“I’m Black, and I’m a Cop”: Career Choices of African American Males in The New York City Police Department

Pamela A. Jimenez

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“I’m Black, and I’m a Cop”: Career Choices of African American Males in The New York City Police Department

Abstract
The negative and hostile relationship between African American communities and the police has sparked public outrage over police mistreatment of African Americans that has led to the constant call for increasing representation of African American officers to quell police-minority tensions. Some researchers argue that as a result of the recurrent problems between the police and African Americans, the police department is challenged with the recruitment of African American males as law enforcement officers. The purpose of this study was to examine the factors that influence Black male police officers to pursue a career in policing in the New York City Police Department (NYPD). For this study, the researcher uses the term Black and African American interchangeably, since both terms are meant to be inclusive of all others of African descent without regard to their ethnicity or national origin. This study employed a qualitative methodology to explore the perception of nine African American males that have chosen a career in the New York City Police Department (NYPD). The data was analyzed and the findings revealed that perception of fit (agreement between personal values and organizational values) is considered when making the career decision of police officer for African American males in the NYPD. Moreover, African American males are cognizant that their racial identity influenced their perception of fit. The emergent themes were classified under three major categories: values, self-identity, and career choice and benefits. Recommendations include developing a formal mentorship program and considering the importance of the investigator in forming a positive perception of organizational values for the NYPD.

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“I’m Black, and I’m a Cop”: Career Choices of African American Males
in The New York City Police Department

By

Pamela A. Jimenez

Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
Ed.D. in Executive Leadership

Supervised by
Dr. Shelley Jallow

Committee Member
Dr. Jennifer Schulman

Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. School of Education
St. John Fisher College

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Dedication

First and foremost, I give thanks and praise to God. I am forever grateful for the blessing bestowed upon me. I am indebted to the nine police officers of the New York City Police Department (NYPD), thank you for allowing me to share your stories. Your willingness and honesty to share your perceptions were critical to this study. As James Baldwin said, “The price one pays for pursuing any profession or calling is an intimate knowledge of its ugly side.” There is not enough room to convey my gratitude for your dedication and commitment to bettering the world. I am humbled to have listened to your stories. I hope that your words help heal those who feel pain and have lived less than positive experiences with the police. I would like to thank the Yonkers Police Department and the NYPD for permitting me to do the ride along which allowed me to gain perspective on the job you do. Thank you, to all enforcement, may the Lord keep you safe as you keep us safe.

I dedicate this dissertation to my grandmother, Beba. My way of saying I love and miss you. Thank you for helping me through this process, even if I missed saying goodbye. I would like to thank my parents, Franklyn and Mara Jimenez, for having an American dream and coming to this country to provide me with an opportunity to have a better life. Thank you for dreaming my reality. My daughter, Emily, you are my greatest achievement. Thank you for the strength you give me every day. Words cannot express my gratitude and love for you. To my Joe, my favorite law enforcement officer- how
can I thank you for your everlasting love and support. You have never made me doubt the depth of your trust and love for me. Thank you for your patience with me on this journey.

I would like to acknowledge my dissertation committee, Dr. Jallow and Dr. Schulman, you challenged and supported me every day. Thank you for demanding my personal and professional best, for stressing that I produce quality work. This dissertation was truly a collaborative effort long before I began this journey, Dr. Girardi, thank you for believing in me even when I did not believe in myself. Dr. Hickman, my dissertation guardian angel, you are the embodiment of dedication and hard work. Thank you for your support. Dr. Aquino, thank you for editing and reading my work, and thank you forever for the apple cider donuts on the day of my defense. Dr. Lyons, I will always praise your patience and support of me. Betsy Christiansen, words are not enough to express my gratitude for mentoring me that lonely week in Rochester. I live in gratitude for all you did for me that week. You were my guiding light in this process. To my cohort – Super 7 – you are the consummate professionals, the day I walked into that classroom in May for the first time, I knew that I was out of my league. Finally, to my beautiful family: my sisters, Maritza and Francina; my niece and nephews, Leanna, Eddie, and Logan; my brothers-in-law, Eddy and Ludwig; my mother-in-law, Babes and my uncle Tony; I love you and thank you for the support.
Biographical Sketch

Pamela A. Jimenez is currently working as the director of an undergraduate degree program at Manhattan College. Ms. Jimenez attended College of Mount Saint Vincent from 1994-1998 and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology in 1998. She attended Pace University from 2004-2008 and graduated from with a Master’s of Science in Mental Health Counseling with a concentration on addiction counseling. She came to St. John Fisher College in the summer of 2015 and began her doctoral studies in the Ed.D. program in Executive Leadership. Ms. Jimenez pursued her research by examining the influence of perception of fit and racial identity on the career choices of African American police officers in the New York City Police Department under the direction of Dr. Shelley Jallow and Dr. Jennifer Schulman and received the Ed.D degree in 2018.
Abstract

The negative and hostile relationship between African American communities and the police has sparked public outrage over police mistreatment of African Americans that has led to the constant call for increasing representation of African American officers to quell police-minority tensions. Some researchers argue that as a result of the recurrent problems between the police and African Americans, the police department is challenged with the recruitment of African American males as law enforcement officers.

