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The Pursuit of Procedural Justice and Police Legitimacy: A Case Study of Community Police
Officers' Perceptions of the Perceived Benefits of Higher Education

by

Tara M. Kane

Dissertation

Submitted to the College of Education Leadership and Counseling

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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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Dissertation Committee:

Raul Leon, PhD, Chair

Carmen McCallum, PhD

Paul Leighton, PhD

Rema Reynolds, PhD

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Ypsilanti, Michigan

Dedication

This is dedicated to my biggest fan, my partner in life, and the greatest love I have ever known.

Thank you for always believing in me and never giving up on me.

Abstract

This is a case study of suburban community police officers and their perception of benefits of higher education as it relates to outcomes of procedural justice and legitimacy. Acknowledging controversial, high-profile incidents which have caused the police profession to be generalized in a negative manner, this study sought to examine community-policing initiatives as an effective strategy for promoting positive community-police relationships. Community police officers were queried about academic and professional preparation they perceived as necessary for the demands of the 21st century community police officer.

Previous literature on community policing and procedurally just policing has primarily focused on the perceptions of the public. This study hoped to contribute to the literature as the authentic police officer voice. Analysis of the data revealed several themes and found that a redefined model of community policing is a promising answer to restoring trust between the community and the police. This new model shall be referred to as the *Procedurally Just Community-Policing Model* and concludes that when intentional community-policing efforts are intertwined with procedurally just policing practice, trust is maximized, therefore resulting in legitimacy.

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Chapter One: Introduction to the Study

Law enforcement in America is facing an identity crisis. The public's trust of law enforcement hit a 22-year low in 2015, with only 52% of Americans expressing confidence (Newport, 2016). Trust increased slightly in 2016, jumping to 56%. In 2017, Chuck Wexler, Executive Director of the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF), opined in an open letter to the national law enforcement community concerning the challenges, opportunities, and strategies for hiring the 21st century police officer. His central concern was the American policing profession and how it may be facing its most fundamental questioning of legitimacy in decades: "The very essence of policing is being debated in many cities, often because of controversial video recordings of police officers' actions. Community trust has eroded, and the professionalism of the police is being questioned" (as cited in Morison, 2017, p. 2).

High-profile, controversial incidents involving law enforcement officers across the country have called attention to the increased tension and lack of trust among officers and the communities they serve (President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing, 2015; Primicerio & Normore, 2018). The age of the Internet and viral videos has transformed what was once a local event making the nightly news, to a worldwide story spread via media outlets. These portrayals have sometimes resulted in large-scale demonstrations, protest marches, and in some instances—riots over perceptions of police misconduct and excessive use of force (United States Department of Justice, 2016). While history confirms there has always been conflict between police officers and citizens, an increasing number of widely publicized and divisive incidents between police and citizens suggest a need for police policies and practices to ensure procedural justice (Peterson, Reichert, & Konefal, 2017). It is imperative police interventions are implemented with strong policies and training in place, rooted in procedural justice.

Without that, police interventions can easily deteriorate into racial profiling, excessive use of force, and other practices that disregard civil rights, causing negative reactions from people living in already challenged communities (Office of Community Oriented Policing, 2014).

The research literature is chockfull of studies showing that the principle pathway to promoting legitimacy is through the practice of procedural justice (Hinds & Murphy, 2007; Tyler, 2001, 2004) and that procedurally just encounters enhance community approval of police action, leading people to cooperate and comply with police directives. The Office of Community Oriented Policing (COPS) recommends, “The most consistent strategy that enhances procedural justice is community-policing initiatives” (Presidents Task Force on 21st Century Policing, 2015, p. 42).

Community policing is not a new idea. As the reader will learn, community-policing initiatives have been around for decades. The reality of community policing today begins with acknowledging there has been a thorough and dramatic change in both the form and appearance of policing (Primicerio & Normore, 2018). Today’s police officer, the 21st Century community police officer, is very different from the police officer of generations past. It is through this lens—understanding the transformation of policing in conjunction with the dynamic changes in society—that this research was rooted. Examining concepts such as community-policing initiatives provided an optimistic route for procedurally just and legitimate policing. Views of police legitimacy, procedural justice, community policing, higher education and the 21st Century police officer were operationalized and examined throughout this study.

It is imperative today’s police officers improve relationships with their local community. Trust between law enforcement agencies and the citizens they protect and serve is

a fundamental aspect of any democracy. The success of the police is contingent not only on the development of their own skills and expertise, but also on the creation of competent communities. Community-policing strategies acknowledge that the police cannot succeed in achieving their basic goals without both the operational assistance and political support of the community. On the other hand, the community cannot succeed in constructing moral, open, and orderly communities without a professional and responsive police force (Meese, 1993).

Before the reader progresses any further, it is important to define community. The literal definition of community involves the characteristics of a group of people who share certain demographic and socioeconomic traits and fellowship (Flynn, 1998; Merriam-Webster, 2019). That definition aside, our individual perceptions vary widely on the notion of community. Because this study sought to examine community-policing initiatives related to procedurally just and legitimate policing, the community identified for this study can be described as the arena in which community-policing initiatives are delivered. The participants, recipients, and focal point of the community-policing strategies are inclusive: community members, business stakeholders, the school systems, and the police themselves.

Focusing on legitimacy and cooperation with the police as outcomes that community-policing initiatives can serve to improve, this study aimed to examine police officers' own perceptions about community policing and their professional as well as academic preparation for policing in a procedurally just and legitimate manner.

Background on Procedural Justice and Police Legitimacy

Research suggests the most common pathway to increase citizens' perceptions of police legitimacy is through the use of procedural justice (Nix & Wolfe, 2015; Rosenbaum, Lawrence, Hartnett, McDevitt, & Posick, 2015). The legitimacy of the police is determined by the

relationships with the community (Lankenau, 2017). The literature on police legitimacy makes clear that such police-community relationships are based on the perception of the police as a legitimate authority (Tyler, 2006).

Procedural justice focuses on the way the police and other legal authorities interact with the public; it also focuses on how the characteristics of those interactions shape the public's views of the police, their willingness to obey the law, and actual crime rates (Bradford, Hohl, Jackson, & MacQueen, 2015; Tyler, 2014). Without procedurally just policing, the development of good will between police and communities is near impossible. When mutual trust between the police and the communities they serve is strong, an environment that ensures public safety and effective policing is the end result (United States Department of Justice, 2016). In addition, procedurally just policing creates opportunities for improved community perceptions of police legitimacy, which is the belief that authorities have the right to dictate proper behavior (Tyler, 2014).

The consequences of the public's perception of an egregious act of misconduct by a single officer in one city not only damage police-community relationships locally; they can foster nationwide attention and reduce trust of the police generally (President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing, 2015; United States Department of Justice, 2016). Transparency and accountability are therefore essential to achieve positive police-community relationships. When law enforcement acknowledges these challenges, they are actively pursuing legitimacy (Mentel, 2012; Patterson, 1995).

Meares, Tyler, and Gardener (2015) found when the public rejects police behavior, it is often fueled by factors unrelated to the law, meaning that police behavior that is procedurally just—even if unlawful—may be perceived more favorably than behavior that is lawful, but

procedurally unjust. When the police have legitimacy, it promotes the acceptance of police decisions with high levels of law abidingness and makes it more likely that police and communities will collaborate to combat crime (Tyler, 2014).

The reality of the oscillation of police-citizen relations has garnered a great deal of attention from scholars and practitioners. Dubious incidents of officer-involved shootings in some communities across America made the need to examine policing strategies all that more important (Przeszlowski & Crichlow, 2018). The resulted public outrage, sometimes characterized by Black Lives Matter protests and in some case riots, was an additional reason why policing strategies and policies were worthy of scholarly evaluation.

The procedural justice model is prescriptive in that it explains the manner in which the police can exercise their authority in a fair and just way, through both the “quality of treatment” and the “quality of the decision making process” (Reisig, Bratton, & Gertz, M. 2007). Procedural justice is therefore realized by the way in which police treat citizens and the fairness of the decisions made (Reisig et al, 2007; Sunshine & Tyler, 2003).

In addition to the research literature, empirical research links outcomes of legitimacy and cooperation to the perceptions of procedurally just policing (Presidents Task Force on 21st Century Policing, 2015). Decades of research and practice support the premise that people are more likely to obey the law when they believe that those who are enforcing it have authority that is perceived as legitimate by those subject to the authority. The public confers legitimacy only on those whom they believe are acting in procedurally just ways (Tyler, 2014). Procedural justice perceptions are identified as the police demonstrating fairness in making decisions (i.e., listening to people before making decisions) as well as treating justly the individuals with whom they come into contact (i.e., showing respect and treating with dignity); (Aksu, 2014;

Tyler, 2006).

In 2012, Mazerolle, Bennett, Antrobus, and Eggins conducted a survey where they applied the concept of procedural justice to citizen-police interactions (Rhodes, 2018). Their study looked at the perceptions the public has of procedural justice related to authority, trustworthiness, and effective policing. Perceptions of “neutrality,” “trustworthiness,” “respectful treatment,” and “voice” were identified as the four key components of procedural justice (Goodman-Delahunty, 2010; Mazerolle et al, 2012). Their study supported what other researchers have said about procedurally just policing and legitimacy—when law enforcement officers used appropriate procedurally just practices, cooperation between police and citizens increased and tensions decreased (Kruger, Nedelec, Reischl, & Zimmerman, 2015).

These perceptions, building trust and fostering legitimacy on both sides of the police-citizen divide, were not only the context of this study, but also the underlying foundational principles to the nature of the relations between the police and the communities they serve. It has been proposed that community-policing initiatives may be the necessary prescription for building trust in many large urban areas where the police-civilian conflict has escalated (Gill, Weisburd, Telep, Vitter & Bennett, 2014; Kelling & Moore, 1988). It is also a widely held view that community-policing initiatives can be successful in reducing crime in problematic inner-city areas (Connell, Miggans, & McGloin, 2008; Rosenbaum & Lurigio, 1994).

Community Policing

The idea of community-oriented policing has risen in popularity since the 1990s (Solzer, Alper, & Merlo, 2013). This popularity was a likely result of the creation of the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) and federal funding that has been attached to many community-policing initiatives. Christine Gardiner’s (2017) *Policing Around the Nation*

report found that 95% of surveyed agencies reported practicing some “form” of community policing (Gardiner, 2017). This report’s findings are consistent with the results obtained by Somerville (2009) and Morabito (2010), who determined many law enforcement agencies in the United States have implemented programs that are generally in accordance with the overall components of community policing. These components include community partnerships, organizational transformation, and problem-solving, with initiatives such as community involvement and decentralization often used interchangeably (Somerville, 2009).

Although there are many definitions of community policing, there seems to be an underlying theme associated with it (Office of Community Oriented Policing, 2014; Oliver & Bartgis, 1998; Turner, 2015). Community policing is a philosophy that promotes organizational strategies that support the systematic use of partnerships and problem-solving techniques and proactively addresses the immediate conditions that give rise to public safety issues such as crime, social disorder, and fear of crime (Office of Community Oriented Policing, 2014). In the simplest of terms, community policing can be viewed as a crime prevention tool that simultaneously fosters community building and trust (Turner, 2015).

The exact strategies employed by community-policing agencies vary, depending on the unique community-related problems the department and community are working to address: “This variance may be regarded as disadvantageous as it prevents a uniform definition and implementation of community-oriented policing, however it is advantageous in the sense that each agency can implement the strategy as necessary to the community it serves” (Przeszlowski et al, 2018, p. 1). The commonality most agencies share is the view that community-oriented policing works when the police concentrate on preventing crime and eliminating the fear it creates. Earning the trust of the community is paramount as it allows officers the ability to

communicate with citizens and therefore better understand and address community problems and the factors that contribute to crime (Office of Community Oriented Policing, 2015). By judiciously listening to residents about the issues that concern them and responding to those concerns, the police can build trust in the community and increase residents' respect for police authority (Fischer, 2014). It is important to understand that community-policing initiatives are not simply one directional, i.e., police to community, instead working best when there is a flow between the police and the community (Bain, Robinson, & Conser, 2014).

The 21st Century Police Officer

For many, police work is not just a job, it's a calling. The very nature of the work is to serve and protect. Without a doubt, the responsibilities today are more complex than ever before (Henion, 2015). The 21st century police officer is tasked with responsibilities that go above and beyond what was expected of previous generations. While 21st century police officers continue to respond to calls for service and investigate crime, that is where the similarities end with generations past. At the most basic level, police agencies have expanded their missions. The goals of preventing crime and reducing crime rates, rather than merely responding after crimes are committed, are the priority. Today's best police departments are consistently looking for ways to be proactive instead of reactive (Reaves, 2015).

The job description of police officer has evolved from reactive enforcement that once required minimal education qualifications to complex professional operations requiring greater capacity for knowledge and techniques (Peak & Madensen, 2019). Officers must be able to adapt and react to changing situations during periods that are unpredictable and unstable, chaotic, or high stress, all while acting ethically and upholding the U.S. Constitution. The role of the police has become significantly wider and embodies the diverse

and multi-faceted demands of anti-terrorism, reassurance, fear of crime, catching criminals, crime prevention, and crime reduction (Millie, 2013).

Rydberg and Terrill (2014), researchers at Michigan State University, found that a college degree significantly reduces the likelihood that officers will use force as their first option to gain compliance. They also discovered evidence that educated officers have greater levels of creativity and problem-solving skills. These skills align with community policing initiatives and suggest a new hiring focus may be the answer to securing communities' trust. In addition to the most basic job requirement, which is confronting crime, officers must possess critical thinking skills to address complex social problems. The need for these critical thinking skills becomes evident in calls involving mentally ill persons in crisis. These calls for service are frequent in communities across the country and officers must be prepared to respond appropriately as resources for this population have diminished over the years (Wells & Schafer, 2006).

Technological advancements have also created new responsibilities for the 21st century police officer. These responsibilities include the adoption of advanced computer skills, a basic requirement to function and communicate in a modern technical society. In the past decade, advances in technologies utilized by law enforcement agencies have accelerated at an extraordinary pace (Miller, Toliver, & Police Executive Research Forum, 2014). The body worn camera (BWC) is commonplace in many suburban agencies and is being adopted in many urban agencies, as they are able to financially procure them. Findings are that BWCs are accepted not only by law enforcement but the public as a necessary tool to ensure truth in policing. The BWC has also been credited with an increase in transparency of police behavior, acting as a deterrent to discrimination, and in restoring community trust (Coudert, Butin, &

LeMétayer, 2015).

The use of drones, data mining, and forensic examinations of cell phones and computers are another glimpse into the highly sophisticated world of police investigations today. Understanding forensic science and how this evidence can strengthen a case, as well as the technical skills to understand ways to fight cybercrime, require educated investigators to use a multi-disciplined approach. Modern police departments need highly educated people capable of leading change in an evolving technology-oriented society. (Rydberg & Terrill, 2014; Bond, 2014) In addition to the specialized investigative techniques required of today's police officers, college helps prepare officers knowledge of people and social situations involving varying degrees of conflict (Henion & Terrill, 2015). These demands preclude a lowering of requirements for persons responsible for confronting major crime and social problems.

Educating the Police

In shaping the police profession for the 21st Century, President Obama convened a task force to investigate police and community relations in December of 2014. The final report published in 2015 was the *President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing*, which stated—

To build a police force capable of dealing with the complexity of the 21st century, it is imperative that agencies place value on both educational achievements and socialization skills when making hiring decisions. Hiring officers who reflect the community they serve is important not only to external relations, but also to increasing understanding within the agency (p. 51)

In fact, the public's perception that police share the morals and values of the communities they serve may be key to increased trust and legitimacy (Jackson & Sunshine,

2007; Trochmann & Grover, 2016).

There are many personal benefits of higher education, which are congruent with community policing. These benefits, while not all-inclusive, include the core components for community policing: independent decision-making and problem-solving skills, aptitude for innovative thinking, adaptability, diversity and cultural awareness, appreciation for minority recruitment efforts, and intellectual personal growth (Bond, 2014). Rebecca Paynich (2009) found college educated officers were also more likely to have a better understanding of policing and the criminal justice system, as well as a better comprehension of civil rights issues from multiple perspectives. According to the Police Association for College Education (PACE), benefits of higher education in policing include fewer citizen complaints, aspirations of promotion and appreciation of minority recruitment (Michelson, 2016). These benefits are in alignment with procedurally just policing and legitimacy.

Problem Statement

There are few who would argue education is unimportant. In law enforcement, where procedural justice and legitimacy are being questioned, it may be more important than ever before (Harris, 2018). The inquiry into whether police officers should have formal education, in addition to the basic police academy, is not new (Edwards, 2017; Harris, 2018). The debate about higher education and the perceived benefits for the community police officer is.

Acknowledging the demands on the 21st century law enforcement officer is more complex than ever before, the problem to be examined in this study was that the minimum education requirement for police officers across America remains consistently low. For those aspiring to leadership and executive positions within their agencies, higher education is even more important. Whether managing millions of dollars in budgets, training academies, supplies,

equipment, forensic labs, personnel, legal and mandated requirements, court decisions and policing diverse communities, these complexities demand higher education (Michelson, 2016).

The 2017 nationwide study *Policing around the Nation: Education, Philosophy and Practice* conducted by Christine Gardiner found the vast majority (81.5%) of surveyed agencies require only a high school diploma to be hired. A small percent of agencies requires recruits to have earned some college credits (6.6%), a two-year degree (10.5%), or a four-year degree (1.3%); (Gardiner, 2017).

Since 1920, there have been 10 major national crime commissions under presidential authority or that of the attorney general. Several of these were presidential commissions specifically analyzing the issues concerning citizens and their relations with the police. Prior to President Obama's 2015 *21st Century Task Force on Policing* report, the 1967 President's Commission on Law Enforcement report, *The Challenge of Crime in a Free Society*, was the most widely accepted in-depth analysis regarding police professionalism (President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing, 2015; Sklansky, 2011). One of the most significant recommendations from that report was the recommendation to require higher education for police officers. The report emphasized that at a minimum; officers should have a two-year degree from an accredited institution, with a preference for a four-year college degree. (National Criminal Justice Reference Service, 1967). That recommendation was echoed in 2015 with the 21st Century Policing Task Force report, yet neither national nor state standards exist.

While there has been some research focused on whether a college-educated police officer performs better (Allen, 2003; Rydberg & Terrill, 2014) or has different occupational attitudes (Paoline, Terrill, & Rossler, 2015) compared to officers without a higher education experience, little attention has been given to the perceptions of police officers regarding the

value of their higher education (Charman, 2018; Edwards, 2017; Paynich, 2009). To build a police force capable of dealing with the complexities of the 21st century, it is imperative that agencies place value on both educational achievements and socialization skills when making hiring decisions (President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing, 2015). Law enforcement managers and police officers who subscribe to community-policing initiatives should also be asked if they perceive value in higher education attainment as it relates to their profession (Paoline et al, 2015).

Diana Bruns and Kevin Magnan conducted a qualitative study in 2014 asking law enforcement officers from a Midwest agency whether a college degree was a necessary ingredient for the performance and behavior of police officers. Their research findings cannot be generalized, as their research did not include a random sample of law enforcement offices across the country. While responses from the participants were mixed, what they found was of interest to the researcher: despite a lack of minimum requirements, officers in their sample, as well as many others throughout the country, have elected to earn college degrees (Bruns & Magnan, 2014).

Justification

A significant amount of information and research on procedural justice and its effects on communities exists (Rhodes, 2018; Mentel 2012). Most of the research has focused on the communities' perceptions of police legitimacy and procedural justice, as it relates to law enforcement's response to crime. The voice of the police officer regarding procedurally just and legitimate policing is absent in the literature. This lack of voice is important to note due to the fact that crime is not the sole burden of the police (Brogden & Nijhar, 2005).

In addition, most empirical research that has examined community-policing strategies

has done so within the framework of large metropolitan cities and agencies (Przeszlowski & Crichlow, 2018). It was the belief of the researcher that it was equally important to contribute to the limited research on smaller populations to increase knowledge of the applicability of community-policing efforts in less studied settings. This study was concerned with the gap in existing literature on the topic of procedural justice and legitimacy through the lens of the suburban community police officer. A suburban community police officer for this study was defined as one who works in a predominantly single-family residential community, within a short distance of an urban area.

This study explored whether community police officers believed higher education was beneficial for the 21st century police officer. Police leaders' and officers' beliefs pertaining to perceived benefits of higher education and how it affects community-policing efforts were emphasized. The results of this study may be used to redefine hiring standards for community-policing agencies that have historically not placed an emphasis on higher education.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore whether community police officers perceive benefits of their college experience as it relates to the pursuit of procedural justice and legitimacy within the community they serve. The researcher did not have the time or the resources to comprehensively interview a nation with 18,000 separate law enforcement agencies and a strong history of preference for local control of community issues. Paramount to this research was understanding how community police officers identify unity of purpose and consensus on best practices related to procedurally just policing and legitimacy in the community they serve.

While there are a multitude of opinions on the definition or role of the police, little is

heard from one particular sector, frontline police officers themselves. Through a case study of experienced police leaders and patrol officers of a suburban police agency in Southeast Michigan, perceptions and misperceptions of community policing as they relate to procedurally just policing and legitimacy were examined. Participants were asked about the perceived benefits of higher education as it relates to community-policing initiatives, specifically, decision-making, community partnerships, and crime prevention efforts. This study provided a unique opportunity for the voice of the suburban police officer to be heard.

Significance of the Study

The debate surrounding the question whether police officers should be required to have met minimum college education requirements prior to employment remains unanswered (Edwards, 2017; Paynich, 2009). Christine Gardiner's (2017) research, a nationwide study of law enforcement agencies and higher education levels of officers, found evidence of the value of a bachelor's degree for police officers was not irrefutable. But when asking the question related to perceived benefits of higher education, it was important to differentiate between who was questioned in the first place. Was it the frontline community police officer? Was it the administration of the police agency? Was it the community itself? What was compelling to the researcher in searching for an answer to this decades long question was that while less than 2% of the nation's police agencies require a bachelor's degree, 30.2% of sworn officers in the United States have one (Gardiner, 2017). With respect to the ongoing discussion regarding police officer minimum education requirements (Bostaph, Brady, & Giacomazzi, 2014; Gibbs, 2016), it was important to determine the opinions of police officers on the perceived benefits of higher education for police officers. If active duty police officers did not perceive higher education as beneficial to their career or saw their education as out of touch with their job

responsibilities, this would question the necessity of police officers obtaining a college education (Edwards, 2017).

This research was significant for several reasons. If one agrees that the demands on the 21st century community police officer are more complex than ever before, then understanding how police officers are professionally prepared is important. Not only were individual police officers' own perceptions related to the perceived benefits of higher education examined, but their opinions related to basic police academy instruction as it relates to community-policing initiatives was queried. The significance is that their perspectives are now shared and will therefore add to the limited research literature currently available. These viewpoints also add to the literature in the field of educational leadership as it relates to formal academic preparation. If the professionals who work in the field of law enforcement do not perceive higher education as being valuable to community-policing initiatives or believe the academic curriculum as out of touch with their responsibilities, this would question the necessity of police officers obtaining a college education and challenge the academic field to create a curriculum which is more helpful to their careers (Edwards, 2017).

This research was also unique in that there was a significant lack of research exploring the relationship between higher education and community-policing initiatives related to procedural justice and legitimacy. The majority of the relevant literature examining community policing has focused on the citizens' perceptions of procedurally just policing (Donner, Maskaly, Fridell, & Jennings, 2015; Mazerolle, Antrobus, Bennett, & Taylor, 2013; Rhodes, 2018). This study's findings add to the research literature regarding police officers' perceptions related to community-policing effectiveness with respect to procedurally just policing and legitimacy. With the Office of Community Oriented Policing stating, "The most

consistent strategy that enhances procedural justice is community-policing initiatives” (as cited in Presidents Task Force on 21st Century Policing, 2015) inquiry into police officers’ perceptions related to this statement was relevant. This inquiry was also significant due to Gardiner’s (2017) research finding, which reported 95% of police agencies across the country acknowledge they practice some form of community policing. If police officers were not convinced that community policing was the correct approach to restoring community trust, shouldn’t they be asked what alternative(s) they perceived to be the answer?

Finally, this research was timely as the role of the police continues to be questioned across the country. The police may be the face of the criminal justice system, but they are simply one facet of a complicated system. Procedurally just policing and legitimacy are present day buzzwords and appear in this study to be the appropriate answer to building trust within the community. In addition, community-policing initiatives were the consistent avenue that the case study officers cited when explaining how they approach procedurally just policing practices.

What made this research unique was that the preferred approach for examining procedural justice and legitimacy seemed to be quantitative, with scholars relying primarily on the use of survey methodology to answer key research questions (Holtfreter, 2016). The opportunity to conduct qualitative research by way of interviewing the persons responsible for providing procedural just and legitimate police services is an underutilized research methodology.

What we know is the movement to establish professional standards in policing that began in the 1930s with August Vollmer has gained and lost momentum over the years. While the development of professional standards has raised the quality of policing in the United

States—transforming both police work and police administration (Gaines & Miller, 2007)—the questions around the necessity of a college degree for police officers remain unanswered (Gardiner, 2017).

Research Question

Research questions in qualitative studies frequently begin with *what* and *how* (Bryant, 2004). They are sometimes called the *grand tour* question. The central question for this study was the following: What are the perceived benefits of higher education for community-police officers as it relates to outcomes of procedural justice and legitimacy?

The following sub-questions were addressed in this study:

- Q1. What does community-policing mean to police officers?
- Q2. What educational preparation do police managers perceive to be the most beneficial for community-police officers?
- Q3. What experiences from higher education do community-police officers perceive as most beneficial for the community-policing model (e.g., diversity in the classroom, real life-scenario based curriculum)?
- Q4. How is decision-making affected by the public's perception of procedural justice and legitimacy? How do issues such as race and ethnicity affect the public's perception of these outcomes?
- Q5. Do community police officers believe the 21st century police officer should be required to have attended college prior to attending the police academy? If so, how much? Associate degree? Bachelor's degree?

When choosing a case study, the researcher must determine if they are choosing a typical, exemplary or unusual/unique model for inquiry (Lichtman, 2013). In-depth interviews

of police managers and police officers from a typical suburban police department in southeast Michigan was proposed. The chosen agency was considered typical due to its minimum hiring standards in the state, an associate degree, as well as its agency's formal identification as a community-policing agency.

The investigation of the research question and its sub-questions into community police officers' perceptions of benefits related to their college education shall add to the literature related to higher education and its necessity for 21st century police work.

Definition of Terms

- *Community*: Community is a unified body of individuals such as people with common interests, living in a particular area (Merriam-Webster, 2019).
- *Community Policing*: Community policing is a philosophy that promotes organizational strategies that support the systematic use of partnerships and problem-solving techniques to proactively address the immediate conditions that give rise to public safety issues such as crime, social disorder, and fear of crime (COPS, 2014).
- *Education Level of Officers*: Educational level of officers is operationalized among three levels: some college experience, a completed associate degree, and completed a bachelor's degree or higher (Paoline et al., 2015; Rydberg & Terrill, 2010).
- *Legitimacy*: Legitimacy reflects the belief that the police ought to be allowed to exercise their authority to maintain social order, manage conflicts, and solve problems in their communities. Legitimacy is reflected in three judgments. The first is public trust and confidence in the police. Such confidence involves the belief that the police are honest, that they try to do their jobs well, and that they are trying to protect the community against crime and violence. Second, legitimacy reflects the

willingness of residents to defer to the law and to police authority, i.e., their sense of obligation and responsibility to accept police authority. Finally, legitimacy involves the belief that police actions are morally justified and appropriate to the circumstances (Tyler, 2014).

- *Municipal Police Department*: Municipal police departments consist of Law enforcement agencies under the control of local city or town governments.
- *Police Academy*: Police academies in the United States are institutions that offer basic law enforcement training to individuals recruited or seeking to become law enforcement officers (Hickman, 2005).
- *Police Officer Job Duty*: Police officer job duty is classified in one of four categories: patrol, investigations, administration/support, or other (Kyle & White, 2017).
- *Police Science*: While there is no formal definition, police science is defined by Sebastian Roche (2012) as “science of the police” as well as “science for the police.”
- *Procedural Justice*: Procedural justice comprises four essential components: citizen participation in the proceedings prior to an authority reaching a decision (or voice), perceived neutrality of the authority in making the decision, whether the authority showed dignity and respect toward citizens throughout the interaction, and whether the authority conveyed trustworthy motives (Goodman-Delahunty, 2010; Tyler, 2004; Tyler & Fagan, 2010).
- *Professionalization*: Professionalism is described by Frederick Mosher (1968) as a necessary step in the development of a career in civil service, wherein—high level occupational specialists develop standards, coalesce, and become recognized—that is to professionalize (Paynich, 2009).

- *Suburban Police Officer*: Suburban police officers are defined as one who works in a predominantly single-family residential community, within a short distance of an urban area.
- *21st Century Policing Trust Requirement*: The 21st century policing trust requirement refers to the fact that individuals are more likely to obey the law when they trust that those who enforce it will treat them equally with dignity and respect, regardless of what they look like, where they live, or whom they love (Davis, 2015).

Chapter Two: Review of Literature

The debate surrounding the necessity and desirability of higher education for police officers has gone on for over a century (Bruns & Magnan, 2014; Roberg & Bonn, 2004; Brown, 1974). Scholars and police professionals have argued that the college-educated police officer is better prepared than their high school graduate counterparts due to their increased exposure to new surroundings and cultures, which should increase their ability to be better problem-solvers and decrease their prejudice and bias (Edwards, 2017; Palmiotto, 1999; Paynich, 2009).

