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Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

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Katija Ra'oof

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Walden University
2019

Abstract

African American Males' Perception of the Prince Georges' County (MD) Police and
Improving the Relationship

by

Katija Ra'oof

MS, Kaplan University, 2014

BA, Delaware State University, 2010

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Criminal Justice

Walden University

June 2019

Abstract

The shootings and killings across the country of unarmed African American males by police officers, has become a topic of discussion. Previous research indicates that African American males, in comparison to other groups, are more likely to have adverse encounters with law enforcement officials. The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the experiences and perceptions of African American males in Prince Georges' County regarding encounters with the Prince Georges' County Police Department and how the relationship can improve. Max Weber's social action theory was used to examine perception and purposive sampling aided in gathering this information from a group of 10 African American male participants. Interviews were transcribed and then coded and analyzed using a modified Van Kaam procedure. Findings suggest most participants believe Prince Georges County police are doing a good job. The participants also noted specific strategies, including better utilization of seminars, meetings, and other collaborative efforts may improve police-community interactions and relations. The implications for positive social change include recommendations to law enforcement executives in the Prince Georges' County Police Department to utilize the insight gained through this study to better understand how they are perceived by the African American males in the county and strengthen outreach and collaboration efforts. Following these recommendations may improve the nature of police-community relations thereby advancing public safety within the county and with the African American community in particular.

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Dedication

I would not be the woman I am today, if it was not for my faith in God. My parents Cedric Stephens and Esme Roberts, I love you both more than words can express. Mom, I know you are watching over me from heaven with a smile, we did it Beck! To my best friend, my biggest supporter, the love of my entire being, my husband Khalil. This doctorate is just as much yours, as it is mine. I know God truly loves me because he gave me you, and for that I am forever grateful. To my sisters who always keep me humble, thank you for your words of encouragement and for also being that mother figure when needed, I love you. My nieces and nephews, I hope you know how much Auntie Tija loves you! I want you to look at me and be better! If I can do it, so can you!

To my entire family, Aunties, Uncles, Cousins and In-laws, thank you for being supportive during this journey, I love you and I am honored to call you family. To the back bending, educated, hard-working women of Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority Inc. I thank you from the bottom of my Sigma heart for all of your love and support. And, to the home chapter, Zeta Delta and Delta Tau Sigma, you've played an intricate part in my life and I plan to continue to make Sigma proud, EE-YIP! Sandra Bland, I will keep you in my heart as I work to improve the criminal justice system, rest easy.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the study

Introduction

For many years, African Americans have been the focus point when conducting research as it pertains to perception towards police officers. Race is the most used and dominant subject when exploring the perceptions of police officers, research shows different races have different views in regard to police officers (Peck, 2015). Perception is not only different based on race, but also based on where an individual grew up, where they live now, their interaction with police officers and also what they've heard or seen in person or on social media (Donovan & Klahm IV; 2015; Lim 2015). Police officers occupy every city, county, and state with the same purpose in mind to serve and protect and to also make sure they uphold the law correctly, for all individuals (The U.S Department of Justice, 2019). The U.S Department of Justice (2015) and the U.S Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (2015) wrote a literature review about the uneven racial composition of police officers and the race of the communities the police officers serve, stating that, police departments that are diverse are less likely to be insular to civilians they encounter (The U.S Department of Justice, 2015).

Recently there have been high profile cases with police officers using deadly force against unarmed African American males. These cases play a significant role in how other African American men perceive police officers. One case, which caused African American males to question police officers, was the Garner case, which took place July 14, 2014. The video of Garner's arrest was public, which allowed the public to see and form opinions and perceptions towards police officers, who encounter African American males (The U.S Department of Justice, 2014). Like the Garner case which took place in New York, Prince

Georges' County Police (MD) Department has had its incidents when dealing with African American males, incidents that question how Prince Georges County police department deal with minorities.

In 2014, Minor, an unarmed African American male was shot and killed by a Princes Georges' County sheriff's deputy (Minor v. Prince Georges' County, 2017). The Prince Georges' County sheriff's deputy, was responding to a domestic violence call when he fatally shot Minor who was unarmed at the time of their encounter (Minor v. Prince Georges' County, 2017). The sheriff was placed on routine administrative leave; and Prince Georges' County is currently being sued by Minor's mother (Minor v. Prince Georges' County, 2017).

Background of the Problem

Within the last 5 years, there have been numerous high-profile shootings that involved law enforcement officers and unarmed African American males. These national high-profile cases created responses from the minority communities for police officers to be held accountable for their actions. In July of 1999, Prince Georges' County Police Unit was placed under investigation by the U.S Department of Justice, for violating the rights of Prince Georges' County citizens regarding excessive force (The U.S Department of Justice, 2004). There had been multiple attacks by police dogs on minorities, who were either handcuffed or already apprehended by police officers (The U.S Department of Justice, 2004). However, after the Prince Georges County department police was under investigation, on September 1, 2000 an unarmed African American male student, Jones' Jr. was shot more than six times by a Prince Georges' County police officer (The U.S Department of Justice, 2004). The officer, along with another police officer, followed

Jones' jeep into Virginia, believing Jones' was a drug dealer who was involved in a previous crime where an officer's service weapon was taken (The U.S Department of Justice, 2004). The officer fired 16 shots into Jones' jeep, hitting the victim five times in the back, (The U.S Department of Justice, 2004). Jones' later died at Fairfax hospital in Virginia and, it was then found that Jones' was not the correct suspect, he was not a drug dealer, and he had no previous record (The U.S Department of Justice, 2004). Virginia did not file charges against the officer. Jones' mother pressed charges against the officer in the Circuit Court for Prince Georges' County but, the entire case was dismissed (Court of Maryland, 2007). The outcomes sparks the question, how do African American males in Prince Georges' County perceive Prince Georges' County police department?

Due to the previous incidents that took place in Prince Georges' County, the U.S Department of Justice and Prince Georges' County charted a consent decree on January 22, 2004. The consent decree was about excessive force by police officers; the consent decree also indicated the majority of the excessive force violations in Prince Georges' County were against African Americans and immigrants (The U.S Department of Justice, 2004). The complaint received by the Department of Justice regarding to the Prince Georges' County police stated the Prince Georges' County police are violating 42 U.S.C § 1414 because of the excessive force officers in the Prince Georges County canine department exhibited against African Americans and immigrants (The U.S Department of Justice, 2004). The sole purpose of the consent decree was to prevent future misconduct from taking place and to help promote police integrity with the Prince Georges' County police department (The U.S Department of Justice, 2004).

The perceptions African American Males in Prince Georges County, have towards the Prince Georges' County police department is an issue that needs to be explored. As of July 1, 2016, Prince Georges' County had a population of 908,049, with African Americans being 65% of the population (The U.S Census Bureau, 2016). However, there is not a recent study that focuses on the perceptions of African American males in Prince Georges' County towards the Prince Georges County Police department. This study is essential because the feedback provided could possibly aid the Prince Georges' County police department in the future when dealing with African American males. Helping to restructure policies and procedures to avoid future issues when dealing with African American males.

In this study, I explored the perceptions African American males have towards the Prince Georges' County police department. Understanding why African American males have the perception that they do will help police officers address these perceptions accordingly.

Statement of the Problem

The perception individuals have towards police officers can affect how well police officers are able to carry out their duties. Prior research suggest if the diversity within police departments increases, police departments would be more willing to incorporate systemic and cultural changes (The U.S Department of Justice, 2016). African American males in Prince Georges' County possibly having negative perceptions of police officers would only widen the divide between African American males and police officers. Police officers are aware of previous research and also are aware of what is said in the news media, and are aware of how certain races and genders perceive them (National Institute of

Justice, 2014). Between a 10 year span 1990 to 2000, it was discovered that Prince Georges County police killed more citizens than any other police department in any of the other 50 largest cities, with 84% of those killed identified as African American (Green, Hutto, 2016).

Previous research has discovered that individuals, who live in neighborhood where crime is a minor issue, are more satisfied with police officers (Lim, 2015). The less contact people have with police officers increases the positive perception they have towards law enforcement officers (Lim, 2015). The shootings of unarmed African American males and the communities where African American males reside can play a vital role in how they perceive police officers. The number of unarmed shootings taking place across the United States that involve African American males has become a topic of discussion and could have changed perceptions towards police officers.

Research Questions

1. How do African American males in Prince Georges County perceive Prince Georges' County Police Officers?
2. How can the relationship between African American males in Prince Georges County and the Prince Georges' County police department improve?

Purpose of the Study

The objective of this qualitative study is to explore the perceptions African American males in Prince Georges' County have towards the Prince Georges' County Police Department and, how the relationship can be improved. The reason to explore this topic is due to the high-profile shootings nationwide and the consent decree that directly

affected African American males in Prince Georges' County. Prince Georges' County police department is the fourth largest police department in the state of Maryland, with more than 1,500 police officers (Prince Georges County, 2017). The results of this study may provide possible solutions to identify problems and could possibly help better the community relationship between the Prince County Police Department and African American males who reside in Prince Georges' County.

Theoretical Framework

In this phenomenological study I used Max Weber's social action theory. Social action theory address different stages of perception (emotional, valuation, and/or rational or purposeful stage), which is why it was the best theory to use for this topic (Coleman, 1986). Social action theory may also help to explain how the African American males who reside in Prince Georges' County, formed their perceptions towards the police officers in Prince Georges' County. Chapter 2 will provide more detailed propositions and references in regards to the topic.

Operational Definitions

Consent Decree: A consent decree is an agreement that is negotiated and entered as a court order that is then enforced by the court (The U.S Department of Justice, 2018). There are periodic assessments of compliance or noncompliance consultation of the parties involved (The U.S Department of Justice, 2018). If the defendant breaches the contract the government may file a lawsuit to enforce the agreement (The U.S Department of Justice, 2018).

Assumptions, Limitations, Scope, and Delimitations

Only African American men who have resided in Prince Georges' County, Maryland, for at least 10 years and had never been arrested by Prince Georges' County police, participated in this study. Once all of the interviews concluded, generalizing the data took time because the answers provided were not yes or no responses, but a summary of how the participants felt towards each question. Also, keeping the literature within a 10 year time frame helped the literature to stay relevant to the findings.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is that it may provide insightful knowledge for Prince Georges' County Police Department on how African American men perceive their officers, since the consent decree and national high-profile shootings. In 2016, Prince Georges' County police department chief spoke with the local newspaper and stated beliefs that the police department has the ability to do things differently, in comparison to those police departments involved in national high-profile shootings (Davis & Maake, 2016). This study is essential because it can help aid other police departments experiencing similar issues with African American males. The guidance from this study could potentially provide alternative resolutions. Potential contributions of this study could provide insight on whether the previous excessive force issues Prince Georges' County Canine police department faced, played a factor in how African American males in Prince Georges County perceives them.

It can be difficult to discover why individuals have certain perceptions towards police officers, due to contradictory findings. However, some essential common denominators may be uncovered in this study. There are some potential implications for

positive social change. There is no current study on this particular issue in Prince Georges' County (MD) and gaining insight on the perceptions of African American males could be one of the first steps in improving the relationship with the police.

Summary of Chapter 1

African American males have had a long history of brutality when dealing with law enforcement (Potter, 2013). In recent years the brutality has become a focus point for the African American community (Davis & Block, 2018). Research has previously shown the African American community is not comfortable with police officers and stated that African Americans have been treated unfairly when dealing with police officers, in comparison to other races (nij.gov, 2016). Prince Georges County has had prior unethical encounters with minorities, placing their police department under investigation with the Department of Justice and eventually a federal consent decree (The U.S Department of Justice, 2004). I sought to understand how African American males in Prince Georges' County perceive Prince Georges' County police department, in light of the recent unarmed shootings and their knowledge and observation of Prince Georges' County police department.

In Chapter 2, I will discuss literature that has explored the general perception of police officers, as well as prior research and statistics explaining how individuals encounter police officers. Chapter 2 also includes description on how the news and social media play a key role in how police officers are perceived. The literature review will also provide knowledge on current events impacting the perception of police officers and the complications police officers face and how these complications could affect their daily duties. The literature provides important background information that allowed me to

formulate my study to address, the specific question about African American males and their perceptions of Prince Georges' County police and how can be improved.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Police officers are often called to handle hostile situations on a daily basis, dealing with individuals of different races, gender, and ethnicity. In addition to traffic stops and other incidents where the police officer/s have limited or no time to prepare for the situation at hand but, are expected to act on the spot and perform their duties seamlessly. Some individuals believe police officers don't receive the credit they deserve by putting their lives on the line every time an officer puts his or her uniform on. Other individuals may have a different perspective, believing police officers abuse their power, and then there are also those who are indifferent in regards to how they perceive police officers. Many studies have been conducted within recent years in regards to police officers and how they are viewed. However, there is currently not a study that focuses on how police officers in Prince Georges' County, Maryland are perceived by African American males in Prince Georges County. Social Change can occur by studying one particular county where the majority of its residents are African American and, their relationship with their local county police officers. The findings in this study can help to aid in better community/policing relationships across the country.

The literature review will highlight previous research from the last 10 years that focus on African American males, and how they perceive police officers in comparison to how other races and women perceive police officers. This will help to provide detailed insight on what previous literature has discovered and shed light on what has taken place in

within the past 10 years to shape the perception African American males outside of Prince Georges' County have towards police officers. The remaining literature content will highlight the perception of police officers from the perspective of males who do not identify as African American. As well as encounters African American males have had with police officers in addition to other contributing factors that shape the African American males perception of police officers. In this study, I examine how African American males in Prince Georges' County, Maryland, perceive Prince Georges' County police. My examination will answer two vital questions, which includes, how African American males perceive Prince Georges' County police officers and how the relationship between African American males and Prince Georges' County police improve.

Research Strategy

Literature used in the literature view was obtained by using several different resources. The Walden University online library was helpful providing scholarly articles needed for the literature review. Using reports and other dissertations completed under the criminal justice and policy, administration and security database. Using keywords such as "perception" and "police officer" as the base for all searches. Those keywords were used in conjunction with "social media," "gender" and "encounter," for example. Other essential resources consisted of government websites such as the Department of Justice and the Census Bureau, which provided statistical evidence relevant to the topic and also provided insight on specific locations. There is not any literature today that focuses on Prince Georges' County African American males and their perception today with their police department, the literature used provided a general sense of how the police are perceived by African Americans.

Theoretical Foundation

Racial disparities between police officers and African Americans have been explored previously and findings have indicated there is a difference in how police officers treat African Americans in comparison to Caucasians (Brunson & Weitzer, 2015). One of the founding fathers of sociology Max Weber created the social action theory, which was designed to study smaller groups, along with explaining how individuals form perceptions (Coleman, 1986). Social action theory is relevant to this current study, which will examine the African American male population in Prince Georges' County, MD and, their perception of the Prince Georges' County police officers. Thus, social action theory is best equipped to answer the research questions; how do African American males perceive Prince Georges' County Police officers and, how can the relationship between African American males and the Prince Georges' County police department improve. Providing information for Prince Georges' County police and other police departments trying to strengthen their relationship with African American males.

Perception of Police Officers

Policing was developed in the United States in 1838, with Boston, Massachusetts establishing the first American police force (Potter, 2013). Other states in the United States followed Boston's lead and created a police force, some of these states included New York City in 1845, New Orleans and Cincinnati in 1853. Philadelphia also followed in 1855 and Newark, New Jersey and Baltimore, Maryland also followed in 1857. All of the other major cities within the United States by the 1800s had a police force in action (Potter, 2013). However, problems arose in the Southern states that had developed a policing force, the police organizations in the South turned into "Slave Patrol." Slave patrol in the south

had three critical functions for police officers to follow and enforce which included, to maintain a form of discipline for slave-workers, to chase down and apprehend slaves and return the slaves to their rightful owner and to provide a form of organized terror to deter other slaves from disobeying or running away from their owners (Potter, 2013). Policing in the 1800's was extreme in the ways they handled people who broke the law, especially African Americans during slavery.

Slavery had been in place prior to policing being established in the 1800s; slavery did not just stay in the South, other states in other regions also such as Connecticut and New York enacted laws to criminalize and enslave African Americans (Kappeler, 2014). From the beginning of policing being created, African Americans have had a strenuous relationship with police officers, which started with helping to enforce slavery and harm to African Americans who did not comply with the slavery laws. The perception of police officers for some African American's stem from the history of slavery and, also based on current events. African Americans have had the lowest attitude towards police officers, in comparisons to other races (Alberston & Gorey, 2018). The Criminal Justice system has been dealing with racial disparities since American criminology began, and because of this literature has focused on racial differences and how police officers are perceived (Crutchfield, Fernandes & Martines, 2010). Previous research has found race to be the number one factor when dealing with the perception of police officers (Chu & Hung, 2010).

Even with the excessive amounts of literature stating the public's perception of law enforcement officer is generally negative, the public still sees police officers as being bias and sometimes abusive (Callanan; Rosenberger, 2011; Nadal, Davidoff , 2017). Being that

slavery has been abolished, and the police force now has officers of different races, the perception of police officers has not improved. The African American community has inquired about the discrepancy in how they're arrested, in comparison to other races in the United States; incarceration is another topic affecting the perception of police officers, within the black communities. In 2016 according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, 93% of the inmates in state and federal prisons in the United States were male. Black males between the ages of 18 to 19 were imprisoned 11.18 more times in comparison to white men their age (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2018). The statistics provided by the Bureau of Justice indicates there is a trend in who police officers are arresting, and who the criminal justice system is incarcerating.

Perception can also be influenced by what the other party has done for an individual directly. Racial groups tend to compete for resources, especially if they live in an area with scarce resources; these resources include the service of the police (Mcneele & Grothoff, 2016). Mcneele and Grothoff (2016) believed there is a racial group that controls the police, which is usually the white population, will have a positive perception towards police officers in comparison to other racial groups. Males commit more crimes than females, causing men to have more of a negative opinion towards police. Males who have not interacted with police officers directly have the propensity to not have confidence in the police (Becker & McCorkel, 2011).

According to the Office of Justice Programs, National Institute of Justice (2014), personal interactions have the most substantial impact on perceptions. The National Institute of Justice (2014) believed individuals focus solely on how police treat them, their interactions with police officers and not the outcome of those interactions. The Department

of Justice is also aware of the backlash police officers receive, sometimes based solely off of the images or videos posted on social media or reported in the news. To combat the adverse press officers receive, the Department of Justice believes officers should acknowledge and discuss with their communities the challenges they face on a daily basis, being transparent could help build the police-community relationship (The U.S Department of Justice, 2015). Civil rights leaders and leaders within the police force recommend all officers, of all levels, should receive mandatory training on diversity, implicit bias, and cultural competency (The U.S Department of Justice, 2015). The training of police officers is rigorous and demanding; the training provides future officers with the knowledge of how to use firearms and other weapons when needed while on the job. However, there is a gap when it comes to training officers on diversity and cultural appreciation. In 2016, more than fifty Prince Georges' County police officers reported claims of discrimination within Prince Georges' County police department. The discrimination complaint included a dummy with a picture of an African American male's photo on the head of the dummy; the complaint was sent to the Department of Justice where it is being decided if a further investigation will take place (American University, 2017). Such a complaint is not only an issue for the Prince Georges' County police department but also an issue for every African American males who resides in the United States.

Where does the perception African Americans have towards law enforcement officers derives from is vital to understanding how African American males in Prince Georges' County perceive Prince Georges' County police. There is a common denominator within the African American community when discussing their feelings towards law enforcement. Prior researchers believed racial profiling began in the 18th

century, an approach to keep control of African Americans by over-policing African Americans (Gabbidon, Higgins & Wilder-Bonner, 2012). Racial profiling is still relevant within law enforcement, and the dealings officers have with African Americans. The biggest crime in the United States according to Quigley and Riley (2012) is, the criminal justice system being a race-based organization where African Americans are targeted "directly and, punished more than white people".

