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To cite this article: Amanda Graham, Murat Haner, Melissa M. Sloan, Francis T. Cullen, Teresa C. Kulig & Cheryl Lero Jonson (2020): Race and Worrying About Police Brutality: The Hidden Injuries of Minority Status in America, Victims & Offenders, DOI: 10.1080/15564886.2020.1767252

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/15564886.2020.1767252

Published online: 26 May 2020.
Race and Worrying About Police Brutality: The Hidden Injuries of Minority Status in America

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ABSTRACT

Given the historically contentious relationship – including most notably the use of excessive and lethal force – between the police and African Americans, the current project examines the extent to which Blacks in the United States fear police brutality. The study is based on a national-level survey (N = 1,000), and measures fear by how much respondents “worry” about experiencing police force. The data support the \textit{racial divide} hypothesis, showing that Blacks’ worry about such violence is over five times that of Whites. Guided by the \textit{racial/ethnic gradient hypothesis}, the analyses also assess Hispanic respondents’ level of worry. Rather than forming a gradient by falling midway between Blacks and Whites, Hispanics’ worry about police brutality more closely reflects those of Blacks at more than four times that of Whites, suggesting a \textit{racial/ethnic divide}. These findings thus assert that worrying about police brutality is an emotional injury that minorities disproportionately experience and whose pervasiveness remains largely hidden from view.

KEYWORDS

Police brutality; fear of police; racial divide; racial-ethnic gradient hypothesis

Get the racists [officers] off the street. It’s disrespectful that I wake up every day scared. It’s disrespectful that I have three boys that I have to teach today what to do. Get them off the streets.

–Unnamed Black woman at Mayor Pete Buttigieg’s Town Hall following the officer-involved shooting of Eric Logan in South Bend Indiana (June 21, 2019)

The physical injuries of police harassment and use of excessive force against Black community members in the United States have been highlighted in the media and popular publications, such as Paul Butler’s (2017) aptly titled \textit{Chokehold} and Chris Hayes’s (2017) \textit{A Colony in a Nation}. Butler (2017) attempts to unravel the myths and mysteries of the criminal justice system by providing a step-by-step guide for safely navigating the system as an African American. Furthermore, Hayes (2017) argues that the American criminal justice system is two systems – one in which policing operates as expected in a democratic nation and the other in which policing operates as would an occupying force in a foreign land. Ultimately, both conclude that something could and should be done to alter the socio-political forces within the United States that permit and even encourage the current
deleterious practices within the criminal justice system, specifically with the aggressive, proactive policing practices that disproportionately affect Black community members.

Even more troubling, these aggressive, proactive police practices have, on occasion, escalated to involve excessive uses of force, including police killings of unarmed Black citizens (Zimring, 2017). The deaths of Eric Garner in New York City, Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, and Walter Scott in North Charleston, South Carolina, at the hands of police illustrate three of many police-involved deaths that have gained national attention. Even prominent Black men, such as tennis star James Blake and Harvard University professor Henry Louis Gates, are not immune from excessive use of force and arrest by the police (Mueller et al., 2015; Valencia, 2010). As Imani Perry (2019, p. 17) asserts in *Breathe: A Letter to my Sons*, “police kill middle-class Black children and adults too. Not with the same frequency, but class is no prevention. It is a reduction of the odds at best.”

Although receiving close scrutiny, the current tension between police and communities of color is not new. Rather, this relationship is marred with a long and disquieting past. In fact, for the Black community, in particular, notes Butler (2017), “There has never, not for one minute in American history, been peace between black people and the police” (p. 2). As such, generations of Black children have been socialized with this longstanding tension as the backdrop of their parents’ advice, expectations, and perceptions for the relationship between Black community members and the police – undoubtedly influencing these children’s perceptions of the police.

These worries, likely heightened by recent high-profile assaults and killings of unarmed Black men, are shared with children, some as young as five, through what is known as “the talk” (Brunson & Weitzer, 2011; Jealous, 2018; Stuart, 2016). As a form of racial socialization, common themes of “the talk” include respect and compliance with police, distrust, and proactive avoidance of police (Brunson & Weitzer, 2011). These topics are discussed as a concrete set of instructions about what should and should not be done to avoid police attention, how to engage with police officers, and when to seek justice as a victim of police harassment or misconduct (Amber, 2013; Brunson & Weitzer, 2011; Stuart, 2016). These messages are nearly universally conveyed to Black children and intend to keep these youths safe from arrest, retaliatory violence, or other punishment at the hands of police (Brunson & Weitzer, 2011).

However, the worry of Black parents conveyed via “the talk” to their children has substantial collateral consequences – many of which are “hidden.” For example, the desire for members of the Black community to reduce contact with police inhibits general social interaction more broadly, which can harm not only the individual but also the community through the reduction of informal social control (Stuart, 2016). Additionally, “the talk” risks signaling to Black children that their parents are powerless to protect them, that they are inferior in society and therefore do not garner the full protection of the law, and that they must prepare to take responsibility for the actions of adults (e.g., avoid being perceived as engaging in criminal activity) (Whitaker & Snell, 2016). Commentators suggest that such messages may have damming effects on a child’s self-esteem, especially through the turbulent phase of adolescence in which youths seek to define their identity through their own eyes and others’ (Boyd & Clammet-Lundquist, 2019; Erikson, 1968; Whitaker & Snell, 2016). Notably, these injuries inflicted by simply being Black in American society are “hidden” – they lack the *visibility* of the physical effects of police violence such as bodily injury or death. These hidden injuries’ effects are *silent* and
potentially experienced without notice. Much like Sennett and Cobb's (1972) assertions about The Hidden Injuries of Class, we argue that these hidden injuries of race, which include feelings of inadequacy, powerlessness, and a loss of dignity, are a result of worrying about police brutality.