Many believe these skills are particularly important, as the job of policing has transitioned to a community-policing model (Paynich, 2009; Sereni-Massinger & Wood, 2016). Community policing gained popularity in the late 1980s and to this day remains the model for officer engagement within the communities they serve. Community policing stresses the importance of police-community relations by actively seeking partnerships within the community. These partnerships are vital to reduce crime. They can help to solve the daily issues that the community identifies as priorities (Fisher-Stewart, 2007; Office of Community Oriented Policing, 2015).

An interesting fact is that there is no uniform model of community policing. Rather, the approach taken by police varies by community or even by individual neighborhood, as each area has a unique set of needs. While this style of policing can be more responsive than traditional policing, it also requires officers to possess more problem-solving and critical thinking skills than in the past (Paterson, 2011). Community police officers have a considerable amount of discretion in deciding how and when to enforce the law (Walker & Katz, 2013). Thus, it is very important that officers use this discretion wisely and professionally (Edwards, 2017). Before addressing the demands on the 21st century police

officer, it is important to reflect on the history of policing in America.

The History of Policing in America

The British directly influenced America's modern police model. The Metropolitan Police Act of 1829 established London's Metropolitan Police Force based out of Scotland Yard. Sir Robert Peel, England's Home Secretary, considered the father of modern policing, replaced the tangled system of Parish constables and night watchmen with new constables called "bobbies." Though corruption and bribery plagued the department in its early years, this police agency was a vast improvement over the previous means of policing (Peak & Madensen, 2019; Schmalleger, 2012;). Sir Robert Peel is credited not only with the first modern organized police organization, he envisioned a larger view of policing. He recognized and emphasized the importance of crime prevention (Schmalleger, 2012).

The Peelian principles, guiding principles for the new police structure created by Peel, are the first known code of ethics for formalized police officers. It was a widely accepted list that described Sir Robert Peel's philosophy of an ethical police force. The principles credited to Peel represent important values that guided modern policing. They included the importance of public approval for police work to work effectively, the need for public cooperation and the need for the police to operate in impartial service to law, and the need for the police to use physical force only when necessary (Barfield, 2017).

After the colonies broke away from British rule, common law continued, and each colony determined lawful or unlawful behavior. Citizens insisted on minimum and local policing. Early colonial policing lacked organization and consistently relied on volunteers (Allen, 2003). The earliest constables and sheriffs who were paid did not patrol and were reactive to crime. They did not work at night. They did not leave their locals, yet as the

population grew, so did crime. Citizens, and part-time watchmen were literally ineffective in their ability to deter crime and corruption was rampant (Schram & Tibbetts, 2018).

By the mid 1800s, crime had become a way of life for most American cities. Looting and theft were two means for survival. Organized gangs fighting for territory only contributed to the mayhem. In 1850, New York City was considered one of the most dangerous cities to live in (Pelfrey, 2000; Schmalleger, 2012). This was in large part due to colonists' preference for a community consensus model when reacting to crime rather than a modern police force. They were weary of too much governmental influence in their daily lives. It was not until the 1930s that citizens' opinions changed. Due to increased immigration, crime rates increased to levels that left citizens extremely uncomfortable. Some cities experienced riots, fires, and economic depression. This lowered quality of life called for a formal and professional police force (Pelfrey, 2000; Primicerio & Normore, 2018).

Organized police forces were born out of necessity in America. The early 19th century saw its first formal police departments. Boston is often referred to as the first formalized police department with the New York Police Department right behind it. They were followed by Philadelphia, New Orleans and Cincinnati. These jobs were highly desirable as they paid about \$900 annually, which were about two times higher than the average blue-collar worker (Walker & Katz, 2013). Police at this time were responsible for keeping the public peace through visible, routine patrol (Allen, 2003).

The Political Era (mid 1800s-1930s). The political era was the first intentional decentralized system of regulation and oversight of police organizations (Allen, 2003; Peak & Madsen, 2019; Primicerio & Normore, 2018). At the turn of the twentieth-century, policing was disorganized, riddled with corruption, incompetence and complaints of excessive force. Police

officers were underpaid, untrained, and at the will of those in political power. Abuse of this power was paramount as politicians remained in charge of who were the police (Primicerio & Normore, 2018; Walker & Katz, 2013). As incumbents were removed from office, so were police officers, replaced by those in favor to the new regime.

Recognizing these issues, in 1844 the New York state legislature enacted a law creating a full-time preventive police force for New York City. Officers interacted with the community in a social manner in addition to responding to criminal activity. Foot patrol was a norm, and this provided an opportunity for casual conversations with residents. Officers often lived within the communities they worked, giving them firsthand knowledge of an area's social and criminal problems. They were also familiar with shared customs, expectations, and values of the community (Primicerio & Normore, 2018).

Though positive change was evident, this era of policing was not without problems. Policing at this time was highly biased as elected officials determined who the police were. Corruption and bribery were commonplace during this time and oversight of the police was minimal (Schmallegger, 2012). Politicians, crime organizations and money influenced this era. Federal oversight, a result of prohibition laws that exasperated corruption from within the police profession propelled law enforcement into the reform era of policing (Kelling & Moore, 1988; Primicerio & Normore, 2018; Schallmeger, 2012).

The Reform Era (1930s-1980s). The reform era is described as the period of American policing during the early to mid-twentieth century during which efforts were made to professionalize police forces and eliminate the influence of corrupt politicians. Due to years of corruption, law enforcement had to undergo significant change to regain the trust of the community (Primicerio, 2018). Research suggests the reform era in government, beginning in

the 1900s, coupled with a nationwide movement toward professionalization, resulted in the separation of the police from the community (Kelling & Moore, 1988; Primicerio & Normore, 2018; Schmalleger, 2012). Stringent rules, regulations and department policies were implemented. Police management also believed employing rotating shifts and assigning officers to various geographical assignments on a regular basis would prevent and eliminate corruption (Peak & Madensen, 2019). Officers who once were encouraged to live in the communities they served were now finding new rules, which prohibited such living arrangements in some states (Schmalleger, 2012).

There was a de-emphasis on community-service relations and a new organizational command structure that emphasized top-down management. This organization of police service created centralized control, which ensured compliance with standard operating procedures and encouraged a professional appearance of impartiality (Kelling & Moore, 1998). This command structure sought to increase professionalism while curbing the susceptibility of political and/or criminal coercion (Primicerio & Normore, 2018).

The drastic change in organizational structure limited accessibility, approachability, and communication between the police and the community. Where the police had once operated as an open system, a complete reversal was implemented. This reversal limited any outside influence or input from the public, as the potential for corruption was too great (Paynich, 2009). Police managers, police officers, and the communities they served were not communicating. Unfortunately, law enforcement's failure to proactively recognize the changes within the demographics, culture and population density of many cities perpetuated this distance (Primicerio & Normore, 2018). Turbulent times were the reality for many police agencies across the country during this era.

Theodore Roosevelt was appointed Police Commissioner for the New York Police Department (NYPD) in 1895 and was tasked with cleaning up the NYPD. Roosevelt is credited with identifying corruption within the police department and immediately firing those he found responsible. His tenure was short, only serving two years as NYPD's top cop. His reform efforts floundered, yet he paved the way for inquiry and transparency on the issue of corruption, which was furthered by August Vollmer (Schmallegger, 2012).

Vollmer was the first police chief of Berkeley, California and the leading presence in America's police reform movement (Peak & Madensen, 2019). He argued police work should be viewed as a professional, public service whose main focus is improving society (Allen, 2003). At the International Association of Chiefs of Police annual conference in 1919, he claimed the police should go "upstream a little further" by trying to prevent crime by working with families, schools, and other influential institutions. He also called for organizational reforms in police agencies: elevating standards of recruitment and retention as well as the adoption of modern management techniques, such as those used in the business sector and military (Allen, 2003; Paynich, 2009).

The Civil Rights Movement exposed weaknesses in this traditional policing model. This era of policing, often referred to as the "professional" model of policing, is described as being organized around strict hierarchical lines, utilizing standard operational protocols and emphasizing response to serious crimes when they occurred (Diamond & Weiss, 2009; Primicerio & Normore, 2018). The protests and riots in the 1960s brought governmental attention to sources of racial tension and discrimination. The police were highly criticized during this time for their lack of diversity within their agencies as well as their lack of community relations. In response to the civil unrest, President Johnson's Commission on Law

Enforcement and the Administration of Justice (1967) recommended that the police become more responsive to the challenges of a rapidly changing society (Allen, 2003).

The Community Era (1980s-present). Adoption of community policing initiatives occurred gradually in the 1970s and 1980s, yet it was not until the 1990s that widespread adoption by local law enforcement agencies took hold (Bureau of Justice Assurance, 1994; Peak & Madsen, 2019; Primicerio & Normore, 2018). This was likely the result of the federal government's endorsement of community-policing approaches with the passage of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 that community policing became a nationwide initiative (Office of Community Oriented Police, 2014).

In 1994, the federal government created the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS), which authorized an initial six-year expenditure of \$8.8 billion dollars in federal aid to support community-policing efforts. In that year, only 20% of surveyed police agencies nationally reported employing some elements of the community-policing model. This statistic rose to 68% by 2003, and according to the most recent national survey data compiled from Christine Gardiner's (2017) *Policing Around the Nation Report*, 95% of responding police agencies said they practice community policing, to some degree. Almost 85% of agencies expect patrol officers to routinely engage in problem-solving, 75.5% work with other public and private entities when problem-solving and include community-oriented policing in their job description of patrol officer (Gardiner, 2017).

While data suggests the majority of America's law enforcement agencies are employing some version of community-policing initiatives, department structures and practices still vary considerably across jurisdictions and community policing means different things to different people (Presidents Task Force on 21st Century Policing, 2015). This

suggests the ways in which issues of legitimacy and procedural justice affecting the success of the police vary from one department to the next (Crowl, 2017). Recognizing these differences may help explain how the escalation of conflict between law enforcement and citizens spotlighted in the media occurs in certain communities, but not others. Unfortunately, racial tension and accusations of excessive force remain a reality in certain cities across America (Hemmer, 2017).

One recommendation for police-community relationship building suggests the police acknowledge the history of racial minorities and others who have faced injustice at the hands of the police (Mentel, 2012). Steps to reduce bias and improve cultural competency include understanding the history of feelings toward the police (Mentel, 2012; Shusta, 2005). There are many Americans still alive who have their own memories of the Jim Crow era, a time when a number of police departments were seen as representative of enforcement laws that institutionalized racial discrimination. And while many officers today were not even born during this era and therefore should not be held responsible, understanding there is legitimacy in some people's feelings toward the police and that there is responsibility to it could go a long way with respect to community relations (Police Executive Research Forum, 2014).

Many civil rights leaders and police executives suggest community-police officers at all rank levels receive training on diversity, implicit bias and cultural competency (Gove, 2011). America has many cities with a vast array of racial and ethnic background and cultures. It is imperative officers be able to communicate effectively and understand cultural norms of these different groups (Lane, Kang & Banaji, 2007; Mentel, 2012). This suggestion was also highlighted in the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing (2015) that recommended police departments provide annual in-service training on implicit bias and cultural competency.

When examining police agencies that declare they are a community-policing department, one should look at the agency's organizational management philosophy as well as the law enforcement officers who are serving the community (Diamond & Weiss, 2009; Gau, Corsaro, Stewart, & Brunson, 2012). It has been found that community-policing implementation can be impeded by centralized management practices and traditional operating assumptions (Bureau of Justice Assistance, 1994; President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing, 2015; Primicerio, 2018).

One of the most recognizable examples of police conflict was the death of Michael Brown. On August 9, 2014, Michel Brown, an unarmed Black male, was shot and killed by a White police officer during a traffic stop in Ferguson, Missouri. The officer involved was not criminally charged in the shooting, but the United States Department of Justice conducted an in-depth examination of the shooting and published their findings. The Ferguson report, published by the United States Department of Justice in 2015, found that many of the frustrations voiced by that community were a result of the Ferguson Police Department's deviation from community-policing efforts it previously had implemented. This departure reduced opportunities for positive police-community interactions and in effect, lost the little familiarity it had with some African American neighborhoods (Shaw & United States, 2015).

Models of Policing

Historically, the job of police officer has been highly reactive. Responding to calls for service and investigating crime after the fact were the realities for the 20th century police officer. James Q. Wilson, a famous criminologist, identified three basic models, or "styles" of police organization: (a) the legalistic model, (b) the service model, and (c) the watchman model (Allen, 2003; Paynich, 2009; Peak & Madensen, 2019). The watchman model based primarily on order maintenance and peace keeping through the "physical presence" of police is

for the most part obsolete. The watchman's behavior reflected "nineteenth-century style policing, with little or no emphasis on officer professionalism or proactive involvement in crime detection, criminal apprehension, or community safety" (Peak & Madensen, 2019, p.).

The legalistic model advocates little discretion as well as enforcing the law by issuing tickets and making more arrests. This model was evidenced in the 1970s as President Nixon championed the *War on Drugs* campaign and attention was focused on reducing violent crime rates (Sharp, 1994).

The service model, which can still be identified in modern police departments today, focuses on service to the community and the citizens. This model gained popularity in the late 1980s as community-policing initiatives became mainstream methods of community engagement (Office of Community Oriented Policing, 2015; Schmallegger, 2012). Today's community police officers are not only identified as "service" officers within the communities they work, but a new model is now being suggested, that of a "Guardian." This suggestion was identified in the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing's (2015) report, which stated, "Law enforcement culture should embrace a guardian—rather than a warrior—mindset to build trust and legitimacy both within agencies and with the public" (p.11).

Reform ideas supporting the embracement of a police culture where actions would be perceived as guardians suggest the end of the militarization of the police. While not a formalized model of policing, scholars define the militarization of the police as the "process whereby civilian police increasingly draw from and pattern themselves around, the tenets of militarism and the military model" (Peak & Madensen, 2019, p. 163). The public's awareness of the acquisition of armored vehicles, aircraft, and weapons has caused widespread criticism across the country for using military tactics and equipment in the enforcement of law and order (Peak & Madensen, 2019). Excess surplus military items are provided by the Department of Justice. The

increased use of military equipment has coincided with increased military style tactics, such as SWAT teams, and no-knock raids by local law enforcement agencies. While considered tools of law enforcement, and not necessarily a model of policing, this movement has caused serious concern in some communities across the country.

Presidential Commissions

Since 1920 there have been 10 major national crime commissions under presidential authority or that of the attorney general. Several of these were presidential commissions specifically analyzing the issues concerning citizens and their relations with the police. In 1929, President Hoover appointed 11 commissioners to study the enforcement of laws and improvement of the judicial system. The Wickersham Commission, as it came to be referred to due to U.S. Attorney General George Wickersham leading the commission (National Advisory Commission on Higher Education for Law Enforcement, 1978), was the first to recognize the need for professionalism in policing by raising the bar on entrance standards and developing ongoing training for current and future police officers to achieve this (Paynich, 2009). The report was the most comprehensive assessment of criminal justice in United States history at the time.

The Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s brought to the attention of the presidency once more the need to look at police professionalism. What followed was the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice (also known as the Katzenbach Commission, after its chairman, or the National Crime Commission). President Lyndon B. Johnson by Executive Order 11236 on July 23, 1965, created this commission. The National Crime Commission was directed to inquire into the causes of crime and delinquency and the adequacy of the existing system of law enforcement, criminal justice, and corrections,

and to make recommendations to the president for crime prevention and improvement of law enforcement and administration of justice by federal, state, and local governments. A lofty goal, it became the most widely accepted in-depth analysis regarding police professionalism (National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards, 1978). One of the most significant recommendations from that report was the issue of higher education. This report emphasized that, at a minimum, officers should have a two-year degree from an accredited institution, with a preference for a four-year college degree (National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards, 1978).

The commission also determined that there was a greater need for the proper training of police officers. It recommended no fewer than 400 hours of instruction and a 12 to 18 month probationary period. It also recommended no fewer than 8 weeks of field training and college education for different levels of police officers (Hawkes, 2018). The report also stated the quality of police service would not significantly improve until higher education requirements were established for personnel. They suggested that minimum job qualifications should be a minimum of two years of college, with four years being preferred (National Criminal Justice Reference Service, 1967). These recommendations sought to professionalize the police profession. Professionalization, described by Frederick Mosher (1968), is a necessary step in the development of a career in civil service, wherein—high level occupational specialists develop standards, coalesce, and become recognized—that is to professionalize (Paynich, 2009).

This emphasis on professionalization, coupled with insulation from political influence, produced a narrow focus on crime fighting and, in turn, undertook the use of technology and principles of scientific management, which would be the most efficient

means for police to control crime. Policing principles termed “police science” were centered on organizational structure and stressed centralization, placed authority at the executive level, and emphasized administrative control over street-level discretion (Paynich, 2009).

These and other reforms did well to standardize and professionalize what had once been little more than the enforcement arm of political machines, but they also created a geographical and social distance between the police and the public they served (Peak, 1993). The next 50 years would see a police model that emphasized crime reduction strategies that unfortunately alienated the police from the community. The police were seen as “us vs. them” and physical encounters during highly publicized civil rights and Vietnam protests called police legitimacy into question.

In 2014, President Obama convened a task force to provide recommendations on policing and community relations. His task force completed their work in May of 2015 and shared their final report. It contained six areas of special interest or “pillars,” each with action items. They were identified as Pillar One: Building Trust and Legitimacy, Pillar Two: Policy and Oversight, Pillar Three: Technology and Social Media, Pillar Four: Community Policing and Crime Reduction and Pillar Five: Education and Training and Pillar Six: Officer Wellness and Safety. Pillars one, four and five lend support and provide recommendations referenced by this research.

Pillar One: Building trust and legitimacy. Pillar One stated that recognizing building trust and nurturing legitimacy on both sides of the police/citizen divide is the foundational principle underlying the nature of relations between law enforcement agencies and the communities they serve. Law enforcement agencies should also proactively promote public trust by initiating positive non-enforcement activities to engage communities that typically

have high rates of investigative and enforcement involvement with government agencies. Law enforcement agencies should also track and analyze the level of trust communities have in police just as they measure changes in crime. This can be accomplished through consistent annual community surveys. Finally, law enforcement agencies should strive to create a workforce that encompasses a broad range of diversity including race, gender, language, life experience, and cultural background to improve understanding and effectiveness in dealing with all communities. (COPS, 2015)

Pillar Four: Community policing. Pillar four is a philosophy that promotes organizational strategies that support the systematic use of partnerships and problem-solving techniques to proactively address the immediate conditions that give rise to public safety issues such as crime, social disorder, and fear of crime. Community policing requires the active building of positive relationships with members of the community—on an agency as well as on a personal basis. This can be done through assigning officers to geographic areas on a consistent basis, so that through the continuity of assignment they have the opportunity to know the members of the community. (COPS, 2015)

Pillar Five: Skills and training. As our nation becomes more pluralistic and the scope of law enforcement's responsibilities expands, the need for more and better training has become critical. The skills and knowledge required to effectively deal with these issues requires a higher level of education as well as extensive and ongoing training in specific disciplines. To build a police force capable of dealing with the complexity of the 21st century, it is imperative that agencies place value on both educational achievements and socialization skills when making hiring decisions. Though today's law enforcement professionals are highly trained and highly skilled operationally, they must develop specialized knowledge and

understanding that enable fair and procedurally just policing and allow them to meet a wide variety of new challenges and expectations. Tactical skills are important, but attitude, tolerance, and interpersonal skills are equally so. To be effective in an ever-changing world, training must continue throughout an officer's career. The goal is not only effective, efficient policing, but also procedural justice and fairness. The task force recommends implementing career-long education and training practices for law enforcement in the 21st century. (COPS, 2015)

Community Policing

The Kansas City experiment was a research effort by the Kansas City Police in 1972 to determine if an increased patrol presence reduced crime. This landmark experiment found that traditional routine patrol in marked police cars does not appear to reduce crime. Pelfrey observed that the findings from the Kansas City experiment on preventive patrol (Kelling, Pate, Dickman & Brown, 1974) and a similar Kansas City report on police response times and case investigations debunked the long-held belief that police presence made a difference in preventing and solving crime. These two major studies had major impacts upon methods of policing, thereby producing a crisis in policing. Police were not as effective as they had once believed in accomplishing their major objective—fighting crime.

The concept of community policing is not new. Engaging the police with communities to build strong relationships between its members and law enforcement is its primary goal. One of the earliest and major tactics of community policing involved officers going on foot patrols through the neighborhoods they serve. In today's modern era, this has evolved to departments incorporating social media and/or community engagement systems to share relevant local information with residents. It has been an integral strategy for cities that have

looked to combat violence, drugs, and other criminal activities (Peak & Madsen, 2019).

Community policing recognizes that the police can rarely solve public safety issues alone. Therefore, community policing is a philosophy that promotes organizational strategies that support the systematic use of partnerships and problem-solving techniques, to proactively address the immediate conditions that give rise to public safety issues such as crime, social disorder, and fear of crime (Office of Community Oriented Policing, 2014). Its origins go back as far as the 1960s as a response to the Civil Rights Movement that exposed weaknesses in traditional policing models. The protests and riots brought government attention to sources of racial tension and discrimination. The police were highly criticized during this time for their lack of diversity within their agencies as well as their lack of community relations. In response to this civil unrest, President Johnson's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice (1967) recommended that the police become more responsive to the challenges of a rapidly changing society (Paynich, 2009).

Interest in the development of community policing accelerated with the 1982 publication of a national article entitled "Broken Windows." James Q. Wilson and George L. Kelling, famous criminologists, wrote about the theory of broken windows in neighborhoods. Their work challenged traditional law enforcement policing practices (Peak & Madensen, 2019; Schallmeger, 2012). They criticized the traditional reactive patrol model, finding communities with higher crime lead to social disorganization and neighborhood decline and that reactive patrol was not reducing crime. They stated when the community is in disorder, i.e., buildings and homes with broken windows, it gives the impression to criminals that no one cares. Over time, the impression that no one cares about the neighborhood increases citizen fear and promotes siege mentality. Citizens may retreat into their homes, or leave their

neighborhoods altogether, ultimately leading to neighborhood deterioration and predatory crime (Allen, 2003; Paynich, 2009; Peak & Madensen, 2019; Wilson & Kelling, 1982). This article sparked interest in problem solving police initiatives, a renewed interest in foot patrol and working with the community to understand citizens' concerns and fears.

No formal governmental office supporting this ideology of policing existed at this time, but police chiefs across the country began implementing Wilson and Kelling's recommendations. As this paradigm shift in policing took root, the federal government realized it should also take notice (Paynich, 2009).

The Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS), created in 1994, is the component of the U.S. Department of Justice responsible for advancing the practice of community policing by the nation's state, local, territorial, and tribal law enforcement agencies through information and grant resources. The COPS Office awards grants to hire community policing professionals, develop and test innovative policing strategies, and provide training and technical assistance to community members, local government leaders, and all levels of law enforcement. Since 1994, the COPS Office has invested more than \$14 billion to help advance community policing (Office of Community Oriented Policing, 2018).

Each decade officers face more complex issues as well as changing technology. In the 21st century, we have seen that expanding the community police officer with intelligence-led policing (ILP) also works. ILP is the integration of community policing and law enforcement intelligence. It provides strategic integration of intelligence into the overall mission of the organization (Office of Community Oriented Policing, 2015).

Coupled with community policing, officers have data to validate citizens' concerns regarding neighborhood issues and allocate appropriate resources to address the problems. ILP

has received some negative criticism due to hot spot crime reduction strategies that appear to target high crime neighborhoods, typically inhabited by low-income families. When ILP is coupled with community policing, citizens are educated on officers' enforcement strategies and together with the police can take back their neighborhoods. This can be accomplished by initiating positive non-enforcement activities to engage communities that typically have high rates of investigative and enforcement involvement with government agencies (Office of Community Oriented Policing, 2014).

Community policing is a philosophy promoting organizational strategies that support the systematic use of partnerships and problem-solving techniques, to proactively address the immediate conditions that give rise to public safety issues such as crime, social disorder, and fear of crime (Office of Community Oriented Policing, 2012). It stresses direct officer involvement with local citizens to thereby address root causes of neighborhood crime with the assistance of the larger community. The philosophical origins can be traced back as far as the 1960s in response to the Civil Rights Movement that exposed weaknesses in traditional policing models.

Consistent examples of weakness for the police during the first half of the 20th century were those police agencies operating under what would be referred to as a "professional" model of policing. A professional model of policing can be described as organized around strict hierarchical lines, utilizing standard operational protocols and emphasizing responding to serious crimes when they occur (Diamond & Weiss, 2009).

The protests and riots in the 1960s brought government attention to sources of racial tension and discrimination. The police were highly criticized for their lack of diversity within their agencies as well as their lack of community relations. In response to this civil unrest,

President Johnson's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice (1967) recommended that the police become more responsive to the challenges of a rapidly changing society. The social disorder and escalating crime rates during the late 1960s caused law enforcement to re-examine their role of police departments in public safety management and therefore began a new personnel designation within the communities the officers served (Bureau of Justice Assistance, 1994).

Implementation of community policing initiatives by local law enforcement agencies was gradual throughout the 1970s and 1980s. By the 1990s, more and more local communities were beginning to adopt community-policing initiatives (Bureau of Justice Assistance, 1994). It was not until the federal government endorsed community-policing approaches with the passage of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, that community policing became a nationwide initiative (Office of Community Oriented Policing, 2015). The bill authorized an initial six-year expenditure of \$8.8 billion in federal aid to support community-policing efforts and created the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) to distribute and monitor the funding. The COPS office continues to award grant funds to local law enforcement agencies that support community-policing initiatives (Office of Community Oriented Policing, 2015).

In 1994, only 20% of police agencies across the country employed community-policing initiatives. As of the 2017 United State Bureau of Justice Performance Report, community policing remains the dominant local law enforcement philosophy in the United States, with 13,000 of the nation's 16,000 law enforcement agencies having adopted community policing approaches (Office of Community Oriented Policing, 2017).

Many agencies across the country have made great strides in their race relations with

the communities they police. Unfortunately, racial tension and accusations of excessive force are still a reality in certain communities (Mentel, 2012). Michael Brown, Eric Gardner, Philando Castile, and Anton Sterling are just a few names that have left shadows of doubt on law enforcement legitimacy.

The Ferguson report, published by the United States Department of Justice in 2015, found that many of the frustrations voiced by that community were a result of the Ferguson Police Department departing from community policing efforts previously implemented. This departure reduced opportunities for positive police-community interactions, and in affect lost the little familiarity with some African American neighborhoods. (Shaw & The United States, 2015)

Community policing works when the police concentrate on preventing crime and eliminating the fear it creates. Earning the trust of the community allows officers the ability to communicate with citizens and therefore better understand and address community problems and the factors that contribute to crime (Office of Community Oriented Policing, 2015). When the public observes the police proactively addressing conditions giving rise to public safety issues such as crime, social disorder, and fear of crime, they are more apt to communicate with the police. Law enforcement's obligation is not only to reduce crime but also to do so fairly while protecting the rights of citizens (Elkins, 2014).

According to 2015 Law Enforcement Management and Administrative Statistics (LEMAS) data, two-thirds of agencies nationwide practiced community policing, with large agencies more likely than small agencies to incorporate into their mission statement as well as train officers in its principles (Reaves, 2015). Christine Gardiner's (2017) *Policing Around the Nation Report* stated 99.5% of responding police agencies said they practice community

policing, to some degree. Almost 85% of agencies expect patrol officers to routinely engage in problem-solving, 75.5% work with other public and private entities when problem-solving and include community-oriented policing in their job description of patrol officer (Gardiner, 2017).

Procedural Justice and Legitimacy

Procedural justice is not simply confined to the criminal justice field. Its original application was the business world, presented as an opportunity to study workplace relations and interactions. Procedural justice affects how decisions are made and what policies are therefore established (Bradford et.al, 2015). The premise is that the most fair and respectful decisions will be made. While important in any workplace, this concept is especially important when evaluating communities served by the police. One of the greatest challenges a police department can face is ensuring fairness and equity among all citizens, regardless of their socioeconomic background (Blair, 2002; Mentel, 2012). This is critically important for police agencies who promote community-policing initiatives. The core of community policing is the premise that effective policing is a result of strong and positive relationships between officers and the people they serve. Police officers across the country do this every day through their use of operational procedures that build legitimacy within the community and foster cooperation with the police and compliance with the law (Tyler, 2008).

Procedural justice emphasizes the need for police to demonstrate their legitimacy to the public in four areas—voice, transparency, fairness, and impartiality (Peterson, Reichert, & Konefal, 2017). First, people want their voice heard as well as an opportunity to share their side of the story. Second, people react to evidence that is collected fairly and impartially. Officers must make decisions based on legally applied principles. This allows the police to be seen as neutral and transparent. Third, people want to be treated with respect and dignity and want to

be certain their rights are respected. Citizens will react negatively if they perceive feelings of being dismissed or demeaned. Fourth, citizens focus on communication cues, which infer character and trustworthiness. The police communicate concern not only by showing compassion and empathy, but also in explaining their actions in a way that shows awareness and sensitivity to others needs and concerns (Scaglione & Condon, 1980; Tyler, 2008).

Procedural justice is based on the premise that the criminal justice system must consistently demonstrate its legitimacy—its existence is valid and justified—to the public it serves (Gold, 2013). To build strong partnerships between police and community, law enforcement needs to focus on the things that shape the views of the community about trust and confidence. These perceptions influence the perceived legitimacy of the police in the community (Sunshine & Tyler, 2003). Though negative interactions between police and citizens can fuel distrust and negative feelings, frequent, positive interpersonal interactions can be influential in positive long-term attitudes and impressions of the police (Scaglione & Condon, 1980).

