Contemporary Urban Police Violence and Body Camera Procurement in the United States

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Chapter 1. Introduction

Shots fired. A body drops. Police have one story. Bystanders have another. Police fail to contain the aftermath and provide inadequate responses. In turn, protests erupt. This is a pattern visible in many police departments across the United States. The public scrutiny of police behavior is rising as these cases continue to occur. As a response measure, police departments look for means to re-establish trust. Over the past three years many police departments turned to body camera procurement in order to raise accountability and promote trust after officer involved shootings. Police departments that do not experience cases of highly publicized incidents are also investing in body cameras. It is worthwhile to investigate why either type of city adopts body cameras and to discern motives amongst a number of cities with body camera programs.

Purchasing body cameras can be a reactive or proactive response to police violence. When an officer unjustly shoots a civilian, a city may respond with police reform. But reform may also serve to prevent future incidents. Cities can be categorized accordingly. Proactive cities do not need an officer involved shooting to justify purchasing body cameras. Reactive cities respond to an officer shooting with reforms to pacify public frustration with the police. Police departments throughout the country pursue various forms of reform such as hiring more minorities and testing new technologies all in an effort to curb police brutality.

Recent reports highlight the failure of many police reforms. In a February 2016 journal article titled “Police Brutality and the Racial Makeup of Local Police Departments,” the author grappled with a conventional police reform to hire additional minorities in order to reduce police brutality. The article demonstrated that recruitment reform yields no reduction in police brutality. Despite the finding, increasing diversity of police forces such that they are more reflective of communities they serve has been consistently proposed as a measure for easing tensions between
police and community members” (Goldstein 2016,1). Minority recruitment does not appear to work.

Large policy changes are typically slow moving and meet resistance. Body cameras are an exception in many cases. Without much research on the new technology, police departments push to procure body cameras as a means to raise accountability, reduce police brutality, and make civilians and officers feel safer. Body cameras are a means to record a police officer while on shift. City leaders hope this technology, recently available at a wide-scale level, can help reduce violence. Communities hope body cameras will be an effective means of oversight and accountability. Whatever the motive for adopting body cameras, cities across the United States are accelerating the process of procuring the technology.

After a high publicity incident of police violence, cities may move forward to adopt body cameras. This occurs in many recent cases of police violence. In October 2014, Officer Jason Van Dyke shot and killed Chicago resident Laquan McDonald 16 times. Chicago police covered up the videotape of the event for over a year. After a year, a court ordered the video release. The public reacted to the officer involved shooting, demanding police reform. And days after Chicago leadership announced plans to purchase body cameras. In Baltimore and Ferguson, the story is roughly the same. An officer harmed a civilian; the public reacted; and the cities began to plan a body camera program. Body cameras are extremely topical reforms because they record police-civilian interactions and may show an objective perspective on an incident.

Cities throughout the United States are adopting body cameras as a means to respond to civilian concerns over the power of the police. Over 7000 United States police departments have body camera programs and the federal government allocated $75 million to help proliferate the technology (Sanburn 2015, 10, Lee 2014, 1-2). It is unrealistic to imagine each of the 7000
departments experienced a case of police violence. This research will examine what may make cities without cases of police violence or low publicity cases of police violence to adopt body cameras. The time is now for police departments to institute major body camera programs as a response to civilian dissent over police lack of accountability.

**Federal laws against police misconduct**

In many of the case studies involving police violence, a court determines whether the officer from the incident acted reasonably or mishandled the situation. The Department of Justice may categorize violence and unnecessary force as police misconduct (Department of Justice, “Addressing Police Misconduct”, 1). There are federal laws to protect civilians from police violence and other forms of police misconduct, which are encompassed under two tiers: criminal and civil federal enforcement. The criminal enforcement, 18 U.S.C. §§ 241, 242, color of law, is a more serious charge. The court must establish proof beyond reasonable doubt that an officer acted under the color of his law enforcement title to take away a civilian’s constitutional rights and other immunities (Ibid., 1-2). According to the Department of Justice website, “The types of law enforcement misconduct covered by these laws include excessive force, sexual assault, intentional false arrests, or the intentional fabrication of evidence resulting in a loss of liberty to another (2).” It is difficult to define excessive force but the accepted way to determine legality is, “whether the police officer reasonably believed that such force was necessary to accomplish a legitimate police purpose (“Use of force”, 3).” If an officer shot a civilian because the civilian was about to shoot him, that would be a reasonable use of force. When there is no video or reliable eyewitness to an incident, it is difficult to establish whether the officer acted with a reasonable amount of force.
The other means of federal enforcement is civil. A civil case means that the Department of Justice will file an investigation on the police department. This can occur through litigation. As long as the Department of Justice can “satisfy the lower standard of a preponderance of the evidence,” it can charge the department with police misconduct (Department of Justice, “Addressing Police Misconduct”, 1). A civil case investigates whether the singular case of police misconduct is a trend for the police department. The Department of Justice explains it is, “unlawful for State or local law enforcement officers to engage in a pattern or practice of conduct that deprives persons of rights protected by the Constitution or laws of the United States. (42 U.S.C. § 14141). The types of conduct covered by this law can include, among other things, excessive force, discriminatory harassment, false arrests, coercive sexual conduct, and unlawful stops, searches or arrests (Ibid., 3).” If the incident is a trend, the Department of Justice may investigate.

A history of recording police behavior

Before body cameras, police recorded on dashboard cameras and relied on surveillance footage from the area. Police may record a scene, but civilians also have devised ways to record cases of police violence. The fastest way to record in modern day is with a cell phone. The issue with cell phone recording and any other civilian means of recording is legitimacy. According to technology legal experts, a civilian can record as long as the police interaction takes place in a public space. However, police officers have the right to make a civilian stop recording at their discretion. An officer may claim the civilian is obstructing the scene. If the civilian does not comply he may face charges. Because the police officer has the ability to choose for himself when a civilian can or cannot record police interactions, this is not a useful method to measure
police accountability (American Civil Liberties Union of Pennsylvania 2014). An officer assaulting a civilian may be more likely to cease any video recording. To add, when police violence occurs there may be no civilians in the area to record the incident and if a civilian records a scene he can edit the footage to support his bias toward or against police. Civilian recording has its faults.

Civilian oversight through media recording has its roots in the early 20th century with photojournalist Jacob Riis, who captured photographs detailing the misery of New York slums and lack of police action in How the Other Half Lives (Stamp 2014, 1). Civilians continued recording officer interactions and in some cases captured cases of police brutality. Civilian recording has a large impact on social movements, because they appear more trustworthy. Police are not capturing the footage and the viewer is not likely to consider the footage to be tampered with to improve the image of the officer. One of the most impactful moments of civilian oversight occurred in 1992. Los Angeles Police huddled around civilian Rodney King and beat him to death. An onlooker recorded the event and shortly after the national news networks reported the event. The Rodney King footage affirmed many civilians’ beliefs about the police and their excessive use of force (PBS 2014, 1). Civilian oversight demonstrated an outside force was necessary to monitor the police and highlight instances where they fail to preserve law and order and instead demonstrate police violence.

Although they sit removed from a stop and frisk, dashboard-mounted cameras have successfully captured cases of officer violence toward civilians such as the officer assault of Sandra Bland in Summer 2015. This video recording led to nationwide distrust of police, especially towards their racial profiling and violent nature. Unfortunately, the footage lacked important details a body camera could have captured. The dashboard-mounted cameras recorded
major details, such as the officer pulling Ms. Bland out of her car. The viewer can also hear their interaction thanks to a dashboard microphone. However many details went unclear. The camera was far away from the officer and the civilian. Therefore, legal analysts struggled to determine whether or not the officer was justified to use force (Smith 2015, 2-3). Another issue from the dashboard-mounted camera is movement. In the Sandra Bland case, the officer pressed Ms. Bland to the ground outside the field of view from the camera. A dashboard-mounted camera cannot move with the officer. Because of its distance from the scene and inability to follow the civilian and the officer, the dashboard-mounted camera is not an ideal means of recording police activity.

Dashboard-mounted cameras are effective in some cases, but body cameras can closely follow an event. In some instances, dashboard-mounted cameras cannot record an encounter when the civilian attempts to run. One example took place in South Carolina, 2014. Walter Scott ran from the police and officer Slager pursued. Officer Slager shot Scott down past the view of the camera. Luckily, a bystander recorded the incident on his cellphone, serving as auxiliary footage to explain the death of Scott. Without a bystander, Scott may have died without anyone learning he was wrongly killed (“Walter Scott Shooting” 2015). Although cellphones are not a perfect means or recording, it served a purpose body cameras should have served. The public should not rely on a bystander to capture an incident. A police department, if committed to keeping its officers accountable, may choose body cameras as a means to always have a mobile video recording. Body cameras provide better proximity to an incident of police violence than a dashboard-mounted camera, increasing the amount of evidence.

Many fatal officer-involved-shootings can be found on websites such as Copwatch.org where civilians post cellphone footage of an officer harming a civilian (Copwatch 2016).
Similarly, dashboard-mounted camera footage has spread across the Internet for public access. Although these technologies are useful methods to capture police violence on tape, they are insufficient means to increase accountability. Often unclear footage lacking proximity to the scene do not hold up as evidence in court when convicting an officer of a crime, such as during the Sandra Bland case (Smith 2015, 2-3). On the other hand, body cameras are quickly becoming a popular tool to impact the nature of police violence recording. Another critical issue with dashboard-mounted cameras is their lack of video credibility. Although police report no edits were made to the dashboard-mounted camera footage of the arrest of Sandra Bland, columnists are doubtful. Motion glitches occur in the video at several moments, sparking public concern about the integrity of dashboard-mounted camera footage as evidence (Rothwell 2015, 1-2). When footage is unreliable, the public conspire that police operate above the law and wrongly harms citizens without facing punitive consequences from the courts. It may never be known if someone edited the dashboard-mounted camera footage to clear the officers of a criminal charge. However it is clear the public doubt the integrity of the footage (1).

**Video Evidence in Court**

Dashboard-mounted cameras and cell phones may present police as violent, but they have legal limitations in a court of law. Videos reveal cases of police violence. But the footage itself may not be substantive enough to convict an officer. Body cameras are a means to continue recording officer behavior, but to also create a video medium that is closer to the action and more presentable in a court case. Body cameras are considered a reform to policing. Protestors encourage and demand body cameras in the hope they can improve police accountability. However, body cameras may not prevent future cases of police brutality. If they do, they may not
reduce a significant number of cases. What many hope body cameras will do is hold an officer accountable when a body camera records the officer harming a civilian (McFarlin 2015, 2). Body camera footage gets closer to the incident than a dashboard-mounted camera or a bystander recording from his cellphone.

Video has an important component that eyewitness testimony cannot achieve: it records an event. A witness may give a statement that is a perspective from the incident but cannot recall the details. Elizabeth F. Loftus from University of California Irvine explains that recollecting a memory is, “more akin to putting puzzle pieces together than retrieving a video recording (Arkowitz and Lilienfeld 2010, 2).” She explains that when a person tries to remember an event he reconstructs the many pieces of the memory and can make mistakes regarding event accuracy. Eyewitness testimony is suspect to mistaken convictions and false memories (3). Video is a more reliable resource. Therefore, video technology such as cellphone video recordings, dashboard-mounted cameras, and body cameras are in high demand to capture police interactions in a way so that the event can be re-watched.

Many cases of police misconduct lack recording technology at the scene of the incident. Michael Brown’s death sparked protests throughout the country, leading to arrests of protestors and civil distrust with the criminal justice system. The death of Michael Brown was not recorded; however the only footage of Brown was from him stealing in a store and another video of him dead on the ground (Department of Justice 2015, 26). No one recorded the police interaction. Therefore, no one has video evidence that sways the court’s decision on whether Officer Wilson acted justly when he had shot Brown. The public at the time reacted negatively and protested, largely because an officer’s word was given the benefit of the doubt (Pew Research Center, “Brown, Garner Decisions” 2014, 2). Lack of proper video, specifically body
camera footage, impedes a court from evaluating the incident. Body camera footage offers proximity and detail. Due to the lack of facts, it is not clear whether footage may have portrayed Officer Wilson as aggressive and malicious or terrified and pulling out a gun to save his life. However, having an additional viewpoint to examine the case could have greatly improved the court’s ability to understand the event.

Body cameras

Body cameras are a new technology of recording footage. Given rapid development, police departments have access to communicate with body camera vendors such as TASER International, Safety Vision, and Patrol Eyes and hold contract bids (Featured Police Body Camera Companies 2016, 1-3). In this investigation the term body camera does not apply to one particular brand or series of camera from a single company. It includes any sort of lapel camera, body-worn, or helmet video camera on a police officer. GoPro cameras, dashboard-mounted cameras, and cellphones are not body cameras. Many body camera companies develop close relationships with police departments, supplying them with devices. These companies can then win large contracts with police departments. Body cameras range in price but typically cost $800 to $1,200 per camera (Cliff 2015, 6). In the past, video devices were cumbersome and inefficient. The body camera signifies big changes in video technology. The camera has shrunk in size and utilizes a cloud network for recordings to be saved and filed.

There are a variety of body camera formats. Many companies produce body cameras and officers may attach them to the rim of their glasses or to their chest such as TASER’s AXON series (AXON TASER Products Page 2016, 1). Police departments do not all purchase the same model. Studying body camera efficacy is inconclusive because many models differ in recording
quality, such as low-light recording, resolution, and durability (1). Results vary based on each model. One of the biggest differences among products is how they market their video storage systems. According to a law enforcement article on body camera purchasing, “body camera vendors are expected to have a place to store what they produce, so they cobble together back-end applications (3 things to avoid 2015, 2).” These storage solutions have software limitations. They lack sophisticated organization and provide very few categories to file video. The same article mentions these back-end applications are unreliable, making many departments look for additional funding to purchase better storage system software (2).