Therefore, this study seeks to further understand this potential for hidden injury by probing a national-level sample about the extent to which not only Blacks but also Whites and Hispanics worry about police brutality. To date, much of the research surrounding race, ethnicity, and perceptions of police focus on satisfaction with the police (Garcia & Cao, 2005; McCluskey et al., 2008; Sampson & Bartusch, 1998; Scaglion & Condon, 1980a, 1980b; B. W. Smith, 2005), confidence in the police (Barrick, 2014; Callanan & Rosenberger, 2011; Lee & Gibbs, 2015), fear of discrimination by the police (Herda & McCarthy, 2018), general attitudes toward the police (Avdija, 2010; Cao et al., 1996; Lai & Zhao, 2010), and perceptions of police misconduct (Kane, 2002; Miller & Davis, 2008; Weitzer & Tuch, 2004). More generally, researchers have also explored “fear of the police,” but not explicitly police brutality (Block, 1971; Schuck, Rosenbaum, & Hawkins, 2008). Furthermore, a limited number of studies include an item about police brutality but do so in scales as part of misconduct (Avdija, 2010; Kane, 2002) or general attitudes toward police (Miller & Davis, 2008; Schuck et al., 2008). These studies do not explore the relationship of worrying about police brutality separately by race or ethnicity, nor do they conduct multivariate analyses on this specific item. This limited attention in the literature represents a glaring gap in research that merits attention. Public perceptions as they relate specifically to police brutality are a particularly salient concern in the wake police use of force (Zimring, 2017) and the Black Lives Matter movement (Garza, 2014).

To capture this specific emotion of fear, we ask respondents about their “worry” in regard to experiencing police brutality. This wording is in line with literature assessing fear of crime, which uses both “afraid” (fear) and “worried” to capture the construct “fear of crime” (e.g., Alper & Chappell, 2012; Andersen & Mayerl, 2018; Franklin et al., 2008; Gray et al., 2008; Haner, Sloan et al., 2019; Jackson, 2005; Nellis & Savage, 2012; Rader, 2004). However, the nuance between fear and worry is subtle. Scholars have distinguished fear as being more reactive and in response to some situation or stimuli; worry can be viewed as a more deliberate rumination about bothersome issues that may or may not occur (Garofalo, 1981; Jackson & Gouseti, 2014). Fear thus tends to be situational and immediate, whereas worry can be more chronic. We chose to focus our attention on “worry” because we are not analyzing specific police-citizen encounters where being afraid of officers might be more salient. Rather, we are examining whether people, especially minorities, generally worry about experiencing police brutality. This worry is the very basis of Black parents having “the talk” with their children – they are perpetually concerned that their children could be the victims of police violence.

We seek to determine if race and ethnicity predict worries about experiencing police brutality as well as if there are substantive differences in this level of worry among racial and ethnic groups. To understand the racial and ethnic differences, if any, the racial divide hypothesis and the racial/ethnic gradient hypothesis are invoked and discussed below. Beyond concerns about police brutality, this study also compares this worry to other events, including hate crimes, violent crimes, burglary, mass shootings, and terrorist attacks. In this way, we are able to assess whether the hidden costs of worry
are unique to police actions or generalize to other threats to safety. As a prelude to this analysis, we first examine insights on racial and ethnic differences in perceptions of the justice system. In particular, we consider the racial/ethnic gradient hypothesis advanced by Hagan et al. (2005).

**Comparative conflict theory: two hypotheses**

Conflict theory, in the traditional sense, is typically used to understand differences in power, threat, and subordination between groups, particularly racial groups (Hawkins, 1987; Liska et al., 1985; Walker et al., 2012). These differences are usually focused on the Black-White racial divide in perceptions of the criminal justice system, specifically perceptions of injustice (Bobo & Johnson, 2004; Brooks, 2000; Brooks & Jeon-Slaughter, 2001; Hagan & Albonetti, 1982; Weitzer, 1999; Wortley et al., 1997). However, a major limitation of traditional conflict theory is the omission of other large racial or ethnic groups, such as Hispanics, who are slated to become over 21% of the U.S. population by 2030 (Vespa et al., 2018). Given this limitation, Hagan et al. (2005) sought to address this concern through the proposition of comparative conflict theory, which moves beyond the racial-divide hypothesis by proposing the racial/ethnic gradient hypothesis. As will first be described below, the racial-divide hypothesis argues that a Black-White gap exists in views of the criminal justice system. Next to be discussed, the racial/ethnic gradient hypothesis argues that Hispanics’ views fall between those of Blacks and Whites, thus creating a “gradient” in perceptions.

**Racial divide hypothesis**

Rooted in traditional conflict theory, comparative conflict theory, as set forth by Hagan et al. (2005), contends that, in the United States, race is a crucial reference point when forming perceptions of injustice. Specifically, these perceptions are based on the relative or comparative subordination of one group compared to another group (Davis, 1959). In America, it is argued that, compared to their White counterparts, the conduct of racial and ethnic minorities is viewed as criminal, which leads to their processing within the criminal justice system (Buckler et al., 2008). Furthermore, as a result of their perceived threat, minority groups are often relegated to inner-cities that are economically disadvantaged, which produces discrimination and disadvantage across several domains of life, such as “education, employment, housing, and criminal justice” (Buckler et al., 2008, p. 38). It is this exposure to discrimination and disadvantage that Hagan et al. (2005) assert produce adverse perceptions of injustice.

Additionally, in regard to the American criminal justice system, Hagan et al. (2005) argue that the racial status of Blacks directly influences their perceptions of injustice. Due to the historical and social forces that have promoted discrimination, comparative conflict theory argues that contacts between minority groups, such as Blacks, and the criminal justice system – viewed as a “component of an oppressive discriminatory social structure” – are likely to be unfavorable (Buckler et al., 2008, p. 38). Furthermore, these perceptions of injustice are often formed while growing up and as a direct result of a youth’s first contact with the criminal justice system, which serves as a reference point in defining injustice for an individual in future contacts (Hagan et al., 2005). Given that
racial minority youths interact with the criminal justice system more frequently than White youths (e.g., Brunson & Miller, 2005; Claus et al., 2018; Spinney et al., 2018) and that this contact is likely to be negative, Hagan et al. (2005) argue that perceptions of injustice should be greater for Black respondents compared to Whites (see also, Buckler et al., 2008). This claim of a Black-White perceptual gap will be referred to as the racial-divide hypothesis.

Researchers have used the racial-divide hypothesis to understand perceptions of criminal justice policies (e.g., Higgins & Gabbidon, 2012; Unnever, Benson et al., 2008; Unnever & Cullen, 2010, 2012) as well as perceived injustice by the criminal justice system and its actors (e.g., Buckler & Unnever, 2008; Buckler et al., 2008; Hagan et al., 2005; Johnson, 2008). However, there is a limited understanding of this hypothesis with regard to the emotional features (e.g., fear) of the informal actions of criminal justice actors (e.g., police brutality). Current evidence provides support for the racial-divide hypothesis with Whites fearing the police less than Black community members (Frankovic, 2019; Weitzer, 2006; Weitzer & Tuch, 2004). Therefore, given greater levels of police contact and higher levels of perceived injustice, we hypothesize that, consistent with the racial-divide hypothesis, Black and White respondents will have distinctly different levels of worry about experiencing police brutality. Specifically, Black respondents will report significantly more worry about police brutality than White respondents.

