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Police Beats and City Streets: An Examination of Black American and Latinx Youth Interactions with and Perceptions of Police

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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

POLICE BEATS AND CITY STREETS:

AN EXAMINATION OF BLACK AMERICAN AND LATINX YOUTH INTERACTIONS

WITH AND PERCEPTIONS OF POLICE

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO

THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

PROGRAM IN CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY

BY

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CHICAGO, IL

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ABSTRACT

Existing research on issues of race and police suggest that Black Americans and Latinx youth tend to have more negative experiences with, and views of, police than individuals from other ethnoracial groups (Brunson, 2007; Schafer, Huebner, & Bynum, 2003; Hurst & Frank, 2000; Sindall, McCarthy, & Brunton-Smith, 2016; Webb & Marshall, 1995; Weitzer, 2000; Weitzer, 2014). This finding is even more robust among Black American and Latinx youth, notably those living in low-income and high crime communities (Brunson, Rod, & Miller, 2006; Carr, Napolitano, & Keating, 2007; Desmond & Papachristos, 2016). Literature suggests that such youth have more adverse attitudes toward the police than their white counterparts (Geller, Fegan, Tyler, & Link, 2014; Taylor, Esbensen, & Winfree, 2001). These attitudes are validated by the fact that Black American and Latinx youth from disadvantaged communities are more likely to experience direct and indirect negative contacts with police (e.g., unwarranted stops, racially discriminatory policing, verbal abuse) (Cao, Fran, & Cullen, 1996; Carr et al., 2007; Jackson, James, Owens, & Bryan, 2017; McGregor, 2015). The victimization and constant burden such perceptions of police and police interactions have on Black American youth can potentially cause psychological damage (Futterman, Hunt, & Kalven, 2016; Geller et al., 2014). When coupled with repeated exposure to social, economic, and racially-related stressors, the former may result in greater adverse psychological outcomes (McGregor, 2016; Jackson, James, Owens, & Bryan, 2017; Weitzer & Tuch, 2004). However, resilience factors such as neighborhood context and ethnic identity may buffer the relationship. This thesis aimed to

qualitatively and quantitative identify the impact perceptions of police and police interactions may pose on Black American and Latinx youth living in low income high crime urban communities. The current study utilized a multi-method quasi-experimental longitudinal research design to examine the nature of youth perceptions/encounters with police and the potential impact on internalizing symptoms for 81 Black American and Latinx youth. Unexpectedly, results displayed the opposite relationship. Neutral to positive experiences with police significantly predicted higher levels of internalizing symptoms than neutral to negative experiences with police. Relatedly, perceptions of neighborhood, ethnic identity membership, and gender failed to significantly moderate the relationship. However, qualitative results offered a more nuanced view into this relationship, revealing diverse negative, neutral, and positive encounters with police at varying frequencies across different environments.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

In *Poetics*, Aristotle analyzes and critiques the elements of a tragedy, objectively designating which components of the tragedy succeed in their purpose and which do not. While examining dramatic theory, Aristotle introduces terms such as *mimesis* and *hamartia* (meaning “representation” and “fatal flaw”, respectively) to help support the “ethical utility” of the tragedy (Halliwell & Aristotle, 1998; Kraut, 2006). In his writings, Aristotle discusses the flow of a proper tragedy, noting that the plot “must necessarily be single rather than double...and involve a change not from bad fortune to good fortune, but the other way round, from good fortune to bad, and not thanks to wickedness but because of some mistake of great weight and [its resulting] consequence of a man...on the good rather than the bad side” (Halliwell & Aristotle, 1998, p. 95).

According to Aristotle, tragedies occur not at the fault of the protagonist, but rather, to the protagonist. While Aristotelian theory may be a lofty branch to grab on to, a similar narrative can be described for at-risk youth subjected to police antagonism, harassment, and violence based upon on their neighborhood environment, class, and race in the United States. In some cases, such interactions may become fatal, not at the fault of the protagonist, but due to a “bad fortune” not of his own “wickedness”, i.e. where the color of one’s skin is their *hamartia*. While in many instances the surrounding context may be complex, it does not change the fact that this

reoccurring series of events has left individuals residing in such communities with negative views of the police.

Research addressing issues of race and police suggest that Black Americans and Latinx individuals tend to have more negative experiences with, and views of, the police than individuals from other ethnoracial groups (Brunson, 2007; Hurst, Frank, & Browning, 2000; Jacob, 1971; Rosenbaum, Schuck, Costello, & Hawkins, 2005; Schuck, Costello, & Hawkins, 2008). Such finding is even more robust among youth of color, notably those living in low-income and high crime communities. Research suggests that such youth have more adverse attitudes toward the police than their white counterparts (Geller et al., 2014; Taylor et al., 2001; Weitzer, 2014). These attitudes are most likely validated by the fact that Black American and Latinx youth from disadvantaged communities are more likely to experience direct and indirect negative contacts with police (e.g., unwarranted stops, racially discriminatory policing, verbal abuse) (Cao et al., 1996). The constant burden such perceptions of police and police interactions have on Black-American and Latinx youth can potentially produce damaging psychological outcomes (Futterman et al., 2016; Geller et al., 2014). While the scale is tipped favorably towards Black American youth with regards to literature on youth interactions with police, Hispanic and Latinx youth report similar socioeconomic context and interactions with police, suggesting that such youth may experience similar psychosocial outcomes (Walker, 1997; Weitzer, 2014; Weitzer, 1996)

Disproportionate rates of being targeted by the police, lack of police accountability, and perceptions of unfair and racialized treatment are likely to have a cumulative effect on youth interactions with police and, subsequently, adverse psychological outcomes for the youth from such interactions (Hardeman et al., 2016; Harrell, Hall, & Taliafero, 2003; Nordberg, Crawford, Praetorius, & Hatcher, 2016). However, existent literature suggests that some youth may be more

resilient to such consequences than others. Factors such as perception of neighborhood context and ethnic identity may serve as protective factors for mental health (Mandara, Gaylord-Harden, Richards, & Ragsdale, 2009; Masten, 2014; Riina, Martin, Gardner, Brooks-Gunn, 2013; Sampson & Bartusch, 1998). Therefore, this thesis will examine the nature of youth perceptions of police and police interactions, factors that may interact with such experiences, and the resulting impact on psychosocial functioning and well-being of Black American and Latinx youth residing in low income and high-crime communities.

Literature Review

Theoretical Framework.

To help conceptualize the variables under review, the proposed study will draw insights from ecological systems theory. For the purposes of this thesis, Bronfenbrenner's ecological system theory will be utilized to provide an expanded view of the contextual component of the stress process model from a developmental lens. According to ecological systems theory, elements that are constantly present and inform an individual's development include both micro-level and macro-level environments (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The framework proposes that events occurring in "higher order social ecosystems" have the potential to influence human development through their impact on events in "lower order social ecosystems" (Li, Nussbaum, & Richards, 2007).

Exposure to community violence alone has been shown to have a detrimental effect on youth development into adolescence (Cooley-Strickland, Quille, Griffin, Stuart, Bradshaw, & Furr-Holden, 2009). Previous studies have discovered positive associations among youth exposed to community violence and anxiety (Cooley-Quille, Boyd, Frantz, & Walsh, 2001; Ward, Martin, Theron, & Distiller, 2007). Combined with other stressors social and environmental stressors, the

psychological outcomes may be equally, if not more, unfavorable. The proposed thesis will utilize the two theoretical frameworks to examine the potential psychological outcomes resulting from youth police interactions and general life stress encompassing social and environmental stressors.

The following sections of the current proposal will review the literature on these topics: 1) the effects of police presence in urban Black American communities, 2) juvenile encounters with police and associated attitudes of police, 3) the potential consequences of youth police encounters on mental health and racial battle fatigue, 4) the context of low income Black American youth in particular and stress-filled environments, 5) the role of neighborhood context, ethnic identity membership, and gender as moderators, and 6) the scientific contributions of the current to the literature.

Effects of Police Presence in Urban Black American and Latinx Communities.

With the recent deaths of Trayvon Martin, Laquan McDonald, Freddie Gray, Sandra Bland, Mike Brown, Andy Lopez, Philando Castile, Alton Sterling, Pedro Villanueva, Walter Scott, and Tamir Rice still salient in the political and social zeitgeist, there has been a noticeable rising interest in the relationship between Black American and Latinx youth and police (Adams, 2016; Buchanan et al., 2014; Desmond & Papachristos, 2016; Engel, 2013; Henderson & Louis, 2017; Kalven, 2015; Hardeman, Medina, & Kozhimannil, 2016; McGregor, 2015; Queally & Parvini, 2016; Rembert, Watson, & Hill, 2015). The use fatal force against communities of color is not new. However, given the advances of technology and the accessibility of smartphones, more and more people are readily exposed to video proof of the traumatizing and violent experiences of black Americans (Hardeman et al., 2016).

Baseline interest in this longstanding relationship goes back decades, invigorated by the social and political movements of the 1960s. Early research found that minority citizens viewed

the police in a more negative fashion than White citizens, a conclusion that has remained relatively stable over time (Huebner, Schafer, & Bynum, 2004; Winslow, 1968; Williams & Murphy, 1990). In a 1996 study, researchers found that Black American participants scored around 25 percentage points lower than White and non-Black Hispanic citizens when rating positive attitudes of police (Huang & Vaughn, 1996). Since then, a substantial body of research has investigated the social ecology of policing and disproportionate effects of police presence and procedures with respect to Black citizens in particular (Cao et al., 1996; Meehan & Ponder, 2002).

While there are many different conceptualizations of perceptions of police (e.g., views of police assistance, attitudes toward police, views of police efficacy, etc.), Black Americans and Latinx Americans tend to be more critical of police contacts than non-Black citizens across the board (Bayley & Mendelsohn, 1969; Brandl, Frank, Worden, & Bynum, 1994; Brick, Taylor, & Esbensen, 2003; Carr et al., 2007; Huang & Vaughn, 1996; Webb & Marshall, 1995). Unfavorable preexistent notions of police are fueled by a number of circumstances, one of which being the negative experiences with the police themselves. Negative experiences such as police misconduct, unwarranted stops, and police brutality support develop and establish adverse attitudes toward police (Carr et al., 2007; McGregor, 2015). Empirical evidence supports this relationship; citizens that report low levels of satisfaction with their contacts with the police tend to express less favorable perceptions of police in general (Campbell & Schulman, 1972).

Weitzer and Tuch (2004) found that more aggressive policing strategies were used more frequently in disadvantaged, urban Black American communities than in others. In a sample of 40 Black American youth residing in low-income neighborhoods of St. Louis, 48% reported that police often harass and mistreat people in the neighborhood (Brunson, 2007). Several studies indicate the disproportionate effects of police procedures among this population as well including,

but not limited to, instances of unwarranted physical force (Graham, 2015; Smith & Holmes, 2003), officer misconduct (Kane, 2002), and experiences of being watched and detained (Hurst et al., 2000).

For example, black and brown individuals residing in New York City are well accustomed to excessive police presence and unwarranted stops. Between January 1998 and March 1999, Fagan and colleagues (2000) found that Black and Hispanic New Yorkers were three times more likely to be stopped and frisk than white individuals. Even after controlling for rates of crime and physical disorder of the environment, researchers found that policing was disproportionately concentrated in areas densely populated with minority citizens (Fagan & Davies, 2000)

The increased police presence in urban communities, consequentially, leads to a greater degree of mistrust of police among Black Americans (Brunson, 2007). Research exploring the relationship between the context of residents' interactions with police suggest that unfavorable views of police arise out of negative police contacts (Huebner et al., 2004). Among a sample of Black American residents surveyed, personal experience with racial profiling were among the "strongest and most consistent" predictors of perceptions of police (Weitzer & Tuch, 2002, p. 449). Notably, direct experience with racial discrimination was found to have lasting and adverse effects on residents' perception of police (Weitzer & Tuch, 2002).