Police departments are procuring body cameras for their officers in many cities thanks to federal grants from Department of Justice in an effort to increase public safety. Federal officials may have many reasons to push for body cameras. In 2014, departments across the nation shared $75 million grant as a result of public outrage with the criminal justice system. This was the start of a federal pilot program to gauge body camera interest. The report states, “The pilot program is part of President Obama’s proposal to invest $75 million over three years to purchase 50,000 body-worn cameras for law enforcement agencies (“Justice Department $20 million” 2015, 1-2).” Cities must apply for a grant and present a plan of how, if accepted, the police department may implement body cameras and train its officers. Many cities, once accepted, begin with a pilot program. This is the first part of implementation for many cities, and often large city news sources write articles about the findings from the pilot program (Sherman 2015, 2-3). Pilot programs vary in size and duration. Often officers are selected to wear the body camera and department performs field tests. Los Angeles began a pilot program before receiving funding from the federal government. Nonetheless, federal funding can play a significant part in encouraging city police departments to think critically about how to implement body cameras.
The Department of Justice also encourages small cities to apply for body camera grants. In 2015 additional federal funds were available for small police departments. In September 2015 the Department of Justice awarded $23 million towards body camera pilot programs (“Justice Department $23 million” 2015, 2-3). The pilot program assists local police departments interested in body camera procurement. For ever how much the police department requests, it must meet that number 50/50 in cash before applying. This 50/50 match to demonstrate the department’s ability to fund partly on its own is also part of the grant for $75 million from 2014. Federal access to funding for large and small police departments means that body cameras are a source of community policing for wealthy and less wealthy districts (“Justice Department $20 million” 2015, 1-2). Los Angeles began its body camera program from private donations. It is unrealistic for every police department to raise enough funds to begin a body camera program without grants. Therefore, federal grants are an important factor to consider when evaluating the diversity of rich and poor cities that adopted body cameras already (Mather, “LAPD $1 million” 2015, 1).

High Publicity Incidents v. Low Publicity Incidents

When an officer harms a civilian, the incident can become a high or low publicity incident. The distinction may play a role in how a police department behaves when adopting body cameras. The terms high publicity incident and low publicity incident are novel to studying police behavior. Both are only applicable to cases of police violence and the respective outcomes from the public and media. A high publicity incident may occur when police cannot contain the aftermath from an incident of police violence and provide inadequate responses to the public. When police cannot suppress attention drawn to the victim, they fail to contain the aftermath.
Due to lack of containment, the media and public rally around and express sympathy over the civilian injured or killed. The incident activates a movement from sympathizers to raise officer accountability, often by pressing police to adopt body cameras.

Ferguson and Chicago are key examples of cities that experienced a high publicity incident. In the Ferguson case, an officer shot a civilian and bystanders circulated the news and sympathized with fallen Michael Brown. Police failed to contain the aftermath. Onlookers asked the police questions about what happened and why an officer shot a resident. Police provided an inadequate response. They did not explain what led to Brown’s death and brought in canine units to disperse onlookers and protesters. In addition, the police did not collect the body from the ground until 4 hours after the incident. People recorded the aftermath of Brown’s death on their cellphones, showing Brown’s body on the ground and the aggressive police response. It was clear police mishandled their response to the community. Sympathizers framed the event as evidence of a much larger societal problem: police violence and racism. News outlets picked up the incident and shortly after the case became a national story (Bosman and Goldstein 2014, 2).

Ferguson is a perfect case of a high publicity incident. Officers heightened the tension as they brought in canine units and refused to explain what had occurred. They also failed to contain the aftermath. Another case of a high publicity incident is Chicago. In 2014, an officer shot down resident Laquan McDonald 16 times. The initial event had little media coverage and Chicago city leaders hid the video of the incident from the public for a year. During this time, they successfully contained the aftermath of the event. Ultimately the court charged the officer involved with first-degree murder and ordered Chicago Police Department to release the video to the public. Once the video went public, the incident went from a contained low publicity incident to a high publicity incident. Chicago city leaders could not contain the video and struggled to
suppress protests and negative media coverage. Once Chicago Police Department released the video, they were unable to frame the event to legitimize their use of force (Smith 2015, 1-3).

A low publicity incident is the counterpart. For a low publicity incident to occur there must be a case of police violence. However, the police department does not face as much public and media backlash. It is unclear what prevents the incident from gaining large-scale attention. It could be because the police contain the aftermath of the event, or onlookers do not sympathize with the victim, or some other unknown reason. In a low publicity incident, there may be unseen factors that prevent the incident from gaining as much attention. One factor may or may not be the race of the victim. Given the three examples of high publicity cases, one may assume cases of police violence involving racial inequality garner more attention than other cases. While the three case studies of high publicity incidents all include victims who are people of color, it is rash to assume the media and public exclusively focus on cases of police violence that involve people of color. Dallas experienced two cases of police violence in late 2013 and it is appropriate to label them as low publicity. In each incident the police department provided adequate responses by firing the officers involved. For unknown reasons, neither case became a major national story. It is difficult to discern what makes a case of police violence circulate through social media and news stations. In both incidents it is unclear whether police were firing shots by accident or for the purpose of abusing their power. Despite the ambiguity, Dallas Police Chief David Brown quickly responded to each incident in newspapers and weeks later began a body camera pilot program (Hallman, “Police release video” 2016, 3, Associated Press 2014, 7, Merchant 2013, 4).

High publicity incidents draw attention and low publicity incidents do not. This distinction may result in differences between how a city responds to cases of police violence.
High and low publicity incidents will offer insight on body camera procurement in the theory generation chapter.

The Case Studies

To make sense of body camera procurement this thesis will examine five major case studies: Los Angeles, Dallas, Ferguson/St. Louis, Baltimore, and Chicago. Researching smaller cities and towns, though useful, makes gathering research difficult. Large cities provide access to articles from a wider range of media sources than what a small city or town may provide. The Los Angeles and Dallas case studies are examples of low publicity incidents, while the Ferguson/St. Louis, Chicago, and Baltimore case studies are examples of high publicity incidents. In low publicity incident case studies, the city proactively purchases body cameras to avoid a high publicity incident. In the high publicity incidents, cities purchase body cameras in an effort to regain public trust as a response to experiencing a highly circulated case of police violence.

To begin, Los Angeles is one of the most important cities to study in policing because of its notorious history of racial violence and recent efforts to reform and build trust with the community (Morrison 2015, 1-3). Los Angeles is a diverse city made up of 10.1 million residents. As of 2014 the U.S. census reports 47.7% are Latino or Hispanic, 14.8% are Asian, and 9.2% are African American (Los Angeles Quick Facts 2015). The city is a testing ground for many new policies and other cities often observe policy effectiveness in Los Angeles before implementation within their respective city. New York City is a key example: in an effort to reform the police department, NYPD sent officers to Los Angeles to learn about the body camera program and report on the best implementation procedures (Parascandola, “NYPD cops to study” 2015, 1-2). Los Angeles began conducting a body camera pilot program earlier than most cities
in February 2013. After the Trayvon Martin trial, Los Angeles began to plan its own body camera as a proactive measure to prevent high publicity incidents. To clarify, the Trayvon Martin case did not involve police violence, but a white civilian taking the role of an authority actor and shooting a black civilian (Sanburn 2015, 106).

The next case study is Dallas, Texas. In Dallas, city leaders quickly adopted body cameras as a proactive measure. One of the biggest reasons to study Dallas is its diversity. Besides being a large city of 1.2 million, 25.0% of Dallas residents are black and 42.4% identify as Hispanic or Latino (Dallas Quick Facts 2015). Dallas is a useful case study because its city leaders purchased body cameras without experiencing a high publicity incident. In late 2013 Dallas experienced two low publicity incidents. Afterward, city leaders began a pilot program. Dallas partly adopted body cameras as a reactive measure to low publicity incidents. Dallas News wrote that Dallas support for body cameras was “bolstered…when Senior Cpl. Amy Wilburn shot an unarmed teen.” This was the second low publicity incident and it is clear the incidents played a role in sparking Dallas police interest in body cameras. Dallas police began a pilot program weeks after the second incident (Hallman, “rollout body camera program” 2015, 1-4). Although Dallas responded to police violence, they did not wait for a high publicity incident. Therefore it belongs somewhere between reactive and proactive.

The first reactive case study in this research is Ferguson/St. Louis, Missouri. Ferguson is a small city on the border of St. Louis, Missouri, containing 21,086 residents. The largest demographic in Ferguson is the African American, consisting of 67.4% of the population. The city of St. Louis borders Ferguson and has a strong connection to Ferguson’s shooting, protests, and police encounters. St. Louis contains 1 million residents, composed of 23.9% of African Americans, 2.7% who are Hispanic or Latino, 4.0% Asian, and 67.6% white (St. Louis Quick
Ferguson is a high publicity incident and so is St. Louis. Both involved an incident where an officer shot a resident that provoked protests and a police response to institute body cameras (NBC News 2014, 1). Ferguson was the first. Officer Darren Wilson shot resident Michael Brown. Reporters widely circulated Brown’s death and protests began. A year later, police distrust and protests reemerge around the anniversary of Brown’s death. Days later, a St. Louis officer shoots resident Mansur Ball-Bey, sparking additional protests. According to the autopsy report, the officer shot Ball-Bey in the back. As a result, the public became increasingly distrustful of police in the Ferguson-St. Louis area. These two distinct shootings became high publicity incidents and promoted body camera reform as a reactive measure (Hanna 2015, 1, Pearce, “Federal oversight” 2016, 21).

The next city to study is Baltimore, Maryland. Baltimore is an urban center with a recent history of police violence and civil unrest (Bacon 2015, 1). The city is made up of 622,793 residents, those of which 63.1% are black and 28.2% are white (Baltimore Quick Facts 2014). In April 2015, six officers had something to do with the death of Freddie Gray, who suffered a spinal injury while in police custody, entered a coma, and died the following day. Information was and still is unclear how Gray died. Nonetheless, protestors spilled into the streets to demand police accountability for his death. The public wanted to know what had happened and the police department officials had no answer to explain the situation and its cause. This and many other factors make Baltimore a critical example of how a high publicity incident puts a city police department in a position to begin instituting police reforms. One of many reforms was the body camera (Stohlberg, “Police officers charged” 2015, 1-3).

The last case study is Chicago. As of this report, Chicago is the most recent city to be in the spotlight regarding police violence. In 2014 Officer Jason Van Dyke shot Laquan McDonald
16 times. Chicago police and the prosecutor withheld the footage of the incident from the public for over a year. After a journalist filed report under a Freedom of Information Act to release the footage. After months of debate, the court ordered Chicago to publicly release the video in November 2015. The video was graphic and Chicago city leaders faced severe public backlash. The incident initially was not widely publicized but after the video release the shooting became a high publicity incident. Days after the video release Chicago Police Department released a promise to invest in body cameras as a reaction to the public criticism surrounding the department (Karimi 2015, 2-3). Rather than proposing body cameras as a means to be seen as a liberal city, Chicago proposed body cameras as a means to end criticism (Briscoe officers wear body cameras 2015, 1-3).

This paper will review each case study and explain why it belongs in one of the two groups. In an ideal world this research would examine every city that has a body camera program. This research is imperfect because it presents a model for cities not included within the paper. However the five case studies represent large and diverse demographics that cover the map of the United States geography from North, South, East, West, and Midwest. Each case study takes place in a large metropolitan area with diverse communities.

The map on the next page includes the five case studies included in this thesis and organizes them into two distinct groups: proactive and reactive.
Works Cited for Chapter 1


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Chapter 2. Literature Review

The literature in this chapter includes sections on body camera trials, policy agenda setting, police violence federal investigations, and framing. Body camera literature is scarce. From the little information available, most supports to rejects body cameras as a worthwhile police reform. Evidence from body camera trials may support camera procurement, but most inform the reader more trials must be undertaken before drawing any conclusions that body cameras can improve trust relations. Once more, this research will not investigate the impact of body cameras on police accountability, but examine the variables that may affect procurement behavior among different case studies. Police departments often begin body camera procurement with pilot programs, whereby department officials track the usage of body cameras in a controlled trial within their department to gauge the outcome of police behavior (Parascandola, “NYPD body camera pilot” 2015, 1).

The Effect of Police Body-Worn Cameras on Use of Force and Citizen’s Complains Against the Police: A Randomized Controlled Trial, Barak Ariel

The first major body camera report appeared in 2013. Researcher Barak Ariel, from the Institute of Criminology at Cambridge University, created a randomized controlled trial. Ariel’s objective was to study whether body cameras can reduce rates of police use-of-force (Police Foundation Advancing Police, 10). For one year, officers from Rialto, California wore body cameras at random during their shift. Ariel studied use-of-force frequency among officers who wore body cameras versus officers who hadn’t worn body cameras. Ariel defines use of force as excessive, unreasonable, and non-desirable response in police-public encounters (Ariel and Farrar 2015, 510). The report demonstrates, “during the 12-month Rialto experiment, use-of-
force by officers wearing cameras fell by 59% and reports against officers dropped by 87% against the previous year’s figures (University of Cambridge Research News 2014, 4).” Ariel suggests an officer changes his behavior when wearing a body camera because awareness that the camera records his actions increases self-awareness. Before Ariel, no one conducted research beyond anecdotal evidence. Barak Ariel explains police departments adopt body cameras to overcome public distrust with police and lack of confidence towards police departments. By reducing use of force, trust can be restored by means of increasing police accountability and the public will feel more confident that the police are working to improve police-civilian relations (Ariel and Farrar 2015, 510). Body cameras improved police behavior in Rialto but each city’s reaction to body cameras may differ. Barak Ariel warns there are “vital questions remaining how normalizing the provision of digital video as evidence will affect prosecution expectations, as well as the storage technology and policies that will be required for the enormous amount of data captured (University of Cambridge Research News 2014, 4).” It is necessary to continue research before any conclusive answers regarding body cameras and their effectiveness in improving the justice system.

**Police Body-Worn Cameras: Assessing the Evidence, Michael White, PhD**

The next research is by Michael White, who published his paper in 2014 and focused on critiquing perceived benefits and concerns of implementing body cameras (White 2014, 1). The purpose of this research is to, “provide a comprehensive resource that will help law enforcement agencies to understand the factors they should consider to make informed decisions regarding the adoption of body-worn camera technology (Ibid., 5).” It is unclear whether departments use this document as a resource, but it is accessible to the public, unlike Barak Ariel’s report, which is
included in a journal. White’s research is not a trial. It is compiled data that can help agencies decide whether to invest in body cameras. Police departments adopt body cameras at different rates. White’s paper offers concerns regarding body cameras that may be a variable affecting the low procurement of body cameras in particular police departments. There is no evidence to suggest departments use this guide and reduce the speed of body camera procurement because of particular concerns. Nonetheless, White discusses benefits and potential harms associated with adopting body cameras (5). On the next page is a table from White’s research.
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<th>Benefits</th>
<th>Concerns</th>
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<td>Improved police officer behavior</td>
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<td>Improved citizen behavior</td>
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<td>Expedited resolution of complaints and lawsuits</td>
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<td>Improved evidence for arrest and prosecution</td>
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Table 2
Perceived benefits and concerns with officer body-worn cameras.
White 2014, 18
On the table, White sums up the opinions for and against body cameras. The concerns revolve around privacy of both civilians and officers as well body camera complications (18). White also introduces body camera research. He discusses case studies from the United Kingdom and the United States in order to evaluate body camera effectiveness. The cases from the United States include studies conducted in Rialto, California; Mesa, Arizona; and Phoenix, Arizona (16). The Rialto case study began in February 2012. In Rialto Barak Ariel had defended body cameras as an effective measure to reduce police violence. Rialto Police Department had fifty-four officers, half of which wore the TASER AXON body camera, the same camera Los Angeles Police Department purchased. The Rialto case took place over 988 shifts, half of which involved body cameras and half of which did not. The second case study took place in October 2012 in Mesa, Arizona. Fifty officers wore AXON FLEX body cameras in a year-long trial (17). This study compared Mesa Police Department to a demographically similar department that did not implement body cameras and measured officer opinions on the technology as well as decreasing complaints by civilians regarding police behavior (16). The third study took place in Phoenix Arizona by Phoenix Police Department and by Arizona University. The program outfitted fifty-six officers with the VIEVU body camera to measure similar outcomes, such as decreasing unwanted police behavior and civilian complaints. The Phoenix case study compared results with fifty officers who did not wear body cameras to measure the outcome. According to White, both cases were too early in development to discuss body camera effectiveness.

