

# The Consequences of Police Brutality on Psychological Well-Being and Collective Action

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## Abstract

The murders of unarmed Black men and women by the police have ignited global movements against anti-Black racism and police brutality. While research has been done on police brutality, there is not a lot of information on how these cases affect people in the Black community. The purpose of this study is to contribute to current knowledge by investigating whether reading an article about police brutality would affect the mental health of Black students.

## Introduction

- Due to racial profiling, a Black person is more likely to be charged or fatally shot by the Toronto Police Force<sup>3</sup>.
- Being the victim of this type of racially motivated violence has been associated with trauma-related symptoms<sup>1</sup>.
- Black Americans who perceived higher levels of racism were also more likely to report lower self-esteem and greater psychological distress<sup>2</sup>.
- When disadvantaged minorities experience racism, they are more likely to support political action for their collective group<sup>4</sup>.

## Methods

### Participants

- Black-identifying students from York University.
- $N = 70$

### Measurements

- State Self-Esteem Scale
- Willingness to Participate in Collective Action
- Support for BLM movement
- Three-Dimensional Strength of Group Identification

### Procedure

- Participants will be randomly assigned to either read an article about police brutality against a Black victim or a non-Black victim.
- Participants will then complete the measures of self-esteem and willingness to participate in collective action.

## Discussion

If the results of this study support the given hypotheses, it would suggest:

- Exposure to police brutality can have a significant and negative effect on the mental health of Black students.
- In line with previous research, police brutality, like other injustices, can increase support for greater political action among Black students.
- Findings would highlight the negative impact that witnessing police brutality can have on the well-being of minorities, even if they are not directly impacted by the event.