The police cannot do it alone. When a community is willing to accept and defer to the appropriate use of police authority, rather than starting the encounter with feelings of hostility and resistance, everyone benefits. When the public has respect for its law enforcement professionals, it is more likely to obey the law. This allows law enforcement to concentrate on serious crime as well as other quality of life issues brought to their attention by the community.

When the police are perceived to be procedurally just in their actions, public recognition of police legitimacy improves along with the ability of police to carry out their responsibilities effectively. This is true even when the outcomes that individuals face is not ideal (Tyler & Fagan, 2008).

Related to policing, legitimacy is widely described as “a feeling of obligation to obey the law and to defer to the decisions made by legal authorities” (Tyler & Fagan, 2010, p. 235). The majority of police legitimacy literature references Max Weber’s (1978) formative work of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, where he defined legitimacy as “the belief in legitimacy on the part of the relevant social agents; and power relations as legitimate where those involved in them, subordinate as well as dominate, believe them to be so” (p. 213). Weber described three forms of legitimate authority: traditional, charismatic, and legal-rational. He argued that, in the modern state, the latter is the dominant basis for claims to legitimacy. For Weber (1978), this form of authority is “a belief in the legality of the enacted rules and the right of those elevated to authority under such rules to issue commands” (p. 215).

Beetham (1991) had an opposing view on the concept of legitimacy. Disagreeing with Weber, he pronounced the definition was flawed in that it implies a universal notion of the concept, whereas beliefs vary from one society to another (Lankenau, 2017). According to Beetham, “A given power relationship is not legitimate because people believe in its legitimacy, but because it can be justified in terms of their beliefs” (p. 11). Authority is therefore thought to be legitimate if it meets three conditions, namely legality, shared values, and consent.

Research on procedural justice has paid increasing attention to police legitimacy over the past two decades (Tankebe, 2013) as part of a shift of focus from deterring crime to fostering the willingness of the public to cooperate with police. Research focusing on the value of procedural justice and the benefits of public perceptions that police practices are fair for fostering police legitimacy are growing (Gau, Corsaro, Stewart, & Brunson, 2012; Hinds & Murphy, 2007; Zamir & Weisburd, 2013; Kochel, Parks, & Mastrofski, 2013; Murphy, Hinds,

& Fleming, 2008; Reisig, Bratton, & Gertz, 2007; Schulhofer et al., 2011; Sunshine & Tyler, 2003; Tyler, 2001, 2004, 2006, 2009; Tyler & Fagan, 2008; Tyler, Schulhofer, & Huq, 2010). Procedural justice is grounded in the principle that the degree to which people view the police as legitimate influences the extent to which they are willing to accept police decisions (Tyler & Huo, 2002). People accept police decisions because they perceive them to be fair and that the police acted appropriately in dealing with them or in executing procedural justice.

Crichlow and McGarrell (2015) conducted a study that focused on community members' perceptions of police. Their findings highlighted the significance of proper police treatment and quality of police service related to police legitimacy. Not surprising, community members were more inclined to disobey the law when necessary trust between the police and the community was elusive (Sunshine & Tyler, 2003). In other words, perceptions of police legitimacy are determined in large part by the procedural interactions of the citizens and the police (Lankenau, 2017).

To say there are innumerable advantages to obtaining legitimacy within the communities served by law enforcement would be an understatement. Paramount for today's law enforcement professionals is to foster good will with the public they serve. By increasing willingness to cooperate with and therefore empowering the police by providing information and otherwise assisting in solving crime and in general being more obedient to the laws is a win for everyone (Sunshine & Tyler, 2003; Tyler, 2006; Tyler & Fagan, 2008; Tyler, Sherman, Strang, Barnes, & Woods, 2007). The benefits of community support for police has enjoyed support within the literature and proven important for policy initiatives. The most widely accepted method for police to gain public support and compliance is through legitimacy (Gau et al., 2012; Henry & Franklin, 2017; Hinds & Murphy, 2007; Mazerolle et

al., 2013; Tyler, 2004).

The Introduction of Higher Education for Police Officers

August Vollmer, considered the father of the modern law enforcement in America, recognized the importance of advanced training in the early 1900s. A proponent of education, he began the first school of Criminology at UC Berkeley. Vollmer also worked to see that police higher education programs were established at schools including San Jose State and Washington State College (today Washington State University); (Kell, 2017). In 1909, he was hired as the first police chief in Berkeley, California. One of his early accomplishments was reorganizing the police department, setting out to modernize the organization. He was the first police chief to require his officers attain degrees and persuaded the University of California to teach criminal justice.

O.W. Wilson, considered Vollmer's protégé, expanded Vollmer's vision, predominantly by applying management philosophy that was contemporary at the time, such as Frederick Winslow Taylor's *The Principles of Scientific Management*. The fact Wilson was a police leader bolstered his credibility within the police profession (Weisburd & Braga, 2006). Mr. Wilson went on to author several policing books, the most widely adopted was *Police Administration*. Not only did Mr. Wilson solidify the professional model of policing, he also laid a foundation of thoughtful, empirically based police management and service delivery that was responsive to crime problems within the community (Weisburd & Braga, 2006) The technological innovations in policing, patrol cars, radio communications, public record systems, fingerprinting, toxicology, and forensics, aided in catapulting policing into the modern, professional era. By the 1950s, American policing was the most professional police model in the world.

As a result of the 1967 Presidential Commission on Law Enforcement Justice and Administration, Congress passed the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act (OCCSSA) of 1968, which created the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA) and provided federal funding for education, research, and equipment. This led to a large increase in the number of colleges offering police science or criminal justice degree programs. (Gardiner, 2017). Regrettably, some of the programs were non-rigorous extensions of police academy curriculum, which hindered attempts to increase education standards for entry-level officers (Roberg & Bonn, 2004; Sherman & the National Advisory Commission on Higher Education for Police Officers, 1978). While inadequate instruction is no longer an issue within higher education criminal justice curriculum across the country, research on police education has yet to produce the clear, unequivocal results that many U.S. police leaders desire in order to change policy (Gardiner, 2017).

The first known study directly measuring the perceptions of higher education among police officers is Barry's (1978) survey of police officers and agencies, which specifically asked about the perceived usefulness of the college curriculum and any suggestions for improving the curriculum to better prepare students for a policing career. Barry found that college-educated officers generally viewed their degree as a valuable asset to increase their performance and cited a variety of courses, including those which required writing and public speaking skills, as worthwhile (Barry, 1978; Edwards, 2017).

Research has found that college-educated officers have fewer complaints and disciplinary actions against them, use force less often, and when they do use force they use lower levels of force than officers without a college degree (Chapman, 2012; Cohen & Chaiken, 1972; Fyfe, 1988; Kappeler et al., 1992; Lersch & Kunzman, 2001; Manis, Archbold,

& Hassell, 2008; Roberg & Bonn, 2004; Rydberg & Terrill, 2010; Wilson, 1999). These particular benefits may be especially valuable for agencies, which serve poor, majority-minority communities where police-community relations are more likely to be strained than in wealthy, homogenous communities. Some research also suggests that college-educated officers may be less resistant to change and more likely to embrace new methods of policing (Roberg & Bonn, 2004), characteristics which might be particularly valuable in agencies committed to newer and more innovative policing strategies, such as community policing, problem-solving, intelligence-led policing, democratic policing, and procedural justice principles.

More recently, a few researchers have reported the education status of survey respondents in their studies of sworn officers. Although none of these findings are generalizable to the entire United States, they are informative and reveal two things about the state of education in policing: (a) the percentage of college-educated officers is increasing and (b) there is great variability between departments (Gardiner, 2017). Still, the value of a college-degree for officers holds much appeal, especially in light of the varied and complex tasks that today's police officers are expected to perform—tasks that were not expected of officers 30 years ago (Gardiner, 2017).

While the debate within the law enforcement community concerning entry-level law enforcement officer education requirements for employment has been occurring for over 50 years, research supports the premise that officers with college have enhanced decision-making capabilities. (Michelson, 2016)

In Michigan, law enforcement officers must complete the basic police academy as well as the Michigan Commission on Law Enforcement Training Standards (M.C.O.L.E.S.) licensure exam to become a certifiable police officer. There are two ways to enter a police

academy in Michigan: self-sponsored or sponsored by a law enforcement agency. Recruits who self-sponsor themselves through a regional police academy must present a college transcript that identify attainment of an associate degree or bachelor's degree to gain acceptance into an academy (Mcoles.gov, 2019). This requirement is nullified if an agency is sponsoring a recruit as an employee. Therefore, education levels are inconsistent within the basic police academy as well as throughout the state with respect to entry-level education hiring requirements.

Chapter Three: Methodology

This chapter contains an explanation of how this study was executed. Social contract theory and the paradigm shift from traditional policing models to the community-policing model were applied to establish a theoretical framework for this study. Included in this chapter after the theoretical framework is an explanation of the case study research method. The chapter concludes with the research purpose, research design, setting and sample, data collection and analysis procedures, and delimitations and limitations.

Theoretical Framework: Social Contract Theory and Community Policing

This study sought to explore essential dynamics of the community-police relationship using social contract theory and community policing as the theoretical perspectives. Setting the context related to communities desiring procedurally just/legitimate police, social contract theory and the community-policing paradigm shift was examined.

Social contract theory established broad philosophical foundations for all legal and criminal justice system policies, procedures, and determinations (Hardin, 2015; Levy, 2009). Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) and John Locke (1632-1704) were two philosophers whose work examined society's agreement with government. Hobbes proposed that people are rational; therefore, they will logically organize a comprehensive system of authority to create rules that will help alleviate the constant fear of offense by others (Schram & Tibbetts, 2018). In his book *Leviathan* (1651), he proclaimed, "A society without rules and laws to govern our actions would be a dreadful place to live (p.)." He defined a society without rules and laws as a state of nature. In this state, one would find people acting on their own accord, without any responsibility to community. This could also be described as a Darwinian life, where the weak perish and the strongest survive (Hardin, 2015; Levy, 2009).

Hobbes argued in the state of nature, everyone has the right to everything—there are no limits to the right of natural liberty. There are also no rules. Because this state of nature does not provide for the comforts and necessities that we take for granted in our modern western society, we agree to the social contract (Jeanty, 2004). He defined social contract as the arrangement of citizens agreeing to abide by the rules or laws set forth by a given society in return for protection (Schram & Tibbetts, 2018).

John Locke emphasized people have rights—the right to life, liberty, and property. Locke’s social contract theory argues people, as part of nature, transfer some of their rights to the government to better ensure stability, comfortable enjoyment of their lives, liberty, and property (Uzgalis, 2010). While Hobbes introduced the idea of the social contract, Locke is considered the first person to provide a legitimate basis for government.

Social contract theory provided an appropriate construct through which to examine community police officers’ perceptions of procedural justice and outcomes of legitimacy. Specifically, for law enforcement, social contract theory was important to justify the power that law enforcement can exert over the population as a whole (Evans & MacMillan, 2014; Schram & Tibbetts, 2018). Today’s social contract between the community and police weighs heavily on the legitimacy of the police authority over an individual or community at large. Because social contract theory encompasses the community–police partnerships and the distribution of procedural justice and legitimacy that this study explored, it was a fitting theoretical approach. Though various models of policing were introduced and explained in the literature review, an in-depth analysis examining the dynamics of community-policing initiatives and how they connect society’s social contract with the police was the appropriate conceptual framework.

Given the current state of policing, and questions pertaining to legitimacy, the police are

encouraged to build stronger relationships with the public they serve. Law enforcement agencies that strive for legitimacy through procedurally just policing strategies are encouraged to take into account societal factors when implementing community-oriented policing initiatives (Przeslowski & Crichlow, 2018).

Community is at the heart of not only political policies, but also those policies involving policing (Hughes & Rowe, 2007). With this in mind, law enforcement agencies main focus when implementing community-policing initiatives should be on improving social controls through the increase of police legitimacy. When disconnect occurs, a negative perception of the police is likely despite their best crime fighting efforts (Bain et al, 2014). Actively involving the community to identify and address quality of life issues rather than merely informing the community of the types of policing initiatives that exist is the key difference from traditional reactive police models (Kerley & Benson, 2000).

What has become increasingly evident amid recent backlashes against the police, is that the community-policing model has become preferred to the traditional model of policing that relied largely on reactive measures such as issuing tickets and making arrests (Maguire & Mastrofski, 2000; Pelfrey, 2004).

Though no one person is credited with its inception, community-policing roots can be traced to Sir Robert Peel and his Peelian Principles. The social unrest of the 1960s was when community policing in America first came on to the radar of law enforcement professionals (Travis & Langworthy, 2008). President Lyndon B. Johnson, realizing not all crime was being reported to the police due to distrust between the police and the community, appointed a Blue-Ribbon Committee to study the issue. The modern movement toward community policing began in the 1980s, but it was not until the Clinton Administration and the 1994 Violent

Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act that the federal government established the Office of Community Oriented Policing (COPS) within the Justice Department to promote funding for community oriented policing initiatives. It has evolved from practice and continues to evolve today (Office on Community Oriented Policing, 2015).

Community policing is currently accepted as the paradigm that the public organizes their understanding of policing (Office of Community Oriented Policing, 2015; Police Executive Research Forum, 2014; Schmallegger, 2012; Turner and Wiatrowski, 1995) and it remains to be advocated that community policing must become the organizing paradigm of public policing (Bayley & Shearing, 1996; Office of Community Oriented Policing, 2015). This paradigmatic shift suggests police organizations become “flatter” (i.e., less hierarchical), more production oriented as opposed to process oriented, and less driven by reactive responses to citizen mobilizations (Office of Community Oriented Policing, 2015).

Scholars recognize that policing has evolved through several eras of organizational change that have advanced the way police perform their duties and how they interact with the community they serve (Kelling & Moore, 1988; Primericerio, 2018; Schmallegger, 2012; Zhao, 1999). Policing has dramatically changed, from the first organized model of the political era to the present-day community era. Christine Gardiner’s (2017) comprehensive research identified community policing as the most widely accepted police practice today.

Community policing involves three distinct components: organizational transformation, problem-solving and community partnerships. Community-policing models recognize that the police rarely solve public safety problems alone and therefore encourages interactive partnerships with relevant stakeholders (Diamond & Weiss, 2009; Office of Community Oriented Policing, 2015). The public must be involved from the beginning—identifying issues

and prioritizing the manner in which public safety issues will be addressed.

Organizational transformation in community policing initiatives is described as the alignment of organizational management, structure, personnel, and information systems to support community partnerships and proactive problem-solving (United States Department of Justice, 2016). Valuable resources include not only the governmental agencies that law enforcement can partner with, but also community members and groups such as neighborhood associations to help identify community concerns (Diamond & Weiss, 2009; Tyler, 2014).

A hallmark of organizational transformation in community policing is decentralization (Ford, Weissbein, & Plamondon, 2003; Office of Community Oriented Policing, 2015; Primicerio, 2018). For today's modern police departments this means management that subscribes to community-policing initiatives operates from a place of transformational leadership. Transformational leadership can be defined as an approach that causes change in individuals and social systems (Decker, 2018). As the American policing profession continues to evolve, it is fundamentally important for police leaders to build upon their organizations by developing the supervisors and police officers under their command to be strong leaders themselves (Decker, 2018). In 1978, James MacGregor Burns first introduced the idea of transformational leadership in his explanatory research on political leaders (Bass & Avolio, 1994). It was Burns' belief that transformational leadership is a process in which leaders and followers help one another to advance to a higher level of morale and motivation. He established two concepts: "transforming leadership" and "transactional leadership." According to Burns, unlike transactional leadership, which focuses on gaining compliance by giving and withholding rewards and benefits, the transformational approach creates significant change in the life of people and organizations. It redesigns perceptions and values,

and changes expectations and aspirations of employees (Decker, 2018). Transformational leaders inspire culture change, hence the paradigm shift of community policing.

Evidence of this leadership style can be seen when a reduction in reliance on top-down policy directives from police management occurs; therefore, empowering decision-making and a reporting structure that is less hierarchical. Decentralization gives officers and line supervisors more authority and discretion that enables creative problem-solving without the restrictions of overly rigid policies (Maguire & Wells, 2009). A key element of this philosophy from a leadership perspective is the ability to empower rank-and-file officers with more decision-making freedom in how they handle calls for service and other specific problems they encounter on the job. This also facilitates buy-in to community policing initiatives at the line officer level (Diamond & Weiss, 2009; Ford, Boles, Plamondon, & White, 1999).

Problem-solving, another key element of community policing, is described as the process of engaging in the proactive and systematic examination of identified problems to develop and evaluate effective responses (Office of Community Oriented Policing, 2015). Problems must be solved in partnership with the community in order to effectively address chronic crime and social disorder problems. Though every community is unique and has their own specific concerns, the community-policing model allows for adaptive response(s) to suit the community. It is evident that community demographics play a significant role here, not only in the implementation process, but also on the overall success of community policing initiatives. Therefore, law enforcement agencies must consider the social context of the communities they serve and implement strategies that are tailored with these characteristics in mind (Wentz & Schlimgen, 2012).

The problem-solving area requires officers to shift from a reactive crime response

model to a more proactive problem-solving model (Goldstein, 1987). SARA—which stands for scanning, analysis, response and assessment is the model the COPS office recommends for officers as they engage the community to prevent and respond to crime and quality of life issues (Brandon, 2015). Officers are encouraged to engage in open dialogue with the community so they can be creative problem solvers, analysts, and identifiers of root causes of social problems.

Community partnerships are critical if community policing is to be effective. It requires dynamic relationship building with members of the community. This can be done through assigning officers to geographic areas on a consistent basis, so that through the continuity of assignment they have the opportunity to know members of the community (President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing Report, 2015). Community involvement must permeate every aspect of a police department. The most successful agencies boast more than just frequent contact or simple sharing of information. They include on-going efforts working together to identify and assess problems facing a neighborhood. An important note here is that commitment and buy-in to community partnerships must occur at all levels—from top management to line officers (Mazerolle et.al, 2013; Maguire & Wells, 2009).

Community partnership includes not only individual residents but literally all groups within a community, including neighborhood associations, faith-based organizations, city councils, business groups, local government agencies, social service providers, school districts, and local businesses. In order for community partnerships to be effective, trust and mutual respect between the community and the police is necessary (Tyler, 2014). Unfortunately, in many cities across the country this trust and respect is lacking. Rebuilding trust is a critical component of procedurally just policing (Meares, Tyler, & Gardiner, 2015).

As each of these components in the model influence one another, it should be acknowledged that there is continuous feedback occurring at every interaction. While a unanimous definition of community-policing fails to exist, the underlying philosophy of the model provides an understanding of how the variables influence one another, how they provide feedback to previous variables creating a two-way process at every level, and how they all come to bear on the desired outcome, namely procedural justice and legitimacy (Bain et al., 2014; Oliver, et al, 1998).

The conceptual framework for the community-policing model (Figure 1) was created by the Office of Community Oriented Policing. No one individual can be identified as its author, yet it is considered the guiding framework from the Office of Community Oriented Policing and the United States Bureau of Justice. Its history can be traced to the problem oriented policing approach, which was first advanced by Herman Goldstein in 1979. He argued that the standard model of policing (which was primarily reactive and incident driven) should be replaced with a more proactive approach to identifying and targeting problems that contribute to crime, disorder, and other community issues (Goldstein, 1990). Eck and Spelman (1987) later developed a framework for implementing problem-oriented policing through the use of the SARA (for scanning, analysis, response, and assessment) model. This model and similar models were the result of many cases studies conducted by individual agencies as well as consortiums.

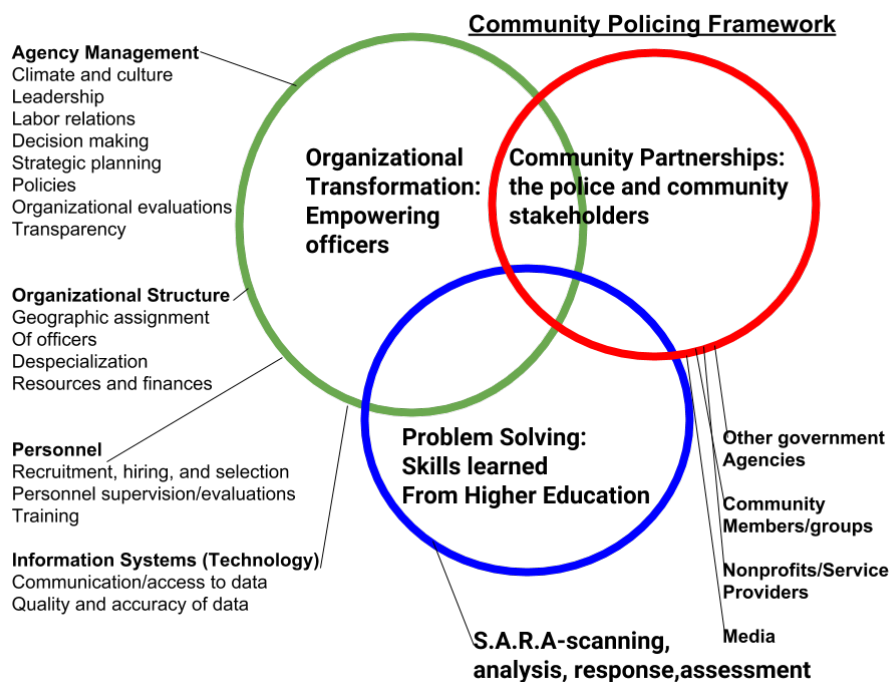


Figure 1. Community policing framework. Adapted from COPS, U.S. Department of Justice, 2015, Clark and Eck, 2005

Research Purpose and Questions

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore whether community police officers perceived benefits from their college experience as it relates to procedural justice and legitimacy outcomes within the community they serve. Through a case study of the experienced police leaders and patrol officers of a suburban police agency in Southeast Michigan, perceptions of community policing outcomes related to procedural justice and legitimacy was examined. This study examined experiential and constructive factors, filtered contextually through the perceptions and interpretations of the police officers themselves, as required to fill the void that exists in the examination of police officer education outcomes related to community relations. Participants were asked about the perceived benefits of higher education as it relates to community policing, specifically through the lens of procedural justice and legitimacy.

The goal of this study was to address the following research question: What are the perceived benefits of higher education for community-police officers as it relates to outcomes of procedural justice and legitimacy?

In an attempt to answer this question, the following sub-questions were also considered: What does community-policing mean to leaders of the case study agency as well as the individual police officers? What educational preparation do police leaders perceive to be the most beneficial for community-police officers? What educational experiences from higher education do community-police officers perceive as most beneficial for the community-policing model (e.g., diversity in the classroom, real life- scenario based curriculum)? How is decision-making affected by the public's perception of procedural justice and legitimacy? How do issues such as race and ethnicity affect the officer's perception of these outcomes? Do officers themselves believe the 21st century police officer should be required to have attended college prior to attending the police academy? If so, how much? Associate degree? Bachelor's degree?

A significant amount of information and research on procedural justice and its effects on communities exists (Rhodes, 2018). Most of the research has focused on the communities' perceptions of police legitimacy and procedural justice. This study was concerned with the gap in existing literature on the topic of procedural justice and legitimacy through the lens of the community police officer. It explored whether police officers believe higher education is beneficial and necessary for the 21st century community police officer. It sought to examine these perceptions of procedurally just policing as well as police legitimacy within a suburban police agency. Police leaders and officers' beliefs pertaining to perceived benefits of higher education and how it affects community-policing efforts was emphasized. The results of this study may be used to redefine hiring standards for community policing agencies that have

historically not placed an emphasis on higher education.

A goal of this research design was to describe and capture community police officers' real-life perspectives and experiences with regard to the relationships they have with the community. Although Gardiner's (2017) report *Policing Across the Nation* found that 95% of surveyed agencies reported practicing some form of community policing initiative, the report does not provide a clear picture of an agency's level of implementation. In addition, there was a need to examine police officers' opinions and beliefs on the community policing philosophy itself. Research has identified the significance of officer perception and its nexus to community policing effectiveness (Connell et al, 2008; Sadd & Grinc, 1994).

Quantitative studies exist related to higher education and police performance, but the results have provided nothing more than controversy (Franks, 2009). Researchers acknowledge for the most part, quantitative studies examining police performance have too many variables to measure for such as, years of service, age of complainants or offenders, geographic location studied, assignment, influence of alcohol or drugs, as well as a myriad of other factors. In an attempt to avoid these concerns and to gain a better understanding of the 21st century community police officer through their own voice, the qualitative approach was determined to be most appropriate for this study.

When determining which methodology to use in qualitative research, there were several designs available. The common designs included: phenomenological, ethnographic, case study, content analysis and grounded theory (Schram, 2006; Turner, 2015). When determining the design, the researcher should identify the position of inquiry they are looking to bring to the research (Schram, 2006; Yin, 2009). A cycle of inquiry is typical to conceptualize one's design. It should be acknowledged that qualitative research does not begin with a fixed starting

point followed by a predetermined sequence of steps (Maxwell, 2005). This is in part due to the reality that the research process is interactive and an accumulating set of experiences.

Research Design

This research was conducted using a case study design. Case study research allows understanding of a complex research issue and can extend experience or add strength to existing knowledge from previous research (Lichtman, 2013; Yin, 2003). As a form of research, the case study is defined by interest in an individual case, not by the methods of inquiry used (Stake, 2008). “How” and “why” questions are explanatory and lead researchers to choose case studies as appropriate research designs (Yin, 2003).

While some scholars refute the reliability of case study research, and its heavy biases, a well-crafted design can assist in answering a real-life issue or problem. What the research loses in breadth, they gain in depth (Murphy, 2014). Case studies provide an opportunity for the researcher to explore various perspectives in an in-depth manner, providing rich and detailed insight into the case or cases being studied (Lichtman, 2013). Case studies are also well recognized as a means of using wide ranging data sources for researching issues of governance related to public policy, the use of power, and the discretionary decision-making process that determines both (Stewart, 2011).

Procedurally just policing and legitimacy is being questioned across the country (Morrison, 2017). The majority of literature available on these timely issues was related to the perceptions of the public. This study shall add to the literature, as community police officers’ perceptions related to procedurally just policing practices and legitimacy to the public they serve will be shared. Identifying best practices related to professional preparation for police officers may lead to future hiring recommendations for police managers and leaders of these

organizations.

Researchers from multiple disciplines call their work “case studies.” The debate regarding qualitative case study research being distinct from ethnography or participant observation studies exists (Hatch, 2002; Yin, 2009). Yet, it is important to remind researchers that there are various kinds of case studies. Traditionally, researchers study a program or project of which they have been working (Lichtman, 2013; Merriam, 1998). A researcher may choose to study an individual, a particular group of individuals, or an entire organization (Yin, 2003). The case study is an appropriate choice when one wants to deliberately cover contextual conditions that are believed to be pertinent to the phenomenon of the study. Case studies have been done about decisions, about programs, about the implementation process, and about organizational change (Yin, 2003).

This research examined a specific police agency in a suburban community as the case study with each interviewed officer as the units of analysis. This proposition was due to the variance of attained education levels of the interviewed officers and their independent perceptions of perceived benefits of higher education as it prepares them for community policing initiatives.

What makes case studies intriguing for the researcher is that they are effective channels for a broad range of research methods; in the sense they are not prejudicial to various types of research-focus groups are just as welcome in case study research as are questionnaires and participant observations (Curtis, Murphy & Shields , 2013). This is one explanation that the utilization of case studies has seen a resurgence of interest within the qualitative research community.

Case study design is warranted when answering how, what, and why questions about

individual and organizational relationships, programs, and interventions related to a phenomenon (Yin, 2009). It provides the researcher an in-depth examination of a particular case or several cases with a primary purpose of describing one or more characteristics, behaviors, or traits (Donmoyer, 1990; Lichtman, 2013). Case study design also supports the deconstruction and rebuilding of phenomena (Yin, 2009). Case study design should also be considered if (a) the behavior of study participants cannot be swayed, (b) the contextual circumstances are pertinent to the phenomenon, (c) or the boundaries between the phenomenon and setting are ambiguous (Yin, 2009). The decision to implement the use of a case study for the research study was warranted because the study intended to (a) answer how, what, and why questions about the phenomenon of community policing, (b) was investigating a particular community, (c) and the contextual circumstances were pertinent to the phenomenon (Yin, 2009).

According to Yin (2014), case studies include “decisions, individuals and processes”. A case study research methodology utilizing in-depth interviews aligned with the phenomenon researched, perceptions around community policing initiatives related to perceived benefits of higher education as they relate to procedural justice and legitimacy within a suburban police department in Southeast Michigan. Police leaders and patrol officers were asked if they believed there were perceived benefits of higher education as they relate to community-policing initiatives. Participants were asked specifically about community-policing initiatives related to their decision-making, community partnerships and crime prevention efforts.

Setting and Sample

Context of the Study. Various agencies within Southeast Michigan were considered

for this study. After thoughtful consideration, and the lens of nonprobability sampling examination was decided, a suburban police agency was selected for this case study. This organization was selected due to the agency's commitment to community policing initiatives, as well as their minimum education requirements for employment. Community partnerships for this agency included not only individual residents, but literally all groups within the community: neighborhood associations, faith-based organizations, city councils, business groups, local government agencies, social service providers, school districts, and local businesses.