This is, in part, due to the historically antagonistic relationship between Black Americans and the criminal justice system by way of institutionalized racism and structural oppression. Some researchers propose a historical framework behind the noted wariness of continual police surveillance. Williams and Murphy (1990) held that modern police patrolling had its origins in southern slave patrols, which legally sanctioned the routine monitoring of all Black people, not just slaves. The idea that current police practices may function in the same way is not lost on

many Black Americans, thus reinforcing the perception of a W.E.B. du Bois-inspired collective consciousness that the police service a system of oppression (Coates, 2013).

Additionally, studies suggest that police presence may lead to greater opportunities of abuses of police power in disadvantaged communities, where the residents have little capacity to hold officers accountable (Hurst et al., 2000; Kane, 2002). This is a reality in a number of US cities, particularly in Chicago. According to the journalistic think tank Invisible Institute, approximately 96% of all allegations filed against Chicago Police Department officers went unsubstantiated between 1967- 2014 (Citizen Police Data Project, 2015). Of the 28,567 allegations of misconduct that were filed between March 2011 and September 2015, less than 6% of the complaints resulted in any punishment (Citizen Police Data Project, 2015). Of the allegations made, 61% were made by Black Chicagoans compared to 21% made by White Chicagoans. However, among the 6% of allegations sustained, 58% of complaints were sustained among White Chicagoans as opposed to the 25% of sustained complaints among Blacks (Citizen Police Data Project, 2015). The lack of police culpability and discrepancy between which individuals are afforded accountability only power overall negative perceptions of police and distrust of police.

While relations between the police and minority groups have a troubled history in the United States, the vast majority of studies focus on the Black and White paradigm and neglect Hispanic and Latinx Americans (Weitzer, 2014; Wu, 2014). Given that Hispanic and Latinx individuals are the fastest growing ethnoracial group in the U.S. and make up 17.6% of the population, the omission of their experiences, context, and outcome to the citizen/police literature is highly problematic (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016; Wu, 2014). The disparity is even more apparent among youth, where one quarter of the population under the age of 18 is Hispanic/Latinx (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016).

As racial/ethnic minorities, Hispanic and Latinx individuals tend to encounter similar challenges to those of Black Americans have experienced, such as racial discrimination in employment, education, housing, and hate crimes (Pager & Shephard, 2008; Solis, Portillos, & Brunson, 2009; Wu, 2014). For the most part, this finding extends to interactions with police. In 1999, the New York State Attorney General reported that the NYPD stopped Black Americans six times more frequently and Hispanics four times more frequently than Whites (Spitzer, 1999; Fine, Freudenberg, Payne, Perkins, Smith & Wanzer, 2003).

Despite the limited focus in the literature, existing studies suggest that Hispanics in the United States are less satisfied with the police than White individuals (Holmes, Smith, Freng, & Muñoz, 2007; Wu, 2014). Weitzer and Tuch (2006) found that Black Americans and Hispanic/Latinx individuals are more likely to report that they have experienced excessive force or have been threatened by police than white individuals. Early studies suggest that Hispanic and Latinx individuals exhibit negative perceptions of police such as distrust, fear, and perceptions of discrimination (Martinez, 2007; Mirande, 1981; Vidales, Day, & Powe, 2009). Additionally, the sociopolitical discourse surrounding immigration and the increase of local police enforcing U.S. federal immigration laws adds to the opinion.

For example, in a report from the National Council of La Raza (2016) based on focus groups on the perceptions of police among Latinx communities in Chicago and Washington, D.C., adult and youth participants offered similar accounts. Participants from both groups noted how implicit bias contributes to differential treatment by the police and fears that immigrant families will be stopped by police and referred to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), or being stopped directly by ICE (Foxen, 2017; UNIDOS, 2017). However, studies also suggest that Latinx residents occupy a middle ground with regard to their perceptions; they report more neg-

ative perceptions of police than non-Hispanic whites but less negative than Black Americans (Garcia & Cao, 2005; Vidales et al., 2009).

Communities with greater socioeconomic disadvantages and disorganization are typically areas that register higher rates of police misconduct towards residents (Hurst et al., 2000). This finding documents the wide range of harms to minorities in disadvantaged communities, including disproportionate experiences with surveillance and stops (Brunson, 2007; Cao et al., 1996) and public deviance (Kane, 2002). Moreover, minorities who are young and male bear the largest share of these negative experiences (Brunson, 2007; Jones-Brown, 2000). Therefore, high rates of being targeted by police, lack of police accountability, and perceptions of unfair and racialized treatment are likely to have a cumulative effect on youth police interactions.

Juvenile Encounters and Attitudes of Police

Age is often found to be a predictor of citizen's attitudes toward and personal interactions with the police (Brunson & Weitzer, 2009). Young people have more frequent contacts with police than adults. According to the U.S. Department of Justice Bureau of Statistics, approximately 4 to 5 million youth ages 16-19 have face-to-face interactions with police annually and in 2012, over a million persons under the age of 18 were arrested in the United States (U.S. Department of Justice, 2012). Additionally, the police are usually the first criminal justice officials with whom juveniles have contact (Hurst & Frank 2000). The resulting frequency of youth police interactions increases the potential for negative interactions. This is exemplified in a 2016 qualitative interpretive meta-synthesis (QIMS) of minority youth police encounters. Nordberg and colleagues (2016) found that among the minority youth police encounters surveyed, all were overwhelmingly negative, with themes such as "aggressive policing" "racially biased policing" and "abuse of power" often reoccurring.

Research has also shown the critical importance of contact with the police and, moreover, satisfaction with the interaction in the formation of attitudes and dispositions (Huang and Vaughn, 1996; Russell, 1998). A qualitative study examining attitudes toward police among Black American youth residing in high crime neighborhoods of Philadelphia via interviews found that within the category of negative disposition, respondents were most likely to describe actual negative interactions with police, accounting for almost a fifth of all responses (Carr et al. 2007). In a survey of non-delinquent, suburban Black American high school males, 91% of young men had been stopped by police while about half of the respondents rated the encounters negatively (Jones-Brown, 2000).

As previously stated, research surrounding Latinx youth interactions with police is limited. Walker (1997) found that younger Hispanic individuals failed to express the regard or fear that characterizes older Hispanics in relations with police but are less adamant to address the police than either whites or Black Americans. A sample of respondents expressed strong deference to the police and fear of retaliation, particularly when their immigration status is in limbo. Solis and colleagues (2009) conducted semi-structured interviews of thirty Afro-Latinx youth (particularly of Dominican and Puerto Rican heritage) in New York City to examine youth perceptions of police. Respondents reported unfavorable views of police, fear of contacting police when witnessing wrongdoing, negative treatment from officers, and a perceived lack of concern about Latinx neighborhood by law enforcement (Solis et al., 2009).

Evidence also supports this from a legal standpoint. Fagan and colleagues (2011) studied the phenomenon of legal socialization among youth. The researchers defined legal socialization as the “process that unfolds during childhood and adolescence as part of a vector of developmental capital that promotes cooperation” and security with legal actors (Fagan et al., 2011). Neigh-

neighborhood contexts and experience with legal actors (i.e., police) shape the outcomes of legal socialization (Fagan et al., 2011). Among their sample, the researchers found that youth that reported lower ratings of law legitimacy and greater legal cynicism viewed interactions as unfair and harsh (Fagan et al., 2011). Carr and colleagues (2007) also investigated the concept of legal cynicism among Black American youth in Philadelphia. The researchers found that most youth surveyed were negatively disposed to police, a belief that was grounded on lived experiences of negative encounters with law enforcement (Carr et al., 2007). Together, these points may suggest that youth encounters with police early in life may shape future relations between youth and the legal system.

Youth Police Encounters, Mental Health, and Racial Trauma.

Adolescence is a particularly significant period to study attitudes toward police and the effects of police interactions on Black Americans residing in low SES communities (Riina et al., 2011). Youth, notably Black American youth, make up a significant percentage of the population subject to police interaction (Hurst & Frank, 2000). In addition to the fact that youth are the most surveilled community in the country, involuntary police contacts are most frequent and salient for Black American youth (Taylor et al., 2001). This is supported by the fact that there is a significant population of minority youth who live in neighborhoods disproportionately beleaguered with proactive policing (e.g., targeting specific areas to display police presence or activity in anticipation of criminal acts) (Anderson et al., 2007). Research indicates that there is a relationship between unpleasant police encounters and trauma and anxiety symptoms among Black-Americans (Geller et al., 2014). Such symptoms can adversely affect overall quality of life. Moreover, youth with clinical levels internalizing symptoms are at an increased risk for criminal

behavior and serious mental illness in adulthood (Lewinsohn, Rohde, Seeley, Klein, & Gotlib., 2003; Roosa, Burrell, Nair, Coxe, Tein, & Knight, 2010).

Research has established that negative encounters with police often occur among populations residing in neighborhoods with chronic environmental stressors (e.g., poverty, community violence, etc.) (Cao & Hua, 2001; Brunson, 2011). Residents of these neighborhoods are at higher risk of negative psychosocial outcomes (Mrug & Windle, 2010). Consequentially, the greater likelihood of experiencing negative police encounters and perceptions of police exists along with poor mental health outcomes among Black American youth, such as anxiety, stress, and depression.

An analysis of New York City and Chicago's policing tactics (e.g., stop and frisk) showed that black young men who encountered law enforcement more frequently demonstrated higher levels of stress, anxiety, and trauma than their counterparts who recounted fewer incidents. Among a sample of 1,261 Black American young men in New York City, participants who reported more police contact also reported more trauma and anxiety symptoms, associations tied to how many stops they reported, the intrusiveness of the encounters, and their perceptions of police fairness (Geller et al., 2014). Similarly, researchers at the University of Chicago identified related sentiments among Black American youth interactions with police. In a qualitative series of interviews between researchers and Black-American high school Chicago youth, Futterman and colleagues found that the students often experienced symptoms associated with PTSD, stress, and anxiety after repeated negative police interactions (Futterman et al., 2016).

Given the scope of contacts of this nature, evidence suggests that this may trigger stress responses. Police-related stressors may include explicit racial discrimination and profiling (Brunson, 2007). Racial discrimination and racial injustices are considered an implicit norm in

these communities, often taking a toll on the individuals experiencing it (Brunson, 2007). Critical race theory posits that race and racism are “endemic to society”, intersecting with various forms of classification and subordination (e.g., class, gender, sexuality, immigration status, etc.) (Bell, 1987, p. 32; Smith, Yosso, & Solórzano, 2006; Solórzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000). Supported by a combination of both empirical and experiential knowledge from people of color, critical race theory helps identify and analyze racism related incidents, notably by providing context to events and circumstances that would otherwise remain as blind spots (Solórzano et al., 2000). Similarly, Latino Critical Race theory (LaCrit) highlights “multidimensional identities and can address the intersectionality of racism, sexism, classism, and other forms of oppression” particular to Hispanic and Latinx individuals (Gonzales & Portillo, 2009; Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2003, 312).

Evidence suggests that racism has been shown to negatively impact mental and physical health among Black Americans and Hispanic/Latinxs (Carter & Reynolds, 2011; Hardeman et al., 2016; Mays, Cochran, & Barnes, 2007). Regardless of ethnicity, perceived racial discrimination has been related with several negative mental health outcomes, including higher psychological distress, suicidal ideation, state anxiety, trait anxiety, and depression (Hwang & Goto, 2008). The effects of racism on health may occur in part via unequal access to health care but also via chronically aroused physiologic systems (Mays et al., 2007). With regards to mental health, individual experiences with racism predicts elevated anxiety and depressive symptoms (Banks, Kohn-Wood, & Spencer, 2006), conduct problems (Brody et al., 2006), and general psychological distress (Bynum, Burton, & Best, 2007). Similarly, Williams and colleagues (2000) also found a positive association among internalized racism and lower self-esteem, symptoms of depression, and chronic health problems.