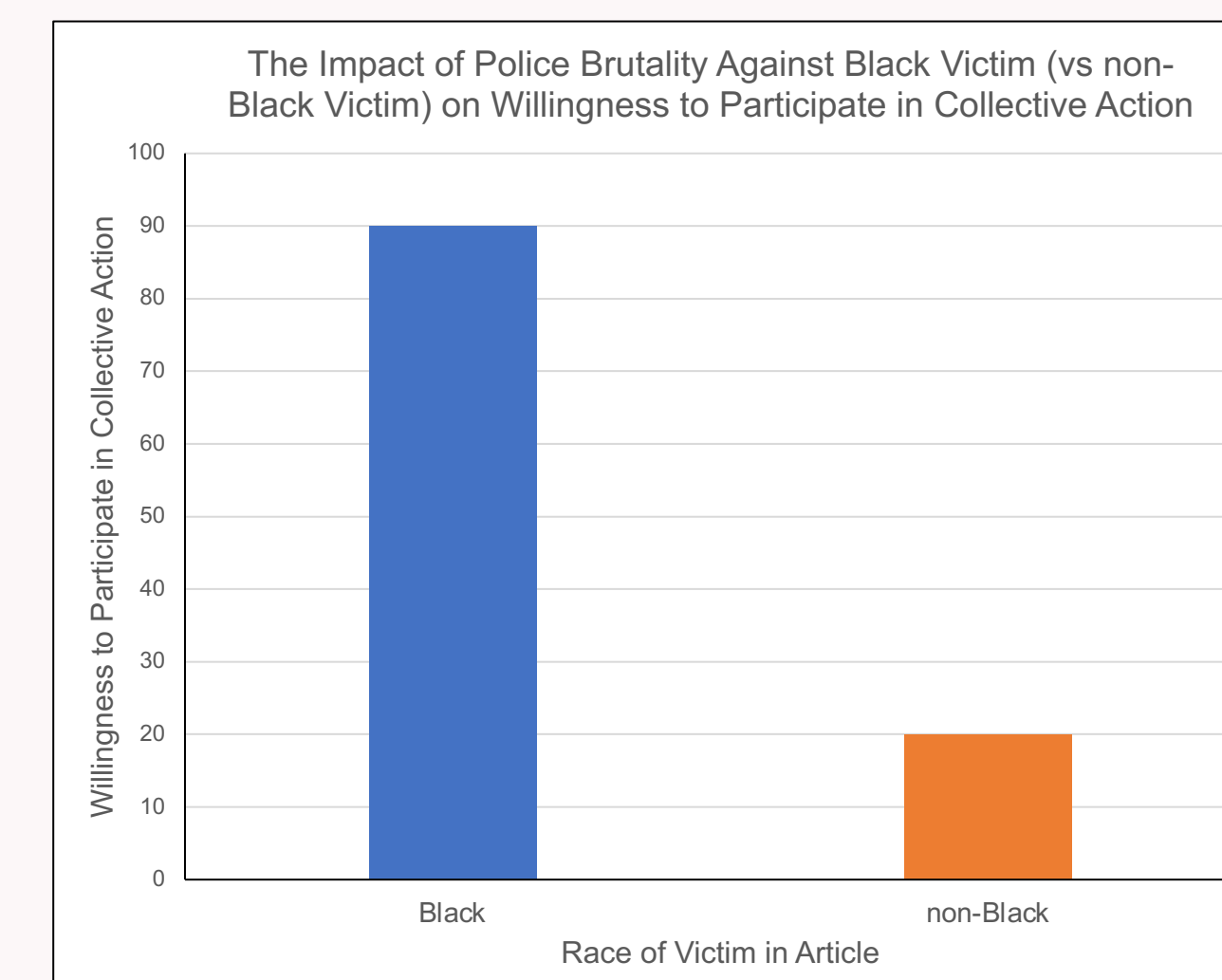
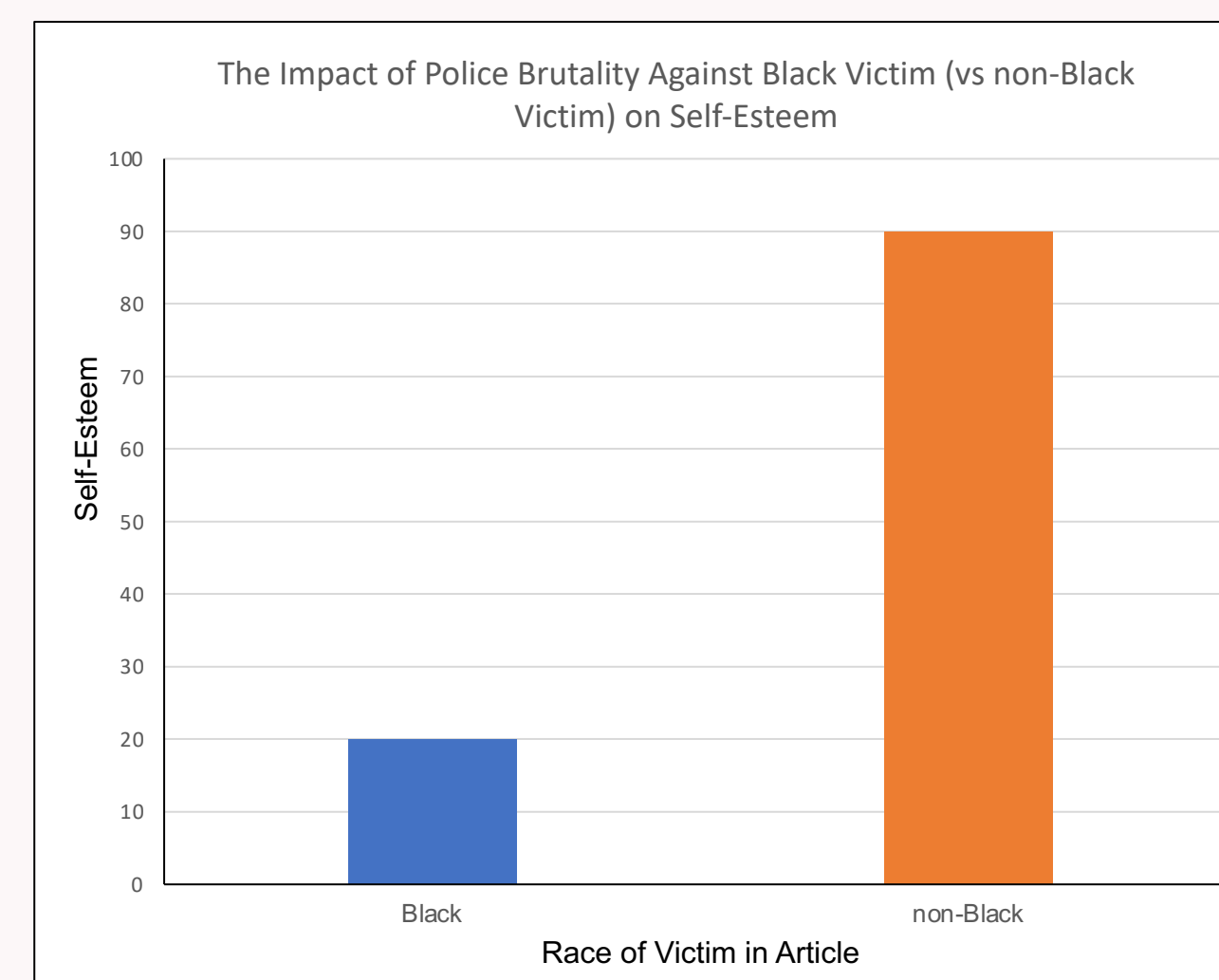
## Research Question and Hypotheses

**Research Question:** Will exposure to police brutality affect the self-esteem and willingness to participate in collective action of Black students?

**Hypothesis 1:** Participants will have lower self-esteem after being exposed to police brutality against a Black victim (vs a non-Black victim).

**Hypothesis 2:** Participants will have higher willingness of collective action after being exposed to police brutality against a Black victim (vs a non-Black victim).

## Expected Results



## References

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