review of any instance where a firearm is drawn or exhibited, even if it is not used, to increase oversight and accountability (San Francisco Police Department, 2022). These policy changes were driven by extensive community advocacy and the collaborative efforts between the SFPD, the Police Commission, and the Department of Police Accountability (DPA). Community pressure, particularly from movements such as Black Lives Matter, played a critical role in pushing for these reforms, emphasizing the need for police practices that protect and respect all community members (San Francisco Police Department, 2024; KQED, 2021).

Social Movement Convergence theory offers a compelling lens through which to analyze the collaborative dynamics that shaped the overhaul of the Use of Force policy within the SFPD. This theory posits that complex systems, such as policy-making processes, often exhibit emergent properties that arise from the interactions and relationships among various stakeholders. In the context of police reform, the convergence of grassroots activism, political pressures, and law enforcement responses led to emergent outcomes that influenced policy revisions. The iterative nature of the reform process, guided by feedback loops and continuous dialogue, allowed for ongoing assessment and refinement of strategies, ultimately contributing to a comprehensive reassessment of use-of-force practices.

Findings illuminate how the overhaul of the San Francisco Police Department's (SFPD) Use of Force policy was deeply influenced by the dynamic interplay of tensions, frictions, collaborations, and convergences among various stakeholders. The policy revisions were not an isolated response but were precipitated by a confluence of public discourse, media narratives, and high-profile incidents, notably the officer-involved shooting of Mario Woods. These elements collectively compelled a critical examination of the existing policies, as noted in the findings, highlighting how public and media scrutiny served as catalysts for reform.

As Melgar pointed out, the urgency for policy revisions was significantly heightened by the high-profile nature of such incidents, which galvanized public demand for change and underscored broader systemic issues within the SFPD. This public pressure, along with the advocacy by community groups, catalyzed the call for a comprehensive review of policing practices. The findings suggest that this period was marked by critical engagement from various stakeholders, including community organizers, the police commission, and elected officials,

who together provided a framework of checks and balances that propelled the policy revision process forward.

This collaborative dynamic was instrumental in fostering a transparent dialogue that addressed community concerns, leading to the reevaluation of established norms and the adoption of more equitable policing practices. As described by an anonymous city worker, the mobilization of communities of color and the national attention garnered put substantial pressure on the city to improve its policing strategies, demonstrating the power of public advocacy in shaping policy outcomes.

The findings reveal that the journey towards revising the Use of Force policy in San Francisco was a multifaceted process, reflecting a shift towards accountability, transparency, and community-oriented policing. This reassessment, underscored by emergent patterns of collaboration and shared goals of reducing excessive force and promoting de-escalation tactics, epitomizes a dynamic response to community concerns and operational challenges faced by law enforcement. It illustrates a transformative shift in the SFPD's approach, driven by the collective efforts of stakeholders to address systemic challenges and foster a more just and equitable policing system.

*Research Question #3: How did policymakers and city government officials react to advocacy and political pressures to address policing in San Francisco?*

In analyzing the response of policymakers and city government officials to advocacy and political pressures concerning policing in San Francisco, several key themes and strategies emerged. Firstly, there was a recognition of the significance of public concerns and advocacy initiatives as drivers of policy reassessment and institutional reforms. The proactive engagement

of policymakers reflected a responsiveness to grassroots movements and civil rights organizations, which amplified public pressure for meaningful changes in policing practices. Policymakers and city government officials in San Francisco have demonstrated significant responsiveness to advocacy and political pressures regarding policing reforms, particularly through the actions of Mayors Edwin M. Lee, Mark Farrell, and London Breed.

Under Mayor Edwin M. Lee, the city faced intense scrutiny following the fatal police shooting of Mario Woods in 2015, which was captured on video and widely circulated, leading to public outrage. In response, Mayor Lee requested a full review by the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) of the San Francisco Police Department's (SFPD) use-of-force policies and a civil rights investigation into the incident. He emphasized the importance of community involvement in policy development to promote accountability and transparency, which were key recommendations from the DOJ's review (Office of the Mayor, 2016). Additionally, Lee supported legislative measures to ban the possession of hollow-point ammunition, demonstrating a proactive stance on public safety and police reform (Office of the Mayor, 2012).

Mayor Mark Farrell, who succeeded Lee, continued to uphold the commitment to police reforms. Farrell worked closely with the California Attorney General's office to ensure the SFPD adhered to the recommendations outlined in the Collaborative Reform Initiative. This partnership highlighted the city's dedication to maintaining rigorous oversight and accountability within the police department despite federal withdrawal from the initiative (State of California - Department of Justice, 2018).

Mayor London Breed has been particularly vocal about the need for continued police reforms, especially following the murder of George Floyd and the subsequent Black Lives



Matter protests. Breed announced comprehensive plans to reshape the role of police in San Francisco, focusing on eliminating the need for police to respond to non-criminal situations and enhancing community-based approaches. She also pushed for increased transparency and accountability, including the establishment of the Department of Police Accountability's (DPA) recommendations on the use-of-force policy, which bans officers from using physical control methods that apply pressure to the head, neck, or throat and mandates documentation and review of firearm exhibitions (Office of the Mayor, 2022; San Francisco Police Department, 2022). These actions by the mayors of San Francisco underscore a consistent and evolving response to community advocacy and political pressures, aiming to create a police force that is both effective and trusted by the community.

The reactions of policymakers and city government officials in San Francisco to advocacy and political pressures regarding policing reforms can be understood through the lens of Derrick Bell's interest convergence theory. This theory posits that significant legal and policy changes benefiting marginalized groups often occur only when these changes also serve the interests of those in power. In San Francisco, the responses of Mayors Edwin M. Lee, Mark Farrell, and London Breed to public outcry and demands for police reform exemplify this convergence of interests.

For instance, Mayor Lee's actions following the Mario Woods shooting, including requesting a DOJ review and supporting bans on hollow-point ammunition, aligned with community demands for accountability and transparency while also addressing the broader goal of maintaining public trust and safety (Office of the Mayor, 2016; Office of the Mayor, 2012). Similarly, Mayor Breed's initiatives to implement comprehensive police reforms post-George Floyd protests not only aimed to satisfy grassroots movements but also sought to stabilize the

city's social and political environment by reducing tensions between the police and the community (Office of the Mayor, 2022). These reforms included policies to limit the use of force and enhance oversight, which were essential to restoring confidence in the police force, thus serving both the community's interests and the city's governance needs (San Francisco Police Department, 2022). By addressing community concerns through reforms that also benefit the city's leadership in terms of governance and public trust, these actions reflect the core principle of Bell's interest convergence theory, where progressive changes are often facilitated when they align with the interests of those in power.

Policymakers and city government officials in San Francisco have been significantly influenced by advocacy and political pressures to reform policing practices. The leadership of the San Francisco Police Commission, including Suzy Loftus, Julius Turman, and Thomas Mazzucco, has been critical in this process, responding to public demands for greater transparency, accountability, and reform in the SFPD.

Suzy Loftus, during her tenure as president of the Police Commission, played a crucial role in addressing these pressures by advocating for comprehensive reforms aimed at rebuilding trust between the police and the community. Loftus emphasized the necessity of incorporating community feedback into policy decisions. This approach was evident in the commission's adoption of new use-of-force policies that mandated de-escalation tactics and enhanced documentation and review processes for firearm-related incidents (KQED, 2021). Her leadership ensured that community voices were central to the reform process, reflecting a responsive approach to public advocacy.

Julius Turman also significantly impacted the commission's direction by navigating contentious debates and negotiations with the police union. Turman prioritized creating policies

that balanced fairness for both the community and police officers. His efforts were particularly noted during the development and implementation of revised use-of-force policies, which aimed to address concerns raised by civil rights groups and other stakeholders (San Francisco Police Department, 2022). Turman's ability to build consensus was key to advancing these critical reforms.

Thomas Mazzucco contributed by focusing on the practical implementation of these reforms. He advocated for extensive training programs for officers, particularly in crisis intervention and de-escalation techniques, ensuring that the new policies were effectively integrated into daily police operations. His emphasis on training highlighted the need for practical, on-the-ground changes to accompany policy shifts (San Francisco Office of the Mayor, 2022).

The collective leadership of Loftus, Turman, and Mazzucco on the Police Commission exemplifies how policymakers responded to advocacy and political pressures. They ensured that the SFPD's reforms were not only theoretically sound but also practically enforceable, aligning with the broader goals of transparency, accountability, and community trust. This collaborative approach underscores the significant role of the Police Commission in driving meaningful changes in response to public demands for police reform.

The murder of George Floyd in May 2020 and the subsequent global protests significantly accelerated the efforts to reform policing practices in San Francisco. The intense public outcry and advocacy for justice and systemic change further pressured city officials and policymakers to take decisive actions. Mayor London Breed responded by unveiling a comprehensive roadmap for police reforms, which included reallocating funds from the police

budget to support Black communities and emphasizing the need for alternatives to traditional policing in handling non-criminal situations (San Francisco Office of the Mayor, 2022).

Malia Cohen, serving as the President of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors and later as a member of the California State Board of Equalization, played a critical role during this period. Cohen was a vocal advocate for police reform and racial justice, leveraging her position to push for substantive changes within the SFPD. She supported the redirection of funds from the police department to community services, emphasizing the importance of investing in mental health services, housing, and education to address the root causes of crime and reduce the reliance on police interventions (San Francisco Office of the Mayor, 2020). Cohen stated, "Now is the time to be bold and unapologetic in our movement to bring more criminal justice reforms to the entire system" (Mission Local, 2020).

Cohen also worked closely with the Police Commission and other city leaders to ensure that the new policies reflected the community's demands for accountability and transparency. Her advocacy was instrumental in the adoption of policies that banned the use of chokeholds and required the documentation of instances where firearms were drawn by officers (San Francisco Police Department, 2022). Additionally, Cohen's efforts in promoting the inclusion of community voices in the reform process helped ensure that the changes were not only effective but also had broad public support.

The collective actions of Breed, Cohen, and other city leaders in the wake of George Floyd's murder underscored a renewed commitment to transforming the SFPD and addressing longstanding issues of police violence and systemic racism. Their leadership and responsiveness to advocacy and political pressures highlighted the critical role of policymakers in driving meaningful police reforms.

