Introduction

• Race is one of the first things we notice about each other (Cosmides et al., 2003), and prior research has demonstrated that race can affect behavior in situations of conflict, particularly between police and civilians (Weitzer & Tuch, 1999; Orbe & Warren, 2000).

• However, little research examines **how** bystanders perceive interactions between police and civilians of different races. Some studies show that race can affect perceptions of conflict between police officers and civilians (Weitzer & Tuch, 1999), but do not examine what kind of effect race has. • The current exploratory study seeks to shed light on how race affects bystanders' perceptions of fault in police-civilian conflicts, as this does not seem to be well-understood in the current literature.

Research Question

• How does race impact bystanders' perceptions of verbal, nonviolent police-civilian conflict?

Hypothesis

• Race will impact how bystanders perceive verbal, nonviolent policecivilian conflict; however, a direction is not predicted due to the exploratory nature of the study.







Results of a secondary Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA yielded a significant main effect of political party, H(3)=15.7, p=0.001, such that there was a significant difference between Democratic/liberal participants and Republican/conservative individuals, p=0.004. Results of another secondary Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA yielded a main effect of participant race, H(4)=10.12, p=0.04, such that there were significant differences between Black and White participants, p=0.047. Kruskal-Wallis ANOVAs were used due to the ordinal nature of the fault ratings.

Discussion

These ratings of fault may be influenced by recent media coverage of incidences between police and civilians, particularly since several participants noted that racial bias may be involved when asked why they gave their particular fault rating. These findings suggest that eyewitnesses may recollect conflict differently depending on the races of the individuals involved or the race/political affiliation of the eyewitness. Additionally, these findings could have implications for jury selection, as individuals who are Black and Democratic tend to rate conflict as more the cop's fault, compared to Republicans, Asians, Whites and Independents.

Bystanders' Perceptions of Fault in Nonviolent, Verbal Police-Civilian Conflict



Participants Table 1. Participant Demographics The sample in Table 1 is Age(in years) 186 heavily biased towards Mean (19.39) SD (1.85) female participants, as well as democratic/liberal Male 45 Female 141 Political Affiliation • When collecting data, Democratic/Liberal 106 Independent/Neutral 58 distinctions weren't made Republican/Conservative 18 between democratic and Other Race liberal; independent and **Black/African American** Asian neutral; and republican White 101 Mixed or Other Race 30

- individuals.
- and conservative.

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Selected References