The chosen community was the ideal setting to conduct this case study for the following reasons: It is a diverse municipality with respect to ethnicity as well as religious affiliations. This police department is a suburban police agency in Southeast Michigan. There are approximately eighty sworn officers in total from the Chief of Police to patrol officers.

As of 2017, the U.S. Census Bureau estimated a population of 65,774 residents. The population estimates are approximately 75.5% White, with 13.4% reporting Black or African American, and 2.3% reporting two or more races. Of particular note with respect to diversity is that 21.4% of residents report being foreign-born. The median household income in 2016 was \$93,729, and 57% of respondents reported having a bachelor's degree or higher (United States Census Bureau, 2018). In addition, Muslim, Chaldean, and Christian followers live and worship among one another in the community. As of 2013, this community had the third largest Japanese national population in the United States (United States Census Bureau, 2018).

There are seven school districts within the township boundaries and the largest school district is recognized as a national exemplary school district. This district is also a school of choice district, therefore bringing in students from outside of the township adding to the

diversity of the community. The school districts within the township all participate in the countywide Youth Assistance program. Youth Assistance is an arm of the juvenile court, yet it is a community-based program whose mission is to strengthen youth and families and to prevent and reduce delinquency, neglect, and abuse through community involvement. Youth Assistance initiatives are supported by a unique tri- sponsorship agreement between the circuit court, local school districts, and local municipalities

Each school district within this community has an identified Youth Assistance program manager who works within the school district as well as with their local police department. A specific example of community partnership for this case study agency was that since 2008, the police department has had an active member on the board of directors for their school district designated Youth Assistance program.

Evidence that this agency practices community-policing initiatives not only came from mission statements and public relations materials, but in everyday practice. The agency actively participates in many community groups. For example, the current deputy chief is not only a board member of the local Optimist Club for Youth, he is also a board member of the grass roots Greater Community Coalition for Youth. The chief of police is a regular speaker at community events and supports many efforts within the community by assigning youth officers not only to the schools, but by participating in monthly community coalition meetings as well as serving in crime prevention roles.

All members of the case study agency receive annual in-service training, which promotes diversity, inclusion, tolerance and social justice. The department actively recruits women and minorities, placing value on the importance of having a police department that reflects the faces of the community (President's Task Force Report on 21st Century Policing,

2015).

Participants. The case study police department was representative of the state in that it requires an associate degree for entry-level police officer employment, though many officers and command officers have attained baccalaureate and master's degrees. A survey conducted by the chief of police in 2018 found the attainment levels of higher education throughout the agency to be varied. Of the 77 sworn personnel employed by this agency at the time of research, 21 had attained associate degrees, 43 had attained bachelor's degrees, 10 had attained master's degrees, and three had a high school diploma or GED. It was this variation of officer educational attainment and the perceived benefits of such education that set the context of the proposed examination.

While a defined sample number for a qualitative study is not specified, it is understood that different participants can have different beliefs and responses; therefore, the sampling must be big enough to capture the majority of potential input (Creswell, 2009; Yin, 2016). Seidman (2013) explained that there is no set number for a qualitative sample size, and most research interviews will achieve sufficiency with approximately ten participants.

Participant Selection. Participants for the study were recruited intentionally using a multi-stage process. Permission from the chief of police was requested to conduct research at his agency along with approved verbiage related to the recruitment strategies via email (see Appendix A). Upon his approval, I attended several shift briefings in May 2019 where I read from my EMU IRB approved script (see Appendix B) for recruiting officers to participate in the research study. Officers were advised their anonymity would be protected and that other than a \$5 gift card for coffee, there would not be any monetary compensation for participating.

After recruiting officers at shift briefings, they were asked to complete a short

demographic questionnaire where they not only shared their contact information, but their level of college attainment (see Appendix C). I attempted to select a diverse pool of participants who represented patrol, investigations, crime prevention, and command officers with various levels of college attainment. After examining the completed demographic questionnaires, a mixed pool of potential participants was formed. Due to the unique nature of a police department's work schedule, and after determining the availability of potential participants, I eventually interviewed 10 police officers and seven command officers. All interviews took place at the police department in a quiet location away from the routine business of the police department with permission of the Chief of Police. A detailed profile of each participant is included in Chapter Four of this document.

A focus group consisting of 13 community members who were actively involved in various relationships with the police department was also conducted. These community members, while not the focus of the study, were vital in the aspect of corroboration of police officers' perceptions related to procedurally just and legitimate policing outcomes. They represented the business community, the religious community, the school community, and the prevention/activist community as well as individual neighborhood champions in the community. Focus group members were candid with respect to representing their individual perceptions about higher education preparation as well as personal experiences with their local law enforcement agency.

Community focus group participants were recruited at a local optimist club chapter meeting as well as email invitations sent to suggested community members. An EMU IRB-approved script detailing the study as well as the neutral location of the event was shared with prospective participants (see Appendix D). Compensation was not provided to focus group

participants. A neutral meeting spot was secured, a parks and recreation building in the case study community for the focus group, which took place in June of 2019.

Access to the Police Department. The administration and police unions at the case study agency were supportive and interested in this research and its potential findings. This agency once offered tuition reimbursement for all officers completing a bachelor's degree as well as graduate education. These benefits were lost during the recession in contract negotiations in 2008, yet the administration and union membership have sought to regain them in subsequent contract negotiations. This support enhanced the participation in the research. Of the 77 sworn officers, it was the researcher's aim to interview as many participants as possible. The goal of participation was 15-20 officers and ultimately a total of seventeen members participated.

Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

Riessman (2008) asserts that the narrative method best allows researchers to “reveal truths about human experience” (p.). For this reason, a narrative method from semi- structured interviews was used to elicit from the study participants’ “truths” regarding their beliefs related to perceived benefits of higher education as it prepares officers for community policing initiatives. The authentic police voice in these discussions was particularly appealing and was the justification the case study research design was employed. Identifying and exploring human experiences related to community policing facilitated understanding related to procedural justice and legitimacy outcomes within the community served.

The choice to interview comes from an interpretive lens. Schwandt has defined this lens as a loosely coupled family of methodological and philosophical persuasions (Schwandt, 1994). I shared the belief as other researchers that people know and believe to be true about the

world constructed-or made up- as people interact with one another over time in specific social settings (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999). The aim of this research was to understand the complex and constructed reality from the point of view of those living it—the community police officers. The focus was the individuals interviewed, the particular community they worked in, and the present-day realities for community police officers.

To interview is to inquire (Seidman, 2006). Qualitative interviews are special kinds of conversations that are used by researchers to explore informants' experiences and interpretations (Hatch, 2002; Mishler, 1986; Spradley, 1979). Recounting narratives of experience has been the major way throughout recorded history that humans have made sense of their experience. Their utility, however, cannot be framed quantitatively. The purpose of in-depth interviews is not necessarily to get answers to questions, nor to test hypothesis, and not to, 'evaluate', as the term is normally used (Seidman, 2006; Yin, 2004). The goal of in-depth interviewing can be explained as the pursuit of understanding the lived experience of others and the meaning structures they make of their experiences. These meaning structures are often hidden from direct observation and taken for granted by participants. Qualitative interview techniques offer tools for bringing these meanings to the surface (Hatch, 2002).

Researchers, in direct and indirect statements say, "I want to understand the world from your point of view. I want to know what you know, how you know it, and in the way you know it. I want to understand the meaning of your experience(s), to walk in your shoes, to feel things as you feel them. Will you become my teacher and help me understand?" (Spradley, 1979, p. 34). The central strength of interviewing is that it provides a means for doing what is very difficult or impossible to do any other way- finding out what is in and on someone else's mind (Hatch, 2002; Patton, 2002).

Community policing is a philosophy that promotes organizational strategies that support the systematic use of partnerships and problem-solving techniques, to proactively address the immediate conditions that give rise to public safety issues such as crime, social disorder, and fear of crime (Office of Community Oriented Policing, 2015). Acknowledging each officer as an individual person and therefore having different approaches and opinions when it came to community policing strategies was paramount. Understanding community police officers' attitudes and beliefs of perceived benefits of higher education that impact community police officers' decision-making and attitudes about community policing initiatives—just may make a case for consistent statewide higher education requirements for police officers.

The debate surrounding the question should police officers be required to have met minimum college education requirements prior to employment remains unanswered. This research sought to provide recommendations for employers seeking officers with the skill set 21st century community-policing agencies desire. This discussion can be found in the Chapter Five, which speaks to the most recent research, a 2017 nationwide study of law enforcement agencies and higher education levels of officers, which found evidence on the value of a bachelor's degree for police officers was not irrefutable (Gardiner, 2017).

One-on-One Interviews. One-on-one interviews were the primary data source for the study. The interviews were semi-structured with the goal of understanding the lived experience of the interviewee (Hatch, 2002; Seidman, 2006). While it is impossible to understand another person perfectly, recognizing these limits, we can still strive to comprehend them by understanding their actions (Hatch, 2002; Schutz, 1967). This is paramount in interviewing.

Semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher the ability to be flexible as well as adaptable to each participant. As the name implies, structured interviews focus on repeating a

formal interview process by ensuring all participants receive the same questions in the same manner with little room for open-ended questions or deviation from the interview protocol. On the other hand, unstructured interviews allow far-reaching as well as universal ideas and questions with few rules and expectations for the interview.

Procedures for Data Recording. Data analysis is a systematic search for meaning (Hatch, 2002). To ensure high-quality data collection procedures, I utilized Yin's (2004) recommendation of (a) using multiple, not just single sources of evidence, (b) creating a case study database; and (c) maintaining a chain of evidence. Recordings of interviews as well as documentation during and after the interviews were completed enhanced this process. Allowing member checks by way of sharing the interviewer's notes and interpretations before any final themes were developed was also important to the researcher.

The methods used to record data in the study included audio recordings, transcripts, interview notes, and journal entries in a reflective research journal. Each method of research documentation is discussed in further detail in this chapter.

Confidentiality was important to the researcher as well as the participants, and steps taken to maintain confidentiality are shared. Interviews began with an explanation of the purpose of the research and participants were provided with a paper copy of the Informed Consent Form (see Appendix E). All participants were provided the opportunity to ask any questions and were advised they could stop participating at any time. None of the participants that met for interviews declined participation. Every participant was made aware that exact quotes may be used in the final study and providing every participant a pseudonym would protect that anonymity. While officers and command officers were identified with names when direct quotes were shared in Chapter Four, every participant name is a pseudonym. Consent forms were filed at my home in a

locked file cabinet as well as uploaded electronically in a designated EMU Dissertation Google Drive folder.

Each interview was recorded using an Apple iPhone using voice memos. All participants agreed to be recorded for the interviews. Though there are varying opinions on recording interviews, the approach employed was congruent with Seidman (2006) that in-depth interviews should be recorded. This allowed the researcher to work most reliably with the words of the participants, transforming the spoken words into a written text to study. Recording interviews offered additional benefit-it provided the researcher with the original data (Seidman, 2006).

These recordings were then uploaded onto my personal laptop which is password protected and also uploaded into the designated Google Drive folder. While every effort was made to allow for the free narrative during the interviews, minimal notes were taken during the interviews, jotting down key words or phrases to come back to for clarification before the end of the interviews. Interview notes were made immediately after each interview was completed to document any observable behaviors and other relevant thoughts related to the interview in the research journal.

Transcripts of every interview as well as the focus group meeting were made once all of the interviews were completed. The website www.transcribe.wreally.com was utilized where each audio recording was uploaded for transcription. In addition, every recorded interview was listened to multiple times while reviewing the transcripts to make corrections where the web program incorrectly transcribed a word or phrase. All transcripts were uploaded into my dissertation Google Drive folder.

A reflective journal was kept throughout the data collection process. This journal along with notes taken during and immediately after the interviews provided the opportunity to

contemplate the significance of the research. Glense (2006) stated the value of making such analytical and autobiographical notes:

They become a means for thinking about how the research is co-created among you and research participants; how each of your interactions shape what follows. They sometimes become a place to vent or express frustration and then, through continued writing, to better understand those emotions and derive more questions or devise new strategies. (p. 60).

Together, the notes, and reflective journal allowed the personal space to plan, respond and analyze the information gathered in the research collection.

Dana Analysis and Interpretation. Data was analyzed using descriptive pattern coding and thematic analysis. Words and data recorded were used to make meaning of the information. Interview recordings and transcripts, observation notes, focus group transcripts, and employment data of participants were considered applicable by the literature to be utilized as the coding process unfolded (Glense, 2006). A constant-comparative approach to coding was employed, which allowed the development of themes and perspectives. The use of constant comparison meant that one piece of data was compared with previous data and was not considered on its own, enabling the researcher to treat the data as a whole rather than fragmenting it. Constant comparison also allowed the ability to identify interrelated as well as unanticipated themes within the research project (Anderson, 2010).

The steps involved with the constant comparison method included: open coding, axial coding and selective coding (Lichtman, 2013). The first step involved in the constant comparison method was open coding, which examined the raw interview data and allowed the researcher to begin developing names and categories. The second step of the constant

comparison method was axial coding. This is where initial codes were connected to one another. The final step, selective coding involved applying selected codes in which decisions were made regarding the most important codes (Lichtman, 2013). Glense (2006) stated, “By putting likeminded pieces together into data clumps, you create an organizational framework” (p. 152).

The actual process of the constant comparison method employed in this study included recognizing the frequency and timing of word choices across participant responses. Each individual interview recording, and transcript was reviewed numerous times and repeated words and phrases were noted in the researcher’s database. The number of times participants used various words or phrases and in the order they did so was analyzed. Key words and phrases were highlighted and considered through examination of the statements made before and after the highlighted words and phrases, which provided additional thoughts about the data. To verify the words heard by the researcher, a python script was written that examined the audio transcript text files that counted how many times certain words were used from the open coding step. These findings for command and non-command offices are in Figure 2.

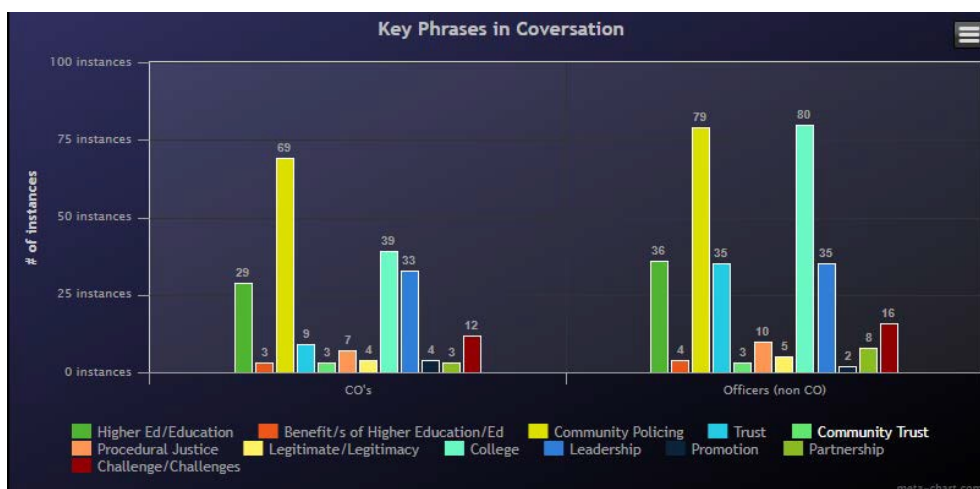


Figure 2. Key Phrases in Conversation

As the review of recordings and transcripts for each interview progressed, emerging themes were identified as important, new knowledge and interesting. The same was done for the focus group meeting. To assist in analyzing the emerging themes, a spreadsheet was created that included specific words and phrases for each interview question. This allowed for identification of patterns across interview responses. Key words and phrases that described what each participant had said or what I thought they had said when listening to the recordings and reading the transcripts was documented.

This prompted the axial coding step to begin where connection of words and phrases took place. These words were grouped together by similar ideas, which then led to the beginning of theme development. At one point I had identified close to fifteen themes, but ultimately reduced this list to six themes with interrelated subthemes. Many attempts to explain, explore, contradict, compare and contrast the findings occurred. Lichtman (2013) calls this process “comparative analysis” and stressed the value of this method for qualitative researchers. Finally, the findings and results were documented in Chapter Four.

Validity of the Accuracy of Findings

By organizing and interrogating the data, I sought to identify patterns and themes, discover relationships and explanations, make interpretations, and mount critiques (Hatch, 2002; Lichtman, 2013). When conducting qualitative research, the issue of validity is a question of whether the researcher sees what he or she thinks he or she sees (Kirk & Miller, 1986). It was important and necessary to validate the information obtained therefore, member checking as well as triangulation assisted in this manner. By using a multiple source methodology for data collection, the case study findings and conclusions are more likely to be convincing and accurate (Yin, 2004).

Data triangulation to establish validity in this study was implemented. Data triangulation not only established validity of this research by analyzing information obtained from participants to develop a complete understanding of the phenomena, but it should be viewed as a research strategy that tests validity through the junction of information from different sources (Patton, 2002; Yin, 2016). Triangulation compared information to determine corroboration; in other words, it was a process of qualitative cross-validation (Wiersma, 2000). According to Yin (2004), triangulation is highly recommended when conducting case studies. It allows the researcher to address a broader range of issues. The most important advantage offered by using multiple sources of evidence is that it allowed for the development of converging lines of inquiry. Interview transcripts of patrol officers, command officers, community members, demographic profiles and department policies were the items used for the triangulation.

Research Ethics

As the researcher, it was important to clarify why I was positioned to view the ideals around higher education for police officers as well as the department examined. I am a retired police sergeant from the case study agency, separated from service for six years. I am currently a criminal justice faculty member at a liberal arts institution of higher education. In the six years that have passed since I was employed with the case study agency, at least thirty new officers have been hired. It was my goal to focus on interviewing police officers that have been hired since 2013 as well as command officers who I never directly worked for. This was realistic, as the command structure in addition to the hiring of many line officers had changed dramatically since my departure. Of the 10 officers interviewed in this research, only one officer worked for me when I was employed at the case study agency.

Once the nonprobability sampling method was determined as my research design, I

reached out to my former chief of police for assistance. This decision was not for convenience sake; instead due to my knowledge of the geographic area of the police agency, the demands for police service of the community and the knowledge of the agency's mission. After speaking with him in depth about this research, I felt the agency was an appropriate case to study.

Researcher as an Instrument of Knowledge

Becoming a partner in the creation of knowledge means that as a qualitative researcher, one must become and develop as a research instrument (Xu & Storr, 2012). Issues paramount to the researcher as an instrument in this study, include having a background with the agency as well as an academic background in criminal justice which helped identify, query, and record a more accurate interplay between the concepts and issues that may have arose, and the theoretical paradigms that currently define the police profession. The quality of observation data as well as interview data is contingent on the expertise of the researcher who serves as an instrument in generating the data (Xu, et al., 2012). It is important to acknowledge the perspective of the researcher as it can influence the type of data generated through observation (Chawla, 2006; Morse, 2003 & Savage, 2000) and consider how the quality of field notes is entirely dependent on the skill development of the researcher as instrument (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995).

Issues related to validity were also attended to via credibility and trustworthiness. Creswell (2013) recommends that qualitative research include at least two strategies for validation. This study utilized triangulation, external peer review, as well as clarifying researcher bias as validation strategies. The latter, which was of particular relevance because of the researcher's former employment as a law enforcement professional, was addressed by detailing any presumed biases or assumptions related to higher education, procedural justice and police legitimacy to the participants. Such disclosure required a detailed statement of past

experiences, biases, prejudices, and orientations that may have shaped the interpretation of the data and the approach to the study (Creswell, 2013).

I was the interim dean of the College of Natural and Social Sciences during the research phase, in addition to serving as the department chairperson of a criminal justice program at a liberal arts institution in Southeastern Michigan. I oversaw the curriculum of the Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice as well as the Master of Science in Criminal Justice at my institution. Aware of my bias of the attainment of higher education for police officers, as I set out to conduct this research I worked diligently to keep my biases in perspective when I conducted the data collection and analysis. I did not gain financially from this research, nor did any personal gains come from this study. Strict adherence to appropriate note taking and recording of interviews was maintained for integrity purposes.

The interview protocol with questionnaires was submitted to Eastern Michigan's IRB for review and permission to move forward with the research was granted in May 2019 (Appendix F). All participation was voluntary, and confidentiality of participants' identity remains a priority of the research. Information about the interview protocol as well as the informed consent was shared with all invited participants, so they were able to make an informed decision regarding participation.

Delimitations and Limitations

The police officers selected to participate, the community, and the time period were all delimitations. Focusing on a single police department in Southeast Michigan rather than multiple agencies delimited this study. This choice was made due to the researcher's curiosity in developing a thorough understanding of community police officers' beliefs of perceived benefits of higher education in Michigan. Due to the roughly 19,000 police officers in the State of

Michigan (Michigan Commission on Law Enforcement Standards, 2019) and the various hiring standards of the agencies they serve, the research focused on one agency that was representative of a particular region of the state through a case study. This study was specific to this police department and may not be generalizable to other populations or settings.

This research was also delimited by the fact that the researcher is a former law enforcement officer who had to balance their professional and personal biases (Schram, 2006). The researcher acknowledged their substantial professional experience and knowledge and how this may have affected the research aims. At issue was the question of “how and to what extent the researcher’s personal qualities or attributes, such as emotions or personal sensibilities, influence or should influence the research process” (Schram, 2006, p. 135) More direct, Behar (1996) suggests the researcher ask themselves, “How do you make the most of your own emotional involvement with the material” (p. 18). This acknowledgement assisted the researcher in guiding their consideration of subjectivity. A strategy to assist with subjectivity that was employed was looking for a paradox (Schram, 2006). Looking for paradox assisted the researcher in identifying the potential narrowing impact of unexamined hidden agendas carried into the research.

A noteworthy limitation was the potential respondent bias within the interview research (Stake, 2006). Due to the fact this research topic revolved around sharing perceptions and beliefs, this study considered the limitations of respondent candor, interpretations, and willingness to share thoughts. Additionally, it must be acknowledged that participants may have sought researcher approval and therefore provided answers to questions in anticipation of acceptance. Stake’s (2006) recommendations that these limitations be addressed with interview questions designed for open-ended responses, providing the opportunity for the respondent to

elaborate on provided answers without specific guidance or input from the researcher were employed to address any potential limitation to the interview responses. The research findings assume that participants answered all questions honestly and to the best of their abilities. Any manipulation of responses by the participants would have undermined the results.

This study was further limited by how well the participants in the study represent the population of law enforcement officers as well as community members in Michigan. Although attempts were made to accurately represent the region, the nonrandom sampling method employed by this study severely limited this assumption. This community has a large population of working class, White citizens and therefore responses to questions around diversity and discrimination cannot be considered universal for opinions on these important topics for law enforcement and community relationships across the State of Michigan.

A low participation rate could have been a limitation, as there can be important differences between police officers who chose to participate and those who may not, but the researcher felt comfortable the saturation point had been met with information gathered from the participant interviews.

Finally, this research is limited in that when exploring community-policing initiatives, there are multiple narratives that can explain a community's perceptions about police legitimacy. Issues exploring discrimination and unpopular police decisions were limitations in that it was realized early on in the interviews that the case study agency was already engaged in proactive problem-solving and community partnerships; therefore, a negative narrative that needed to be corrected was not a reality for this police agency. Interviews with senior command staff uncovered an extensive history of community engagement and a long history of procedurally just policing practices. Protocol questions about diversity, discrimination and

enforcing unpopular decisions were asked, and it was found that due to the intentional effort over the years to engage the community and collaboratively problem solve, the case study agency did not appear to struggle with negative perceptions around legitimacy as other agencies across the State of Michigan. This research acknowledges that the case study agency is in fact a microcosm in the police profession and that the police-citizen relationship is fragile and in certain areas across the country frankly broken. Findings from this research therefore shall serve as a guide as to how an agency can initiate and maintain proactive, positive community relationships rather than a critical analysis of what recommendations agencies should adopt to correct a negative narrative.

Finally, due to time constraints, as well as the lack of a uniform definition of community policing, this qualitative inquiry constructed to examine community police officers' perceptions related to perceived benefits of higher education in the pursuit of procedural justice and police legitimacy might not be an accurate representation of community police officers across the State of Michigan.

Chapter Summary

This study explored the perceived benefits of higher education for community police officers as it related to the pursuit of procedural justice and legitimacy. In order to conduct this research a case study agency was chosen due to the vast differences in hiring standards across the state as well as the various demographics each individual community is comprised of. I carefully considered my own biases, determined the optimal case study participants and selected methods appropriate to yield the most accurate data.

Data collection included audio recordings, transcripts, and field notes of interviews. Interview transcripts and notes were analyzed and interpreted. A reflective journal allowed me

the ability to document and synthesize valuable insights about the progress of the research.

Early ideas were validated against reliability and credibility and findings were then written in

Chapter Four.

Chapter Four: Findings

This study was an examination of community policing in a suburban community. The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of benefits of higher education for community police officers in the pursuit of procedural justice and legitimacy in a suburban community. This chapter presents the results of seventeen interviews of police officers and command officers (the participants) as well as a community focus group, which occurred in June 2019. The interviews provided insight into participants' experiences and perspectives on how community-policing initiatives can influence outcomes of procedurally just policing and legitimacy.

Several member checks were included in the data analysis process, occurring after all interviews were transcribed and listened to multiple times for accuracy. This was important as themes were developed as well as identification of subthemes emerged. Making certain what was heard was exactly what the participants said was necessary for validity purposes.

Community policing, as discussed in previous chapters, is a philosophy and therefore a standard definition fails to exist across the law enforcement community (Office of Community Oriented Policing, 2014). Procedural justice and legitimacy can also be considered abstract concepts that not only concern the attitudes of those in positions of authority regarding their own power, but they concern the perceptions of the public they serve. It was necessary to cast community policing, procedural justice and legitimacy in unambiguous terms in order to facilitate the interviews. Participants were interviewed about their roles as community police officers; specifically, regarding professional preparation that was considered necessary for community policing initiatives in their community, opportunities for leadership development, the ways police leadership empowers officers to

build relationships within the community, including the officers' personal reflections on how those relationships impact perceptions of procedurally just police practices and legitimacy within the community. The phenomenon studied was the authentic voice of community police officers and police leaders as they relate to perceptions of the perceived benefits of higher education in the pursuit of procedural justice and legitimacy within the community that they serve. Phenomenology describes the essence of phenomenon by exploring it from the perspective of those who have experienced it so as to understand the meaning participants ascribe to that phenomenon (Teherani, Martimianakis, Stenfors-Hayes, Wadhwa & Varpio, 2015). A case study methodology using phenomenology as the referenced framework was chosen for this research study because it was determined that it would garner the desired information. It is important to state that various differences in context, police culture, and community-policing initiatives across the country make it impossible to generalize the findings about the perceptions of benefits of higher education for law enforcement officers based solely on these interviews.

Research Participants Demographics

This chapter begins with an overview of the demographics and profiles of the 17 community police officers and leaders who were interviewed for this study in June of 2019. All of the participants volunteered to participate in the study, for which the officers and command officers received \$5 coffee gift cards, while the focus group received no compensation.

Police and Command Officers. The participants' police experience ranged from 3 years to 34 years of service. The average number of years of service in law enforcement for the officers interviewed was four and the average number of years of service for the command officers interviewed was seventeen and a half. Sixteen of the participants were male and one was

female. Two of the command officers and one police officer had prior military experience.

Six of the seven interviewed command officers had obtained a master's degree, and one had obtained an associate degree and is currently working on completing his bachelor's degree. Five of the officers interviewed had obtained bachelor's degrees and four of the police officers had obtained associate degrees. One officer had attended an academy for creative studies and therefore earned a professional certificate in lieu of an associate degree. All participants were certified law enforcement officers in the state of Michigan, having attended an accredited regional police academy. Six of the interviewees had worked at other police agencies prior to being hired by the case study agency.

All participants had various experiences with in-service training, professional development training, specialized police units, and such roles as patrol, field training officer, narcotics, special weapons and tactics (SWAT), community policing, sex crimes, crimes against children, as well as undercover operations. The participants' various levels of formal education, training, and police assignments collectively provided the diverse policing experiences and perspectives that inform this study. A summary of participant years of law enforcement experience and educational is provided in Table 1.

Table 1

Characteristics of Participants

		Number of participants
Years of service at case study agency	21+	7
	16-20	1
	11-15	1
	1-10	8
College major	Criminal Justice	7
	Public Administration	2
	Business	3
	Sociology	1
	Other	4
Highest level of education completed by officers	Advanced	0
	Bachelor's	5
	Associate	4
	Certificate	1
Highest level of education completed by command officers	Advanced	6
	Bachelor's	0
	Associate	1

Participant Profiles. The following profiles represent the 17 police officers and command officers who took part in this study. Each profile was developed to further provide an authentic voice to each participant. Each profile presents biographical information shared by police officers and command officers at the beginning of the interview process. In addition, each profile offers a brief description of why participants decided to pursue a career in law enforcement. Aligned with the central research questions of this study, participants' profiles also present a summary of the responses offered by police officers and command officers pertaining their interpretation and understanding of community policing.

Command Officers

LARRY

Larry is a White male in his late 40s. He has been a law enforcement officer for 24.5 years and has obtained a master's degree in criminal justice leadership. His current position is in administrative leadership at the police department. At this time, he has no desire to obtain any additional higher education, but he is currently focusing on macro-level leadership professional development. When asked how he would describe community policing from his perspective, he replied,

Community policing in my perspective is where your police department is comfortable enough to embed itself or partner with the community that it serves. That we are there to problem solve, that we are there to communicate with the public, to understand what is affecting them in a positive and negative way. I think law enforcement has a role in like I said, problem-solving and the only way they can really do that is to have an open line of communication, develop relationships and I think we do that very well here in this community.