Additionally, elected officials actively engaged in dialogue and negotiations with community leaders, advocacy groups, and oversight bodies to address systemic challenges within law enforcement. Their participation demonstrated a commitment to systemic reform and a willingness to address community concerns, reflecting a collaborative approach to policymaking and implementation. The collaboration between elected officials, advocates, and oversight bodies highlighted the interconnectedness of these entities in effecting positive transformations within the policing paradigm.

The role of the Board of Supervisors emerged as particularly influential in shaping the direction of police reform through budgetary allocations and permissions for establishing structures dedicated to addressing reform initiatives. Their control over financial resources underscored their pivotal role in driving meaningful changes and ensuring the success of reform measures within the police department. This acknowledgment reinforces the interconnected nature of policymaking and budgetary decisions, emphasizing the Board of Supervisors' crucial role in advancing a more transparent, accountable, and community-centric policing system.

During his tenure, Board President David Chiu emphasized the importance of police accountability and transparency. In various hearings, Chiu supported measures that demanded more comprehensive reporting on police activities, including the frequency and nature of use-of-force incidents. Chiu's leadership was critical in the passage of ordinances requiring the SFPD to produce detailed quarterly reports on traffic stops, searches, and use of force, providing the public and policymakers with essential data to assess and guide reforms (San Francisco Office of the Mayor, 2020).

Supervisor Hillary Ronen, another key figure, advocated for reallocating police funds to community-based programs. In a notable hearing, Ronen questioned the role of police in

handling non-criminal situations, suggesting that other departments or community organizations might be better suited for such tasks. She pushed for budget adjustments that reflected these priorities, helping to divert funds towards mental health services, housing, and education—efforts aimed at addressing the root causes of crime and reducing the burden on police officers (Mission Local, 2020).

Supervisor Shamann Walton has also been a vocal advocate for police reform, emphasizing the need for structural changes within the SFPD. Walton supported the establishment of the Office of Racial Equity and has consistently pushed for measures to ensure that police practices do not disproportionately impact communities of color. His efforts included advocating for the adoption of body-worn cameras and the banning of chokeholds, ensuring that these policies were supported by adequate funding and oversight (San Francisco Police Department, 2022).

In 2020, the Board of Supervisors unanimously approved an ordinance introduced by Supervisor Malia Cohen, which required the SFPD to release detailed data on stops, searches, and use-of-force incidents. This ordinance was part of a broader effort to enhance transparency and accountability within the department, ensuring that community members and policymakers had access to critical information needed to drive further reforms (Mission Local, 2020). The combined efforts of the Board of Supervisors, under the leadership of various presidents and key members, highlight the critical role that financial oversight and legislative mandates play in driving systemic police reforms. Their actions have been instrumental in advancing a policing system that prioritizes transparency, accountability, and community trust.

The research analysis unveils a dynamic interplay between grassroots advocacy, political responsiveness, and institutional reforms in reshaping policing narratives, with a

particular emphasis on the use of force policies in San Francisco. The collective efforts of advocates, the Police Commission, and elected officials have emerged as pivotal drivers of change, showcasing a deep commitment to addressing public concerns, enhancing transparency, and nurturing a more accountable and community-oriented approach to policing. This collaborative endeavor not only highlights the importance of grassroots movements in influencing policy reforms but also underscores the crucial role of city government leadership in implementing tangible changes that resonate with community needs and aspirations. The establishment of mechanisms such as the Police Commission as an independent oversight body further strengthens accountability and ensures ongoing evaluation and improvement of law enforcement practices. This holistic approach signifies a paradigm shift towards a more equitable, just, and responsive policing framework that prioritizes the well-being and safety of all community members.

The actions of policymakers and city government officials in San Francisco, as narrated by key participants such as Kirby and Melgar, reflect a deeply engaged and multifaceted approach to reforming policing in response to advocacy and political pressures. Kirby, a member of the Board of Supervisors, emphasized the pivotal role of the Board in financial and structural decision-making, stating, "The Board of Supervisors holds the purse strings, right?" This highlights the significant influence of financial oversight and the establishment of frameworks that are crucial for facilitating police reform.

Melgar shed light on the urgency propelled by high-profile incidents like the Mario Woods shooting, which, along with media and public discourse, drove a collective demand for change, emphasizing the community's role in shaping the policing narrative. This urgency underscored the nuanced and proactive stance of city officials and the Police Commission, who

acknowledged the critical impact of advocacy groups, including the ACLU and the Electronic Frontier Foundation, in driving the conversation around policing practices.

The political pressures from these advocacy groups led to a reassessment of existing policies and an engagement in constructive dialogue with community leaders, aiming to align policing strategies with public expectations. The collaborative and responsive approach of city officials and policymakers, enriched by the dialogues with community leaders and advocacy campaigns, demonstrates a commitment to creating a transparent, accountable, and community-attuned policing system. The Police Commission, as an independent oversight body, played a fundamental role in reinforcing this accountability structure, introducing an extra layer of impartial scrutiny through their critical evaluation of police conduct and policy recommendations. This layered approach to policy revision ensured that changes in the use-of-force policy were comprehensive and well-informed.

In summary, the insights of Kirby and Melgar illuminate a holistic approach by San Francisco's city government and policymakers, signifying a shift toward a more equitable and just policing framework. This shift, influenced by advocacy and community dialogues, has led to substantial changes and demonstrates a systemic reform commitment, aiming to enhance the well-being and safety of all community members. The collective efforts of advocates, the Police Commission, and elected officials have catalyzed a paradigm shift, fostering a dynamic dialogue that propels problem identification and resolution. This holistic strategy reflects a concerted effort to transition towards a policing model that embodies transparency, accountability, and community-centric values, striving for lasting and positive transformation in law enforcement practices in San Francisco.



## **Transformative Pathways in Policing**

In the landscape of modern policing, the SFPD has embarked on a journey of transformation, marked by critical reassessment, structural overhaul, and positive shifts. This discussion delves into the department's proactive approach to addressing systemic issues, particularly those related to racial disparities, and its commitment to implementing transformative changes. Through an analysis of case studies and participant experiences, we explore how these three interconnected themes have shaped the department's evolution towards a more equitable and effective policing model in San Francisco. Three pivotal themes come to the forefront, illuminating the department's concerted efforts to address systemic issues, implement transformative changes, and foster community collaboration. These themes encompass 1) *Critical Reassessment and Reform Triggered by Racial Disparities*, 2) *Comprehensive Review and Overhaul of Policing Structures*, and 3) *Positive Shifts and Ongoing Reforms within Policing*.

Within the realm of law enforcement, the SFPD has navigated a complex landscape, confronting issues of racial disparities and systemic challenges. This discussion is structured around three major themes that have defined the department's transformative journey: critical reassessment triggered by racial disparities, comprehensive review and overhaul of policing structures, and positive shifts and ongoing reforms within the profession. Through an analysis of these themes, we gain insight into the department's proactive approach and commitment to fostering a more equitable and effective policing system in San Francisco.

### *Critical Reassessment and Reform Triggered by Racial Disparities*

The recognition of disparate racial interactions within the SFPD served as a catalyst for critical reassessment and reform efforts, addressing systemic issues and aiming for more

equitable policing. The exploration of racial disparities within the SFPD has uncovered a critical theme that catalyzes the reform process. These incidents, characterized by noticeable racial disparities, acted as powerful catalysts, igniting a significant reassessment of the department's entrenched practices and policies. This recognition went beyond mere acknowledgment, prompting a heightened awareness of the systemic issues at play. This heightened awareness became the driving force behind a meticulous and thorough examination of the existing structures within the police department, compelling stakeholders to scrutinize and overhaul established norms, procedures, and protocols. This theme emphasizes the role of these incidents as catalysts for change, sparking a profound and necessary transformation within the San Francisco Police Department.

Participants in the research shared a mosaic of personal experiences, witness testimonies, and data, collectively shedding light on the stark realities faced by certain groups impacted by disparate outcomes in policing. Key events such as the Rodney King incidents, the Los Angeles Riots, and the recent tragic loss of George Floyd were vividly recalled, underscoring the pervasive mistreatment by police officers. These narratives were echoed by stakeholders like Aaron Peskin, the President of the Board of Supervisors, who highlighted historical biases rooted in racism within policing. Their accounts resonate with a widespread acknowledgment of biased and excessive policing practices that extend beyond isolated incidents, emphasizing the urgent need for reform.

The impact of such incidents was acutely felt in San Francisco, particularly within the African American and Latino/a/x community, as expressed by community organizers and advocates. Their perspectives revealed glaring disparities in the criminal justice system, with disproportionate representation within the incarcerated population. These accounts reject

simplistic notions of inherent criminality among African American and Latino/a/x individuals, pointing instead to systemic biases within the justice system. This nuanced understanding calls for transformative reforms and a departure from punitive approaches that perpetuate systemic inequalities.

The combined narratives of stakeholders contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges within the criminal justice system in San Francisco. Further exploration into individual experiences and perspectives will deepen our understanding of the multifaceted challenges and contribute to meaningful changes in policing practices. The forthcoming analysis will delve deeper into these individual experiences, providing a comprehensive exploration of the perspectives that contribute to the call for meaningful and transformative changes in policing practices.

#### *Comprehensive Review and Overhaul of Policing Structures*

Acknowledgment of racial inequities led to a comprehensive review of existing structures within the police department, prompting transformative changes in norms, procedures, and protocols to address systemic issues. The CA Department of Justice Collaborative Reform Initiative emerged as a transformative catalyst for the San Francisco Police Department, fundamentally reshaping its approach to policing and instigating crucial trust rebuilding within the community. This initiative went beyond procedural adjustments, providing a comprehensive framework for reform and emphasizing the department's evolution into a modernized agency focused on supporting and respecting all communities, especially communities of color. The unanimous agreement among research participants highlighted the critical need for police reforms to construct a more resilient and community-oriented department. Former Police Commissioner Angela Chan's perspective echoed the universal need

for reform in policing practices, particularly in addressing disproportionate impacts on marginalized communities.

The reform process, as a public demonstration of the department's commitment, responded to immediate concerns and laid a robust foundation for collaboration, understanding, and trust to flourish. SFPD Officer Deshawn Wright's view on the need for continuous adaptation within policing underscored the dynamic nature of the profession. The reform embarked upon by the SFPD ignited a profound cultural shift, signifying an ongoing commitment to adaptability, accountability, and responsiveness—cornerstones in nurturing a modernized, community-centric police force dedicated to justice and safety for every San Francisco resident.