The purpose of this study was to examine the factors that influence Black male police officers to pursue a career in policing in the New York City Police Department (NYPD). For this study, the researcher uses the term Black and African American interchangeably, since both terms are meant to be inclusive of all others of African descent without regard to their ethnicity or national origin. This study employed a qualitative methodology to explore the perception of nine African American males that have chosen a career in the New York City Police Department (NYPD). The data was analyzed and the findings revealed that perception of fit (agreement between personal values and organizational values) is considered when making the career decision of police officer for African American males in the NYPD. Moreover, African American males are cognizant that their racial identity influenced their perception of fit. The emergent themes were classified under three major categories: values, self-identity, and career choice and benefits. Recommendations include developing a formal mentorship
program and considering the importance of the investigator in forming a positive perception of organizational values for the NYPD.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

The research related to African Americans and the police underscores a negative relationship that has been characterized by a lack of trust and hostility (Bolton & Feagin, 2004; Brunson & Gau, 2015). As a result, policing organizations have been challenged by the recruitment of African Americans as police officers (Guajardo, 2014; Sklansky, 2006; Wilson & Wilson, 2014). The research affirms that African Americans are more likely to have negative experiences and a negative perception of police officers (Brunson & Gau, 2015; Chaney & Robertson, 2013, 2014; Taylor, Tuner, Esbensen, & Winfree, 2001).

Even for a city as diverse as New York City with one of the most diverse police departments in the country, the New York City Police Department (NYPD), the recruitment of African Americans has been challenging (Bratton, 2015; Guajardo, 2014).

According to the Reaves (2015) Law Enforcement Management and Administrative Statistics data collection (LEMAS) survey, there were 12,000 local (not including state or federal law enforcement) police departments, with nearly 477,000 sworn officers. Sworn officers were those who have authority to arrest (Reaves, 2015). About half of the local police department (48%) employed fewer than 10 officers. While many police agencies have some sworn officers, 54% of the sworn officers in this country work for the police department in jurisdictions with 100,000 or more residents (Reaves, 2015). The LEMAS survey also reports 27% of full-time sworn officers are of underrepresented racial or ethnic groups. African Americans and Latinos each comprised around 12%, while other minorities, including Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians or
other Pacific Islanders, Native Americans or Alaskan Natives, as a group, comprised of 3% (Reaves, 2015).

The Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) (2015) reports that it began collecting data through the LEMAS survey in 1987. Black or African American representation was about 58,000 in local police departments in 2015. This was approximately 3,000 (up 5%) more than in 1987 (Reaves, 2015). From 2007 to 2013, the percentage of Black officers remained at about 12% of the sworn police officers in local law enforcement. Blacks are among the racial and ethnic groups that are not proportionately represented in policing, and that has stalled in growth since 2007 (Guajardo, 2014; Kringen & Kringen, 2014). The BJS report also notes that larger police departments with larger jurisdictions have more diversity than those in smaller departments (Reaves, 2015). Although the NYPD is considered one of the largest police department with 34,353 police officers, in 2015, they reported difficulties in recruiting Black officers (Bratton, 2015).

For decades, researchers have examined the relationship between the African American community and police officers to understand the impact of race on the relationship (Alex, 1969; Conti & Doreian, 2014; Dulaney, 1996; Holdaway, 1991; Leinen, 1984). The literature reveals that the origin of American policing cannot be understood without considering slavery and racism (Alex, 1969; Dulaney, 1996; McKnight, 2015). In an effort to ameliorate issues related to race in many African American communities, the prevailing solution has been the integration of the police department (Brunson & Gau, 2015; Leinen, 1984; Todak, 2017). However, despite successful efforts to integrate the police departments, the constant tension between the
police department and African American communities continues (Brunson & Gau, 2015; Conti & Doreian, 2014; McKnight, 2015; Wilson & Wilson, 2014).

Some researchers have suggested that the underrepresentation of African Americans in policing organizations is related to the relationship between the community and the police (Brunson & Gau, 2015; Conti & Doreian, 2014; Kringen & Kringen, 2014). Other researchers and police administration suggest that the administrative issues with the process of becoming a police officer and the civil service regulations are at fault for the decline in Black police officers (Bratton, 2015; Kringen & Kringen, 2014; Swarns, 2015). According to Zhao, He, and Lovrich (2005), other reasons included the lack of representation in bureaucracy such as the presence of a Black mayor and Black councilmen (O’Brien, 2003; Zhao et al., 2005) and the institutional culture of the police department, which has been characterized by its insular nature. Additionally, there has been a general failure of police management to convey the message of diversity (Conti & Doreian, 2014; Holdaway, 1991; Knafo, 2016; Milgram, 2002; Wilson & Wilson, 2014).