In a 2003 community study, Williams and colleagues found evidence to suggest that perceptions of discrimination appear to induce both physiological and psychological arousal and systematic, exposure to such psychological stressors may have long-term health consequences. Accumulative stressors resulting from racial macro- and microaggressions have the potential to produce racial trauma, the physiological and psychological strain exacted on people of color due to racial microaggressions and racism in general (Smith et al., 2007; Williams, Neighbor & Jackson,

Repeated exposure to racial discrimination can lead to what researchers describe as racial trauma (Bryant-Davis & Ocampos, 2005; Smith et al., 2011). Racial trauma addresses the physiological and psychological strain exacted on racially marginalized groups and the amount of energy lost dedicated to coping with racial microaggressions and racism (Smith et al., 2011; Smith et al., 2007). The concept of racial trauma synthesizes and builds on the extensive discipline-specific research literature and studies of stress responses to racism and its impact on health and coping.

In low income, high crime communities, evidence suggests that one of the most salient manifestations of racial trauma is carried out by law enforcement via racialized policing practices (Sindall, McCarthy, & Brunton-Smith, 2016; Stewart, Morris, & Weir, 2014; Webb & Marshall, 1995). The impacts of racial trauma increase risks for chronic stress, depression, and anxiety disorders (Smith et al., 2011). The racial trauma perpetuated by the police in this community could pose a comparable, or greater, psychological bearing on Black American and Latinx youth. Greater effects may be due to the impressionable and malleable nature of adolescence as well as the heightened power differential between a police officer and an adolescent (Futterman et al., 2016; Nordberg et al., 2016).

Context of Low Income Black-American and Latinx Youth & Stress-Filled Environments.

Adolescents living in high crime communities with chronic neighborhood problems are exposed to numerous stressors, and these stressors are generally linked to negative outcomes (McMahon et al., 2003). Although a variety of stressors are influential in terms of adolescent outcomes, chronic environmental stress is of particular concern and relevance for Black American and Latinx youth. Generally, as youth transition into adolescence, their exposure to community and peer influences increases (Seidman et al., 1998). Further, Black American youth and Latinx are exposed to disproportionately higher levels of neighborhood stressors, such as community violence and poverty compared with other youth (Gaylord-Harden, Cunningham, & Zelencik, 2011; McMahon et al., 2003).

Empirical evidence strongly suggests a relationship between adolescent exposure to violence and negative psychosocial outcomes (Mazza & Reynolds, 1998; Mrug & Windle, 2010; Singer, 1995). Adolescents that are exposed to or participate in violent conduct as either victims, witnesses, or offenders are at high risk of adult exposure to violence (Franzese, Covey, Tucker, McCoy, & Menard, 2017). Additionally, research suggests that childhood and adolescent exposure to violence is interconnected with a variety of violent and nonviolent risky behaviors (e.g., carrying a gun, gang affiliation, etc.) that may manifest in internalizing and externalizing symptoms as time progresses (Aliprantis & Chen, 2014; Hardaway, McLoyd, & Wood, 2014). This exposure often leads to increases in internalizing problems, such as post-traumatic stress symptoms and depression (Fowler, Tompsett, Bracisqewski, Jacques-Tiura, & Baltes, 2009; Scarpa, 2003). Combined with the fact that adolescent exposure to violence occurs in concert with critical periods of mental development is considered a significant public health concern as well (Gaylord-Harden, Cunningham, & Zelencik, 2011).

The chronic deprivations due to poverty constitute an important element of socially toxic environments that may lead to negative psychosocial outcomes on youth. Garabino (2008, p. 33) describes the concept of socially toxic environments as “the values, practices, and institutions that breed feelings of fear about the world...feelings of rejection by adults inside and outside the family, and exposure to traumatic images and experiences.” With adolescence, great numbers of low income youth develop a clear awareness of how society views them as having minimal worth and value (Garabino, 2008). Combined with near-constant police surveillance and exposure to community violence, such youth possess a diathesis weighted toward negative psychosocial outcomes just based on their community context.

Moderators.

Neighborhood context. Identifying resilience factors is imperative when examining low-income Black American adolescents who face varying chronic environmental stressors. Modern resilience definitions emphasize the adaptive capacities of dynamic systems such as community or culture (Masten, 2014). Social-ecological literature has long considered the importance of neighborhood effects on youth development and psychological outcomes (Bronfenbrenner, 1997; Cicchetti & Lynch, 1993; Elliot, Wilson, Huizinga, Sampson, & Ranakin, 1996). Research on the study of neighborhood context and neighborhood effects suggest that residing in neighborhoods where residents engage socially is related to better physical and mental health among adults and a lower incidence of problem behaviors among youth (Gephart 1997; Sampson, Morenoff, & Gannon-Rowley 2002).

Research suggests that neighborhood context and neighborhood effects may provide an encouraging setting that, in turn, may support positive evaluation of formal institutional structures (i.e., law enforcement) (Cao et al., 2001; Sampson & Bartusch, 1998). Therefore, neigh-

neighborhood context (conceptualized as the degree to which an individual perceives the psychological sense of community, social order/disorder, and attraction to their neighborhood) may serve as a protective factor for youth faced with repeated exposure to police interactions and associated racial discrimination.

Sampson (1998) describes the influence of neighborhood context via the concept of neighborhood collective efficacy. Neighborhood collective efficacy is defined as the association between a mutual trust and “shared willingness to intervene for the common good of the neighborhood” (Duncan, Duncan, & Stycer, 2002; Sampson, 1998, p.919). Neighborhood members may perceive the neighborhood’s capability to maintain services and resources, form local social ties, and capacity for community social control (Sampson, 1998). This fuels the common goal of neighborhood residents: to live in a “safe and orderly environment” (Sampson, 1998, p. 918). Sampson posits that the variance in a neighborhood’s ability to realize the common goal of its residents is a major source of neighborhood variation in crime and violence. Socially cohesive neighborhoods are believed to be more successful in maintaining services and resources in hard times (Kawachi, Kennedy, & Glass, 1999).

The influence of neighborhood context may also play an important role in generating and sustaining notions of police. Recent research also suggests that perceptions of the police are formed within the context of respondents’ neighborhood cultures and contexts (Jacob, 1971; Sampson & Bartusch, 1998). Youth whose neighborhood collective efficacy informs their perceived neighborhood context may not be as affected by experiences with police. This may be particularly important for citizens who do not have routine and direct contact with the police. Rather than basing their perceptions on personal experiences, these individuals may evaluate the police using their neighborhood culture or context, including real or perceived rates of crime (Ja-

cob, 1971). Citizens may be predisposed to view the police in a particular fashion based on the collective experiences and norms within their neighborhoods. Those who do not have direct contact with the police on which to base their opinions may express opinions based on the experiences of their neighbors and peers.

Ethnic identity membership. Ethnic identity membership has also been identified as a buffer between chronic environmental stressors and potential internalizing symptoms. Ethnic identity is the strength of one's connection to an ethnic group (Moran et al., 1999). Ethnic identity is an imperative component of self-concept and can be particularly salient during adolescence (Phinney, 1989). During the explorative stage of adolescence, ethnic and racial identity often intertwine with an individual's sense of sense, thus impacting how the individual appraises different situations as well as cope with stressors (Carter & Reynolds, 2011; Mandara, Gaylord-Harden, Richards, & Ragsdale, 2009).

Many studies support this notion, suggesting that ethnic identity membership related to psychological well-being, positive self-evaluation, and self-esteem (Jones & Galliher, 2007; Mandara et al., 2009; Phinney, 1989). Relatedly, there is evidence to suggest that ethnic and racial identity helps individuals avoid internalizing symptoms negative stereotypes of one's own race (McLoyd, Cauce, Takeuchi, & Wilson, 2000). For example, among a sample of 10 to 15-year-old Black American students administered the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM), the MEIM was negatively related to depressive symptoms (Mandara et al., 2009; McMahan & Watts, 2002).

Ethnic identity has also been shown to serve as a buffer between perceived discrimination and depression (Deane et al., 2016; Li et al., 2007; Mandara et al., 2009). In a study of 259 Black American adolescents, researchers found that an increase in racial identity was associated with a

decrease in depressive symptoms (Mandara et al., 2009). Relatedly, high levels of ethnic identity membership were found to significantly predict higher levels of self-esteem among a sample of Latino boys and girls and partially mediate the relation between perceived discrimination and adolescent depressive symptoms (Umaña-Taylor & Updegraff, 2007).

The commitment and security of an ethnic identity may help to abate depressive symptoms experienced soon after experiencing discrimination, which in turn alleviates overall stress (Riina et al, 2013).

Gender. In addition, the role of gender as a possible moderator is considered. Research suggests that boys and girls are impacted differently by youth police interactions. Geller and colleagues (2014) found among a sample of Black American young men, those who reported intrusive police contact also displayed higher levels of anxiety and trauma related to their experiences. Brunson and Miller (2006) examined the gendered nature of youth police encounters among an Black American sample. Young men reported frequent involuntary contact with police, derogatory language, and refusal to acknowledge innocence, while young women reported concern for police sexual misconduct (Brunson & Miller, 2006).

However, findings concerning the influence of gender on youth attitudes toward police have been mixed (Hurst & Frank, 2000). A 1983 study found that female youth voiced more positive evaluations of police performance than males (Apple & O'Brien, 1983). Brick and colleagues (2009) demonstrated that males and female adolescents held similar attitudes towards police. Among a sample of 1,300 sixth through ninth grade students across the United States, students reported attitudes of police did not vary significantly between males and females (Brick et al., 2009). On the other hand, gender was not a statistically significant predictor of youth attitudes toward police in a sample of Black American youth (Boggs & Gahler, 1975). Nonetheless,

since the existent literature on outcomes related youth police interactions among Black American youth rarely addresses gender, the proposed study will examine whether the projected relationship is gendered as well.

The Present Study

Youth residing in low-income, high crime communities are exposed to stressors that are numerous and varying. While data on the quantity of youth/police interactions exist, robust research on the content, context, effects of such interactions is limited. Youth make up a significant percentage of the population subject to police interaction, notably Black American and Latinx youth (Hurst & Frank, 2000). In addition to the fact that youth are the most surveilled community in the country, involuntary police contacts are most frequent and salient for Black American and Latinx youth (Taylor et al., 2001).

Findings from the study will contribute to the emerging research on police encounters in other urban areas, thus advancing a public mental health perspective on negative policing. Moreover, the proposed study will not only underscore the importance of implementing efforts to improve relations between police and Black American youth, but also push forth an effort to require systemic solutions to systemic problems (i.e., the chronic environmental stressors in such communities that promote negative psychosocial functioning). Additionally, findings from the proposed study will help add to the limited literature of Hispanic and Latinx youth interactions with police.

Aims and Hypotheses

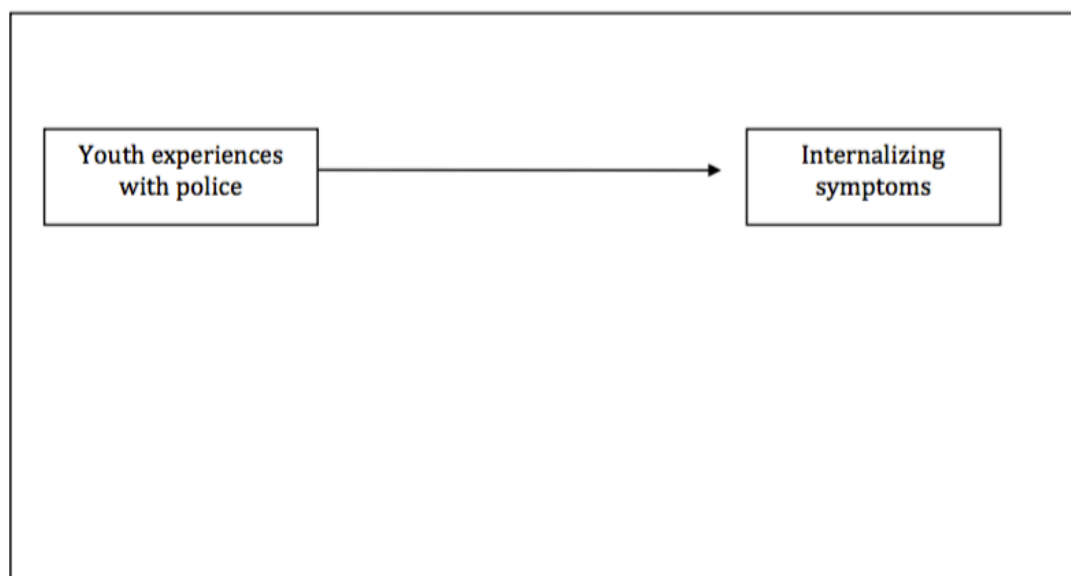
The proposed thesis seeks to examine the following aims and related hypotheses:

Aim 1.