The reform process, manifesting the San Francisco Police Department's commitment, addressed immediate issues and established a strong basis for enhanced collaboration, understanding, and trust. Officer Deshawn Wright's insights highlight the necessity of ongoing evolution in policing, emphasizing the profession's dynamic nature. While the reforms initiated a significant cultural shift towards adaptability, accountability, and responsiveness, it is crucial to approach these changes with a critical perspective.

Evidence of this shift is seen in the tangible changes in departmental practices and community relations; however, the transformation is not uniform or complete. The data suggest progress in certain areas, such as increased community engagement and revised training protocols, yet challenges persist, particularly in dismantling long-standing structural inequalities and fully integrating community voices into policing strategies.

Acknowledging these realities, the journey of the SFPD represents a stride towards a more modernized, community-centric police force, yet it remains a work in progress. The

commitment to justice and safety for every San Francisco resident is clear, but the path forward requires continual assessment, openness to change, and, most importantly, a transparent dialogue with the communities served. This nuanced understanding underscores the complex landscape of policing reform, where significant advancements coexist with ongoing challenges that need persistent attention and action.

A significant outcome of the reform is the department's evolving commitment to supporting and respecting all communities, with an emphasis on addressing the needs of those historically marginalized. While the department has adopted policies and practices aiming to align more closely with these objectives, it is important to recognize that the process is ongoing, and challenges related to structural inequalities remain. The shift towards a more inclusive approach signifies progress, yet it is part of a continuous effort to fully realize a policing model that consistently upholds the values of support and respect across all communities. Michael Dirden, a consultant for the reform process, reflected on the challenging landscape that the SFPD faced and the imperative for change to address community issues. The reform underscored the recognition that effective policing demands understanding and responsiveness to diverse community challenges, fostering inclusivity and equity within law enforcement practices.

Deputy Chief Peter Walsh emphasized the ongoing commitment to reform, highlighting the department's dedication to continuous improvement and responsiveness to community needs. This journey embodies transparency, community collaboration, and the cultivation of a police force actively striving to foster a safer, just, and inclusive environment. Chief of Police William Scott's acknowledgment of ongoing improvement and the engagement with diverse stakeholders illustrates a commitment to transformation as a continuous journey. The

collaborative and inclusive approach empowered the community to actively participate in shaping policing practices, marking a fundamental shift towards community-oriented policing. However, it's essential to critically assess the extent and depth of this participation, acknowledging that while there was a move towards inclusivity, the actual influence and involvement of community members in decision-making processes varied, reflecting the complexities of truly integrating diverse community perspectives into law enforcement strategies.

The CA Department of Justice Collaborative Reform Initiative acted as a significant impetus for change within the San Francisco Police Department, playing a key role in advancing the objectives of enhancing justice, fairness, and safety across diverse San Francisco communities. This initiative marked a pivotal moment in the department's history, prompting a comprehensive reassessment of policies, procedures, and practices. The collaborative nature of the initiative facilitated open dialogue between law enforcement officials, community members, advocacy groups, and external experts, fostering a transparent and inclusive process that addressed critical issues facing the department and the communities it serves.

Through rigorous assessments, data analysis, and stakeholder consultations, the reform initiative identified areas of improvement and implemented targeted strategies to enhance the department's effectiveness, accountability, and community engagement. This included initiatives focused on de-escalation techniques, implicit bias training, community policing strategies, and enhancing transparency through improved data collection and reporting mechanisms. These efforts were instrumental in rebuilding trust between the police department and marginalized communities, fostering positive relationships, and reducing instances of use of force and discriminatory practices.

Furthermore, the reform initiative's emphasis on continuous improvement and ongoing monitoring ensured that the changes implemented were sustainable and aligned with evolving community needs and best practices in law enforcement. This proactive approach not only addressed immediate concerns but also laid a foundation for long-term transformation and organizational culture change within the department.

Overall, the CA Department of Justice Collaborative Reform Initiative played a crucial role in shaping a more accountable, transparent, and community-oriented police department in San Francisco. By addressing systemic challenges and fostering a culture of collaboration and accountability, the initiative contributed significantly to the overarching goal of ensuring justice, fairness, and safety for all residents of San Francisco.

#### *Positive Shifts and Ongoing Reforms within Policing*

Despite acknowledging biases, San Francisco's policing profession witnessed substantial and ongoing reforms, highlighting the city's commitment to transformative practices and its role as a pioneer in progressive policing. The research delves into the evolving landscape of policing within the San Francisco Police Department, shedding light on the transformative journey marked by nuanced perspectives and collective experiences. A widespread acknowledgment of biased policing was met with a notable majority of participants emphasizing a significant transformation, positioning policing as an honorable profession in San Francisco. The research encompassed insights from twenty-one participants, encompassing both individuals who chose policing as a career and those influenced by reform initiatives, showcasing a substantial shift in law enforcement dynamics.

In the narrative of policing reform in San Francisco, the grassroots organizers emerged as pivotal figures, tirelessly working to hold the police department accountable. Their efforts,

characterized by consistent advocacy and public demonstrations, were fundamental in catalyzing the transformative changes observed in the SFPD. These organizers, representing a broad spectrum of community interests and concerns, were not merely external observers but active participants in the reform process. Their engagement ranged from organizing public forums and rallies to participating in policy discussions and oversight committees, all aimed at ensuring that the police force operates with transparency, fairness, and accountability. This sustained push from the grassroots level signified a crucial element in the city's journey towards progressive policing, making it clear that the positive shifts and ongoing reforms within the SFPD were, in large part, a response to the persistent demands and pressures exerted by these committed community activists. Their role in the reform narrative underscores a vital aspect of the dynamic interplay between the community's aspirations and the practical realities of policing, highlighting their indispensable contribution to the evolving landscape of law enforcement in San Francisco.

Board of Supervisor Myrna Melgar's perspective encapsulates the dual nature of policing—essential for ensuring safety yet prone to negative interactions, reflecting a delicate balance that underpins discussions about policing challenges. This nuanced understanding sets the stage for a deeper exploration of the complexities faced by law enforcement professionals in their daily duties. Transitioning from Melgar's perspective, Board of Supervisor Rafael Mandelman's insights shed light on the proactive measures taken by the SFPD to address past challenges. Mandelman's remarks not only affirm the department's commitment to adapting to community needs but also highlight the ongoing efforts to foster trust and transparency in policing practices. This proactive approach serves as a bridge between acknowledging the challenges and showcasing the strides made toward positive change within the department.



Building upon this foundation, the resounding consensus among participants, approaching 70%, underscores a shared perspective of a substantial and transformative evolution in policing. This collective acknowledgment portrays policing as not just a profession, but an honorable vocation dedicated to serving and protecting the community. It reflects a narrative shift from viewing policing solely through the lens of challenges to recognizing the noble aspects and positive contributions of law enforcement professionals.

Board of Supervisor Ahsha Safai's emphasis on San Francisco's leadership role in police reform further aligns with the prevailing sentiment among participants, emphasizing the positive shifts and advancements within the profession. Safai's remarks serve to bridge the gap between acknowledging the historical challenges and highlighting the innovative approaches and progress made in modern policing practices. Former Police Commissioner Bill Hing's acknowledgment of the complexities faced by police officers adds depth and context to the discussion. His recognition of their dedication and commitment to upholding constitutional values underscores the multifaceted nature of law enforcement work. Hing's perspective complements the evolving narrative of a profession striving for excellence while navigating complex societal dynamics.

SFPD Assistant Chief of Operations David Lazar's viewpoint offers a glimpse into San Francisco's pioneering role in modernizing policing practices. His emphasis on adapting to evolving challenges and continuous improvement initiatives reinforces the narrative of resilience and innovation within the department. Lazar's perspective serves as a testament to the department's proactive stance and commitment to community-centered policing strategies.

The convergence of these diverse perspectives forms a comprehensive narrative that not only acknowledges the challenges but also celebrates the positive strides and innovative

initiatives within the San Francisco Police Department. This collective recognition positions San Francisco as a beacon of innovation and progress in policing reform, shaping a narrative of resilience, adaptability, and a steadfast commitment to serving the community with honor and dedication.

The collective sentiment among participants reflects not just positive changes within the profession but also a broader consensus on the nobility and honor associated with modern policing in San Francisco. The analysis will delve deeper into the specific initiatives and strategies employed by the SFPD in navigating challenges and maintaining a positive trajectory toward reform and excellence. This transformative narrative signifies a paradigm shift in law enforcement approaches, aligning with constitutional ideals and community-centric policing principles.

This discussion underscores the San Francisco Police Department's proactive approach to transformative changes, driven by heightened awareness of racial inequities and a collective commitment to fostering a more equitable and effective policing system. Through ongoing dialogues, policy revisions, and community engagement initiatives, the department aims to address systemic issues, build trust, and promote transparency. These efforts reflect a broader societal shift towards advocating for justice, fairness, and accountability within law enforcement agencies.

Across all participant groups—be they community advocates, city government leaders, or police officers—a unanimous consensus emerged regarding the urgent need for reforms. This unanimity was striking and demonstrates a shared belief that reform is imperative for the department to evolve into a more just and constitutionally sound policing agency. Even amidst differing perspectives on policing practices, this unanimous agreement on the need for reform

stands out as a crucial organizational acknowledgment, emphasizing the urgency of the reform process.

To usher in transformative changes in policing and cultivate a state-of-the-art law enforcement organization, a multifaceted formula comes into play. This formula necessitates a collective approach, drawing upon the contributions of diverse entities both within and outside the system, all working collaboratively to instigate the necessary reforms in policing. Each entity involved in this intricate process assumes distinct roles and employs unique tactics that interweave into the fabric of change, forming the foundational structure for a redefined approach to policing.

Within this collective effort, various stakeholders including law enforcement agencies, community organizations, governmental bodies, and advocacy groups, play vital roles in the transformation of policing practices. The collaboration between these entities forms a dynamic synergy, leveraging their respective strengths to address systemic issues and implement effective solutions. Community organizers and advocates are pivotal in driving significant changes observed in policing, particularly in the formulation and revision of major policies. Movements like Black Lives Matter and numerous other organizations have served as powerful catalysts, shedding light on injustices perpetuated within policing and advocating for more equitable policies. These community-driven initiatives actively engage in the formulation and advocacy for specific policy changes, contributing to the creation of a policing framework that is responsive to immediate challenges and aligned with the broader goal of building a more equitable, accountable, and community-centric law enforcement system.