**Background of the Problem**

In 1967, President Lyndon B. Johnson appointed the Kerner Commission (National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders) to investigate the riots that occurred in the major cities in the country during that time. Rioting in cities, such as Los Angeles, Chicago, Newark, Detroit, and New York, was attributed to the long history of discrimination and segregation of African Americans in America. These riots in 56 cities across the country accounted for 84 deaths, 3,800 injuries, and millions of dollars in property damage (Helmreich, 1973; Leinen, 1984). After a 7-month investigation, the Commission made recommendations based on the intensity of the grievances coming
from the different cities. According to the Commission, the grievances with the first level of intensity were the police practices. The practices at issue were related to internal operations, community-relations programs, and the hiring and training procedures for minority police personnel (Dulaney, 1996; Leinen, 1984).

More recently, in 2015, after the killing of many unarmed Black men, an increase in attacks on law enforcement, and growing demonstrations and protests over police and community relations occurred, President Barack Obama established the Task Force on 21st Century Policing (Ramsey & Robinson, 2015). The task force made 60 recommendations, including body-worn cameras, and a similar recommendation was made of diversifying the police department to establish better relationships within the community and build trust and legitimacy within the community and police agencies (Ramsey & Robinson, 2015).

In a similar manner, in October 2016, the Department of Justice Civil Rights Division and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) launched “Advancing Diversity in Law Enforcement,” a research initiative that examined the barriers that challenge diversity in law enforcement and highlighted the best practices for diversifying these agencies. The initiative focused on recruitment, hiring, and retention. Two significant findings relate to this study. First, the research suggested that the climate of distrust in certain communities, specifically the African American communities, can impede recruitment and hiring. Second, to build trust and legitimacy in communities, law enforcement should reflect their jurisdictions (U.S Department of Justice [USDOJ] and Equal Employment Opportunity Commission [EEOC], 2016).
The research regarding law enforcement highlights the criticism faced by the police for racially biased decision making including racial profiling, disrespectful encounters, excessive force and deadly use of force of African Americans (Conti & Doreian, 2014; Nicholson-Crotty, Nicholson-Crotty, & Fernandez, 2017; Weitzer, Tuch, & Skogan, 2008; Wilkins & Williams, 2008; Wilson & Wilson, 2014). Kahn and Martin (2016) made a clear distinction between biased organizational policies and practices (such as stop and frisk—see definition of terms) that lead to racial disparities and institutionalized racism and the perception of racially biased police officers. According to the researchers, the latter is much more difficult to prove scientifically, but both are often conflated (Kahn & Martin, 2016). Kahn and Martin (2016) argued that the perception of racially biased police officers is detrimental to the relationship between the community and African Americans males who often have the most contact with police officers. This perception erodes the trust in the police, which is the cornerstone necessary for effective policing (Sunshine & Tyler, 2003).

Hence, the perspective of Black police officers matters because how they see themselves and view their work as part of the process of distributing justice provides insight into the impact they have on the profession itself (Leinen, 1984; Wilson & Wilson, 2014). This behavior influences legitimacy and the trust in police, consequently affecting the relationship between police officers and the community (Theobald & Haider-Markel, 2008; Weitzer, 2000; Weitzer & Brunson, 2013).

Brunson and Gau (2015) argued that those (despite their racial/ethnic group) that choose a career in policing are different in many dimensions due to the nature of police work. The reasons why African American males would choose a career in policing have
been quantitatively examined in the past (Raganella & White, 2004; White, Cooper, Saunders, & Raganella, 2010). This research related to Black officers’ career motivation is limited by the relatively small size of African Americans in these studies. The existing quantitative literature does underscore the motivators for White, Blacks, and Hispanics to be similar with minor differences in ranking (Raganella & White 2004; White et al., 2010). According to White et al. (2010), Black officers ranked opportunity to help people and job security as consistent motivators in the studies. Similarly, Campion’s (2016) study of African American males majoring in criminal justice with the aspiration to become law enforcement officers, revealed that despite having had a negative experience with law enforcement, these participants continued to pursue a career in law enforcement. Their goal was to educate others about African Americans and increase cultural competency with different underrepresented minority groups (Campion, 2016).