According to Huggins (2012), African Americans feel discriminated against by the police, so much that the term "Driving While Black" was created. "Driving While Black" has become a phrase used by African Americans to describe unlawful stops by police officers. Prince Georges' County police department in recent news has had occurrences where police officers have been questioned about their practices when dealing with African Americans. Between 1990 and 2000, Prince Georges' police officers shot and killed more citizens per officer, in comparison to any of the other 50 largest city or county police departments in the county. During the years 1990 to 2000, of those shot by Prince Georges' County police department, 84% of the citizens were black (Hutto & Green, 2016). Current statistics indicate 65% of African Americans make up Prince Georges' County in 2017, and 30.7% of African Americans make up Maryland's population (Census Bureau, 2018).

Within the past few years, police officers have been the topic of discussion, in the workplace, in schools and others form's across the county. Some of the debate depicts the duties of officers and questions whether or not they are serving and protecting the communities they serve correctly. The unarmed shooting of African American males has caused for police departments to change how incidents are handled, and how police

officers are trained. However, with changes being made by police departments, there are still barriers officers' face that are hard to change. People with access to social media within the last five years have seen or heard of a video being uploaded showing a police officer harming or using deadly force against a minority, especially African Americans.

Encounters with Police Officers

Location plays a significant factor in how police officers are viewed by others; studies have shown areas with high crime rates view police officers as less favorable. Whereas, those who reside in areas with little to no crime perceive police officers in a more positive light (Crichlow & Przeszlowski, 2018). To fully understand where perception towards the police comes from, it is vital to examine previous problems individuals have encountered while coming across police officers. Areas with high crime rates have more encounters with police officers, which is the primary factor as to why those who reside in high crime areas don't have a positive outlook on police officers. Vigne, Fontaine, and Dwivedi (2017) conducted a study called "How Do People in High-Crime, Low-Income Communities View the Police?" The researchers conducted a qualitative study from 2015 to 2016 where they interviewed individuals in person from several different cities. These cities included Birmingham, Alabama; Fort Worth, Texas; Gary, Indiana; Minneapolis, Minnesota; Pittsburgh; and Stockton, California. The sole purpose of this study was to gather data on residents and their view of police officers for the Urban Institute evaluation of the National Initiative on Building Community Trust and Justice (Dwivedi, Fontaine & La Vigne, 2017).

In this study, the participants ranged between the ages 18 to 104, with 46 being the median age with a total of 1,278 adults participating in the survey (1,189 in person and 89

over the phone). The majority of the participants resided in homes categorized as extreme poverty, with 62% stating their total income combined annually was less than \$20,000 a year. In the year 2015, the poverty level was \$24,257 for a family of four and, decreased based on individuals occupying the home, \$12,082 was for a single individual (Kollar, Proctor & Semega, 2016). Of the 1,278 participants who took part in the study, 66.3% were African Americans, 11.9% were Caucasian, 10.6% were Hispanic, and 4.9% was other. In regards to gender, 58.6% of the participants were female and 41.4% were males. At the end of the study the researchers stated "Our research shows that although variations exist across the six cities; respondents' perceptions of police across measures of legitimacy, procedural justice, racial bias, relatability to police, and applied principles of community policing, on average, are extremely detrimental" (Dwivedi, Fontaine & La Vigne, 2017). Variations within the study meaning different factors in each city played a role in how police officers are perceived. Each police department in each city has a different approach when policing the neighborhoods within their jurisdiction, along with various policies and procedures, which will contribute to how they're perceived. However, with each department having a different approach when dealing with their civilians, the perception had towards the officers was still negative.

In today's current society previous encounters play a crucial role in whether or not an individual will contact police officers for help if assistance is needed. Especially personal encounters and what an individual has seen or heard others experience while encountering police officers. Some individuals have the perception that police officers will not help the situation if called, and others rely solely on police officers to solve all discrepancies. In 2010, Chu and Hung believe individuals who hold police officers to

higher regard cooperate with police officers, which in return leads to better policing. In an article written by Avdi S. Avdija Ph.D. (2010), Dr. Avdija stated females tend to have a better perceptiveness towards police officers, in comparison to males. Women hold a more favorable outlook towards law enforcement, due to the higher amount of contact males have with police officers, in contrast to females.

Females and males have different encounters with police officers, and these interactions can determine how that individual perceives all police officers. It is essential to distinguish the different interactions most commonly had between women and police officers, as well as men and police officers. In 2011, the U.S Department of Justice wrote a special report "Contacts between Police and the Public, 2008", providing the reader with detailed statistics showing how often males and females residents encountered police officers, based on traffic stops and reporting a problem or crime. The findings provided insight based on the Police-Public Contact Survey (PPCS), that is used to examine individuals 16 or older in a nationally representative sample, by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (Durose, Eith, 2011). In 2008, according to the special report "Contacts between Police and the Public", table four titled "Number of U.S residents age sixteen or older who had contact with police, by demographic characteristics and reason for contact, 2002 and 2008", females sixteen and older encountered police officers 7,333 times while being the driver in traffic stops, and 4,679 times by reporting an issue or crime (Durose & Eith, 2011). Males on the other hand in 2008, sixteen and older encountered police officers 10,330 times because of traffic stops while they were the driver and, 3,665 times due to crime or reporting issues (Durose & Eith, 2011).

Males based on this particular survey encountered police officers 18.5%, while females encountered police officers 15.5%, indicating based on the findings of this survey, men encountered police officers at a higher rate due to traffic stops but are reluctant to reach out to the police in comparison to women (Durose & Eith, 2011). The survey helped to highlight essential reasons as to why a person would encounter police officers, unintentionally (traffic stops) and willfully (contacting police officers for incidents or crimes). It is also important to point out both male and female residents each had a higher rate of encountering police officers due to traffic stops, opposed to willful contact. The residents who were stopped by police officers for traffic stops formed a perception of police officers, based on their personal experience during the traffic stop that took place. Table eight on page six titled "Perceptions of police behavior during contact, by reason for contact and race/Hispanic origin of resident, 2008", the majority of the individuals stated they had a positive experience dealing with police officers during their encounter.

According to the Fourth Amendment, people have the right "to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no warrant shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized" (law.cornell.edu, 2018). The Fourth Amendment helps to protect residents from unlawful searches, however often the encounters police officers have with individuals do not result in search or seizure (Miller, 2015). Carbado (2017) focused on the fourth amendment and the pathway used by police officers to commit crimes. According Carbado, every encounter an African American has with police officers in today's society is a potential killing field. Further believing the fourth amendment pushes polices officers

to target blacks and "pulls" blacks to encounter police officers (Carbado, 2017). Some may believe the courts enable police officers to search African Americans illegally because not all searches done by officers are legal, but officers rely on the fourth amendment to defend their illegal search.

Some encounters can lead to deadly force being used. Deadly Force by definition according to Cornell Law School (2017) is a destructive physical force directed against a person or persons (ex. firing a lethal weapon). Deadly force should only be used in dire situations when all lesser means have failed or cannot reasonably be employed and must be justified under conditions of extreme necessity. On August 9, 2014, an officer of the Ferguson Police Department encountered, shot and killed Mr. Brown, an eighteen-year-old African American male who at the time of the shooting was unarmed. Mr. Brown encountered the officer while he and another suspect were walking from a liquor store in Ferguson, Missouri that was recently robbed. Shortly after, the officer shot and killed Mr. Brown stating Mr. Brown reached into his SUV, assaulted him and tried to grab his gun.

According to the Department of Justice (2015), the officer was responding to a robbery that took place at the same liquor store Mr. Brown was seen on camera, stealing goods when the officer told Mr. Brown and another suspect to step on the sidewalk because Mr. Brown and the suspect were walking in the street. The Office instructed the two suspects to step on the sidewalk to identify if they were the two suspects in the robbery. This particular case is compelling because of the nature in which the situation took such a deadly turn, a police officer responding to an incident can never tell if they will need to use deadly force or not. There may be times where an experienced officer can determine if they will need back up ahead of time, before going to a particular place to

answer a call. However, the officer responding to a call in regards to a robbery could not foresee that he would have had to use his weapon to kill Mr. Brown. After further investigation by the Department of Justice, it was determined that Mr. Brown did reach for the officers gun, giving the officer no other choice but to grab his weapon and fire at Mr. Brown, resulting in Mr. Brown's death.

The Department of Justice (2015) stated the officer did followed proper procedure by shooting Mr. Brown; stating officer the officer had a right to fear for his life since Mr. Brown had reached for the officer gun. The public doesn't always comprehend that police officers can fear for their life as well; it is often believed that since the officer is armed, the officer has the upper hand at all times. Other cases involving unarmed African American males being shot and killed by police officers followed the Mr. Brown case. Mr. Gray, an unarmed African American male in Baltimore, Maryland made eye contact with Lieutenant Rice, a plain-clothed cop on a street corner where they both Mr. Gray and Lieutenant Rice were standing. Once eye contact was made, Mr. Gray ran, and Lieutenant Rice chased after Mr. Gray while calling for back up, because Lieutenant Rice believed Mr. Gray's action were suspicious. Mr. Gray did stop running at one point, and a switchblade (a knife) was found on Mr. Gray after Lieutenant Rice searched him. Lieutenant Rice and the other officers he called for backup removed the knife and threw it on the ground. The officers stated Mr. Gray tried to move toward the knife to grab it, and that's when an officer placed Mr. Gray on his stomach. The officers then put Mr. Gray in a police van, were the officers did not place a seatbelt on Mr. Gray. The Department of Justice (2017) stated Gray had hit his head multiple times while in the van which caused him severe damage and was the cause of his death on April 19, 2015. Charges were brought forth against the officers who

encountered Mr. Gray, but further investigation determined the officers did not intentionally kill Mr. Gray and the charges were dropped (The U.S Department of Justice, 2017). The racial tension between the African American community and police officers continues to grow, due to cases such as the Mr. Brown and Mr. Gray case. However, before these recent cases took place, there have been other incidents, which caused the African American community to question police officers and try to avoid encounters with officers at all cost.

A demographic shift took place in Prince Georges' County, Maryland at the end of the 1980s, when African Americans became the majority (Green & Hutto, 2016). In Maryland between the years 2010 and 2014, at least 109 people died due to police encounters. In Prince Georges' County since 2010, county police officers killed at least 21 individuals with the average age being 35. An interesting fact to keep in the forefront of the matter is the unequal ratio African Americans hold in regards to death by police officers in comparison to other races in Maryland. Within four years (2010 to 2014), according to the American Civil Liberties Union of Maryland, ACLU (2015), the 36 unarmed African Americans who died by the hands of Maryland police officers within four years, exceed the total number of whites killed by the hands of police officers in Maryland.

Whether or not the Caucasian suspect was unarmed or armed with a weapon. The state of Maryland has had issues when dealing with civilian interaction with police officers, causing police departments to increase their police force. Prince Georges' County police department has explicitly received more tactical military weapons than any other police department in Maryland since 2010. The tactical weapons received by Prince Georges' County police officers are in accordance under the 1033 program of the National

Defense Authorization Act (Green & Hutto, 2016). However, according to Maryland's 2010 Uniform Crime Report, Prince Georges County was not the most dangerous county in Maryland, yet Prince Georges' County received the most military weapons out of any other county in Maryland (Williams, 2010; Hutton & Green, 2016). Current statistics indicate there is a tumultuous relationship between the African American community in Prince Georges' County and Prince Georges' County police officers. Based on recent incidents taken place across the United States, one has to ponder on whether or not African Americans are treated fairly when encountering police officers in Prince Georges' County, Maryland.

News and Social Media Involvement

Prior to social media becoming popular, the main source of news came from local TV news stations. Previous studies have focused particularly on local TV news and have discovered that citizens, especially minorities, have a negative attitude towards police officers in the rise of highly publicized events shown on local TV news (Donovan, Klahm IV, 2015). However, local news stations ratings have decreased, particularly amongst younger viewers (Donovan, Klahm IV, 2015). Before the decline in ratings in regards to local TV news stations, not all local news televised crime stories, however, television shows were reenacting criminal cases and guiding viewers to have a particular perception towards police officers. Nielsen Media is a leading global information measurement company that provides insight and data on what is being watched in the United States. Nielson Media listed NCIS, NCIS: Los Angeles, Blacklist, Person of Interest and Blue Bloods as their topmost watched shows for 2013-2014 TV season (Donovan, Klahm IV, 2015). The Mr. Brown case took place in 2014 (The U.S Department of Justice, 2015), this

particular case was the start of many to follow that made headline news. The drama series listed played off of the incidents that took place between African Americans and police officers, in the U.S, over 40% of citizens believe crime shows are somewhat accurate (Donovan, Klahm IV, 2015). This belief is detrimental to the police force because of the perception these drama shows are feeding their viewers.

Different police departments across the country would use social media platforms to their advantage since social media is now a popular form of relating current news amongst the youth. The two main reasons why police agencies found social media appealing was one, having the public help to aid in criminal investigations and two, for disseminating information quickly and to manage the public's opinion (Jones & Ruddell, 2013). However, the use of social media has in some effect done the opposite in helping police officers to solve criminal cases. In recent years social media has played a vital role in how the public perceives police officers and how the shooting and killing of unarmed African American males occurred. Photos and videos have been taken by bystanders to record how both officers and unarmed African American males behave towards each other. Social media videos have been used to help the court system determine if any crime has occurred on either the officer's or civilian's end, especially when officers are accused of using unnecessary deadly force. Social media influences how police officers are perceived because of what is shared and how fast the content spreads.

For example, Mr. Gray and Ms. Bland, where a video is attached and has been seen on social media platforms played a vital role in the public's view of police officers. Other cases such as the Brown and Rice case, have helped to shape the perception of police officers for some viewers. The biggest denominator of these videos is race and gender and,

these high-profile cases involved an unarmed African American male suspect and a police officer that does not identify as African American. Due to these recent events, specific city and county police are feeling the backlash of the videos taken mostly by cell phones and being posted on social media, where the public views the altercation that took place.

Leaving certain police departments to inquire about how they're perceived by those who they protect. In August 2011 and April 2012, surveys of community and university populations were conducted in regards to the perception of the Regina Police Service. The goal of this survey was to provide Regina Police Services with of the public's trust and confidence in the police, in addition to perceptions of crime and disorder. Regina Police Services found it essential to conduct this survey, based on current events involving officers and videos being shown on the news or social media. Overall, the results of the study showed respondents had high-levels of satisfaction with the Regina Police Services. However, the findings do not indicate whether or not social media played a part in the results (Jones & Ruddell, 2013). Not every police department is fortunate enough to have the results of the Regina Police Service; negative results usually means there's tension between the police and the respondents in the area. According to the National Institute of Justice (2014), the frequent exposure the media provides in regards to police misconduct influences the perception towards police officers, but not as much as personal interactions.

Another example is E.A Weitzer discovering events involving police officers that are highly publicized profoundly influence the public's view of the police (Lim, 2015). Incidents such as the Amadou Diallo and Patrick Dorismond incident, which took place in New York and, the Rodney King case took place in Los Angeles. Weitzer studied the perception towards LAPD Rampart Division and NYPD before these publicized events and

after the incidents took place. His research discovered a drastic increase in unfavorable attitudes towards officers after the incidents with LAPD and NYPD were publicized (Lim, 2015). However, Surette (2014) who has studied social media and police officers for years has stated the media offers conflicting portrayals of police, while also simultaneously portraying police as ineffective and equipped to do their job. The news media and social media are equally influential in how the public perceives law enforcement officers, not all of the coverage on social media and news media depict negative images of police, but the vast majority of the coverage is negative.

Top news stories in regards to police encounters with African Americans are developed based on a video someone took of the encounter and posted it on social media. The public, the black community especially has often cried and relied on news media to further investigate specific police brutality videos that have been uploaded to social platforms such as Twitter and Facebook, for example. In 2012, an article titled "Ways of Ensuring Social Respect and Support for the Activities of the Police," addressed how social media plays an adverse effect on how the public views police officers. The author Mr. Pastushenia believes the attitude citizens' have towards law enforcement influences the public sense of Justice. Sense of justice meaning, even if an officer followed protocol when dealing with a civilian, because of the negative aspect the viewer/s has towards police in general, the viewer/s could believe the police officer crossed the line (Patushenia, 2012). Also, believing injustice has taken place if the officer faces no criminal consequences, especially if deadly force was used on the officer's end, even if the action of the officer/s are warranted.

News media stations are here to report issues within the communities and to keep the public informed on what is taken place during these issues. However, when is it crossing the line for social media or news stations to show certain incidents on television, certain videos being shown put police officers at risk. For example, the video of Eric Garner being held in a choke-hold by a New York City police department was shown on major news outlets and also shown on social media platforms for the world to see and to form opinions (The U.S Department of Justice.gov, 2014). Showing such videos could help to determine if any wrongdoing has occurred, but showing such videos could also help to aid in civilians retaliating against police officers, who already have a negative perception of police officers.

Both positive and negative images of how African American males are treated by police officers are shown on the news and social media outlets. There have been videos shown of police officers having a positive interaction with African Americans, but these videos aren't explained and shared on news outlets as much as videos that show officers using deadly force. Some videos that are shared on social media outlets have made it to televised news stations, for the country to see and speculate even if the video only shows clips of the incident and not the full story. The first amendment provides freedom of expression, prohibiting Congress from hindering the press or the rights of others to speak freely (Cornell Law School, 2018). The right to speak freely within the press has played a role in the tension between police officers and the African American community, the widespread videos and photos used to try and piece together why an unarmed person of color was shot by an officer has not only caused society to question the practices of officers, but it has increased the stress officers deal with.

On the other end, law enforcement officers now have to work with not only their character being questioned based on a video upload onto social media, but now their life and the lives of their family members could be in danger. According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation law enforcement bulletin, police departments may neglect to protect their officers just to minimize negative perceptions. Obtaining an officers address is easy due to public websites, and also the information placed on that officer's police department website. The heightened exposure of police officers due to social media has put many officers and their families in danger; there are no constraints in social media in regards to what can be uploaded (Waters, 2012). Measures have been taken to protect officers from being charged criminally for doing their job; some police departments have implemented body-worn cameras. Prince Georges' County's police department has explored the idea of body-worn cameras, in hopes to help improve their relationships with the Prince Georges' County resides.

Complying with Police Officers

Prince Georges' County police department is aware of the backlash police officers receives when the public views an encounter an officer has with a civilian. Some police departments have now turned to body-worn cameras to help with this issue and also to show that some citizens do not comply with police officers on purpose. The definition of comply according to Merriam-Webster (2018) is conform, submit, or adapt as required or requested, failure to comply with police officers could result in a misdemeanor for the suspect. In 2015, Prince Georges' County police department stated there is an urgency for a body-worn camera pilot program to take place. The key reason for the body-worn pilot is due to a dramatic decrease in complaints against the officers in San Diego Police

Department, due to the use of body-worn cameras (Prince Georges' County Police Department Office of Inspector General, 2015).

African American males have been the focus of attention in regards to police brutality, and the negative perception held by the public in regards to police officers. Officers have often stated they had no choice but to fire their weapon, due to feeling threatened or the suspect would not comply with their command and in some cases was a danger to others around them at the time the incident took place. Prince Georges' County police department at this moment can't say for sure if a body-worn camera will be implemented or not due to several issues that arose during the pilot. Nonetheless, body-worn cameras could potentially exonerate officers who do not comply within the parameters of the code of conduct (Prince Georges' County Police Department Office of Inspector General, 2015). Also, helping to show the full story of the incident to help determine if laws were broken on the officer or suspects end. Officers have stated in the past that suspects are reluctant to comply with their commands, forcing the officer to use force.

The public's cooperation with law enforcement is essential to not only police officers, but also to the public. Police officers are not favored by every citizen they encounter, however; these citizens still rely on police officers for assistance if they believe police officers can benefit their particular situation. Police officers who work in African American communities can have a positive impact in these communities by being present. According to an article written by the Department of Justice titled "Importance of Police-Community Relationships and resources for Further Reading," finding opportunities to interact with community members in a non-enforcement environment helps to reduce

police bias (The U.S Department of Justice, 2015). On the other end, due to recent events, it can be difficult for police officers to try and bridge the gap between African American communities, males especially and law enforcement officers. African American males have stated they have been racially profiled by police officers, for more than one reason. Some reasons include the kind of vehicle they drive, the type of clothes they wear, the color of their skin or because of where they reside. In 2011, Cochran and Warren defined racial profiling as mainly focusing one's race, focusing on one's skin color, religion and other stereotypes linked to that particular person's race.