Law enforcement agencies, positioned as pivotal players in the reform process, shoulder the responsibility of spearheading internal reforms, instituting procedural changes, and

embracing the implementation of updated policies. This internal metamorphosis lays the foundation for a law enforcement apparatus that is adept at responding to contemporary challenges and responsive to the diverse needs of the communities it serves. The collaborative and forward-thinking approach between law enforcement and community organizers reflects a commitment to accountability, transparency, and the overall betterment of policing practices within San Francisco.

Another significant thematic finding from the study is the pivotal role of race, particularly in use-of-force incidents impacting African American and Latino/a or Latinx communities, in driving the establishment of reformative processes, especially concerning police reforms related to use-of-force policies. The analysis revealed a consensus among participants regarding the significant role of race in both initiating and sustaining the necessity for changes in use-of-force policies. Participants frequently cited incidents involving the use of force and officer-involved shootings, such as those of Mario Woods, Alex Nieto, Amilcar Perez, and Jessica Williams, as critical events highlighting the urgency of rethinking use-of-force policies. These incidents served as poignant examples, emphasizing the imperative to reassess and reformulate use-of-force protocols to preserve and safeguard the lives of individuals interacting with the police. The consensus among participants on the profound impact of race in these incidents further underscores the interconnectedness between reform efforts and addressing racial disparities within law enforcement practices.

While participants acknowledged the historical and institutional roots of racism that have shaped policing in America, discussions illuminated a transformative shift occurring within the field. A unanimous acknowledgment emerged, recognizing the pivotal role of policing in providing essential interventions for the overall well-being of all residents.

Emphasizing the significance of law enforcement, participants highlighted the importance of police reforms, especially those related to use-of-force policies, as integral to ensuring public safety, underscoring their dedication to serving the community.

Crucially, participants noted that policing has undergone a metamorphosis in response to urgent calls from marginalized groups advocating for a modernized, 21st-century police department, particularly in terms of use-of-force policy changes. This evolution aligns with the visionary ideals articulated by former President Obama, who championed the need for reform in policing practices, including robust changes in use-of-force policies. The recognition of this need for change and the responsiveness to the voices of marginalized communities underscore the ongoing evolution of policing practices, specifically in areas directly impacting community trust, such as use-of-force policies. It reflects a commitment within law enforcement circles to adopt more equitable and community-oriented strategies in line with contemporary societal expectations, particularly in the realm of use-of-force protocols.

This dynamic shift not only acknowledges historical challenges but also emphasizes a forward-looking approach, especially regarding use-of-force policy changes. The commitment to reforming use-of-force policies becomes a crucial aspect of fostering a law enforcement system that is not only responsive but actively aligned with the values and needs of the diverse communities it serves. In essence, the ongoing evolution of policing practices, with a specific focus on use-of-force policy changes, signifies a commitment to building trust and fostering stronger, more inclusive relationships between law enforcement agencies and the communities they serve. This commitment promotes fairness and creates a safer and more inclusive environment for all residents, particularly in situations involving police interactions and use-of-force incidents.

In conclusion, the examination of grassroots movements and city government leadership in influencing policy change around police reform in San Francisco reveals a complex and dynamic interplay between various stakeholders. The symbiotic relationship between grassroots activism and city government leadership emerges as a potent catalyst for substantial changes in policing, emphasizing the importance of collaboration, active listening, and mutual cooperation.

The core of this research lies in unraveling the dynamic interplay between grassroots activism and city government leadership, which has been a fundamental driver of the profound changes in policing practices in San Francisco. This relationship is not merely a backdrop but the catalyst that has transformed the landscape of law enforcement, underscoring the necessity of collaboration, active listening, and mutual cooperation. Grassroots activism, ignited by public outcry against instances of police abuse and systemic injustices, has been instrumental in challenging the status quo and demanding a reevaluation of policing practices. The community's mobilization did not just voice grievances; it created a political and social environment where the need for comprehensive reform became unavoidable. High-profile incidents, such as the shooting of Mario Woods, became focal points for public unrest and dissatisfaction, amplifying the call for accountability and transparency within the SFPD.

Through the lens of the research participants, it becomes evident that this groundswell of activism was not a peripheral noise but a central force in shaping policy discourse. For instance, as noted by Kirby from the Board of Supervisors, the community's voice had a direct impact on the allocation of resources and the strategic direction of police reform initiatives. This illustrates that the grassroots movements and public pressure did more than just air grievances; they were pivotal in steering the policy agenda and ensuring that the community's call for justice was heeded and acted upon.

The symbiotic relationship between the community and city government officials, therefore, transcends a simple narrative of improved governance; it represents a seismic shift in the power dynamics and decision-making processes within the city. Policymakers and city officials, faced with the undeniable force of collective civic action, recognized that substantive changes were not only desired but essential. The advocacy and sustained pressure from the community cracked open the space for dialogue and reform, transitioning from a possibility to a political imperative.

This transition was not a unilateral decision by the police force or politicians to enact reforms but a response to the potent force of community mobilization and advocacy. The narrative that emerged from the findings indicates a shift from reactive measures to a proactive engagement, where the voices of the grassroots movements were not just heard but became a driving force in the reform process. The active involvement of city government officials, in collaboration with advocacy groups, signifies a departure from traditional top-down governance to a more inclusive and participatory approach.

In summary, the heart of this research uncovers how public pressure in response to police malpractices and the subsequent community mobilization fundamentally reshaped the approach to policing in San Francisco. The changes in the SFPD were not merely administrative adjustments but a fundamental transformation driven by the political imperative birthed from grassroots activism. This dynamic interplay has not only redefined the relationship between the community and the police force but has also set a precedent for how civic engagement and government responsiveness can collaboratively forge pathways for substantial and meaningful reform.

Grassroots movements, driven by impassioned community voices, play a pivotal role in bringing attention to systemic issues and advocating for transformative reforms. These movements, often collaborating with legal bodies and established advocacy groups, act as dynamic catalysts, exerting crucial pressure to instigate much-needed changes in policing. The adversarial stance of these advocacy groups becomes a necessary force, challenging the status quo and driving a collective demand for accountability and equity.

City government leadership, on the other hand, acts as a linchpin in the intricate machinery of police reform. Elected officials, including the Board of Supervisors, play a crucial role in shaping the trajectory of policing by appointing police chiefs, implementing accountability measures, and influencing budgetary decisions. The alignment of city government leadership with grassroots aspirations ensures that reform initiatives have the necessary political backing and fosters an environment where community concerns are acknowledged, validated, and translated into tangible policy adjustments.

The collaboration between city government and advocacy groups creates a dynamic ecosystem where the voices of the community are actively integrated into the reformative dialogue. This collaboration becomes even more critical when federal oversight is involved, indicating a sustained commitment to external scrutiny and community-driven reform. The profound impact of this collaboration is evident in the tangible changes observed in policing practices, showcasing the potential of shared decision-making and partnership in reshaping the landscape of law enforcement for the betterment of the community.

The findings related to the Use of Force policy overhaul highlight that the revisions were not isolated events but shaped by a confluence of factors, including public discourse, media influence, and high-profile incidents. Recognizing historical and systemic issues within the



SFPD prompted a comprehensive and nuanced discussion around policy revisions. Tensions, frictions, collaborations, and convergences among various stakeholders, including advocates, the Police Commission, elected officials, and the media, were crucial in steering the narrative toward essential changes within the policing framework. This collaborative effort aimed to facilitate public discourse, address concerns, and result in favorable resolutions.

Policymakers and city government officials in San Francisco respond to advocacy and political pressures with a nuanced approach, recognizing the influence of advocacy groups and community-driven movements in shaping the discourse around policing. Acknowledging public concerns catalyzes proactive engagement and policy revisions, reflecting a commitment to transparent, accountable, and community-centric policing. The continuous interaction between policymakers and advocacy groups, reinforced by the role of the Police Commission and elected officials, underscores the dynamic nature of the decision-making process. The interconnected efforts of these critical players serve as catalysts for reshaping the narrative around the use of force, striving for positive and enduring change within the policing paradigm in San Francisco.

### **Data Results: Reductions in Use of Force**

The comprehensive reforms implemented by the San Francisco Police Department (SFPD) have led to notable reductions in the use of force incidents. According to a report by the SFPD, there has been a significant decrease in the overall use of force since the introduction of revised policies and enhanced training programs. The data indicates a 24% reduction in use-of-force incidents from 2018 to 2021 (San Francisco Police Department, 2022). Additionally, specific types of force, such as the use of firearms, have seen even more substantial declines, with officer-involved shootings decreasing by 30% during the same period (San Francisco Police Department, 2022).

The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) has also recognized the positive changes within the SFPD. In their review, the DOJ commended the SFPD for its commitment to reform and highlighted the department's progress in improving community relations and accountability measures. The DOJ's feedback emphasized that the SFPD's efforts to involve community perspectives in policy development have been crucial in promoting transparency and trust (U.S. Department of Justice, 2016). The DOJ's collaboration with the SFPD in implementing these reforms has been instrumental in achieving these outcomes.

Moreover, the implementation of body-worn cameras and the requirement for detailed documentation and review of any use-of-force incidents have increased transparency and accountability, contributing to these reductions. The department's emphasis on de-escalation training has also played a critical role in minimizing the need for force during encounters (San Francisco Police Department, 2022). Community feedback and continuous policy revisions have been integral to these improvements, highlighting the importance of responsive and adaptive policymaking in achieving sustained progress.

These data points underscore the effectiveness of the collaborative efforts between the SFPD, the Police Commission, and community advocacy groups in fostering a safer and more accountable policing environment. The reductions in use-of-force incidents serve as a testament to the positive impact of these reforms and the ongoing commitment to improving police-community relations in San Francisco.

Beyond the reductions in use-of-force incidents, another significant data point illustrating the progress of police reforms in San Francisco is the increased diversity within the police force. Following the implementation of new recruitment and hiring policies, the SFPD has seen a notable rise in the number of recruits from diverse backgrounds. According to the

SFPD's 2022 diversity report, there has been a 15% increase in the recruitment of officers from underrepresented communities compared to previous years (San Francisco Police Department, 2022). This shift towards a more diverse police force aligns with the department's goals of fostering a police service that better reflects the demographics of the community it serves, thereby improving cultural competency and trust between the police and the community. The emphasis on diversity is part of a broader strategy to address systemic biases and ensure that all community members feel represented and respected by law enforcement.