### Racial/ethnic gradient hypothesis

A crucial but often neglected issue is how Hispanics view the justice system, in this case, whether police brutality is to be a source of worry. It is this issue that Hagan et al. (2005) take up. They argue that there is a perceived differential threat of Blacks and Hispanics, with Blacks being more readily viewed as a threat to Whites. However, they note that given their more recent population growth in the United States, Hispanics have more recently begun drawing attention from Whites, but are still viewed as less of a threat than Blacks. Arguably, this gradient of skin tone, from Black to White, has become a key social indicator of acceptance in American society that overrides other characteristics such as class, language, and religion (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). As such, Hagan et al.’s (2005) comparative conflict theory hypothesizes that there is a racial/ethnic gradient effect for perceptions of injustice. Thus, they contend that Blacks comparatively perceive more injustice compared to Hispanics, but that Hispanics perceive more injustice than Whites.

Researchers have used the racial/ethnic gradient hypothesis to understand perceptions of injustice (e.g., Buckler & Unnever, 2008; Buckler et al., 2008, 2011; Gabbidon & Jordan, 2013; Unah & Wright, 2015), policy effectiveness (e.g., Buckler & Higgins, 2016), and perceived treatment by criminal justice actors (e.g., Buckler & Higgins, 2016; Davis & Hendricks, 2007; Graziano & Gauthier, 2019; Wright & Unah, 2017). However, as with the racial divide hypothesis, there is a limited understanding of the racial/ethnic gradient hypothesis with regard to fear of experiencing police brutality. To our knowledge, only two national polls have descriptively examined worries as they specifically related to race, ethnicity, and police brutality. A Morning Consult poll found that among terror attacks, gun violence, and police brutality, Blacks were most worried about themselves or someone they know being the victim of police brutality (49%), followed by Hispanics (25%), and Whites (12%) (Yokley, 2016). Likewise, in a Barna Group (2016) poll, 56% of Black
Americans responded that they “absolutely” or “possibly” lived in fear of police brutality, whereas 29% of Hispanics and 13% of Whites felt this way. Although instructive, neither of these polls were published in peer-reviewed forums, nor did they examine these differences in any multivariate analyses, which may have uncovered non-race-related influences for these responses, such as sex or income.

In a narrower sample, the worry of police violence finds similar patterns, with 66% of Black Hamden, Connecticut residents expressing this worry, whereas only 39% of Hispanic and 12% of White residents expressed this worry (Staff, 2019). Furthermore, in a Hispanic-only sample, 68% of respondents worried about law enforcement using excessive force against them (Kellogg Foundation, 2014). By looking specifically at police brutality, this study explores this understudied area much in the same way that fear of crime researchers have when the importance of going beyond a global fear of crime was recognized thus leading to research on the nuances related to specific crimes, such as fear of rape or fear of stalking (Ferraro & Grange, 1987; Reynolds & Englebrecht, 2013; Warr & Stafford, 1983; Wilcox et al., 2006).

Although there is evidence that Hispanics do fear the police (Frankovic, 2019; Planas, 2014) and national polls provide tentative support for the gradient thesis (Barna, 2016; Yokley, 2016), it is unclear if this level of fear or worry is significantly less than that experienced by Blacks after controlling for other factors. It is also possible that it is race/ethnicity alone which produce these findings.

**Research hypotheses**

Based on the racial/ethnic gradient hypothesis, we hypothesize that being Black will have the largest impact on the worry of experiencing police brutality compared to Whites. Likewise, being Hispanic will have a significant but tempered effect (compared to Blacks) on the worry of police brutality compared to Whites. Furthermore, given the disproportionate frequency of direct and vicarious contact with police (Enns et al., 2019; Figures & Legewie, 2019), as opposed to the frequency of other types of victimization experiences (Morgan & Truman, 2018), we hypothesize that levels of worry about police brutality for Black and Hispanic respondents will be especially salient compared to worries of other potential victimization experiences (i.e., violent crime, residential burglary, mass shootings).

**Methods**

**Sample**

The data for this study come from a national-level survey designed by the research team, which was placed in the field from July 9, 2018, to July 12, 2018 by YouGov America, Inc. With a pool of over two million U.S. resident participants, the international survey research company, YouGov, uses opt-in panel surveys to collect data. This methodology has been used widely and has become a standard survey methodology across a range of subject areas (see, e.g., Enns & Ramirez, 2018; Haner, Cullen et al., 2019; Pickett, 2016; Thielo et al., in press). Additionally, these methods have
been found to produce more generalizable samples than other probability sampling techniques (Vavreck & Rivers, 2008).

Specifically, YouGov uses a three-phase sampling strategy, which is designed to produce a nationally representative sample of a target population from their pool of respondents (Rivers, 2006). First, a pseudo sampling frame is constructed using high-quality probability surveys and large-scale, commercially available databases – in our case, the 2016 American Community Survey (ACS). Second, YouGov matches their panel members to this frame based on a variety of demographic and behavioral variables – for this survey, this sample included 1,068 panel members matched based on gender, age, race, and education. Third, YouGov adjusts biases in the sample through propensity score weighting – for the current study, based on 2016 presidential vote choice, gender, age, race, and education (Rivers, 2006, for a full discussion of YouGov methodology, see Thielo, 2017). Through this process, the initial 1,068 respondents were matched down to a representative sample of 1,000 respondents. Due to this particular focus on the experiences of White, Black, and Hispanic respondents, those who self-identified as other races/ethnicities (e.g., Asian, Native American) were removed from the analytic sample, resulting in a sample of 918 respondents. Furthermore, weighting and listwise deletion (4.7%) in multivariate models reduced the final analytic sample to 875 respondents (Schafer, 1999).