Problem Statement

Some researchers have argued that racial and ethnic representation in the police departments create a climate of trust and legitimacy between the police department and the communities they serve (Sklansky, 2006; Wilson & Wilson, 2014) In addition, police effectiveness and community cooperation increases (Nicholson-Crotty et al., 2017; Sklansky, 2006; Skogan & Frydl, 2004). Sklansky (2006) affirmed that racial and ethnic representation does not guarantee trust in a community, but it does remove the impediment toward trust. Although police organizations have accomplished significant diversification of the police workforce since the 1960s, African American are still underrepresented in many police departments across the country (Brunson & Gau, 2015; Guajardo, 2014; Kringen & Kringen, 2014; Wilson & Wilson, 2014).
Despite being one of the most diverse police departments in the country, Black officers are underrepresented in the NYPD (Bratton, 2015; Guajardo, 2014; Knafo, 2016). The NYPD is one of the largest police departments in the country with roughly 15.4% Black officers. However, Blacks represent 25.5% of New York City (Reaves, 2015; U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). In 2015, the NYPD released statistics, which revealed that, while 20% of Blacks have passed the civil service exam and met the requirements, only 9% had been hired—which is lower than any other minority group (Bratton, 2015). Blacks represented 15% of the new applicants, with a hiring rate of 4.8% for all new applicants, compared to 2.1% for Black candidates. NYPD reported not being able to retain qualified Black candidates (Bratton, 2015).

Despite the underrepresentation of African American police officers in the United States, some African American males find the position appealing, and they want to pursue the career of policing despite the negative perception of the police department (Kringen & Kringen, 2014; Todak, 2017; White et al., 2010). To understand the complexities of why African American males would choose the career of policing, given the long-standing negative perception and mistrust, a qualitative study to investigate, in-depth attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions of the police organization that lead to influencing their decision to choose a career in policing is necessary (Leinen, 1984; Moskos, 2008; Wilson & Wilson, 2014).

**Theoretical Rationale**

The theoretical frameworks that were used to examine the factors that affect the career decision for African American males are the person-organization fit theory (Cable & Judge, 1996, 1997; Chatman, 1989; Judge & Cable, 1997; Kristof, 1996) and
racial/identity development model (R/CID) (Sue & Sue, 1990, 1999, 2008). For this study, the R/CID was used to explore whether racial identity influences the perception of fit.

**Person-organization fit theory.** The person-organization fit (P-O fit) theory postulates that job seekers are motivated to find employment in organizations that are congruent with their characteristics and the organizational attributes (Cable & Judge, 1996; Chatman, 1989). According to Chatman (1989) although many aspects of an organization influence behavior and attitudes, person-organization fit is a viable way to assess person-situation interaction because values are fundamental and enduring. Hence, the goal of this study in electing person-organization fit was to examine if previous negative perceptions of police organizations have influenced the perception of fit (values congruence), which, in turn, influenced career choice for African American males as law enforcement officers.

In seeking jobs, candidates develop perceptions regarding the degree of fit with an organization (Chatman, 1989). According to this person-organization fit theory, *fit* means a match between the applicant’s values and beliefs and the perceived values of the organization (Cable & Judge, 1997; Chatman, 1989). Person-organization fit theory has been used to measure career satisfaction, career commitment, and turnover intentions (Chatman, 1989). However, it is the selection and career choice that is the focus of this study. This theory argues that people’s values are so salient that values help them make sense of any organizational situation (Chatman, 1989). Individual values within an organization are defined by the theory as enduring beliefs that a specific behavior or end state is superior to the opposite (Cable & Judge, 1996; Chatman, 1989). According to
Cable and Judge (1996), these values guide individuals’ attitudes, judgment, and behavior. Another crucial element of organizational fit is demographic similarity among job seekers (Cable & Judge, 1996). Cable and Judge (1996) asserted that there is indirect evidence (Liden & Parsons, 1986) to suggest that if there is a demographic similarity between the job applicant and the organization in terms of age, race, gender, and socioeconomic status, the job applicant chooses the organization and has a better experience in an organization. Cable and Judge (1996) further proposed that individuals with similar attributes and experiences benefit from improved communication and liking (Cable & Judge, 1996). If candidates continuously self-select out of an organization’s hiring process, it may be attributed to the perceived lack of person-organization fit.

**Racial/cultural identity development model.** To frame the examination of how racial identity influences the perception of fit for American African police officers, this researcher used the racial/cultural development model (Sue & Sue, 1999). Lee, Steinberg, Piquero, and Knight (2010) reported that the social distance and the controversial nature of the relationship between police and African Americans runs so deep that it becomes part of the ethnic identity of many African American youths. For this study, racial identity is used as another element of values.

Brown (2002) posited that values are beliefs based on experiences that are used as standards of how to function; they are cognitive structures with behavioral and affective dimensions. Values are based on self-evaluation and the evaluation of others, and they play an important and major role in developing goals. Brown (2002) emphasized that cultural values are held by a culture and include many dimensions including social relationships. In these relationships, it is important to put the group’s concerns ahead of
the individual. Brown qualified that cultural values by arguing that not everyone in the
cultural group will identify with the cultural values. This study looked at racial identity
not within a development process but as an influencer of fit for African American males
in law enforcement. The stages that were used to determine values related to identity.
This model, along with the stages, were also used to explore whether police identity in
the social context of the African American police officer’s life has created issues.