From these case studies, White begins to discuss the perceived benefits to explain why police departments take interest in body cameras. These perceived benefits may yield potential indicators to study varying rates of body camera procurement among police departments. Most of the assumptions advocates claim are based around the theory that behavior changes when
individuals know they are being recorded (13). In this case, there is an assumption that has yet to be proven with extensive trials indicating police, and potentially civilians, change their behavior when an officer wears a body camera. From this assumption, one of the largest perceived benefits is that body cameras will increase transparency and improve citizen views towards the police. White argues “this claim has not been sufficiently tested...[and] there have been virtually no studies of citizens’ views of the technology (6).” Although Barak Ariel published a randomized controlled trial, even he insisted researchers must continue researching the topic before anyone draws a conclusion regarding the impact of body cameras on police behavior (5, University of Cambridge Research News, 4). These benefits are difficult to track among police departments. The concerns and criticisms may yield more information to explain why a police department is slow to adopt body cameras.

White discusses substantive concerns regarding body camera procurement that may be used as indicators to track slow rates of body camera procurement in particular departments. He argues that video can be an invasion of privacy for a civilian and the officer. White mentions the National Institute of Justice does not support body camera usage: “federal law blocks the warrantless capturing of photo or video images of people where they have an expectation of privacy (Hayes and Ericson 2012, 7).” There is legal concern regarding officers recording interactions with the public. Consent is not lawfully acquired from civilians. Body cameras also can impinge on particular state laws: In Seattle: “State law bars audio recording of private conversations without the consent of all directly involved...state law does allow an exception for dashboard-mounted cameras in police cars but not body cameras on police officers (Rosenberg 2011, 1).” Civilians may not want a video of their police interaction. Without consent from a civilian, a body camera moves from a public safety measure to an invasion of privacy.
Implementing a new technology comes with criticism, and in this case opposition from the law. Advocates may claim body cameras will have a positive impact, but institutions valuing privacy find reasons to oppose procurement.

In his research, White discusses perceived concerns about body cameras, some of which appear in case studies such as Los Angeles. The American Civil Liberties Union of Southern California issued a press release opposing Department of Justice providing grant money for Los Angeles’ body camera program. The ACLU report mentioned, “We believe that LAPD’s policy does not promote—and in fact undermines—the goals of transparency, accountability and creation of public trust that body worn cameras should serve (Bibring 2015, 1).” ACLU’s Director Denise E. O’Donnell opposed Los Angeles’ proposed body camera policies. O’Donnell released this letter September 3 2015, two days after the launch of the Los Angeles Police Department body camera program. ACLU is against the proposed policy because it is, “failing to include protections against the use of body-worn cameras as general surveillance tools (2).” ACLU emphasized a valuable point: cameras can make civilians feel uncomfortable. Citizen privacy is difficult to manage in a body camera program. More evidence needs to be collected on the impact of body camera concerns such as citizen privacy before determining whether it plays a role in decelerating body camera procurement; in the case of Los Angeles, the Department of Justice allocated funds despite ACLU’s concerns (Mather, “LAPD $1 million” 2015, 1).

**Ferguson Report, U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division**

Moving away from guides and research, authors write about racial tensions between the public and police and the resulting civilian distrust with the justice system; studying public frustration with the police is a useful means to understand why many police departments are
vying for body camera programs as a means to improve officer accountability. After the death of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, the White House commissioned a Federal investigation by the U.S. Department of Justice Civil, Rights Division on Ferguson’s Police Department titled, *The Ferguson Report* (Shaw 2015, vii). In the published version, Theodore M. Shaw writes an introduction with many important comments on institutional racism within police departments nationwide. Beyond racism, Shaw comments on lack of accountability: “a culture within police departments of silence among good officers about excessive force in the part of other police officers, tears at the fabric of the relationship between law enforcement and the communities they police (xiv).” In this case, body camera footage can record unwanted officer behavior as a means of oversight when officers hesitate to report their colleagues. *The Ferguson Report* is an instrumental document to objectively report institutional racism in Ferguson’s Police Department. Therefore, the *Ferguson Report* can provide a credible basis for finding indicators to explore the cause of why cities adopt body cameras.

The *Ferguson Report* explores a particular police department and reports extensively on race-based police violence and intolerance. The authors reviewed over 35,000 pages of police reports and interviewed half of Ferguson’s Police Department as well as city officials and residents (*The Ferguson Report* 2015, 1). Ultimately, the authors compiled and analyzed the data on stops, arrests, searches, and citations. The writers of the *Ferguson Report* explain that Ferguson Police Department prioritized earning revenue rather than preserving public safety, often targeting people of color. According to the report, “officers rely heavily on the municipal Failure to Comply charge, which appears to be…on a system of officer generated arrest orders called wanteds that circumvents the warrant system and poses a significant risk of abuse (28).” Officers pick out people of color to police and increase their revenue (2-3). If a person does not
comply with an officer’s demands, the officer arrests the individual with no underlying crime committed. Officers also avoid warrants and pursue individual by means of stating they are wanted. These practices raise revenue for Ferguson Police Department, by means of increasing fines and arrests (29).

The Ferguson Report discusses African Americans are at the center of unconstitutional police harm. The authors write, “FPD records suggest a tendency to use unnecessary force against vulnerable groups such as people with mental health conditions or cognitive disabilities, and juvenile students...[and] excessive force disproportionately harms African American members of the community...almost 90% (48).” The Ferguson Report demonstrates police violence is real and targets particular groups of people. The authors state that Ferguson’s Police Department methods are unconstitutional. They defy the fourth amendment, guaranteeing civilians security from unreasonable search and seizure. As ruled in Graham vs. Conner, 490 US 386, 394 1989, law enforcement officers cannot use excessive force unless it is objectively reasonable (48). Ferguson police instituted circumstances to justify use-of-force. After federal investigation of 151 cases reports of reasonable use-of-force, the authors determined Ferguson police officers consistently acted with unjustifiable force towards civilians. This is an important example of how poor law enforcement can go unnoticed and explains why civilians may develop negative relationships with their police department (49). The Ferguson Report may investigate only one department but, “Ferguson did not happen in a vacuum...police killings of unarmed individuals are, unfortunately, not uncommon (Shaw 2015, vii-viii).” The report provides objective analysis on local law enforcement and justifies the call for action to improve police accountability (The Ferguson Report 2015, 1). By studying the Ferguson Report and the surrounding events of the Michael Brown shooting, there is clear concern over police violence
and the need to restore the justice system’s responsibility to preserve public safety (1). Body cameras may be the answer to public distrust of law enforcement and police violence.

*Agendas Alternatives and Public Policies, John W. Kingdon, PhD*

The next literature to examine does not deal directly with body cameras but the process in which policy proposals become part of a legislative agenda. Policy agenda setting may potentially explain the surge in body camera adoption across the United States. In *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*, John W. Kingdon explains opportunities open to let proposed policy become law. He writes, “a window opens because of change in the political stream (shift in national mood); or it opens because a new problem captures the attention of governmental officials and those close to them (Kingdon 168).” A government may take interest in a policy proposal because the individuals in power view the policy as a solution to a problem. Before, that policy may have been tangential. But once the window opens and the policy becomes a realistic solution, supporters increase and the policy idea has the potential to become law.

Kingdon explains that when a window opens for a policy proposal, the window is time significant. There must be a trigger to make the proposal a priority for legislators. He gives the example of aviation policy: “An airplane crash for instance, opens a window for advocates of initiatives in aviation safety. If they have their proposals ready, the crash provides an opportunity to argue that the proposal should be enacted (Ibid., 169).” Horrible events provoke policy. The government will promote the new policy because of the damage the incident may have done to the reputation of the aviation firm, the reputation of government, or the safety of the passengers. Previously the government may not have expressed interest in the policy.
Kingdon’s aviation crash example is equivalent to an officer killing a civilian without probable cause. Documents such as the *Ferguson Report* depict violence, racism, and profiteering in America’s policing. Following a shooting, a department may recognize their policing issues. This opens the window for new policy work (*The Ferguson Report* 2015, 1). One of the most popular policies is the body camera.

*Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment, Robert D. Benford, David A. Snow*

This article, written in 2000, explores a concept called framing. The writer quotes psychologist Erving Goffman’s definition: “schemata of interpretation that enable individuals to locate, perceive, identify, and label occurrences within their life space and the world at large (Goffman 1974, 21, Benford and Snow 2000, 614).” *Framing Processes* examines framing techniques of social movement groups, called collective action framing. Social movement organizations frame as a means to gain support. While portraying the world, social movement organization actors follow three steps. The first step is diagnostic: the actors find a problem and describe it as something fundamentally wrong. The next is prognostic: the actors find a solution to the problem. The last step is motivational: actors encourage participation as a means to solve the problem at hand. These are the social movement’s core framing tasks and are agents of change (Benford and Snow 2000, 615). The police and social movement actors use framing to interpret cases of police violence according to their beliefs.

The writers explain collective action frames derive from two types of discursive processes: frame articulation and frame amplification. Both processes involve written or oral communication from social movement actors. Frame articulation involves connecting events to
tell a coherent story. Social movement actors use this to dismiss events are arbitrary. Articulation intensifies the issue a social movement combats by linking events together. The actor can express an interpretation of the events as connected and resultant of one societal issue. The second discursive process is frame amplification. After linking the events, the actor emphasizes the issue. Each event thereby strengthens the actor’s argument to solve the societal problem (623). This article examines social movement organizations through frames. This thesis will apply the framing concepts on police behavior.

The purpose of including a section on *Framing Processes* is not to suggest police operate as social movements, but to consider police may use similar framing techniques to generate change. Though *Framing Processes* is useful to study frameworks, it is not directly applicable to police framing. Studying social movement organization framing helps a reader gain more knowledge about mobilization tactics and how to articulate and amplify a goal. Similar techniques may take place when a police department tries to institute a reform such as body cameras. Police and city leaders may use discursive processes within their city to justify spending taxpayer money on body cameras. Social movements use diagnostic, prognostic and motivational discursive processes. Without the intention to simulate social movement organizations, police departments may frame high publicity incidents as issues to solve and motivate other city leaders to buy body cameras as a way to solve the issue of police violence, or in other cases, prevent high publicity incidents.
Works Cited for Chapter 2


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Chapter 3. Theory

Theory Generation

There is no established explanation in body camera literature explaining why cities adopt body cameras. However, there are theories, some of which fit better than others. Information of body camera procurement typically focuses on proving or disproving their efficacy in reducing police violence, but neglect to study the factors that cause procurement. By comparing case studies of cities that adopted body cameras and applying concepts from the literature review section, theories emerge. To create theories, as political scientist Stephen Van Evra mentions, “some scholars use deduction, inferring explanations (Van Evra 1997, 21).” Deduction is a useful means to build a theory regarding body camera procurement. As one continues to deduce, some theories must be eliminated and others must be generated.

To begin, body cameras are expensive, new, and the benefits are unclear. Adopting a brand new technology requires massive funding. Recent price estimates from 2015 calculate a body camera costs $800 to $1,000 and $1,200 for each camera’s annual storage maintenance (Cliff 2015, 2, Gross 2015, 1). If a police department insists on purchasing body cameras it must have an important enough reason to outweigh the cost. When reviewing cases, plenty of city leaders are confident body cameras increase accountability. Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti claimed, “These cameras will help law enforcement and the public alike find the truth -- and truth is essential to the trust between the LAPD and the community (Welch 2014, 2).” Los Angeles is not the only city to support body cameras. Roughly every one in three police department has a body camera program in the United States as of December 2015 (Lustbader 2015, 1). One may deduce cities adopt body cameras despite their high costs to achieve a social
agenda. If money is typically tight in a department, it is significant when a department chooses to purchase body cameras.

Cities can use body cameras to raise accountability, attempt to decrease police violence, and decrease citizen complaints. The root of these motives is to build trust between the police and their city. But looking at one city is not enough to develop an argument. In order to generate a theory for why cities adopt body cameras, this investigation considers numerous cases of adoption. Looking for generalizable relationships calls for heuristic case studies. Political scientist Harry Eckstein argues that,

Heuristic case studies tie directly into theory building, and therefore are less concerned with overall concrete configurations than with potentially generalizable relations between aspects of them...because the potentially generalizable relations do not just turn up but are deliberately sought out (Eckstein 1975, 104).

Building a theory requires selecting particular case studies that demonstrate a generalizable relationship between the dependent and independent variable. General relationships between the variables may produce different causal processes. However, the scope of research may be of use to demonstrate the complexity of the relationship between the dependent and independent variables. There are two types of general relationships: proactive and reactive cities.

Particular authors helped generate this theory. John Kingdon’s policy window theory closely matches the theory of reactive and proactive body camera procurement. Body cameras are an expensive means to reform police behavior. If not for an open policy window, only wealthy cities would buy body cameras. A high publicity incident such as the Laquan McDonald shooting in Chicago provokes police to consider implementing body camera legislation. Emergencies cause cities to re-evaluate policy proposals, and if they believe the policy can help solve an issue, they may adopt the policy. A high publicity incident opens the policy window for body camera policy (Briscoe officers wear body cameras 2015, 1). However, not every city
needs to wait for a high publicity incident to begin a body camera program. Other cities may experience a low publicity incident and begin a body camera program, or not even experience police violence. For instance, some cities such as Dallas may begin investing in body cameras after a low publicity incident occurs (Mcllwain 2013, 1-2). Los Angeles adopted body cameras not as a result of police violence but as a means to improve its police force amidst high publicity incidents including the Trayvon Martin shooting, which loosely fits the model but still generated public frustration with authority actor racial violence, and the Michael Brown shooting (Sanburn 2015, 106).