The first aim of the proposed study is to identify the relationship between perceptions of police and police interactions among Black American and Latinx youth, and internalizing symptoms (see Figure 1). Youth perceptions of police and police interactions will be conceptualized as youth experiences with police.

Hypothesis 1. It is predicted that negative experiences with police will be associated with higher levels of internalizing symptoms in Black-American and Latinx youth (See Figure 1).

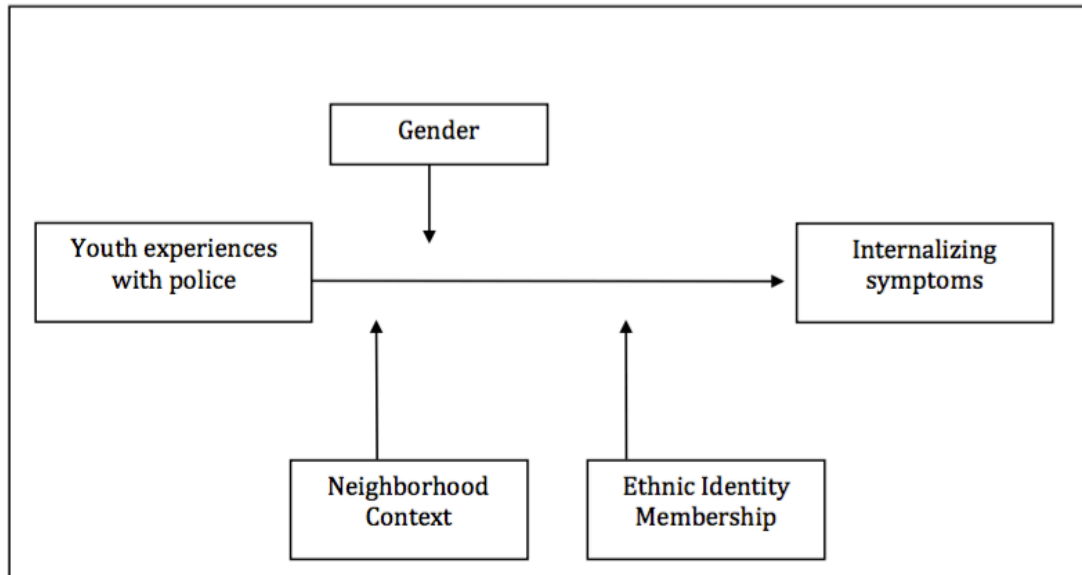
Figure 1. The relationship between youth experiences with police and internalizing symptoms



Aim 2.

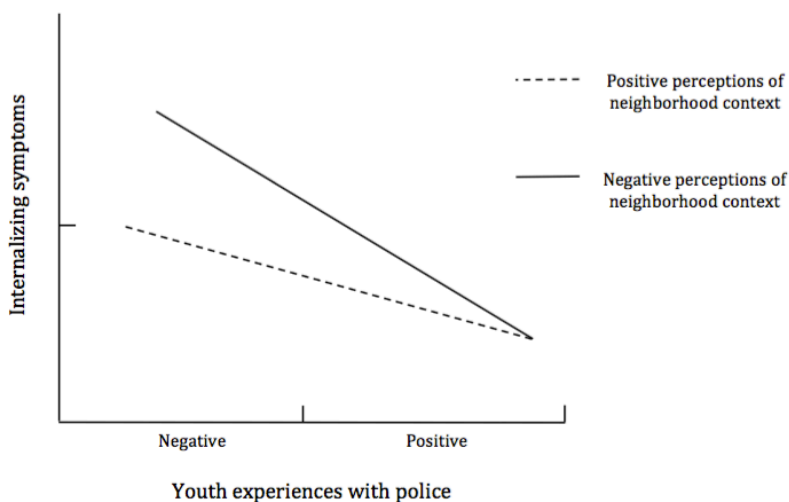
To add clarity to the relationship between youth experiences with police and internalizing symptoms within the context of varying factors, the second aim will evaluate neighborhood context, ethnic identity membership, and gender as moderators (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. The relationship between police interactions and perceptions and internalizing symptoms moderated by neighborhood context, ethnic identity membership, and gender.



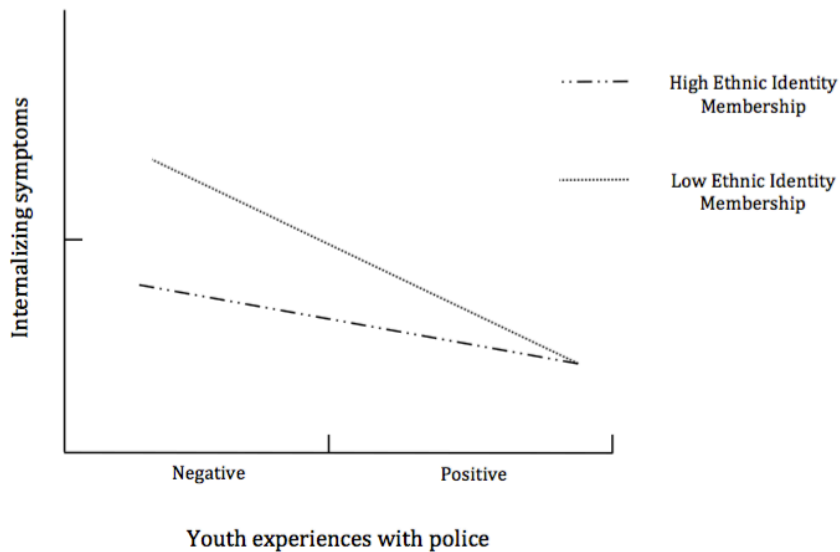
Hypothesis 2.1. It is predicted that for individuals with positive perceptions of neighborhood context there will be a weaker negative relationship between youth experiences with police and higher levels of internalizing symptoms (see Figure 3). The strength of the effect of youth experiences with police on internalizing symptoms will be buffered by perceptions of neighborhood context.

Figure 3. Hypothesized moderation outcomes of perceptions of neighborhood context.



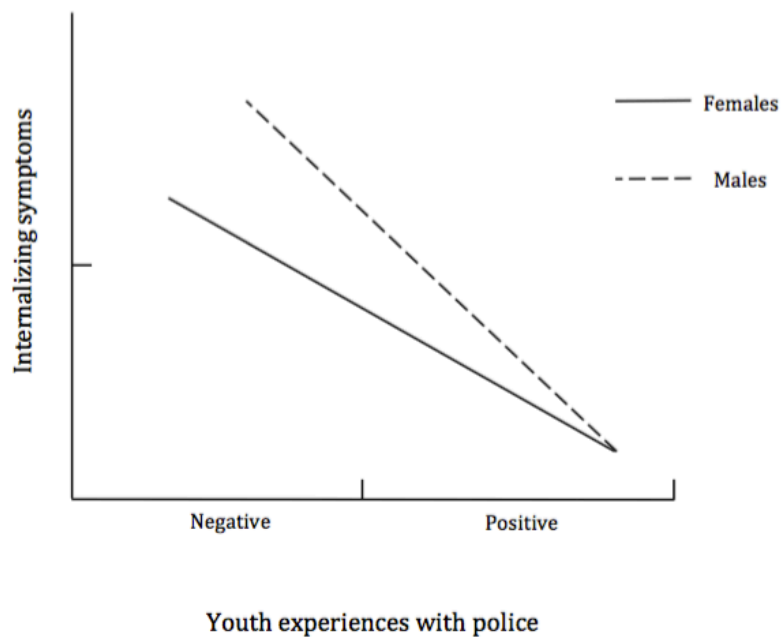
Hypothesis 2.2. Moreover, the impact of Black American and Latinx youth experiences with police on internalizing symptoms will be moderated by levels of ethnic identity membership. It is predicted that for individuals with higher levels ethnic identity membership, there will be a weaker negative relationship between youth experiences with police and internalizing symptoms (see Figure 4).

Figure 4. Hypothesized moderation outcomes of ethnic identity membership.



Hypothesis 2.3. Although findings in the literature are mixed with regard to gendered youth police interactions, it is predicted that males will exhibit a more salient relationship between negative youth experiences with police and internalizing symptoms than girls (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Hypothesized moderation outcomes of gender



CHAPTER TWO

METHODS

Participants

Data for the study were derived from the *Saving Lives, Inspiring Youth* mentoring program, a larger 4-year longitudinal project examining the effectiveness of community-based cross-age mentoring to reduce negative outcomes related to violence exposure among high-risk Black American and Latinx youth. The overarching aim of this study was to identify the risk and protective factors related to adolescent youth exposed to high levels of community violence while working to increase positive youth development and resilience outcomes. This study is currently in progress with final data collection taking place.

Participants included 81 Black American and Latinx adolescents aged 14 – 19 ($M = 17.1$ years, 33% male) residing in low income, high crime neighborhoods in the South and West sides of Chicago (Englewood, North Lawndale, South Lawndale, and Bronzeville). The City of Chicago exhibits a particularly high crime rate at 1,106 per 100,000 residents (FBI, 2017).

2018 Chicago Police Department crime data suggests that these neighborhoods are high-crime areas, citing reported instances of crime in the past year; Bronzeville (2,578), South Lawndale (4,551), Englewood (5,844), and North Lawndale (8,955) (Chicago Police Department, 2018). Relatedly, 2010 U.S. census data indicated participants resided in community areas with poverty rates ranging from 36.5 – 47.4% (Farooqui, 2017; U.S. Census Bureau, 2016).

The students were recruited for participation in the study from Chicago high schools and community organizations across the four neighborhoods. Schools were identified based on their participation in the Department of Justice & Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention-funded *Saving Lives, Inspiring Youth* study (Richards, Tyson-McCrea, Rice, & DiClemente, 2016).

The students in the current study were participants in the cross-age mentoring intervention, serving as mentors to elementary and middle school mentees. At the point of the study, the participants had completed approximately nine to twelve months of the intervention (depending on student attendance) and were near completion of the project.

Inclusion criteria state that students in the study must be proficient in English and have the cognitive capacity to complete the self-report questionnaires. At each of the identified schools, school administrators (e.g., principals and vice principals) were contacted to discuss the research project and assess cooperation with study procedures.

Procedures

Formal recruitment procedures included screening students based on inclusion criteria, collecting program permission slips, audio/visual recording permission slips from students and their parents, and informing parents about the nature, aims, and goals of the research project. Trained research assistants distributed and collected student assent and parental consent from all participants prior to the start of data collection.

Participation in the study was voluntary and youth responses were confidential. Protocol was approved by the Chicago Public School Research Review Board and the Institutional Review Board at Loyola University Chicago. Self-report questionnaires applied in the study were administered at two different time points during the study: at baseline (Wave 1) and nine to

twelve months from the baseline date (Wave 3). Time points for data collection coincided with the course of the cross-age peer mentoring intervention, with baseline occurring at the start of the intervention and Wave 3 occurring nine to twelve months into the intervention. All data used in the present study were collected at Wave 3, controlling for Wave 1. While not used for the current study, questionnaires will be distributed at one final time point, twenty-four months after the baseline date. Youth were compensated with \$25 gift cards for their completion of the questionnaires.