In this final weighted sample, 48.6% of respondents were male, which closely aligns with the ACS estimate of 48.7%. Additionally, most (64.2%) of the respondents reported their race/ethnicity as White, which mirrors the ACS’s 64.5%. Another 11.9% reported being Black, and 15.7% identified as Hispanic. The average age of the respondents was approximately 47.4 years (SD = 18.16). As for education, 12.5% of the respondents reported not completing high school, 27.7% reported completing high school, and 20.1% reported completing some college. Additionally, 11.2% reported earning a two-year degree, 17.9% a four-year degree, and 10.6% a post-graduate degree. As for annual household income, the sample’s mean fell between 50,000 USD and 59,000 USD. Finally, in terms of political identification, most respondents self-identified as either liberal or very liberal (30%), or moderate (25.9%), with only 32.8% identifying as conservative or very conservative. These values correspond to the Pew Research Center’s findings of registered voters (e.g., 33% Democrat, 26% Republican). Given that the demographic characteristics of our sample align with those of the ACS and the Pew Research Center, we are more confident in the generalizability of our findings.

**Dependent variable: measures of worries**

The primary dependent variable of interest seeks to understand the level of worry about police brutality experienced by respondents. The respondents were asked, “How much, if at all, do you worry about the following things happening to you?: Experiencing police brutality.” The response options were “do not worry at all,” “worry a little,” and “worry a lot.” To provide context for the primary research question, as seen in Table 1, the respondents were also asked to express their level of worry for other types of victimization using the same instructions and response options. Thus, the respondents were asked about a race-related victimization (“being the victim of a racial/hate crime”), two traditional street crimes (“being the victim of a violent crime” and “someone breaking into your house when you are home”), and two types of victimizations currently receiving media
attention (“a mass shooting at some event or at work/school” and “being the victim of a terrorist attack”). The goal of asking about these other worries was to determine if racial/ethnic differences were unique to the worry of police brutality or found for other victimizations – and if so, to what extent. Additionally, the phrase “police brutality” was explicitly used to capture extreme police force that may not be understood by academic phrasing, such as “excessive use of force.” The frequencies of these responses are discussed in greater detail below. For multivariate analyses, responses were dichotomized into “Do not worry at all” and “Worry a little or a lot.” Of note, the analyses were also estimated with responses to this item coded as “Do not worry at all or worry a little” versus “Worry a lot.” No substantive differences were found regarding the effects of race/ethnicity on worry about police brutality (results available upon request).

**Independent variables**

In addition to respondents’ worries, the survey collected information related to the sociodemographic characteristics of respondents. These variables were derived from YouGov’s “core profile” items, which are regularly collected and updated for all panel members. The predominant independent variable of this study is the respondent’s race or ethnicity, which is dummy coded to indicate White, Black, and Hispanic.

As noted above, there is variation in polling and surveys regarding experiences with police as well as fear or worry about police brutality. Therefore, in order to help isolate the variation in worries that can be attributed to race, controls were included in the multivariate analyses. Age and sex are included as standard demographic control variables. Respondent’s sex is a dichotomous measure (0 = Male; 1 = Female). The respondent’s date of birth was used to calculate the continuous measure age in years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Victimization</th>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Level of Worry</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Percent Worry a Lot</td>
<td>Percent Worry a Little</td>
<td>Percent Do Not Worry at All</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Experiencing police brutality</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>32.4</td>
<td>36.9</td>
<td>30.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>26.5</td>
<td>37.4</td>
<td>36.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>White</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>75.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Being a victim of a racial/hate crime</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>38.7</td>
<td>41.4</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>38.1</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>White</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>22.4</td>
<td>69.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Being the victim of a violent crime</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>33.0</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>43.8</td>
<td>36.3</td>
<td>19.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>White</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>51.9</td>
<td>30.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Someone breaking into your house when you are home</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>23.4</td>
<td>47.7</td>
<td>28.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>37.0</td>
<td>41.1</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>White</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>41.8</td>
<td>39.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. A mass shooting at some event or at work/school</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>37.8</td>
<td>43.2</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>43.5</td>
<td>32.0</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>White</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td>45.0</td>
<td>29.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Being the victim of a terrorist attack</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>17.9</td>
<td>43.8</td>
<td>38.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>34.7</td>
<td>22.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>White</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>39.1</td>
<td>48.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Race and class effects in the United States are often intertwined. As a result, controls are introduced for education and employment. Respondents’ education was measured ordinally from 1 = “not completing high school” to 6 = “postgraduate degree.” Employment of respondents was originally measured categorically as “full-time,” “part-time,” “temporarily laid off,” “unemployed,” “retired,” “permanently disabled,” “homemaker,” “student,” and “other.” However, this variable has been dummy-coded to reflect full-time employment (0 = no, 1 = yes).

Finally, research suggests that views toward the police are influenced by political factors (Brown, 2017; Silver & Pickett, 2015). Given that Blacks tend to be more on the political left (Pew Research Center, 2015), it is possible that political orientations could account for their heightened worries about the police. As a result, we control for partisanship and political ideology. Political ideology originally came from YouGov’s core profile item of political ideology, which included response options of “very liberal,” “liberal,” “moderate,” “conservative,” “very conservative,” and “not sure.” However, in order to avoid excluding respondents who selected “not sure” on this specific item (n = 96 cases), this item was dichotomized (0 = other; 1 = conservative or very conservative), as is consistent with previous research (see, e.g., King & Wheelock, 2007; Shelley et al., 2017). Finally, to account for regional differences within the United States, respondents’ state was grouped by U.S. Census region in which the “South” was used as a dummy variable.

**Analytic strategy**

The analyses for the current study were carried out in three stages. First, to understand respondents’ worries about experiencing police brutality, we examined the descriptive data about the extent of these worries as a whole and across racial/ethnic groups. Second, we used logistic regression including as controls standard sociodemographic and political variables to understand respondents’ levels of worries about six potential victimization scenarios. Logistic regression was used due to dependent variables’ failure to pass the test of parallel lines using ordinal regression. Furthermore, we conducted this multivariate analysis to understand the effects of race/ethnicity on worries aside from any compositional effects. Finally, we estimated additional logistic regression models to examine within-group effects to see if consensus or cleavages existed with regard to worry about police brutality within each racial/ethnic group.