Benford and Snow also help to generate the theory. In their literature, Benford and Snow discuss framing: perceiving an event in a particular way to benefit a movement or organization. *Framing Processes* discusses the discursive process to rally for change. The discursive process includes three steps: diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational framing. Reactive body camera procurement is a framing technique. Supporters of body cameras start with the diagnostic step: there is a problem and that is public distrust towards policing. The problem comes after a high publicity incident damages the department’s public image. The problem may also be a high publicity incident occurring in another city, or that the city experienced a low publicity incident and is looking for means to improve police accountability. In each diagnostic case there follows a solution, or the prognostic step. Cities want body camera programs. Body cameras record police behavior, which they believe will increase trust. Lastly, the third step is motivational (Benford and Snow 2000, 614). Body camera supportive officers rally around the technology and city council may agree to begin a body camera program (623).

These three steps occur in Baltimore after Freddie Gray’s death (Rector, “Baltimore police officers begin” 2015, 9). After experiencing a high publicity incident, city leaders rallied
around a body camera program as a solution to the lack of public trust in the police force. Framing also occurs in cities such as Dallas, where city leaders rallied around body cameras as the answer to improving police accountability. The case studies in this paper all use framing as a means to adopt body cameras. Without a frame, high and low publicity incidents would occur in a vacuum and hold zero relevance to prompt police body camera procurement. Framing involves looking at an incident of police violence from a particular perspective and rallying people to support body cameras in order to fix the issues generated by the event.

Framing Processes and Agendas Alternatives both provide valuable insight for developing a theory. The case studies and literature both point toward reactive and proactive models.

**Defining Reactive and Proactive Body Camera Procurement**

When a city implements a body camera program, there are two different general routes that may prompt a city to adopt. These terms narrowly apply to discussing body camera adoption and may or may not work describing other situations. A reactive city model experiences a case of police violence that becomes a high publicity incident. In return, city leaders and the police department lose the public’s confidence and trust. In an effort to restore accountability to the police force, the city may begin a body camera program, or if already in existence, accelerate the program after the high publicity incident. Reactive case studies only occur after a city experiences a high publicity incident. Ferguson/St. Louis, Baltimore, and Chicago are cities that follow the reactive model. Relevant to the discursive framing process, each city has a diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational step. The diagnostic step occurs after a high publicity incident in the city decreases public trust in the police force. As a result, city leaders and members of the
police department take a prognostic step by recognizing body cameras as a means to solve the problem. The third part, the motivational, is evident when some members of the city leadership advocate for body cameras. The reactive model also fits Kingdon’s writing. A high publicity incident opens a policy window. Once open, there is necessity to address the critical issue that opened the window. A reactive case study is about dealing with a large problem by instituting a solution.

A proactive city does not experience a high publicity incident. It may, however, experience a low publicity incident of police violence or none at all. If the city did not experience police violence, there is a chance it received news about a high publicity incident occurring in another city. In any of these circumstances, the city may choose to adopt body cameras to increase police accountability. The most defining characteristic of a proactive city is its leaders adopt body cameras without experiencing a high publicity incident. Reactive cities adopt body cameras in an attempt to regain public trust, while proactive cities adopt to increase public trust. Dallas city leaders adopted body cameras without experiencing a high publicity incident that damaged its policing credibility. Los Angeles as well adopted body cameras without experiencing a high publicity incident shortly before adopting body cameras.

Ferguson/St. Louis, Baltimore, and Chicago were different than Los Angeles and Dallas because the former experienced high publicity incidents. High publicity police violence can lead a city to consider body cameras to make up for the incident that media and the public widely circulated. Los Angeles and Dallas did not wait for a high publicity incident. Therefore it is appropriate to call their behavior proactive. Although two low publicity incidents occurred in Dallas, the city is proactive specifically because it did not wait for a high publicity incident to occur before buying body cameras. On the next page is a flow chart detailing the argument.
Table 3
Flow Chart for body camera procurement outcomes
Competing theories

Before deducing the theory of proactive and reactive procurement, this thesis focused on how access to funds may impact a city adopting body cameras. The predominant example was Los Angeles and its initially fast procurement rates after raising money. Los Angeles city leaders organized a campaign to afford body cameras and less than two months later had over $1 million and could begin purchasing plans. To contrast, Ferguson’s Officer Darren Wilson shot and killed Michael Brown and St. Louis took a year and a half after his death to begin a pilot program for body cameras. The early conclusion was that access to money is the most significant indicator separating cities with speedy procurement rates versus cities that are slow to adopt body cameras. This research is misleading.

No matter how strong the relationship may be after examining the scores for cases, it is reasonable to reflect on the indicators and systematized concepts used in a conceptual ladder and examine if they support measurement validity. The original conceptual ladder tracked dates of body camera implementation and volume of body cameras per city. It can be found on the next page.
Table 4
Conceptual Ladder version 1
This framework changed as body camera rates decelerated in Los Angeles. Over time, Los Angeles City Council backed off from its plans to adopt a large volume of body cameras. Los Angeles was a critical case study to support the argument. As Los Angeles’ plans changed, so did the initial theory. After this mishap, it became clear that an indicator may mislead a researcher if it is no longer relevant and applicable to each case study. The access to funds indicator was difficult to track in other cities because most city finances are internal documents. Rather than study finances through procurement dates and procurement volume, this research looked for another means of explaining body camera procurement. Los Angeles first began seriously preparing a body camera program under the direction of a particular city leader, Steven Soboroff, who began fundraising for body cameras the day he became president of the Los Angeles Police Commission. At least in Los Angeles, new leadership led the city to begin procuring body cameras (CBS Los Angeles 2013, 2-3). But the argument is inconclusive. As theorist W. Phillips Shively explains,

> We cannot always make a causal interpretation when two phenomena tend to coincide. The notion of cause involves more than that. Winter does not cause spring, although the one follows the other regularly (Shively 2005, 75).

New leadership may be a factor in Los Angeles, but it doesn’t explain what causes body camera procurement everywhere. In Chicago, Mayor Rahm Emanuel announced plans for body cameras in November 2015, but he had been in office since 2011 (Emanuel, 1). After reviewing the literature and the case studies in more detail, it became clear that cities adopt body cameras under different situations, and it is possible to categorize them. When adopting body cameras, some city leaders may be buying them to rebuild public trust with the police after a high publicity incident. This is a reactive measure to police violence. Other cities may proactively purchase body cameras. The indicators had to change from studying adoption rates and access to
funds to reactive and proactive procurement. This theory shift best reflects the goal of the research, which was to explain why cities buy body cameras if they are expensive and largely untested. The former indicators did not match the systematized concept. The chart on the next page is a new conceptual ladder that better reflects the case studies.
Table 5
Conceptual Ladder version 2
This thesis studies two causal processes. But if there is no relevant relationship, knowing that is worthwhile. W. Phillips Shively explains,

Most of the time we must work with variables that are indirect measures of the concepts in which we are interested. This means that there are interposed, between our (concrete) operations and the (abstract) theory we want to work on, the relationships between our concrete concepts and their abstract measures (Shively 2005, 45).

Body camera research is novel and requires new research. Although access to funding is a useful theory to explain the outcome of interest, it held up as an inaccurate measure. More research is required to explain the varying rates of body camera procurement, but working with proactive and reactive terms organizes city responses to police violence. The reactive-proactive view may in the future prove inconclusive, but with the available information, it is a useful way to organize cities that adopt body cameras into two distinct groups.

Works Cited for Chapter 3


Chapter 4. Proactive Case Studies: Los Angeles and Dallas

Los Angeles and Dallas are cases where city leaders proactively adopt body cameras. Dallas began purchasing body cameras shortly after two low publicity incidents. City leaders invested in body cameras to increase public safety. Rather than wait for a high publicity incident and react by purchasing body cameras, Dallas city leaders proactively began a body camera in an effort to prevent future occurrences of police violence in their city. To contrast, Los Angeles city leaders began announcing body camera plans after a series of protests in Los Angeles. The protests however were not part of a high publicity incident in Los Angeles. Los Angelinos had mobilized to protest racial inequality and institutional racism after the Trayvon Martin case in Florida. Although the Caucasian shooter was not an officer he took on the role of an authority actor as he shot Trayvon Martin, a man of color. The case is comparable to instances of police violence on a racial level (CNN Library 2016, 1-2). Although each city experienced differing causes to buy body cameras, both cities did not experience high publicity incidents. Dallas and Los Angeles are distinct from one another but both feature proactive body camera purchases.

The chart on the next page is a timeline detailing the events that affect each city’s decision to procure body cameras.
Table 6
Proactive Case Studies Timeline
Los Angeles Case Study

Los Angeles’ history of police violence and protests over the Trayvon Martin death both played a role in prompting city leaders to purchase body cameras. As mentioned in chapters beforehand, Los Angeles Police Department was responsible for the Rodney King beating in 1991, which sparked the 1992 Los Angeles riots. Since then, Los Angeles Police Department has tried repairing its relationship with the public. According to LAPDonline, “When it was over, some 2,500 people had been injured and an estimated $1 billion in property had been damaged (1992 Civil Unrest 2016, 3).” The upset provoked many police reforms. Charter Amendment F passed in 1992 and prohibited police chiefs from serving indefinitely. The Christopher Warren Commission, a group set on restoring Los Angeles police accountability, was responsible for the amendment. At the time of the Rodney King incident, Daryl F. Gates had been police chief for 13 years. The amendment “empowered the mayor to select a chief with the City Council’s consent and provided for civilian review of police misconduct (Pringle and Blankstein 2012, 6).”
Police Chief Daryl Gates “faced a chorus of blame for the LAPD's slow response to the violence and, after a battle of wills with much of the city's political establishment, stepped down about two months later (9).” Since the Rodney King beating, Los Angeles underwent major efforts to increase accountability and reduce police violence. Another reform was to hire more minorities. According to *The Los Angeles Times*, LAPD’s police force shifted from 41% nonwhite officers in 1992 to 64% by 2012. After Daryl Gates stepped down, Los Angeles city leaders replaced him with their first African American police chief, Willie L. Williams. After Williams Los Angeles police had another African American chief, Bernard C. Parks (11-12). By 2002 Los Angeles had a new chief who made an impact on police reform, William J. Bratton. Over his 8-year term, Chief Bratton received oversight from the U.S. Department of Justice through the consent decree, which had been instituted in 2000. The consent decree forced Los Angeles police to act responsibly as the Department of Justice could check on Los Angeles Police Department’s constitutionally lawful behavior at any time (Bliss 2015, 5-6). Los Angeles is still pursuing police reform. In August 2015, police procured over 800 body cameras, making Los Angeles the largest body camera program in the United States (Sanburn 2015, 106). The event that prompted Los Angeles was the Trayvon Martin incident from Sanford, Florida. Los Angelinos learned about Trayvon Martin and many minorities evaluated his death as racially motivated. Although the individual responsible for Martin’s death was a neighborhood watch captain and not an officer, he played the role of an authority figure. This event closely matched other events whereby an officer shoots a civilian. Minorities from Los Angeles appeared in the news urging the jury to convict Martin’s assailant George Zimmerman. Protests occurred throughout July 2013. During the court session, Los Angeles police arrested dozens of protestors, up to 14 individuals on July 16 (Vives 2013, 1-2). Protests provoked media coverage of citizen frustration
towards the police. Members of the community criticized police behavior as racially motivated: protesters chanted, “no justice, no peace, no racist police (Linthicum 2015, 1).” As a response to the contention, newly elected Los Angeles Police Commission President Stephen Soboroff presented a plan to improve the Los Angeles Police Department (Sanburn 2015, 106).

One of President Soboroff’s earliest and most critical priorities was to implement body cameras. Steven Soboroff is a former CEO of Playa Vista, a multi-billion dollar real-estate development project. Before stepping down from his business, Soboroff looked forward to helping Los Angeles, “embrace big public policy goals (Vincent 2010, 1-2).” When he stepped into office as President of Los Angeles Police Commission, Soboroff demonstrated his passion to work hard and begin implementing police body cameras. During his induction speech, Soboroff demanded body camera adoption within eighteen months; this was the start of a financial campaign to raise money to begin purchasing body cameras (Los Angeles Police Department 2013, 1-2). At the time, the Department of Justice could not offer significant federal funding. Two years after President Soboroff’s induction speech, Los Angeles Police Department received $1,000,000 in federal funds for purchasing body cameras (Mather, “LAPD gets $1 million” 2015, 1). Los Angeles was one of many cities to receive federal funding from President Obama’s December 2014 $75,000,000 body camera fiscal allocation through the Department of Justice (Lee 2014, 1). In 2013 President Soboroff was eager. After the recent riots and protests from the Zimmerman Trial, Soboroff planted an aggressive campaign to improve public safety, community relations, and officer accountability with body cameras. President Soboroff argued that, “we don’t want to be a low-tech department in a high tech world…technology saves lives and money (CBS Los Angeles 2013, 2-3).” His concern was to implement body cameras as a means to raise accountability and to seize the opportunity to implement the technology to make
that possible. Soboroff contacted business leaders in Los Angeles asking for donations to help purchase body cameras. His goal was $1,000,000 but within two months of the campaign, President Soboroff raised $1,500,000 from private donors (Rubin, “LAPD surpasses fundraising” 2013, 1). In comparison to waiting for federal funding, private donations were a very quick means to begin procuring body cameras.

One particular detail about Los Angeles in comparison to other cities is its large pool of wealthy donors. When contacting business executives and philanthropists, Soboroff had plenty of industries to pursue, such as media, sports, and local politicians. When approached, many groups willingly donated. The LA Dodgers, the second highest valued MLB Team at $2.4 billion dollars in March 2015 contributed $250,000 (Forbes 2015, 1). After their donation, LA Dodgers owner Mark Walter commented, “nothing is more important than the safety and welfare of the people of Los Angeles (Rubin, “Dodgers donate” 2013, 1).” Many executives share similar sentiments. Body cameras are a potential means to improve public safety. Casey Wasserman of Wasserman Media Group also contributed $250,000 and CEO Jeffrey Katzenberg of DreamWorks provided Soboroff with a publicly non-specified sum (CBS Los Angeles 2013, 2-3). Former Mayor and businessman Richard Riordan also contributed $50,000. Politicians donated and pushed for the purchase and implementation of body cameras. City Councilman Mitchell Englander argued that, “this is a great opportunity to set the record straight, to give us extra eyes and ears at a situation (9).” Soboroff led the campaign to purchase body cameras and utilized the wealth and public influence of many leaders to make body camera procurement a priority in Los Angeles.