Self-reported measures (detailed below) utilized in the study included the Revised 12-Item Multigroup Ethnic Identity Scale (Phinney, 1992), the Youth-Self Report (Achenbach, 1990), and the Neighborhood Youth Inventory (Chipuer, Pretty, Delorey, Miller, Pors, Rumstein, Barnes, Cordasic, & Laurent, 1999). The research assistants were available to give assistance during the survey administration.

In order to properly document the complex and nuanced understandings of police interactions and perceptions among Black American youth, qualitative interviews were conducted. Youth-led interviews took place as a part of a larger exit interview component of the termination of the mentoring program (nine to twelve months after the start of the intervention). Research assistants and program staff trained the youth mentors on interviewing techniques and listening skills to help them complete the interviews as thoroughly as possible. The participants were paired off into groups of two and took turns interviewing one another. Youth-led interviews were audio recorded and de-identified.

Measures

Demographics

As a part of the larger intervention, demographic information was collected via self-report questionnaires and forms. Identifying information included age, grade, school, gender, and ethnicity/race.

Experience of the Police

Perceived views of police interactions and attitudes of police were measured by two items, a seven-point Likert scale with responses ranging from 1 = feeling very safe to 7 = feeling very fearful, and a corresponding open question. The rating scale asked respondents to report how safe/secure they felt with regards to the presence of police officers or the potential of police interaction. Higher scores indicated more negative perceptions of police. Ratings 5 to 7 were operationalized as negative feelings related to the presence of police officers or the potential for police interaction. Ratings between 1 and 3 were operationalized as positive feelings toward the potential of police interaction and the presence of police officers. A rating of 4 indicated a neutral response to the item. For the qualitative item, participants were asked to respond to the prompt “Describe a memorable interaction with police officers that you have had” (Richards & McCrea, 2016).

Internalizing Problems

To assess adolescent psychosocial functioning and behavior, items from the Youth Self-Report (YSR) (Achenbach, 1991) were used. The YSR is a self-reported measure consisting of 112 items that correspond to eight subscales: Attention Problems, Withdrawn, Anxious/Depressed, Delinquent Behavior, Somatic Complaints, Aggressive Behavior, Social Problems, and Thought Problems. Together the Somatic Complaints, Anxious/Depressed, and With-

drawn items make up the Internalizing dimension (problems directed inwards such as withdrawal, anxiety, depression, and disordered mood) (Achenbach & McConaughy, 1997). The current study utilized subscales comprising the Internalizing composite scale. Items include statements referring to symptoms experienced in the past six months such as “I feel worthless or inferior” and “I run away from home” and rated on a three-point scale, 0 (not true), 1 (somewhat true), or 2 (very true or often true) (Achenbach, 1991). The YSR has been shown to have good reliability, with Cronbach’s alpha coefficients ranging from $\alpha = .78$ to $\alpha = .86$ for the Internalizing scale (Achenbach, 1991; Stanger, Achenbach, & Verhulst, 1997). The current study yielded a Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of $\alpha = .89$ for the Internalizing scale at Wave 1 and $\alpha = .91$ at Wave 3.

Neighborhood Context

Youth perceptions and experiences of their neighborhood were measured with the Neighborhood Youth Inventory (NYI; Chipuer et al., 1999). The 22-item self-reported measure consists of four subscales that help identify the psychological characteristics of a student’s neighborhood: safety ($\alpha = .85$ among urban youth), friendships ($\alpha = .74$ among urban youth), activity ($\alpha = .79$ among urban youth), and support ($\alpha = .93$ among urban youth) (Chipuer et al., 1999). Items included statements such as “People are there for each other in my neighborhood” and “There are gangs in my neighborhood”. The items on each subscale are rated on a scale from 1 (not true at all) to 5 (completely true). The measure possesses high internal validity with Cronbach's alpha coefficients of $\alpha = .93$ among urban youth (Chipuer et al., 1999). The measure utilized in the current study possessed an alpha coefficient of $\alpha = .84$. Relatedly, the study yielded Cronbach’s alpha coefficients of $\alpha = .91$, $\alpha = .81$, $\alpha = .77$, and $\alpha = .51$ for support, safety, activity, and friendships, respectively.

Ethnic Identity Membership

Ethnic identity membership was measured with the Revisited (12-Item) Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM; Phinney, 1992). The measure assessed the participant's attitudes and sense of belong to their ethnic group as well as ethnic identity achievement (the secure sense of self tied to ethnic identity) (Phinney, 1992). Items evaluated were categorized into two subscales: Ethnic Identity Achievement ($\alpha = .69$ among high school sample), as well as Affirmation and Belonging ($\alpha = .75$ among high school sample) (Phinney, 1992). Respondents rated the items on a four-point scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (4). Higher scores indicated high ethnic identity. Subscales Affirmation and Belonging and Ethnic Identity Achievement were assessed for the current study, $\alpha = .87$ and $\alpha = .64$, respectively.

Analytic Procedure

To understand the complex and nuanced nature of Black and Latinx youth experiences with police, this study utilized both quantitative and qualitative analyses.

Preliminary Analyses.

The analyses tested the influence of the variables of interest by utilizing both outcome measures and qualitative peer-led interviews. Psychometric properties of all measures were reported prior to any hypothesis testing and data analyses. The initial analyses involved examination of the demographics of the participants. Descriptive statistics and frequencies were run on demographic variables (e.g., age, race/ethnicity, gender). The means and standard deviations for reports of internalizing symptoms, neighborhood context, ethnic identity membership, general life stress, and youth experiences with police for the sample were examined as well.

Regression Analyses.

Aim 1 - Hypothesis 1. The first hypothesis of the current study was to examine the relationship between Black American youth experiences with police and internalizing symptoms. The relation between each of the variables was examined with hierarchical simultaneous multiple regression analyses to examine the cross-sectional and longitudinal data with the predictor (youth experience with police) and outcome (internalizing symptoms). A hierarchical linear regression analysis was performed using SPSS Version 24 (Leech, Barrett, & Morgan, 2016) to assess whether negative youth experiences with police predicted higher internalizing symptoms, as stated in Hypothesis 1.

PROCESS. PROCESS v3.0 for SPSS is a computational procedure estimating the coefficients of a model using ordinary least squares (OLS) regression (Hayes, 2018). PROCESS produces direct and indirect effects in mediation and mediated moderation models, conditional effects in moderation models, and conditional indirect effects in moderated mediation models with a single or multiple mediators (Hayes, 2013).

The proportion of the total variance of the outcome that is independently attributed to each interaction is presented. Moreover, the macro provides the ability to estimate the conditional effects of X at the 10th, 25th, 50th, 75th, and 90th percentiles of the selected moderator. While traditional moderator models have tended to rely on the moderate, relatively high, and relatively low levels of the moderator, characterized by the mean and one standard deviation above and below the mean, for probing an interaction, there is no guarantee that all three of these arbitrarily selected values will fall within the range of data (Hayes, 2013). This is particularly relevant when the distribution of the moderator variable is skewed, which may present a poor representation of the data. In contrast, using the five selected percentiles, which may be interpreted as very low,

low, moderate, high, and very high levels of the moderator, will always fall in the range of the data (Hayes, 2013). Given these advantages, the PROCESS method will be utilized to test the models of moderation.

Aim 2 – Hypotheses 2.1, 2.2., & 2.3. The second aim of the current study sought to determine the differential effect of youth experiences with police on internalizing symptoms as a function of neighborhood context, ethnic identity membership, and gender. The PROCESS v3.0 module for SPSS (Hayes, 2018) was used further to examine whether neighborhood context, ethnic identity membership, and gender moderate the relationship between youth experiences with police and internalizing symptoms. The moderating variables were examined individually. Hypothesis 2.1 sought to test whether there is a significant interaction between youth experiences with police at Time 3 (X) and levels neighborhood context (W) such that internalizing symptoms at Time 3 (Y) decrease when levels of neighborhood context are high, controlling for internalizing symptoms at Time 1 (Figure 4).

Relatedly, Hypothesis 2.2 assessed whether ethnic identity membership moderates the relationship between youth experiences with police and internalizing symptoms as a means of attenuating the negative relationship between the two (Figure 5). Baseline levels of internalizing symptoms were entered as control in this analysis.

Lastly, Hypothesis 2.3 will be used to test whether there is a significant interaction between gender at Time 3 (W) and youth experiences with police (X) at Time 3 and if such effect is significant in predicting internalizing symptoms (Y) (Figure 6).

Qualitative Analyses.

Peer-led evaluation interview data analysis. Following grounded theory methodology described by Saldaña and colleagues (2013), the research team used an open, axial, and selective

coding procedure. The research team performed preliminary coding of transcripts based on the key areas of interest from the topics discussed by youth in their peer-to-peer interviews. Research team members developed and reviewed the initial coding to determine the breadth of each domain and then expand, condense, or remove initial codes to define a final coding scheme based on team consensus. The master coder from the research team reviewed 10% of all transcripts to ensure inter-rater reliability of $\alpha = .91$.

Dedoose Version **7.0.23** (a qualitative data analysis and research software) will be used to code and perform content analyses of the transcripts and analyze themes (Dedoose Version **7.0.23**, 2017; Saldaña, Saldaña & Miles, 2013). Content analyses were performed to investigate and analyze themes and information gathered from the semi-structured peer-led interviews. The current study will examine Aims 1 through 3 by examining youth experience with police presented by the youth from the transcripts.

CHAPTER THREE

RESULTS

Preliminary and Correlational Analyses

The means and standard deviations for reports of internalizing symptoms, ethnic identity membership, neighborhood context, and youth experiences with police were assessed. Means, standard deviations, and correlations among all the variables are displayed in Table 1.

Regression Analyses

The first aim, and associated hypothesis, of the current study was to examine the relationship between youth experience of police and internalizing symptoms for the sample. The association between the two variables was examined by a hierarchical simple linear regression to assess the cross-sectional and longitudinal data with the predictor (youth experiences with police) and the outcome (internalizing symptoms). To explore the relation between youth experiences with police and internalizing symptoms, a longitudinal equation was tested for the overall sample. Baseline levels of internalizing symptoms were entered simultaneously as controls for the analysis. Regression analysis outcomes for all variables are displayed in Table 2.

It was hypothesized that more negative reports of youth experiences with police (operationalized as higher ratings on the police interaction scale) would be significantly associated with higher levels of internalizing symptoms. While there was a significant association between youth experiences with police and internalizing symptoms, the analyses displayed the opposite

Table 1. Means and Correlations for Variables of Interest

Variable	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.
1. Youth EXP	1	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
2. EIM	-.10	1	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
3. INT_W3	-.30*	-.17	1	---	---	---	---	---	---
4. INT_W1	-.01	-.01	.58**	1	---	---	---	---	---
5. NYI_support	-.01	.17	-.19	.27**	1	---	---	---	---
6. NYI_safety	.01	.05	.24*	.19	-.1	1	---	---	---
7. NYI_activity	-.00	.16	.014	-.15	.68**	.21*	1	---	---
8. NYI_friendships	.12	.05	-.10	-.12	.56**	.26**	.61**	1	---
9. NYI_mean	.03	.16	-.03	-.14	.80**	.46**	.83**	.78**	1
<i>M</i>	3.93	3.10	.51	.54	2.68	3.17	3.02	2.85	2.91
<i>SD</i>	1.65	.55	.38	.38	.97	.95	.93	.78	.64

***Youth EXP = youth experience with police; EIM = ethnic identity membership; INT = internalizing symptoms at Wave 1 or Wave 3; NYI = neighborhood context *Note.* * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Table 2. Effect of police presence on youth

Outcome	Predictor	<i>b</i>	<i>p</i>	ΔR^2
1. Internalizing symptoms_W3	Police presence	-.075	.037*	.088

relationship. Neutral to positive experiences with police significantly predicted higher levels of internalizing symptoms than neutral to negative experiences with police ($\beta = -.075, p < .05$).