African American male's perception of police officers, is vital within the African American community. Crimes go unsolved often within black communities because police officers are viewed as untrustworthy, causing the African American population to not seek the help of law officers but in some cases to take matters into their own hands. Residents, who refuse to seek the help of police officers when a crime is committed, rely on the code of the street, meaning to retaliate through violence or other forms of revenge (Kirk & Papachristos 2011; Sampson, 2012). A majority of police work relies on the cooperation of those who reside or work in the area where the crime was committed. Racial Profiling plays a vital role in African American males feeling targeted by police officers, with a result of African American males having less trust in police officers in comparison to other races.

Prince Georges' County, Maryland has a group called the "Citizen Complaint Oversight Panel." The Citizen Complaint Oversight Panel (CCOP) helps to monitor and evaluate investigations of Prince Georges' County police department allegations of misconduct (Citizen Complaint Oversight Panel, 2015). It is essential to keep in mind the

citizen complaint oversight panel is a separate government entity; they're not linked to the Prince Georges' County police and, has been a critical point in investigation police misconduct claims for Prince Georges' police since 1991. In 2002, Prince Georges' County legislation expanded the citizen complaint oversight panel's authority to conduct their investigations and to submit subpoenas through the County Council. Currently, the citizens complaint oversight panel previews all allegations made against a Prince Georges' County police. The chair of the citizens complaint oversight panel stated the reason to start the panel stemmed from the recent incidents around the nation and the increased public scrutiny of police officers and their interactions with American citizens (Citizen Complaint Oversight Panel, 2015). In 2015, the citizens complaint oversight panel received 746 complaints of misconduct by citizens against Prince Georges' police officers, out of the 746 complaints 194 were investigated by the citizens complaint oversight panel. The citizens complaint oversight panel then divided the allegations into nine different categories.

These categories are, attention to duty, meaning failure to perform tasks as prescribed; followed by conduct related is unbecoming conduct or unreported misconduct, which the citizens complaint oversight panel states is one of the top related police misconduct complaints. There is also criminal misconduct, described as administrative charge for misconduct not successfully prosecuted in courts. The fourth category is ethics/credibility, which is a false statement being made and misrepresentation of facts. Discharge/firearms related is the fifth category that is defined by the citizens complaint oversight panel as intentional and accidental discharges of a firearm by an officer. The sixth an is harassment or discrimination defined as acts of unwarranted verbal or physical

threats or demands, and any acts of misconduct related to a person's race, creed, color, national origin, gender or religion. The seventh category is procedure violation; this can occur when an officer fails to adhere to the procedures in the police general order manual or standard operating procedures. Use of language is also an issue; this is reported when citizens claim officers used abusive discriminatory or inappropriate language against them. The ninth and last category is use of force, which is also one of the most frequently reported allegations against officers. Use of force is defined by the citizens complaint oversight panel as non-firearms, related excessive, unnecessary, and aggressive use of force (Citizen Complaint Oversight Panel, 2015).

Reading the citizens complaint oversight panel annual report indicates there is a gap in regards to what complying with police officers mean, or either the citizen or police officer/s are not compliant regardless of how cooperative the other party is. The distribution of findings by type chart in the report shows the citizens complaint oversight panel exonerated 67% of the use of force allegations. However, 42% of the accusations for procedure violation were sustained (Citizen Complaint Oversight Panel, 2015). Police officers may ask a suspect to perform a certain task, and the individual may decline for the simple fact of just not wanting to comply with the officer, or because they don't believe the officer has any right to ask them to perform such task. Citizens have rights when dealing with police officers but citizens must also comply with police officers when asked, or they can be arrested.

Current Events Impacting the Perception of Police Officers

The news of police officers shooting or killing African American males travels fast, due to the many avenues presented in today's society to spread these incidents. Providing

the African American community with information that is not always complete, but aiding in the perception of what happened and should not have occurred during the police encounter. In 2015, on April 4th, a North Charleston, South Carolina police officer fatally shot Mr. Scott Jr., an unarmed African American male.

According to the Department of Justice records, officer the officer had stopped Mr. Scott's car due to a brake light that was not working. However, the when the officer had Mr. Scott step out of the car, Mr. Scott started to run on foot, causing the officer to pursue Mr. Scott. During the foot chase, the officer took out his taser and tased Mr. Scott, causing Mr. Scott to fall to the ground. Unfortunately, Mr. Scott managed to pull himself together after being tased and fled on foot again. A key point in this encounter is to acknowledge that Mr. Scott is unarmed during this situation, and was running away, his back was turned to the officer, when the officer fired eight shots at Mr. Scott (The U.S Department of Justice, 2017).

The encounter between the officer and Mr. Scott was captured on a bystander's cellular phone; the video was posted on social media outlets and became a key piece of evidence in the charges brought against the officer. In this particular case, the officer who shot an unarmed African American male was sentenced to twenty years in prison. The current Attorney General, Jefferson Sessions stated: "Law enforcement officers have the noble calling to serve and protect, officers who violate anyone's right also violate their oath of honor, and they tarnish the names of the vast majority of officers" (The U.S Department of Justice, 2017). Mr. Session's statement is one of many made in regards to police officers having the ability to tarnish the reputation of other police officers, due to their wrongdoing, causing for negative perceptions' of officers as a whole.

However, other incidents have not been caught on video, where an unarmed African American male encounters an officer/s and is shot and killed but the officer/s are not convicted of violating any laws. Other incidents similar to Mr. Scotts has not only caused outrage within the African American communities, but has called other organizations not related to the criminal justice system to feel the repercussion of cases such as the Mr. Jones' case or similar. For example, football players in the National Football League (NFL) decided to protest during the playing of the national anthem by taking a knee, instead of standing. The taking of the knee according to one football player, in particular, Mr. Kaepernick, stood for the "in-justice" taking place within the criminal justice system. Mr. Kaepernick stated, "To me, this is bigger than football, and it would be selfish to look the other way, there are bodies in the street and people getting paid leave getting away with murder" (kaepernick7.com, 2017). According to Mr. Kaepernick, the shooting and killing of unarmed black males is murder, and taking a knee was a silent protest against the criminal justice system. Others did not see this silent protest the same way Mr. Kaepernick did and wanted the National Football League to take action and demand all players stand during the national anthem.

Taking a knee during the national anthem became headline news, and caused for the National Football League to make a decision on whether or not to allow players to take a knee during the national anthem. On May 23, 2018, the National Football league stated a policy will be enacted making it mandatory for players and personnel on the sideline to either stand during the national anthem, or they can stay in the locker room until the end of the national anthem (Knoblauch, 2018). The current events involving police officers and African Americans have affected an organization such as the National Football League

when there is no direct correlation between the National Football League and police duties. The perception the football players have towards police officers has now affected the National Football League, causing issues for their players and owners. The National Football League commissioner also stated those players and personnel who do not comply with the new policy in regards to standing for the national anthem or staying in the locker room until the anthem is over will be fined (Knoblauch, 2018).

These recent current events could influence others to believe police officers are willfully shooting and killing unarmed African American males, even if this is not true. There have been protest on both ends of this argument, African American males feeling targeted by police officers and other believing if African American males would comply with officers they would be apprehended unharmed. Understanding the African American male's perceptive dealing with their county police is essential, to society as a whole. It is also essential to remember the stressors police officers deal with on a daily basis as well as officers who experience being over-worked and/or burned out. Being stressed and being a police officer is a topic that is not explored enough within the news, the public is generally not aware of the stressors and issues officers face that could be the reason for their actions taken on the job.

Complications Police Officers Face

According to the National Institute of Justice, factors that can cause fatigue and stress to officer consist of poor management, inadequate or broken equipment, excessive overtime, and regular change in duties and sometimes frequent rotating shifts (National Institute of Justice, 2018). Some stressors are related directly to the officer's police department, and other stressors have nothing to do with work, but what the officer is going

through in their personal lives. Individual stress factors can include family problems, financial problems, and health issues (National Institute of Justice, 2018). Each officer when stressed will experience different reasons for the stress, which in can hinder their work abilities. Stress does not last forever for everyone, it can be stress just for the moment, or it can last longer for others. Nonetheless, police officers have to carry on with their duties and push their issues to the side, which is not easy for all officers.

The training of police officers has come into question due to recent events, especially in incidents where a suspect is harmed and without a weapon. Having properly trained police officers to handle stressful situations with citizens and being able to apprehend the suspect without harming themselves or the suspect is significant. To become a police officer for Prince Georges' County police department, one must go through an extensive process. There is an application process that is followed by a physical exam, written exam, background questionnaire, initial interview, background investigation and a polygraph exam. If the applicant can pass these first six steps, they have four steps left to complete before having their application forwarded to the hiring agency. These additional four steps include meeting with a three board panel of Law Enforcement personnel for an oral interview, which can take up to two hours. There is then a psychological exam, which is scheduled right after the completion of the oral board interview. After completion of the psychological exam, the candidate then completed a medical exam, once all exams are passed the applicants are certified, and it is now left up to Prince Georges' County police department to make their selection on who will be in the next police academy class (Prince Georges County, 2018).

Prince Georges' County police department currently wants to hire 150-200 officers; this process started in July of 2017 and will continue until July 2019. Entry-level police officers will attend the police academy for twenty-five weeks, while experienced officers (a year or more as a Maryland police officer) would attend EPO (experienced police officer) academy for 10 to 14 weeks (Prince Georges' County, 2018). Prince Georges' County police department is continuously hiring officers due to police officers resigning, officers losing their lives in the line of duty and because of officers being placed on administrative leave due to corruption. The steps Prince Georges' County has taken in regards to its rigorous selection process and training is a step forward in better policing. At the end of every incident, officers are required to write a police report detailing the sequence of events that took place. If there happens to be a discrepancy in regards to what happened during the encounter the police officer had with the suspect/s, it is the police officers word against the suspect.

Stress is a factor within the police department in Prince Georges' County, so much so that Prince Georges' police department took part in a report called "Health, Safety, and Wellness Program Case Studies in Law Enforcement." Which is a report focusing on the health and safety of police officers across the country (The U.S Department of Justice, 2015). The purpose of the report is to better understand the value officers receive by having a wellness program, which helps to control stress on the job. In 2014 the leading cause of death amongst officers in Prince Georges' County was gun related (41%). However, officers also died due to traffic-related fatalities (41%). Due to these statistics polices officers were now required to wear a seatbelt anytime their vehicle was in motion, officers did not agree with this policy and believed it would be more challenging to

respond to ambushes or other dangerous situations causing more stress on the job (Kuhns, Leach & Maguire, 2015). In regards to keeping police officers safe while on the job, some of the new policies implemented can also cause havoc for officers in other ways.

Officers who do not identify as black are often perceived to be racist, with no basis to back the racist claim. Race during an arrest is one area that is studied extensively in the area of policing, but not so much on the effect of officer's race when arresting a suspect (Mbuba, 2018). Mbuba (2018) conducted a study on the effects of officer race and gender arrest decision-making; his study found that officers are more inclined to arrest members of their racial group. However, there is a disparity in Prince Georges' County according to Maryland Department of Legislative Services. 2015, in Prince Georges' County 45% of the police officers are white, but there are only 14% of Caucasians occupying Prince Georges' County. 43% of Prince Georges' County police officers are black, but African Americans make up between 65% of the population in Prince Georges' County (Census Bureau, 2018; Bush, 2015).

Police officers now have a target on their backs due to recent events, which makes their daily duties extremely difficult. Officers can hesitate to pull their weapon when warranted due to fear of being made out to be a murderer, or an officer can panic and pull their gun prematurely because the officer is aware of how they are perceived based on recent events. Both scenarios can cause stress, Chae and Boyle (2013) stated research has shown police organizations have in general been unsupportive in regards to the needs of police officers involved in critical incidents, critical incidents that can cause stress. Officers need a system that provides help to them when they're involved in an incident that can be mentally damaging before they are sent back into the communities where they are

required to be of sound mind and judgment. Focusing on one particular county in Maryland will help not only Prince Georges' County police department, but also help the entire state of Maryland to improve police-community relations.

Perception can be taken out of content if not explained adequately, or if further research is not done to confirm one's perception. Currently, the majority of African American males do not perceive the criminal justice as a system that is fair in regards to African American males. Officers are usually the first line of contact for some individuals when a legal issue arises, that officer/s unbeknownst to them is now setting the tone for how this individual could potentially perceive all officers going forward. Police work is particular and an occupation where the slightest incorrect move can cause tremendous damage.

Summary of Chapter 2

Previous researchers have explored how police officers are perceived based on a person's gender, race and also based on where a person resides. Females tend to hold police officers in higher regard in comparison to males (Avdija, 2010). African Americans feel discriminated against by police officers (Huggins, 2012) and, those who reside in areas with high crime volume do not have a positive outlook towards police officers (Dwivedi, Fontaine & Vigne, 2017). Concluding that the perception of police officers is generally negative (Callanan & Rosenberger, 2011; Davidoff & Nadal, 2017). On the other end, police officers have to deal with the negative image of police officers as a whole on social media and on news stations, which influences the public's perception of police officers (Lim, 2015). With the social media and news attention towards police officers, it can be difficult for police officers to do their job, especially if the person being apprehended

doesn't want to comply with the officer. In addition to officers having stress due to job-related factors and personal stress, other organizations are being affected based on how the public perceives police officers. With all the previous research conducted pertaining to how police are perceived, there is still a gap in the literature in how African American males in Prince Georges' County perceive Prince Georges' County police and, how the relationship between the police and black men in Prince Georges' County can be improved.

The significance of this study will provide Prince Georges' County police department with in-depth knowledge of how they're perceived by black males in the county. The information provided can help to aid in better police practices to build a better community policing relationship. The current Chief of police for Prince Georges' County stated in 2016 that he wants to do things differently to avoid the issues other departments have in regards to high profile shootings (Davis & Maake, 2016). The importance of this study is at an all-time high, considering the recent events taking place across the county, incidents such as the shootings and killings of unarmed black males by the hands of police officers.

The theory of social action will be used to examine the perception African American male in Prince Georges' County have towards Prince Georges' County police. Social action may be influenced by an action that took place in the past, present or future, the participants in this study could perceive Prince Georges' County police based on past or present actions taken by Prince Georges' County police. Or, based on how they believe they will be treated in the future by Prince Georges' County police officers. Social action theory focuses on social relationships, Max Weber, the sociologist who founded the social

action theory presented social action as one's behavior being related to the conduct of others (Malczewski, 2015). The relationship between Prince Georges' County police and Prince Georges' County African American males is a social relationship that will be explored in this research, to answer the following questions. How do African American males in Prince Georges' County perceive Prince Georges' County Police Officers? And, how can the relationship between African American males in Prince Georges' County and the Prince Georges' County Police Department improve. Chapter 3 will include my research design, methodology, data analysis plan, any threats or validity that may occur and how the research questions will be answered and organized to bring about social change, not just for Prince Georges' County police department but police departments across the country.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

Chapters 1 and 2 provided insight on why the perception African American males in Prince Georges' County have towards Prince Georges' County police needs to be explored. Prince Georges' County has had issues when dealing with the African American population in the past and currently. Previous research concluded the common perception of police officers amongst the African American community, in general, is mostly negative (Alberton & Gorey, 2018). The social action theory assisted in the unknown perception African American men in Prince Georges' County have towards Prince Georges' County police. Chapter 3 will provide the qualitative method used to understand the participants viewpoints.

Research Methodology

Qualitative methodology was used to explore the perception African American males in Prince Georges' County have towards the Prince Georges' County police. Qualitative research was best suited for this study because it is a systematic inquiry into social phenomena in natural settings (Hayes, Martimianakis & Teherani 2015). In particular, for this study, qualitative research examined how interactions shape relationships. In addition to focusing on events that occurred and the outcome of these events from the perspective of those involved (Martimianakis, Stenfors & Teherani, 2015). There is currently no information about how Prince Georges' County police are perceived by African American males who reside in Prince Georges' County. However, there is research that has examined the African American population as a whole and based on gender, concluding African Americans in general compared to other races are more likely to view police negatively (Alberton & Gorey, 2018). Nonetheless, there hasn't been any research done focusing on the perception held by African Americans and Prince Georges' County police.

Research Design

The tradition of phenomenology was selected to explore how African American men in Prince Georges' County perceive Prince Georges' County police and if the relationship between African American males and the Prince Georges' County Police Department improve can be improved. The tradition of phenomenology was chosen because of its "revealing the essence of the experience in which others can derive knowledge about a unified meaning of an experience" process (Moustakas, 1994). For the African American men in Prince Georges' County who have interacted with Prince

Georges' County police and for those who have not but, may have experienced how police officers interact with others in Prince Georges' County. According to Patton (1990) a phenomenology study lies within the description of what people experience and how they have experienced it.

Other methodologies were taken into consideration such as mixed methods, however, this methodology would not provide accurate results in comparison to a qualitative approach. A mixed methods approach would deliver both observations and statistical analysis, helping to validate the results within the study (Creswell & Wisdom, 2013). However, the quantitative portion of mixed methods was not needed to examine the perception African American males in Prince Georges' County have towards Prince Georges' County police since there is not any direct data available in regards to the research question. Measuring perception is measuring someone else's thoughts, how they perceive things through observation, which cannot be done using a quantitative instrument. Qualitative research, on the other hand, is designed to study real-world situations, providing detail information in regards to the participants and their experiences (University of Southern California, 2018 & Johnson, 2013).

Participants of the Study

This qualitative study used purposive sampling as its approach in recruiting African American men in Prince Georges' County. Purposive sampling is fitting for this study because the participants being utilized are a specific group of individuals (Green, Horwitz & Palinkas et al, 2015). At least 9 but no more than 11 African American men within Prince Georges' County could be used for this study, based on the founding father of phenomenological research, Moustakas (1994) recommendation. A vital requirement for

this study was for the participants to be between the ages of 21 to 65. Having a broad age group helped to provided the perception of younger and mature African American males in Prince Georges' County, which could help to provide a full scope of how black men in Prince Georges' County perceive Prince Georges' County police.

Advertisement such as Facebook posting and neighborhood flyers aided in the recruitment of participants. Facebook, in particular, is an essential platform to use for this study because it reduces the cost of targeted participant recruitment (Gosling, Kosinski & Matz, 2016). The Facebook postings and neighborhood flyers included the criteria to participate in the study, which included being an African American male who have resided in Prince Georges' County for no less than 10 years, between the ages of 21 to 65 and has never been arrested by Prince Georges' County police. The advertisement postings also provide my email and telephone contact information, the purpose of the study and a statement stating this study is entirely voluntary, and their identities will not be disclosed in any part of this study or on any social media platforms. Also, participants were made aware in the advertisement flyer and posting that a valid form of I.D showing residency in Prince Georges' County is required to take part in this study. In addition, participants must be willing to be voice recorded during the interview process. However, participants had the option to discontinue the interview at anytime, and could determine at that point if they will allow any of the already given answers in the study or if they did not want to be included in the study at all.

Measures

The purpose of this study was to evaluate how African American males in Prince Georges' County perceive Prince Georges' County police. Once the qualitative data was

collected, I had the obligation to make sense of the findings, provide proper measurements and precautions and, to produce findings that had not been tampered with. For this study, perception could have been built based on direct interaction the participant has had with Prince Georges' County police or, what they have seen or heard from others and their interaction with Prince Georges' County police. Also, I had no prior relationship with the participants, to ensure the participants were not persuaded to answer the research questions in any particular way.

Research Questions

1. How do African American males in Prince Georges' County perceive Prince Georges' County Police Officers?
2. How can the relationship between African American males in Prince Georges' County and the Prince Georges' County Police Department improve?

Ethical Protection of Participants

Participation in this study was strictly voluntary, all of the participants were African American males and at least 21 years of age, and they could have declined to answer any question at any time. Their identities are kept confidential, and there is not significant harm associated with this study. All participants received a non-disclosure form and consent form, before participating in the study. Informed consent has been recognized as a vital part of ethics when conducting qualitative research (Bahramnezhad, Fomani, Sanjari & Shoghi et al., 2014). All information associated with this study will be kept in my possession in a secured filing cabinet and, no one else besides me will have access to the secured filing cabinet. Identifiable information was extracted from the files before the

data was released for validation. Copies of the consent form, non-disclosure agreement and interview transcripts are provided in the appendix.