**Results**

**Assessing levels of worry about victimization**

To start, Table 1 presents the percentage of respondents who worry about being a victim of police brutality. It is clear that Whites experience few emotional costs. Only 6.6% of Whites “worry a lot” about police brutality, whereas three-fourths (75.5%) “do not worry at all.” Minority respondents, however, report a starkly different experience. Thus, 32.4% of Blacks and 26.5% of Hispanics “worry a lot” about being a victim of officer violence – figures about five times (for Blacks) and four times (for Hispanics) larger than those for Whites. Conversely, only about a third of minority respondents “do not worry at all” about police brutality. Importantly, note that the level of worry among Hispanics does not
fall midway between Whites’ and Blacks’ worries, as expected with a gradient; rather, it is close to that of Blacks (as we will note, the differences between Blacks and Hispanics are not statistically significant). As such, the descriptive data for worry of police brutality reveal support for the racial divide hypotheses but not for the gradient hypothesis. Although not often publicized, it appears that worry of police brutality exists not only among Blacks but also among Hispanics — a hidden cost racial and ethnic minorities bear in America.

Similarly, the majority of Black (80.1%) and Hispanic (71.4%) respondents worried a little or a lot about being victims of a racial or hate crime. In a slightly narrower divide than that found for police brutality, the majority of White respondents (69.7%) did not worry at all about being a victim of a racial or hate crime. It appears that again, Black and Hispanic community members share a uniquely hidden burden of being a minority in America.

Table 1 also includes the worries of two street crimes — victimization from violent crime and someone breaking into your house when you are home. The racial/ethnic disparity between the levels of worry about these events remains but is narrowed. A substantial percentage of Black and Hispanic respondents reported worrying a lot (33.0% and 43.8%, respectively) about being victims of violent crime. Meanwhile, compared to police brutality, a larger percentage (17.8%) of White respondents worried a lot about being victims of violent crime. This level of divide narrows even further when examining the worry about someone breaking into one’s house when they are home. A lower percentage of White respondents (19.1%) worried a lot about this victimization when compared to Black and Hispanic respondents (23.4% and 37.0%, respectively), but the racial divide was limited.

Finally, Table 1 presents the levels of worries for two less-frequent events that have the potential for a large toll: a mass shooting and a terrorist attack. Again, a divide exists, especially for Hispanic respondents, in which 43.5% and 42.9% worried a lot about these two events, respectively. In contrast, 25.7% and 12.0% of White respondents worried about these events, respectively. Although this racial/ethnic divide is present for the worries of a mass shooting and terrorist attacks, the largest divides persist with worries of experiencing police brutality and racial/hate crime victimization.

The level of these worries (e.g., violent crime, home invasion, mass shooting, terrorism) demonstrate that there is a divide between the perceptions of Black and White community members (i.e., racial divide hypothesis). Moreover, when examining the level of worry held by Hispanic respondents, their worry is similar to or exceeds that of Black respondents in all forms of victimizations examined. Thus, it becomes clear that there is not only a racial divide but also a racial/ethnic divide in which White respondents differ in their perceptions from racial/ethnic minorities in the United States. Although this divide between White and Black/Hispanic respondents is narrower for some victimizations (e.g., mass shooting, violent crime), it persists nonetheless.

Predicting worry about victimization

These descriptive statistics of worries being examined by racial and ethnic group is informative, but further analyses sought to understand the leading factors that produced these differing levels of worry. Table 2 examines whether race/ethnicity is a predictor of
Table 2. Logistic Regression Predicting Worry about Police Brutality and Other Types of Victimization (N = 875).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity \ Model</th>
<th>Experiencing police brutality</th>
<th>Being a victim of a racial/hate crime</th>
<th>Being the victim of a violent crime</th>
<th>Someone breaking into your house when you are home</th>
<th>A mass shooting at some event or at work/school</th>
<th>Being the victim of a terrorist attack</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>1.681*** 5.372 (2.40)</td>
<td>2.179*** 2.62 (2.63)</td>
<td>.489* .262 (2.51)</td>
<td>.444 (2.40)</td>
<td>.590** (2.27)</td>
<td>.590** 1.157 (2.26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>1.389*** 4.013 (2.13)</td>
<td>1.69*** 1.948 (2.17)</td>
<td>.666** .394 (2.37)</td>
<td>.161 (2.30)</td>
<td>.126** 3.534 (2.29)</td>
<td>.672* 1.958 (2.89)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Race/Ethnicityb       |                            |                                    |                                    |                                               |                                        |                                    |
| White                 | −1.681*** .186 (2.40)      | −2.179*** −2.62 (2.63)             | −.489* −.262 (2.51)               | −.444 (2.40)                                 | −.590** 1.157 (2.26)                    | −.590** .554 (2.27)                  |
| Hispanic              | −292 (2.85) .787 (309)     | −486 (313) .615 (317)              | .132 (2.31) 1.141                | .176 (2.30)                                  | .672* 1.958 (2.89)                      |                                    |

| Control Variables     |                            |                                    |                                    |                                               |                                        |                                    |
| Female                | −368* .692 (1.62) .766 (1.54) | −266 .210 (1.57) 1.233 (1.51)      | .313 .917 (1.51)                  | .798*** 2.222 (1.61)                         | .643*** 1.902 (1.47)                   |                                    |
| Age                   | −.025*** .975 (0.05) .995 (0.05) | −.017*** −.045 (0.05)              | −.028*** .215 (0.04)             | −.013*** .972 (0.05)                         | −.016** .985 (0.04)                    |                                    |
| Married               | −.066 (1.72) .936 (1.62)    | −.226 .797 (1.63)                  | −.044 .957 (1.57)                | −.029 (1.66)                                 | −.027 1.027 (1.54)                     |                                    |
| Education             | +.026 (0.56) .974 (0.54)    | −.079 .924 (0.53)                  | −.044 .957 (0.51)                | −.029 (0.55)                                 | −.011 1.027 (0.50)                     |                                    |
| Fulltime              | −.168 (1.82) .846 (1.75)    | .179 .119 (1.78)                   | −.113 .893 (1.71)                | −.157 (1.80)                                 | −.162 1.061 (1.65)                     | −.308 1.061 (1.65)                  |
| Conservative          | −.665** .514 (2.14) .978 (2.01) | −.023 .199 (2.04)                 | .295 .122 (2.17)                 | .216 (1.98)                                  | .401* 1.493 (1.92)                     |                                    |
| Republican            | −.296 (2.27) .743 (2.20)    | .261 .199 (2.14)                   | .347 .122 (2.14)                 | .193 (2.14)                                  | .546** 1.727 (2.14)                     |                                    |
| South                 | .221 (1.64) 1.248 (1.56)    | .373* 1.321 (1.61)                 | .153 .1371 (1.62)               | .151 (1.62)                                  | .008 1.008 (1.49)                      |                                    |
| Nagelkerke R²         | .282 (1.64) .243 (1.56)     | .47 (1.61) 1.03 (1.62)             | .71 (.07) 1.136 (1.49)           | .71 (.07) 1.136 (1.49)                       |                                    |                                    |