Youth experiences with police significantly explained 8.8% of the variance in internalizing symptoms for participants suggesting a significant moderate negative correlation between youth experiences with police and internalizing symptoms. Including gender as a moderator produced no gender differences in the relationship between police interaction and internalizing symptoms. When examined separately by gender, youth experiences with police at Time 3 did not significantly explain variance in internalizing symptoms at Time 3 among male participants nor female participants.

Moderation Analyses

The second aim of the current study was to determine the moderating function of ethnic identity membership and perceptions of neighborhood context. PROCESS for SPSS is capable of estimating the coefficients of a model using OLS regression as well as generation conditional effects in moderation with relevant variables (Hayes, 2013). The first hypothesis of this aim speculated that ethnic identity membership would moderate the pathway between youth experiences with police and internalizing symptoms. Ethnic identity membership did not exhibit an overall moderating effect between youth experiences with police and internalizing symptoms.

The second hypothesis of this aim sought to determine the moderating effect of perceptions of neighborhood context on the relationship between youth experiences with police and internalizing symptoms. Operationalized as perceptions of neighborhood context, analyses utilized the Neighborhood Youth Inventory and its four subscales (activity, friendships, safety, and security) as the moderating variable. Quantitative results did not provide support for the relationship.

Mean youth perceptions of neighborhood context, as well as the four subscales, did not significantly interact with youth experiences with police to predict internalizing symptoms.

Qualitative Analyses

In addition to gathering quantitative information on youth perceptions of police, the study included an opportunity for youth to report on memorable interactions with police. The peer-led interview presented narrative data related to the study hypotheses on the nature of youth experiences with police and the psychosocial consequences of such interactions. The qualitative analyses stemming from the peer-led evaluation interviews exhibited four valence-based themes: negative experiences with police, positive experiences with police, neutral experiences with police, and no interaction with police.

Drawing from the valence-based themes, thirteen codes emerged from the responses to the prompt: “Describe a memorable interaction with police officers that you have had”: racism/discrimination, poor attitude of police, unwarranted stops, violence perpetuated by police, safety/security due to police presence, police presence in the home, police violation of belongings, police presence in institutions, friendly interactions with police, arrest, neutral interactions/experiences, and no interaction. Frequencies of codes are displayed in Table 3. Themes and selected quotes are displayed in Table 8.

Table 3. Frequency of codes

Name of code	Percentage (%)
Negative experiences with police	
Unwarranted stops	14.7%
Witnessed negative interactions	9.3%
Poor attitude of police	8.0%
Police violation of belongings	5.3%
Violence perpetuated by police	5.3%
Arrest	2.7%
Racism/discrimination	2.7%
Neutral experiences with police	
Neutral experiences with police	10.7%
Domestic police presence	4.0%
Police in institutions	2.7%
Positive experiences with police	
Friendly interaction with police	6.7%
Security/safety due to police presence	2.7%
No interactions with police	
No interaction with police	25.3%

Within each of the categories, responses from the interviews also corresponded with three sub-categories based on the type of youth/police interaction: witnessed interactions/experiences with police, direct experiences with police, and police interactions dependent on setting. The frequency of the type of police interactions are displayed on Table 4. Among the 81 participants, 64 responses to the interview were tape-recorded, transcribed, coded. The remaining participants only completed the written portion of the interview due to refusal to answer the question, youth administration error, or protocol changes. All 81 had usable quantitative data.

Table 4. Frequency of type of police interactions

Type of police interaction	Males	Females	Percentage (%)
Direct experiences with police	43.8%	28.6%	32.1%
No experience	18.8%	38.8%	33.9%
Experiences with police based on setting	6.3%	2%	3%
Witnessed experiences with police	25%	30.6%	29.2%

Table 5. Frequency of youth dispositions of police encounters

Disposition of police interaction	Males	Females	Percentage (%)
Negative	40%	42.6%	41.9%
Neutral	33.3%	21.3%	24.2%
None	6.7%	27.7%	22.6%
Positive	20%	8.5%	11.3%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Negative experiences with police.

Generally, youth experienced diverse negative interactions with police. The frequency of youth disposition of police interactions is displayed in Table 5. Of reported interactions with police, 42% presented a negative disposition. Within the category of negative experiences with police, the majority of youth reported facing unwarranted stops by police. Unwarranted stops, in particular, comprised 14.7% of all coded responses, only second to youth reporting no interactions with police. Multiple youth reported being unexpectedly stopped by law enforcement while walking home, hanging out with a group of friends, or with family members. One participant stated, “Me and my friends, we walked down the street and I guess they [the police] thought that we were gonna fight or something, so they hopped out on us and pulled a gun out on us for no reason...like we was doing something bad or something.”

For both Black and Latinx youth the remaining responses were coded into the following categories: witnessed negative interactions (9.3%), poor attitudes of police (8%), violence perpetuated by police (5.3%), violation of belongings (5.3%), racism/discrimination (2.7%), and arrest (2.7%). Along with unwarranted stops, these were cited as negative responses to the memorable interactions youth had with police.

Youth are also aware of the injustice they face during their interactions with police. Four participants noted on the “unfairness” of their interactions, with one participant in particular

commenting on how they believed that it was not “alright” for police to question and search him for no reason, “Ok this one time, it was maybe 7:30pm/8 pm and I had to walk to the store with my brother. And we was just going get, like, some milk or stuff like that for the house. And on our way back we seen like two police cars ride upon us and they just got out the car like we was bad guys or something, or like we did something or stole something or something like that. And they just got to questioning us and searching us, and I didn't think that that was alright.” Other participants reported experiencing this injustice due to witnessed interactions. Among the youth that reported witnessed negative interactions, several reported instances of racism, discrimination, and police violation of belongings of indicators of injustice and negative perceptions of police.

When cross-referenced with the type of the experience, more nuanced results emerged. Among all responses, the results presented a relatively even split between direct experiences with police (33%), witnessed experiences of police (32%), and no interactions at all (32%). Black and Latinx youth who reported negative interactions were more likely to directly experience the memorable interaction (56%) rather than witness them (41%).

Positive experiences with police.

In addition to negative experiences with police, youth also reported positive experiences with police. While a significantly lower percentage of youth reported experiencing positive interactions with police (7.9%) the interactions that were more affirming varied. Two codes emerged that reflected positive experiences with police: friendly interactions with police (6.7%) and security/safety due to police presence (2.7%). The influence of friendly interactions with police dominated reported positive experiences with police. For example, one participant stated that they

“never had no problem with police officers. The most thing that was said with a police officer was good morning.” Moreover, Latinx youth tended to report more positive experiences with police than Black youth. Of all Black youth surveyed, 4.3% reported positive interactions with police. In contrast, 18.8% of all Latinx youth reported positive encounters.

The majority of positive interactions reported by Latinx youth were based on feelings of safety and security due to police presence. A high school student from South Lawndale, a predominantly Hispanic/Latinx neighborhood in Chicago, noted on the peer-led evaluation that “The police interactions that I would encounter would be very civil, they could help and they'd do a friendly hello at us. So it's not the worse in the world.” Within the context of type of police interaction, the majority of positive interactions with police were witnessed (71%) as opposed to direct experiences (29%).

Neutral experiences with police.

Among youth responses, 10.7% reported neutral experiences with police. This contrasted with quantitative findings, where 30.8% of youth rated “neither safe nor fearful” when asked how they felt with regards to the presence of police officers or the potential of police interaction. The discrepancy between youth’s ratings of police interactions and their lived experiences is best personified by a high school student from South Lawndale “Personally, I haven't had a memorable interaction, but from what I've seen like in social media, they seem to have like, uh, sort of hatred toward a certain race, and I wouldn't feel very safe. But then, again, there's some police officers that are really good at their job and that they would want to protect us. So I would give neither, I'm not against or for the police because of the different things in social media, but also I can't be, uh, be thinking that all of the police officers are racist or are against a specific race.”

When cross-referenced with types of police interaction, the findings suggest no significant distinction between witnessed and direct experiences with police. Of youth that reported neutral experiences with police, there was an equal split between witnessed experiences with police (25%) and direct experiences (25%).

No Interaction.

By far, the majority of youth reported not experiencing any interactions with police at all (21.3%). Female respondents were more likely to report not experiencing police interaction than males, with 28% of all females reporting no interactions. Among male participants, only 7% of

Gendered Experiences with Police.

In line with previous research, gender did not significantly predict quantitative differences in attitudes toward police. However, qualitative results offered a more nuanced view into this relationship. While not significant, comparative analyses revealed gendered distinctions between youth direct experiences with police versus witnessed encounters, with males reporting a greater percentage of direct victimization by police than females (44% of males, 29% of females).

Additionally, while both genders reported more negative experiences/perceptions of police, females were more likely to not have encounters with police than males (13% males, 35% females). While not significant, females reported more witnessed negative interactions than males (25% males, 31% females), however their witnessed interactions often depicted encounters involving young men (brothers, peers, etc.) One female participant noted a witnessed negative experience with police regarding her brother sharing, "... recently my brother was in trouble. Like he did something, and I don't even know what he did, but the police was just at our house,

like, looking for him and they was just...it was just, it was something that he didn't do but they were just tryna, I guess, make it seem like he did it and it was just unnecessary.”

Table 6. Frequency of dispositions of police interactions by neighborhood

Disposition	Englewood	Bronzeville	South Lawndale	North Lawndale	(%)
Negative	58.6%	33.3%	12.5%	80%	41.9%
Neutral	17.2%	41.7%	31.25%	0	24.2%
None	17.2%	8.3%	37.5%	20%	22.6%
Positive	6.9%	1.7%	18.8%	0	11.3%
<i>N</i>	29	12	16	5	62

Neighborhood-Based Experiences with Police.

In line with previous research, youth residing in high-crime communities reported more negative interactions with police. The frequency of dispositions of police interactions by neighborhood are displayed in Table 6. Among youth residing in Englewood, 59% reported experiencing negative interactions with police. Relatedly, 80% of youth living in North Lawndale shared negative interactions with police. Among youth residing in Bronzeville, a neighborhood with relatively less instances of reported crime than Englewood and North Lawndale in the previous year, 34% reported negative experiences with police. Participants from South Lawndale the lowest percentage of negative interactions among the four neighborhoods, where 12.5% of youth shared negative encounters with police.

An equal percentage of Englewood adolescents reported either experiencing neutral encounters with police or no interaction at all at 17.2%. Comparatively, 41.7% of Black teens from the Bronzeville community reported neutral police interactions, the largest within-group percentage of neutral experiences across all neighborhoods. Youth living in North Lawndale did not endorse neutral experiences with police, whereas 38% of youth residing in South Lawndale reported neutral experiences with police. These youth also shared the highest percentage of

positive experiences with police within their neighborhood (18.8%), compared to youth from other communities. In contrast, 6.9% of youth living in Englewood shared positive encounters with police. Bronzeville teens reported an even less within-neighborhood percentage, with 1.9% of youth sharing positive experiences with police. North Lawndale youth did not report any positive encounters with police.

Table 7. Frequency of valence of police ratings

Rating of police	Males	Females	(%)
Positive rating of police (1-3)	37.5%	35.7%	36.3%
Neutral rating (4)	33.3%	32.1%	32.5%
Negative rating (5-7)	29.2%	32.1%	31.3%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Inconsistency between Youth Perceptions of Police and Interactions with Police.

While the variable “youth experiences with police” is comprised of two items (a seven-point Likert scale with responses quantifying perceived views of police interactions and attitudes of police and a qualitative and an open-ended question asking youth to describe a memorable interaction with police), there were discrepancies between the ratings from each method. When youth were asked to report their views of police quantitatively, there appeared to be an equal split amongst the three valences, positive (35.9%), neutral (33.3%), and negative (30.9%). However, when asked to qualitatively describe a police interaction, youth reported experiences that were predominantly negative (40.6%), and less neutral (24.2%), and even less positive (11.3%). The frequency of the valence of police ratings are displayed on Table 7.