After raising funds, Los Angeles policy officials quickly moved along the adoption process. Los Angeles had access to funds and after getting city leaders in support, body cameras
became a reality. The campaign began in September 2013 and ended November 2013. By September 2014 the city was testing different body camera brands. From February 2013 to the end of 2014 Los Angeles ran an extensive testing period to gauge the impacts of body cameras on police use-of-force incidents (Chang 2014, 3). By December 16, 2014, Los Angeles police released a statement announcing they would purchase 7000 body cameras with a date never set (Winton 2014, 1). Carson Station Officer Conway said to *The Los Angeles Times*, “It's given me the peace of mind that the person I'm dealing with is not going to say the opposite of what happened, it's all recorded and the transparency is there (Ibid., 2).” Officials were impressed by the results. This period is called the pilot program and after money was accessible the pilot program could move onto official body camera adoption (4). Body cameras would no longer be a pilot program, but a normal aspect of policing. By December, Los Angeles police chose a brand, TASER AXON Body Worn Camera, and set a purchase for 7000 body cameras. Mayor Eric Garcetti advocated for body camera procurement: “I want to make sure LAPD is on the cutting edge when it comes to crime suppression and constitutional policing (3).” Los Angeles Police Department began testing body cameras to gauge their efficacy and by August 31, 2015 over 800 police officers wore body cameras on-duty. If Los Angeles Police Commission President Steven Soboroff waited for federal funding before he began the body camera adoption phase, Los Angeles would be years behind in their program. By September 21, 2015, over two years after Soboroff’s campaign directed toward private donors, Department of Justice allocated $1,000,000 to Los Angeles for its body camera program (Mather, “LAPD gets $1 million” 2015, 1). In this particular case, wealthy Los Angelinos played a significant role in expediting the body camera adoption phase. This demonstrates, “a special sort of case: one considered likely to be revealing, on some basis or other (Eckstein 1975, 106).” Federal funding will help President Soboroff
expand Los Angeles’ body camera adoption phase, but private donations were the foundation allowing Los Angeles procure a larger volume of body cameras than any other of the 7000 police departments with body camera programs within the United States (Sanburn 2015 1-2).

As of 2016 Los Angeles took a turn away from speedy procurement plans. Before the end of 2015, Los Angeles city leaders planned to join Kern County’s contract with TASER International to procure body cameras (Frosch 2016, 2). By joining the contract, Los Angeles could avoid the bidding process and procure body cameras at a faster rate. Los Angeles city leaders proposed a five-year contract with TASER for $31 million. City Council President Herb Wesson and other city leaders inquired why Los Angeles Police Department wanted to skip a bidding process (2). President Wesson hesitated pursuing the plan on account of piggybacking with Kern County and because of the large costs for the program. In December 2015 he cancelled the voting session (2).

After Ferguson, Los Angeles city leaders began taking on a more proactive adoption behavior. President Soboroff has, “cited Ferguson, Mo...as one reason for moving aggressively on the body camera program (Zahniser and Mather, “Firms left out” 2016, 12).” Los Angeles pushes to adopt body cameras to avoid high publicity incidents and is a proactive case study (Ibid., 12). By August of 2015, Los Angeles deployed a batch of body cameras. That was the last time Los Angeles was able to purchase body cameras without provoking backlash from city council on pricing and ethics issues (Mather and Zahniser, “Equip officers with body cameras” 2016, 6). Los Angeles included, cities struggle to afford body cameras due to pricing and policy implementation. According to an April 2016 article from The Los Angeles Times, “LAPD officials do not expect to finish outfitting 7,000 officers until the fall of 2017 at the earliest […] and a new proposal, they say, could push the completion date back another year (3).” Progress is
slow. Los Angeles is a case of proactive body camera procurement. It did not require a high publicity incident in Los Angeles for President Soboroff to raise funds from donors or get the first batch of body cameras on the streets. The intent was to maintain police-civilian safety and prevent an emergency rather than let one occur and then buying cameras.

Dallas Case Study

Dallas is a proactive case study. Its police department and city leaders did not wait for a high publicity incident to invest in body cameras. In late 2013, Dallas experienced two low publicity incidents (Hallman, “rollout body camera program” 2015, 11). Starting on October 14 2013, a Dallas police officer used excessive force and shot a civilian (11). This incident and the next in December did not attract national attention. The news circulated in Dallas. In both situations Dallas police fired the officers involved (11-12). City leaders handled these incidents well, and they began plans to prevent future incidents. Rather than wait for an incident to become highly publicized, city leadership turned to body cameras as a means to raise accountability.
Weeks after the December police shooting, Dallas began its pilot program. In support, Dallas’ president of the Fraternal Order of Police Richard Todd reported body cameras are “part of future policing (14).”

The first officer involved shooting sparked body camera interest. During the first low publicity incident, officer Cardan Spencer shot a mentally ill man. The officer claimed in his report that the man lunged at him with a knife. However, a surveillance video footage from the scene discredited officer Spencer’s account. In the video the mentally ill man stands still with his arms to his sides and officer Spencer proceeds to shoot (Merchant Dallas officers who shot 2013, 4). As a response to the video, Police Chief David Brown fired Officer Spencer and charged him with aggravated assault (1). Weeks later another article surfaced. Dallas Police Chief David Brown stated that after experiencing the low publicity incident Dallas Police Department is interested in procuring body cameras as a means to raise officer accountability (Fletcher 2013, 4). Shortly afterward, another low publicity incident took place. On December 9, Sr. Cpl. Amy Wilburn shot 19-year old Kelvion Walker, a suspect for carjacking (Eiserer 2013, 2). According to Walker and an eyewitness, Officer Wilburn fired at Walker after he raised his hands (3). A dashboard-mounted camera recorded the scene but failed to show in detail Wilburn shooting at Walker. In a Dallas News article, Dallas Police Association president Ron Pinkston, Officers […] who were already upset that Chief David Brown fired Senior Cpl. Amy Wilburn for the Dec. 9 shooting, were even more infuriated after seeing the video. Hundreds of DPA members met at their headquarters Tuesday and vented about Brown’s handling of recent officer-involved shooting cases (Hallman, “Police release video” 2014, 3). 29 seconds into the video, at 3:10PM, Officer Wilburn fired at the passenger in the car (Dallas Police Department 2014, 03:10PM). The passenger, Kelvion Walker, survived the incident and filed charges against Dallas Police Department (Ibid., 03:10PM). Afterward, Dallas Police
Department began to improve deadly force training for officers (Hallman, “Police video release” 2014, 14). To be clear, both incidents did not spark protests throughout the country and there are no reports about protests occurring in Dallas. The two cases were low publicity incidents (Associated Press 2014, 7).

Shortly after the second incident, Dallas police began investing in body cameras. On December 31 2013, Dallas Police Department began its body camera pilot program. According to a Dallas NBC article 50 officers were to wear body cameras for the pilot. In order to test which models worked best for Dallas Police Department, officers wore body cameras from different manufacturers (Mcllwain 2013, 1-2). Many interviewees expressed positive impressions about the pilot program: Dallas Deputy Chief Andy Acord stated, “[body cameras] will be useful to us from the perspective of being more transparent in our daily operations, to continue to build upon public trust” (3).” Very little took place after late 2013 surrounding Dallas’ body camera program, but reports began to resurface in June 16, 2014. One article explained that for the first time in Dallas a body camera recorded a fatal officer involved shooting and Dallas would move forward using the footage as evidence. The report also included details from the Dallas Police Department on future procurement plans. As of June 2014 Dallas Police Department announced interest in purchasing 2,500 body cameras and city council plans were underway (Hallman, “first fatal shooting” 2014, 3-5). Despite this update, body camera news was scarce (Hallman, “council members talk uniform cameras” 2014, 1).

In the following year, Dallas released a new update. At that moment, Dallas hadn’t procured additional body cameras. The proposed 2,500 did not come into fruition. On June 18, 2015, Dallas city leaders agreed they would purchase 1000 body cameras by 2018 (La Monica 2015, 1). Dallas police settled on purchasing TASER’s AXON body cameras (2). The quantity
was scaled back occurred because of budgetary constraints. Dallas could not afford 2500 body cameras.

Later that summer additional body camera news surfaced. The first shipment of body cameras arrived. On August 31, 2015, Dallas police agreed to purchase 400 AXON Flex cameras along with storage and technical assistance for $3.7 million. However, Dallas officials failed to mention how they would afford the body cameras (Hallman, “rollout body camera program” 2015, 20). Despite initial plans to use taxes for body cameras, Dallas Deputy Chief Andrew Acord explained Dallas did not have a viable plan. On August 31, Dallas announced a drawback. Rather than try to buy 1000 body cameras by 2018, Dallas officials commented they would finish purchasing the 1000 cameras by 2020 (9). From June to August, Dallas began buying body cameras without knowing how to afford them and pushed back its purchasing plans an additional two years. Despite Dallas being quick to procure and purchase body cameras, they lacked financial support.

Since then there have been no major stories surrounding the Dallas body camera program. August 31, 2015, was the first day of the body camera program. On that day, Dallas deployed 200 officers with body cameras (Shardae 2015, 1). Starting in summer 2015, Dallas began scaling body camera plans due to financial constraints. Despite these drawbacks Dallas is a large-scale metropolitan area that began a pilot program and moved onto an established body camera program without experiencing a high publicity incident such as Ferguson’s Michael Brown shooting or Chicago’s Laquan McDonald death. Dallas police responded to criticism from their two fatal officer involved shootings by implementing body cameras. Dallas stands alongside Los Angeles as a unique case in which each city proactively began a body camera program to increase public safety.
Works Cited for Chapter 4


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Chapter 5. Reactive Case Studies: Ferguson/St. Louis, Baltimore, Chicago

A city that experiences a high publicity incident may reactively procure body cameras as a means to develop trust between the police and community. The three case studies follow the reactive procurement model that was established in the theory generation chapter. Ferguson, Baltimore, and Chicago may differ in procurement volume per city and the speed of procurement, but they each follow the same generalizable causal process, which results in reactive body camera procurement.

On the next page is a timeline that charts the events impacting body camera procurement. Each city features a high publicity incident and dates whereby the city leadership reacts to the incident by investing in and procuring body cameras.
Table 7
Reactive Case Studies Timeline

Key
A - announce body cameras
B - buy body cameras
D - Deploy body cameras
HPI - High Publicity Incidents
PP - Pilot Program

Video released, A1200 by next June
**Ferguson Case Study**

Ferguson is one of 90 cities surrounding St. Louis, Missouri and consists of 21,000 residents. Due to the municipal court’s demand for funds, Ferguson Police Department aggressively fines and harasses Ferguson residents in order to maximize revenue. In the summer of 2014, Ferguson became synonymous with police violence and institutional racism. On August 9, 2014, Officer Darren Wilson shot and killed African American Michael Brown (“What happened in Ferguson 2015,” 1). After poor police response and large-scale protests, Ferguson quickly adopted body cameras in response to the high publicity incident. Although Ferguson implemented body cameras after the death of a particular civilian, Brown’s death was one of many examples of unnecessary force from Ferguson Police Department (Shaw 2015, vii-viii).

The Department of Justice conducted a federal investigation on Ferguson Police Department after the death of Michael Brown, titled the *Ferguson Report* (*Ferguson Report* 1). This report included three sections, the first of which details Ferguson officers’ behavior.
According to the federal investigation, Ferguson Police Department operates as an extraction racket in order to maximize profits for the city rather than prioritizing public safety and maintaining positive community relations. The report finds, “City officials have consistently set maximizing revenue as the priority for Ferguson’s law enforcement activity [and thereby] Ferguson generates a significant and increasing amount of revenue from the enforcement of code provisions (Ibid., 9).“ Rather than providing public safety, the Ferguson Police Department operated to extract money and distribute it to the city government. Ferguson Police Department complied with the city’s need to increase revenue, and “There is no indication that anyone considered whether community policing and public safety would be better served by devoting five overtime officers to neighborhood policing instead of a revenue pipeline of highway traffic enforcement (17).” Police officials prioritized maximizing profits at the expense of wrongfully arresting and fining residents. Ferguson Police Department did not establish positive community relationships but directed its efforts towards targeting residents, in particular African Americans. Before the death of Michael Brown, Ferguson Police Department did not receive the national attention it needed to begin reform. One reform in particular was the body camera.

African Americans bore disproportionately high rates of police violence, “accounting for 88% of all cases from 2010 to August 2014 in which an FPD officer reported using force (62).” Beyond violence, Ferguson officers regularly targeted African Americans on legal matters: “Despite making up 67% of the population, African Americans accounted for 85% of FPD’s traffic stops, 90% of FPD’s citations, and 93% of FPD’s arrests from 2012 to 2014 (62).” Beyond officers harming civilians, Ferguson police regularly ignored civilians’ attempts to file officer misconduct reports (82). After studying The Ferguson Report it quickly becomes clear
why police needed oversight. Two weeks after Michael Brown’s death, police began to wear body cameras as a means to begin controlling accountability.

After months of federal investigation, the Department of Justice released another document titled, *Department of Justice Report Regarding the Criminal Investigation into the shooting death of Michael Brown by Ferguson, Missouri Police Officer Darren Wilson*. Authors spoke to eyewitnesses and deduced most narratives did not match (*Department of Justice 2015*, 26). Since no one recorded the Michael Brown shooting, records remain unclear. Officer Darren Wilson’s testimony matches most reliable eyewitness accounts that he was not the aggressor and fired fearing for his life. Wilson in his narrative did not act with unnecessary force when he shot Michael Brown (12). The position siding with Brown differs based on the eyewitness. People who sided with Michael Brown did not claim Officer Wilson fired out of self-defense. The report could not build a credible story in which Officer Wilson used unnecessary force. By the end of the report the authors conclude, “because Wilson did not act with the requisite criminal intent, it cannot be proven beyond a reasonable doubt to a jury that he violated 18 U.S.C.§ 242 when he fired his weapon at Brown (86).” To explain, 18 U.S.C.§ 242 comes from U.S. Code, Title 18, Part 1, Chapter 13, Section 242, and reads, “Whoever, under color of any law…willfully subjects any person… to the deprivation of any rights… secured or protected by the Constitution or laws of the United States, or to different punishments, pains, or penalties, on account of such person being an alien, or by reason of his color, or race, than are prescribed for the punishment of citizens, shall be fined under this title or imprisoned (18. U.S. Code § 242).”

The Michael Brown shooting makes a case for officers adopting body cameras because of the narrative ambiguity surrounding his death. Beyond testimonies, many believe video could have been an easy solution to explain the events leading to Brown’s death (Madhani 2015, 2).
The only videos associated with Michael Brown are a surveillance video feed of him stealing cigarillos from a convenience store, portraying him as a criminal, and a cellphone video recording of Brown’s corpse on the ground, displaying the brutality of his death (Department of Justice 2015, 25, 41). If Officer Darren Wilson wore a body camera, there would be less ambiguity regarding what occurred during the time between the convenience store and his death. This ambiguity led private security firms to purchase body cameras to reduce future high publicity incidents that lack evidence.