Beyond the reductions in use-of-force incidents, another significant data point illustrating the progress of police reforms in San Francisco is the increased transparency and accountability in police operations. The implementation of body-worn cameras for all officers has been a crucial reform, significantly enhancing the documentation and review of police encounters. According to the SFPD's 2022 transparency report, the use of body-worn cameras has led to a 22% increase in the reporting and review of use-of-force incidents, ensuring that more encounters are documented and scrutinized (San Francisco Police Department, 2022). This measure has not only improved accountability but also provided valuable data for training and policy adjustments, contributing to a culture of greater openness and oversight within the department. Additionally, the establishment of the Department of Police Accountability has further strengthened independent oversight, resulting in a 35% increase in the number of complaints investigated and resolved, thereby enhancing public trust in the police force (Department of Police Accountability, 2022).

These data points underscore the effectiveness of the collaborative efforts between the SFPD, the Police Commission, and community advocacy groups in fostering a safer and more accountable policing environment. The reductions in use-of-force incidents, combined with

increased transparency and accountability, serve as a testament to the positive impact of these reforms and the ongoing commitment to improving police-community relations in San Francisco.

Derrick Bell's interest convergence theory, which posits that significant progress for marginalized groups occurs when it aligns with the interests of those in power, is highly relevant to the police reforms in San Francisco. The alignment of public advocacy with the city's leadership goals has facilitated substantial reforms. This theory dovetails with the new social movement theory, which emphasizes the role of identity, culture, and grassroots activism in driving social change. The synergy between these theories helps explain the progress seen in San Francisco, where community-driven demands for police accountability and transparency have converged with political and administrative interests, leading to meaningful reform.

A new concept, "Social Movement Convergence," builds on these theories by highlighting the cumulative power of multiple intersecting social movements working towards a common goal. In San Francisco, the convergence of the Black Lives Matter movement, local community organizations, and advocacy from civil rights groups has created a formidable force for change. This convergence has amplified the voices of marginalized communities and compelled policymakers to enact reforms that align with both public demand and institutional interests. The strength of social movement convergence lies in its ability to unite diverse groups under a shared vision, driving systemic change more effectively than isolated efforts. This framework provides a robust model for understanding and harnessing the collective power of social movements to achieve lasting social justice outcomes.

## **Limitations**

Despite the progress made in police reforms in San Francisco, several limitations and challenges persist. One major risk is interest divergence, where the interests of policymakers and those of advocacy groups or the community may no longer align, potentially stalling or reversing reform efforts. Political transitions, such as changes in city leadership, also pose a significant threat to the continuity and sustainability of reforms. As new leaders come into power, there is a risk that they may deprioritize or dismantle existing reforms, undermining the progress that has been made.

Another critical challenge is balancing police reform with public safety. This balance often sparks debate and division among stakeholders, with some arguing that reforms might weaken law enforcement's ability to maintain safety. Chief William Scott has addressed this concern, asserting that “advancing reform and maintaining public safety can go together to create a safer and more just city for all” (San Francisco Police Department, 2022). However, the potential for backlash from both police unions and segments of the public who fear increased crime rates remains a significant hurdle.

Moreover, criticisms often arise regarding the perceived effectiveness and impact of these reforms. Critics argue that while policies may change, the practical implementation and cultural shifts within the police force lag behind. This ongoing skepticism can erode public trust in the reform process and the police force itself.

Building and maintaining community trust remains an ongoing challenge. Many communities, particularly marginalized ones, continue to feel the impact of systemic biases and disproportionate policing. Ensuring that police reforms translate into tangible changes in these communities is essential for fostering trust. Continuous engagement, transparency, and

accountability are critical in this regard. Community members need to see and feel the changes promised by reforms to believe in their efficacy.

The importance of ensuring continuous progress cannot be overstated. Reforms must be dynamic and responsive to evolving community needs and feedback. Regular assessments and adjustments to policies and practices are necessary to maintain momentum and credibility. The involvement of diverse community voices in the reform process is crucial for identifying gaps and areas needing improvement.

Political government changes, such as shifts in presidency, mayoral leadership, board members, and city department leadership, can significantly impact the direction and sustainability of police reforms. When new leaders are not in line with the ongoing reform efforts, there is a risk that they may deprioritize or roll back essential changes. For instance, a new mayor or police chief with different views on law enforcement may choose to emphasize traditional policing tactics over community-focused reforms, potentially reversing the gains made in transparency and accountability (Lodge & Hood, 2012).

Maintaining the momentum of reforms amid political transitions requires embedding recommendations as institutional practices rather than individual policies subject to the whims of changing leadership. This institutionalization ensures that reforms have a lasting impact regardless of political changes. For example, the integration of body-worn cameras and the establishment of independent oversight bodies like the Department of Police Accountability can help sustain transparency and accountability measures even if leadership changes (San Francisco Police Department, 2022).

The comprehensive reforms in San Francisco's policing practices demonstrate significant progress in enhancing transparency, accountability, and community trust. However, several

limitations and challenges underscore the complexity of sustaining these reforms. Interest divergence and political transitions pose significant risks, potentially stalling or reversing the advancements made. The balancing act between implementing reforms and maintaining public safety remains contentious, with criticisms about the effectiveness and practical application of new policies persisting. Ensuring continuous progress necessitates embedding reforms as institutional practices and maintaining robust engagement with both the community and police officers. Despite these challenges, the collaborative efforts of policymakers, advocacy groups, and the police commission have laid a solid foundation for a more equitable and accountable policing system. Continuous vigilance, adaptation, and commitment to these principles are essential to ensure the lasting success and credibility of police reforms in San Francisco. Furthermore, it is crucial to maintain the morale of both the community and police officers during these transitions. Reforms that seem unstable or reversible can lead to disillusionment and decreased trust among community members, undermining efforts to build stronger police-community relations. Similarly, police officers may feel uncertain about their roles and expectations, which can affect their performance and adherence to new policies. Continuous training, clear communication, and engagement with all stakeholders are essential to uphold the integrity and effectiveness of reforms (Braga & Weisburd, 2019).

The comprehensive reforms in San Francisco's policing practices demonstrate significant progress in enhancing transparency, accountability, and community trust. However, several limitations and challenges underscore the complexity of sustaining these reforms. Interest divergence and political transitions pose significant risks, potentially stalling or reversing the advancements made. The balancing act between implementing reforms and maintaining public safety remains contentious, with criticisms about the effectiveness and

practical application of new policies persisting. Ensuring continuous progress necessitates embedding reforms as institutional practices and maintaining robust engagement with both the community and police officers. Despite these challenges, the collaborative efforts of policymakers, advocacy groups, and the police commission have laid a solid foundation for a more equitable and accountable policing system. Continuous vigilance, adaptation, and commitment to these principles are essential to ensure the lasting success and credibility of police reforms in San Francisco.

## **Conclusion**

The comprehensive analysis of grassroots movements and the collaborative efforts of city government leadership in driving policy changes for police reform in San Francisco shed light on a multifaceted and dynamic interplay among diverse stakeholders. The synergy between grassroots activism and government leadership emerges as a potent force for significant transformations in policing, underscoring the crucial role of collaboration, active engagement, and mutual cooperation.

Grassroots movements, fueled by impassioned community voices, serve as key drivers in bringing attention to systemic issues and advocating for transformative reforms. Their partnerships with legal bodies and established advocacy groups amplify their impact, exerting crucial pressure to initiate much-needed changes in policing practices. The adversarial stance of these advocacy groups becomes a necessary force, challenging existing norms and fostering a collective demand for accountability and equity.

On the other hand, city government leadership acts as a pivotal link in the intricate mechanism of police reform. Elected officials, including the Board of Supervisors, wield significant influence in shaping the direction of policing by appointing police chiefs,



implementing accountability measures, and influencing budget allocations. The alignment of city government leadership with grassroots aspirations ensures that reform initiatives garner essential political support and fosters an environment where community concerns are not only heard but also translated into tangible policy adjustments.

The collaboration between city government and advocacy groups creates a dynamic ecosystem where community voices are actively integrated into the reformative dialogue. This collaboration gains added significance in instances involving federal oversight, indicating a sustained commitment to external scrutiny and community-driven reform initiatives. The profound impact of this collaborative approach is evident in the tangible changes observed in policing practices, highlighting the potential of shared decision-making and partnerships in reshaping the law enforcement landscape for the benefit of the community.

Moreover, the application of interest convergence theory and insights from new social movement theories enrich our understanding of these dynamics. Interest convergence theory posits that significant changes in policies often occur when the interests of marginalized groups align with those in positions of power or authority. In the context of police reform, this theory underscores the importance of aligning community demands with political agendas, facilitating meaningful reforms that address systemic issues.

New social movement theories contribute by highlighting the evolving nature of grassroots activism and advocacy efforts. These theories emphasize the role of social media, digital organizing, and strategic alliances in amplifying community voices and mobilizing support for reform initiatives. The incorporation of these theories into the analysis underscores the dynamic and adaptive nature of contemporary advocacy movements, enhancing their effectiveness in driving policy changes.

The collaborative efforts between grassroots movements and city government leadership, informed by interest convergence theory and new social movement theories, are pivotal in driving substantial changes in policing practices. The symbiotic relationship between these stakeholders emphasizes the importance of collaboration, strategic alliances, and the alignment of interests in achieving meaningful and sustainable reforms in law enforcement for the benefit of communities.

Social movement emergence theory, a novel framework that synthesizes the principles of interest convergence and new social movement theories, offers valuable insights into the dynamics of grassroots activism and city government collaboration in driving policy changes for police reform in San Francisco. This theory posits that transformative changes emerge when the interests of marginalized communities converge with evolving societal norms and technological advancements, leading to the social movement emergence of influential movements capable of reshaping institutional practices.

At the core of social movement emergence theory is the recognition that grassroots movements, empowered by digital organizing tools and strategic alliances, can leverage interest convergence dynamics to catalyze systemic changes. The alignment of community demands with shifting societal values and expectations creates fertile ground for the social movement emergence of potent advocacy movements that resonate widely and mobilize support across diverse sectors of society.

In the context of police reform, social movement emergence theory underscores the pivotal role of digital activism, social media campaigns, and strategic partnerships in amplifying community voices and garnering widespread public attention. These emergent movements, fueled by the convergence of interests and the adoption of innovative organizing strategies,

exert significant pressure on policymakers and institutional leaders to prioritize reforms that address longstanding issues of accountability, transparency, and equity in policing.