PAUL

Paul is a White male in his early 60s and has been a law enforcement officer for 34 years. He has earned a master's degree in public administration and his current position is in administrative leadership at the police department. At this time, he has no desire to obtain any additional higher education, but he continues to attend professional development related to organizational leadership. When asked how he would describe community policing from his perspective, he replied,

When you look at community policing, it is sort of a buzzword. I do not say that

disparagingly because I do believe it has tremendous value, but it can mean a variety of things. I look at community policing as being engaged with the community and going above and beyond what we tend to look at the traditional role of a police department.

RICK

Rick is a White male in his early 50s and has been in law enforcement for 29 years. He served in the armed forces before becoming a police officer. He has obtained a master's degree in public administration, and his current position is in operational leadership at the police department. At this time, he has no desire to obtain any additional higher education, but he continues to attend professional development related to patrol functions as well as emergency management response when available. When asked if he could provide an example of how his agency intentionally practices community policing, he replied,

I do think we seek out the community's input and I also believe we participate and offer opportunities for the community to get involved with the police department that other agencies do not. So, an example where we bring in community members, to interact with them in a non-traditional call for service experience, we provide community education classes. I think this is pretty unique, something that not many other agencies provide.

DEVON

Devon is a White male in his late 30s and has been a law enforcement officer for thirteen years. He has attained a master's degree in interdisciplinary studies and is in an

administrative leadership position at the police department. At this time, he has no desire to obtain any additional higher education, but he continues to attend professional development related to administration as well as investigations. When asked if he could provide an example of how his agency intentionally practices community policing, he replied,

An example of our current community police officer is that he attends local clergy meetings, school district events, and subdivision meetings to get an idea what people are concerned about, as well as he tries to inform subdivision association leaders of what's going on in the community.

CONNOR

Connor is a White male in his late 40s and has been in law enforcement for 25 years. He has obtained a master's degree in criminal justice leadership administration, and his current position is in administrative leadership at the police department. At this time, he has no desire to obtain any additional higher education, but he continues to attend professional development related to leadership as well as administration when available. When asked from his perspective how he would describe community policing, he replied,

I really think community policing is a partnership between law enforcement and the community. For law enforcement to provide the community what it wants from its law enforcement. Law enforcement was originally designed to provide a service that the community wanted, and that service has changed over the years. At various times during history, it has meant various things. Currently I think it means more involvement, attending more functions, less hard-core law enforcement, and more of an individualized law enforcement.

PATRICK

Patrick is a White male in his late 40s and has been in law enforcement for 25 years. He has obtained a master's degree in organizational leadership and administration, and his current position is in operational leadership at the police department. At this time, he has no desire to obtain any additional higher education, but he continues to attend professional development related to leadership as well as administration when available. When asked how he would describe community policing from his perspective, he replied,

I would say that it is having some community buy-in to the criminal justice effort. This is not just the police going out and enforcing the law. It's the community having a relationship with the police- being willing to be the eyes and ears for the police. Being willing to and also having enough trust in the police to pick up the phone and call when they see things and know that they're not going to be ignored, dismissed. Those would just be my general thoughts on what community policing is-rather what a successful community policing agency otherwise needs that community buy-in.

ROBERT

Robert is a White male in his mid 40s and has been in law enforcement for 23 years. In addition to his military service, he has obtained an associate degree in criminal justice. His current position is in operational leadership at the police department. At this time, he is continuing work toward completion of his bachelor's degree. He attends professional development at every opportunity and has recently completed an advanced leadership course through a regional university. When asked from his perspective how he would describe community policing, he replied,

Community policing has evolved from its initial run, the initial run I think when it first

came up was a lot of getting out- and simply being seen. Talking to the businesses. When I worked at another agency we had a community police officer and his job was simply getting out and talking to the business owners. See what was going on. Today I think it's turned into a community liaison type position, where they kind of take care of things that don't really fit into other categories of law enforcement. They do a lot of talks; they tend to do a lot of the different safety things. I would say to simplify things, the community police officer really still in its core it's about getting out, but not just to the business. It's being seen proactively by the community as a whole, someone who's more personal. The more personal side of the police department.

Police Officers

JAMES

James is a White male who is in his early 30s and has attained a bachelor's degree in political science. He has a total of eight years of law enforcement experience and has worked at a previous police department prior the case study agency. He is currently assigned to the youth bureau in investigations. At this time, he does not have plans to go back to college for more education, but he would be interested in doing so do so if the employer offered education benefits. When asked what factors contributed to his desire to become a police officer he stated, I kind of come from a family of them. My cousins on my mom's side are all officers. I thought about law school, but my parents would not pay for that and therefore, I decided to pursue a career as a law enforcement officer.

CHARLES

Charles is a White male who is in his late 40s and has attained an associate degree in

criminal justice. He has a total of 22 years of law enforcement experience and has worked at a large urban police department prior the case study agency. He is currently assigned to the patrol division. At this time, he does not have plans to go back to college for more education. When asked what attracts current police officers to the profession, he stated,

I'm not sure. I know that school was not high on my priority list of things to do after high school. I attended community college and was not clear on what I wanted to do but happened upon a career with law enforcement and attended the academy.

RICHARD

Richard is a White male who is in his early 30s and has attained a bachelor's degree in sociology. He has a total of four years of law enforcement experience. He is currently assigned to the patrol division. At this time, he does not have plans to go back to college for more education. When asked what factors contributed to his desire to become a police officer, he stated,

Being out in the field. The biggest thing was not doing the same thing over and over, day after day. It's never the same. Law enforcement was kind of a second career for me. My first job was more deskwork and I just realized that was not what I wanted to do. I have family in law enforcement, and I guess that also kind of pushed me into it.

JACOB

Jacob is a White male in his late 20s and has attained an associate degree in criminal justice. He has a total of four years of law enforcement experience. He is currently assigned to the patrol division. At this time, he does not have plans to go back to college for more education. When asked what factors contributed to his desire to become a police officer he stated,

I was originally going to school for architecture but realized I did not want to sit behind a desk. I wanted to actually do something in the community. I wanted to join the military, and this was the closest thing to it. I did not want to leave my girlfriend-now my wife, so I chose law enforcement.

KATHY

Kathy is a White female who is in her late 20s and has attained an associate degree in criminal justice. She has a total of four years of law enforcement experience. She is currently assigned to the patrol division. At this time, she does not have plans to go back to college for more education due to finances, but she has aspirations to one day complete her bachelor's degree because she would like to be a candidate for supervision and believes it is important. She would be very interested in returning to school sooner rather than later if her employer offered education benefits. When asked what factors contributed to her desire to become a police officer she stated,

So, I grew up with no father and my mom's first boyfriend was a deputy and I just remember seeing him get up every day to go to work and thinking he was a superhero. I remember thinking I am going to grow up and save the world like he does. Apparently it doesn't come with a cape though, so I was a little disappointed.

MICHAEL

Michael is a White male in his early 30s and has attained an associate degree in criminal justice. He has a total of three years of law enforcement experience. He is currently assigned to the patrol division. At this time, he does not have plans to go back to college for more education but would be interested in doing so do so if the employer offered education benefits. When asked what factors contributed to his desire to become a police officer he stated,

For me it was something I always wanted to do, and I worked a lot of different jobs before I became a police officer. So, I basically had to go for it. The way that I was raised was super religious. Like having the heart of a servant. So that side of life was always appealing to me. I love helping people, talking to people. This career was totally appealing to me.

JOHN

John is a White male in his late 40s and has attained a certificate from a trade school. He has a total of 22 years of law enforcement experience and worked for a large urban agency prior to getting hired at this case study agency. He is currently assigned to the patrol division but spent many years in investigations. At this time, he does not have plans to go back to college for more education, but he attends professional development when opportunities present themselves. He admitted that he loves learning and believes you can learn something every time you attend professional development regardless how long you have been a law enforcement officer. When asked what factors contributed to his desire to become a police officer, he stated,

I guess it was just something that I thought about when I was a kid and when the opportunity arose, I attended a police academy and things turned out the way it did.

ANDREW

Andrew is a White male in his early 30s and has attained a bachelor's degree in criminal justice. He has a total of three years of law enforcement experience and is currently assigned to the patrol division. At this time, he does not have plans to go back to college for more education, but he attends professional development when opportunities present themselves. When asked what factors contributed to his desire to become a police officer he

stated,

That's a tough question. I originally didn't think about police work. Early in college I was initially interested in engineering. After some turns I began to consider a career in law enforcement. I grew up always having a lot of respect for police officers. I love talking to people and I am a people person and once I began looking into the career and realized the opportunities to grow in it I made the decision to try it.

KEN

Ken is a White male in his mid 30s and has attained a bachelor's degree in business administration. He has a total of seven and a half years of law enforcement experience and is currently assigned to the training division. He spent several years at another police department out of state before coming to the case study agency. At this time, he does not have plans to go back to college for more education, but he attends professional development when opportunities present themselves. When asked what factors contributed to his desire to become a police officer he stated,

My father was a police chief, so I was around law enforcement pretty much my whole life. Realistically I had other jobs and careers but at the end of the day I always wanted to be a police officer. It took a lot of years, but my brother and I both eventually convinced our mother that we wanted to be police officers.

VICTOR

Victor is a White male in his late 40s and has almost attained a bachelor's degree. He has a total of 10 years of law enforcement experience and is currently assigned to the crime prevention unit. He was originally studying engineering and is less than two credit hours from completing his bachelor's degree. He does have plans to go back to college to complete his

degree and attends professional development when opportunities present themselves. When asked what factors contributed to his desire to become a police officer he stated,

I was a graphic designer before switching careers because I wanted to do something in my professional life that I felt was contributing positively to society.

Focus Group Participants. In May 2019, the researcher attended a local optimist for youth club meeting in the case study community. This was intentional, as there were representatives of many community groups that belong to and regularly attend weekly breakfast meetings for the Optimist Club. The researcher was provided the opportunity by the current president to explain the proposed research and asked for volunteers to participate in a focus group in June 2019. The audience was encouraged to share this invitation with other community members that they thought might be interested in participating. On June 27, 2019, a focus group meeting was held at a parks and recreation building in the case study community where thirteen community stakeholders attended. They shared their opinions about their community police officers related to procedurally just police practices as well as their perceptions about higher education requirements for the police officers in their community. All community members were provided an informed consent waiver (see Appendix G) before the focus group officially began and only after providing consent, the meeting commenced. The meeting was recorded, and participants were asked to only use their first names.

Themes and Subthemes

The central phenomenon examined in this case study was the perceptions of benefits of higher education as it related to community policing initiatives in the pursuit of legitimacy. Participants' narratives shared in the following sections provide evidence to support the emerging themes identified from the data. The following themes identified are explained from

the perspectives of the command officers, the police officers and the community members: the importance of education, community policing aligns with procedurally just policing, community partnerships build trust, community policing starts with transformational leadership, recruitment challenges, and the police academy instruction is not enough. Sub themes were identified and are addressed in several of the main theme areas.

The Importance of Education. Although their reasons varied, interviewees, regardless of his or her rank, assignment, or level of education, voiced perceptions that education was important for today's community police officers. One command officer simply stated, "An educated police officer is a better police officer." Another officer stated, "The public wants *smarter not stronger* officers today." This officer added that there is pressure to recruit the best candidates—top-notch officers who are able to consistently perform at the highest levels. He believed this is where a college-educated officer may police differently than an officer working for an agency that has minimal, if any, college requirements. It was explained that large urban agencies typically have lower hiring standards around higher education, and this is in response to being able to generate a large enough pool of candidates. While all police officers are expected to police in a constitutional manner, it was the opinion of participant officers that large urban agencies can get by with a focused, reactive police response due to the sheer volume of calls for service versus a smaller suburban community. Regarding the question of minimum higher education standards, he stated that one must look at the needs of the community first. The needs of the community typically inform the recruitment strategy.

Of considerable interest to the researcher was the finding that many of the reasons provided for supporting the idea that there are perceived benefits of higher education for community policing initiatives were not necessarily the academic knowledge that comes from a

college degree. While report writing and subject matter knowledge of history and the criminal justice system were cited as beneficial, the most common benefits were identified as essential skills—skills unequivocally necessary to thrive in the modern world. These essential skills refer to personal attributes that enable someone to interact effectively and harmoniously with other people. They include interpersonal skills such as communication, empathy, honesty, integrity, and a sense of humor (Dean, 2017; Parente, Stephan, & Brown, 2012). Confidence, critical thinking, and the ability to effectively collaborate and communicate with others in the workplace and the community were identified as perceived benefits from participants' higher education experiences.

And while essential skills are critical for today's community police officers, it is important to acknowledge they are not technical and can be learned from a variety of personal experiences that do not necessarily include formal education. This study found that every participant agreed that the higher education experience was where he or she honed many of these skills.

A major perceived benefit of higher education was associated to the first opportunity many young people have to experience being around people different than themselves. A concern voiced by several officer participants was that when an individual grows up in a homogeneous community and later gains employment in a diverse community, the new officer can find him or herself at a disadvantage. The experiences that come from living away at college with complete strangers, as well as critical conversations and dialogue that occurs in college classrooms are opportunities for the pre-professional student to learn about working with and living with others who may have different color skin, different values and opinions than oneself.

The Importance of an Academic Degree. The narrative around what is expected of today's police officer, particularly in a community where the general population itself is highly educated, was discussed. When Command Officer Larry was asked what educational preparation, he perceived as beneficial for today's community police officer and why, he responded,

For us here, I think it is important to have as educated police officers as we can get. The population, the community that we are serving is highly educated. So, I think it's important for our officers to have a higher level of education as well. With higher education you become more rounded as an individual. You have more access to history, to learn about mistakes of the past, and maybe successes in the past. You have the ability through formal education to have more of an ability to talk to other individuals who are from different ethnic backgrounds and have different experiences. When you take all that into account, that makes a better police officer and I think here in a very diverse community, that's what the community wants. They want a diverse police officer that's used to dealing with different people and different types of experiences and that's where formal education comes in.

Officer Andrew shared his feelings on how important he felt higher education was for today's officers:

I find it to be very important. I think that educating oneself to understand how the world is actually changing, and understanding how to deal with different people because of how the world is changing is very important. Not to mention encompassing yourself with others who may not think the same way you do because as law enforcement officers, we can be stubborn. And for the most part we are all type A personalities, and

we think our opinions matter the most, but aside from that, being more encompassed with people who think different than you provides you with a much more open mind in certain situations and I think intermingling ourselves with those opportunities can be incredibly beneficial for our careers.

While there was some disagreement whether officers should obtain a bachelor's degree vs. an associate degree, all participants including the focus group, agreed that police officers should attend college before pursuing the police academy. There was a consensus among officer participants that the academic degree was a rite of passage to be considered a professional police officer, particularly if one aspired to work in an enlightened, progressive community with financial resources. Officers who admitted they begrudgingly attended college all stated they did so because they knew it was necessary to attain employment at a reputable agency. Therefore, the college degree was necessary for their professional aspirations as well as career goals.

In addition, although their reasons varied, similarities related to how the higher education experience prepares today's community police officers for the demands of the job were consistent. Among those, various statements supported the idea that an educated police officer is a prepared police officer for community policing initiatives. James explained why he believes a college education is important:

I think it's huge. College teaches you to work in a group. Teaches you how to live on your own. Whether you live at home or college, you're still responsible for yourself. I think a lot of that translates to police work. Because once you leave in a patrol car, you are responsible for yourself at that point. The day is going to be your day how you make it. It can be the best day of the week, or it can be the worst. It can go south quick on you.

I think it kind of translates to going to school- learning, I mean yeah I don't use algebra anymore. But it was a challenge. I wasn't good at math, it's probably why I am a cop, but you have to get through it. And out here you have to get through it. There is no quitting halfway through a call.

Ken also agreed that the college experience was valuable in preparing him for being a community police officer, specifically being adaptable and able to relate to a new community. He stated,

College is your first step into adulthood. Teaching you to be on time, being prompt. Teaching you to get your work done in a timely fashion. To make sure you are doing professional work. I went from 200 kids in my high school where I knew everyone to 22,000 people at my college. I went on study abroad to Australia during college. I spent time over there for four months. There was never a time when I didn't think I couldn't communicate with people. I never felt there was a barrier. This confidence came from attending college.

Officer Kayla shared her perceptions around the value of higher education and her experience as a whole as it prepared her for community policing initiatives. She stated,

Being in classrooms with people who were strangers and sitting next to them, I realized they were not different from me at all. You may come from a different place, speak different languages, maybe even believe in a different God, but we are all the same. I also think that learning about different cultures was good. I think we should all have to learn about different cultures before being able to do this job. Acknowledging different cultures when doing police work can foster respect for the job that needs to be done.

Officer and command officer participants were asked to reflect upon the knowledge base that comes from higher education conducive to community policing initiatives. As they reflected upon their own experience and that of their co-workers, it was revealed that not all participants studied criminal justice. Some participants studied business, others political science as well as sociology. This led to deeper conversations about the complexities of the job and how officers with diverse and varied academic majors such as computer science and finance felt equally prepared to be police officers as criminal justice majors.

Officer Kayla shared understanding various cultures from her sociology courses has helped her be effective when responding to various homes in the community. She shared,

When I walk into a home and know it is a sign of disrespect to not take my shoes off, I apologize right away. It may seem like a little thing, but if I am acknowledging someone's culture right away, it helps bridge the fact that I have a job to do.

While many shared the opinion that having knowledge of the criminal justice system helped as they entered the workforce, its value was more aptly related to the police academy instruction rather than the day-to-day job of being a community police officer. As evidenced in Table 1, participants in this study had chosen a vast array of educational majors prior to becoming police officers. They voiced that it was not necessarily the specific major in college, rather the higher education experience as the consistent factor in preparing them for the interpersonal work of community policing. As Robert stated:

When I am sitting on an oral board for a new hire and I hear that someone has earned a psychology degree, I think wow that's great. I would hope with those sorts of classes you would better understand different types of people instead of just having a more generalized type of law enforcement degree that may not have a lot of those type of

psychology classes. Of course, this is a lot of assumptions. I think psychology is good because you would come with some knowledge already built in around de-escalation, some built in "*I can understand where this person is coming from*" so they may be able to better communicate with people. I think cultural studies are also great. Language studies. Yes, psychology, language, cultural diversity, may even some world religions. Just so you can better understand your core population.

This theme was also found across the community members who attended the focus group for similar reasons. As the conversation progressed, participants shared not only how much education they expected for their officers, but also why they perceived higher education as an important requirement for community policing initiatives.

Unbeknownst to the group, many of the statements made in support of educating the police are congruent with the argument supporting a liberal arts education. Jack shared, I think one of the problems of today's society is that we are training people for their job and we're not giving them a broad education. For example, if you had a police officer or if someone is training to become a police officer and we tell him or her to take a course in philosophy or take a course in speech, one might say how is that related to his or her job? I do not believe that you are truly educated until you have that background. And when a police officer is only trained to interpret the law for lawbreakers, I do not think they are truly able to understand people and police officers are dealing with people all the time. And if they only see people in their law enforcement education then I do not think they are seeing the real person and making judgments that way. Maybe that is the utopian way of looking at it.

Another focus group member shared that he believes sometimes the community is looking for more service than its police can give and therefore those employed should be well rounded, from a policy standpoint related to the expectations of the municipal government as well as from the community's viewpoint. This community member is an elected official on the township board of the case study community and has attempted to change the language in the hiring policy to require a bachelor's degree. While he has not been successful in convincing the entire board to adopt his suggestion, he shared his perceptions on the importance of higher education in a diverse community such as the case study community. Howard shared,

If we want to have community policing and if we expect our police officers to recognize different kinds of people and the way they behave in different ways and reduce the opportunity for escalating it in, and for reducing the use of force and for defusing a situation, and if we are expecting all of this out of our police officers then we have to train them. And in order to train them, we have to educate them. And so, the more educated a person we can get who comes in, it's going to be easier- that's a start. Coming to us with a liberal arts education they have shown they have already worked hard to earn a liberal education and are already well rounded. To be able to understand the diversity in a community, which here is just gigantic: different languages are spoken, different colors are seen, different nationalities are coming in and you're asking a lot of them and so we have to get them ready. And in order to get them ready we have to educate them, either on the job or at other institutions.

The Limitations of an Academic Degree. The officer participants as well as the focus group participants were asked to reflect on their ideas about the role of the police today. Both groups agreed the role has evolved and it is no longer acceptable to simply be reactive. One

only needs to search social media and watch the television news to understand this concern. Questions were asked about minimum hiring requirements and if a college degree should be required prior to employment. Not surprising to the researcher, officers who had earned bachelor's degrees identified numerous benefits to the college degree as it related to their profession, and supported officers coming to the profession with higher education. When officers who had only earned associate degrees reflected on their decision to attend college, their reasoning was a means to enter a police academy, as it is a pre-requisite for many agencies in the State of Michigan. The majority of associate degree officers believed that their life experience should be considered equal to the attainment of a bachelor's degree with respect to their overall job effectiveness.

Officer John shared that while he understands times have changed since he started his law enforcement career when higher education standards were less than today, he shared,

Out here it is different. The community perceives higher education as the predictor for hiring the best candidates. And while I know I have less education than most of the officers here, I learn by doing. I have never been successful learning from books. But right now, I know I can do anything any officer with more education on the road can. And honestly, I can do it possibly better. I feel very confident in my ability to write reports, investigate crime and talk to people. I learn something new everyday. I attend as much professional development as possible. If there is something I can learn or use to do my job I am open to it. I just don't have the degree.

Officer Charles shared that while he understood that working in a highly educated community required an educated police department, he did not feel it was the end all, be all. He shared,

I believe someone who went and did four years in the Marines, particularly if they made rank, they could be just as well off as someone with a bachelors degree-supervising people because they were commanding people. Education is important because you do not want your officers to not be a bunch of idiots, and I can see why education is important here, especially the way we write reports. My gosh, that was the biggest transition for me. It's a different story here all together. Considering the smallest report is like writing a term paper, wow! You better have a firm grasp because if you don't you won't make it. If I had not gone to college, I would never have known how to write a term paper and therefore I would not have been able to write a report here.

Ironically, several officers who had earned bachelor degrees stated while they perceived their college experience as extremely beneficial for their success as a community police officer, specifically as it helped them grow into a well-rounded individual, they were not convinced that it was the end all be all to best prepare officers. Therefore, the question around setting a minimum education standard similar to other professions in the human services was not agreed upon.

This conversation continued into the community focus group. At the beginning of that meeting, participants were asked to share what they believed the role of the police was today. Many agreed it has significantly changed over the years and that being proactive instead of reactive was required for today's officers. Willingness to work with various community groups, interacting with extra-curricular organizations, and partnering with the schools are not simply requests from the community; they are expectations for today's community police officer. As the group shared their perceptions and beliefs about higher education preparation related to

these expectations, it was acknowledged that this community in particular expects a lot of their officers and many believed an educated, well-rounded individual was necessary to fulfill the requirements of the job. This led the group to further examine their thoughts about the minimum education requirements. It should be noted that prior to this focus group meeting, not all participating community members were aware that a bachelor's degree was not required.

Conversation ensued about this requirement and while everyone agreed they would prefer bachelor prepared officers due to the liberal arts education that typically comes with it, they trusted the current Chief of Police as he makes hiring decisions. This led to a discussion about box limitations on applications and how there are times when those boxes automatically preclude a candidate for consideration. As a participant stated,

When you have two candidates for police officer and one has a degree and the other has a high school diploma, it's a no-brainer. The educated candidate will get preference for the hiring. But in certain circumstances, say when a candidate has military experience and some college, the Chief of Police has asked the township board to trust him when making certain hiring decisions. As the Chief of Police has explained it, the hiring board may see something in a candidate during an interview and background investigation that the paper application does not always convey.

While the minimum education requirement for employment by the case study agency and community focus group was never agreed upon, all participants in the study agreed candidates should have some college education paired with life experience to gain employment, supplemented with on-going professional development.

Community Partnerships Built Trust. As interviews continued, many participants repeated the idea community partnerships build trust through community policing initiatives. It

was acknowledged that community trust is fragile. It is not something that can be taken for granted. It must be earned. But how does a police agency earn the trust of their community when the majority of the newsfeed about interactions with the police, especially young men of color is negative? This question was the impetus that fueled the researcher to undertake this research study. The opening statement in the introduction was *Law enforcement in America is facing an identity crisis*. An emergent theme around trust appeared in every interview as well as the focus group and was talked about at length. One focus group participant shared a powerful example of how her three African American sons came to develop a relationship with the police chief of the case study agency.

She shared that when he was asked to chair the United We Walk committee he not only agreed, but he went an extra step by interacting with her one son who was a co-chair as well as other young students of color who were on the committee on a monthly basis. Crystal shared The perceptions of the police, if you look at the media are not always positive, and not always positive especially with children of color. The fact that he took the time; we even had meetings at the police department and he gave us a tour of the station which helped so you were able to see the police in a way where they made themselves approachable, they let the kids sign up to do ride-a-longs. It was more of a positive experience and I feel it helped to give my sons a more positive interaction with the police in our area, on a very positive note. And so I think by just taking the time, and starting at the top with the police chief, he's not just saying it, he's modeling it. And that his officers are watching him and then they are benefiting by watching him.

Another interesting piece related to trust that came from the focus group was that trust for others in the community comes from knowing the police. A focus group participant shared

that she has four sons and has had several police interactions with the department due to car accidents, attending public schools in the community where there are liaison officers working, making theft reports, etc. Her feelings related to trust of the police simply meant feeling comfortable in her community with the police officers serving and protecting her family. She shared that when driving around her community when she sees a police car or even when she doesn't, she feels safe and comfortable. "I know the police are out there protecting us, like a blanket around my shoulders. I don't feel that way in other communities. It's not that I feel unsafe, I just don't know them."

Officers and command officers cannot solve every problem in the community, but by practicing community policing, they make an attempt to do so. Being involved in a wide variety of issues in the community that are outside of traditional law enforcement has helped build relationships and trust between the community and the police department. Trust is important in good times, but especially important in the lean and not so good times. This community has routinely supported the police department via millage initiatives that have not always been supported in other SE Michigan communities, particularly during the economic downturn of 2008-2010. Some may attribute this to the expectation and satisfaction of customer service provided by the police department. Members of this police department would say it is due to the relationships built between the police and the community over time.

Trust is especially beneficial when things are not so positive. All officers and command officer participants agreed that procedurally just policing is the manner in which they strive to police, but sometimes the police are going to make mistakes. A command officer shared that there have been times when the police leadership has reached out to community partners to help diffuse particular situations. These requests were not meant to

work as the police department's spokesperson, but to help the police correct a potential narrative. Command Officer Larry said,

When the community says we have trust and confidence in our police department, that when the Chief of Police says he is handling something we know he is handling it, or when the police department says they are correcting something, we trust they are correcting something. That relationship of trust is huge and not every community in this country has those kinds of relationships with their community members.

Life Experience. Throughout the coding process, a few subthemes were identified. The Importance of Education was determined as a main theme in the findings, yet perceptions around the importance of life experience and ongoing professional development appeared consistently to warrant their discussion. Though all participants shared their perceptions related to benefits of higher education for community police officers, many also shared their thoughts on the value of life experience. Needing to have life experience before being in a position of authority was referenced a lot after the importance of education. These life experiences were all rooted in officers having learned soft skills from having lived some adult life and being experienced before being able to apply discretion, which is a large part of the job.

Charles, who had worked for a large urban police department for 20 years before coming to the case study agency, said it best when asked what the ideal candidate's skill set should look like today for the policing profession:

I believe after seeing what I did, and I'll be honest, I got on the job very young at my previous department, I couldn't even buy bullets. I wasn't ready for it. No twenty-year-old, and I know they say you can join the military at 18-the military is a different thing. You have people there-they put you through boot camp. They basically tell you when to

stand up, when to put your boots on, they tell you everything from that day forward. They turn you into a man; they turn you into an adult. Police work is not the same thing. You are an 18-year-old kid, 20-year-old kid walking into a grown man's house trying to tell them how to run their life. So by that, I do not believe you should be doing this job until you're 25-26, closer to 30 so that you have some life experience behind you.

Michael shared that he had worked in the skilled trades for many years and was the first person in his family to ever go to college. Once he determined he wanted to become a police officer and realized it was necessary to have attained an associate degree to be eligible to attend the police academy, he focused on criminal justice. When asked about the importance of higher education as it relates to community policing today he stated:

I've read a summary of case studies on how having a college education makes a person more social, more engaging. For some reason, maybe because of the environment that you are in. I guess the short answer is that I think yes, higher education is good and that's going to make you more specialized in a certain area. But to me in my own experience, community policing is going to be a culmination of education and personal experience. More so on the personal experience of who you are as a person. I think it plays a role.

The community focus group revealed that they also value life experience in addition to supporting continuing professional development for their officers and feel it is necessary to stay abreast of legal updates as well as trends of police-community engagement. Jack shared, Most professions require continuing education and while this community wants the police officer to do police officer work, I also believe they should be trained on communication and social interaction skills. If the budget does not allow for this sort of

training, I believe it should be. Jill agreed with Jack and furthered her support of continuing professional development once hired. She stated, "I almost feel it is more important what you continue to learn once on the job than what education you came to the job with."

Sheri shared,

While this community is a microcosm, she believes the police in this community care about how the community feels. She shared an incident involving a firearm discharge that could have escalated to a very dangerous event, but due to the professionalism and what she believed to be training of the officers, the incident was de-escalated rather quickly. The police response was explained to the neighborhood and residents felt safe rather quickly. She attributed their professionalism and response to the community to the education and professional development these officers had.