Role of the Researcher

The essential role of the researcher in a qualitative study is to attempt to examine the thoughts and feelings of the participants in the study (Austin & Sutton 2015). Which can be a difficult task, since the participants may not feel the need not to answer the question or questions if it is a sensitive topic that relates to them directly. Also, as the researcher, it was important to stay neutral during the interview process. Participants could potentially pick up on my body language during the study and could have felt the need to change how they answer a question. As the researcher, I did not provide any of the participants with any information regarding my perception of Prince Georges' County police. This helped the participant to answer based on how they felt, without any worry of judgment on my behalf.

Moustakas (1994) believes to produce an unbiased phenomenological study, before conducting the study, the researcher has to eliminate any biases they may have towards the study. Prior qualitative researchers have used reflexivity to help eliminate biases on the researcher's side. Reflexivity is the process of the researcher examining themselves as the researcher and the research relationship, which I have done before conducting this research study (Caricativo, Molintas & Palaganas et al., 2017). As the researcher, I ensured I treat all of the participants with respect and only asked the research questions. All perceptions were vital to this study and are included in the finding; the participants also have the option to receive a copy of the discovery of the research.

Data Collection

Once participant's emailed or called stating they wanted to take part in the study, for comfortably and privacy reasons each participant can choose between a private conference room in a local library in Prince Georges' County or a private reserved office space to conduct the face-to-face interviews. One interview was conducted in the home of the participant, with the approval from the Institutional Review board. I, the researcher reserved rooms in local libraries within Prince Georges' County, allowing the participant to pick the library they felt most comfortable going to. Leaving the discretion of the library location up to the participants allowed for the participant to feel comfortable and relaxed (Yin, 2013). Before the participants were asked any of the research questions, they read and signed the consent form. Participants were also made aware that at any time during the interview, they could have declined to answer the questions or stop the entire interview process. They purpose of this study was reiterated to the participants, and any questions or concerns they had were addressed. Participants also showed their valid form of I.D showing their age and residency in Prince Georges' County.

The data was then collected through a structured interview utilizing a questionnaire with the semi-research questions. Before the data collection, I verbally explained this study is strictly voluntary, and they can decline to answer any of the research questions at any time. I then begin the voice recorder for accuracy and started to read each semi-research question to the participant, in addition to writing down the participants' response. Each participant was assigned a number to say at the beginning of the recording instead of their name (which was is written on their questionnaire), which is their identifier throughout the findings of the study. Tessier (2012) believed recording and taking notes are crucial to

accurately obtaining data. The questionnaires and voice recorder were reviewed, and files were created based on the responses to the questionnaire. Organizing and creating files to initiate the data analysis process is a recommendation from Creswell (1998). The questionnaires are included in the appendix of the study.

Data Analysis

Once the data was reviewed and files were created based on the responses from the participants, it was easier to gain an understanding of what information this study could provide. Reading each questionnaire and listening to each recording was vital in obtaining a proper understanding of the perception African American males in Prince Georges' County have towards Prince Georges' County police. Transcribing data from a voice recorder can be difficult, however with a questionnaire being utilized, it helped to guide what is said on the voice recorder (Austion & Sutton, 2015). The data was then analyzed using Moustakas (1994) method "Modified Van Kaam Method of Analysis of Phenomenological Data". Moustakas (1994) phenomenological data method consists of seven-step process, which includes:

1. Listing and Preliminary Groupings (this is done by listing relevant quote linked to the experiences).
2. Reduction and Elimination.
3. Clustering and thematizing the invariant constituents (these clustered are core themes of the experience).
4. Final identification of the invariant constituents and themes by application.
5. Utilizing the relevant, validated invariant constituents and themes, construct an individual description for each participant and their experience.
6. Forming a textual-structural description for each participant, providing meanings of the experience.

7. Once steps one through six are completed, develop a composite description of the meanings of the experiences, which will represent the group as a whole.

Based on Moustakas (1994) seven step recommendations, it was essential to get rid of vague comments and duplicates, in addition to grouping the remarks into theme categories and organizing the themes. Organizing the themes and categories with the statements provided by the participants, helped to accurately depict each individual's perception. Also, identifying statements and labeling statements based on their importance was necessary for phenomenological data analysis.

Verification of Findings

For this phenomenological study, the findings were verified and not validated which is the norm for qualitative studies. According to Creswell (1998), verifying the findings of a qualitative study helps to keep the integrity of the research conducted. Three steps were used at the recommendation of Creswell (1998) to help verify the findings; these three steps were clarifying research biases, member's check and rich and thick descriptions. In addition to the three steps taken to verify this study, it was necessary to address credibility, dependability and conformability issues that can occur.

Qualitative studies are typically examined by other researchers in regards to its validity and reliability. Credibility is essential within qualitative research because it is an internal validity within the study that measures if the study tested what is intended (Grand Canyon University, 2018). It is important to establish to the reader that the results of this qualitative study are accurate, according to Merriam (1998) credibility deals with the question "How congruent are the findings with reality?" Reflexivity and data triangulation is used in this study to establish credibility. Data triangulation is vital because qualitative

studies can be skewed if the researcher is not careful in their method of collecting data, by having a questionnaire and voice recorder during the interviews can help to eliminate any credibility issues that could have arose.

Dependability provides a map for the study to be repeated, ensuring that the research findings are dependable and can be repeated (Grand Canyon University, 2018). Making sure each process of this study is adequately documented and in detail will provide external researchers the opportunity to duplicate this study to gain their results. Dependability also referred to as reliability leads to the legitimacy of the research method chosen for this study (Grand Canyon University, 2018). Nonetheless, dependability will help the reader to understand why specific steps were taken and provide an understanding of its effectiveness, all steps taken within this study was described and explained in detail. It was important to understand research findings need to be supported by data collected and should be able to withstand the examination of other researchers; this is where conformability comes in. Conformability also uncovered if there were any biases the researchers end while conducting the study (Grand Canyon University, 2018). Having an audit trail will help future observers to duplicate this study step by step, based on decisions made and procedures taken.

Summary of Chapter 3

Chapter 3 highlighted the research methodology for this qualitative study, along with the phenomenology research design that will be utilized to explore how African American males in Prince Georges' County perceive Prince Georges' County police. Recruiting the right participates for this study was essential to make sure the finding were accurate, using purposive sampling helped to ensure the participants were screened

correctly for this study. Along with making sure the correct participants were selected, there were additional measurements taken to make sure this study is unbiased, such as making sure the participants and I had no relationship before this study. The participant's identity is protected throughout this study; all identifiable information was extracted from the files before the data was released for validation.

As the researcher, it was my responsibility to examine the thoughts and feelings of the participants, while producing an unbiased study. In addition to collecting the data accurately, using a questionnaire and voice recorder, it was also vital to analyze the information correctly using Moustakes (1999) phenomenological data method. Once all the participants had been interviewed, and the data was examined, and the findings have were reported, this study can be used in the future by other researchers. Chapter 4 describes the setting, demographics, data collection, data analysis as well as the evidence of trustworthiness and the results of the study.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological research study was to explore the perception of African American males in Prince Georges' County, Maryland have towards Prince Georges' County, Maryland police. In order to conduct this research, face-to-face structured interviews took place, which involved semi-questions. Semi-questions 1 through 4 aimed to examine how Prince Georges' County African American males perceive the police in Prince Georges' County and, what events lead to these perceptions. Semi-questions 5 through 8 focused on the relationship between Prince Georges' County police and African American males in Prince Georges' County and, if the recent high profile

cases of unarmed African American males being shot and killed by police officers has affected this relationship. The 8 semi-questions would answer the 2 research questions.

1. How do African American males in Prince Georges' County perceive Prince Georges' County Police Officers?
2. How can the relationship between African American males in Prince Georges' County and the Prince Georges' County Police Department improve?

The 8 semi questions were essential to answer the research questions; themes were created which helped to provide a background of where the participants answers derived from. Understanding why each participant answered each question with a certain response is essential to the providing accurate results. Phenomenological studies not only focuses on the understanding of the human experiences or their world, but it also focuses on a critical part of the human experience, which is the how (Austin & Sutton, 2015). Chapter 4 will provide in detail the setting, demographics, data collection, data analysis, evidence of trustworthiness and detailed results of the perception African American males in Prince Georges' County have towards Prince Georges' County (MD) police.

Setting

10 structured interviews were conducted; the participants were only asked the semi questions created to answer the research questions. A structured style interview was used for this study to target specific answers and not answers that have relation to the study. 9 of the interviews took place in library rooms throughout Prince Georges' County (MD) libraries and, one took place at the residencies of the participant. Most of the rooms in each library had to be reserved and some of the rooms were on a first come first served basis. The interview conducted at the participant's residences took place in their dining room. All

of the interviews took place between January 15, 2019 and March 16, 2019. All participants were interviewed in a private setting to ensure that others could not hear their responses to the questions and also to keep each participant anonymous.

Demographics

10 African American males took part in this study, between the ages of 21 to 65 years old. All 10 men have resided in Prince Georges' County for or more years and still live in Prince Georges' County and, have never been arrested by Prince Georges' County police.

Participant	Age
1	23
2	32
3	30
4	32
5	25
6	47
7	44
8	24
9	26
10	63

Data Collection

All participants were sent an email including the consent form prior to the interviews taking place to ensure each applicant knew as much details in regards to the study as possible. Once the applicant agreed to take part in the study after reading the consent form, I asked the applicant for their zip code and time of availability in order to reserve a room in a local library next to their home in Prince Georges' County for their convenience. I informed all of the participants the interview, including instructions would take no more than forty-five minute. I created scripts for the applicants and I to read to keep the interview structured and also to provide order during the collection of the data. The interview questions provided the participants the opportunity to explain where their perception came from and what they believe can be done to improve the relationship with Prince Georges' County police.

The semi-questions were (a) do you believe Prince Georges' County police treats everyone in the county the same? Please explain your answer, (b) are you comfortable encountering Prince Georges' County police? Please explain your answer, (c) If an incident were to take place, where the norm would be to call the police. Would you call for the help of Prince Georges' County police? Please explain your answer, (d) how do you perceive Prince Georges' County police? Please explain your answer, (e) How is your relationship with Prince Georges' County police? Please explain your answer, (f) Do you want a stronger relationship with Prince Georges' county police? Please explain your answer, (g) Do you believe the high profile shootings of unarmed African American males by police officers, has affected your relationship with Prince Georges' County police?

Please explain your answer, (h) How can your relationship with Prince Georges' county police improve? Please explain your answer.

All of the interviews were recorded and took no longer than forty-five minutes, which also included going over the consent form with the participants face to face and having them sign the consent form. Some applicants wanted to review the questions prior to the interview starting. All of the applicants were provided the opportunity to hear the recording of their interview once the interview ended. Participants were also informed they could request a copy of the transcript of their interview at any time to make sure they felt comfortable with their answers. Once the data was collected for all 10 participants, I transcribed the interviews and began to identify themes.

Data Analysis

Moustakes (1994) modified van Kham method was utilized to analyze and code the data collected from all 10 participants. Moustakes method included seven key steps, which included.

1. Listing and Preliminary Groupings.
2. Reduction and Elimination.
3. Clustering and thematizing the invariant constituents and themes.
4. Final identification of the invariant constituents and themes by application.
5. Utilizing the relevant, validated invariant constituents and themes, construct an individual description for each participant and their experience.
6. Forming a textual-structural description for each participant, providing meanings of the experience.

7. Once steps 1 through 6 are completed, develop a composite description of the meanings of the experiences, which will represent the group as a whole.

Moustakes seven key steps allowed the data collected to be analyzed and to correlate the semi questions to the actual research questions. After all of the data was analyzed, repeat responses from different participants created themes and also created keys points to provide to the Prince Georges' County police, which will be discussed in the results section. Themes emerged from the data, the men who took part in the study mentioned being pulled over by Prince Georges' County, the history or Prince Georges' County police officers and being stereotyped based on their looks.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

By having all the applicants read the same script, it allowed for the audience to hear on the tape recording which participant was being interviewed and also ensured the participant met the requirement to participate in the study. For example, all participants at the beginning of their interview stated on the tape recording "I am Participant number ____, taking part in the study titled "African American Males' Perception of the Prince Georges' County (MD) Police and Improving the Relationship" study. I am (age) and an African American male who has resided in Prince Georges' County for at least 10 years and I currently still reside in Prince Georges' County. In addition, I have never been arrested by Prince Georges' County police. Once the participant has completed reading their script, I began each interview stating "

Credibility was established by allowing the participants to hear their interview or request a transcript copy of their interview at any time. All of the interviews tape

recordings and transcripts will be kept for no less than five years, allowing the opportunity for participants or anyone with interest in this study to hear the interviews to validate the findings. After each interview, I provided feedback to the participants in regards to the hand written notes I took and gave each participant an opportunity to ask any follow up questions or address concerns they may have. Transferability is practical because I created a script I followed as the researcher, which can be duplicated and followed.

Consistency took place because the interviews were structured; each interview began and ended in the same manner to ensure dependability. I also made sure that all of the transcribed data matched the tape recordings and notes taken at each interview. None of the participants in this study have discussed with me prior to their interview their perception of Prince Georges' County police, none of the questions were altered to suit the application or to persuade the findings of this study. Confirmability was address by auditing the tape recording and notes taken during each interview. In addition, all the participants were asked the same questions in the same order.

Results

After the completion of the data analysis, themes were identified within the 8 semi-questions asked to answer the research questions. The results will be broken into two sections. Section 1 will provide the semi questions and responses for the first research question and section two will provide the responses to the semi-question for the second research question. In the end providing a detailed description of all the responses to the semi-questions and the themes that emerged. The first research question was, how do African American males in Prince Georges' County perceive Prince Georges' County Police officers? In order to answer this question, 4 semi-questions were asked.

Section One

Semi-question 1 was, do you believe Prince Georges' County police treats everyone in the county the same? Please explain your answer. Out of the 10 participants, 7 stated they did not believe Prince Georges' County police treats everyone the same. 2 participants revealed they do believe Prince Georges' County police does treat everyone in the county the same and 1 participant was indifferent. The two tables below display the themes for the participants who answered yes and no.

Table 1: No Responses

Theme	Number (N=7)	Percentage
Drug Dealer	2	28.5%
Pulled Over	3	42.8%
Race	4	57.1%

Some of the participant's answers fell under multiple themes.

Participants 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 10 do not believe Prince Georges' County treats everyone in Prince Georges' County the same, as shown in table 1. Participants 1 and 2 stated the police in Prince Georges' County assumed they were drug dealers because of the way they were dressed or because they have dreadlocks. Participant 1 stated,

I don't think PG County police treats everybody the same, the reason for me saying that is because it's a lot of cases of African Americans getting shot down or getting shot because of a PG County cop or a cop thinks that their holding something that they're not holding. Or they can believe that they're a drug dealer because of the way they dress

Participants 2, 3 and 5 mentioned being pulled over either leaving their apartment complex or because they were driving in the car with other African Americans. 4 out of the 7 participants who answered no also believed they were profiled because and pulled over because of their race. Participant 2, whose response was no because of being stereotyped stated,

I do not, I feel like depending on where you live, depending on what you look like. The way that your treated will be based upon that. Prime example, I have dark tint on my car, automatically I am assumed to be a drug dealer because you're not able to see inside my vehicle

The 7 participants who answered no also mentioned different circumstances warrant different encounters and the police in Prince Georges' County draw their guns to quickly on black males.

The participants who answered yes were, males 7, 8 and 9. Numbers 8 and 9 both mentioned having encounters with Prince Georges' County police because they were pulled over. However, both participant 8 and 9 had some reservations. Participant 9 answered the question by saying, "I am comfortable encountering police just from my perception of them is that they are the police so, in my head I'm subjected to believe that they're always here to protect and serve". Participant 7 who also stated yes, also stated young black males are treated differently, "For the most part I do. However, I will probably say young black males were probably profiled as being, have a criminal background or might be treated a little bit more differently than most". Table 2 below show the results for men who answered yes to semi-question 1, and what they've experienced to explain why they answered yes.

Table 2: Yes Responses:

Theme	Number (N=3)	Percentage
Pulled Over	3	100%

Theme 1. After listening to the voice recordings and transcribing the data, the theme that emerged from all 10 participants, whether they answered yes or no was being pulled over. Based on the men who answered yes to the question, race and being stereotyped as a drug dealer was a common response when answering the first semi-question.

Semi-question 2 was, are you comfortable encountering Prince Georges' County police? Please explain your answer. Participants 3, 5 and 10 stated they are not comfortable encountering Prince Georges' County police. Participants 1, 7 and 9 stated they were comfortable and participants 2, 4, 6 and 8 stated only in certain situations. Table 3 below is broken into two sections for the 6 participants who either indicated they are or aren't comfortable encountering Prince Georges' County police.

Table 3: Comfortable & Not Comfortable

Responses	Number (N=6)	Percentage
Comfortable	3	50%
Not Comfortable	3	50%

For the 6 participants who answered yes or no to semi-question 2, each participant had a different reason for their answer. For example, participant 3 who answered no stated, "Honestly, I am not comfortable encountering the police in this district because every time I actually get pulled over by the police, I have been calling 911 just so I can have their

operator record everything”. Participant 7 whose response was yes, he is comfortable encountering Prince Georges’ County police replied with,

At my current age, yes I am because I just know more and I have more understanding of my rights and I know I’m not I don't have any criminal background issue so right now yes, I am okay encountering the police.”

As shown below in table 4, the 4 men who answered they were comfortable in certain situations; participants 2, 4 and 8 stated the event that makes them uncomfortable encountering Prince Georges’ County police is getting pulled over. Participant 6 stated his comfortable level has increased because he knows he’s not violating the law but his discomfort comes from the history of Prince Georges’ County police regarding abuse and brutality.

Table 4: Comfortable Being Pulled Over

Responses	Number (N=4)	Percentage
Not Comfortable	3	75%
Other	1	25%

It is essential for semi-question 2 to be broken into two sections in order to clearly depict why the men either stated they are or aren’t comfortable. Each question asked allows the participant to provide feedback as to why they are answering the question in a certain manner, which could potentially help the Prince Georges’ County police to figure out why the men in Prince Georges’ County feel the way they feel towards Prince Georges’ County police department.

Theme 2. Similar to semi-question 1, being pulled over was the focus point for how the men answered semi-question 2. However, not all of the men have had a bad experience when being pulled over by Prince Georges' County police.

Semi-question 3, if an incident were to take place, where the norm would be to call the police. Would you call for the help of Prince Georges' County police? Please explain your answer. Participants 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 answered yes, no matter how they feel about the Prince Georges' County police they would call for their help, if an incident took place. Participant 3 stated no and participants 5 and 10 stated it depends on the situation.

Table 5: Would or Wouldn't Call Prince Georges' County Police

Responses	Number (N=10)	Percentage
Yes - Would Call For Help	7	70%
No –Would not Call For Help	1	10%
Depends on Situation	2	20%

The males who answered yes, all provided different reasons as to why they would call the Prince Georges' County if an incident warranted an officer or officers to be there. For example, male number 4 response was,

In an emergency situation, yes if it deems, you know, police response. Or, I feel as if it escalated out of my control. But, I 'm very hesitant to want to involve them for the threat of myself being injured or someone I'm involved in the situation with. That may not necessarily have a threat that against me or anything around me, that could be injured

Participant 3, whose response was no stated,

No, I would not call for the Prince Georges' County police because they would actually try to think of a way to make you the suspect. And instead of making you instead of treating you like the victim that you are, they actually look at you as you were the suspect and, it could be someone fighting down the road they would not care about that, they would actually try to make you seem like you were doing something wrong, although you weren't

Participant 10 responded by stating it depends on the situation, he would only call Prince Georges' County police if he couldn't call any other district and help was need, "Depending on the situation, I will call for the Prince Georges' County police if there isn't any other different jurisdiction I could call. If I had the authority I would call a different jurisdiction". Even with the majority of the men answering yes to semi-question 3, there is still some hesitation there before calling the Prince Georges' County police. The majority of the men understand that when police should be involved, it is best to call for their assistance.