Many models have attempted to explain the development of racial identity that is
However, the model chosen considers cultural and racial identity as a collective
experience (Yeh & Hwang, 2000). The R/CID model identifies five stages of
development that oppressed people may experience in their struggle to understand
themselves regarding their identity.

Sue and Sue (1999) emphasized that the model is not intended to be a
comprehensive theory of personality development but an understanding of minorities’
attitude and behavior within existing personality theories. The model identifies as the first
stage as conformity (Sue & Sue, 1999). In this stage, individuals exhibit a clear
preference for the cultural values of the dominant group over those of their cultural
group. In stage two, the dissonance stage, the individual is conflicted between negative
attitudes adopted in the conformity stage and exposure to positive attitudes about his or
her racial group (Sue & Sue, 1990, 1999). Stage three is the resistance and immersion
stage, where individuals completely support their cultural view and reject the dominant
society and culture. The desire to eliminate oppression of the person’s minority group
becomes an important motivation for the individual’s behavior (Sue & Sue, 2008). In
stage four, *introspection*, the individual adopts a more independent and individual expression. Sue and Sue (2008) asserted that the focus is on an independent quest for goals and direction beyond being angry at *White racism* and European Americans. These individuals progressively feel more comfortable with their identity rather than the group identity. In the fifth and final stage, called *integrative awareness*, the individual feels an inner sense of security and appreciates both the positive and negative characteristics of both his or her culture and the dominant culture (Sue & Sue, 2008).

The development of identity is not a linear or stagnant process; it is a dynamic process (Sue & Sue, 2008). Individuals can move through each of the stages; some move faster than others; some can stay predominantly at only one stage, and some may revert back to an earlier stage (Sue & Sue, 2008). According to Sue and Sue (2008), identity development models begin at the point of interaction with an oppressive society. There is evidence to suggest that African American males may consider their lived experiences with racism as a factor when choosing a career in policing, despite knowing that the profession does not always treat non-Whites the same as Whites (Campion, 2016; Chaney & Robinson, 2014).

**Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the factors that influence African American males to choose a career in policing despite the historical dissonance between African American males and law enforcement for New York City African American police officers (Alex, 1969; Bolton & Feagin, 2004; Brunson & Gau, 2015; Weitzer, 2015). Specifically, this study used the framework of P-O fit and racial identity as an element of fit on the impact of career choice of African American males in
local law enforcement to give a voice to African American police officers in the NYPD who are in unique positions to give meaning to their decisions to become police officers.

**Research Questions**

The research questions this study addressed are the following:

1. Does the perception of fit influence the decision of African American police officers to become police officers in the NYPD?
2. Does racial identity influence the perception of fit for African American male police officers in the NYPD?
3. What individual factors influence African American males to become police officers in the NYPD?

**Potential Significance of the Study**

Diversity is an important characteristic in nearly every sector of society, police, and organization but especially urgent for police agencies due to the nature of their work (Ramsey & Robinson, 2015; Sklansky, 2006; Wilson & Wilson, 2014). According to Nicholson-Crotty et al. (2017), research suggest that there may be a relationship between workforce composition and a decrease in police violence, but only if there are enough Black officers who feel safe in representing the interest of individuals of the same race. Nicholson-Crotty et al. (2017) suggested that law enforcement would benefit from increasing the number of Black officers in their departments.

Law enforcement would benefit from increasing minority representation in the police department as one way to build trust between the communities and local police departments. This would also improve perceived police legitimacy (Legewie & Fagan, 2016). As this research discusses, trust and perception of police legitimacy are crucial to
the work of police officers. Research continues to support that when the public feels they can trust their police departments to treat them fairly, represent them, understand them, and respond to them, communities perceive police as an authority that is fair, legitimate, and accountable (Brunson & Gau, 2015; Smith & Holmes, 2003, 2014; Todak, 2017; Weitzer & Brunson, 2013).

While not within the purview of this study, there is also evidence to suggest that increasing diversification does affect the police organizational culture positively (Legewie & Fagan, 2016; Moskos, 2008; Sklansky, 2006). Specifically, research emphasizes that increased diversity in the police department can also make agencies more willing to initiate cultural and systematic changes (Legewie & Fagan, 2016; Sklansky, 2006). Sklansky (2006) noted that while there is a fragmented culture in the police department which is due to the increasing numbers of minority officers, this has not hindered the effectiveness of the police officers as crime fighters. Sun and Payne (2004) acknowledged that while research is conflicting regarding race and the officers’ behavior toward citizens, officers with distinct backgrounds conduct their jobs differently, increasing cultural participation in policing.