Overall, the overwhelming sentiment of the officer participants as well as the community members was that in addition to the importance of education, ongoing professional development is crucial as well. A career in law-enforcement cannot be a stagnant career.

Working with a Diverse Community. A second subtheme identified in the findings of The Importance of Education was Working with a Diverse Community. When looking at the increasing responsibilities of our law enforcement officers, some participants said the college experience prepared them for the elevated level of performance expected of them, particularly in a diverse community. The case study community is incredibly diverse, with the Jewish and Chaldean populations alone accounting for 60% of its residents. Command Officer Paul shared:

The college experience broadens a person's experiences, gets them out of the bubble they have grown up in. College provides people with the opportunity to interact with people that maybe one might not interact with otherwise. And when you look at serving in a community that is incredibly diverse-that helps.

The importance of cultural competency for officers and the necessity of them to understand and acknowledge the values and beliefs of the various groups living and working within the community could not be understated. The case study community is racially diverse, religiously diverse, ethnically diverse, culturally diverse and economically diverse. When the focus group was asked how important it was for the officers of the case study community to recognize and respect the diversity of the community it was stated, "it is critical, very important and not negotiable."

Community Policing Aligns with Procedurally Just Policing. The idea of procedurally just policing (PJP) and the belief that community-policing initiatives can influence outcomes of PJP was introduced in Chapter One. This approach is complex as it focuses on the way the police interact with the public while also focusing on how the characteristics of those interactions shape the public's views of the police, their willingness to obey the law, and actual crime rates (Bradford, Hohl, Jackson, & MacQueen, 2015; Tyler, 2014). Procedural justice perceptions are identified as the police demonstrating fairness in making decisions (i.e., listening to people before making decisions) as well as the treatment of the individuals they come into contact with are perceived as just (i.e., showing respect and treating with dignity); (Aksu, 2014; Tyler, 2006). This study not only focused on examining perceptions of benefits related to higher education for community police officers, but also questioned the participants' beliefs whether those benefits correlated to outcomes of

procedurally just policing and legitimacy.

As interviews progressed and narratives around community policing initiatives unfolded, police participants were asked about their thoughts on procedurally just policing and outcomes of legitimacy. Many officer participants were familiar with the term *procedurally just policing*, but it was not until a definition as well as context was provided that they were able to identify and reflect upon their own experiences.

Participant after participant stated that although they were initially unfamiliar with the term, once given a clear definition, they were able to make connections to their professional experiences as well as opinions. Many felt the concept was at the core of the community-policing model in which they police in the case study jurisdiction. The message that all citizens are to be treated with respect, fairly and without discrimination is a message that is loud and clear from the administration. Many shared personal examples as well as media narratives about the importance of policing in a just manner. It was through their many examples that the theme Community Policing Aligns with Procedurally Just Policing came to light.

After sharing the context and definition of procedurally just policing practices, the researcher asked Command Officer Patrick if he believed members of his agency policed in a procedurally just manner. He shared,

I do. I think we recognize in the oral board process, we can identify pretty well if somebody is maybe not going to be able to meet the expectations of how we expect our officers to police, just in personality. And just would not necessarily fit in here and in this community. I think it has always been part of the culture here, I think it's always been kind of part of the community's expectation. But I think it's even more engrained, even younger than it was engrained in me with newer people starting. From the top

down, I think the leadership at the top makes that clear. That's what's expected. Not ticket writing, not arrests. All of that is part of law enforcement yes, some communities, some agencies make that a priority. We don't make that a priority here. Never have, in my career anyway. If a ticket is the appropriate thing to do, if an arrest is the appropriate thing to do well then that is what we will do but there are many different ways to handle an incident. We've never and we certainly are not now numbers counters. It's not about revenue. It's about making the right decision at the right time. In the right circumstances and there are many of those.

The researcher followed up with the question "Do procedurally just policing practices correlate to community policing initiatives?" and he stated,

I think it should. It makes it kind of genuine. If you espouse to be a community police agency and there's a lot of definitions for that. In my view, if you espouse to be that and then you're heavy handed with the community I think they see right through that. And then you're not going to get the support you expect.

Conversations around the manner in which the community expects its officers to engage with the community were rich with examples. A command officer who is responsible for leading the patrol division of the case study agency offered the following narrative about the importance of procedurally just policing in this community:

I think the citizens of this community demand it. As a lieutenant, I pride myself by going out of my way to try to make the public feel listened to. Feel like they have a say in what's going on. I take the time to explain to them about how decisions were made. There are times when people are not happy, they're not going to be happy, things didn't work out the way they wanted, but I try my best to try to work that through with them. I

would say that would be one of my higher callings. Can I make this person happy? We definitely strive to be procedurally just.

Command Officer Paul offered a compelling analogy when asked what procedurally just policing meant to him and why it was important to his agency. He stated procedurally just policing is constitutional policing. When asked if he believed his officers policed in a procedurally just manner, he stated:

Yes we do and that is a day-to-day commitment. You treat everyone with respect, though there are days when you have to be officious. Even when someone is being horribly abusive, the idea that the police respond outside of the scope of their profession is no longer acceptable. Not because of fear of consequences, but because it is wrong. If the police act in a manner the community does not accept, they're never going to be supportive of us. They will never trust us. In some communities across the country this is a problem, and every police officer needs to address this on a daily basis.

Participants agreed that community-policing practices enhance procedurally just policing outcomes. When asked how important it was for the police to act in a procedurally just manner, it was shared that the leadership at the case study agency directs and empowers all officers to operate within a framework that is constitutional at all times. Command Officer Paul shared,

This means practicing constitutional policing on the approach with any subject, constitutional on any kind of a search of an individual, constitutional on any kind of use of force, constitutional on all of their arrest decision-making, those decisions have to be not only reasonable but also constitutional. There are a lot of rules and regulations agencies put out there, and their policies and procedures and of course their training

helps narrow down decision-making, but what we ultimately hope we are doing here is a positive reflection on the profession.

Incidentally, days before the community focus group convened a divisive incident occurred at a local restaurant in the case study community. Several officer participants had mentioned it in the periphery during interviews, but little detail was provided as the investigation was in its infancy. Community focus group members who had knowledge of the incident were eager to share what they knew. Elected officials who have a vested interest in their police agency's response to calls for service like this one shared compelling evidence to support what officers had said about the procedurally just manner in which their police agency responds to calls for service. Steven stated,

There was a racial incident the other night that made the news. Apparently the person who felt they were being treated unjustly and racially profiled by the restaurant staff complimented the officers for doing exactly what you just said- listening, treating her in a respectful manner. She shared this with the news as well. Those officers who responded, I am not sure who they were, according to the reporting person treated her almost verbatim to the definition you just provided about procedurally just policing. On the surface it could have easily been considered an assault, yet after listening impartially and talking to all persons involved in the matter, the police did not feel comfortable arresting the female who allegedly threw a bowl of food at the wait staff person.

This incident as well as other personal experiences shared by the group led Howard to state,

While some may consider procedurally just policing a lofty goal, I believe it

exists in this community. We have faith in the command leadership at the police department that they believe in it, and that they expect their officers to police in this manner. And I believe the community demands it of this police department.

Community Policing Starts with Transformational Leadership. While there are not any formal requirements to have earned a graduate degree to obtain a formal leadership position at the department, higher education has always been perceived as a value to the case study department. For many years, though it was not a criterion for promotion, those promoted into sergeant and lieutenant positions had earned bachelor's degrees as well as some having earned graduate degrees. At the time of this research, every command officer with the exception of one has earned a bachelor's degree and all executive command officers at the case study agency have earned master's degrees. Though the agency no longer provides tuition benefits for college to its officers, a robust training budget in place allows officers to attend as much professional development as possible. Attending on-going professional development is required in many human service professions, yet it is not for active duty law enforcement officers once licensed in the State of Michigan.

There are numerous professional organizations in addition to grant-funded training opportunities available for officers across the state, but it is the sole discretion of an agency to send their offices to receive additional training. For some agencies it is a matter of training dollars, for others it may be manpower issues. Unfortunately it must be acknowledged that professional development of active duty law enforcement officers is not a priority at every agency.

In addition to the case study agency promoting professional development, it empowers command officers and patrol officers with decision-making, community relations and personal

development opportunities. This empowerment is not only crucial for successful community-policing initiatives, but it enables the agency to develop formal and informal leaders at the agency. Leadership at the case study agency believes the patrol officers and investigators are provided with a lot of autonomy and are therefore free to make a lot of decisions without conferral of supervision. Command Officer Larry provided the following example of how the organizational leadership supports the community-policing model recommendation of empowering officers to make decisions, problem solve and use of discretion:

In a general sense, that's what we want to promote here, we do want our sergeants, our officers-they have the ability to make decisions on their level because they are in the situation and there's usually multiple ways to solve a situation. To get to the end goal, that you want to get to. There may be five different ways to do something and us as leaders have to remember that just because it's not the way we would have done it does not mean it was the wrong way. I think that our policy and procedures which are very thorough, at times might be too thorough because we want to give officers the ability to use that, we want them to know that we understand- we know there are gray areas, it's not always black and white. So we want to give them the ability, give them the power to make decisions because they are in the moment and we as leaders are not necessarily in the moment.

Officers are also strongly encouraged to make preparations for their own future leadership roles by way of seeking out professional development and making career goals known. This form of succession planning is a somewhat new way of thinking as police departments are largely considered paramilitary type of organizations where historically chain

of command and seniority are large factors in specialty assignments and promotions. Command Officer Robert shared he has a succession plan vision for the agency that is different from the “old way” of thinking in police work. His vision includes preparing people for roles within the agency as well as looking at who is going to replace those roles down the road. He wrote a formal plan for a leadership school project recently where he proposed identifying a key group of mentors in the different areas of the agency. He shared that while the criteria to be a coach/mentor is specific, the agency needs to do a better job in having the right people doing the right jobs because it helps the organization provide better services to the community. For example, if a 10-year veteran wants to be assigned to the detective bureau, but hasn't done anything to professionally prepare for specific investigative skills with the exception of their patrol duties versus a newer officer with a computer science degree who has also attended professional development opportunities related to interview and interrogation techniques, digital forensics, etc. should the veteran be given the assignment simply because of their seniority? In the past the answer would be yes without question. Today's progressive leadership which is in tune with the younger generation of officers it is hiring knows that making a decision based simply on seniority is not the best recipe for preparing future leaders.

Professional Development and Lifelong Learning. Additional subthemes identified with Community Policing Starts with Transformational Leadership are the idea of Professional Development and Life-Long Learning. While many fields in the human services require ongoing professional development, the law enforcement community does not. Unlike other human service professions where continuing education credits are required to remain licensed, law enforcement officers are not. Every police department in the State of Michigan has the autonomy and flexibility to support and require their officers to attend professional

development as they see necessary. In many instances this is a budgetary issue, acknowledging that every police department has a unique operational budget, and some may not even have a line item for training in the budget. The only exception to this rule regarding required proficiency evaluation is related to firearms where the state licensing agency MCOLES requires all certified officers to qualify annually for their agency to be eligible to receive Public Act 302 funds (MCOLES.gov, 2019).

Participants agreed that life-long learning is incredibly important in the law enforcement profession. The good news for the officers and command officers at the case study agency is that the commitment to lifelong learning is considered a priority from the township and therefore a large training budget exists. Every participant shared that they were aware that their department's training budget was considerably larger than most peer agencies throughout the state and several commented that it was rare for training requests to be denied. Leadership at the agency shared the goals of the training budget in the interviews: it is the leadership's belief that by allowing officers to enhance their knowledge and skill set in their profession, by supporting officers in continued specialization in their various assignments within the department as well as prepare future leaders for supervision roles, they are empowering officers to be the best they can be. The overwhelming rationale from the command officers interviewed was that life-long learning not only opens officers' minds to new ideas, but it allows them to also learn what is going on at other agencies; in other states, it helps develop interpersonal skills for dealing with persons different than them, as well as staying current with legal updates.

Participant officers shared that they take advantage of the training opportunities available to them so when promotional opportunities open up, or special assignments, they may already have the skill set to be better prepared for the role than being placed in an assignment without any specific preparation. When asked if professional development related to leadership

development or professional growth that an officer seeks out on his or her own is supported by the agency, Andrew shared, “Yes. Any officer who can articulate a specific course or training that they would like to go to that would help benefit their career whether it is now or in the future for the most part gets approved.”

When asked why he believed the agency supported officer’s individualized professional development he stated that he believes the agency leadership knows that a well-rounded, educated officer is a better officer.

Recruitment Challenges for the Police Profession. All participants, officers as well as command officers, were asked about the current challenges facing the police profession. While some, not surprising, talked about needing more diversity in the ranks, the theme of recruitment challenges emerged as the most common theme related to challenges for the law enforcement profession. Police executives across the country are sensing a crisis in their ability to recruit new officers and to hold onto the ones they have (Police Executive Research Forum, 2019). The case study agency command officers shared that they were no different and while they offer one of the highest salaries + fringe benefits package in the state, they struggle like many agencies across the state with recruiting. As presented by officers, the majority stated they did not feel financial factors were the cause of present-day recruitment challenges. There seems to be fewer young people today who want to enter the profession. The negative lens the police have been subject to in the news as well as social media narratives were the most common thoughts around this issue. This concern is even more complicated if one were to look at economically depressed areas that cannot offer the salaries and benefits as some suburban communities. Charles came from a large urban agency before the case study agency. When asked how to recruit the next generation of law enforcement officers, he replied,

To be totally honest with the way the climate is toward police officers right now I have

no idea. I know I wouldn't want to be in charge of it. How do you tell someone- hey, become a police officer, spend 25-30 years of your life doing this, but while you're doing this you're going to be being scrutinized on everything you do and the second there is a financial downturn, they're going to come after your pensions, your current pay, your benefits. I don't know how you recruit people into this career anymore. I think in the next ten years we are going to have a real problem. I don't know what's attracting anybody to this job anymore.

While officers shared that they are fortunate to work in a community where there is a lot of support from the community, there is the reality that there is a negative connotation with being a law enforcement officer today. James shared that he has been asked several times by subjects he has stopped for traffic violations if he was going to shoot them. He replied, "No I am not, you were speeding." This sounds dramatic, but as he shared, "It's hard to wrap your head around these feelings the general public has of the police."

Another example of the negative narrative that officers face today came from a crime prevention officer. He shared that when speaking at an elementary school recently to a group of fourth grade children about safety he was asked by a Caucasian female how many black people he had shot? He shared that it was very disheartening to hear that a young child would have this idea of the police. In crafting his response, he was cognizant of the fact that there were several African American children listening for his answer, as the school is very diverse, so he chose to make it a teaching moment. He stated he responded with,

Our guns are our tools to protect us and we don't want to hurt people. When we have to use them, it has nothing to do with color. It has nothing to do with white or black; it has to do with protecting us or protecting the citizens. And I explained to her that I have

never shot anyone and that we are here to help people. The police deal with a lot of good and bad, but we are here to protect people.

He went on to share that he recognizes it can be difficult to know what one's prior experiences with the police involved before he has interacted with them, especially when talking at the schools or at other community events; therefore, he does his best to address questions directly, because answering their questions, especially children's questions, is critical if the negative narrative is to ever change.

With the knowledge that everyone has a camera, that the media is typically going to report a story with a limited version of information, and that the news cycle today is 24/7, officers shared it is important to know they are supported by the top of the organization. Some officers voiced concerns, particularly newer officers, that the command leadership is more concerned with how an action is perceived by the public versus the reasons an officer had to perform their duties in the manner in which he or she did. Not feeling supported was one of the main reasons that some participants stated they have considered leaving the profession as a whole.

Command Officer Patrick stated while he understood that the department is given legal counsel regarding making public comment during ongoing investigations, he believes making a statement at times to clarify an officer's actions, or the department's actions, would go a long way in helping officers feel supported when a negative story is reported, especially when the agency knows the officer has acted in accordance with the law. He also felt that sharing information with the public as soon as possible is important to correct an incorrect narrative.

The Police Academy Instruction Is Not Enough Today. Participants were questioned about academy instruction in lieu of college during the interviews. All participants, command

and officer ranks, agreed the academy instruction was not adequate in preparing a suburban police officer for community policing initiatives. When I asked James if college should be required before one attends the academy, he shared,

Yes. College gives a person an opportunity to act outside of their comfort zone, act outside of maybe their own home life. They're off on their own, they're living with a group of people, living with a lot of different people and you need to get along. There is an interaction level of taking you out of your comfort zone that you've lived in for 18 years. I think being able to go college, especially being going away to college provides you the opportunity to be put in situations you never were around before. It also gives you an idea of the structure that is going to be expected on a professional level when you move into the workforce. I mean yeah, I had a great time washing carts at a golf course in the summers because I got to play free golf. But I can't say that gave me experience to be a better officer. However, getting good grades on a test or being able to show that I can give presentations and speak in front of large groups absolutely equates into this job. But I think the biggest fact is that it moves people out of their comfort zone. Now at the same time, an associate degree also gets people out there to learn.

Several participants who are part-time instructors at one of the local police academies in addition to their full-time law enforcement jobs shared that they do not believe that recruit instruction is enough to prepare police officers for the demands of the job today. Concerns about the police academy stemmed from the fact that the curriculum tends to focus on the procedural elements of law enforcement and not much time is spent on essential skills necessary for community-policing initiatives.

When asked about recruiting future police officers, Victor shared that attending the

academy, as an older, mature individual provided him with an opinion about how not only is the academy instruction not enough, but its approach needs to change if the younger generation is even going to consider a career as a law enforcement officer. Victor shared,

The basic police academy instruction is still a paramilitary experience and while I was there several recruits left because of that. They were smart people who would have been good officers, but they were like, squaring my corners? Listen, I think discipline is important, and it is important to work as a team, I just think the days of marching and all of those things should be wrapped up. This is just my opinion. I think you are going to have an easier time drawing younger persons into police work if you have a different approach. I'm not saying you have to be all handsy, and touchy and you've got to be hugging everybody, but to berate somebody because their shirt is not quite pressed, those days may be coming to an end, and maybe rightly so. Here's an example—there was an officer in the academy with me and she was a wonderful girl—very nice and friendly. We were doing traffic stops and her attitude went from very nice, we were having a normal conversation, to hard ass fast. She pulled over an older woman, grandma type age, like 70 years old and she went in there hard ass, "Ma'am, do you have your ID?" instead of talking normal to her. I think that approach is really a problem for those coming in to the career today because you're telling me to be a hard ass in the academy and once I get on the road you want me to be nice to people? So I am wondering can't we train the way we want people to police?

To be fair, the regional police academies in the State of Michigan only have so much time to prepare recruits for all of the academic content to prepare for the state licensing exam as well as hours to train on the operational content, e.g., driving, firearms, mechanics of arrest, etc.

Two regional police academy directors confirmed during the data collection phase that the state of Michigan requires a minimum of 594 hours of instruction. This equates to approximately 15 weeks, though many academies run longer, typically closer to seventeen weeks. While this timeframe appears to provide an opportunity for ancillary instruction, prescribed hours of specific instruction for law, tactics and procedures leaves little, if any, discretionary time for supplemental instruction. The fact that a focus on essential skills is not a state mandated component of required instruction leads the researcher to believe that the directors of academy instruction assume recruits are arriving for the academy already with this much-needed skill set addressed in an earlier section.

Lack of Communication Skills in New Generation of Police Officers. An interesting subtheme identified within the Police Academy Instruction is Not Enough Today from several officers was Lack of Communication Skills in New Generation of Police Officers. Several officers who were in their late thirties made this comment when asked about what skill set today's police officer should come to the agency with. Many spoke about their concerns related to new officers' lack of ability to talk to people. They were speaking of their fellow officers, those hired in the last couple of years that were in the 22-to-25-year-old age range. One officer who works at the local academy shared:

Acknowledging the life experience is so important because the younger generation of recruits who have grown up with technology; it is starting to bring its own kind of challenges. These new recruits who are really young do not have communication skills on a personal level anymore. It is very difficult to get them to engage. I think those who come to the academy with some life experience have an easier time with the communication piece when learning how to relay the procedural context of police work

today.

Anecdotally this is a common complaint about the generation of young people who have grown up with technology, a generation that has been raised with cell phones, social media, and texting that they are not conversant on the telephone or in person. The thought that a community police officer would struggle with the idea of being capable of communicating with the public was not on the radar for the researcher when the interviews began. The paradox of this inability to communicate was additionally surprising as many participants shared that the new generation of police officers embrace community-policing initiatives. It was said that while they really want to be involved in the community, they struggle with the communication part of the enforcement portion of the profession.

One participant, who was a field training officer (FTO), shared he had to stop a probationary officer from texting a citizen when the recruit realized they needed more information after clearing the call for service. The FTO shared that the recruit was confused as to why this was even a problem. The consensus among all participants who spoke about this issue of academy instruction was that if hiring requirements in the state of Michigan were only a high school diploma and the police academy, the profession would be in even bigger trouble than it is right now. Unfortunately, this is a reality in some communities across this state as well as across the country.

Chapter Summary

Analysis of the participant interviews revealed complex subtleties of officers' perceptions about perceived benefits of higher education for the 21st century community police officer. The data provided a foundation for examining higher education as an appropriate catalyst to prepare officers who are involved in community policing initiatives as it relates to

the goals of procedurally just policing and legitimacy. Interviews with officers as well as the community focus group revealed a range of experiences and perspectives with regard to college, community policing, leadership, procedurally just policing practices, trust, legitimacy and recruitment challenges for police leaders. The narratives provided comprehensive insight to the perceptions of police officers as well as the community in regard to their thoughts on community policing.

In general, the findings were similar with respect to officers, command officers and community members when it came to perceptions about the value of higher education for today's community police officer. The findings regarding the appropriate amount of college prior to entering the police academy were more complex. Those officers and command officers who had obtained a bachelor's degree all agreed college should be required. Those officers who had earned only an associate degree, or a professional certificate thought the degree itself should only be considered a small factor in the overall requirements for employment prior to attending a police academy. All participants agreed that the police academy instruction by itself was not sufficient in preparing officers for the demands of the 21st century community police officer. Chapter 5 offers an in-depth discussion of the findings and presents implications for future research.

Chapter Five: Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of benefits of higher education for community police officers in the pursuit of procedural justice and legitimacy. In June 2019, 17 full-time sworn officers and command officers from a case study police agency in SE Michigan participated in this qualitative study. The results revealed a range of experiences and perspectives with regard to perceptions about how college prepares officers for community policing initiatives, leadership, procedurally just policing practices, trust, and recruitment challenges for police leaders.

Command officer participants as well as most officer participants pointed to higher education attainment as significantly preparing them for community policing initiatives. This was in large part due to the fact that for many, college was the first time they were forced to step outside of their comfort zones. The classroom experience as well as living away from home, which included working in groups with strangers, hearing ideas that were different than their own, and meeting people from different backgrounds were contributing factors supporting this finding.

A small number of officer participants who earned the minimum associate degree had mixed opinions on the scale of perceived benefits of higher education. These officers were of the belief that while college can assist an officer with communication, technology and writing skills, the majority of job responsibilities for community police officers are concerned with being relatable to people. One officer stated, “You can’t teach someone their personality.” This sentiment was due to the belief that life experience can provide similar benefits as higher education experiences related to effective community policing initiatives.

All officer participants as well as the one command officer who had only attained an

associate degree stated that they valued higher education to the extent they would return to school for additional education if tuition assistance were provided by the case study agency. When asked to provide further explanation about this response, the participants revealed that they perceive higher education as a whole as important, particularly for those who aspire to official leadership roles in law enforcement. This finding was supported by Pew Research (2019) which concluded this generation of police officers born between 1981-1996 not only value higher education but come to the hiring process having attained more than the minimum education required by most agencies. In addition, Christine Gardiner's (2017) study found while less than 2% of the nation's police agencies require a bachelor's degree, 30.2% of sworn officers in the United States have earned one today. Younger officers shared their aspirations of promotion to sergeant in the near future and these aspiring leaders believe that one should have completed their bachelor's degree to be considered a competitive candidate.

This study sought to examine the demands on today's community police officers, specifically how community-policing initiatives can be the conduit to procedurally just policing practices, and what academic and professional preparation one should have attained prior to entering a career in law enforcement. It focused on the pursuit of procedural justice and outcomes of legitimacy in a suburban community from the perspectives of individual officers and command officers. Community stakeholders were also invited to share their perceptions in an organized focus group.

It is the hope this study will add to the literature of police legitimacy by converging procedurally just policing practices with intentional, community-policing initiatives. Informed community-policing strategies that empower officers to not only be present, but to buy-in is just the start. When the tenants of procedurally just policing; including neutrality, voice, respectful

treatment and trust are present, the pathway for legitimacy has been made. Framing this research to include procedurally just policing practice is the acknowledgement that while any police agency can assert subscribing to community policing initiatives, only those agencies that practice and insist upon procedurally just policing practices can attain true legitimacy. Legitimacy is the foundation of the social contract between the police and the community they serve. Decades of research and practice support the premise that people are more likely to obey the law when they believe that those who are enforcing it have authority that is perceived as legitimate by those subject to the authority. This principle is paramount to understanding why the manner in which the police conduct themselves ultimately determines their legitimacy within the community they serve.

This chapter presents an interpretation of a new model—a procedurally just community-policing model. This model incorporates the original components of community policing founded by the Office of Community Policing in Washington, D.C., but provides a new lens to further the idea of procedural justice and legitimacy. The model suggests that the intentional tenants of respectful treatment, the opportunities for community members as well as police officers to share their voices combined with the acknowledgement that reserving judgment until all of the facts have been gathered and keeping one’s biases in check can create trust in a community. This model is the result of data collected from interviews and the theoretical framework of social contract theory. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the study’s findings, limitations, and suggestions for future research.

The Challenges of Police-Citizen Relationships

In recent years, narratives concerning the police-citizen relationship have garnered a great deal of attention from news outlets as well as social media. Dubious incidents of officer-

involved shootings in communities across America (Przeszlowski & Crichlow, 2018) have fueled the fundamental questioning of police legitimacy. The city of Ferguson, Missouri, will always be a reminder for police leaders as to how the little things can add up, and not always in a positive way. One of the most significant findings from The United States Justice Department was that the City of Ferguson Police Department had focused much of their enforcement on revenue rather than public safety needs. That emphasis compromised the character of the police department, contributing to a culture of unconstitutional policing (Shaw & United States, 2015). Overtime, mistrust grew between the community and law enforcement, which ultimately undermined legitimacy.

While this research did not aim to examine the Michael Brown case in particular, the circumstances that led up to that event and the subsequent protests against the police provided the context as to why study legitimacy outcomes for police agencies. The recommendations from this research focus on procedurally just, community-policing initiatives that just may be the means to achieving such legitimacy.

With 95% of police agencies across America reporting practicing some form of community policing (Gardiner, 2017), this research examined a police agency in a suburban community in an attempt to understand whether this intentional practice could be the key to increased trust and perceptions of legitimacy. Research has consistently found that the principle pathway to promoting legitimacy is through the practice of procedural justice (Hinds & Murphy, 2007; Tyler, 2001, 2004; Quattlebaum, Meares, & Tyler, 2018), yet the literature has primarily focused on large urban police agencies and the public's perceptions. Absent in the literature was the authentic police voice, therefore this study was intended to contribute to the larger discussion regarding improved community-police relationships by examining

community policing initiatives that facilitate procedural justice and legitimacy.

Discussion of the Findings

Analysis of the study's findings suggests there are complex explanations related to perceptions of benefits of higher education for community police officers (Edwards, 2017). Fueling this complexity is the acknowledgement that the community policing philosophy is not universally defined and varies from one community to another.

Police and community relationships, which are at the heart of community policing success, are continually enhanced and sometimes undermined depending on the interactions with the police or the social media narrative. Perceptions around community policing are difficult to generalize, as participants in this study expressed unique perspectives and experiences that contributed to their understanding about community policing initiatives, therefore making context an important aspect of this study. In addition, conversations around outcomes of legitimacy were a new paradigm for some of the participant officers. While many expressed belief and support for outcomes of legitimacy as the goal of community policing initiatives, it was not until a definition of procedurally just policing was provided that officers made the connection to the importance of perceptions of legitimacy. Command officers in particular shared the importance of this concept and acknowledged this factors into hiring decisions, assignments decisions, disciplinary decisions and promotional decisions.

Participants' age, years on the job, and assignments factored into perceptions of community-policing initiatives. This was due to the fact that most police agencies have multiple generations of police officers working alongside one another, each entering the career during various eras of policing (Paynich, 2009). Officers who began their careers in the 1980s were trained in a manner referred to in the literature review as a "warrior" philosophy vs. the current

“guardian” philosophy. These differences account for the reactive crime control response vs. the proactive crime control approach gaining traction across the country. In addition, hiring standards fluctuated during various decades of law enforcement history and it was important to keep in mind that these variables contributed to officers’ narratives around perceptions of benefits of higher education.

With various generations working together, it was interesting to hear how officers approached problem-solving with community members. Some were comfortable talking to citizens while on routine patrol, some shared they volunteered for community liaison committee work, and some simply made connections through their procedurally just patrol response. While there was a variety of educational and professional development experiences among the participants, all agreed that it was the diversity of the college/classroom experience, whether through being exposed to diverse people or diverse opinions, that was most beneficial for them in terms of learning skills applicable to community policing initiatives. This skill set allows for all involved in problem-solving to have a voice and to critically think together to come up with real life solutions.