In order to examine the extent to which this discrepancy was present, a Pearson’s product-moment correlation was run to assess the relationship between youth perceptions of police (ratings of police) and youth interactions with police. There was a statistically significant,

moderate positive correlation between the valence of youth police ratings and the valence of youth interactions with police ($r(62) = .45, p < .001$), with youth interactions with police explaining 20% of the variance of youth perceptions of police.

Table 8. Peer to peer interview codes, themes, and selected quotes

Themes	Code	Quotes
<p>Negative experiences with police</p>	<p>Racism/ discrimination</p>	<p>“[I don’t like police] because they were racist to me.”</p> <p>“Personally, I haven't had a memorable interaction, but from what I've seen like in social media, they seem to have like, uh, sort of hatred toward a certain race, and I wouldn't feel very safe. But then, again, there's some police officers that are really good at their job and that they would want to protect us. So I would give neither, I'm not against or for the police because of the different things in social media, but also I can't be, uh, be thinking that all of the police officers are racist or are against a specific race.”</p>
	<p>Poor attitude with police</p>	<p>“I don't really know. I stay away from police. [Why?] Because I don't like police. I'm not gonna say I don't like all police, but I'm just don't like the vibe that they give me when I see them or when I'm around them.”</p> <p>“I don’t trust the police.”</p>
	<p>Unwarranted stops</p>	<p>“I feel safe but I don't feel safe because the police, they been on some goofy stuff. Um, me and my friends, we walked down the street and I guess they thought that we were gonna fight or something so they hopped out on us and pulled a gun out on us for no reason. Just like checkin on us and talking to us, it was r*****. Like we was doing something bad or something.”</p> <p>“I got stopped for curfew and they checked me 3 times to ensure their safety before letting me in the back of the car.”</p>

	<p>Witnessed negative interactions</p>	<p>“I don't really like police because they tried to arrest my granny for hitting this lady in the club who bumped her.” “Um, I wouldn't say so much of me, but my brother and my sister had an altercation. And my brother, he's actually 20-something, and his sister is, y'know, still in our teens y'know. And they had an altercation. And he doesn't live with us so he was visiting and they were on the porch and they were arguing and my mom asked them to get off the porch because she knows how her son is. And he refused to, so basically, they had to call the police because he said that a woman can make him get up or move. And they [the police] were going to taze him and once he saw that, he just got up and let it go. But I wouldn't say that I have had altercation with a police officer.”</p>
	<p>Arrest</p>	<p>“Last summer my friend and I was playing basketball. He ran home to get something to drink. When he came back there was shooting at the end of the corner. We were at the other corner, but they arrested him and held him for 15 hours because they thought he was the one shooting.”</p>
	<p>Police violation of belongings</p>	<p>“[My] house was raided.” “<u>They threw my belongings on the ground and drove off.</u>”</p>
	<p>Violence perpetuated by police</p>	<p>“I got slammed by the police before.” "“They will shoot you! Um, when I witness somebody just walking and they got shot, for real.”</p>

Positive experiences with police	Friendly interactions with police	<p>“Walking down the street with my friends and they stopped us because it was too many of us. They were friendly though.”</p> <p>“When my brother got jumped they were very helpful.”</p>
	Safety/security due to police presence	<p>“I haven't really had any, but, um, when I feel like I'm in a dangerous neighborhood or when it's night in my neighborhood, and there's like a police there, it makes me feel safer.”</p> <p>“I haven't had a personal interaction, but I've seen, like, there are more police officers in the area, and it makes me feel more secure.”</p>
Neutral experiences with police	Neutral experiences with police	<p>“I feel like it is a 4, feeling neither safe or fearful, because in my neighborhood, there hasn't been much police interaction. Um, so it doesn't feel that safe but it doesn't feel like there's a lot of things going on in the neighborhood.”</p> <p>“Personally, I haven't had a memorable interaction, but from what I've seen like in social media, they seem to have like, uh, sort of hatred toward a certain race, and I wouldn't feel very safe. But then, again, there's some police officers that are really good at their job and that they would want to protect us. So I would give neither, I'm not against or for the police because of the different things in social media, but also I can't be, uh, be thinking that all of the police officers are racist or are against a specific race.”</p>
	Institutional police presence	<p>“When our mentoring group were part/main event of the National Night Out.”</p>

CHAPTER FOUR

DISCUSSION

Study Overview and Major Findings

The primary purpose of the current study, conducted with urban Black and Latinx adolescents, was to examine the relationship between youth interactions with police and subsequent internalizing symptoms, with attention to the moderating role of neighborhood context, ethnic identity membership, and gender. The current study presented two aims. The first aim was to examine the relationship between youth experiences with police, as measured using questionnaire data and youth-led interviews, and the related outcomes of internalizing symptoms. Similarly, the final aim was to examine the relationship as a function of neighborhood context, ethnic identity membership, and gender. The findings will be discussed with respect to each of these aims.

Variance among Youth Experiences with Police.

The first aim of the study was to examine the extent to which youth perceptions and attitudes of police interactions predicted internalized symptoms. As previously discussed, youth perceptions and attitudes of police interactions was measured through indications of how safe/secure they felt with regards to the presence of police officers or the potential of police interaction. In line with previous research on the chronicity of negative Black and Latinx youth interactions of police, it was hypothesized that more negative reports of youth experiences with police (operationalized as higher ratings on the police interaction scale) would be significantly associated with higher levels of internalizing symptoms. While a significant relationship

emerged between youth experiences with police and internalizing symptoms, it did so in an unexpected direction. Neutral to positive experiences with police significantly predicted higher levels of internalizing symptoms than neutral to negative experiences with police. Youth experiences with police significantly explained 8.8% of the variance in internalizing symptoms for participants, suggesting a significant moderate negative correlation between youth experiences with police and internalizing symptoms.

Within the context of previous studies on youth/police interactions and the frequency of negative narratives surrounding youth of color and law enforcement in our current sociopolitical landscape, these findings surprisingly stray from expected norms (Brandl, Frank, Worden, & Bynum, 1994; Brick, Taylor, & Esbensen, 2003; Carr et al., 2007). Though the literature is limited on the extent to which youth experiences with police predict psychosocial outcomes, these results do not seem to fit in with the narrative presented by the few studies that do examine this phenomenon (Futterman et al., 2016; Geller et al., 2014). However, within the larger framework of the study, the quantitative findings appear to represent a microcosm of what youth experiences with police accurately look like for urban Black and Latinx adolescents residing in high-crime, low-income communities. When compared to the 30.9% of youth that reported negative ratings of police, qualitative findings suggest that youth experience negative interactions with police at a more frequent percentage (40.6%) than neutral (24.2%) or positive (11.6%) interactions. Despite the majority neutral ratings of police, instances of unwarranted stops, racism and discrimination, and violence perpetuated by police often emerged from youth reports of police interactions, signifying that these severe encounters are not mapping on to youth perceptions of police. In relation to the literature, there is evidence to suggest that these encounters may predict anxiety symptoms (Geller et al., 2014).

Moreover, the inconsistency between the valence of the quantitative youth ratings of police (majority neutral) and the disposition of the qualitative youth reported interactions with police (majority negative) suggests that youth may underreport the extent to which their interactions with police impact their perceptions. This suggests that urban youth of color may emotionally distance themselves from their negative experiences with police, thus become desensitized to negative contacts with police.

In theory, emotional desensitization characterizes a form of habituation, a learned diminished response to a salient stimulus after repeated exposure (Mrug, Madan & Windle, 2016; Rankin et al., 2008). For example, when faced with repeated exposures to community violence, research suggests that youth initially experience strong negative emotional reactions, followed by subsequent blunted emotional reactions, resulting in less emotional distress (Mrug et al., 2016). The desensitization process suggests that youth may begin to familiarize themselves to violence through regulating to pain and loss and viewing violence as normal (Fitzpatrick & Boldizar, 1993). While the violence exposure desensitization literature largely focuses on community violence exposure, the pathological adaptation model of desensitization may be adapted for adverse police interaction exposures (Gaylord-Harden, Cunningham & Zelencik, 2011; Ng-Mak et al., 2004). According to this model, youth begin to respond to violence with cognitive desensitization, evidenced by lower than expected levels of internalizing symptoms (Schwab-Stone et al., 2011; Ng-Mak et al. 2004). The current study's findings may suggest that youth undergoing frequent and repeated negative encounters with police may experience emotional numbing to subsequent negative police interactions across contexts.

This phenomenon is similar to that of legal cynicism (a cultural alignment in which institutional actors of law enforcement are viewed as indifferent and ill equipped to maintain civil

order) among urban youth of color (Kirk & Matsuda, 2011). Young people are negatively disposed toward police, in part, due to repeated experiences of procedural injustices. This finding is very much in accordance to that of Carr and colleagues (2007). Among a sample of Black American youth, researchers found that young people held negative views of police due to repeated lived experiences of negative encounters with law enforcement (Carr et al., 2007). The legal cynicism stemming from recurring negative interactions with police may, in turn, fuel notions of defeat and apathy towards the prospect of police encounters, resulting in a numbing effect.

Neighborhood Context.

In order to expand upon previous literature on the role of community context in explaining dispositions toward police, neighborhood context was examined as a moderator. Evidence suggests that neighborhood context and neighborhood effects may provide an encouraging setting that, in turn, may support positive evaluation of formal institutional structures (i.e., law enforcement) (Cao et al., 2001; Sampson & Bartusch, 1998). It was hypothesized that neighborhood context, conceptualized as the degree to which an individual perceives the psychological sense of community, social order/disorder, and attraction to their neighborhood) would moderate the relationship between youth experiences of police and internalizing symptoms, thus serving as a protective factor. However, mean youth perceptions of neighborhood context did not significantly interact with youth experiences with police to predict internalizing symptoms, nor did any of the four subscales related to neighborhood cohesion (safety, activity, friendships, and security.)

Qualitative data reflected the quantitative data within this context. When examining the youth-led interviews, two youth reported neighborhood-based protective factors that influenced more positive ratings of police (i.e., both youths attended the community-police awareness event, National Night Out). This finding falls in line with previous research on the advantages of successful

community policing programs designed to build community with the citizenry (Wycoff & Skogan, 1993). Previous literature suggests that community policing programs (CPPs) intended to improve community relations via accountability, transparency, and involving citizens as decision-makers have positive outcomes related to perceptions of disorder, police legitimacy, perceived police departments as socially equitable (Gill et al., 2014; McCandless, 2018).

However, depending on the neighborhood, youth reported experiences with police at varying levels of severity and valence. The four Chicago neighborhoods that provide the context for the study include Englewood, a predominantly Black and high poverty neighborhood, Bronzeville, a predominantly Black and somewhat less poor neighborhood, South Lawndale, a predominantly Latinx and poor neighborhood, and North Lawndale, a predominantly Black and high poverty neighborhood. As mentioned previously, Chicago crime data suggests that these neighborhoods are high-crime areas, citing reported instances of crime in the past year: Bronzeville (2,578), South Lawndale (4,551), Englewood (5,844), and North Lawndale (8,955) (Chicago Police Department, 2018). Relatedly, 2010 U.S. census data indicated participants resided in community areas with poverty rates ranging from 36.5 – 47.4% (Farooqui, 2017; U.S. Census Bureau, 2016).

Previous research suggests that marginalized communities situated in areas with high levels of crime are more likely to experience increased police presence and negative police interactions (Brunson, 2007). Youth reports of police interactions demonstrated similar outcomes. Youth residing in neighborhood with higher rates of reported crime shared more negative encounters with police. For example, youth residing in Englewood and North Lawndale reported higher rates of negative encounters with police than adolescents living in neighborhoods with relatively lower rates of crime (Bronzeville and South Lawndale). Concurrently, youth residing

in Bronzeville and South Lawndale reported higher rates of positive encounters with police within their neighborhood than participants from Englewood and North Lawndale.