Protests followed the death for many reasons: people at the scene recorded footage from a cellphone of Brown’s corpse ignored lying on the ground. The body was on the ground for four hours. In addition a New York Times journalist reports, “the image of Mr. Brown’s corpse in the open set the scene for what would become a combustible worldwide story of police tactics and race in America (Bosman Timeline for a Body 2014, 2).” Ferguson Committeewoman Patricia Bynes said, “it was very disrespectful to the community and the people who live there [because] it also send the message from law enforcement that we can do this to you […] and there’s nothing you can do about it (3).” Shortly afterward, Governor Jay Nixon sent the Missouri National Guard to mollify the protests. Authority actors tried to contain the aftermath of the shooting but did not succeed. Events occurred which sparked additional public frustration.

By November 24, 2014, the prosecutor for St. Louis County reported the grand jury would not indict shooter officer Wilson. By this point the White House ordered a federal investigation on Ferguson’s policing. The document became known as The Ferguson Report (10). It outlined plans Ferguson should adopt to improve its policing. After a year and a half of debate, Ferguson City Council accepted federal demands to reform the Police Department. One of the biggest demands required every Ferguson officer to wear body cameras as well as use
dashboard-mounted cameras. In the past, Ferguson had access to body cameras on behalf of a private security firm but now had strict orders to regularly use them (Pearce, “Federal oversight” 2016, 21).

Ferguson is a critical case study because it has a high score as a city with a high publicity incident. The death of Michael Brown sparked public protests and nationwide frustration with the police officer’s use of violence. The result of the high publicity incident led directly to an influx of private donations for body cameras similar to the case study of Los Angeles. Two private security firms donated the funds for Ferguson to begin its body camera program. Without the access to private funds, it is unknowable when Ferguson could have received public grants from the government to afford body cameras. Ferguson is a small police department that had struggled with finances. By August 30, 2014, only weeks after the death of Michael Brown, Ferguson Police Department outfitted its officers with body cameras thanks to private donations (“Ferguson gets body cameras” 2014, 1). According to Chief Tom Jackson, the funding provided Ferguson with enough money to afford body cameras for nearly every one of its 54 officers. Ferguson proves that a city with high score of public concern towards police from a high publicity incident can lead to rapid procurement of body cameras for nearly all of its officers. One detail must not be ignored. Ferguson is a small city of 21,000 residents and it is easier to afford body cameras to a small police department than a city the size of New York (Ferguson Quick Facts 2014).

The Michael Brown shooting sparked a movement across the country to proactively adopt body cameras. According to a Pew Research survey, Americans followed the story as closely as the death of comedian Robin Williams, who had died the same day as Michael Brown. The day beforehand, significantly more people knew Robin Williams than Michael Brown. But
in a course of a day people learned about Michael Brown, his death, the police response to the aftermath, and the growing racial tension. Both stories took up 27% of people’s attention according to the Pew Research Survey. Other stories gained less attention such as the Ebola outbreak or U.S. airstrikes in Iraq (Pew Research Center, “Ferguson Police Shooting” 2014, 3).

The Pew Research Center conducted a survey to gauge public opinion on the shooting. The survey took place between August 14 to the 17 over telephone interviews with a sample of 1,000 adults over 18 residing in the United States. The survey used random digit dialing on landlines and cell phones (Ibid., 7-8). In addition, 40% of respondents answered that the police response to the aftermath in Ferguson had gone too far, while 28% answered the police are acting appropriately. Of the respondents, 65% of African Americans agreed police went to far. In comparison, only 33% of whites agreed (15). Despite the racial divide, the story drew attention to police violence.

The Michael Brown shooting and its aftermath spiked proactive body camera procurement among other departments and increased body camera stock investments. Seven days after the shooting, TASER International’s stocks shot up from under $12.50 to over $15.00, up more than 8% (Udland 2014, 1). Analysts explained the increase is not coincidental: people are concerned about police violence and believe police forces will invest in body cameras (2). It is unrealistic to claim every purchase in the weeks after the Michael Brown shooting came as a direct result of his death. However, some cities such as Los Angeles cite Ferguson and its troubles as the reason to accelerate their body camera program. On the quarterly report, TASER experienced a spike in body camera purchases after the Michael Brown shooting. Fresno Police Department in California placed an order to TASER International for 100 body cameras on August 12 (2).
Ferguson is one half of the Michael Brown shooting case study. St. Louis is east of Ferguson and played a role in protest mobilization following the Brown shooting. The map below illustrates the proximity between Ferguson and St. Louis.

**St. Louis**

The city of St. Louis, a large metropolitan center came under criticism for not implementing body cameras as quickly as Ferguson. In St. Louis many obstacles deterred police from purchasing body cameras. One of the earliest articles on St. Louis’ body camera struggle, written September 16, 2014, describes financial and political barricades to purchasing body cameras. According to the article, an estimate for body cameras places the bill at $1.2 million. At this point, St. Louis Police Department officials are not beginning a pilot program, but reportedly express concern over implementing a body camera program. Additionally, the St. Louis Police
Union officials were dubious that spending a large sum of money for body cameras would solve any issues. The concern for body cameras came out of the Michael Brown shooting and St. Louis’ need to promote accountability and better documentation of future police shootings (Pistor 2014, 2-4). Opposition to body cameras came from Jeff Roorda, the business manager of the St. Louis Police Officers Association. He argued how can the city not afford body cameras if, “city officers didn’t have helmets when they had bricks and bottles thrown at their heads while they were in Ferguson (10).” Roorda insisted on investing in officer safety rather than body cameras. Despite his efforts, St. Louis would eventually adopt body cameras. However, no action to purchase body cameras came directly after the Michael Brown shooting. From then on very little happened regarding body camera news.

After the one year anniversary of Michael Brown’s death, protestors and police began to have tense relations again. Another African American teen was shot and similar to the Brown shooting there was, “no video evidence when two white police officers fired four times at 18-year-old Mansur Ball-Bey (Gillam 2015, 2).” The fatal officer involved shooting occurred on August 19, 2015 and sparked additional frustration towards police violence. At the scene protestors gathered to mourn his death and demand police acknowledge them. According to the police, 150 protestors came to “gather on the street, chanting Black Lives Matter as some protestors threw glass bottles, bricks, and smoke bombs (Blinder 2015, 15).” St. Louis Police Department faced severe criticism for repeating history and not having a means to raise accountability. The lack of video evidence did not help. Jamira Burley, Senior Campaigner for Amnesty International USA said, “I’m not sure why St. Louis is still dropping the ball on this [because] we need a clear picture that is unbiased (5).” Despite criticism, St. Louis Police Department did not begin developing a body camera program. In the region, St. Louis had
multiple high publicity incidents that slowly led city leaders to adopt body cameras. These include the neighboring Ferguson Michael Brown shooting and the Mansur Ball-Bey shooting. Eventually, St. Louis responded to these high publicity incidents by reactively procuring body cameras.

St. Louis is a case where certain actors with influence slowed body camera procurement. In the media one of the biggest critics of procurement is Jeff Roorda, business manager for St. Louis Police Officer’s Association. Mentioned previously, he and the officer’s union opposed body cameras and argued it was wasteful to spend large sums of money on a new technology. Despite negative sentiments, St. Louis eventually began investing in body cameras. By December 8, 2015, St. Louis Police Department began a body camera pilot program. Critic Jeff Roorda mentioned in a St. Louis Post Dispatch article, “we understand the public has aright to answers, but they also have a right to know what the consequences of deploying this type of equipment are (Bynes 2015, 9).” Roorda argued the answer to police reform is increasing officer pay and additional training, not spending money on video technology. However, St. Louis police did not pay for the body cameras. The body camera company TASER provided body cameras at no fee for St. Louis to run a 90-day pilot program (11). St. Louis Police Chief Sam Dotson hopes the pilot will provide officers with a positive experience. Members of the St. Louis Police Union drafted a contract in which union officers do not have to wear body cameras until after the pilot program, a formal bargaining period, and official procurement. With this in place select sergeants not included in the union contract wore the body cameras for one month and handed them to the next sergeant at the end of their trial. By the end of the trial, a total 90 sergeants wore body cameras (2–4). Beyond Roorda’s financial concerns, sergeants such as Sgt. Scott Valentine have mixed feelings, claiming body cameras are “an intrusion of their privacy, and at the same
time, complaints go down because people know they are being videotaped and are less likely to file complaints and we’re less likely to have to act out negatively (19).” Although critics may see body cameras as an increasing norm among police departments nationwide and a means to decrease civilian complaints and raise accountability, officers in St. Louis still express concern regarding privacy. Sgt. Valentine accepted body cameras are becoming a standard, but like many other officers, he was slow to support body camera procurement (20).

**Baltimore Case Study**

The Baltimore Police Department faced severe criticism after the death of African American Freddie Gray. On April 12, 2015, Baltimore police approached Gray and arrested him for carrying an illegal switchblade. According to a cellphone video, officers dragged Gray into a police transport van. During the ride to the station, Gray suffered spinal injuries and a broken neck. Shortly after Gray died from his injuries. The six officers involved in the transport of Gray faced charges. According to *The New York Times*, this is, “Baltimore’s highest-profile trial in
years, playing out against the backdrop of an intense national debate over race and policing (Stohlberg, “Baltimore trial leaves” 2015, 2).” But the details are unclear. This high publicity incident led to further public distrust of police. On the day of Gray’s funeral, Baltimore students began walkouts, violence, and acts of vandalism. In the trial against the officers, the prosecutor Marilyn Mosby presented to the jury a seatbelt from the transport van carrying Freddie Gray. The belt had been cut and was covered in Gray’s blood (11-13). As of early 2016 the case continues. At the moment the case rests on eyewitness testimonies and a cellphone video recording of Gray dragged into the transport van.

Despite Baltimore’s slow body camera procurement, advocates voiced their support in Baltimore politics. Six months before the death of Freddie Gray, Baltimore city council passed a bill demanding body camera implementation. If adopted, Baltimore would have been a proactive case study. The vote took place in November 2014 and required every officer to wear body cameras, requesting a total of 3,000 devices. However, the mayor vetoed the bill commenting it needs more policy planning before becoming law. Officers expressed concern, including Baltimore Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake: “they were so eager to get something done, they didn’t get it done right (Broadwater Baltimore bill passes 2014, 1).” On the other side of the argument, city councilmember Warren Branch supported body camera procurement. Warren explained in his support he will “stand firm for the people (1).” Warren and other advocates expressed concern over the slow rate of body camera adoption because in 2013, “[a] consultant's report to the Police Department recommended Commissioner Anthony W. Batts begin a body-worn camera trial” similar to other Barak Ariel’s Rialto California body camera trial (14). Baltimore paid $285,000 for political consultants to investigate methods that can improve Baltimore’s policing. The final report strongly recommended Baltimore to continue where Barak
Ariel left off with body camera research. Originally, councilmen Warren Branch and Bernard Jack Young proposed the bill. Councilmen Young explained in a Baltimore Sun article how, “investing in the cameras could save the city money by potentially reducing settlement costs from police misconduct cases (Broadwater 2 councilmen 2014, 4).” Despite recommendations from the consultant’s report and Baltimore city councilmembers, the mayor’s administration did not respond quickly to body camera implementation and trials to research their effects on police behavior (6).

Months later, Gray died in police custody and Mayor Rawlings-Blake faced severe criticism for her lack of action to guarantee public safety from police violence. Whether or not body cameras may have changed the situation surrounding Gray’s death or heightened the evidence for the case, there is evidence Rawlings-Blake was slow to progress police reforms. According to the Baltimore Sun’s journalist Yvonne Wenger, “The 45-year-old mayor's every move has drawn heightened scrutiny since Gray was fatally injured in police custody in April and the city erupted in flames.” In September 2015, Rawlings-Blake decided not to seek re-election for mayor of Baltimore.

Advocates argue that if Baltimore had implemented body cameras and the six officers’ actions in the transport van were recorded, the case may be more conclusive. Months after the Freddie Gray death, body cameras became a priority. In October 2015, Six months after Gray’s death, Baltimore police began procuring body cameras. Despite broad details, the policy for body cameras remains secret. The state commission demands Baltimore’s policies to be public. David Rocah of the American Civil Liberties Union of Maryland argues,

Residents who fear that officers' body cameras will only be on when officers want them to be on and they won't be on when officers are engaged in misconduct should be able to look to the department's policy for assurances
that officers are being held accountable (Rector, “Baltimore police officers begin” 2015, 9).

Despite progress towards adopting body cameras, Baltimore is moving toward procurement without notifying the public about their policies. In addition, Baltimore police began its trial program six months after the death of Freddie Gray, which once again shook up national anxiety towards policing violence and racism towards African Americans. At this point the frustration is targeted towards police. Baltimore was slow to respond, by beginning a pilot program at this point with 155 cameras on October 26, 2015 (1). Baltimore Police Department’s body camera pilot program tested three different products and lasted two months (3). The pilot program ended December 18 and officers such as Police Commissioner Kevin Davis commented, “when can we get these back? I like these I don’t want to give them up (Rector, “when can we get these back?” 2015, 2).” Once in officer hands, many came forward in the press with positive reactions to the technology. Commissioner Davis mentioned body cameras “brought our agency one step closer to the transparency that we need (ibid., 2).” Officers felt they had a higher sense of accountability for their actions when equipped with body cameras.

As of early 2016, the city has not made official decisions regarding body cameras. According to Baltimore Sun, officials planned to equip over 1,400 officers with body cameras by 2017 (6). The three body camera products tested include TASER, Atlantic Tactical Inc., and Brekford Corp (7). Bids and potential contracts remain unknown. Therefore it is difficult to conclude exactly how much funding Baltimore Police Department attempts to pool into a body camera program (8).

Despite plans to expand the body camera program, many officers felt dissatisfied the pilot program did not directly lead to body camera procurement. The Baltimore Police Department announced it will not set dates for camera procurement and did not mention how to finance the
Conlon  80

program. Officers stepped forward to advocate for a body camera program. Commissioner Kevin Davis explained that wearing body cameras sends a message to the public that Baltimore police is trying to right its previous wrongs and work towards accountability. He explained that, “we’re happy to be part of that effort because we want folks to see how much we care about our jobs and do what we know is necessary, and I think the cameras just hold us all accountable (Davis, Press Conference 2015).” Many officers in Baltimore Police Department quickly grew attached to wearing body cameras and expressed unease when the pilot program ended and they returned the technology, fearing without a body camera they would be seen as less accountable (Rector, “Baltimore police officers begin” 2015 2, Kromer and Hughes 2016, 5).