Theme 3. The data from this particular question did not indicate a specific reason for why some of the males answered yes, no or it depends on the situation. Each male had their own reason to back up their response, with the majority saying they would call Prince Georges' County police if needed.

Semi-question 4, how do you perceive Prince Georges' County police? Please explain your answer.

Table 6: Perception of Prince Georges' County Police

Responses	Number (N=10)	Percentage
Good	6	60%

Bad	3	30%
Has no perception	1	10%

Looking at table 6 for semi-question 4, 6 out of the 10 males perceive Prince Georges' County police as a police department doing well in Prince Georges' County. Males number 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 are in favor of Prince Georges' County police when asked the question. Participant 7 responded with "Overall I believe the county police are effective and they are a pretty decent police department". The other 5 men had similar sentiments as participant 7, some of the men recalled a time where they may have been warranted a harsher punishment, the Prince Georges' County police officer let them go with a warning instead. Other participants who have a good perception of Prince Georges' County police stated when they encountered them, the encounter is usually respectful. For example, in participants 9 response,

Overall, I have a good a perception of Prince Georges' County police. During my incidents where they have been involved, for the most part everything has always been respectful and has always at times even ended with grace. Where if I did deserve or warrant something, typically just got a speech or warning and they let me go. Now interesting enough, over this past weekend while I was in a shopping center late at night with a friend just talk not doing anything illegal or anything wrong. Just a general conversation we did have a police pull up upon us and shine the light very aggressively at us and wondering what we were doing, obviously we were just talking cause she's in the driver seat I'm in the passenger seat. Its very obvious we're literally just having a conversation, we're not doing anything illegal, we're not bothering anybody and he forcibly an aggressive tone told us to leave the

premises, which I understood because it was after hours however there are plenty of cars that are there not necessarily maybe running but there are car still on the premises and I understand he just wants to keep everything clean. But he sees that we're not bothering anybody and we're literally just having a conversation that was interesting that happened right before this interview

The 3 participants who perceive the Prince Georges' County police as doing a bad job where participants 2, 3 and 10. Participants 2 and 3 mentioned being pulled over in their response and, participants 2 and 9 mentioned the possibility of the Prince Georges' County police drawing their weapons. Table 7 depicts the percentages between the 3 men who stated they don't perceive the Prince Georges' County in a positive light, based on being pulled over or the use of Prince Georges' County drawing their weapons, drawing their weapon meaning the cop took his or her gun out of their holster during the encounter.

Table 7: Negative Perception

Responses	Number (N=3)	Percentage
Pulled Over	2	66.6%
Drawing Weapon	2	66.6%

Note: Some participants fell under multiple categories

Participant 1 when asking the question started out by saying he believes the Prince Georges' County police do good work. However, he doesn't really know how to perceive them. His response is below,

How do I perceive the Prince Georges' County police? I think for the most part, they do good work. I mean, I don't even know where to start to answer that question. I don't know how to perceive them, a cop is a cop. I think a cop is going

to do what a cop needs to do and some of them don't but it isn't my job to perceive them. Just, I don't know

Theme 4. Based on the responses gathered by the 10 gentlemen, being pulled over and Prince Georges' County drawing their weapon was a common theme that shaped their perception of the Prince Georges' County police. However, the majority of the responses for semi-question 1 indicate the African American males in Prince Georges' County have a good perception of the police in Prince Georges' County.

After the first 4 questions are asked and answered by all 10 of the participants voluntarily, it is now time to move onto the second set of questions that will help answer the second research question, how can the relationship between African American males in Prince Georges' County and the Prince Georges' County police department improve.

Section 2

Transitioning into the last 4 semi-questions to answer the second research question, how can the relationship between African American males in Prince Georges' County and the Prince Georges' County Police Department improve? The 5th semi-question asked was, how is your relationship with Prince Georges' County police? Please explain your answer. After reviewing the data, participants 4, 6, 7, 8 and 9 stated they have a good relationship with Prince Georges' County police and, male number 3 stated his relationship is bad. On the other hand, participants 1 and 5 are indifferent; they believe their relationship with Prince Georges' County is not bad or good. Whereas participants 2 and 10 stated they don't have any kind of relationship with Prince Georges' County police.

Table 8: Relationship with Prince Georges' County Police

Responses	Number (N=10)	Percentage
Good	5	50%
Bad	1	10%
Not Good/Not Bad	2	20%
No Relationship	2	20%

Each male who answered they have a good relationship with Prince Georges' County police provided different answers as to why their relationship is good. For example, participant 4 stated,

Right now, Prince Georges' County is okay. I think we can do a lot better as far as our county government, as far as our law enforcement and equal benefits compared to some of other counties in the state and fair treatment. But, in general I like Prince Georges' County as a home, I think its very diverse, I think that its kind of misunderstood due to the media and just people that aren't from here that just look at the perception of this is a bad place to live, when its really not.

Another example would be participant 8 stating his relationship with Prince Georges' County police is good because he's had encounters with them but, he's never been set to jail, "I believe my relationship with Prince Georges' County police is great. I haven't, I've had interactions with police but I've never been arrested or taken to jail. Most of the interactions I've had have been great".

There were not any specific themes that emerged from the applicants who answered yes to semi-question 5. However, male number 3 who answered no to this question believes his relationship with Prince Georges' County is bad because he gets pulled over too often. He stated,

My relationship with Prince Georges' County police has not been good at all since I've been living here every year I get pulled over at least about 5 to 10 times I have to go to court each time because it's always something that they say that I did and it don't really explain any rules and I have to always be to a supervisor on the scene and then the supervisors to direct me to go to court and I never receive a court date in the mail. I have to call the court in order to receive a court date

Participants 1 and 5 both mentioned how the police spoke to them as a reason as to why they don't have a good or bad relationship with Prince Georges' County police, participant 1 stated

I don't like cops but I don't have a problem with them. I mean, like I said, some are good and some are bad. Some don't know how to talk to you and some think because they have power they can treat you however they want to treat you

Participant 5 echoed similar sentiments as male number 1 by saying,

My relationship is so so it's not the greatest in the world but it's also not the worst. Like I've said, I've had encounters with the police by myself where it wasn't the great experience just the way they spoke to me and things they asked me.

Which I know they would never know me do to someone, lets say if I was white or any other ethnicity. So all my encounters have not been bad, all my encounters have not been good. So my relationship is kind of up in the air

Having no relationship with the police officers in Prince Georges' County is the reality for male number 2 and 10. Participant 10 believes he has no relationship with Prince Georges' County police because he has not encountered them personally, he does however believe that some of the officers are doing a good job but some need to be trained. Participant 2

had a different response when asked how his relationship is with Prince Georges' County police,

I don't have one, I encounter them when I encounter them. Besides that, I do my best to not be in the laws hand. And, I think if I were to have a relationship with the Prince Georges' County police commissioner or the police officers themselves I think it would be a situation where I would be not fully open with them

Male number 2 stated if he were to have a relationship with Prince Georges' County police he would not be fully open shows a sign of distrust he has towards the Prince Georges' County police department.

Theme 5. The answered provided for semi-question 5 did not provide a consistent reason as to why the men either have a good, bad, not bad and not good relationship or no relationship at all with Prince Georges' County police. Mentions of having encounters with the police Prince Georges' County was mentioned but not how or why the encounters took place, male number 3 mentioned being pulled over, which has been a common then for semi-questions 1 though 5.

Semi-question 6 was, do you want a stronger relationship with Prince Georges' county police? Please explain your answer. The data shows participants 3, 5, 6, 9 and 10 do want a stronger relationship with Prince Georges' County police. Males 2, 4, 7 and 8 on the other hand do not want a strong relationship with the Prince Georges' County police. Participant 1 answered the question from a standpoint of the Prince Georges' County should do more to protect the county.

Table 9: Stronger Relationship

Responses	Number (N=10)	Percentage
Wants Stronger	5	50%

Relationship		
Does not want Stronger	4	40%
Relationship		
Do more to protect Prince Georges' County	1	10%

4 of the males who answered yes to semi-question 6, stating the community could benefit from having a stronger relationship with Prince Georges' County police. Community policing or being involved in the community was the main reason behind these group of men wanting a stronger relationship. Table 10: wants stronger relationship, shows how many times community policing and being involved in the community was stated as well as wanting a stronger relationship to better their encounter with Prince Georges' County when they are pulled over.

Table 10: Wants Stronger Relationship

Responses	Number (N=5)	Percentage
Community Policing	2	40%
Benefit the Community	2	40%
Pulled Over	2	20%

Participant 3 who would like a stronger relationship with Prince Georges' County to better their experience when being pulled over stated he likes living in Prince Georges' County but his experiences with being pulled over aren't pleasant experiences, compared to when he is pulled over in Virginia or the District of Columbia. He stated,

Yes, because it is the county that I live in and I like living in Prince Georges' County and not go to DC I don't get bothered by the DC cops I go to Virginia and the Virginia cops are very nice when they pull you over and they actually explain to you and they actually treat you like a human being, you know, instead of treating you like an animal and they actually treat you with respect and they seemed very kind when they pull you over and explaining why they pull you over before your license and registration

Participant 5 when answering the question took the "it would benefit the community" approach by stating,

Absolutely, I think every community should have a better relationship with their police department because they're here to protect and serve, like they're supposed to do and in order for that to happen I think they do need to reach out more

Male number 9 whose response was similar to male number 5 believed in previous years, Prince Georges' County police were more active in the community and the relationship was stronger because of it, he stated,

"You look back let's say 60 years ago and you look at the relationship between police and the community, I just feel like its way different now in a bad way because hearing stories from the past, the police would be the communities and it wasn't seen as a threat. The police were actually someone who interacted with the children and an example of that, that's not even 60 years ago but its a good example relativity now, my friend he actually used to live in palmer park which is near one of the Prince Georges' County headquarters, and one way that they show good responsibility through us is they have a big football field and we were kids from

probably shoot ages 6 to 14 and they used to just let play football, on their football field no problems asked

Community policing was the focus point for participants 6 and 10, male number 6 response was,

Yes, as I said, living in Prince Georges' County and one who understands policing, I also believe in or have faith in community policing. That means that the citizens in the community must establish a relationship with the Prince Georges' County police with police in their communities, vice versa. So it's a shared relationship if you if will, where the community and the police work hand and hand together

The no responses to semi-question 6 came from males 2, 4, 7 and 8. The reasons for not wanting a stronger relationship came from two reasons, one being they believe their relationship with Prince Georges' County police is fine with no issues and doesn't need to be stronger. Secondly, participants believed the community needs a stronger relationship but not them personally. For example, participant 4 responded with,

Me personally no, not unless I need them. I think that a stronger relationship within the communities is warranted and I would like to see their interactions on a day-to-day basis where they're more positive. Instead of their negative approach to situations and people

Participant 7 stated he knows and has grown up with a lot of Prince Georges' County police so his relationship is okay and doesn't need improvement but the police can never stop doing enough to engage in the community.

Table 11: Doesn't want Stronger Relationship

Responses	Number (N=4)	Percentage
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Relationship does not need improvement	3	75%
Community needs stronger relationship, not participant	2	50%

Some of the participant's answers fell under multiple themes.

Theme 6. Providing three tables for semi-question 6 is important to show the different information provided by asking this one particular question. Whether the answer was yes or no to a stronger relationship, the participants agreed a stronger relationship would benefit the community of Prince Georges' County. Being pulled over, community policing and benefits the community were the core reasons for the 6 participants who would like a stronger relationship with Prince Georges' County police. For the men who don't want a stronger relationship, they believe their relationship with Prince Georges' County police is adequate or they don't need the relationship to strengthen but the community does. Being pulled over was also a key factor when answering semi-question 6.

Semi-question 7, which focuses on the affects of the high profile shooting of unarmed black men. The participants were asked, do you believe the high profile shootings of unarmed African American males by police officers has affected your relationship with Prince Georges' County police? Please explain your answer. 9 out of the 10 participants indicted the high profile shootings of unarmed black males by police officers has affected their relationship with Prince Georges' County police. The table below, table 12: high profile shootings and perception of the police, shows how many participants answered yes or no to semi-question 7.

Table 12: High Profile Shootings & Perception of Police

Responses	Number (N=10)	Percentage
Yes	9	90%
No	1	10%

Male number 4 answered no from the standpoint of unarmed black men being shot and killed by police officers is not new. In his response he stated,

No, I don't believe it's affected my relationship with Prince Georges' County police. With people as a whole, if you're black and in this county you understand that this is not a new epidemic, its been going on since slave times into the fifties and sixties and civil right. So for me its just, they know the history, what is it that they trying to do to change it? You know

Participants 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 who answered yes to the question also provided a similar explanation to participant number 4 response. For example, participant number 5 response was,

Absolutely, like I said when I was younger I didn't really think about it if a police officer stopped you, you know you did what they asked and hopefully the traffic stop or what ever go fine. But as we see in these recent shootings, you can do everything they say and whatever fear they may have or the perception they may have of you as a black male may trigger their mind, "wait a minute, maybe he's about to do something" even when there's no clear evidence that he may do anything. So in the light of all the events that are happening that we can see now with out camera phones, because we know they've been happening before, even

before we had social media. But now every single person with access to a phone can see it. So it just heightens it even more.

Social media has played an important role in what the public sees. Participant 4 mentioning anyone with access to a phone can see what is taking place is one reason the African American community is privy to incidents where unarmed black men are shot and killed by police officers. Table 13 below shows the 9 participants who answered yes and, where 2 men mentioned being pulled over and 2 other participants mentioned being a target because of how they or the suspect who is black looks. The other 5 applicants had different reasons for answering yes, such as the history of police officers, Prince Georges' County police needing more training, the lack of diversity in the police in the past but the department is becoming more diverse and also stating law enforcement is law enforcement and black males just have to be concerned whenever they encounter police officers.

Table 13: High Profile Shootings Affected Perception of Police

Responses	Number (N=9)	Percentage
Stereotyped by Their Looks	2	22.2%
Being Pulled Over	2	22.2%
Other	5	55.5%

Theme 7. Semi-question 7 uncovered black males in Prince Georges' County feeling stereotyped based on how they look. Being pulled over was a deciding factor again when answering this question. Reviewing both tables under semi-question 7 helps to understand why the black males in Prince Georges' County believe the high profile shootings of

unarmed black men has affected their relationship with the police of Prince Georges' County.

The last question asked to all 10 participants was semi-question 8, how can you relationship with Prince Georges' county police improve? Please explain your answer. This particular question did not warrant a simple yes or no answer, but explanation to explain their perceptives.

Table 14: Improving the Relationship with Prince Georges' County Police

Responses	Number (N=10)	Percentage
Seminars/Mentoring/ Programs	5	50%
Treat others Respectfully	2	20%
Other	3	30%

Participants 4, 5, 6, 8 and 9 believed seminars, meetings and programs would help to improve their relationship with Prince Georges' County police. They believe more interaction will help to bridge the gap between the police in Prince Georges' County and the black males who live there. Participant 5 for example stated,

I would like to see more public forums, were like I said we can discuss what our differences are and how we can improve the relationship. I will also like to see some kind of mentoring program between the police department and maybe certain communities or middle or elementary middle and high school. Where you can pair some kids up with police officers, I'm not sure they still do ride a longs or anything like that but I did like that concept. Because then you had these kids that interact

with people every single day and you realize they're not just these guys or ladies that just want to kill us

Participants 4, 6, 8 and 9 replied with similar answers. There were 2 males, numbers 3 and 10 who believed the Prince Georges' County should treat black men in the community the same way they would want to be treated, and this would improve their relationship with black men. Participant 10 believes, "I think it will improve by the police department instituting community policing, respect people more, ask questions, do proper investigations before drawing their weapons. They need to be trained better on weaponry and neighborhood community policing. Participant 3 also responded with a similar response,

I believe my relationship and everyone's relationship with Prince Georges' County police can improve if they actually treat people like they're supposed to be treated. Like they would be treated like outside of the force, if they didn't have a badge then would they be treated the same way if they were to be pulled over by another police officer

The other 3 participants, participants 1, 2 and 7 were placed under "other" for table 14: semi-question 8. Their responses consisted of the police getting to the know the culture of Prince Georges' County to help strengthen the relationship between black men and the police, and if they (black men) got civically involved with wants going on in the county it would help to improve the relationship. Another response came from participant 2, who stated he would like for the police to stop the senseless killings of unarmed African American males, to improve the relationship.

Theme 8. In order for the relationship to improve between the African American males in Prince Georges' County and the police of Prince Georges' County, more than half of the males agree mentoring or programs need to happen.

Summary of Chapter 4

Max Weber's social action theory originated to examine smaller groups and, explain how participants formed their perceptions. By interviewing only 10 participants, the semi-questions helped to drive the social action theory, by allowing the participants to not only answering the semi-questions but also explaining why they perceive the Prince Georges' County police in a certain manner. Using Moustakes (1994) modified van Kham method, guided the process of coding and analyzing the data in an organized manner once all the interviews were completed. Overall there were 9 themes identified, throughout the responses provided by the 10 participants. These 9 themes were a) getting pulled over, b) race, c) police drawing their weapon, d) stereotyped by looks, e) community policing, f) benefit the community, g) seminars, programs and mentoring, h) assumed they're a drug dealer, and i) treat people respectfully.

The participants based on the data believe Prince Georges' County police are doing a good job overall but, the relationship between the police in Prince Georges' County can only improve with the black males in Prince Georges' County if they conduct more seminars, treat others respectfully and if African Americans in the community get more civically involved. Chapter 5 will provide insight detailed interpretation of the findings, along with recommendations to duplicate this study and implications I faced during the process completion of this study.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological study was to conduct an examination the perceptions African American males in Prince Georges' County have towards the Prince Georges' County Police Department and, how the relationship can be improved. Exploring this topic provided black men in Prince Georges' County the opportunity to voice their perception of the Prince Georges' County police and, provide insight on how the high profile shootings nationwide has affected their relationship with the county police. There is always room for improvement when strengthening the relationship between a group of individuals and the police who serve them. The goal of this study is not to just prove yes or no, good or bad answers, but to provide in-depth answers for the those who want to know how Prince Georges' County police are perceived by black men in Prince Georges' County. Invoking social change could possibly take place because the findings could help police officers across the county to reexamine how they deal with black men.

Interpretation of the Findings

The interpretation of the findings derives from the interviews and observation during the interview process. Noticing the different facial and body expressions, tone of voice and sometimes the hesitation or eagerness to answer a question, showed the emotion the participants felt during the process. Some of the participants prior to the actually interview taking places expressed they've been waiting to tell their story or provide feedback to the Prince Georges' County police.

The first 4 semi-questions aided in providing an answer and explanation to the first research question, how do African American males in Prince Georges' County perceive Prince Georges' County police officers? This research question and the semi-questions asked are needed because of the current backlash all police officers are experiencing because of the recent unarmed shootings of black men. However, not all African American men dislike their county or local police department. Based on the data collected, the black men in Prince Georges' County perceive Prince Georges' County police officers as doing a good job within their community. Now, here is where the semi-questions play an essential role because the semi-questions allowed the participants to provide detailed feedback on their perception.

Even with the majority of men believing Prince Georges' County police do a good job within the community, they also believe there are biases in how Prince Georges' County police treat the citizens of Prince Georges' County. Some of the men stated they believe Prince Georges' County police pull them over simply because they're black or, the police assume they are drug dealers. As stated in chapter 2, according to Huggin (2012), "Driving While Black", was created because African Americans believe they are pulled over solely because they are black. In addition, with the majority of the participants having a good perception of the police in Prince Georges' County, their level of comfort with Prince Georges' county police is still not where it needs to be. Out of the 10 men interviewed, 3 were able to say for certain they were comfortable encountering the police in Prince Georges' County, 3 other men stated they were not comfortable. And, 4 men stated they are comfortable encountering the Prince Georges' County police only in certain situations, 3 of which then stated getting pulled over makes them feel uncomfortable.

Which prior research has previously indicated the African American community is not comfortable with police officers (National Institute of Justice, 2016).