The main research question was approached using a case study to examine perceived benefits of higher education as it relates to outcomes of procedural justice and legitimacy for community police officers in a suburban community in SE Michigan. A focus group consisting of community members as well as individual, in-depth interviews were conducted with officers, and command officers, which provided various perspectives. Recordings of these interviews were transcribed, and the resulting data was then analyzed. Chapter four provided the participant profiles as well as the emergent themes that came from the data analysis.

The community-policing model introduced in Chapter Three was refined with a

recommendation to combine procedurally just policing practices within the model. This was a result of participants' beliefs that procedurally just policing practice must be infused within the community-policing model for the outcome of legitimacy to be a reality. Model components are examined, and examples, where appropriate are provided. Social contract theory is revisited as it relates to procedural justice to emphasize the justification of the new model. The chapter concludes with suggestions for future research and implications.

Procedurally Just Community-Policing Model

The *Final Report of the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing* is considered one of the most significant documents for law enforcement in modern history (Lum, Koper, Gill, Hibdon, Telep & Robinson, 2016). One of the most profound findings from that report was from the Office of Community Oriented Policing (COPS), which recommends, "The most consistent strategy that enhances procedural justice is community-policing initiatives" (Presidents Task Force on 21st Century Policing, 2015). Recommendations from the report were identified as pillars and key themes from pillars were central to this research. Three of the pillars specifically informed this research and were drawn upon when creating the new community-policing model. Pillar One: Building Trust and Legitimacy recommends the police should focus on trust-building activities, including emphasizing non-enforcement activities in communities and schools and increasing transparency through information sharing. Narratives from participants echoed the importance of this recommendation and it was learned the case study agency has enjoyed success by implementing variations of this strategy. Pillar Four: Community Policing suggest law enforcement should proactively promote trust by initiating positive non-enforcement activities to engage the community, on an agency as well as on a personal basis. Evidence of this practice exists not only in the manner in which the case study

agency encourages and empowers its officers to interact as often as possible, but by supporting the use of discretion and teachable moments versus strict enforcement. Pillar Five: Training and Education aligned with the main research question of this study. The report recommends that due to a more pluralistic nation and the expansion of law enforcement's responsibilities, the need for more and better training has become critical (Presidents Task Force on 21st Century Policing, 2015).

Attaining Legitimacy

A significant outcome of this research was the idea that intentional procedurally just, community-policing initiatives are conducive to achieving legitimacy. Chapter Three introduced the conceptual model for community policing, which illustrated how the individual components, organizational transformation, community partnerships and problem-solving, influence one another. The components of the model are interconnected and require collaboration, as one attribute cannot be considered successful if the others are not actively engaged. By accepting community policing as the recommended conduit in the pursuit of procedural justice and legitimacy in this study, the findings necessitated refining the model to incorporate the tenants of procedurally just policing practice. This enhanced model, a *Procedurally Just Community Policing Model*, serves as a guiding foundation to discuss the research findings (Figure 3).

and the police agency, any communication shared cannot be considered genuine. As stated in Chapter One, the police cannot do their job alone. Without honest feedback to address quality of life concerns as well as the realities of fear of crime or crime itself, anything less is simply lip service. Neutrality is important, as it must be acknowledged that all human beings have biases. It is being aware of one's own biases and keeping them in check while gathering information before any decision-making occurs that is critical. Creating a hypothesis and setting out to prove it instead of gathering all relevant information before determining to what the gathered information points out can be a recipe for disaster. It leads to a breakdown in trust and can also hinder communication. Finally, respectful treatment of all people in all contact situations is mandatory. It is the respectful treatment of all who have contact with law enforcement that will facilitate communication and problem-solving.

This revised model recommends placing procedurally just policing in the center of the three components of the original community-policing model. This revised model aligns with research which has found that the public is especially concerned that the conduct of authorities be fair, and that this factor matters more to them than whether outcomes of particular interventions favor them (Tyler & Fagan, 2008).

This revised model encourages organizational transformation to include trust and voice as it was learned that for agencies to successfully recruit and retain top talent, the paramilitary structure of police agencies must change. Allowing the newest members of an organization to share their voice as well as contribute to the agency's message to the community is critical for attaining legitimacy. Respectful treatment, neutrality and trust are concentric circles placed within community partnerships and problem-solving. Without these intentional practices, community partnerships cannot be considered genuine, nor do they allow for trust to be built

which is a necessary element for effective problem-solving. The tenants of procedurally just policing are not only critical for successful community-policing initiatives, but empirical research has also shown that perceptions of legitimacy have a great impact on compliance with the authority that is enforcing the law (Quattlebaum, Meares & Tyler, 2018).

A ring encompassing the procedurally just community-policing framework is the acknowledgement that the formal preparation of these officers is critical and must be intentional. Findings from every participant, officers, command officers and community stakeholders, support the need for higher education coupled with on-going professional development and lifelong learning.

The outer ring, legitimacy, is the goal of this model. Perceptions of legitimacy are critical for effective community partnerships and problem solving. When the public is willing to obey the law, they are also more likely to support the police in ensuring that those living in their community are also obeying the law.

Social Contract Theory and Procedural Justice

Social contract theory, as it relates to community-policing initiatives, was examined in the individual interviews as well as the focus group. All participants were provided the definition of social contract theory to set a context as how it relates to community policing initiatives. Once shared, not only did officer participants agree that social contract theory was relevant to justifying the authority law enforcement has over the citizens (Evans & MacMillan, 2014; Schram & Tibbitts, 2018), but they also highlighted the relationship between social contract theory and procedurally just policing. It was learned officer and command officer participants believe that social contract theory is a commitment to allow law enforcement to police in a manner that is socially acceptable to the community.

Legitimacy coupled with social contract is in fact the understanding that provides the public's willingness to obey the law. This adherence is predicated on the public's perceptions that the police are acting in a fair and unbiased manner. These perceptions include being listened to when questioning the actions of the police department, being provided an unbiased investigation, being heard and above all else, being treated with respect.

It was learned that over the years, the case study agency has implemented intentional, community-policing initiatives that have focused on improved social controls through perceptions of legitimacy. These social controls include participants' comfort in the knowledge that, when having provided feedback to the leadership at the police department related to a concern about overly authoritative actions by the police, their voices are heard. It should be acknowledged that there would be times when the police do not have the ability to negotiate direct commands with the public, but those occasions are infrequent and reserved for active incidents where the public's safety is in jeopardy. A procedurally just police agency will always find time after a matter has been resolved to debrief how the incident was handled.

It must be acknowledged that this type of relationship is not a reality in all communities, particularly in certain areas of the country. For purposes of this research, data collected in the case study community concluded that building trust in the community, which increases residents' respect for their police authority (Fischer, 2014), can be achieved by judiciously listening to residents and responding to concerns in a manner considered appropriate by the community. It is critical to appreciate that community-policing initiatives are not simply one directional—police to community—instead, they work best when there is an interactive flow between the police and the community (Bain, Robinson, & Conser, 2014).

This research suggests police leaders consider a marriage of procedurally just policing community policing initiatives and social contract. Doing so encourages the collaborative, voluntary maintenance of a law-abiding community by accentuating legitimacy within social contract theory. When the police and the community they serve share values based upon a common conception of what social order is and how it should be maintained, you have a social contract.

Social contract theory is vital to address the crisis of confidence in the American police profession. High profile, controversial incidents involving law enforcement officers across the country have continued to call attention to the increased tension and lack of trust among officers and the communities they serve (President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing, 2015; Primicerio & Normore, 2018). Prior research on procedurally just policing has recommended it is imperative police interventions implemented with strong policies and training in place, are rooted in procedural justice (Office of Community Oriented Policing, 2014). This study found procedurally just encounters have the ability to enhance community approval of police action, leading people to cooperate and comply with police directives.

Community-Policing Framework Revisited

The case study community members who participated in the focus group shared that they expect community policing from its police department. Officer and command officer participants were aware of this expectation and interviews provided valuable insight into the agency's leadership messages communicated to officers about community policing initiatives. It was revealed that while examples provided were unique to the individual sharing their experience, most of them began with an acknowledgement that the administration has empowered its officers to reach out and engage the community. The command leadership has

set the example by not only partnering with the community at the macro level, but by the intentionality of the officers they recruit, the on-going professional development, policies that support decision making, strategic planning and organizational culture. The by-product of leadership that supports and fosters a work culture that embraces the community-policing model is buy-in. Here the original components of the community-policing model are revisited.

Organizational Transformation

The hallmark of organizational transformation is decentralization.

Decentralization (Ford, Weissbein, & Plamondon, 2003; Office of Community Oriented Policing, 2015; Primicerio, 2018) as it relates to community policing practice suggests management approaches that engender change in individuals and social systems as the desired outcome of this initiative (Decker, 2018). As officers and command officers were questioned about organizational directives, conversations about discretion and empowerment took place. Participants concurred community policing only works when there is buy-in from the officers.

This acknowledgement informed the study in that, for community policing initiatives to be truly successful, agencies must recognize the importance of an evolved leadership structure. This denotes leadership styles that are changing, moving from the authoritative manner that has largely dominated the police field to a more inclusive approach that seeks to enable and empower rather than simply command (Decker, 2018). This inclusive approach signifies to officers they are trusted to make decisions, their voices are heard and there is intentional mentoring in place. To achieve true transformation, this approach is critical and must also permeate every facet of the police department (Maguire & Wells, 2009).

Trust and voice. The two tenants of procedurally just policing related to organizational transformation, trust and voice, are important to highlight. When agencies alleviate a strict

reporting system and as an alternative support one that is less hierarchical and flatter, officers and command officers are empowered to use discretion. Discretion is central in decision-making when looking through the lens of procedurally just community policing; it signifies to an officer that they are trusted to not only make decisions but allows for autonomy in how calls for service are handled. It encourages officers to be creative problem solvers. Trust and voice are two elements of conveying empowerment to officers. A transformed organization will not only listen but solicit ideas from its newest members. Here officers are not only heard but encouraged to share their ideas and decision-making.

Empowerment also serves as an attractive, non-tangible benefit of the police profession for the most recent generation of police officers. New officers are very concerned with feeling connected to the mission of the work they are doing and want their voices heard (Chevremont, 2018). The desires of the new generation of law enforcement professionals must not be overlooked. According to the Pew Research Center, those born between 1981-1996 are now the largest living generation in the U.S. With 75.4 million persons in this age group in the U.S., they make up an ever-increasing portion of the workforce (Fry, 2018). This generation is the future of the American workforce, including law enforcement and it is imperative law enforcement leaders understand them.

They want to be a part of something bigger and value purpose more than a paycheck. Encouraging discretion, while allowing for feedback to inform policies, can foster a culture of mutual respect within an organization as a whole. It is also important to acknowledge that when an officer's actions are called into question, officers, just like the public, appreciate and care about fair treatment. The more officers feel they are treated fairly within their own department, the more likely they will enact those principles in their interactions with the public (Trinker,

Tyler & Goff, 2016).

Mentorship. Law enforcement leaders find themselves at a unique nexus in the fields of mentoring, career development and community development (Bowers, Wang, Tirrell & Lerner, 2016), therefore, they must learn to recruit effectively, train, and retain new police officers. Research supports that young officers not only want to find purpose in the work they are doing, but they want to feel like they belong in the work setting. They also want personalized feedback and support. One way to offer that support is through a mentorship program, where seasoned officers provide advice to new recruits.

This study suggests the modern concept of mentoring should be utilized by law enforcement not only as an opportunity to engage new officers at a time when competition for those employees is at an all-time high, but to promote loyalty and inclusiveness within the organization. Goal setting and career planning can provide many benefits for an employer, including the reduction of employee turnover.

Problem-Solving

Recognizing quality of life issues and concerns do not fall onto the community or the police alone, a unique aspect of community policing is that crime can sometimes be addressed in a non-enforcement manner. An exemplary reminder of the power of problem solving came from a focus group participant. She shared that she approached the chief of police and deputy chief to ask that they support an opioid intervention program called *Hope Not Handcuffs*. This program, rooted in looking at the epidemic of drug addiction through the lens of a quality of life issue rather than a law and order issue, is taking hold across the state. Its success is attributed to the fact that it is a diversion program rather than a court sanctioned program. When someone is under the influence of narcotics and has contact with law enforcement, rather

than being taken into custody, the individual is detained while the police contact a volunteer to meet the individual and get them to either the hospital or a rehabilitation clinic. If the individual wants help, there is no punitive law enforcement response.

Respectful treatment and neutrality. Recognizing that in the last five years there have been 60 heroin related overdoses in the community, which have resulted in 18 deaths, the agency agreed to try this approach. This was an acknowledgement that there is no zip code that is immune to this crisis in the United States. This was a possible solution to a serious quality of life issue that was afflicting all demographics in the community. And while insensitivity about this issue percolates in some pockets of the community, the police advocate that they are in the life saving business. By encouraging people to not do drugs, by educating the youth, by partnering with diversion programs, they are addressing a criminal justice problem with a coordinated community response. What makes this response different from traditional law enforcement protocol is that this initiative came from a citizen who trusted the police leadership enough to ask them to listen to the idea, ultimately convincing them to give it a try.

Community Partnerships

Trust. When one thinks of community policing, it is common to envision bike patrols, playing basketball with neighborhood kids, engaging in a dance off or shop with a cop at Christmas time. These general perceptions are positive and provide for a positive sound bite. But there is much more to these interactions. Recent research from Rutgers University-Newark, Yale University, and Massachusetts Institute of Technology, titled "A Field Experiment on Community Policing and Police Legitimacy," found that positive, non-enforcement contact between uniformed police officers and community members can improve public perceptions of police (Peyton, Sierra-Arévalo, & Rand, 2019). Findings included that a single, non-enforcement contact with a uniformed patrol officer substantially improved an individual's perception of

legitimacy and their willingness to help law enforcement solve neighborhood problems. These experiences predicated on procedurally just community policing are a critical aspect of community partnerships.

Interviews revealed that the new generation of police officers seems to embrace these informal interactions more so than veteran officers. And while the mission of community partnerships and problem-solving should be encouraged from top leadership, many of the younger participants advised they would do so regardless if it were formally suggested. Officers routinely patrol neighborhoods and apartment complexes in effort to reach out and get to know the community. Participant narratives supported the cited field experiment research regarding how powerful these interactions can be, particularly when unsolicited communication is shared from residents who have come to personally know individual officers.

The power of community relationships cannot be quantified. The value sometimes is not even realized until the police need the community's help. The importance of this attribute was highlighted in the findings when a command officer shared that sometimes a community partner speaking on behalf of the police department's actions is the best way to address a negative narrative. Procedurally just policing and legitimacy is rooted in the public's acceptance of an unpopular decision primarily because they trust the police who must enforce it. Community partnerships are invaluable and should not be discounted, as a police agency never knows when they may have to ask their citizens for support.

Bottoms and Tankebe (2012) stated that police legitimacy could not be achieved unless a continuous dialogue between the police and the community exists. Communication skills and the newest generation of police officers were discussed in Chapter Four and its importance cannot be understated. Communication is vitally important when shaping the future of a community (Fray, 2017). Problem-solving cannot begin if the police are not fully

informed as to what the problem is in the first place. Lack of communication is typically the nexus for misinformation.

This study extended Bottoms and Tankebe's idea with an examination of how police officers are contributing to the role two-way communication plays in their community. As police leaders intentionally recruit the best candidates, the focus on communication skills must be an important factor in deciding whom to bring onto the force.

Understanding of diversity. Morin, Stepler, and Mercer (2017) reported 83% of Americans believe they understand the challenges facing law enforcement officers, while only 14% of polled police officers agree. Not only is the work of police officers complex, so are the wants and needs of citizens who live and work within the community. To alleviate this misunderstanding, it is suggested that by interacting with the community, community police officers can come to know their community.

Procedurally just policing advocates for neutrality and the respectful treatment of all. The case study agency was deliberately chosen to study because of the vast socioeconomic, religious, cultural and racial diversity. This rich diversity allowed the researcher to hear firsthand officers' and command officers' thoughts and impressions of working within a community that has many different skin colors and speaks several different languages. Multiple officers shared that it was incumbent upon them to do their own research about the histories of the citizens they serve as well as attend any professional development available to them. The leadership has also been intentional in proactively attending and co-hosting community events, providing a presence in the schools as well as engaging the clergy association within the community. These practices have provided the foundation for relationships to take root.

Misreading the community can lead to disaster. An officer's ability to explain and educate rather than respond aloof or indifferent when the community questions an officer's actions is necessary for procedurally just community policing. The example provided in Chapter Four where the young child at the school asked the officer how many black people he had shot provided great insight into the power of procedurally just community policing. The officer listened to the student, explained an officer's obligation to use deadly force only when necessary and attempted to turn the incident into a positive teaching moment. Appreciating the norms and customs of the various cultures living and working in a community can only help officers approach problem solving. This insight will assist a community police officer when the need presents itself to connect appropriate representatives for a community response.

Perceived Benefits of Higher Education for Community Police Officers

Christine Gardiner's (2017) nationwide study *Policing Around the Nation: Education, Philosophy and Practice* came on the heels of President Obama's Task Force on 21st Century Policing and was the background study that informed this research. The hope of the researcher is that the findings from this research help contribute to the larger discussion regarding the authentic voice of the suburban, community-police officer and what professional preparation should look like for effective community-police officers today. As participants shared their perceptions around academic preparation, it must be highlighted that focus group members in particular felt only an educated and informed officer can grasp the realities of a community's past and put together the connections as to how various groups within a community respond to law enforcement. The focus group suggested this knowledge primarily comes from higher education.

This study also sought to answer whether the officers and command officers perceived benefits of higher education as they relate to outcomes of procedural justice and

legitimacy, as their voice has been absent in the literature. It is the hope that we are one step closer to having an answer.

Implications for Future Research

A significant finding of this research is that the perception of benefits of higher education differs among the levels of higher education attainment from the participants. Not surprising, the officers who have earned a bachelor's degree perceived more benefits than officers who had only attained an associate degree. In addition, the focus group sample was drawn from the case study community, therefore with a median household income of \$93,729 and 57% of respondents reporting having a bachelor's degree or higher (United States Census Bureau, 2018) it was not surprising the focus group participants also perceived benefits to their officers having attained higher education.

A statistic that encourages further research on the perception of benefits of higher education was presented in Christine Gardiner's (2017) report, which stated that while less than 2% of the nation's police agencies require a bachelor's degree, 30.2% of sworn officers in the United States have one. Understanding why officers are choosing to pursue higher education when it is not required remains to be answered.

When questioned about the ideal professional preparation for community police officers who police in a consistent procedurally just manner, most respondents provided examples that were not necessarily academic in nature, instead essential skills such as communication, interpersonal skills, problem-solving, and being adaptable were identified. These ideals were perceived as things that could be learned through life experience, but many shared it was the college experience that magnified participants' experiences, some for the first time in their lives. It was the setting-being placed outside of their comfort zone, living with

people who were different from them, being in classrooms surrounded by people of different colors, or hearing different languages spoken that participants felt contributed to a well-rounded person prepared for community police work.

Many of these experiences came from college, especially living away from home during the college years. A qualitative research design similar to this study involving state police recruits who are required to live at the police academy during training may provide additional information that supports or negates the perception that living away from home is beneficial for community-policing strategies.

Given the implications for community-policing strategies, which enhance outcomes of procedural justice and legitimacy, this study suggests further research be conducted on what attributes are most beneficial for today's community police officer. While the community focus group shared the importance of officers' abilities to appreciate the histories of various cultures living and working within a community, officers' perceptions about which academic subject matter was most beneficial for community-policing initiatives varied. A promising approach for future research would be to study a geographic region versus a case study agency. This recommendation would garner a larger sample, including suburban as well as urban police agencies whose communities have different needs for service. While the needs for service may vary from urban to suburban communities, the concept of procedurally just policing is universal. Examining how these variances achieve legitimacy would add to the research. Future research could also include a strategy that utilizes a quantitative method. A quantitative study would allow the researcher to not only obtain information from a large sample pool but would provide a mechanism to test or confirm theories (Lichtman, 2013). Findings from a large quantitative study could corroborate or refute the findings of this

research, therefore adding to the limited amount of literature on perceptions of benefits of higher education for community police officers as they relate to outcomes of procedurally just policing practices.

Another finding from this research that can serve as a springboard for future work is the idea of the importance of verbal communication. Problem-solving and building trust with the community is rooted in effective communication for the community-policing model as well as procedurally just policing practices, yet veteran participants shared perceptions that the most recent generation of 21st century police officers struggle with this facet of the job at times. This concern is specifically related to officers identified as being born between 1981-1996, which has grown up with the Internet and whose members are adopters of the newest and best technology in their lives (Dimock, 2018). The repercussions of growing up in an “always on” technological environment is only now on the radar of hiring executives. Recent research has shown dramatic shifts in youth behaviors, attitudes and lifestyles—both positive and concerning— for those who came of age in this era. Researchers agree generational cohorts give researchers a tool to analyze changes over time (Pew Research, 2019). Following this generation of officers over time and tracking their careers could be of significant importance to the policing profession (Dimock, 2018).

As participants reflected on their preferred communication strategies, it was apparent there were mixed opinions on their overall communication effectiveness. Young officers perceived they were effective communicators and did not feel using text message communication was an inappropriate method for follow-up with a citizen. The perception of the veteran officers who work alongside them and are training them disagreed. Veteran officers shared new recruits in their early to mid 20s not only struggle with oral communication, but

with behavior analysis, body language, and determining authenticity. Veteran officers believe that the reason for the above deficits in the new generation of officers is having grown up learning to communicate via text messages rather than voice phone calls and in-person conversations. Such limits in communication skills become exacerbated in socially challenging encounters.

Furthering the findings related to the importance of verbal communication for community policing, a qualitative study focused on the police academy curriculum would be timely. While minimum education requirements for employment vary across the State of Michigan for law enforcement careers, all officers must attend a regionally state mandated police academy prior to employment. Looking at the mandated statewide police academy curriculum related to verbal communication could provide an avenue for recommendations for curriculum revision. This suggestion came from participants who unanimously agreed that the academy instruction alone is not adequate preparation for police work today. Police academies are charged with providing training that is focused on the mechanics of police work: report writing, learning the motor vehicle code, ticket writing, laws of arrest, use of force continuum, etc. These skills are important and necessary for law enforcement, yet essential skills, such as having compassion and empathy, how to problem solve, having good interpersonal relationship skills, integrity and ethical decision-making are areas where minimal classroom instruction is provided.

Agencies need officers who can think their way through situations rather than relying on traditional training, which may or may not have prepared recruits for the nuances in behavior and communication when dealing with the public. This recommendation challenges the focus of the police academy, which concentrates heavily on the mechanics of law and

procedure.

Lastly, the research design employed here may be of use to future researchers concerned with looking at succession planning for future leaders within agencies that promote community-policing initiatives. What is known about the newest generation of police officers is that they value the following: achieving rapid advancement, being part of a team that has a say in important decisions, and working for a purpose, which is more than a paycheck (Chevremont, 2018). While command officers were included in this study, future research focused on early leadership identification and development, the perceived benefits of higher education for leaders and how professional development at the command level differs from line officer professional development and how it could inform the future of policing is worth future discussion. In a recent Gallup poll (Adkins, 2017), 87% of new professionals entering the work force for the first time cited professional development and career opportunities as a very important factor when taking a job. This suggests police agencies begin focusing on how police officers make a difference in their communities versus the salary and benefits package.

Implications for Practice

Recruiting police officers today is harder than ever. A robust economy coupled with the negative narrative about the police profession in general are just some of the explanations as to why people do not want to enter the profession or are leaving it all together. Alonzo Thompson, Chief of Police for Spartanburg (SC) Police Department, summed up the problem by theorizing that as baby boomers are retiring, fewer working aged people are replacing them in the ranks. He commented, “The inherent dangers of the profession and its intense scrutiny and harsh criticism discourage some from entering and/or remaining in law enforcement while others pursue more lucrative, less stressful and safer career fields” (Challenges Facing Law

Enforcement in the 21st Century, 2017).

Unfortunately, this reality makes the case for enhanced minimum education standards that much harder. In addition, pensions, retiree healthcare and a static pay structure once officers have attained top pay contribute to the recruiting crisis. While police officers generally get paid an average wage, receive average benefits, and are provided a higher number of days off compared to a private sector job (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2018), skyrocketing health-care premiums in addition to the disappearance of pension systems are contributing factors to the recruiting crisis (Wharton Business School, 2018).

In addition, the debate on whether there is value in a liberal arts education remains. While students surveyed (2015) by the Association of American Colleges and Universities reported feeling prepared for post college success, the majority of surveyed employers felt college graduates are not particularly well prepared to achieve the learning outcomes that they view as important. Nearly all employers agreed that for career success, “a candidate’s demonstrated capacity to think critically, communicate clearly, and solve complex problems is more important than his or her undergraduate major” (Hart research Associates, 2015). The literature on the value of higher education also finds that possessing field specific knowledge in addition to a broad range of knowledge and skills is crucial to achieve long-term career success. The following suggestions for police leaders, officers and communities are therefore proposed in the next section.

Suggestions for Police Leaders. In recent decades, police agencies would have hundreds of applicants vying for one or two entry-level positions. Today peer agencies find themselves fighting over the same candidates—attempting to lure them to their department versus another. Agencies have had to become creative in luring top talent and can even be

found accepting lateral transfers from one agency to another. This practice was unheard of before.

This reality supports the concern that the pool of interested candidates has shrunk to the point that recruits can be incredibly selective about where they choose to work. Incentives such as salary, signing bonuses and continuing education remain attractive recruiting incentives, however, new officers entering the law enforcement profession are more concerned with feeling connected to the mission of the work they are doing, flexible work schedules, relaxed grooming standards, and the acceptance of tattoos (Chevremont, 2018). These incentives are atypical of most paramilitary police organizations, therefore a progressive leadership that is in tune with what the newest generation of police recruits are looking for is necessary to attract and keep talent.

Transformational leadership that understands what the newest generation of police officer wants from a career in law enforcement is critical. These employees seek coaches, mentors, and career enhancement in the form of education. The 21st century police officer cares about their purpose of work and their contribution to the organization. They want to be included in decision-making and provided an explanation when they question non-emergent directives. Transformative agencies where the executive command staff, first-line supervisors, and training officers accept the desires of the 21st century police officer will be able to attract and retain the best talent. Modern police agencies cannot ignore this transformation. The days of new recruits being assigned to the midnight shift for years before earning their “right” to apply for specialized positions is not considered acceptable for this generation.

Mentoring and encouraging officers to care about procedurally just policing practices should not stop once an officer has made it through their probationary period of employment.

Goal setting allows for an agency to remain transformational by continuously assessing the development of their officers and their relationships with the community. Agencies that do not offer performance evaluations requesting input from their officers on professional goal setting are missing the critical foundation for procedurally just community policing practices.

Suggestions for Police Officers. There is good news for the 21st century police officer. Not only do they have options related to where they choose to work, but benefits, retirement plans, and pension systems still exist in communities across the state. Most agencies in the State of Michigan offer a 401k match or a defined contribution pension, but officers must also save for their future. The reality is that law enforcement careers are no different than private sector careers. Rapidly rising commercial premiums caught up to the public arena post 2008, impacting state budgets and slashed shared revenue funds. These fiscal pressures have led to proposals and implementation to increase employees' share of the costs (DeLord & York, 2017).

And while this new normal may impact recruitment efforts, at the heart of police work is serving the community. In communities where there is strong support for the police, officers cannot take this support for granted. In the communities where their citizens do not support the police, they must look within the organization to determine if a new approach is warranted. Compensation packages that greatly exceed what the public feels they are getting only results in unsupported millage initiatives, failed bond issues, etc.

Procedurally just police practice that leads to legitimacy does not happen in a microcosm. Officers have to accept that responsiveness, transparency, respectful treatment and hearing the voice of the community is a minimum requirement of police work today. Communication skills must be honed and opportunities to collaborate with the community

should not be ignored. There is a reason it is referred to as public service. Applicants must do their homework about the community they are applying to before their interviews. The hiring process should be an opportunity to inquire about existing community partnerships, opportunities for officers, as well as the opportunity to ask for examples of collaborative problem solving. Recruits should also be prepared to come to the interview table with suggestions.

Suggestions for Municipalities. Keeping in mind the desires of this generation, as well as the public sentiment around the police profession, now is not the time to lower hiring standards. In order to recruit the most qualified candidates, agencies must provide as many non-monetary incentives as it can: interesting assignments, professional development, health and wellness amenities and appreciation for the work that is required. Agencies that can offer incentives such as continuing education will continue to remain at the top of the list for those looking to enter the profession and aspire to positions of leadership. What those agencies need to be mindful of is keeping those officers who better themselves through higher education so as to not lose the much-needed talent pool to private industry.

If professional development or advanced education benefits are provided to recruit and retain officers, municipalities that support these incentives should attach a required number of years of service to these benefits. Requiring three to five years' employment post education benefits would not be considered unreasonable.

A final recommendation to recruit highly skilled candidates suggests a student loan forgiveness program. This program could be crafted to scale- aligned with a certain year of service for repayment forgiveness. A municipality could pay for this benefit ahead of time, delaying interest before loans would be paid, while simultaneously enticing recruits who

have already attained higher education with a signing bonus related to level of education attained.

Suggestions for Police Academy Curriculum Development. A final recommendation for practice suggests the governing body responsible for licensing police officers in the State of Michigan adopt a formal procedure to assess their mandated curriculum that includes higher education professionals. Presently, MCOLES licensing regulations are the result of the board of commissioners who suggest areas of content to be covered in the academy prior to taking the licensure exam. This commission is made up of Chiefs of Police and Sheriffs who are eligible to receive Public Act 302 funds. Professionals from academia have been absent in these conversations (D. Harvey, personal communication February 12, 2020).