Definitions of Terms

Black male – The Black racial category includes people who marked the “Black, African, Am., or Negro” checkbox. It also includes respondents who reported entries such as African American; Sub-Saharan African entries, such as Kenyan and Nigerian; and Afro-Caribbean entries, such as Haitian and Jamaican (U.S. Census, 2010).

Kerner Commission – The National Advisory of Civil Disorder was established in 1967 by President Lyndon B. Johnson to investigate the causes of 1967 riots and make future recommendations.

Patrol officer – Police officers that have frequent interaction with the public and are responsible for all policing activities (Dempsey & Forst, 2015).

Police legitimacy – reflects the belief that the police gain the cooperation of the community by drawing on people’s feelings of responsibility and obligation. Reinforcing this strategy is the belief of voluntary cooperation. The public’s cooperation is motivated by personal values, is self-regulatory, and does not depend on police sanctions or incentives to illicit personal behavior. (Tyler, 2004).

Sworn officer – police personnel with general arrest powers (Reaves, 2015).

Stop and frisk – this policy is defined as follows:
The basic tactic under stop, question, and frisk (SQF) is an encounter between an officer and a citizen usually initiated by the officer. Under constitutional rules and New York case law for such encounters, known as Terry stops nationally, police can stop a citizen based on the founded suspicion that crime may be afoot. The encounter would proceed to increase levels of intrusion if suspicion was determined to be credible or reasonable. Reasonable suspicion would permit pointed questioning and frisk or pat down to look for weapons, drugs, or other contraband. (Gelman, Fagan, & Kiss 2007, p. 815)

Chapter Summary
Police departments across the nation have been criticized for decades for racially biased policing, continuous racial profiling, disrespectful encounters, and excessive and
deadly force against African Americans. Due to decades of struggle between the African American communities and the local police department, the continuous recommendation to diversify the police department has been made by police administrators, scholars, politicians, and various presidential and national commissions. The recommendation comes from the assumption that there is no interracial variability among the African Americans civilians and those who decide on a career in policing (Brunson & Gau, 2015). Research suggests this may not be the case. While diversifying the police department is a positive step, Brunson and Gau (2015) asserted that there are qualitative differences between those who pursue the career of policing and those who do not.

In 2015, the NYPD reported a decline in African American males in the police department, and previous research asserts that the hiring of African American males has always been a challenging for the police department. Despite this, some African American males do become and are successful in the career of policing (Bratton, 2015). While there are many quantitative studies regarding what motivates African Americans to become police officers, there are fewer qualitative studies regarding the perceptions of African Americans, their attraction to the job, and how racial identity impacts this decision.

Chapter 2 reviews the literature related to the historical perspective of African Americans and police, as well as the research related to career motivation of police officers and the current relationship status of the police and the African American community. Chapter 3 discusses the research design, methodology, and analysis of this study. Chapter 4 discusses the findings of the research and Chapter 5 discusses the
implications of the study along with recommendations for law enforcement and possible future research studies.
Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

Introduction and Purpose

Historically, police departments have been predominantly White male organizations (Alex, 1969; Dulaney, 1996; Leinen, 1984; Wilson & Wilson, 2014). It was not until the late 1800s and the early 20th century that Blacks gained access to the police department (Alex, 1969; Alexander, 1978; Bolton & Feagin, 2004; Dulaney, 1996).

The literature reveals that since the time of slavery, American policing had a history of subjugation and enforcement of African Americans that persisted through pre-post-Civil War eras, Reconstruction, Jim Crow, and the urban riots of the 1960s, and it is still evident today (Bolton & Feagin, 2004; Dulaney, 1996; Wilson & Wilson, 2014).

According to research reports over the last 50 years, policing organizations were forced, through political influences and legislative and judicial mandates, to diversify police departments in an attempt to gain the trust and cooperation from African American communities (Bolton & Feagin, 2004; Dulaney, 1996; Rousey, 1987; Sklansky, 2006; Todak, 2017). The perception of police organizations by African American communities has been characterized by decades of struggle related to biased policing, continuous racial profiling, disrespectful encounters, and excessive and deadly force of African Americans (Brunson & Gau, 2015; Conti & Doreian, 2014; Rice & White, 2010). Researchers contend that as a result of the disharmonious relationship between the police and the African American community, challenges persist for the police organization to hire
African American police officers (Alex, 1969; Campion, 2016; Conti & Doreian, 2014; Kennedy & McNamara, 1999; Wilson & Wilson, 2014).

Other researchers attest that the underrepresentation of African American males in the police department is a result of the limited representation of Blacks political offices and communities (O’Brien, 2003; Zhao et al., 2005). Studies suggest that the presence of a predominantly Black community led by a Black mayor and council members is related to higher percentages of Black officers (O’Brien, 2003; Zhao et al., 2005). In some other studies, researchers fault the underrepresentation of Blacks in the police force on the institutional culture of the police department (Conti & Doreian, 2014; Holdaway, 1991). The reported negative race relations within the police department dissuades the number of interested Black applicants (Conti & Doreian, 2014; Holdaway, 1991). This may be due to the general failure of police management to support the message of diversity within the police department, the lack of Black role models as well as not actively confronting institutionalized racism (Knafo, 2016; Milgram, 2002; Wilson & Wilson, 2014).