The death of Freddie Gray sparked statewide interest in body cameras. According to a Goucher public opinion report collected from February 13-17 2016, 85% of Maryland residents said police should wear body cameras. In the breakdown, 96% of African-Americans answered yes and so did 80% of Whites (Kromer and Hughes, 5). Pollsters collected the data from 545 Maryland residents 18 years or older using, “random digit dialing (RDD) of a county-level stratified random sample using landline and cellular telephone numbers (7).” According to the survey methodology page, it had a 95 percent chance the sampling error was +/- 4.2 percent from the population distribution (7). The chart below organizes public opinion towards Maryland policing (23).
Q: POLICE
Next, I’m going to read you a few statements about the policing in communities. Please tell me whether you [agree or disagree] with each one:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items Rotated</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>DK/ REF (v)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The racial makeup of a community’s police department should be similar to the racial makeup of the people living in that community.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People of all races receive equal treatment by the police in your community.</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police in your community are held accountable for misconduct.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police officers should be required to live in the communities in which they serve.</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In general, police officers are respected in your community.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police officers should be required to wear body cameras.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>42</td>
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Total=100 (545, +/-4.2)

Table 8
Baltimore Poll
(Kromer and Hughes, 5)
Baltimore did, however, address the lack of cameras in their transport vans. By February 2016, Baltimore purchased cameras to equip inside their transport vans in an effort to reduce cases similar to the death of Freddie Gray. In the Baltimore case study, Freddie Gray received critical injuries in the back of a transport van. By implementing cameras into vans, Baltimore city politicians hope to prevent similar incidents (Broadwater police vans 2016, 1-2). The Baltimore City Board of Estimates signed the transport camera contract for $187,000 with Point Blank Enterprises Inc. (1). According to Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake, adding transport cameras and body cameras will help raise accountability for Baltimore police (5). Baltimore police utilize 23 transport vans and in January 2016 city leaders agreed to spend an additional $200,000 for additional dividers inside the vans in an effort to prevent future injuries (13).

Despite the slow movement toward body cameras, Baltimore leaders in mid-March of 2016 came forward with a plan. Baltimore plans to spend $11.6 million from 2016 to 2021 on body cameras and deploy the first 500 by May 1 2016 (Anderson 2016, 4-5). The long-term plan for Baltimore leadership is to purchase a body camera for all 2,500 officers by 2018. At a press conference, Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake publicly supported the initiative: “I firmly believe that the cameras will help bring a greater sense of accountability and trust (3).” Previously the mayor was averse to body camera initiatives. This announcement demonstrates Baltimore police and city leaders are ready for body cameras. Regarding finances, Baltimore leaders saved the city money. Baltimore police saved $1.2 million through negotiations with TASER International. Many Baltimore leaders support the plan. Joyce Green, from the Central District Police Community Relations Council, and Police Commissioner Kevin Davis commended body cameras and Davis explained the program will make Baltimore the largest police department to have a fully implemented body camera program (12).
The Baltimore case study demonstrates a city reacts to high publicity incident by introducing reforms such as body cameras. The cell phone recording of police arresting Gray into a transport casts a negative public opinion on Baltimore Police Department. It is narrated by a citizen concerned for Gray and the audience builds sympathy for Gray and distrust towards the police and their motives in the video (Zurawik 2015, 5). In order to build a better reputation, Baltimore police began to wear body cameras to provide clarity and accountability to future civilian interactions.

**Chicago Case Study**

Chicago, Illinois, is the most recent city to feature a high publicity incident. The shooting took place in October 2014 but the public saw the footage for the first time in November 2015.
Police failed to contain public frustration with what they saw: Officer Jason Van Dyke shot civilian Laquan McDonald 16 times, including in the back (Editorial Board 2015, 7). Days after the video release, Chicago leaders responded to protests with plans to purchase body cameras (Briscoe officers wear body cameras 2015, 1). Mayor Rahm Emmanuel only responded to the death after the footage of the incident reached the public. City leadership decided to announce body camera plans as a response to public frustration. The timing surrounding this event makes it clear that Chicago is a case of reactive body camera procurement (Briscoe 9).

Nearly a year before the high publicity incident became public, Chicago had already begun investing in a body camera program. However, Chicago only began accelerating their program after the public learned how the Laquan McDonald video. Despite the early progress, Chicago police and council members did not accelerate body camera procurement until the public saw the McDonald shooting.

Although Chicago began its pilot program in January 2015, the Chicago Police Department expressed interest much earlier. A month after the death of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, Chicago Police Department began plans for its own body camera program to prevent similar high publicity incidents (Gorner body cameras to pose 2014, 3). At this point, Chicago was proactive since it began a body camera after another city’s high publicity incident. According to The Chicago Tribune from September 15, 2014, “Chicago Police Superintendent Garry McCarthy hinted this month [September 2014] that the department would try out the body cameras (Gorner 7).” The pilot sparked interest from officers, a number of them agreeing to participate. In the media that month, police spoke positively about the role of body cameras in policing. Dean Angelo, the president of Chicago’s Fraternal Order of Police mentioned he saw
advantages with body cameras, particularly in disproving unfair allegations against officers (1).” Advocates of body cameras may often base their confidence in the product from Barak Ariel’s Rialto research on body cameras, described in detail during the literature review chapter (5).

Despite the positivity, many officers and members of Chicago ACLU noted potential privacy concerns. American Civil Liberties Union spokesman Edwin Yohnka explains, “they should record every interaction they have with citizens—whether it’s making an arrest or just giving out directions—to prevent racial profiling (12).” The purpose of body cameras fails to record every incident because of storage concerns. Therefore, an officer is required to manually hit record at his discretion. ACLU’s spokesman, explained an officer can choose when to record an incident based on racial profiling. The policies surrounding body cameras is novel and not refined to protect the interests of officer objectivity and the privacy of civilians who may feel officer’s record too much, such as reactions of a crime victim. In September 2014, much policy work surrounding body cameras was unclear. The movement to research how they work and to begin the pilot program stemmed from the Ferguson Michael Brown shooting and Chicago’s department desire to prevent a similar case in its city (3).

Months later another article announced that Chicago would begin its pilot program in January 2015. Chicago Police Superintendent Garry McCarthy explained, “we have a number of officers who have volunteered because that’s how we’re going to handle it initially (Briscoe officers test body cameras 2014, 3).” In other instances a pilot program may randomly assign body cameras to officers. In Chicago’s pilot program, body cameras went out to officers on a volunteer basis (3). In early 2015 Chicago Police Department announced the pilot program’s first deployment day, January 21 (Loo 2015, 3). The pilot program included 30 officers who would
wear body cameras for two months to determine whether “recording encounters between police and troublesome individuals will provide visual proof that an officer acted properly, or improperly (Loo, 6).” Body camera officers operate in the Shakespeare patrol district to create a focus around the results of the study (Gorner police test Body cameras 2015, 1). In the first report from January the pilot would last two months, in the second report by mid-February the pilot would last 90 days (Gorner, 14). Despite the initial time pushback, the pilot program went on to study police relations for a much longer period than planned.

Six months later, the trial program continued and Chicago police moved slowly before adopting body cameras as they focused on the legal and financial issues surrounding massive adoption. Chicago city officials worked with state legislators to draft a statewide body camera bill to enforce body camera training as well as create a means to fund cameras (Geiger 2016, 12). The bill, signed by Governor Bruce Rauner on August 12, 2015, gained support from many other Illinois political leaders. Senator Kwame Raoul spoke on behalf of the bill, commenting it will, “provide tools for law enforcement to better train their officers (Geiger 15).” In order for Chicago to afford a body camera program beyond the pilot, the bill includes a $5.00 fine on traffic and criminal violations to begin by early 2016. The fee will go directly toward aiding police departments in Illinois with purchasing body cameras and training officers to use them effectively (10). The bill also deals with several legal complications surrounding body cameras such as privacy, when to not be recording, and training standards. The bill will require officers to record at all times when enforcing the law besides speaking with confidential informants or when a witness or victim asks an officer to not record (6). According to a Chicago Tribune article the Law Enforcement Training Standards Board will create a grant system to fairly disperse funds from the $5.00 fees to support police departments interested in financing their body camera
programs. This bill provides departments statewide with more ease to begin adopting body cameras. Despite the progress, Chicago as of January 2015 to the adoption of this bill in August 2015 still remains in the pilot program phase (12).

The slow pace of body camera adoption began to accelerate in November 2015. The primary cause of the acceleration was the city’s attempt to improve its image to minimalize the large-scale criticism from the Laquan McDonald shooting. What makes matters worse for Chicago is that the death of Laquan McDonald occurred over a year before November 2015. Close to Thanksgiving, Chicago released the dashboard-mounted camera footage in response to Freedom of Information court order. The footage revealed violent details surrounding McDonald’s death. Before there was national attention surrounding the high publicity incident, few articles surfaced regarding McDonald’s death on October 20, 2014. The day after McDonald’s death, “Officers got out of their car and began approaching McDonald, again telling him to drop the knife...The boy allegedly lunged at police, and one of the officers opened fire. McDonald was shot in the chest and... was pronounced dead (Ford 2014, 6-7).” According to the initial reports, there is no information to suggest officers shot McDonald 16 times, including bullets entering his back. The 2014 report documents a bullet entering his chest. It also explains the officer fired for fear of being attacked. These details are inaccurate. The federal investigation and the video show that the officers acted as aggressors.

The Fraternal Order of Police reports the autopsy findings that a bullet entered McDonald’s chest. However, the autopsy included 15 other bullets, all shot by one officer at the scene (Editorial Board 2015, 3). These bullet entry sites include McDonald’s scalp, neck, hand, arms, and most interesting, his back (Editorial Board, 5). If a bullet entered McDonald’s back, the officer shot him while he attempted to flee. The report from 2014 suggests the officer shot
McDonald only in the chest when he attempted to lunge at the officer with a knife. In addition, the original report in *The Chicago Tribune* failed to mention the officer shot McDonald 16 times. These discrepancies can be found in articles from April 2015. At that point, the officer who shot McDonald went unnamed in newspapers. Corporation Counsel Stephen Patton mentioned the video at the scene of McDonald’s death would remain unseen because the city believes it will impact the jury’s decision to charge the officer with criminal charges (7). Therefore, the City Council unanimously voted in April to complete a $5 million payout to McDonald’s family in order to pre-empt the federal lawsuit (2). The $5 million settlement was not enough for the McDonald family; shortly after the city received a Freedom of Information request to release the video. By November 2015, Chicago became the center of nationwide police criticism when they released the video. Months before, Chicago prided itself as a progressive police department committed to raising accountability via body camera legislation. However in November 2015 the media portrayed Chicago’s police and city leaders as a group of individuals willing to cover up unjust deaths of civilians to protect their careers. Attached below is a digital copy of McDonald’s Autopsy report, which indicates bullet entrance and exit points.

According to the report, McDonald was shot 16 times. The officer at the scene shot McDonald in the back. This bullet entered his lower right back and exited from his abdomen. Driven from the report, there is a large discrepancy between the original October report and the public release of McDonald’s autopsy report (Means 2014).
As of November 24, 2015, *The Chicago Tribune* publicly released a court ruling ordering the release of the McDonald video. The report indicates that on May 26, 2015, freelance journalist Brandon Smith ordered a Freedom of Information Act request to release the dashboard–mounted camera footage from the scene of the McDonald shooting. By August 4, 2015, the Department of Justice denied Smith’s request, stating that the release would, “create a substantial likelihood of irreparable harm, affecting the integrity of the investigation and potentially depriving the involved officer(s) of an impartial hearing (Cercone 2015, 2).” The next day, Smith issued a complaint and demanded the Department to release the video. The Department asserted its previous position and denied the video release. After two Department Affirmative Defenses, Smith “denied the material allegations of the Department’s Affirmative Defenses” and demanded a judge issue a motion (Cercone, 3). The legal term was a summary judgment, in which a judge would determine whether releasing the video would jeopardize the investigation of the McDonald shooting (3). Smith argued that the dashboard-mounted camera footage is a public record and anyone should have the right to view it and the Department’s exemptions do not apply to this case, because there is no proof the release of the video will cause irreparable harm to the case. Smith then argues Cook County Police Department is not part of the investigation and therefore the video is not kept private for law enforcement purposes (6). The departments involved in the investigation are the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the City of Chicago Independent Police Review Authority (2).

After a lengthy legal battle, Brandon Smith successfully convinced the court to release the video. According to the ruling report, “The General Assembly hereby declares that is the public policy of the state of Illinois that access by all persons to public records promotes
transparency and accountability (7).” In addition, the ruling argues that residents of Illinois have a right to disclosure of details surrounding any aspect of government activity that affect government conduct and civilians. Smith went on to establish a *prima facie* case to conclude releasing the video would not harm the investigation (11). After numerous additional debates, the court found that “Smith has satisfied his initial burden to establish a prima facie showing that there are no genuine issues of material fact as to his complaint (17).” On November 19, 2015, the court presiding over the case issued that the Cook County Police Department must release the dashboard-mounted camera footage on or before November 25, 2015 (18).

The Laquan McDonald video is an important document for the public to watch because it, according to Brandon Smith, will help accelerate police reform. Despite the push back from Cook County Police Department and objections from McDonald’s family, “he said he felt it was the best thing he could do to galvanize efforts for police reform (Southall 2015, 10).” Smith’s intention to release the video had a direct impact on body camera adoption in Chicago. The video appeared online November 24, 2015, hours after officer Jason Van Dyke faced a verdict: guilty of first-degree murder in the shooting of Laquan McDonald. The video evidence played a role in charging the shooter with first-degree murder, the first officer charged in 35 years (Meisner 2015, 1).

On the streets protestors demanded an end to racially motivated police violence. Protests demanded Mayor Rahm Emanuel’s resignation. By December 2, 2015, the mayor stated, “I have no plans to resign (Gass 2015, 1).” Instead the mayor called for Chicago Police Superintendent to resign, shifting public frustration towards McCarthy’s role in the video cover-up (Gass, 12). The Mayor belittled McCarthy in an interview stating, “he has become the issue rather than dealing with the issue (14).” Nonetheless Chicago residents continued to distrust their mayor.
Many believed he withheld the video from public release in order to win his April 2015 re-election. In a public opinion poll conducted by Ogden & Fry LLC with a +/- 3.68% margin of error and random sampling pool of likely 2016 voters, 51.3% of the sample believes Rahm Emanuel should resign. Attached on the next page is a copy of the public opinion poll, conducted December 5 2015 (Swiss 2015, 1).
CHICAGO, IL - Ogden & Fry, conducted a 3-question poll for The Illinois Observer on Saturday, December 5, for Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel’s job approval rating with 739 respondents. Respondents were selected by random sampling of likely 2016 voters. The margin of error for this poll is +/- 3.68% at the 95% confidence interval.