A major finding from this research was that the newest generation of police officers struggle with verbal communication and nonverbal communication cues. This finding suggests the commission review the areas of curriculum concentrations to include emphasis on the importance of communication. In addition, this recommendation aligns with recommendations on de-escalation practices within the law enforcement profession.

A benefit of allowing higher education professionals to have a voice in academy curriculum development is that they would also bring to the conversation the importance of curriculum assessment. The argument the police academy instruction is not enough is a valid point. Police academies are referred to as “basic” police academies for this reason. At the same time, the foundational skill set needs to be in place from the beginning of training, not left up to individual agencies across the state whose police service styles vary depending on the needs of the community. Assessment that focuses on academy instruction in conjunction with community-college academic instruction would ensure consistent training.

Conclusion

Prior literature examining the effectiveness of community policing exist in copious amounts. In contrast, concepts informing procedurally just policing and legitimacy are comparatively new to the field of proactive policing, particularly as policy-level interventions. Literature on procedurally just policing remains in its infancy, with broader concepts of procedural justice developed within the field of social psychology, in theory-driven studies exploring why people trust authorities, view them as legitimate and entitled to be obeyed, and consequently defer to their authority (Mallicoat, 2019). Research has subsequently studied procedural justice and perceived legitimacy in work organizations, within court procedures as well as citizen perceptions of the police encounter. However, these concepts have only recently been applied to policing strategies and the police officer voice.

It must be stated that if intentional procedurally just police practices are not rooted in community policing initiatives, the efforts of a police agency that purports to practice community policing might not realize their full potential. An example of community policing can be found in the school liaison officer position. This position is considered necessary in many communities today due to increased acts of violence. Many school districts across the country incorporate them. If parents and students were to find the school resource officer when investigating a matter punitive in nature and not approachable, the outcome could be missed dialogue that might otherwise prevent future crime. This example highlights the fact that trust cannot be garnered through community policing initiatives if the citizens do not feel heard or respected. Relationships are especially crucial in communities plagued by extreme violence.

Summarizing the perceptions of benefits of higher education for community police officers presented challenges, as it was difficult to generalize individual experiences as they

relate to available empirical research. Individual police agencies each have a unique interpretation of what community policing means to them. These inconsistencies make it difficult to draw direct comparisons to perceptions of benefits of higher education as they relate to community-policing initiatives across the state. The case study agency itself is a microcosm within the spectrum of policing in Michigan. Therefore, this study should serve as a guide for future research as the question related to how police officers should be professionally prepared so that outcomes of procedural justice and legitimacy are commonplace across the law enforcement profession.

It is the hope that future research focused on procedurally just policing practices across America continues. Constitutional policing occurs when procedurally just policing practices combined with intentional community-policing initiatives are in tandem with one another. Implementation of the research findings has the potential to solidify the police identity to that of a guardian and mitigate the crisis of confidence in the police profession once and for all.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Email Communication to the Chief of Police

Email Communication to the Chief of Police requesting access to the police department

Chief Patton,

I am requesting formal approval to conduct an in-depth case study on your agency's command and patrol officers' perceptions of perceived value of higher education as it relates to community policing initiatives and outcomes of procedural justice and legitimacy.

I am asking that I have the opportunity to interview yourself as well as three command officers who directly supervise community police initiatives. In addition, I am requesting the opportunity to interview officers assigned to patrol, the detective bureau and the crime prevention unit. These interviews would be conducted in a private location, preferably the administrative conference room, and upon participants informed consent, their interviews would be audio recorded.

Confidentiality will be a priority and therefore no one's private information will be recorded or will be used in any research findings. In addition, the name of the department will not be acknowledged in the final research findings, instead I will refer to the agency as a suburban police department in SE Michigan.

I anticipate the interviews to take approximately an hour to complete and I will make certain to accommodate the various patrol shifts work availability as well as your manpower deployment needs.

I am also requesting that I be granted permission to participate in a few ride a-longs with participant officers once all interviews are completed for strictly observation purposes. These ride a-longs would entail notes being taken by myself, but no recording of any conversation of patrol responsibilities would take place.

For the officers' time I am offering a \$5.00 gift card to each participant. With your permission I would like to request that I be given the opportunity to attend all 3-shift briefings (days, afternoons and midnights) to explain the research in person, answer any questions at that time and solicit volunteers.

I look forward to answering any questions you may have. Thank you.

Tara M Kane
Eastern Michigan University Doctoral Student
248-396-7918
Tkane2@emich.edu

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Appendix B: Script for Recruiting Police Department Personnel

Script for Recruiting Police Department Personnel: Command Officers as well as Patrol Officers.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak with you today. My name is Tara Kane and I am a doctoral student at Eastern Michigan University. I am here today because I am looking for volunteers to participate in my research study.

Today's police officers are tasked with many responsibilities that go beyond responding to crime. The public expects transparency, communication, partnerships and response to quality of life issues that are not always criminal in nature. The minimum education requirements for police officers vary across the nation, as well as across this state. That being said, almost all police agencies as of 2017 identify as practicing some form of community policing initiatives.

My research involves a qualitative research project on your agency's command and patrol officers' perceptions of perceived value of higher education as it relates to community policing initiatives and outcomes of procedural justice and legitimacy.

I am asking interested participants to agree to allow themselves to be interviewed about these perceptions at a date and time convenient for you with permission of your supervisor. This interview will take place at the police station in a private room and it is my request that you will allow your responses to be audio recorded. Informed consent will be explained and a written explanation will be provided at the time of the interview.

Confidentiality will be a priority and therefore no one's private information will be recorded or will be used in any research findings. In addition, the name of the department will not be acknowledged in the final research findings, instead I will refer to the agency as a suburban police department in SE Michigan.

I anticipate the interview to take approximately an hour to complete and I will make certain to accommodate your shift work availability as well as the department's manpower deployment needs.

I am also requesting that I be granted permission to participate in a few ride a-longs with participant officers once all interviews are completed for strictly observation purposes. These ride a-longs would entail notes being taken by myself, but no recording of any conversation of patrol responsibilities would take place.

For your time I am offering a \$5.00 gift card to each participant. If you are interested and agree to participate in this case study I am asking you fill out a letter of interest form I have brought along with me. I will follow up with you via email to set up and confirm the interview date and time. I look forward to answering any questions you may have. Thank you.

Appendix C: Letter of Interest

LETTER OF INTEREST

I am conducting a case study on your agency's command and patrol officers' perceptions of perceived value of higher education as it relates to community policing initiatives and outcomes of procedural justice and legitimacy.

If you are interested and agree to participate in this case study I will follow up with you via email to set up and confirm the interview. I am asking that I have the opportunity to interview yourself at a date and time convenient for you with permission of your supervisor. This interview will take place at the police station in a private room and it is my request that you will allow your responses to be audio recorded. Informed consent will be explained and a written explanation will be provided at the time of the interview.

The name of the department will not be acknowledged in the final research findings; instead I will refer to the agency as a suburban police department in SE Michigan.

I anticipate the interview to take approximately an hour to complete and I will make certain to accommodate your shift work availability as well as the department's manpower deployment needs.

I am also requesting that I be granted permission to participate in a few ride a-longs with participant officers once all interviews are completed for strictly observation purposes. These ride a-longs would entail notes being taken by myself, but no recording of any conversation of patrol responsibilities would take place.

For your time I am offering a \$5.00 gift card to each participant.
I look forward to answering any questions you may have. Thank you.

Tara M Kane

Eastern Michigan University Doctoral Student
248-396-7918
Tkane2@emich.edu

Please check all that apply to you:

_____ Associate degree

_____ Bachelor degree

_____ Graduate degree

_____ Military experience

Name: _____ Email address: _____

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Appendix D: Focus Group In-Person Recruitment Language

Focus group recruitment language for in-person recruitment

Hello XXXX,

I am a graduate student at Eastern Michigan University and I am inviting you to participate in a focus group session with other selected community members to discuss the perceptions of perceived value of higher education as it relates to community police officers and outcomes of procedural justice and legitimacy.

The purpose of the focus group is to ask participants within this community to share their perceptions about the police officers that serve their community; specifically as it relates to what the community believes the minimum education standards should be, continuing professional development and community policing practices.

An informed consent document will be provided at the beginning of the session and all questions will be answered prior to the focus group session. The investigator plans on audio recording the focus group session, therefore all focus group participants will be asked to only use their first names during the session and to not share any information discussed in the focus group with others outside of the session.

At any time participants can leave the focus group. Participants will not be paid and the meeting will be held at a neutral place within the community, i.e., community library, parks and recreation building or school (TBD) within a closed-door room for privacy. The meeting should last no longer than 1.5-2 hours and will only be held one time

If you are interest in participating or have any concerns or questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at (248)-396-7918 or via email with my address below.

Thank you,
Tara M. Kane
Tkane2@emich.edu

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Appendix E: Informed Consent Form for Command and Patrol Officers

RESEARCH @ EMU

Informed Consent Form for Command and Patrol Officers

Project Title: The Pursuit of Procedural Justice and Police Legitimacy-A Case Study of Community Police Officers' Perceptions of the Perceived Benefits of Higher Education

Principal Investigator: Tara Kane, Eastern Michigan University

Co-Investigator: Raul Leon, PhD., Eastern Michigan University

Faculty Advisor: Raul Leon, PhD., Eastern Michigan University

Invitation to participate in research

You are invited to participate in a research study. In order to participate, you must be willing to share your opinions and experience as a community police officer. Participation in research is voluntary. Please ask any questions you have about participation in this study.

Important information about this study

- The purpose of the study is to hear from the authentic police officer voice related to their perceptions of perceived value of higher education as it relates to community policing initiatives, specifically as they relate to outcomes of procedural justice and legitimacy.
- Participation in this study involves answering demographic questions as well as professional experiences via personal interview. The interview will last approximately 1 hour.
- Participation may include allowing the investigator to participate in a ride along with a participant officer at a time after the interview has been completed for observation purposes only.

What is this study about?

The purpose of the study is to examine minimum education requirements for police officers in a suburban community in SE Michigan. The focused inquiry will seek to understand the individual officers' perceptions related to higher education and any perceived benefits related to their education and community policing initiatives.

What will happen if I participate in this study?

Participation in this study involves:

- Confidential interviews that will occur at the police department. The interview will occur during a time convenient for the participant. The interview will last approximately 1 hour and during this time the participant will be asked open-ended questions that will examine: 1) attained education levels, 2) personal

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opinions related to community policing initiatives and 3) perceived benefits of higher education as it relates to community policing initiatives, procedural justice and legitimacy outcomes for police officers.

- The investigator would like to make an audio recording of your interview for note taking purposes. Your personal voice will remain confidential and you will be provided a pseudonym. If you are audio recorded, it may be possible to identify you through your voice, though the recordings will not be disseminated with the research findings. If you do not agree to be audio recorded, you may not be eligible to participate in this study.
- The investigator will transcribe all responses and these responses will be individually coded which will link the interviewee to the interview.

Data Collection

The investigator will collect data about your level of attainment of higher education. This data will be compared to perceived benefits of higher education from other individual police officers within the case study agency.

What are the expected risks for participation?

There are no expected physical or psychological risks to participation.

The primary risk of participation in this study is a potential loss of confidentiality.

Some of the interview questions are personal and may make you feel uncomfortable. You do not have to answer any questions that make you uncomfortable or that you do not want to answer. If you are upset, please inform the investigator immediately.

Are there any benefits to participating?

You will not directly benefit from participating in this research.

How will my information be kept confidential?

The investigator will protect your confidentiality by ensuring all audio recordings, typed transcripts, and files related to the analysis will be stored on their personal password-protected laptop computer. Hard copies of completed consent forms and questionnaires will be scanned and stored electronically on investigator's personal laptop with password protection. Subjects' names and their questionnaire answers will be linked to a code that will be recorded on a document separate from the data. This document will also be password-protected and stored on researcher's personal laptop. Additionally, back-ups of all audio recordings, transcripts, and analysis documents will be maintained in files in a password-protected Google drive.

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Essentially, all documents with identifying information will be stored separately from the data. We will store your information for at least five years after this project ends, but we may store your information indefinitely. We plan to publish the results of this study. We will not publish any information that can identify you.

We will make every effort to keep your information confidential, however, we cannot guarantee confidentiality. The principal investigator and the research team will have access to the information you provide for research purposes only. Other groups may have access to your research information for quality control or safety purposes. These groups include the University Human Subjects Review Committee, the Office of Research Development, the sponsor of the research, or federal and state agencies that oversee the review of research, including the Office for Human Research Protections and the Food and Drug Administration. The University Human Subjects Review Committee reviews research for the safety and protection of people who participate in research studies.

Storing study information for future use

Your information may be used to study in the future. Therefore we will store your information for at least five years after this project ends, but we may store your information indefinitely. Your information will be labeled with a code and not your name. Your information will be stored in a password-protected or locked file and will be stored indefinitely.

We may share your information with other researchers without asking for your permission, but the shared information will never contain information that could identify you. We will send your de-identified information by email and only upon request.

What are the alternatives to participation?

The alternative is not to participate.

Benefits to Society

The lack of consistent minimum education levels for police officers across the country leaves society questioning how much education is really necessary for policing in the 21st century. This lack of understanding of perceived benefits police officers derive from higher education limits the police executive's ability to place a realistic priority on hiring standards and professional development. Officer participation in this study will allow the case study institution to examine their current hiring standards. Area agencies not selected for this study will benefit from learning from the work of their peer.

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Are there any costs to participation?

Participation will not cost you anything.

Will I be paid for participation?

You will be given a \$5 gift card for participating in this research study.

Study contact information

If you have any questions about the research, you can contact the Principal Investigator, Tara Kane, at Tkane2@emich.edu or by phone at 248-396-7918. You can also contact Tara Kane’s adviser, Dr. Raul Leon, at Rleon1@emich.edu or by phone at 734-487- 7120 x 2695.

For questions about your rights as a research subject, contact the Eastern Michigan University Human Subjects Review Committee at human.subjects@emich.edu or by phone at 734-487-3090.

Voluntary participation

Participation in this research study is your choice. You may refuse to participate at any time, even after signing this form, without repercussion. You may choose to leave the study at any time without repercussion. If you leave the study, the information you provided will be kept confidential. You may request, in writing, that your identifiable information be destroyed. However, we cannot destroy any information that has already been published.

Statement of Consent

I have read this form. I have had an opportunity to ask questions and am satisfied with the answers I received. I give my consent to participate in this research study.

Name of Subject

Consent for ride along observation

Signature of Subject

Date

Approved by the Eastern Michigan University Human Subjects Review Committee
UHSRC Protocol Number: UHSRC-FY18-19-315
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I have explained the research to the subject and answered all their questions. I will give a copy of the signed consent form to the subject.

Name of Person Obtaining Consent

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent

Date

Approved by the Eastern Michigan University Human Subjects Review Committee
UHSRC Protocol Number: UHSRC-FY18-19-315
Study Approval Date: 05/21/19

Appendix F: EMU IRB Approval Letter

May 21, 2019 12:27 PM EDT

Tara Kane
Eastern Michigan University, Leadership and Counsel

Re: Expedited Review - Initial - UHSRC-FY18-19-315 The Pursuit of Procedural Justice and Police Legitimacy-A Case Study of Community Police Officers' Perceptions of the Perceived Benefits of Higher Education

Dear Tara Kane:

The Eastern Michigan University Human Subjects Review Committee has rendered the decision below for The Pursuit of Procedural Justice and Police Legitimacy-A Case Study of Community Police Officers' Perceptions of the Perceived Benefits of Higher Education. You are approved to conduct your research.

Decision: Approved

Selected Category: 7. Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

Findings: You must use stamped copies of your recruitment and consent forms.

To access your stamped documents, follow these steps: 1. Open up the Dashboard; 2. Scroll down to the Approved Studies box; 3. Click on your study ID link; 4. Click on "Attachments" in the bottom box next to "Key Contacts"; 5. Click on the three dots next to the attachment filename; 6. Select Download.

Renewals: This approval will not expire. Once you have completed data collection and all data are de-identified, please submit a Closure form.

Modifications: All changes to this study must be approved prior to implementation. If you plan to make any changes, submit a modification request application in [Cayuse IRB](#) for review and approval. You may not implement your changes until you receive a modification approval letter.

Problems: All deviations from the approved protocol, unanticipated problems, adverse events, subject complaints, or other problems that may affect risk to human subjects *or* alter their willingness to participate must be reported to the UHSRC. Complete the incident report application in [Cayuse IRB](#).

Please contact human.subjects@emich.edu with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Eastern Michigan University Human Subjects Review Committee

Appendix G: Informed Consent Form for Focus Group Participation

RESEARCH @ EMU

Informed Consent Form-Focus Group Participation

The person in charge of this study is Tara Kane. Ms. Kane is a student at Eastern Michigan University. Her faculty adviser is Dr. Raul Leon. Throughout this form, this person will be referred to as the “investigator.”

Project Title: The Pursuit of Procedural Justice and Police Legitimacy-A Case Study of Community Police Officers’ Perceptions of the Perceived Benefits of Higher Education

Principal Investigator: Tara Kane, Graduate Student

Faculty Advisor: Raul Leon, Ph.D., Professor of Higher Education and Student Affairs at Eastern Michigan University

Invitation to participate in research

You are invited to participate in a research study. In order to participate, you must be willing to share your opinions and experience as a community member of the case study police department. Participation in research is voluntary. Please ask any questions you have about participation in this study.

Important information about this study

- The purpose of the study is to examine the community’s perceptions of a case study police department as it relates to community policing initiatives, procedural justice practices and police legitimacy.
- Participation in this study involves a 2-hour focus group session.
- Risks of this study include a potential loss of confidentiality.
- The investigator will ask participants to use first names only in the focus group session, as this session will be audio recorded.
- Participation in this research is voluntary. You do not have to participate, and if you decide to participate, you can stop at any time.

What is this study about?

The purpose of the study is to examine minimum education requirements for police officers in a suburban community in SE Michigan. The focused inquiry will seek to understand the individual officers’ perceptions related to higher education and any perceived benefits related to their education and community policing initiatives. Community partnerships are a vital component of community-policing initiatives and therefore perceptions about the police from the community they are serving are an important measurement of effectiveness.

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What will happen if I participate in this study?

Participation in this study involves

- Attending a focus group session lasting approximately 2 hours. The focus group will involve up to 10 research participants and the investigator. You are asked to only use your first name in the focus group and to not share information exchange in this session with others outside of the group. This focus group session will be audio recorded.

What are the expected risks for participation?

The primary risk of participation in this study is a potential loss of confidentiality.

Some of the focus group questions are personal in nature and may make you feel uncomfortable. You do not have to answer any questions that make you uncomfortable or that you do not want to answer. If you are upset, please inform the investigator immediately.

Are there any benefits to participating?

You will not directly benefit from participating in this research.

Benefits to society

The lack of consistent minimum education levels for police officers across the country leaves society questioning how much education is really necessary for policing in the 21st century. This lack of understanding of perceived benefits police officers derive from higher education limits the police executive's ability to place a realistic priority on hiring standards and professional development. Officer participation in this study will allow the case study institution to examine their current hiring standards. Community member participation will provide for data triangulation with respect to themes identified by the investigator as well as allow the case study institution to receive feedback from its citizens. Area agencies not selected for this study will benefit from learning from the work of their peer.

How will my information be kept confidential?

We will store your information for at least five years after this project ends pursuant to Eastern Michigan University's institutional research rules and guidance. We plan to publish the results of this study though the community studied will not identified, instead it will be referred to as a community in SE Michigan. Due to the sensitive nature of the information collected, every effort will be made to not publish any information that can readily identify you.

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The focus group transcripts will be stored in password-protected computer files, and any audio recordings will be kept in a password-protected recording file until they are destroyed. These files will only be accessible to the investigator as well as her primary co-investigator at EMU (dissertation chair and faculty member) and upon the five year mark of completed research the investigator will request these recordings be destroyed.

Other groups may have access to your research information for quality control or safety purposes. These groups include the University Human Subjects Review Committee, the Office of Research Development, the sponsor of the research, or federal and state agencies that oversee the review of research, including the Office for Human Research Protections and the Food and Drug Administration. The University Human Subjects Review Committee reviews research for the safety and protection of people who participate in research studies

The investigator will ask you and the other people in the group to use only first names during the focus group session. The investigators will also ask you not to tell anyone outside of the group about anything that was said during the group session. However, we cannot guarantee that everyone will keep the discussions private.

Storing study information for future use

We will store your information to study in the future. The investigator will protect your confidentiality by ensuring all audio recordings, typed transcripts, and files related to the analysis will be stored on their personal password-protected laptop computer. Hard copies of completed consent forms and questionnaires will be scanned and stored electronically on investigator's personal laptop with password protection. Subjects' first names and their questionnaire answers will be linked to a code that will be recorded on a document separate from the data. This document will also be password-protected and stored on researcher's personal laptop. Additionally, back-ups of all audio recordings, transcripts, and analysis documents will be maintained in files in a password-protected Google drive.

We may share your information with other researchers without asking for your permission, but the shared information will never contain information that could identify you.

Will I be paid for participation?

You will not be paid for participating in the focus group.

Are there any costs to participation?

Participation will not cost you anything.

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Study contact information

If you have any questions about the research, you can contact the Principal Investigator, Tara Kane, at Tkane2@emich.edu or by phone at 248-396-7918. You can also contact Tara Kane's adviser, Dr. Raul Leon, at Rleon1@emich.edu or by phone at 734-487- 7120 x 2695.

For questions about your rights as a research subject, contact the Eastern Michigan University Human Subjects Review Committee at human.subjects@emich.edu or by phone at 734-487-3090.

Voluntary participation

Participation in this research study is your choice. You may refuse to participate at any time, even after signing this form, with no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may choose to leave the study at any time with no loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you leave the study, the information you provided will be kept confidential. You may request, in writing, that your identifiable information be destroyed. However, we cannot destroy any information that has already been published.

Statement of Consent

I have read this form. I have had an opportunity to ask questions and am satisfied with the answers I received. I give my consent to participate in this research study.

Signatures

Name of Subject

Signature of Subject

Date

I have explained the research to the subject and answered all their questions. I will give a copy of the signed consent form to the subject.

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Name of Person Obtaining Consent

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent

Date

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Appendix H: Interview Protocol for Police Officers

Q1. How long have you been a police officer and what is your current assignment? Have you worked anywhere else (another police department) before here?

Q2. What college education in addition to the police academy have you attained? What factors contributed to your decision to pursue a career in law enforcement? What factors contributed to your decision to obtain a college education? Do you have any plans to further your education at some point in the future?

Q3. From your perspective, how would you describe community policing?

Q4. If you can recall your hiring interview, was community policing discussed related to the mission of the department?

Q5. Does this agency actively promote and encourage community-policing practices? If so, can you provide specific examples?

Q6. Describe any professional experiences that stand out to you as evidence that the agency you work for supports and values community-policing initiatives?

Q7. The community-policing model recommends empowering officers to make discretionary decisions and working close with the community to problem solve rather than a top down directive mission. Can you provide specific examples of organizational leadership at your police department that supports this recommendation?

Q8. Is professional development related to leadership and professional growth available to officers? Please share any examples.

Q9. Does leadership have to be formal, meaning the level of rank an officer has attained? Can leadership be informal? Please explain your responses. Related to community

policing initiatives, is one (formal vs informal) more valuable than the other? Why or why not?

Q10. Describe any relationships/experiences with citizens that influence your confidence in your role as a community police officer. Describe any experiences that positively and/or negatively impact your confidence as a police officer in general? [SEP]

Q11. What do you believe to be the basis of your authority as a police officer?

Q12. Are you familiar with the term Procedural justice? If yes, what does procedural justice mean to you?

Q13. Procedurally just policing (PJP) is described as the public feeling listened to, their voices are heard before decisions are made, the police act in an unbiased manner and treat everyone they come into contact with respect. Do you feel the members of this police department police in a procedurally just manner? Can you provide any specific examples of PJP yourself?

Q14. Do you believe the community would agree with your assessment related to PJP? Help me understand your response.

Q15. Do you believe people have an obligation (legal framework) or duty (sense of [SEP]morality) to obey your authority as a police officer? Why? Or Why not?

Q16. Describe a time when the public supported an unpopular decision the police have had to enforce. Can you provide an explanation for the support?

Q17. How is your decision making affected by the public's perception of procedural justice and legitimacy?

Q18. What are some of the biggest challenges facing police officers today?

Q19. Describe the role race and diversity plays in your assessment of the community-

policing model. Would you describe this community as racially diverse?

Q 20. Does the leadership at this agency prepare officers for the myriad of responsibilities community police officers are tasked with? Please provide specific examples.

Q21. How important do you feel higher education is for today's police officers?

Q22. If you perceive value in higher education for police officers, what educational experiences from higher education do you perceive as beneficial for the community-policing model? I.e., Diversity in the classroom, diverse student population, diverse faculty, etc. Scenario based learning?

Q23. What was your academic major in college? Do you believe studying criminal justice as a major is beneficial for police officers? Why or why not?

Q24. Help me understand what you would like the community to know about community policing initiatives as they relate to policing in this community? What professional development, education, and/or life experiences factor into how you approach your job on a daily basis?

Q25. How do you see the law enforcement community as a whole recruit the next generation of community-police officers in today's climate?

Appendix I: Interview Protocol for Command Officers

- Q1. How long have you been a law enforcement professional? What is your rank?
- Q2. What college education in addition to the police academy have you attained? Do you have any plans to further your education at some point in the future?
- Q3. From your perspective, how would you describe community policing?
- Q4. Does this department formally subscribe and practice community policing? Please provide some examples.
- Q5. What educational preparation do police leaders perceive to be the most beneficial for community police officers? Why?
- Q6. The community-policing model recommends empowering officers to make discretionary decisions and working close with the community to problem solve rather than a top down directive mission. Can you provide specific examples of organizational leadership at your police department that supports this recommendation?
- Q7. Is professional development related to leadership and professional growth available to officers? Please share any examples.
- Q8. Are you familiar with the term Procedural justice? If yes, what does procedural justice mean to you?
- Q9. Procedurally just policing (PJP) is described as the public feeling listened to, their voices are heard before decisions are made, the police act in an unbiased manner and treat everyone they come into contact with respect. Do you feel the members of this police department police in a procedurally just manner? Can you provide any specific examples?

Q10. How does the concept of PJP correlate to community-policing initiatives? What strategies does the leadership at the police department have in place that encourages PJP?

Q11. Is higher education valued to the point it impacts the decision to promote officers or place them in specific assignments? Can you provide any examples?

Q12. Can you share specific examples related to quality of life issues/concerns your agency has addressed and how your agency works with the community to come up with solutions?

Q13. What can you share about community policing initiatives and race relations? Does the leadership at the agency promote and educate officers on issues such as tolerance for diversity and social justice? Please provide specific examples.

Q14. Is your agency representative of the community as it relates to its demographics?

Q15. Are there any plans for future investment in community policing initiatives related to professional growth of your officers?

Q16. What are the greatest challenges for leaders of police organizations today?

Appendix J: Interview Protocol for Community Members/Focus Group

- Q1. What is your role in the community? (examples: activist, school, community member, clergy, non-profit, etc.)
- Q2. Share your perceptions about the role of the police today. Where do these perceptions come from: personal experience, social media, TV news, etc.?
- Q3. What responsibilities to the community do you believe the police have and why?
- Q4. Please expand on the role of today's police officer you identified and share your thoughts on whether you feel those responsibilities require specialized training/education. What training and/or college preparation do you perceive to be appropriate for police officers today?
- Q5. Are you familiar with the minimum education requirements for police officers in the State of Michigan? What amount if any do you believe they should have?
- Q6. Share your ideas of what community policing means to you? Are you aware it is by definition a philosophy of community partnerships to solve quality of life issues in addition to addressing response to crime? Can you share an example of partnering with the police department to address a specific issue/concern? Please share your experience with the group.
- Q7. Do you perceive your local police agency actively promotes and encourages community-policing practices? If so, can you provide specific examples? Have you ever worked with the police department on a community or quality of life issue? If yes, please share your experience.

Q8. Please share your thoughts on how higher education possibly impacts decision-making (on the part of the police officer) as it relates to community-policing practices.

Q9. Procedurally just policing (PJP) is described as the public feeling listened to, their voices are heard before decisions are made, the police acting in an unbiased manner and treating everyone they come into contact with respect. Do you feel the members of this police department police in a procedurally just manner? Can you provide any specific examples? Do you believe the Chief and Deputy Chief of your local police department subscribes to community-policing initiatives?

Q10. John Locke emphasized people have rights-the right to life, liberty and property and therefore coined the idea of the social contract theory. His theory argues people, as part of nature, transfer some of their rights to the government to better ensure stability, comfortable enjoyment of their lives, liberty and property. Please share your thoughts on the social contract and if in fact it influences the community-police relationship in this community.

Q11. Do you believe people have an obligation or duty to obey the police? Please share your beliefs related to this obligation or duty as it relates to the police-community relationship.

Q12. Please describe a time when the community supported an unpopular decision the police have had to enforce. Can you provide an explanation for the support?

Q13. How would you describe the racial diversity of the community?

Q14. What if/any quality of life issue would you like to see the police department focus on?

Q15. Can you share your experience with the police department on responsiveness to issues in the past?

Q16. What are some of the most important attributes police officers should possess today as it relates to community policing?