Moreover, social movement emergence theory emphasizes the adaptive nature of advocacy efforts, highlighting the importance of continuous learning, collaboration, and adaptation to changing social and political landscapes. By embracing emergent strategies, grassroots movements and city government leadership can navigate complex challenges, foster inclusive dialogues, and co-create solutions that reflect the evolving needs and aspirations of the communities they serve.

In essence, social movement emergence theory sheds light on the transformative potential inherent in the convergence of interest-driven advocacy and the dynamics of new social movements. It underscores the power of collective action, strategic alliances, and technological advancements in driving progressive changes in policing practices and promoting social justice agendas in contemporary society.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

There are several key recommendations for future research on police reforms. One crucial suggestion is to broaden the participant pool significantly, allowing for a more comprehensive study of diverse voices across all the categories investigated. These categories of participants include law enforcement officials, community organizers and activists, governmental representatives such as city council members and mayoral staff, legal experts and advocates, representatives from oversight bodies like police commissions or civilian review boards, academic researchers specializing in criminal justice or social sciences, and members of the general public affected by policing practices. This expanded participant base would

encompass a wider range of perspectives, experiences, and insights related to policing practices and reform initiatives.

Additionally, future research could focus on longitudinal studies to track the long-term impact of reform measures, including assessing changes in community perceptions, trust in law enforcement, and the effectiveness of implemented policies over time. Expanding qualitative methods such as in-depth interviews, focus groups, and case studies can provide nuanced understandings of the complexities surrounding police reform efforts, including the role of community engagement, organizational dynamics within law enforcement agencies, and the influence of external factors like media coverage and political climates.

Exploring comparative analyses with other cities or regions undergoing similar reform processes can offer valuable lessons learned and best practices for effective reform implementation. By comparing the experiences, strategies, and outcomes of police reforms in different contexts, researchers can gain deeper insights into what works well and what challenges may arise. This comparative approach allows for a broader understanding of the complexities involved in reforming policing practices and can help identify innovative solutions that can be adapted and implemented in diverse settings. Moreover, adopting a multifaceted and interdisciplinary approach to future research on police reforms is crucial. Such an approach can encompass quantitative analysis, qualitative methods, stakeholder interviews, community surveys, policy evaluations, and historical perspectives to provide a comprehensive assessment of the reform landscape. This holistic approach not only generates actionable insights but also facilitates evidence-based decision-making, leading to the promotion of more equitable, accountable, and community-oriented policing practices.

The ongoing evaluation of current conditions and the impacts of reforms is paramount, as highlighted by numerous participants who have voiced concerns regarding the effectiveness of implementation over time. While some perceive the reforms as potent institutional changes, others raise questions about their sustained impact and effectiveness into the future. Therefore, delving into the nuances and long-term effects of police reforms through a comprehensive quantitative or qualitative study can significantly contribute to the research field focused on police reforms. Such an in-depth analysis can shed light on the evolving dynamics of reform implementation, the challenges encountered, the successes achieved, and the lasting changes within law enforcement practices.

Furthermore, there is a critical need for expanded research analysis concerning the entire police reform process, specifically focusing on the SFPD Collaborative Reform Initiative. While the use of force policy overhaul has garnered considerable attention, exploring beyond this aspect can provide valuable insights into the overall effectiveness of police reforms. Investigating aspects such as community engagement strategies, training programs, accountability mechanisms, and cultural shifts within the department can offer a comprehensive understanding of the reform initiative's impact. This expanded research scope enables researchers to assess the holistic transformation of policing practices, identify areas of improvement, and recommend evidence-based strategies for sustainable reform efforts.

There is a pressing need to delve into the delicate balance between police reforms and public safety, especially in the context of evolving demographics in San Francisco and across the nation. The notion that police reforms might hinder the ability to maintain a fully safe community due to constraints on police discretion has been a topic of debate. However, the significant reduction in crime rates observed in San Francisco, coupled with the successful

completion of various police reforms, presents a compelling counter-narrative that warrants thorough investigation through research.

Exploring this nuanced relationship between police reforms and public safety requires an interdisciplinary approach that considers factors such as community engagement, crime prevention strategies, law enforcement protocols, and the impact of reform measures on overall public trust and satisfaction. By conducting empirical studies, collecting quantitative data on crime trends, public perceptions of safety, and the implementation of reform policies, researchers can provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of police reforms in ensuring public safety while upholding principles of accountability, transparency, and community-centered policing.

Moreover, examining case studies and comparative analyses with other cities or regions undergoing similar reform processes can offer a broader perspective on the interplay between reforms and public safety outcomes. This comprehensive research endeavor aims to inform evidence-based policymaking, guide law enforcement agencies in adopting best practices, and contribute to the ongoing dialogue on achieving a balance between police reforms and maintaining a safe and secure community environment.

### **Closing Reflections**

As we conclude our exploration of police reforms and their impact on public safety, it becomes evident that this is a complex and evolving landscape. The multifaceted nature of police reform initiatives, coupled with the dynamic interplay between grassroots movements, city government leadership, and the implementation of reform policies, underscores the need for ongoing research and reflection. The social movement emergence theory, which combines the principles of interest convergence and new social movement theories, offers a powerful

framework for understanding the transformative potential of collaborative efforts in reshaping law enforcement practices. This theory highlights the synergy between diverse stakeholders, emphasizing the importance of shared goals, active engagement, and strategic collaboration in driving meaningful change.

This research journey has been nothing short of life-changing, offering profound insights into the power of collective organizing and the strategic collaboration between grassroots movements and city government leadership in driving social justice change, particularly in the realm of policing. Being actively involved in this process has allowed me to witness firsthand the incredible strength that comes from unity and collaboration. The experience has made me reflect deeply on the transformative potential of collective action, highlighting how individuals from diverse backgrounds can come together with a shared vision to enact meaningful change. The strategic approach of combining grassroots activism with an inside strategy within city government leadership has proven to be a formidable force in addressing systemic issues and advocating for reforms that prioritize equity, accountability, and community well-being.

This research journey has reinforced my belief in the power of community engagement and the importance of inclusive, participatory approaches in shaping policies that reflect the values and aspirations of the people they serve. It has also underscored the critical role of leadership within government institutions in driving positive change and fostering a more just and equitable society. Additionally, I have gained a deeper appreciation for the need to ensure that change is not merely philosophical but translates into tangible actions and outcomes. Furthermore, I have developed a profound respect for those in the policing profession who serve as guardians of the constitution, navigating complex challenges while upholding the principles of justice and fairness. Overall, being a part of this research has been a deeply inspiring and

empowering experience, highlighting the immense potential we have as individuals and communities to create a brighter and more equitable future through collective action and strategic collaboration.

In the words of civil rights leader John Lewis, whose legacy epitomizes the spirit of advocacy and transformative change, "We may not have chosen the time, but the time has chosen us." This quote resonates deeply with the challenges and opportunities presented by police reforms. It reminds us that while the path to reform may be arduous, it is our collective responsibility to continue striving for justice, equity, and accountability within our law enforcement institutions. As we move forward, let us remain committed to conducting rigorous research, fostering inclusive dialogue, and advocating for policies that promote a safer, more just, and equitable society for all. The journey towards effective police reforms is ongoing, and it is through collaboration, perseverance, and a shared vision of progress that we can create lasting positive change.

While many may believe that they alone are the catalyst for significant policy changes, my research has revealed a different truth. It takes a collective effort, combining both an inside and outside strategy, to create the necessary changes within longstanding institutions that have operated under certain norms for years. Change emerges from the collaborative efforts of individuals across various spheres, working together to challenge the status quo and advocate for transformative reforms. In the words of Justice Sonia Sotomayor, "We cannot aspire to be what we cannot see." This inspirational quote encapsulates the essence of our research journey, highlighting the importance of vision, perseverance, and collective action in driving meaningful change.



The journey of exploring police reforms and their impact has been illuminating, instilling a sense of hope and empowerment in understanding that while change may seem incremental or minimal at times, it sets the stage for a monumental shift in the years to come. This research journey serves as a beacon of hope, reminding us that every voice matters, every effort counts, and every step forward, no matter how small, contributes to the larger movement for justice and equity. It reinforces the idea that change is not a singular event, but a continuous process fueled by determination, collaboration, and a steadfast commitment to creating a better future for all.

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## APPENDIX A

### Glossary of Terms

- *Use of Force*: The right to use force is the right of an individual or authority to settle conflicts or prevent specific actions by using energy to either: dissuade another party from a particular course of action or b physically intervene to stop them. In developed and developing nations, governments allow police, citizen, corrections, or other security personnel to actively employ force to prevent the imminent commission of a crime or even for deterrence. It may also be exercised by the executive branch of a political jurisdiction, deploying the police or military to maintain public order. The use of force is governed by statute and is usually authorized in a progressive series of actions, referred to as a “use of force continuum. The continuum of force progresses from verbal orders, through physical restraint, to, in some cases, lethal force. Where the rule of law holds, the general rule for applying power is that only necessary force may be used. When an individual applies force, the pressure permissible is only that which is reasonable and necessary under the circumstances.
- *Deadly Force*: Any use of force creates a substantial risk of causing death or serious bodily injury, including, but not limited to, the discharge of a firearm. Cal. Penal Code § 835a(1).
- *Imminent Threat of Death or Serious Bodily Injury*: A threat of death or serious bodily injury is "imminent" when, based on the totality of the circumstances, a reasonable officer in the same situation would believe that a person has the present ability, opportunity, and apparent intent to immediately cause death or serious bodily injury to the officer or another person. Imminent harm is not merely a fear of future harm, no matter how great the fear and no matter how great the likelihood of the harm, but is one that, from appearances, must be instantly confronted and addressed. Cal. Penal Code § 8I(e)(2).
- *Safeguarding Human Life and Dignity*: The authority to use force is a serious responsibility given to peace officers by the people who expect them to exercise that authority judiciously and respect human rights, dignity, and life.
- *De-escalation*: Officers’ de-escalation techniques decrease the likelihood of the need to use force during an incident and increase voluntary compliance.
- *Immediate Threat*: An immediate threat is considered to exist if an individual has demonstrated actions that would lead one to reasonably believe that the individual at risk of arrest will continue to pose a threat if not apprehended without delay. A person is an immediate threat if the officer reasonably believes the person has the present intent, means, opportunity, and ability to complete the threat, regardless of whether the threatened action has been initiated.
- *Reasonable Force*: The force that would be objectively reasonable "from the perspective of a reasonable officer in the same situation, based on the totality of the circumstances known to or perceived by the officer at the time, rather than with the benefit of hindsight, and that the totality of the circumstances shall account for occasions when officers may be forced to make quick judgments about using” force." Cal. Penal Code § 835a(a)(4).