Literature suggests that neighborhoods that experience higher rates of crime are more likely to exhibit disorganization, limited social cohesion, and mutual assistance (Sampson, 2011). Within the context of the larger study, youth residing in neighborhoods that possess internal social cohesion, evidenced by lower rates of crime, may exhibit resilience to perceived encounters with police (e.g., youth residing in Bronzeville and South Lawndale). Youth residing in communities with higher rates of crime, Englewood and North Lawndale, may not experience the beneficial outcomes of neighborhood cohesion and, thus, may report higher rates of negative experiences (both perceptions and encounters) with police. This aligns with work presented by Brick and colleagues (2009) in that higher levels of community strain and weakened community ties was associated with less favorable views of police among urban youth. Whether or not this association can be extrapolated to desensitized views of police over time is an incidence that ought to be explored in future studies.

Ethnic Identity Membership.

The penultimate hypothesis of the study sought to examine the moderating role of ethnic identity. Ethnic identity was characterized as affirmation and belonging or a child's sense of belonging to and feeling positive about their ethnicity. Affirmation and belonging are just one of many aspects of ethnic identity but is a component that is strongly linked to the mental health of Black American adolescents (Phinney, 1992; Mandara et al., 2009). Relatedly, there is evidence to suggest that ethnic and racial identity helps individuals avoid internalizing symptoms and negative stereotypes of one's own race (McLoyd, Cauce, Takeuchi, & Wilson, 2000). In the current

study, ethnic identity membership did not significantly moderate the relationship between youth experiences with police and internalizing symptoms.

Gender.

The final hypothesis of the study was to examine the moderating role of gender. Gender socialization theories suggest that girls are more inclined to internalize their problems and boys to externalize their problems (Nolen-Hoeksema, 1994). Indeed, male adolescents report more self-protective (e.g., carrying a weapon) and aggressive behaviors in response to witnessing violence while female adolescents reporting more depressive symptoms (Jenkins and Bell, 1994). Research suggests that the rates of internalizing symptoms in response to violence exposure are lower for males than for females, and desensitization in response to violence may be more likely to occur in male adolescents than female adolescents. Although the existent literature was mixed, it was hypothesized that males would exhibit a more salient relationship between negative youth experiences with police and internalizing symptoms than girls.

In line with previous research, gender did not significantly predict quantitative differences in attitudes toward police. However, youth-led interviews concerning their experiences with police exhibited a more nuanced view into this relationship. The study yielded distinctions between youth direct experiences with police versus witnessed encounters, with males reporting a greater, but not significantly different, percentage of direct victimization by police than females (44% of males, 29% of females). Methodologically, these findings suggest a truncated gender distribution. Within the sample, there were two females for every male, potentially resulting in the insignificant findings.

Limitations, Strengths, Future Directions.

Limitations. The findings of the current study also need to be considered within the context of a number of limitations with regard to the measurement, methodology, and sample. One significant weakness of the investigation is the fact that the main construct of interest, youth experiences with police, was partially measured by single-item quantitative measure. According to previous research, youth interactions of police are complex in that they can encompass a range of components (e.g., views of police assistance, attitudes toward police, views of police efficacy, encounters with police, etc.) (Brick et al., 2009; Brunson & Miller, 2006; Carr et al., 2009). By collapsing the broad range of elements that factor into youth/police interactions into a single item, the study fails to adequately conceptualize this experience, thus resulting in low content validity.

Additionally, the utility of a single item measure of youth experiences with police is weakened by the fact that it consists of a 7-point Likert scale. With fewer points of discrimination, the measure is more vulnerable to unknown biases in meaning and interpretation. A larger sample size would help differentiate between ratings. Follow up studies could benefit from narrowing the scope of questioning and focusing on a youth/police interaction or factor in their interaction with related outcomes.

Another limitation included the use of cross-sectional data, indicating a need for longitudinal data to fully examine causality in the association as theorized. Although baseline levels of internalizing symptoms were controlled, the use of cross-sectional qualitative data limits study exploration to correlates as opposed to causes. This contributes to another limitation regarding the study's sample size. The smaller sample size of the study increases the chances of Type II error (i.e., failing to reject the null hypothesis when there is an effect), and weakens the overall statistical power.

The sample also exhibited a gender imbalance, with the sample consisting of an overrepresentation of females (which is in contrast with previous studies regarding youth/police interactions). This limits the generalizability of the study's findings and is in contrast with previous studies that utilized equally balanced gender subgroups in their respective samples (Brick et al., 2009; Taylor et al., 2001). However, given that the general consensus does not deem gender as a significant predictor in youth/police interactions, the current study's findings may not shift our understanding on the role of gender in youth/police interactions in any direction.

Another potential limitation of the current study was largely homogenous sample with regard to race, social class, character traits of youth and geographical location (Chicago). Although conducting the study among a specific population maintains many advantages, the lack of heterogeneity in the current sample diminishes the external validity and generalizability to other communities and demographic groups. For example, the participants in the current study also contributed as high school mentors and mentees in a cross-age peer mentoring program grounded in positive youth development strategies, resulting in a youth sample that was largely pro-social and self-motivated (which may not be a good representation of the overall population). Additionally, the study was also imbalanced in terms of racial ethnic identity, with the majority of the sample consisting of Black youth.

Strengths. Despite the limitations present in the current study, the investigation also exhibited several strengths. The current study contributed to the limited literature on Black and Latinx youth experiences with police from both a quantitative and qualitative lens. Through utilizing qualitative interview data to complement quantitative findings, the current study was able to provide a richer understanding of youth experiences with police. The open-ended youth-led qualitative interviews were able to provide unique descriptives surrounding youth/police interactions and the

varying dimensions such interactions can exist in (e.g., direct experiences versus witnessed experiences, negative experiences versus positive experiences, etc.) By giving youth an opportunity to explicitly describe their various encounters/impressions of police and the context in which these encounters/impressions occurred or formed, the study's qualitative components expertly fill in any gaps quantitative data were unable to capture. These descriptives can help inform future constructs of interest related to youth/police interactions and aid in the development of more complex quantitative measures.

Another strength stemming from the current study is its ability to add to the limited literature on the psychosocial outcomes of youth/police interactions. As mentioned previously, the frequency to which negative perceptions of police and police interactions occur with Black American and Latinx youth can potentially produce damaging psychological outcomes (Futterman et al., 2016; Geller et al., 2014). While the findings add to our enigmatic view on the extent to which adverse psychosocial outcomes may occur, they expand on the understanding that more studies are needed in this area.

Future Directions. To combat limitations and expand upon these strengths, future studies should continue to examine the extent to which Black and Latinx youth from low income, urban communities interact with police in larger, longitudinal studies and the varying outcomes that may result from such interactions. This would also allow for a more tailored analysis of the consequences of youth interactions with police across a variety of psychosocial domains and help inform law enforcement on how to best interact with youth through having first-hand knowledge.

Future studies may also benefit from employing a more complex multi-item measure to aid in examining the extent to which youth experiences with police occur both longitudinally and with larger samples. Finally, future research should also attempt to utilize different samples (e.g., larger samples with equal gender representation, samples with Black and Latinx youth not participating in community-based, after school programming, etc.) in other contexts over time to explore whether the patterns reported in the current study apply to other settings.

Conclusions and Implications

The current study aimed to qualitatively and quantitative identify the psychosocial impact perceptions of police and police interactions may pose on Black American and Latinx American youth living in low income, high crime urban communities. The current study utilized a multi-method quasi-experimental research design to examine the nature of youth perceptions of, and interactions with, police and their potential impact on internalizing symptoms for 81 Black American and Latinx youth residing in low income and high crime urban communities. It was expected that this study will help increase the understanding of how youth perceptions of police and interactions with police can impact the psychosocial functioning and well-being of Black American and Latinx youth residing in low income and high crime communities.

Results from this research will help contribute to the emerging research on police encounters in other urban areas, thus advancing a public mental health perspective on negative policing. Moreover, the project will not only underscore the importance of implementing efforts to improve relations between police and Black and Latinx American youth, but also push forth an effort to require systemic solutions to systemic problems (i.e., the chronic environmental stressors in such communities that promote negative psychosocial functioning).

APPENDIX A
YOUTH EXPERIENCES WITH POLICE MEASURE

In your neighborhood, how safe/secure or fearful do you feel with regards to...

1. The presence of police officers or the potential of police interaction?

1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7
very safe/secure very fearful

1a. Describe a memorable interaction with police officers that you have had.

APPENDIX B
NEIGHBORHOOD YOUTH INVENTORY MEASURE

Revised version of Chipeur et al.'s (1999) Neighborhood Youth Inventory (NYI)

The following questions are asked about your feelings of the support, safety, activity, and friendships in the neighborhood(s) you live/spend a lot of time in. Answer to the best of your ability and as honestly as possible. There are no right or wrong answers.

Use the following numbering system:

- 1- Not at all true
- 2- A little true
- 3- Sort of true
- 4- Mostly true
- 5- Completely true

- | | | | | | | |
|-----|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | People in my neighborhood pitch in to help each other. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. | There is a place for kids my age to hang out in my neighborhood. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. | There are gangs in my neighborhood. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. | None of my friends live in my neighborhood. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. | When I want I can find someone to talk to in my neighborhood. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. | We look out for each other in my neighborhood. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. | There are things for kids my age to do in my neighborhood. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. | There are fights in my neighborhood. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. | My friends live close to my neighborhood. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. | I feel okay asking for help from my neighbors. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| | | | | | | |
| 11. | People support each other in my neighborhood. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12. | In my neighborhood there are things to get involved in. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13. | There are bad kids in my neighborhood. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 14. | I like being with the other kids in my neighborhood. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 15. | If I needed help I could go to anyone in my neighborhood. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 16. | People are there for each other in my neighborhood. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 17. | There is not much to do in my neighborhood. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 18. | There are drug dealers in my neighborhood. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 19. | Everyone is willing to help each other in my neighborhood. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 20. | The neighbors are suspicious of teenagers in my neighborhood. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| | | | | | | |
| 21. | People in my neighborhood work together to get things done. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 22. | People in my neighborhood can be really mean. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

APPENDIX C

MULTIGROUP ETHNIC IDENTITY MEASURE

Revised (12-item) Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure

In this country, people come from a lot of different cultures and there are many different words to describe the different backgrounds or ethnic groups that people come from. Some examples of the names of ethnic groups are Hispanic, Black, Asian-American, Native American, Irish-American, and White. These questions are about your ethnicity or your ethnic group and how you feel about it or react to it.

Please fill in: In terms of ethnic group, I consider myself to be _____

Use the numbers below to indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement.

(4) Strongly agree; (3) Agree; (2) Disagree; (1) Strongly Disagree

- _____ 1. I have spent time trying to find out more about my ethnic group, such as its history, traditions, and customs.
- _____ 2. I am active in organizations or social groups that include mostly members of my own ethnic group.
- _____ 3. I have a clear sense of my ethnic background and what it means for me.
- _____ 4. I think a lot about how my life will be affected by my ethnic group membership.
- _____ 5. I am happy that I am a member of the group I belong to.
- _____ 6. I have a strong sense of belonging to my own ethnic group.
- _____ 7. I understand pretty well what my ethnic group membership means to me.
- _____ 8. To learn more about my ethnic background, I have often talked to other people about my ethnic group.
- _____ 9. I have a lot of pride in my ethnic group and its accomplishments.
- _____ 10. I participate in cultural practices of my own group, such as special food, music, or customs.
- _____ 11. I feel a strong attachment towards my own ethnic group.
- _____ 12. I feel good about my cultural or ethnic background.

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While at Loyola, Ogechi worked as a graduate research assistant under the supervision of Dr. Maryse Richards in the Risk & Resilience Lab. Upon completion of her doctorate, Ogechi will dedicate her career to providing therapy for youth of color exposed to community violence and related environmental stressors and promoting task shifting of mental health services in communities facing social and economic inequalities.