Regionally, in urban racially/ethnicity diverse communities, local efforts to address the diversification of the police force has still been difficult to change. The NYPD is one of the largest and most diverse police departments in the country (Reaves, 2015). Despite this fact, the NYPD reported that in 2015, of the 35,160 sworn police officers in the agency, 15.4% of these officers were Black, while 25.5% of New York City residents were Black (Bratton, 2015). According to researchers, there is evidence to suggest that African American males are self-selecting out of policing careers due to the
negative relationship with police departments in their communities (Conti & Doreian, 2014; Kringen & Kringen 2014).

The purpose of this study is to examine the career decisions of African American police officers in New York City by exploring how the perception of the police organization and their values as well as racial identity impacted the decision of Black males to become a New York City police officer. This literature review examines: (a) the historical perspective of the African American community and law enforcement; (b) the relationships between the African American communities, the police, and their effect on police legitimacy; (c) recruitment efforts to diversify police organizations; and (d) a close examination of the individual experience of the Black officers currently within law enforcement organizations. Two frameworks, person-organization fit theory (P-O-fit) (Cable & Judge, 1996, 1997; Chatman, 1989) and the R/CID as a sub-element of fit (Sue & Sue, 1999, 2008), were used to analyze what factors influence African American males’ decision to pursue a police career despite the historically negative relationship between the African American community and law enforcement.

Review of Literature

Historical perspective. From the period of 1800-1865, slave owners’ relationships with Black slaves were characterized by a sense of entitlement and violent interactions with slaves that stemmed from a fear of loss of property and labor that fueled the southern economy (Browne, 2015; Dulaney, 1996; Wood, 1974). These researchers noted that as a result, a restrictive slave code and slave patrols were established to enforce the laws and punish any violators. During the reconstruction era of 1865-1877, historians highlight that there were strong anti-Black sentiments that led to the integration of
African Americans in the police department and the unwillingness and inequitable treatment of free African Americans at the time (Ploski & Williams, 1992).

With the end of slavery after the Civil War, hostile feelings toward the free slaves prevailed and intensified in what became known as the Jim Crow era (Dulaney, 1996; Ploski & Williams, 1992; Wood, 1974). African American police were in a contradictory position of enforcing Jim Crow laws and faced challenging experiences in all-White police forces that did not welcome their appointment. These laws attempted to reestablish the pre-war status of African Americans by dominating free Blacks through physical violence and establishing racial segregation (Rousey, 1987). According to historians, Blacks felt that African American police officers would protect them from the White terrorism and violence that characterized this time (Dulaney, 1996).

In the late 1800s, the appointment of African Americans police officers in different cities became a pattern of appointing African Americans to patronage jobs in the police department (Williams & Murphy, 1990). Historians recount that the political system drove the increase of African American police officers to secure Black votes (Dulaney, 1996; Rousey, 1987; Williams & Murphy, 1990). In 1872, Chicago appointed the first African American police officer, who served for only 3 years. As time progressed, the numbers of African American police officers on the Chicago police force grew (Williams & Murphy, 1990). By 1930, the percentage of African Americans reached 2.2 % of the 6,163 police officers (Rousey, 1987). In New York City (NYC), the political systems also assisted with the appointment of the first African American police officer (Browne, 2015; Dulaney; 1996). His name was Samuel Battle, and he became the first police officer in NYC, after being disqualified by the NYPD physician several times,
which was later overturned by two different doctors that declared him in perfect health (Browne, 2015).

The first African American police officers faced racism, discrimination, and abusive practices. In NYC, Officer Battle faced hazing and isolation by not being spoken to for over a year by his colleagues, and he was not allowed to sleep in the police barracks (Browne, 2015). He slept in a cramped room alone (Browne, 2015). Battle served under these conditions for 35 years and became New York’s first Black police sergeant and lieutenant (Browne, 2015; Dulaney, 1996). The strong anti-Black sentiments and disdain for Blacks did not allow for police departments to be welcoming of Black police officers (Fogelson, 1977; Monkkonen, 1981). In 1870, in Chicago, African American police officers patrolled the streets in plain clothes, not in uniform, to avoid White negative reactions (Dulaney, 1974). Police departments handled the hostility toward African American police officers in many different ways; some restricted Black officers from arresting White suspects, while others supported them against public violence (Dulaney, 1974, 1996).