Do you approve or disapprove of the way Mayor Rahm Emanuel is handling his job?

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<tr>
<td>Approve</td>
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<td>18.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disapprove</td>
<td>495</td>
<td>67.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>15.0%</td>
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Do you believe Mayor Rahm Emanuel when he says he had never viewed the now famous Laquan McDonald shooting video?

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<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>No</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>18.9%</td>
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Since the release of the Laquan McDonald shooting video, there have been calls for Mayor Rahm Emanuel to resign over his handling of the McDonald case. Do you think Rahm Emanuel should resign?

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<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>379</td>
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<td>Undecided</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>19.6%</td>
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Table 9
Chicago Public Opinion Poll on Mayor Rahm Emanuel
(Swiss 2015, 1)
Besides demanding the elected mayor to step down, residents distrusted Chicago Police Department. When Officer Jason Van Dyke shot and killed Laquan McDonald on October 20, 2014 five other officers were present and defended Van Dyke as innocent of first-degree murder, and nearly a victim of McDonald’s incoming knife lunge (Ruthhart 2016, 2). Political scientists from Research America Inc. conducted a poll on Chicago residents’ trust in police. The poll started January 20 and finished gathering scores by January 28. 985 registered city voters answered, and the results have +/-3.2% margin of error with a 95% confidence level (Research America Inc. 2016, 4). According to the score, 70% of the respondents answered no to “Do Chicago police officers treat all citizens fairly (Research America Inc., 4)?” The poll, months after the video release, still show overwhelmingly high levels of public distrust towards the police. Despite the long-term public distrust, there are clear signs Chicago Police Department attempted to repair relations days after the video release. Chicago released an additional video from Burger King that has an hour and twenty minute gap during the time of the Laquan McDonald incident. Days after its release, “Lawyers for the McDonald family have alleged the missing footage signals a cover-up by Chicago police who responded to the crime scene (Gorner Burger King video 2015, 4).” The gap in the video increased people’s suspicions towards Chicago Police Department. Unlike the Burger King video, the dashboard-mounted video released before hand showed the shooting. Both videos reduced public trust towards Chicago police.

The most important call to action from Chicago police was the acceleration of their body camera program. After nearly a year of keeping Chicago’s body camera in its pilot program, Chicago propelled the program further. On November 29 Mayor Rahm Emanuel and Superintendent Garry McCarthy made a public announcement: Chicago police officers will wear
body cameras in six more police districts by June 2016 (Briscoe officers wear body cameras 2015, 1). Civic unrest continued. On November 28 2015, Chicago officers arrested four protesters. One day later, Mayor Emanuel announced Chicago Police Department will purchase 1,200 to 1,400 body cameras by June 2016 in order to expand their program from a 30 body camera pilot to fill a third of Chicago (Davey 2015, 1). The cameras would cost $2.2 million, half of which coming from a Justice Department Grant and the other half from city funding (7).

The next day more details surfaced: the program would last 18 months and use higher quality video than the cameras used in the pilot. The study would compare the districts with body cameras against districts without body cameras to test police-citizen interactions (Tafoya 2015, 2). While it cannot be proven whether the video release sparked acceleration in body camera procurement, the timing is uncanny. At the moment of civil unrest and public distrust towards police, Mayor Emanuel commissioned the expansion for Chicago's police body camera program. Body cameras are an expensive means to reform the police and prevent high publicity incidents. Despite the cost Chicago began accelerating their program.

Chicago police did not pay for the pilot program. According to a report, "the pilot cameras in the Shakespeare District were paid for by TASER (Biasco 2016, 3)." After the McDonald video release Chicago didn't have the necessary funding to purchase body cameras but made plans to use a Department of Justice grant and alternative ways to afford the rest of the cost. In an article on Chicago's body camera program journalist Paul Biasco explains, "the budget for the expanded program is approximately $2 million, with a portion coming from a $1 million federal grant. Chicago Police Department leaders also applied for additional state grants to assist with camera purchases, storage, maintenance, licensing, upload stations and program-related costs (Biasco, 3)." Chicago puts high publicity incident before access to funding. At the
moment of the McDonald video release city leaders began publicly announcing plans for body cameras. Despite not having the funding, Chicago set a date for body camera procurement and began requesting grants. In this case Chicago Police Department reactively procures body cameras (3).

**Works Cited for Chapter 5**


Chapter 6. Conclusion

Police departments throughout the United States implement body camera programs for different reasons. Some pursue body camera procurement to rebuild trust with the community after a high publicity incident. Other cities procure body cameras after experiencing a low publicity incident and invest in the technology to improve policing. Meanwhile, other cities adopt body cameras without needing to experience police violence. Body cameras are expensive, lack adequate scholastic research, and have many policy issues.

The triggers that cause a city to invest can be critical to understanding the future of body cameras in the nationwide effort to restore trust with police departments. It is too early to conclude whether body cameras can increase public trust or assess their efficacy in the field. There also is not enough evidence to determine what makes a city’s body camera program better than another city’s. Research into body cameras is novel, like the technology itself. The first step to gain a deeper understanding of body cameras is to study the events-- high and low publicity incidents-- that may lead cities to invest in body cameras. The second step is to classify the city’s procurement behavior into reactive and procurement case studies. And the third is to examine what these distinctions may teach police departments about body cameras.

Expenditures

Body cameras are very expensive. If city leaders purchased body cameras, they consider the cameras a significant method to improve policing. Cities such as Dallas and Los Angeles had to scale back their programs due to financial constraints. Beyond procurement, cities face a financial problem ahead of them: storage and maintenance. Procurement is just the beginning. Keeping up with future camera models, purchasing cloud databases to store footage and
preventing hackers from accessing it, developing training for new body camera officers, and hiring body camera technicians will be expensive. Some cities may not be able to afford continuing their program as the prices rise.

One of the most valid arguments against body cameras is their cost. Body camera programs often include a bid selection period, a pilot program, contract procurement, officer training, hiring additional personnel, and video storage maintenance with security and proper cataloging. Each step requires time and money. Although the goal in adopting body cameras is admirable, many departments may not be able to put in the necessary resources. Police unions such as St. Louis oppose body cameras and suggest the money could be going to officer pensions or non-lethal weapons (Pistor 2014, 2-4).

Policy Concerns

Beyond price, body cameras lack standardized policies and police oversight. Police departments throughout the country have a variety of local policies regarding when a police officer should begin recording on his body camera. This may lead to an officer shouting a racial slur at a civilian and then hit record. In Albuquerque, New Mexico, police officers chose not to hit record on body cameras and use force against civilians. This violated local body camera policy and only a fraction of the officers were punished (Lustbader 2015, 1). The footage instantly becomes biased when an officer can strategically choose when to begin filming, or to not at all film the incident. After spending millions on a body camera program, a policy error can ruin police efforts to improve relations with their community. In the current policy climate it is unclear whether body cameras are increasing trust or reducing cases of police violence.
Policy work and funding will affect variability of body camera procurement. Cities such as Baltimore shied away from procuring body cameras for a year before settling on the right policies (Rector, “When can we get these back?” 2015, 9. As cities develop body camera programs at differing rates due to policy work and also access to funds, there may be variability in body camera procurement among cities. If one police department has a large pool of funds and a robust policy, officials may purchase a higher quality camera and use it effectively. Compare this to a city with limited access to funding that struggles with policies. That city may adopt a cheaper brand and not have the policies in place to effectively keep its police force accountable.

To give an example of a high quality body camera, TASER’s AXON body camera features low retina light recording as a means to film in dark locations. The camera also features a wide-angle frame to capture more details than an officer’s eye may see. Cities with large budgets and robust policies can afford these body cameras and use them effectively, such as Cleveland, Ohio (AXON 2015, 1). Depending on the company a department buys from, body cameras may record at different video resolutions. A department with limited funds may invest in lesser quality body cameras. This may lead to some footage becoming unusable as evidence if recorded in poor lighting and the officials reviewing the footage cannot make out critical details from the scene.

Body camera policies as mentioned previously are not uniform. In some cities such as Minneapolis, citizens voice concern over body camera policies that do not encourage officer accountability. In April 2016 city leaders called a town meeting to discuss body camera policies. Mica Grimm of Black Lives Matter Minneapolis explained, “officers wearing body cams ultimately decide when to turn it on and off…so leaving when to record those interactions up to the officer defeats the purpose (Tigue 2016, 1).” During a town hall meeting the policy stated officers will begin recording during a stop, a search, or an incident involving a criminal.
However the officer can use discretion when to not record. Lt. Gregory Reinhhardt of the Minneapolis Police Department Business and Technology Unit explained they included officer discretion as a means to “protect certain situations when recording may jeopardize a case or a citizen’s privacy (Ibid., 2).” If the officer turns off his camera when he is meant to leave it recording, that officer must explain his reasoning. Despite good intentions, Grimm and many other concerned residents express concern how officer discretion to record can lead to unrecorded police violence (1).

Another critical policy issue is police response while off-duty. A city may adopt body cameras but if an officer who is off-duty encounters a civilian, engages in a conflict and shoots that civilian, there may be trouble. In some cities such as Charlotte, North Carolina, departments spend millions “to equip officers with body cameras to provide clarity” but a shooting can go unrecorded (David, 2016, 2). There are policy gaps. If an officer has a secondary employment in Charlotte he cannot wear a body camera due to issues with financing body cameras. Charlotte’s Major Steve Willis argued the priority is to have officer on patrol wear body cameras. However, officers often carry their guns while on their second job. Some of these secondary jobs include security positions at bars where inebriated peoples are likely to fight or engage in criminal activity. Officers on their second job in Charlotte encounter violent scenarios and in one incident on December 24 2015 Officer Tyler Lee fired three shots into a belligerent (Ibid., 4). These incidents go unrecorded. Body camera policies are imperfect and the gaps fail to record instances of police force. In order to build trust between the community and the police, cities will continue improving policies.
Body camera misconceptions

Some researchers beg to ask if body cameras can reliably capture an incident. In an April 2016 New York Times article, Seth W. Stoughton, a law professor at University of South Carolina argues, “Our interpretation of video is just as subject to cognitive biases as our interpretation of things we see live (Williams, Thomas, Jacoby, and Cave 2016, 5).” When an officer mounts a camera to his chest and records an incident, the footage may be more shaky. Jerky footage persuades the viewer an incident involves more of a struggle than a surveillance video or a steady handheld video of the event may demonstrate. Stoughton presents body camera footage and handheld footage to demonstrate differing recording tactics prompt varying reactions. Stoughton supports officer to wear body cameras but hopes to educate people about their limitations: “They expect…[body cameras] to be a broad solution for the problem of police-community relations, when in fact it’s just a tool, and like any tool, there’s a limited value to what it can do (Ibid., 7).”

The issue with relying on body cameras to solve societal trust problems is surging in the news. In April 2016 The Los Angeles Times released an op-ed titled, “Forget cops. Should doctors and teachers wear body cameras?” (Strauss 2016, 1) Writer Steven Strauss argues, “body cameras on doctors and nurses might well prevent such incidents [of sexual misconduct], provide evidence if they did occur (Ibid., 4).” Strauss cites body camera research on decreasing police use-of-force. He suggests the technology is useful to any field struggling with the issue of accountability. Strauss writes, “even our politicians should be required…to wear body cameras…personally I’d welcome video or audio of what Hilary Clinton has to say (9).” Other articles cover the same questions. In MedCity News, a medical journalist explores the impact of body cameras on the medical world and mixed reactions (Versel 2016, 1). The issue with
inducing other professions to adopt body cameras is that body cameras are, as Stoughton explained, a tool, not the solution. They bring viewer bias and often people see what they want to see in footage rather than uncover an objective truth.

From the implications listed above, many things can go wrong when a city purchases body cameras. For some reason, cities continue to procure body cameras and this will affect everyone: the taxpayer whose money goes to the police budget, the donor whose money goes to the body camera program, and the civilian who experiences an interaction with a police officer. Any citizen living in an area with a police body camera program should be aware of the department’s motives. That citizen may live in a city that experienced a high publicity incident or a city that wishes to avoid one. Whatever the case, it is important to be aware of how the government attempts to rectify relations between authority actors, the police, and society. If a police department procures body cameras shortly after a high publicity incident, the resident may assume the police force expects civilian hostility and protests. The resident may also assume the police force wasn’t willing to spend money on improving accountability until it had to. If a citizen is aware he lives in a city with reactive body camera procurement, he may expect tense relations with the police force.

**Moving Forward**

Proactive case studies have one defining characteristic: body camera procurement cannot occur as a result of the respective police department experiencing a high publicity incident. By studying proactive body camera procurement and introducing new case studies, researchers can better understand the term. Dallas dealt with low publicity incidents and sought out body cameras to improve public safety and Los Angeles dealt with protests concerning a high
publicity incident in another city (Rubin, “LAPD surpasses fundraising” 2013, 1, Eiserer 2013, 2). As more cases and research opportunities present themselves, it may be easier to categorize proactive body camera procurement. One interesting similarity among the cases is their struggle to budget for body cameras. In both cities, journalists released articles explaining that the body camera program required shrinking the volume of cameras and extending the number of years to afford them (Zahniser and Mather, “Vote to buy” 2015, 1, Hallman, “rollout body camera program” 2015, 3). Both cities did not experience, as Kingdon explained in the literature review chapter, an open policy window. Los Angeles and Dallas began body camera programs without experiencing a high publicity incident in their own cities. A policy window opens after a horrific incident provokes policymakers to invest resources in a policy that can solve the problem (Kingdon 2010, 168). Without an open policy window, proactive cities may have a more difficult time gathering the resources for body camera programs. Despite its appeal, this belief is inconclusive.

The future of body cameras is uncertain. This thesis aimed to establish two causal relationships between cases of police violence and cities procuring body cameras. However, studying the motives behind body camera procurement may or may not be critical. The most important question to ask is whether or not body cameras can help police departments achieve their goals of increasing public safety, decreasing cases of police violence, and overall making communities trust their police officers. There is not enough information to answer this question yet, but studying motives for procurement of body cameras may in the future offer insight. A city with high publicity incidents may have a more difficult time building trust with the community through body cameras. To contrast, a city that did not experience a high publicity incident may more easily develop trust with its community.
Even though the measures are not yet determined, it is important keep an open mind about factors triggering body camera procurement and to remain informed about breaking news about body cameras in major metropolitan areas. Since this research relies on daily updates regarding cities across the country, all at different stages in their body camera programs, the task continues.

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