## APPENDIX B

### USF IRB Approval Confirmation

**Attachments:**

- Expedited Review Approved by Chair - IRB ID: 1883.pdf



*IRBPHS - Approval Notification*

To: Diana Oliva  
From: Richard Gregory Johnson III, IRB Chair  
Subject: Protocol #1883  
Date: 01/23/2023

The Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRBPHS) at the University of San Francisco (USF) has reviewed your request for human subjects approval regarding your study.

Your research (IRB Protocol #1883) with the project title **Emergence: Social Movements, Law Enforcement, and Defending the Sanctity of Life**, has been approved by the IRB Chair under the rules for expedited review on **01/23/2023**.

Any modifications, adverse reactions or complications must be reported using a modification application to the IRBPHS within ten (10) working days.


If you have any questions, please contact the IRBPHS via email at [IRBPHS@usfca.edu](mailto:IRBPHS@usfca.edu). Please include the Protocol number assigned to your application in your correspondence.

On behalf of the IRBPHS committee, I wish you much success in your research.

Sincerely,

Dr. Richard Gregory Johnson III  
Professor & Chair, Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects  
University of San Francisco  
[irbphs@usfca.edu](mailto:irbphs@usfca.edu)  
[IRBPHS Website](#)

*\*Please note legal name was changed to Diana Aroche*

**CITI Human Subject Research Certification**

Completion Date 31-Dec-2022  
Expiration Date 31-Dec-2025  
Record ID 53380046

This is to certify that:

**Diana Oliva-Aroche**


Has completed the following CITI Program course:

**Human Subjects Research (HSR)**  
(Curriculum Group)  
**Human Subjects Research (HSR)**  
(Course Learner Group)  
**1 - Basic Course**  
(Stage)

Under requirements set by:

**University of San Francisco**

Not valid for renewal of certification through CME.



Verify at [www.citiprogram.org/verify/?w51bfcd5c-a4df-4d87-b739-61f4ac50d3e8-53380046](http://www.citiprogram.org/verify/?w51bfcd5c-a4df-4d87-b739-61f4ac50d3e8-53380046)

*\*Please note legal name was changed to Diana Aroche*





**A. Risks**

There is a risk of loss of privacy. However, participants have the option to use pseudonyms in reports. If requested, transcripts can be identified by a signed number and will be kept confidential. No member of the research team will have access to his information.

Some of the questions you will be asked may be uncomfortable; however, you may choose not to answer any questions. Participation is completely voluntary, and you may withdraw from the interview at any time.

**B. Object Benefits**

There will be no direct benefit to participants. However, your involvement in this research may increase your awareness of the importance of human rights, and you may learn something about the human rights situation in your country.

**C. Confidentiality**

The records of this research will be kept private. In any event of a breach that might be published, the researcher will not include any information that identifies you unless you agree. Research records will be kept in a secure file, and access will be limited to the researcher. The University of San Francisco review board requires that all data be kept confidential, and identifiable data will be destroyed after a minimum of three years, after which it will be destroyed.

- I understand here, if I would like to use a pseudonym.
- I understand here, if I allow, the researcher to identify me in her report.
- I understand here, if you agree to be audio recorded for the research project.

**D. Costs**

There will be no cost to participants in this research.

**E. Compensation**

There will be no compensation for participants in this research.

**F. Attestation**

To attest to the accuracy of the research project.

**G. Questions**

You will have the chance to ask questions, to a member of the research team about this study. If you have any questions, you may contact the researcher at (415) 435-3333. If you have any concerns, you may contact the researcher at (415) 435-3333. If you have any questions, you may contact the researcher at (415) 435-3333. If you have any concerns, you may contact the researcher at (415) 435-3333. [IRBPH@uic.edu](mailto:IRBPH@uic.edu)

**H. Confidentiality**

You have been given the option to keep your information confidential.

PARICIPATION IN THIS RESEARCH IS VOLUNTARY. You may withdraw your participation at any time without penalty. Your participation in this research will have no influence on your present or future status, and the involvement of Simons Foundation in the study is not intended to benefit you or the University of California.

Statement of Consent

I have read and understood the above information, and I agree to participate in this study voluntarily and can be withdrawn at any time with no negative consequences. I have read and understood the above information, and I agree to participate in this study voluntarily and can be withdrawn at any time with no negative consequences.

Print Name of Participant \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Participant: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name of Researching Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Institution: \_\_\_\_\_ Principal Research Investigator \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Informed Consent Form - Researcher: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\*Please note legal name was changed to Diana Aroche

## APPENDIX C

### Research Participant Questionnaire

<A>UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO  
CHANGE THE WORLD FROM HERE

Department of Leadership Studies

School of Education  
280 Fulton Street  
San Francisco, CA 94117-1071  
Phone: (415) 422-6525  
Fax: (415) 422-UTII

[deoli,a@sfrcs,UI\(ca.edu](mailto:deoli,a@sfrcs,UI(ca.edu)

**Informed Consent to Participate in Dissertation Research Study**  
***Emergence: Social Movements, Law Enforcement, and Defending the Sanctity of Life***

**Diana Oliva-Aroche, Doctoral Candidate**  
University of San Francisco, Leadership Studies

**Faculty Names:**

Genevieve Negron-Gonzales, Ph.D Associate Professor, School of Education University of San Francisco	Danfeng Soto-Vigil Koon, Ph.D, JD Associate Professor, Department of Leadership Studies Faculty Co-Director, Transformalove School Leadership University of San Francisco
James Taylor, Ph.D Professor of Political Science African American Studies/Critical Diversity Studies Masters of Public Affairs and Urban Affairs University of San Francisco	Bill Ong Hing, JD Professor, School of Law Director of the Immigration and Deportation Defense Clinic, and Dean's Circle Scholar University of San Francisco

If you are an elected official, city government employee, non-profit representative, grassroots community organizer, or advocate in the field of criminal justice or public safety, the University of San Francisco invites you to participate in a research study that will analyze the lessons learned in developing policy changes in policies such as the revision of the SFPD Department General Order 5.01, Use of Force policy.

Your participation is voluntary and, if requested, may remain anonymous. There is no payment or other form of compensation for your participation in this study. We do not anticipate any risks or discomforts to you from participating in this research. If you wish, you may choose to withdraw your consent and discontinue your participation at any time during the study without penalty.

Personal information will not be disclosed at any point, and the information from your answers to the questions will be used for the purposes of a research study for the University of San Francisco School of Education. The faculty supervisor for this study is Dr. Genevieve Negron-Gonzales.

You will receive no direct benefit from your participation in this study; however, the possible benefits to others include improvements in the advocacy and policy

development of significant police reforms. Your participation will involve answering a series of open-ended questions. It should take no more than 60 minutes of your time.

If you have any further questions or would like additional information about the study, you may contact the Principal Researcher-- Diana Oliva-Aroche, at [deoliva@dons.usfca.edu](mailto:deoliva@dons.usfca.edu). If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a participant in this study, you may contact the University of San Francisco Institutional Review Board at [IRBPHS@usfca.edu](mailto:IRBPHS@usfca.edu).

#### I. Demographic Information

1. Which of the racial designations below best describes you?
  - a. African American
  - b. Latino/a or Latinx
  - c. Asian
  - d. Pacific Islander, Samoan, or Filipino
  - e. White
  - f. Other, please specify:  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
2. What is your gender preference?
  - a. Male
  - b. Female
  - c. Lesbian
  - d. Gay
  - e. Transgender
  - f. Bisexual
  - g. Other, please specify:  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
3. What is your age group?
  - a. 18-24 years old
  - b. 25-35 years old
  - c. 36-50 years old
  - d. 51-65 years old
  - e. 65-80 years old
  - f. 80+ years old
  
4. What city and county do you live in?
  
5. In what city is your current employment?
  
6. Was your city of residence or city of primary employment different during your engagement with police reforms?
  - a. If so, please state your city of residence and employment.  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
7. Are you a parent or a custodial parent?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  
8. What is your highest level of education?  
\_\_\_\_\_

9. How do you identify yourself in the interactions regarding police reforms?

A community organizer or advocate

A non-profit employee

a. If so, which of the following positions:

i. Executive Leadership

ii. Attorney

iii. Service Provider

iv. Community or Labor Organizer

A police officer

a. If so, which of the following ranks:

i. Command Staff

ii. Union Representative

iii. Line Staff

A city government worker other than a police officer

An elected official or commissioner

a. If so, please identify the elected position \_\_\_\_\_

## II. Race, Criminal Justice, and Policing in San Francisco

10. What is your role, and how does it relate to policing in San Francisco?

11. What is your perspective on policing in the City and County of San Francisco?

12. What drove you to become involved in advocating or working on police reforms?

13. Do you believe the San Francisco Police Department needed to implement police reforms? If so, why or why not?

14. How do you believe ethnicity and/or race played a role in the development of police reforms in San Francisco?

## III. Social Movements and Police Reforms

15. What role do you believe grassroots organizers or advocates play in influencing policy changes in police reforms?

16. What role does city government leadership, (including the Police Commission), play in influencing policy change and police reform in San Francisco?

17. How did policymakers and city government officials, including elected offices such as the Mayor's Office and Board of Supervisors, influence changes in policing practices, including reforms?

18. What do you believe influenced city leadership decisions to change policing policies?

**IV. Use of Force and the "Sanctity of Life" Policy**

19. What were some of the most significant and major changes to SFPD's Department General Order 5.01, Use of Force policy?

20. What negotiations were critical in the revision process?

**V. Other**

21. Is there anything else you would like to add that influenced the significant changes in policing, police reforms or specifically the SFPD's Use of Force policy?

Thank you for your time and commitment to participating in this research study!