Level of worry is measured dichotomously with 1 = worry a little or worry a lot and 0 = do not worry at all. Conservative political ideology is dichotomous with 1 = conservative, 0 = other. White is the reference group. Black is the reference group. Standard errors in parentheses. * p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001. Equality of Coefficients (z-test) between worry of experiencing police brutality and corresponding model: +p < .05, ++p < .01, +++p < .001.
respondents’ worries across six victimization scenarios. Again, a logistic regression model was utilized with predictors including race/ethnicity, sex, age, education, employment, and political ideology for each type of victimization. It should be noted that these models were run twice – once with White as the reference category and once with Black as the reference category. However, only the race/ethnicity variables appear twice in order to show all combinations of comparisons as well as for the sake of parsimony because all other coefficients in the models did not change by exchanging the racial/ethnic reference category.

As seen in Table 2, compared to White respondents, both Black and Hispanic respondents were significantly more likely to report being worried about experiencing police brutality (see Model 1). Black respondents were five times more likely (Odds Ratio [OR] = 5.372) and Hispanic over four times more likely (OR = 4.013) than White respondents to report being worried about this experience. Additionally, female respondents were less likely than male respondents to report being worried about experiencing police brutality. Likewise, older respondents were less likely to report being worried. Interestingly, those who reported conservative political ideologies also were significantly less likely to report being worried about experiencing police brutality compared to respondents with other political ideologies (e.g., liberal, moderate). Taken as a whole, this model again supports the racial divide hypothesis for worry of experiencing police brutality with Black and White respondents experiencing significantly different levels of worry.

As mentioned, a second logistic regression model was examined in which Black respondents were the reference category in order to compare directly Black and Hispanic respondents’ worries. As seen in Table 2, no statistically significant differences were found in the level of worry for experiencing police brutality between Black and Hispanic respondents. This finding runs counter to the racial/ethnic gradient hypothesis, which proposes that Black and Hispanic respondents will differ significantly.

To contextualize the worries of experiencing police brutality, five other logistic models for various worries were examined. As can be seen in Table 2, worries about being the victim of a violent crime (Model 3) or a victim of a mass shooting event (Model 5) appear homogeneous as Black and Hispanic respondents worried no more or less than White respondents. Rather, it appears that younger Americans worry more than older Americans about both of these events. Uniquely, Hispanic respondents worried more than White respondents about someone breaking into their house when they were present (Model 4). However, Black respondents did not worry about this crime any differently than White respondents. Finally, Black and Hispanic respondents worried significantly more than White respondents about being victims of a racial or hate crime (Model 2) or being victims of a terrorist attack (Model 6). Comparing these beliefs across models using equality of coefficients, Black respondents’ worries of police brutality were not significantly different from worries related to being the victim of a hate crime, but were significantly higher than worries about being the victim of violent crimes, a home break-in, a mass shooting, and a terrorist attack. Similarly, Hispanic respondents’ worries of police brutality were not significantly different from worries related to being the victim of a hate crime as well as being the victim of terrorism. However, their worry of police brutality was significantly higher than worries about being a victim of violent crimes, a home break-in, and a mass shooting.
Predicting worry about police brutality within race

Finally, to understand further the racial/ethnic experience of worry about police brutality, Table 3 examines the within-group predictors for this worry. Using logistic regression, Table 3 shows that the worry of experiencing police brutality for Black respondents seems nearly universal, with no significant demographic predictors of worry (see Model 1). For Hispanic respondents, gender, age, and marital status significantly predict worry within this group (see Model 2). Female (OR = .415) and younger (OR = .970) Hispanic respondents were less likely than their Hispanic male and older peers to worry about experiencing police brutality, while those who were married (OR = 3.544) worried more than those who were unmarried. The White respondent model in Table 3 highlights the heterogeneity in worrying about experiencing police brutality as a White community member (see Model 3). Older White respondents worried less than younger ones (OR = .973). Likewise, White respondents with fulltime employment, as opposed to those who were not fulltime employed, worried less (OR = .632). Furthermore, politically conservative White respondents worried significantly less about experiencing police brutality than their politically different peers (OR = .487).

When comparing these coefficients across models using equality of coefficients tests (Paternoster et al., 1998), only marital status and full-time employment significantly differ in their influence on worrying about police brutality. For Hispanic respondents, being married played a much larger role in their level of worry compared to Black (z = 2.897) and White respondents (z = 3.141). Likewise, being employed fulltime played a significantly larger role in Black respondents’ worry compared to White respondents (z = 2.267). In sum, the within-group differences, or lack thereof, for Black respondents, and few significant differences for Hispanic respondents demonstrate the ubiquity of worry for experiencing police brutality – the hidden cost of being a minority in America.

Table 3. Logistic Regression Predicting Worry about Police Brutality by Race/Ethnicity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
<th>Model 3</th>
<th>Equality of Coefficients (z-test)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>OR</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>OR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.808</td>
<td>.446</td>
<td>.879*</td>
<td>.415</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>OR</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>OR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.014</td>
<td>.986</td>
<td>.030*</td>
<td>.970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>OR</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>OR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.749</td>
<td>.473</td>
<td>1.265**</td>
<td>3.544</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>OR</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>OR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.096</td>
<td>1.101</td>
<td>.008</td>
<td>.992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fulltime</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>OR</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>OR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.768</td>
<td>2.155</td>
<td>.199</td>
<td>1.220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>OR</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>OR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.067</td>
<td>1.069</td>
<td>.916</td>
<td>.400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republican</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>OR</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>OR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>-.229</td>
<td>.795</td>
<td>-.958</td>
<td>.384</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>OR</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>OR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>-.198</td>
<td>.820</td>
<td>.676</td>
<td>1.965</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nagelkerke R²</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>OR</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>OR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.131</td>
<td>.241</td>
<td>.136</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Level of worry is measured dichotomously with 1 = worry a little or worry a lot and 0 = do not worry at all. Conservative political ideology is dichotomous with 1 = conservative, 0 = other. Standard errors in parentheses. B = Black, H = Hispanic, W = White *p <.05, **p <.01, ***p <.001.
Discussion