Also discussed in literature review section, according to the U.S Department of Justice special report “Contacts between Police and the Public”; individuals who were stopped by the police due to a traffic stop formed a perception of the police, based off of their personal experience (Durose & Eith, 2011). On the contrary, one male took another approach with his answer and stated his comfort level has increased because he is not breaking any laws, however he is still uncomfortable due to the history of Prince Georges’ County police department. Even with some men feeling uncomfortable around Prince Georges’ County police, the majority of the men agreed that if an incident were to take place, they would call for the help of the Prince Georges’ County police department.

The second research question was, how can the relationship between African American males in Prince Georges’ County and the Prince Georges’ County police department improve? After reviewing the transcribed interviews, 5 out of the 10 participants believed their relationship with Prince Georges’ County police is fine and doesn't need improvement, two men replied by saying the relationship is neither good nor bad. Leaving the remaining two men, who both stated they have no relationship with Prince Georges’ County police. Nonetheless, half of the participants do want a stronger relationship with their county police, and believe seminars; programs and programs can help to strengthen the relationship. However, taking the proper steps forward to strengthen the relationship could be difficult because 9 out of 10 participants stated the high profile shooting of unarmed black men has affected their relationship with Prince Georges’ County police. Which aligns with the National Institute of Justice (2014) social media

affect on the police study, who believes the frequent exposure of police misconduct the media provides has a negative impact on police officers. In the end, the interviewees stated the relationship could improve by Prince Georges' County police department mentoring the black men in Prince Georges' County, along with holding seminars and programs for the community. The Chief of police in Prince Georges' County has previously stated he does want to do things differently to avoid incidents other police departments have experienced, due to high profile shootings (Davis & Maake, 2016).

After thoroughly analyzing the semi-questions for research questions 1 and 2, African American males have a positive perception of Prince Georges' County police department. Lastly, in order to improve the relationship between African American men and the police in Prince Georges' County, there needs to be more programs, seminars and a mentorship program extended from Prince Georges' County police to the African American men in the county.

Limitation of the Study

A couple of limitations arose when it came to trustworthiness. The first limitation was interpreting the responses correctly, which can be difficult because the responses are not yes or no answers but each response came with a detailed explanation. It was my job to ensure the interpretations are accurate, and this is essential to the results of the study. Also, since there was not any prior studies that studied the perception African American men in Prince Georges' County has toward Prince Georges' County police; there was not any prior data to compare the findings to.

Also, making sure the participants answered truthfully was a limitation as well. Perception can be measured however, the events the participants are saying occurred that

drew them to their perception of the Prince Georges' County police could be inaccurate. Some of the men mentioned what they've seen on social media or the news in regards to police officers in general. However, some of the men established a perception of the Prince Georges' County police based on what other police officers have done and, not Prince Georges' County directly. This is considered a limitation because the participants are asked the questions and are free to provide their explanation freely, whether they have or haven't encountered the police in Prince Georges' County. I, as the researcher had to assume all the participants are answering truthfully without malicious and I couldn't question their experience, if I did this could have been seen as leading the participants to answer in a certain manner to persuade the findings.

Recommendations

There are four recommendations for future researchers who would like to duplicate this study. The first recommendation would be to allow the participants to have lived in the location of study for 5 years and not 10 years. By using 5 years and not 10 years, will allow for a bigger applicant pool and this also takes into consideration those who may have went away to college, military etc. Secondly, make sure the age group chosen is achievable, older participants may not want to travel to local libraries to participate. If this occurs, the Institutional Review Board will have to approve the researcher to conduct the study outside of libraries.

Also, to streamline the results, future researchers could turn the interview questions into a survey, providing the participants with three choices to choose from, "good perception", "negative perception" or "no percentage" which will allow the researcher to calculate the percentage of "good perception", "negative perception" or "no percentage"

answer easily. The survey can still provide an explanation option where the participants can explain where their perception derived from. Lastly, make sure the participant has time to take part in the interview. You don't want the participant to have to rush their responses because they are short on time, rushing the interview could result in inaccurate answers which could harm the results of the study.

Implications

The African American men in Prince Georges' County believe in order for their relationship to strengthen with the Prince Georges' County police, there needs to be more seminars, programs and mentoring opportunities. However, on the Prince Georges' County police department website, there are plenty of community events where Prince Georges' County police are reaching out to the community (Prince Georges' County, 2019). Despite the many events Prince Georges' County police have to involve the community, there aren't any programs geared specifically towards strengthen the relationship with black men in Prince Georges' County (Prince Georges' County, 2019). The potential impact for positive social change at the Prince Georges' County police level is possible; this study provided direct feedback on possible steps Prince Georges' County police can take to strengthen their relationship with the African America male population.

The African American men of Prince Georges' County have a positive perception of their local police. However, for those in the community who don't have a positive perception of Prince Georges County police, seminars, mentoring, collaborating and being mentored by the Prince Georges County police could strengthen the relationship. In order to have positive social change, it is important for the African American men in Prince Georges' County to be receptive to collaborating, programs, seminars and mentoring

programs if Prince Georges' County police decided to implement their suggestions.

Overall, if the Prince Georges' County police are seen in the community interacting more with African American males, this could potentially have a positive impact on other races, religion and women in Prince Georges' County as well, who also want a strong relationship with Prince Georges' County police department.

Conclusion

Since the beginning of policing the African American community has had a stressful relationship when dealing with police officers (Alberton & Gorey, 2018). Although slavery no longer an issue in the United States, African American men for countless of years have still been the forefront when discussing how police officers are perceived and, this stems from the history of slavery. Pervious research has proven that race is an essential subject when determining how police officers as a whole are viewed (Peck, 2015). It is important to know that perception stems from where an individual lived, social media and most importantly their interaction with police officers (Lim, 2015; Donovan & Klahm IV, 2015). However, the data in the study shows the African American men in Prince Georges' County have a positive perception of their county police department.

With the high profile shootings-taking place across the country, the African American men in Prince Georges' County want their county police to hold seminars, programs and mentoring opportunities to strengthen the relationship. The findings in the study can help to impact any police department across the country who want to know what they can do to either, bridge the gap between their police department and black men or, what can be done to simply strengthen the relationship. There is no doubt that slavery and

unarmed black men being shot and killed by cops has affected how black men look at police officers but, the black men in Prince Georges' County still want the Prince Georges' County police to do more in the community. The feedback gained from this qualitative, phenomenological study could evoke social change across the country. Positive social change, which could potentially lead to less unarmed African American men being shot and killed by police officers, because the relationship is less strenuous and there is compromise and compassion on both sides.

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Appendix A: Participate Recruitment Flyer

RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS NEEDED

My name is Katija Ra'oof and I am a current PhD candidate at Walden University. I am looking for African American male participant's who reside in Prince Georges' County, MD, who are willing to answer a few questions in regards to their perception of the Prince Georges' County police. My approval number to conduct this study is (), Walden University can be reach via email at ().

Requirements:

- Participant must be an African American Male between the ages of 21 to 65.
- Has resided in Prince Georges' county for no less than 10 years, and has never been arrested by Prince Georges' County police.
- Must have a valid I.D to show before the study begins (this information will not be copied, it is only showed to the researcher to verify age, race and residency).
- Must be willing to be voice recorded.

Contact Information:

Email: ()

Phone Number: ()

- ✦ Participation is strictly voluntary and participants can stop the interview at any time.
- ✦ The identifies of the participants will not be included in the study.
- ✦ There is no compensation for participating in this study.
- ✦ Participants can request a copy of the study once completed.
- ✦ Information gathered from this study will not be accessible to Facebook or any social media.
- ✦ Entire interview will take between 30 to 45 minutes.



Appendix B: Consent Form

You're invited to take part in a research study entitled "African American Males' Perception of the Prince Georges' County (MD) Police and Improving the Relationship". This study will aim to examine how African American males in Prince Georges' County perceive Prince Georges' police officers, and how the relationship can improve. This study requires African American males between the ages of 21 to 65, who have never been arrested by Prince Georges' County police and has resided in Prince Georges' County for no less than 10 years. This form is part of a process called "informed consent" to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether or not to participate. Also, participants will not be specifically asked about prior involvement in criminal behavior. In addition, participants are encouraged to keep a copy of the consent form.

This study is being conducted by (), a doctoral candidate at Walden University, pursuing a doctorate in Criminal Justice.

Background Information:

The objective of this qualitative study is to explore the perception African American males in Prince Georges' County have towards the Prince Georges' County Police Department and, how the relationship can be improved. The reason to explore this topic is due to the high profile shootings nationwide and the consent decree that affected African Americans males in Prince Georges' County. Once this study is conducted and concluded, it may provide possible solutions to identify problems and could possibly help to better the community relationship between the Prince County Police and, African American males who reside Prince Georges' County.

Procedures:

If you agree to take part in this study, you will be asked to:

- Participate in a face-to-face interview about your perception of Prince Georges' County police.
- Voluntarily allow me to voice record our interview.
- You will identify yourself as participant interviewer no. _____ age _____, I have never been arrested by Prince Georges' County police and have resided in Prince Georges' County for no less than 10 years.
- Voluntary answer 8 questions that will be read to you.
- Voluntary sign this consent form and show a form of I.D with your date of birth present before being interviewed.
- Please provide 30 to 45 minutes of your time for the interview to take place.

Here is a sample question:

- Are you comfortable interacting with Prince Georges' County police

Voluntary Nature of Study:

This study is voluntary. You are free to accept or turn down the invitation. If you decide to be in the study now, you can still change your mind later or stop the interview at any time.

Risk and Benefits of Being in the Study:

Being in this type of study involves some risk of discomfort such as stress or becoming upset. However, this study will not pose a risk to your safety or wellbeing. The benefit of taking part in this study will be felt over a period of time, but this study will provide helpful information to Prince Georges' County police and, providing insight on how the police can improve their relationship with African American males'. All participants can request a copy of the study once the study has concluded.

Payment:

None.

Confidentiality:

Reports coming out of this study will not share the identities of individual participants. Details that might identify participants, such as name and address will not be shared in the study, and not accessible to Facebook or any other social media outlets after this study has concluded. The interviewers will be referenced based on the number assigned to you during the interview process. Data will be kept secure by utilizing a locked desk to store the interview questionnaire and the voice recorder will be transferred to a hard drive, which will require a password for access. The hard drive and interview questionnaire will be stored in a locked desk.

Reporting:

If any criminal activity is described during the interview process, it is my responsibility to report this information to Prince Georges' County police department.

Contacts and Questions:

You can reach me via telephone () or via email (), with any questions you may have now or later. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call the Research Participant Advocate at my university () or email (). Walden University's approval number for this study is () and it expires on (). I will give you a copy of this form to keep for your record.

Obtaining Your Consent:

If you feel you understand the study well enough to make a decision about it, please indicate your consent by signing below.

Printed Name of Participant _____

Date of consent _____

Participant's Signature _____

Researcher's Signature _____

Appendix C: Participant Opening Script

I am Participant number ____, taking part in the study titled “African American Males’ Perception of the Prince Georges’ County (MD) Police and Improving the Relationship” study. I am (age) and an African American male who has resided in Prince Georges’ County for at least 10 years and I currently still reside in Prince Georges’ County. In addition, I have never been arrested by Prince Georges’ County police.

Appendix D: Participant Questionnaire

Thank you participant () for participating in this voluntary study. Please keep in mind you can stop the interview at any time or refuse to answer any question you're not comfortable answering. Are you ready to begin?

I intend for questions 1 through 4 to answer the first research question "How do Prince Georges' County African American males perceive Prince Georges' County police officers?" The first 4 questions aim to examine how African American males in Prince Georges' County, perceive police in Prince Georges' County and what events lead to this perception. Questions 5 through 8 focuses on the relationship between Prince Georges' County police and African American males and, if the recent high profile cases of unarmed African American males being killed by police officers has any effect on the relationship between the two (African American males and Prince Georges' county police) and if the relationship can be improved.

Dissertation Title: African American Males Perception of Prince Georges' County (MD) Police and Improving the Relationship.

Time of Interview:

Date:

Location:

Interviewer:

Interviewee:

Interview Questions

1. Do you believe Prince Georges' County police treats everyone in the county the same?

- Please explain your answer.

2. Are you comfortable encountering Prince Georges' County police?

- Please explain your answer.

3. If an incident were to take place, where the norm would be to call the police. Would you call for the help of Prince Georges' County police?

- Please explain your answer.

4. How do you perceive Prince Georges' County police?

- Please explain your answer.

5. How is your relationship with Prince Georges' County police?

- Please explain your answer.

6. Do you want a stronger relationship with Prince Georges' county police?

- Please explain your answer.

7. Do you believe the high profile shootings of unarmed African American males by police officers, has affected your relationship with Prince Georges' County police?

- Please explain your answer.

8. How can you relationship with Prince Georges' county police improve?

- Please explain your answer.

Appendix E: Participant 1 Interview

Introduction

Participant 1: I am Participant number 1, taking part in the study titled “African American Males’ Perception of the PG county police and Improving the Relationship” study. I am an African American male who has resided in PG County for at least 10 years and currently still reside in Prince Georges’ County. In addition, I have never been arrested by PG County police.

Interviewer: Thank you participant number 1 for participating in this voluntary study. Please keep in mind you can stop the interview at any time or refuse to answer any question you’re not comfortable answering. Are you ready to begin?

Participant 1: I am.

Interviewer: Okay, so just a recap. I intend for questions 1 through 4 to answer the first research question “How do African males perceive Prince Georges’ County police officers?” Aiming to examine not just how the police in Prince Georges’ County are perceived by African American males, but what events lead to this perception. Questions 5 through 8 focus on the relationship between Prince Georges’ County police and African American males and, if the recent high profile shooting cases of unarmed African American males being killed by police officers has any effect on the relationship between the two. My name is () and this is participant one.

Interview

Interviewer: So, the first question is, do you believe Prince Georges’ County Police treats everyone in the county the same? And please explain your answer.

Participant 1: I don't think PG county police treats everybody the same, the reason for me saying that is because its a lot of cases of African Americans getting shot down or getting shot because of a PG County cop or a cop thinks that their holding something that they’re not holding or they could be thinking that there a drug dealer because of the way they dress or their a hoodlum because of the way they act or the way they are. So, I feel like if it was a different ethnicity they wouldn't treat them the same way.

Interviewer: Okay Thank you, and the next question is, are you comfortable encountering Prince Georges’ County Police? And please explain your answer.

Participant 1: I’m comfortable to a certain extent, most PG county cops well some of them I should say, not most, some of them are pretty cool to talk to. Like, I’ll have a question about my license or my car I can do that. Like just now before I walked in here I asked a PG County cop about my car because I got a repair order for my exhaust so some people you can talk to some you cant, just depends.

Interviewer: Okay thank you, next question is, if an incident where to take place where the norm would be to call the police. Would you call for the help of Prince Georges' County Police? And please explain your answer.

Participant 1: If there was any emergency, I would call the cops. Not every cop is bad not every cop is good but at least the cops should be there for any emergency situation.

Interviewer: Okay, Thank you. Alright and the next question is, how do you perceive Prince Georges' County police?

Participant 1: How do I perceive the Prince Georges' County police? I think for the most part, they do good work. I mean, I don't even know where to start to answer that question. I don't know how to perceive them, a cop is a cop. I think a cop is going to do what a cop needs to do and some of them don't but it isn't my job to perceive them. Just, I don't know.

Interviewer: That's fine. Okay, and how is your relationship with Prince Georges' County police? Explain your answer.

Participant 1: I don't like cops but I don't have a problem with them. I mean, like I said, some are good and some are bad. Some don't know how to talk to you and some think because they have power they can treat you however they want to treat you. But, in general I just don't really have any time for cops, I don't really like them.

Interviewer: Okay and do you want a stronger relationship with Prince Georges' County Police? Please explain your answer.

Participant 1: I think they should be doing more, I think they should be more into protecting PG County. I think they're more on trying to pull over people for the wrong things like not using a indicator, instead of you know stopping drug dealers from doing drugs or stopping crime.

Interviewer: Okay, thank you and do you believe the high-profile shootings of unarmed African-American males by police officers, has affected your relationship with Prince Georges' County police? And please explain your answer.

Participant 1: It's definitely, what's the word? It's definitely made me look at them differently as far as how they treat African American males. There's been a lot of cases of African American males being shot down or being killed or punched in the face, just because of how they look. So, It's definitely gave me a different opinion on police in general.

Interviewer: Okay, thank you and how can the relationship with Prince Georges' County police improve? Please explain your answer.

Participant 1: Getting to know their culture, by getting to know who your around and who (knows) does what, you cant just assume everybody is the same way just because of somebodys culture.

Interviewer: Okay, thanks participant one. Do you have any questions for me?

Participant 1: No questions.

Interviewer: All right, thank you.

Appendix F: Participant 2 Interview

Introduction

Participant 2: I am Participant number 2, taking part in the study titled “African American Males’ Perception of the Prince Georges’ County police and Improving the Relationship” study. I am 32 and an African American male who has resided in Prince Georges’ County for at least 10 years and I currently still reside in Prince Georges’ County. In addition, I have never been arrested by Prince Georges’ County police.

Interviewer: Okay, thank you participant number 2 for participating in this voluntary study. Please keep in mind you can stop the interview at any time or refuse to answer any questions you’re not comfortable answering. Are you ready to begin?

Participant 2: Yes.

Interviewer: Okay, so just a recap. I intend for questions 1 through 4 to answer the first research question “How do African males perceive Prince Georges’ County police” Aiming to examine not just how the police in Prince Georges’ County are perceived by African American males, but what events lead to this perception. Questions 5 through 8 focus on the relationship between Prince Georges’ County police and African American males and, also if the recent high profile shooting cases of unarmed African American males being killed by police officers has any effect on the relationship between the two.

Interview

Interviewer: My name is (). All right so I’m going to start with question one, do you believe Prince Georges’ County police treats everybody in the county the same?

Participant 2: I do not, I feel like depending on where you live, depending on what you look like. The way that your treated will be based upon that. Prime example, I have dark tint on my car , automatically I am assumed to be a drug dealer because you’re not able to see inside my vehicle. I am have dreads, there’s a stigma against dreads and African American men that don't have a suit on to be thugs or hoodlums. I’ve been in situations where I’ve been pulled over leaving my apartment complex because, I’m either unable to look into my vehicle and then they call two or three cop behind me, to make me roll down my windows just because they cant see, if you look at my vehicle registration it automatically identifies that I have a tint waiver. Due to medical reasoning, however, when you look at what goes on in todays society. No matter who you are, the look of your skin is what they really look at.

Interviewer: Okay, all right, thank you. And question two, are you comfortable encountering Prince Georges’ County police? And please explain your answer.

Participant 2: It depends on the situation. If I am in a dark spot that is not residential, I do not feel comfortable without having somebody else on the phone or me to record what’s

going on. If I am in a residential spot that's lighted, and I know that I might have done something wrong, i.e. speeding or you know tailgating or things of that sort then I am somewhat comfortable. But, what makes me uncomfortable is when I get pulled over and I have no idea what I've done. Especially when I was doing everything that I should be doing. Because I noticed that the beginning of the month people have to get their quota, at the end of the month they have to get their quota. So, cops will make up ways to be able to stop us. But, I don't feel secure in certain areas.

Interviewer: Okay, thank you. And, if an incident were to take place where the norm would be to call the police. Would you call for the help of Prince Georges' County police? Please explain your answer.

Participant 2: No matter how I feel at this time and how they treat us as African American men or others, if a situation is happening that is warranting the police, I am going to call. However, I am going to ensure that if something is done out of the norm, I am going to ask that a supervisor be present, to ensure that all the appropriate steps are taken.

Interviewer: Okay, thank you. And, How do you perceive Prince Georges' County police? Please explain your answer.

Participant 2: My perception of them is, I want to say grime. But, I can only say that because of the few encounters I've had with them. I think that not all police officers are horrible, I don't think a lot of them are looking at us based upon our skin or stigmatizing us do to our looks. But, you do have those bad apples who do mess it up for others. And, based upon that, that is a horrifying situation do be in, when you get pulled over and all of a sudden adrenaline goes through your body, your heart starts pumping. Because, you're not sure if they're going to come to your car with a gun drawn, you're not sure if you say the wrong thing what's going to happen. And, being unsure that if you reach into your glove department to pull out your proper registration, it's going to be taken as you're looking for a gun.