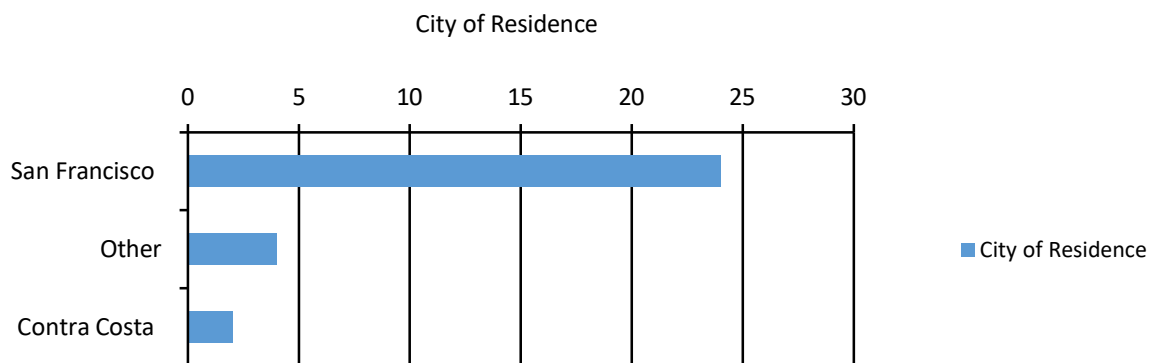
# LIST OF TABLES

**Table 1. Participant Demographics**

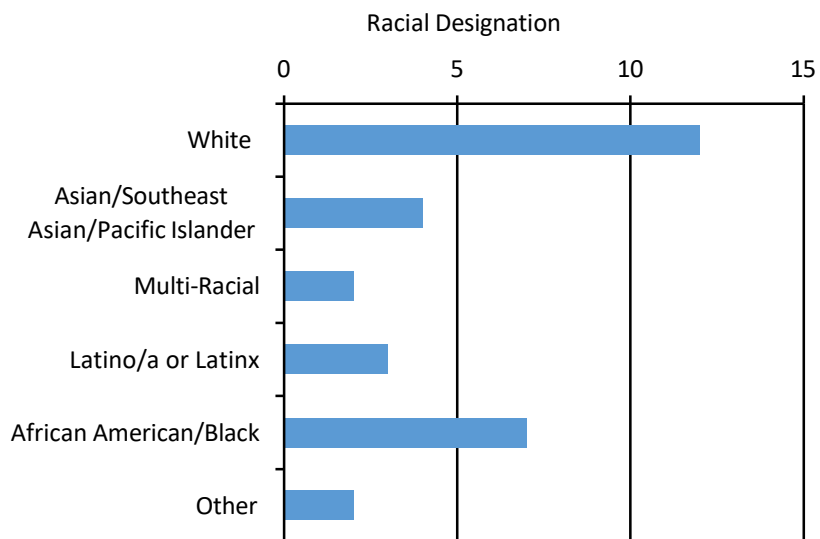
Table 1. Participant Demographics							
Current Employment	City of Residence	City of Employment	Racial/Ethnicity	Gender	Age Grouping	Parent Status (Yes or No)	Education
City Government Worker	Other	Other	White	Female	51-65 years old	No	BS
DI 'Kiliili	KUMEHELE	Other	Other	Female	61-65 years old	No	JD
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**Table 2. City of Residence**

City of Residence	
San Francisco	24
Other	4
Contra Costa	2
Total	30

**Table 3. Racial Designation**

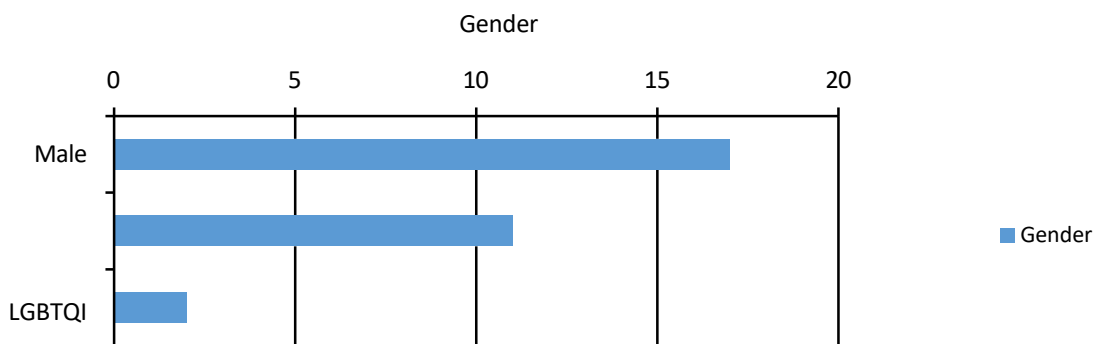
Racial Designation	
White	12
Asian/Southeast Asian/Pacific Islander	4
Multi-Racial	2
Latino/a or Latinx	3
African American/Black	7
Other	2
Total	30



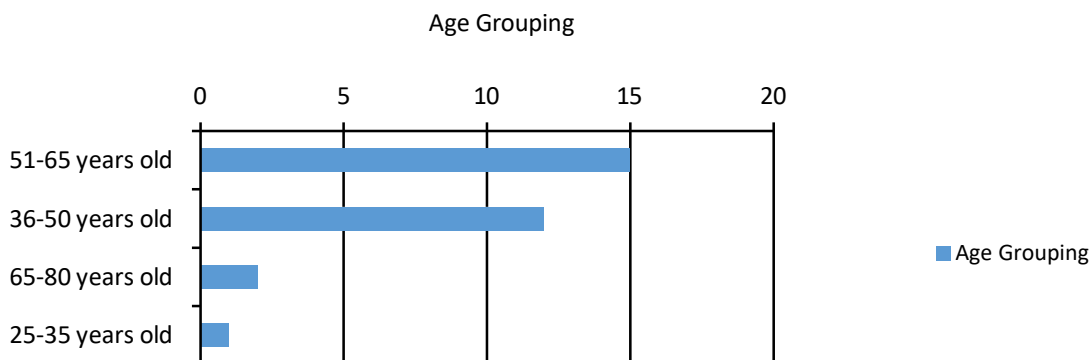


**Table 4. Gender**

Gender	
Male	17
Female	11
LGBTQI	2
Total	30

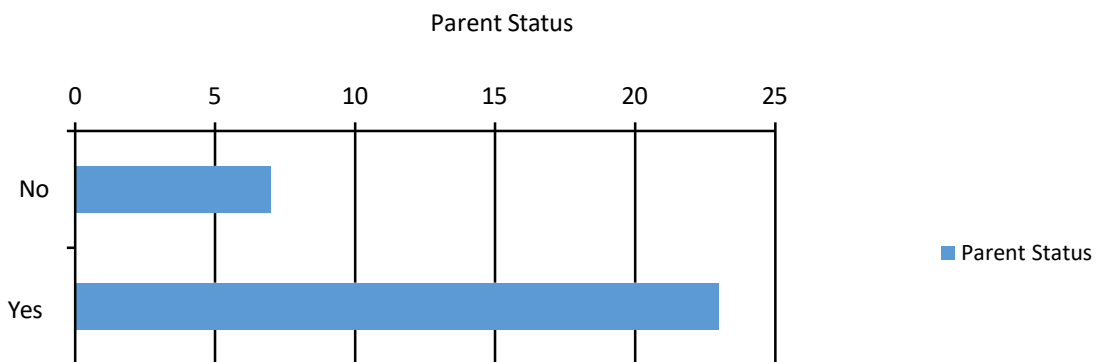
**Table 5. Age Grouping**

Age Grouping	
51-65 years old	15
36-50 years old	12
65-80 years old	2
25-35 years old	1
Total	30

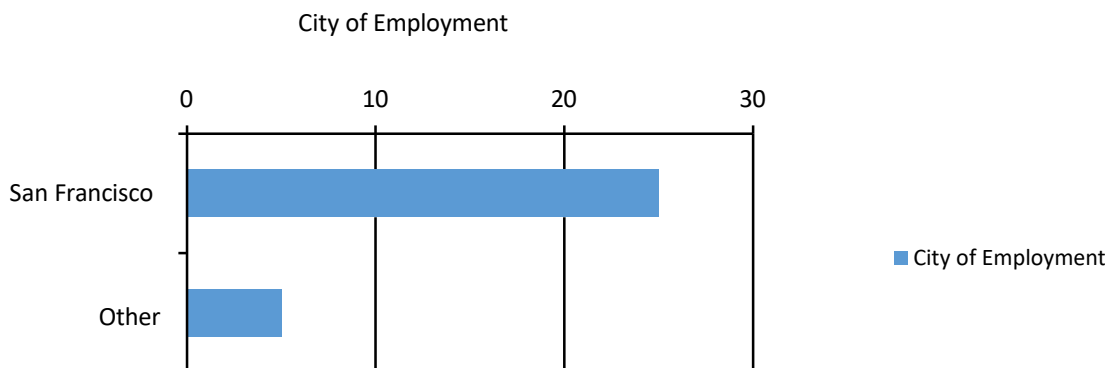


**Table 6. Parent Status**

Parent Status	
No	7
Yes	23
Total	30

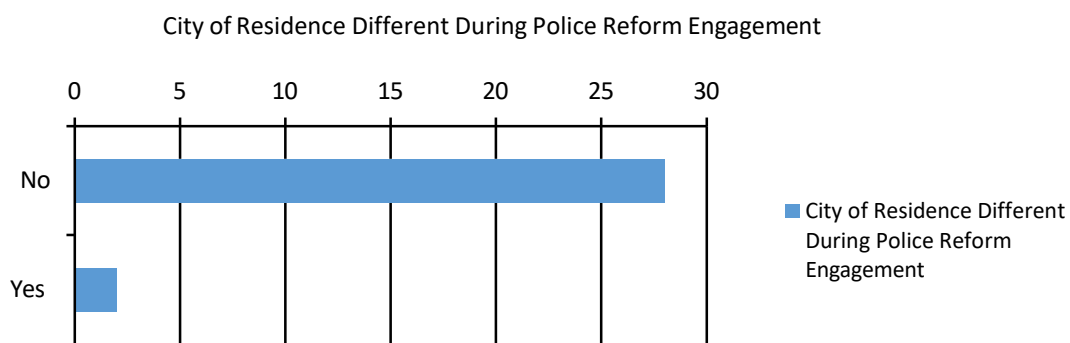
**Table 7. City of Employment**

City of Employment	
San Francisco	26
Other	4
Total	30



**Table 8. City of Residence Different During Police Reform Engagement**

City of Residence Different During Police Reform Engagement	
No	28
Yes	2
Total	30



**Table 9. Education Level**

Education Level	
BA/BS	8
Masters	5
JD	14
AA	3
Total	30