In his 2019 presidential address to the American Sociological Association, Bonilla-Silva argues for the need to study “racialized emotions” – that is, affect that is produced by Blacks’ existing in a stratified society. “I am not interested in people’s fear of heights or snakes,” observes Bonilla-Silva (2019, p. 3), “but the socially engendered emotions in racialized societies.” In this context, it is important to note that the police have a long history of problematic relations with Black community members, which can generate a range of emotions. Legewie and Fagan (2019) have illuminated the consequences that police activity can have in the lives of Blacks – not just those with whom they have contact but also with those who experience their actions vicariously. Research documents, for example, “the health consequences related to the stress, fear, trauma, and anxiety” that “might affect entire communities and not only individuals in contact with the police and the criminal justice system” (Legewie & Fagan, 2019, p. 224). The current project thus falls within this emerging line of inquiry into the racialized emotions that Black community members experience due to their race. However, this study uniquely seeks to address the emotions of an oft neglected group – Hispanics. The key issue here is whether being Black or Hispanic exposes individuals to the hidden cost of worrying about police brutality – a very specific worry that goes beyond just fear of the police.

Specifically, using a national-level sample of respondents, we examined levels of worry about experiencing police brutality and also placed this emotion in the context of other worries of being victimized (e.g., hate crimes, violent crime, mass shootings). Given the detrimental effects of being scrutinized, let alone harassed or brutalized, by authority figures, such as the police, the hidden injury of persistent worry and fear as well as the effects of these emotions is especially salient. In the above analyses, we observe several findings that warrant further discussion.

Assessing the racial divide hypothesis

In testing the racial divide hypothesis, we find that police brutality is of little concern for White respondents. Only 6.6% worry a lot, about one fourth (24.4%) worry a lot or a little (combined), and three-fourths do not worry at all. By contrast, experiencing police brutality is a major concern (“worry a lot”) for nearly one-third of Blacks (32.4%). Furthermore, only 30.6% do not worry at all, meaning that seven in ten Black community members worry at least a little about experiencing police brutality. This means that there is a clear racial divide in whether, on a daily basis, Americans experience the hidden injury of worrying that the police – who are sworn to protect and serve – might be a source of brutality.

Although the racial divide hypothesis is supported, many facets about these worries of experiencing police brutality remain unknown. For instance, the source of worry for Black communities may lie in the historical brutality and poor relations between themselves and the police, as suggested by Hagan et al. (2005). Alternatively, some evidence suggests that this worry of police violence has recently been heightened for Black Americans due to the election of President Trump (McManus et al., 2019), which may explain part of the racial/ethnic divide unearthed in this cross-sectional study. In their study, McManus and colleagues find that the majority (67%) of Black Americans reported being more fearful
that they or a family member would experience police violence as a result of President Trump’s election. Furthermore, 70.6% felt the shooting of unarmed Black men by police was likely to increase due to the election of President Trump. Although this study accounts for political party affiliation and political ideology when modeling fear of the police, it is not entirely certain that we adequately control for specific beliefs related to President Trump – a divisive political figure currently associated with the Republican Party (Bump, 2019; King & Hayes, 2019). Nonetheless, this level of worry may also come from the awareness of the potential for violence due to the new-found ability to document and disseminate information about police violence through digital technologies, such as social media and cell phone video (Chermak et al., 2006; Weitzer, 2002), as well as movements, such as the Black Lives Matter movement, which sought to bring awareness to these types of injustices (Milkman, 2017).

**Assessing the racial/ethnic gradient hypothesis**

This study has the added advantage of including a representative proportion of Hispanic respondents – a subgroup of the U.S. population that is often omitted from this area of research (e.g., Henderson et al., 1997; Huebner et al., 2004; Hurwitz & Peffley, 2005; Johnson, 2008). Based on Hagan et al.’s (2005) *racial/ethnic gradient hypothesis*, we expected that Hispanic respondents’ worries would fall distinctly between those of White and Black respondents. As anticipated, Hispanic respondents worry significantly more than White respondents about police brutality. Here, however, an unexpected finding emerged: Hispanic respondents’ worries about the police approximated those of Blacks in the sample. Put directly, Hispanic and Black respondents worried about experiencing police brutality at the same levels. This set of findings runs contrary to the *racial/ethnic gradient hypothesis*, which argues that Hispanics’ perceptions should fall between White and Black perceptions. Instead, there is a *racial/ethnic divide* – not a gradient – with both Hispanic and Black respondents occupying the opposing end of the worry spectrum from White respondents.

But, why is it that Hispanic respondents share this same worry? One possibility is that the aggressive, proactive policing tactics being used in Black communities are also being used in Hispanic communities (Johnson et al., 2018; Wilkinson, 2018). In several states, such as Arizona and Connecticut, much like Black communities, Hispanics have been targeted by police through harassment, profiling, and, at times, lethal force (Nittle, 2018). Given the same type of treatment by police, there is a distinct lack of attention (by media, police, and communities) to the tenuous relationship between police and Hispanic communities – there is no Hispanic Lives Matter movement. It is possible these interactions are not being uploaded and going viral like those in Black communities (Cuban, 2019; Jacqui Ford Law, 2018). Furthermore, it is possible that the Hispanic community, which is relatively new to the United States compared to the Black community, has not yet organized to combat these injustices within their own communities due to other pressing concerns (e.g., immigration status, economic needs). Nonetheless, the harassment, brutality, and lethality experienced by Hispanic community members with police appear similar to those of the Black community (see for e.g., Cantu-Pawlik, 2019; Lartey, 2018; Perez, 2017)
Two other potential sources may be worth exploring. One possibility is that, given the poor police-community relations (e.g., corruption, brutality) in Mexico and other Latin American countries (see Brown et al., 2006; Olivero & Murataya, 1998; Reames, 2003), Hispanic immigrant communities’ worries about the police may have been transplanted to American police officers as well. Another possibility is that this worry is derived from the Trump Administration’s focus on the policing of immigrants, especially those from Mexico and Latin America (e.g., being labeled as drug dealers and rapists by President Trump, DREAMERs being deported, immigration raids) (Feeney, 2017; Lopez et al., 2018; Perez & Carmona, 2018; Reilly, 2016; Time, 2015). As such, Hispanics’ worry of police brutality may be more generally an extension from the worry of engaging with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) (Wilkinson, 2018). Future research should explore these possibilities as well as the heterogeneity of experiences and worries within the Hispanic population based on national origin (e.g., Guatemalan, Columbian, Mexican, Cuban) or physical appearance (e.g., skin tone, facial features). Relatedly, future research might also profit by assessing how these worries might vary among Hispanics by documented versus undocumented status and by generation (e.g., first generation, second generation).