Interviewer: Okay, thank you. And question 5, How is your relationship with Prince Georges' County police? Please explain your answer.

Participant 2: I don't have one, I encounter them when I encounter them. Besides that, I do my best to not be in the laws hand. And, I think if I were to have a relationship with the Prince Georges' County police commissioner or the police officers themselves I think it would be a situation where I would be not fully open with them.

Interviewer: Okay, thank you. And, do you want a stronger relationship with Prince Georges' County police?

Participant 2: No.

Interviewer: Would you like to explain your answer?

Participant 2: I think, where I'm at presently I think there are certain people in this community that need to have a stronger presents. Who are going to be change agents, to ensure that true victims get the help that they need to make sure that their crime is resolved, but ensuring that we are going everything appropriate for every person. So, I feel that there is somebody else that needs to do that job.

Interviewer: Okay, thank you. And, do you believe the high-profile shootings of unarmed African-American males by police officers, has affected your relationship with Prince Georges' County police? Please explain your answer.

Participant 2: Yes. I am a well-established African American male, who works in a fortune 500 company but I carry the look of a black thug man, male excuse me. With dreads, who doesn't wear a suit at all times, who has a car with dark windows. Who plays loud music, I'm already stigmatized, so if I don't have that look or if I don't have the vernacular to have a conversation, I'm already walking around with a target.

Interviewer: Okay, thank you. And question 8, which is the last question. How can the relationship with Prince Georges' County police improve? Please explain your answer.

Participant 2: I think it will improve when we stop the senseless killings of unarmed African American men and children. I think as we grow as a country, I mean it's hard to say because our country is already in shits. Excuse my language but as we grow as a country and as we grow as a community we have to feel that we can trust those that are actually wearing that badge. To be able to do their job, and the funny thing about it when I look at it, many people think it's the cops who are Caucasians that are causing the issues within the black community. It is our own African American cops, who are putting their own brothers and sisters in harms way. Who take their badge a little bit to serious, who end up doing more than they're supposed to. That cause the issues that we have today, may it be smuggling drugs, bringing drugs into our (black) community. Maybe using people or you know, using the top kingpin to be able to get their benefits, these individuals are weeping benefits off our issues and our demise. So I think if we can work on that piece and have own-ness for those that are actually in this situation. Prime example, what happened in Baltimore we don't see much of that happening here.

Interviewer: Okay, all right. Thank you, I appreciate it and that's the end of this interview with participant two.

Appendix G: Participant 3 Interview

Introduction

Participant 3: I am Participant number 3, taking part in the study titled “African American Males’ Perception of the PG county police and Improving the Relationship” study. I am 30 years old and an African American male who has resided in PG County for at least 10 years and I am currently still resided in Prince Georges’ County. In addition, I have never been arrested by Prince Georges’ County police.

Interviewer: Thank you participant 3 for participating in this voluntary study. Please keep in mind you can stop the interview at any time or refuse to answer any questions you’re not comfortable answering. Are you ready to begin?

Participant 3: Yes.

Interviewer: Okay, so just a recap. I intend for questions 1 through 4 to answer the first research question “How do African males perceive Prince Georges’ County police officers?” Aiming to examine not just how the police in Prince Georges’ County are perceived by African American males, but what events lead to this perception. Questions 5 through 8 focus on the relationship between Prince Georges’ County police and African American males and, if the high profile cases of unarmed African American males being killed by police officers has any effect on the relationship between the two.

Interview

Interviewer: My name is () and again this is participant three. Okay, so first question is do you believe Prince Georges’ County Police treat everyone in the county the same? And please explain your answer.

Participant 3: I do not believe Prince Georges’ County police treat everyone in the county the same because recently I was actually a victim of stereotyped, being stereotyped by the police. And, I was actually pulled over because they stated that my license plate was covered by, my license plate tag was covered by a plate cover. And, I've been pulled over several times by the police and they've never mentioned that ever at all so I asked the police what was the reason for it, and he just said that “hey I’m going to give you a citation” but then he came back and he said he's going to give me a ticket because he felt that there was an altercation. Then I also believe that when talking to the police county, That I don't have any issues with like African-American males who are asking the police force but I do have problems with other ethnicities in the police force because the African Americans come up to the car and they actually talked to everyone like their humans but the other ethnicities they just don't have any respect, they don't explain anything until they get your license and write you a ticket.

Interviewer: Okay, thank you. Next question, are you comfortable and countering Prince Georges’ County police? And please explain your answer.

Participant 3: Honestly, I am not comfortable and countering the police in this District because every time I actually get pulled over by the police I have been calling 911 just so I can have their operator record everything.

Interviewer: Okay, thank you. And if an incident were to take place where the norm would be to call the police, would you call for the help of Prince Georges' County police? And please explain your answer.

Participant 3: No, I would not call for Prince Georges' County police because they were actually try to think of a way to make you the suspect. And instead of making you instead of treating you like the victim that you are do actually look at you as you were the suspect and, it could be someone fighting down the road they would not care about that they were actually tried to make you seem like that you were doing something wrong although you weren't.

Interviewer: Okay, thank you. And the next question, how do you perceive Prince Georges' County police? Please explain your answer.

Participant 3: I perceive the Prince Georges' County police as basically someone who's actually looking for things that they should not be looking for instead of protecting the people they're actually trying to try to just make themselves look good. As far as oh I pulled this person over for this, so they're just writing tickets for everyone for doing something so little, yet they see someone running the red light they don't do anything, but they see an African American male driver different car they are quick to pull someone over.

Interviewer: Okay, thank you. And how was your relationship with Prince Georges' County police? Please explain your answer.

Participant 3: My relationship with Prince Georges' County police has not been good at all since I've been living here every year I get pulled over at least about 5 to 10 times I have to go to court each time because it's always something that they say that I did and it don't really explain any rules and I have to always be to a supervisor on the scene and then the supervisors to direct me to go to court and I never receive a court date in the mail. I have to call the court in order to receive a court date.

Interviewer: Okay, thank you. And do you a stronger relationship with Prince Georges' County police? Please explain your answer.

Participant 3: Yes, because it is the county that I live in and I like living in Prince Georges' County and not go to DC I don't get bothered by the DC cops I go to Virginia and the Virginia cops are very nice when they pull you over and they actually explain to you and they actually treat you like a human being, you know, instead of treating you like an animal and they actually treat you with respect and they seemed very kind when they pull you over and explaining why they pull you over before your license and registration.

Interviewer: Okay, thank you. And do you believe the high-profile shootings of unarmed African-American males by police officers has affected your relationship with Prince Georges' County police?

Participant 3: Yes, I've actually witnessed several times when the police officers harass African American men outside of a 7-Eleven. One male he just walked of the store, waiting on his girlfriend and, the police officers stated that he was loitering then he tried to say that he was selling drugs and I stood there and I witnessed the entire thing.

Interviewer: Okay, thank you. Has your relationship, sorry. How can your relationship with Prince Georges' County police and prove? Please explain your answer.

Participant 3: I believe my relationship and everyone's relationship with Prince Georges' County police can improve if they actually treat people like they're supposed to be treated. Like they would be treated like outside of the force, if they didn't have a badge then would they be treated the same way if they were to be pulled over by another police officer? Because my understanding is that just because they have a badge doesn't mean that they're always right, and the judge will always reconcile with the police officer. Because the police officer would come up with a statement and then he will always try to taunt the citizens to do something that they shouldn't be doing in order for them to get an arrest or get it give them a ticket or just to get a number in the jail cell.

Interviewer: Okay that was my last question participant 3 and that is the end of this interview, thank you.

Appendix H: Participant 4 Interview

Participant 4: I am Participant number 4, taking part in the study titled “African American Males’ Perception of the Prince Georges’ County police and Improving the Relationship” study. I am 32 and I am an African American male who has resided in PG County for at least 10 years and I am currently still resided in Prince Georges’ County. In addition, I have never been arrested by Prince Georges’ County police.

Interviewer: Thank you participant 4, for participating in this voluntary study. Please keep in mind you can stop the interview at anytime or refuse to answer any questions you are not comfortable answering. Are you ready to begin?

Participant 4: Yes ma’am.

Interviewer: Okay, so just a recap. I intend for questions 1 through 4 to answer the first research question “How do African males perceive Prince Georges’ County police officers?” Aiming to examine not just how the police in Prince Georges’ County are perceived by African American males, but what events lead to this perception. Questions 5 through 8 focuses on the relationship between Prince Georges’ County police and African American males and, if the recent high profile cases of unarmed African American males being killed by police officers has any effect on the relationship between the two.

Interview

Interviewer: My name is () and this is participant 4. Okay, so first question is do you believe Prince Georges’ County Police treat everyone in the county the same? And please explain your answer.

Participant 4: Since I’ve lived in Prince Georges’ County my entire life, I don't believe they treat everyone the same. Any minority, I believe they actually judge are a little more crucial of any of their actions and don't give them the benefit of the doubt. Compared to anyone that’s, I would say of fair skin or white to be identified. But, for me, it comes from knowing the history of Prince Georges’ County police from back in the fifty’s up until present, based on my own interactions with them.

Interviewer: Okay, all right, thank you. And, are you comfortable encountering Prince Georges’ County police? Please explain your answer.

Participant 4: I am with regard to certain situations, I would say like a traffic stop or general questioning. There is always that fear in my mind that if an officer, you know perceives me to be a threat or has had a bad day things can go wrong. For me in particular, I actually tried to join Prince Georges’ County police that was one of my goals. Where I wanted to be a police officer for this county and try to like change the perception of them but, my experiences with them as always been borderline disrespectful. Like, just their whole, like if they stop you they don't give you the benefit of the doubt. They just identify

you as a group or culture and just perceive you as treat against anything in society. So, I don't have the best relationship with them.

Interviewer: Okay, thank you. And if an incident were to take place where the norm would be to call the police, would you call for the help of Prince Georges' County Police? Please explain your answer.

Participant 4: In an emergency situation, yes if it deems, you know, police response. Or, I feel as if it escalated outside of my control. But, I'm very hesitate to want to involve them for the threat of myself being injured or someone I'm involved in the situation with. That may not necessarily have a threat that against me or anything around me, that could be injured.

Interviewer: Okay, and the next question, how do you perceive Prince Georges' County police? Please explain your answer.

Participant 4: Not all of them are bad; I think they generally try to do a good job. Certain officers try to interact with the community. But, I think most of the officers that aren't from a minority-based community that work in Prince Georges' County, they tend to overact. So, I feel like because they're not from here, or can't relate to the people, they just think that everyone is trying to do something wrong. And, they don't necessarily take the background of the person or stress or anything else into account when they respond.

Interviewer: Okay, thank you. And how was your relationship with Prince Georges' County police? Please explain your answer.

Participant 4: Right now, Prince Georges' County is okay. I think we can do a lot better as far as our county government, as far as our law enforcement and equal benefits compared to some of other counties in the state and fair treatment. But, in general I like Prince Georges' County as a home, I think its very diverse, I think that its kind of misunderstood due to the media and just people that aren't from here that just look at the perception of this is a bad place to live, when its really not.

Interviewer: Okay, thank you. And do you a stronger relationship with Prince Georges' County police? Please explain your answer.

Participant 4: Me personally no, not unless I need them. I think that a stronger relationship within the communities is warranted and I would like to see their interactions on a day-to-day basis where they're more positive. Instead of their negative approach to situations and people.

Interviewer: Okay, thank you. And do you believe the high-profile shootings of unarmed African-American males by police officers has affected your relationship with Prince Georges' County police? Please explain your answer.

Participant 4: No, I don't believe it's affected my relationship with Prince Georges' County police. With people as a whole, if you're black and in this county you understand that this is not a new epidemic, its been going on since slave times into the fifties and sixties and civil right. So for me its just, they know the history, what is it that they trying to do to change it? You know.

Interviewer: Okay, and last question is how can your relationship with Prince Georges' County police and prove? Please explain your answer.

Participant 4: My relationship with them personally, I would say, I would probably would have to kind of fall back and I would say remove myself from the negative condensation of their past. Like to give them, or some of their officers the benefit of the doubt, treat them with respect like I've always have with their interactions. And at the same time I guess, be more approachable like in certain interactions or situations. Like national night out or if the officer is just saying hi, I find myself being very courtesy to any kind of law enforcement because I do work with them on a daily basis in my own job, so its kind of like up and down.

Interviewer: Okay, all right and that was the last question. So thank you participant 4, that's the end of this interview.

Appendix I: Participant 5 Interview

Introduction

Participant 5: I am Participant number 5; taking part in the study titled “African-American Males Perceptions of the Prince Georges’ County Police and Improving the Relationship” study. I am 25 years of age and an American African male who has resided in Prince Georges’ County for at least 10 years and I a currently still resided in Prince Georges’ County. In addition, I have never been arrested by Prince Georges’ County police.

Interviewer: Thank you participant 5 for participating in this voluntary studying. Please keep in mind are you at any time, or refuse to answer any question you are not comfortable answering are you ready to begin?

Participant 5: Yes.

Interviewer: Okay, so just a recap. I intend for questions 1 through 4 to answer the first question “How do African American males perceive Prince Georges’ County police officers”, aiming to exam and not just how the police in PG are perceived by African American males, but what events lead to this perception. Questions 5 through 8 focuses on the relationship between Prince Georges’ County police and African American males and, if the recent high profile cases of unarmed African American males being killed by police officers has any effect on the relationship between the two.

Interview

Interviewer: My name is () and this is participant 5. First question is do you believe Prince Georges’ County Police treat everyone in the county the same? Please explain your answer.

Participant 5: I do not believe they treat everyone the same there's always some bias in any organization. Whether that be police, just any career field there’s always going to be some type of bias towards a group of people. I myself have noticed when I'm traveling with my white friends how cops interact with us differently as supposed to if I'm driving the car. They maybe a little more aggressive with their questions or they’ll ask me things they did not ask my white counter-part. And I’ve been in both situations so I can clearly tell the difference between the two and although that is just a case-by-case basis I believe on a broader scale it does happen to a majority of us.

Interviewer: Okay, thank you. Are you comfortable encountering Prince Georges’ County Police? And please explain your answer.

Participant 5: When I was younger I was but now in the light of things although you know shootings and everything that we see now because of social media. I'm a little hesitant when dealing with them a little more cautious, as opposed to when I was younger. So I

don't really feel as safe now if I was to encounter one, I'd be a lot more tend to run a different scenarios in my head because I know what they are capable of now.

Interviewer: Okay, thank you. And if an incident where to take place where the norm would be to call the police would you call for the help of Prince Georges' County Police? Please explain your answer.

Participant 5: I probably would not just because I think I can handle some, depending on what the situation is. I don't think I would I was the first time I asked him hardest to do it myself and then if I absolutely had to like my life was in danger or a loved one or something, then I will call the police because that's the last line of defense.

Interviewer: Okay, Thank you. And how do you perceive Prince Georges' County Police? Please explain your answer.

Participant 5: I feel like they all try to do a good job but a lot of things always come up. Like the perception, the perception that we have of them, they bring that perception when they come to help us. So if we think that all cops are bad off the get go, they'll come with that attitude like "well they don't want us here anyway, they already think we don't do a good job so lets prove them right". So I believe they do try but there's a lot of things in the community still have to resolve before I believe they can do their job fully. First and foremost I think the police department should put people in areas where they think they would thrive, I don't believe in just throwing someone anywhere because you need a body there. Because at the end of the day that could be detrimental to the community and ending of itself.

Interviewer: Okay, thank you. And how was your relationship with Prince Georges' County Police? Please explain your answer.

Participant 5: My relationship is so so it's not the greatest in the world but it's also not the worst. Like I've said, I've had encounters with the police by myself where it wasn't the great experience just the way they spoke to me and things they asked me. Which I know they would never know me do to someone, lets say if I was white or any other ethnicity. So all my encounters have not been bad, all my encounters have not been good. So my relationship is kind of up in the air.

Interviewer: Okay, thank you. And do you want a stronger relationship with Prince Georges' County Police? Please explain your answer.

Participant 5: Absolutely, I think every community should have a better relationship with their police department because they're here to protect and serve, like they're supposed to do and in order for that to happen I think they do need to reach out more. And we need to be receptive to what they say a lot of times we hear what the quam that police have with us but we kind of take it and throw it away like they are supposed to always do what we say and we don't have to listen to their needs. So we need to understand what their needs, they need to hear our out and we need to find a common ground. Because at the end of the day

we all want to go home to our families, safe and sound, we want to be protected and they are here to just do there job.

Interviewer: Okay, thank you. And do you believe the high-profile shootings of unarmed African-American males by police officers has affected your relationship with Prince Georges' County police? Please explain your answer.

Participant 5: Absolutely, like I said when I was younger I didn't really think about it if a police officer stopped you, you know you did what they asked and hopefully the traffic stop or what ever go fine. But as we see in these recent shootings, you can do everything they say and whatever fear they may have or the perception they may have of you as a black male may trigger their mind, "wait a minute, maybe he's about to do something" even when there's no clear evidence that he may do anything. So in the light of all the events that are happening that we can see now with out camera phones, because we know they've been happening before, even before we had social media. But now every single person with access to a phone can see it. So it just heightens it even more.

Interviewer: Okay, thank you. And last question how can your relationship with Prince Georges' County Police improve?

Participant 5: I would like to see more public forms, were like I said we can discuss what our differences are and how we can improve the relationship. I will also like to see some kind of mentoring program between the police department and maybe certain communities or middle or elementary middle and high school. Where you can pair some kids up with police officers, I'm not sure they still do ride a longs or anything like that but I did like that concept. Because then you had these kids that interact with people every single day and you realize they're not just these guys or ladies that just want to kill us. They are actual human beings and stuff. I think if we let them mentor some of us and we see the other side of things we'd be more receptive to what they have to say and they'd also be more receptive to what we have, because we can see both sides and understand better interaction. As supposed to us just seeing them on TV and seeing what they do and you know like they may see us on TV and say "this kids are just out here going crazy, we got to do something about this", just bring all sides to the table.

Interviewer: All right and thank you and that's the end of this interview for participant 5, thank you.

Appendix J: Participant 6 Interview

Participant 6: I am taking part in the study titled American males perception of the Prince Georges' County Maryland police and improving the relationship study I am 47 years old and an African American male who has resided in Prince Georges' County for at least 10 years and I still reside in Prince Georges' County. In addition I have never been arrested by the Prince Georges' County police.

Interviewer: Okay, thank you participate number 6 for participating in this voluntary study. Please keep in mind you can stop the interview at any time or refuse to answer any question you're not comfortable answering. Are you ready to begin?

Participant 6: Yes.

Interviewer: Okay, just a recap, I intend for questions 1 through 4 to answer the first research question how to African American males perceive Prince Georges' County police officers, Aiming to examine not just how the police in PG County are perceived by African American males, but what events lead to this perception. Questions 5 through 8 focus on the relationship between Prince Georges County police and African American males and, if the recent high profile shooting cases of unarmed African American males being killed by police officers has any effect on the relationship between the two. My name is () and this is participant number 6.

Interview

Interviewer: Okay, the first research question is, do you believe Prince Georges' County Police treats everyone in the county the same? Please explain your answer.

Participant 6: I do not believe that Prince Georges' County police officers treat everyone the same and my reason being is because each individual I believe that they encounter have different circumstances. That warrants a different treatment approach.

Interviewer: Okay, thank you. And question number two, are you comfortable and countering Prince Georges' County police? Please explain your answer.

Participant 6: Yes I am in certain situations. I feel comfortable my comfort level is increased because I know I am not violating the law. On the other hand, I may feel a little discomfort based on the history of police officers, officer in particular Prince Georges' County police officer and in regarding police abuse and brutality.

Interviewer: Okay, thank you. And if an incident were to take place where the norm would be to call the police, would you call for the help of Prince Georges' County police? Please explain your answer.

Participant 6: Yes, yes I do now I do not have a level of comfort with calling the police reason being I am a law-abiding citizen and I do have like I say a certain comfort with calling the police in certain emergencies, in emergency situations.

Interviewer: Okay, thank you. And how do you perceive Prince Georges' County police? Please explain your answer.