**Worry of other victimizations: assessing divides and gradients**

Beyond the worry of experiencing police brutality, the clearest divide between respondents occurs with the worry of “being the victim of a racial/hate crime,” where the worry is even higher than for police brutality for Black and Hispanic respondents. Yet again, Black and Hispanic respondents did not significantly differ in their worry. In short, this means that, simply due to their race/ethnicity, Black and Hispanic community members uniquely experience this emotional cost.

In addition, this racial/ethnic divide between White and racial/ethnic minority respondents persists across other types of victimization, but to a lesser degree. For experiencing police brutality or being the victim of hate crimes, few White respondents worried a lot (6.6% and 7.9%, respectively). However, for the other forms of victimization (violent crime, house break in, mass shooting, terrorist attack), the percentages of White respondents worrying a lot is between roughly two and four times higher than their worry of experiencing police brutality. Furthermore, the percent of White respondents who do not worry at all about these other four victimizations ranges between 26.6 and 46.2 percentage points lower than the figure for experiencing police brutality. Taken as a whole, these findings suggest that, for some types of worries of victimization, there is indeed a racial divide. What’s more, there appears to be a racial-ethnic divide, not a gradient, in which White Americans’ worries are significantly different from those of racial and ethnic minorities’ (see Buckler et al., 2008). As such, the hidden cost of simply being Black or Hispanic in America means the additional burden of worrying about other events, such as police brutality and hate crime victimization.

Relatively, an important and, to our knowledge, previously undiscovered revelation is that, in American society, Hispanics now hold a worry of various types of victimization that rivals or exceeds that of Blacks. In five of the six victimization models, Black and Hispanic respondents did not differ significantly in their levels of worry. In the sixth model, contrary to the racial/ethnic gradient hypothesis, Hispanic respondents
were actually more worried about being the victim of a terrorist attack than Black and White respondents. It is entirely possible that these worries have long existed. But, as noted, it is also possible that these levels of worry reflect the recent efforts to demonize, surveil, and mistreat Hispanics within the borders and those seeking to enter the United States from Central and Latin America – again, an issue that merits further investigation.

**Conclusion: hidden injury of minority status**

When examining the within-group predictors of worry about experiencing police brutality, a stark image appears. For Black respondents, worrying about experiencing police brutality seems somewhat commonplace. A similar pattern of worry is present for Hispanic respondents. Although some limited differences do exist for Hispanic respondents (e.g., gender, age, marital status) and there are no significant differences found among Black respondents, these demographics fail to explain much of the variation in worry about experiencing police brutality (R-squared = .131 for Black respondents and .241 for Hispanic respondents). It is possible that these findings are underpowered and thus are conservative estimates of differences between racial/ethnic groups. However, it seems that such worries about the police exist across minority communities – both Black and Hispanic – in a ubiquitous manner.

Given these pervasive views about police brutality for Black and Hispanic respondents, it seems possible that they may feel a particular and uniquely held vulnerability as a result of their racial and ethnic minority status in America. Taken as a whole, what remains is an insidious picture in which communities worry about those they are supposed to trust in their greatest time of need. There is a substantial subpopulation in America that worries about being victimized, not by some perpetrator, but by the state – the very people who are supposed to protect them. As with Unnever, Cullen et al.’s (2008) *state threat hypothesis* about Blacks opposing capital punishment due to its inextricable link to state-sanctioned oppression and lynching, our findings demonstrate a distinct worry about victimization by the state from Blacks. Furthermore, this worry influences the daily lives of racial and ethnic community members. Moreover, this worry is concentrated in the racial and ethnic minority communities who have been relegated to the inner-city where police services are needed most to reduce crime and victimization. In addition, although the worry for Black Americans experiencing police brutality is especially salient due to the media and movements, such as Black Lives Matter, the most hidden injury for this worry resides with Hispanic Americans whose worry receives little to no press coverage and even less political activism.

Arguably, researchers and politicians alike suggest that, in part, the use of procedural justice will ameliorate this worry through the building of trust between police and communities (see Mazerolle et al., 2012, 2013; Tyler, 2004). Although this study could not directly address this possibility, the multitude of videos of young Black men being brutalized and killed by police who face few, if any, repercussions for their actions, provides an alternative story for racial and ethnic minority communities in America – that their worries are justified and no amount of camera footage is likely to stop this brutality (Graham et al., 2019; Gregory, 2019; Milkman, 2017).
Furthermore, the worries of their parents, although not always captured on video, are justified (Mendoza, 2018). Ultimately, the weight of worrying about experiencing police brutality is uniquely shared by Black and Hispanic communities, as is the hidden cost.

Notes
1. The phrase “Hispanic” is used due to Hagan et al.’s (2005) interchangeable use of “Hispanic” and “Latino/Hispanic.” Furthermore, YouGov uses “Hispanic” when asking respondents to identify themselves. We recognize there is a distinct difference between these two terms and have opted for the use of “Hispanic” given the respondents’ self-identification.
2. Note that all multivariate models were estimated with a “Hispanic States” variable in place of the “South” variable in which states having a Hispanic population of more than 25% (based on the U.S. Census 2017 estimates; i.e., Puerto Rico, New Mexico, Texas, California, Arizona, Nevada, Florida) were defined as a Hispanic State. Results related to police brutality did not substantively change (results available upon request).
3. As a check of robustness, the worry of police brutality models were assessed with the inclusion of a generic measure of worry by summing responses (Worry a lot or worry a little = 1) of the five other worries assessed in this paper to control for generic worries of crime. Results remained robust but given the inadequacies of this measure of “worry,” authors opted not to include this measure in the models presented. Additionally, police brutality models were assessed with the inclusion of two items from the CES-D regarding fear and anxiety. The inclusion of these items in the models did not affect the reported results. The results of these models, which include various measures of general worry, are available in the online Appendix.
4. Racial/ethnic differences for each type of victimization were examined using chi-square. All models were statistically significant with eta values ranging between .136 (mass shooting) and .453 (hate crime). The eta for worry of experiencing police brutality was .410.

Disclosure statement
No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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