Participant 6: Like I said, as of before my perception is based on historical experiences historical data rather. Currently with the I guess the makeup of the Prince Georges' County police department, in other words historically my perception was based on the history of Prince Georges' County police being brutal or harassing citizens. Presently my comfort level or my perception has risen something because the police department has become much more diverse, okay. And this also gives me a certain level of comfort with working with the Prince Georges' County police.

Interviewer: Okay, thank you. And how is your relationship with Prince Georges' County police? Please explain.

Participant 6: My relationship is very limited because as a law-abiding citizen, I have very, very little contact or action with the Prince Georges' County police. So based on that I would say that relationship is good in that sense.

Interviewer: Okay, thank you. And do you want a stronger relationship with Prince Georges' County Police? Please explain your answer.

Participant 6: Yes, as I said, living in Prince Georges' County and one who understands policing, I also believe in or have faith in community policing. That means that the citizens in the community must establish a relationship with the Prince Georges' County Police with police in their communities, vice versa. So it's a shared relationship if you if will, where the community and the police work hand and hand together.

Interviewer: Okay, thank you and do you believe the high-profile shootings of unarmed African-American males by police officers, has affected your relationship with Prince Georges' County police? Please explain your answer.

Participant 6: That's right. And the reason being is and this also ties into the diversity of the police force, the Prince Georges' County police force. So, historically that was a problem in Prince Georges' County and the reason being you had officers who didn't look like the citizens who lived in the community that they were sworn to protect and serve. Okay, so that being the officers may have had certain biases or certain prejudice against the citizens in that community. Now today moving forward presently as I stated, the Prince Georges' County police department has become diverse. Also I believe that the community policing relationship has improved, which makes me feel comfortable and also which leaves me to believe that those incidents will somewhat decrease, based on it. evidence.

Interviewer: Okay, thank you and how can the relationship with Prince Georges' County police improve? Please explain your answer.

Participant 6: As I stated before, the relationship especially my relationship with Prince Georges County police, would be to constantly develop and establish a community working relationship with the police. Where the police, I know the officers in my community, the officers know me. Where I attend police neighborhood meetings, but it's a relationship that has to be established and it's under what they term, community policing.

Interviewer: Okay, and that was my last question. Thank you participant number 6.

Appendix K: Participant 7 Interview

Introduction

Participant 7: I am Participant 7, taking part in the study titled “African American Males’ Perception of the Prince Georges’ County Maryland Police and Improving the Relationship”. I am 44 years of age and an African American male who has resided in Prince Georges’ County for the last 10 years and currently still reside in Prince Georges’ County. In addition I've never been arrested by Prince Georges’ County.

Interviewer: Okay, thank you participant 7 for participating in this voluntary study, please keep in mind you can stop the interview or anytime or refuse to answer any question you are not comfortable answering. Are you ready to begin?

Participant 7: Yes.

Interviewer: Okay, thank you. I intend for questions 1 through 4 to answer the first research question “How do African males perceive Prince Georges’ County police officers?” Aiming to examine not just how the police in Prince Georges’ County are perceived by African American males, but what events lead to this perception. Questions 5 through 8 focuses on the relationship between Prince Georges’ County police and African American males and, if the recent high profile shooting cases of unarmed African American males being killed by police officers has any effect on the relationship between the two. This is interview participant number 7, being interviewed by me ().

Interview

Interviewer: First question is, do you believe Prince Georges’ County police treat everyone in the county the same? Please explain your answer.

Participant 7: For the most part I do however I will probably say young black males were probably profile is being have a criminal background or might be treated a little bit more differently than most.

Interviewer: Okay, thank you. Are you comfortable encountering Prince Georges’ County police? Please explain your answer.

Participant 7: At my current age yes I am because I just know more and I have more understanding of my rights and I know I'm not I don't have any criminal background issue so right now yes I'm okay encountering the police.

Interviewer: Okay, thank you. And if an incident were to take place (this is question number three, I'm sorry) if an incident were to take place, where the norm would be to call the police, would you call for the help of Prince Georges’ County police? Please explain your answer.

Participant 7: Yes, I mean I respect law enforcement so I would call the police if I needed to deal with any type of incident.

Interviewer: Okay, thank you. And question number 4 how do you perceive Prince Georges' County police? Please explain your answer.

Participant 7: Overall I believe the County police are effective and they are pretty decent Police Department.

Interviewer: Okay, thank you and question number 5, how is your relationship with Prince Georges' County police? Please explain your answer.

Participant 7: I mean currently its fine, I don't have any issues with the Prince Georges' County police department.

Interviewer: Okay, thank you and question 6, do you want a stronger relationship with Prince Georges' County police? Please explain your answer.

Participant 7: Personally do I want a stronger relationship? No, because I know plenty of people who are police officers in Prince Georges' County that I've grown up with, just that the fact that the police can never stop doing enough to engage with the community in a more positive way. Just give the climate that they're in now.

Interviewer: Okay, thank you. And question 7 do you believe the high-profile shootings of unarmed African-American males by police officers, has affected your relationship with Prince Georges' County police? And please explain your answer.

Participant 7: Yes, slightly only because it's just at the end of the day law enforcement is law enforcement if you're a black male you just have those concerns but, overall I'm okay with the Prince Georges' County police.

Interviewer: Okay, thank you and last question. Number 8, how can the relationship with Prince Georges' County police improve? Please explain your answer.

Participant 7: My relationships could improve, if I don't know if I got more civically involved with what's going on in the county.

Interviewer: Okay and that was the last question. So thank you for participating in the study that is the end

Appendix L: Participant 8 Interview

Introduction

Participant 8: I am number Participant 8, taking part in the study titled “African American Males’ Perception of the Prince Georges’ County Maryland Police and Improving the Relationship”. I am 24 years of age and an African American male who has resided in Prince Georges’ County for the last 10 years and currently still reside in Prince Georges’ County. In addition I've never been arrested by Prince Georges’ County.

Interviewer: Okay thank you participant 8 for participating in this voluntary study, please keep in mind you can stop the interview or anytime or refuse to answer any question you are not comfortable answering. Are you ready to begin?

Participant 8: Yes

Interviewer: Okay, Thank you. I intend for questions 1 through 4 to answer the first research question “How do African males perceive Prince Georges’ County police officers?” Aiming to examine not just how the police in Prince Georges’ County are perceived by African American males, but what events lead to this perception. Questions 5 through 8 focuses on the relationship between Prince Georges’ County police and African American males and, if the recent high profile shooting cases of unarmed African American males being killed by police officers has any effect on the relationship between the two. My name is () and this is participant 8.

Interview

Interviewer: First question is, do you believe Prince Georges’ County police treat everyone in the county the same? Please explain your answer.

Participant 8: Treat everyone the same? I would say yes they do. To explain that, I think they treat everyone the same based on how they’re treated. So for example, say if I get pulled over, I say the officer approaching the car would just approach me with the respect and read me what’s going on. Why I got pulled over and also if I was belligerent and acting belligerent towards him, I feel like he would just get upset and act belligerent towards me and the it would just be an aggressive conversation. Other than that, I believe they treat everyone the same.

Interviewer: Okay, thank you. And question number two, are you comfortable encountering Prince Georges’ County police? Please explain your answer.

Participant 8: Yes and no so like for the example I just gave, so for now with all the stuff is happening in the world. So when I gave you get pulled over and I am kind of startled when the officer is coming to the car because, I’m not sure what his approach is or what his attitude is today but I wouldn't say I’m uncomfortable but I am comfortable too at the same time.

Interviewer: Okay, thank you. And question number three, if an incident were to take place where the norm would be to call the police, would you call for the help of Prince Georges' County police? Please explain your answer.

Participant: Yes I will call for the help of the Prince Georges' County police because I feel as though they can take care of the situation, to the best of their ability. And, I don't believe there is anyone else can take care of the situation like they can.

Interviewer: Okay, thank you. And question number 4, how do you perceive Prince Georges' County Police? Please explain your answer.

Participant 8: I perceive Prince Georges' County police as basically doing their job, protecting and serve and until proven otherwise I don't have a bad perception of police until I see otherwise. So, I view all Prince Georges' County police as good officers until I see otherwise.

Interviewer: Okay, thank you and question number 5, how is your relationship with Prince Georges' County police? Please explain your answer.

Participant 8: I believe my relationship with Prince Georges' County police is great. I haven't, I've had interactions with police but I've never been arrested or taken to jail. Most of the interactions I've had have been great.

Interviewer: Okay. Thank you and question number 6, do you want a stronger relationship with Prince Georges' County police? Please explain your answer.

Participant 8: No I don't want a stronger relationship with them. I feel as though the relationship I have is good so far. I feel as though I can call them whenever I need some help or have a question about anything or I can also go to the Prince Georges' County police office and I can get any situation solved or if I need help with anything they can help me with that also.

Interviewer: Okay thank you, and question number 7 do you believe the high-profile shootings of unarmed African-American male has affected your relationship with Prince Georges' County police? Please explain your answer.

Participant 8: Yes, I do believe that because as humans I believe its natural that when we see unarmed shootings, it natural for us to say all cops are bad or we don't like those cops. But, until you have interactions with different cops and conversations with different cops, you'll understand that all of them aren't bad, maybe just some bad apples. Some are good, majority of them are good you just have to make the distinction for yourself, which are good and which are bad.

Interviewer: Okay, thank you and question number 8, how can the relationship with Prince Georges' County police improve? Please explain your answer.

Participant 8: I believe it can approve by just having more conversation, dialogue and also being more interactive with them. Maybe doing more stuff with them in the community, just having more conversations and just more interactions in general.

Interviewer: Okay and that was the last question for participant 8, thank you.

Appendix M: Participant 9 Interview

Introduction

Participant 9: I am Participant number 9, taking part in the study titled “African American Males’ Perception of the Prince Georges’ County Maryland Police And improving the relationship study I am 26 years old and African American male who has resided in Prince Georges’ County for at least 10 years and currently still reside in Prince Georges’ County. In addition, I've never been arrested by Prince Georges’ County police.

Interviewer: Okay, thank you participant 9 for participating in this voluntary study, please keep in mind you can stop the interview or anytime or refuse to answer any question you are not comfortable answering. Are you ready to begin?

Participant 9: Yes.

Interviewer: Okay, thank you. I intend for questions 1 through 4 to answer the first research question “How do African males perceive Prince Georges’ County police officers?” Aiming to examine not just how the police in Prince Georges’ County are perceived by African American males, but what events lead to this perception. Questions 5 through 8 focuses on the relationship between Prince Georges’ County police and African American males and, if the recent high profile cases of unarmed African American males being killed by police officers has any affected this relationship This is interview participant number 9, and my name is ().

Interview

Interviewer: So the first question is, do you believe Prince Georges’ County Police treats everyone in the county the same? Please explain your answer.

Participant 9: I do believe they treat everyone the same to a certain extent. The reason I say that is because I have experience where I was with a certain crowd of people and, in that certain crowd when the police arrived they handled us one way which was more in a positive way. And I've also been around another certain crowd of people and when the police arrived they treated us in the more negative light now in the positive light that was always when I was with another women or groups of women now when I was with more so with some men it was always a bit more aggressive.

Interviewer: Okay, thank you. And question number two, are you comfortable encountering Prince Georges’ County police? Please explain your answer.

Participant 9: I am comfortable encountering police just from my perception of them is that they are the police so, in my head I'm subjected to believe that they are always here to protect and serve. However, due certain events that I see on the news, any encounter with any police honestly makes me a little bit nervous because I never know how they're going to act or what mood they're going to be in. So, it tends to vary on each situation.

Interviewer: Okay, thank you. And question number three, if an incident where to take place where the norm would be to call the police, would you call for the help of Prince Georges' County police? Please explain your answer.

Participant 9: I would call for the help of Prince Georges' County police, because that is the county we're in and that's their job. Like I said to help protect and serve us so I would give them a call hoping that they would follow the correct line of duty. I don't really have too much bias on that, so I would say I would give them a call if an incident God forbid happened.

Interviewer: Okay, thank you. And question number 4, how do you perceive Prince Georges' County Police? Please explain your answer.

Participant 9: Overall, I have a good a perception of Prince Georges' County police. During my incidents where they have been involved, for the most part everything has always been respectful and has always at times even ended with grace. Where if I did deserve or warrant something, typically just got a speech or warning and they let me go. Now interesting enough, over this past weekend while I was in a shopping center late at night with a friend just talk not doing anything illegal or anything wrong. Just a general conversation we did have a police pull up upon us and shine the light very aggressively at us and wondering what we were doing, obviously we were just talking cause she's in the driver seat I'm in the passenger seat. Its very obvious we're literally just having a conversation, we're not doing anything illegal, we're not bothering anybody and he forcibly what they aggressive tone told us to leave the premises, which I understood because it was after hours however there are plenty of cars that are there not necessarily maybe running but there are car still on the premises and I understand he just wants to keep everything clean. But he sees that we're not bothering anybody and we're literally just having a conversation that was interesting that happened right before this interview.

Interviewer: Thank you and question number 5, how is your relationship with Prince Georges' County Police? Please explain your answer.

Participant 9: Overall, I would say my relationship with Prince Georges' County police is good. I do know some Prince Georges' County police from the standpoint of the they are either people that I grew up with now so of course I have good relationship with them. Or some people that grew up their parents are maybe Prince Georges' County Police of course I have a good perception of them. Like I refer to I've never really had a exact negative negative encounter with Prince Georges' County police and, and even the one or two times where it look like someone was going to be arrested in the end they end up talking and actually just trying to understand what happened and both times, well actually three time everyone was let go. So I thought that was a big deal because typically if it involving young black males a lot of times where it quickly just picked on unnecessarily just for even looking a certain way. So for them to respond the way that they did and at times if something did happen that may have even warranted us to get in trouble, in the end they've

typically been pretty understanding and understood that we could have been doing something way worse and let us go.

Interviewer: Okay, thank you. And question number 6, do you want a stronger relationship with Prince Georges' County? Please explain your answer.

Participant 9: I would like a stronger relationship with Prince Georges' County police, just from the standpoint of when you look back let's say 60 years ago and you look at the relationship between police and the community, I just feel like its way different now in a bad way because hearing stories from the past, the police would be the communities and it wasn't seen as a threat. The police were actually someone who interacted with the children and an example of that, that's not even 60 years ago but its a good example relativity now, my friend he actually used to live in palmer park which is near one of the Prince Georges' County headquarters, and one way that they show good responsibility through us is they have a big football field and we were kids from probably shoot ages 6 to 14 and they used to just let play football, on their football field no problems asked. And, obviously that's a good look because Palmer Park is an at risk area and that was definitely one-way for us to stay out of trouble. So they could have been picky and said, hey go play football somewhere else and they'd probably have to chase us doing something else but instead they allowed us to play on the football field and potentially stay out of trouble.

Interviewer: That's good, okay thank you. And question 7 do you believe the high-profile shootings of unarmed African-American males by police officers, has affected your relationship with Prince Georges' County police? And please explain your answer.

Participant 9: I definitely do because anytime I'm around the police I get nervous. Even in the incident where this past weekend where I was with my friend, and the police pulled up on us. I told her look, put your hand on the dash put your hand on the steering wheel immediately. Don't even move don't do nothing, just wait for him to come up to the car because its no telling what's wrong, what's going on because obviously he's bothering us for some reason. So you know I'm always just on edge I'm always thinking whenever they're around to think about what they want to potentially ask me and I may not even be doing anything wrong, it could simply be me making a right turn without putting the blinker on. If they pull me over I'm automatically going into defense, not in terms of being aggressive but I'm automatically going to think about what do I need to do to protect my life even though in a way is their job to protect my life but because of the whole high profile shootings, I feel like most times they out here just trying to take it. So it definitely has changed the dynamic of young black males but even once I get older and considered a more seasoned black male, I still feel like the relationship is going to be what it is, which is me not being able to trust them and me not having any type of comradery with them and it does bother me but unfortunately that's just the reality that we live in.

Interviewer: Okay thank you. And last question, question number 8. How can you have a relationship with Prince Georges' County police improve? Please explain your answer.

Participant 9: I believe my relationship with Prince Georges' County can improve if they just held seminars themselves on how to conduct yourself around police for yourself young black males and older black males and even young black women and older black women. Because the male is the head for sure but the female is just as important and you know if men can get attacked God forbid that start attacking the women. So I feel like they even need to know how to interact with the police as well. I believe if they had some type of seminars or just had some type of, it could be a parade just for the community just to show that you care and just to have certain interactions where you can talk to the community to let them know what you're looking for, what you're not looking for. Where they even want help in the community because it's not just their job to build the community, it's our job too. So, you know just developing the relationship in a form of a partnership in a way so that people can trust the police cause I know that's definitely lacking.

Appendix N: Participant 10 Interview

Introduction

Participant 10: I am Participant number 10 , taking part in the study titled “African American Males’ Perception of the Prince Georges’ County (Maryland) police and Improving the Relationship” study. I am 63 and I am African American male who has resided in Prince Georges’ County for at least 10 years and I’m currently still reside in Prince Georges’ County. In addition, I have never been arrested by Prince Georges’ County police.

Interviewer: Okay, thank you participant number 10 for participating in this voluntary study. Please keep in mind you can stop the interview at anytime or refuse to answer any questions you’re not with comfortable answering. Are you ready to begin?

Participant 10: Okay.

Interviewer: Thank you. So I intend for questions 1 through 4 to answer the first research question “How do African males perceive Prince Georges’ County police” Aiming to examine not just how the police in PG are perceived by African American males, but what events lead to this perception. Questions 5 through 8 focuses on the relationship between Prince Georges’ County police and African American males and, also if the recent high profile shooting cases of unarmed African American males being killed by police officers has any effect on the relationship between the two. My name is () and this participant 10

Interview

Interviewer: So the first question number one is do you believe Prince Georges’ County Police treat everybody in the county the same? Please explain your answer.

Participant 10: I do not believe everyone in Prince Georges’ County is being treated the same. My (our) perception is that they treat black males differently, from the way they treat white suspects. There is prejudice in Prince Georges’ County and most of the cases they are easy to pull their gun before any question is asked, when they encounter a black males in Prince Georges’ County. Where they approach white males differently.

Interviewer: Okay, all right, thank you. And question two, are you comfortable encountering Prince Georges’ County police? And please explain your answer.

Participant 10: I am not comfortable encountering Prince Georges’ County police. I honestly believe they’re not well trained. And, I believe that they do not understand the true meaning of community policing.

Interviewer: Okay, thank you. And question number three, if an incident where to take place where the norm would be to call the police. Would you call for the help of Prince Georges' County police? Please explain your answer.

Participant 10: Depending on situation, I will call for the Prince Georges' County police if there isn't any other different jurisdiction I could call. If I had the authority I would call a different jurisdiction.

Interviewer: Okay, no problem thank you. And, How do you perceive Prince Georges' County police? Please explain your answer.

Participant 10: My perception of Prince Georges' County police is they are not well trained. They are too easy to draw their weapons and there is prejudice in Prince Georges' County.

Interviewer: Okay, thank you and question 5, how is your relationship with Prince Georges' County police? Please explain your answer.

Participant 10: I really have no relationship with Prince Georges' County police because I have not encountered them personally but based on what I have seen so far with others that have encountered them. I believe that some of them are doing a good job but some of them just need to be trained.

Interviewer: Okay, thank you. And question 6, do you want a stronger relationship with Prince Georges' County Police?

Participant 10: Of course, I would want a stronger, a better relationship per say with Prince Georges' County. They need to understand community policing, they need to understand that police is there their friend and, people in the community need to be comfortable with the police department especially Prince Georges' County. Instead of looking at them as their enemies.

Interviewer: Okay, thank you and question 7. And, do you believe the high-profile shootings of unarmed African-American males by police officers, has affected your relationship with Prince Georges' County Police? Please explain your answer.

Participant 10: Of course, the high profile shootings has affected my relation, my perception and relationship with the Prince Georges' County police. Again, I still believe they need more training.

Interviewer: okay thank you and the last question is how can your relationship with Prince Georges' County Police and prove

Participant 10: I think it will improve by the police department instituting community policing, respect people more, ask questions, do proper investigations before drawing their

weapons. They need to be trained better on weaponry and neighborhood community policing.

Interviewer: Okay, thank you participant 10 and that was the last question.

Participant 10: Thank you.

Interviewer: Thank you.