Simultaneously, while Blacks were entering police departments across the country, the police organization was going through significant reforms (Kelling & Moore, 1988). Although the first and second wave of reforms during the 1890s until 1960s respectively, led to vast improvements in the police department, they did not lead to more equitable treatment of Black police officers (Williams & Murphy, 1990). There were still many departments that operated with hostility and discrimination toward Black police officers. (Dulaney, 1996; Williams & Murphy, 1990). In an attempt to professionalize and end corruption the first wave of reform occurred from the 1890s to
1930s, with police organizations implementing civil service exams (Williams & Murphy, 1990). The second wave of reform from the 1930s to 1960s led to new certifications and employment standards such as high school diplomas as a minimum requirement, an intelligence test for police recruits, background investigations, a physical exam, a polygraph test, and a merit system (Williams & Murphy, 1990).

These changes in the police department in recruiting and hiring practices allowed the justified exclusion of African Americans (Dulaney, 1996; Williams & Murphy, 1990). In 1921, the St. Louis Police Department rejected 37 Black police officers for failing the physical examination (Williams & Murphy, 1990). This research goes on to say that in Chicago and Cleveland, African American candidates faced the same fate, being rejected due to medical reasons. In New York City, Black candidates learned they had to get a medical certification from outside physicians to overrule the official exam of the police department (Browne, 2015; Dulaney, 1996).

Moreover, the merit system also created separate eligible lists for African American and White police candidates (Browne, 2015; Dulaney, 1996). In the city of Columbus, OH, when an African American officer resigned, died, or was dismissed, those eligible for the position would be pulled from the list of “Negro patrolmen” to fill the vacancy (Dulaney, 1996, p. 30). The number of African American police officers declined significantly, and with the implementation of quotas, only a few African Americans held onto their positions (Dulaney, 1996).

By the 1950s-1960s the conditions for Black police officers remained stable. The political pressures continued, and the appointment of Blacks in civil service was made to appease the Black vote (Alex, 1969; Leinen, 1984). Alex (1969) wrote that Black police
officers were motivated to enter police work more by the lack of alternative opportunities and by the relative absence of discrimination in civil service than by any positive motivator found in police work itself. He also believed, after interviewing 41 police officers in New York between 1964-1965, that Blacks felt like agents of an oppressive White society. Alex (1969) said that Black police officers were aware that this was the best job for them at the time, despite the disadvantages, even though they knew that the job was designed to help the department control the Black community and to deal with Black criminals (Alex, 1969). Alex (1969) stated that:

The Negro who enters into the police role is subject to all the tensions and conflicts that arise from police work. Moreover, the conflict is compounded for the Negro: he is much more than a Negro to his ethnic group because he represents the guardian of White society, yet he is not quite a policeman to his working companions because he is stereotyped as a member of an “inferior” racial category. (p. 13)

The 1960s were a tumultuous time in America for both Blacks and Black police officers (Alex, 1969; Leinen, 1984). Black protest in the form of marches, sit-ins, boycotts, rent strikes, and other types of civilian confrontations took place as a result of perceived oppression by Blacks and White domination (Alex, 1969; Leinen, 1984). Reminiscent of the early 1800s, Black communities resorted to violence as the only solution to the long history of discrimination, exploitation, and the ostensibly unresponsive system. Again, the prevailing solution was to use Black officers to placate the Black community (Leinen, 1984).
Alex (1969) recounted that common patterns of discrimination and bias developed by the White members toward the Black police officers of the police department (Alex, 1969). Alex noted that these behavioral and attitudinal responses would persist for years. Discrimination against Blacks became a police norm, and it was supported by a pervasive racial ideology, which was evident in the common practice of denying Black police officers an opportunity to work in White communities (Alex, 1969; Dulaney, 1996; Leinen, 1984).

Police-minority relationships in the United States continue to be characterized by hostility and distrust (Brunson & Gau, 2015; Conti & Doreian, 2014; Todak, 2017). A series of events that is recounted in this paragraph that occurred in the early 1990s and continued until 2015 that further reinforced the negative relationship between police and the African American community. In 1991, Rodney King (Black) became the face of police brutality when he endured a brutal beating by four White police officers in Los Angeles; thus, multicultural riots ensued as the community expressed frustration and anger (Chaney & Robertson, 2014). In 1997, a NYC police officer sodomized Haitian immigrant, Abner Louima, with a broomstick in a precinct house (McFadden & Fried, 1999). Again in New York City in 1999, Amadou Diallo, an immigrant from Guinea was killed in a hail of 41 bullets by police under the mistaken notion that Diallo had a gun (Cooper, 1999). In 2006, Sean Bell, a Black male, was killed under a 50-bullet fusillade by police after leaving a New York City strip club while celebrating his bachelor party (Goldstein, 2011).

In 2014, highly publicized cases from around the country, such as Eric Garner, Tamir Rice, Michael Brown, Tony Robinson, and Eric Harris, all African Americans, all
unarmed, and all killed by police, further deteriorated the negative relationship between the African American community and the police (Weitzer, 2015). In December 2014, New York City police officers, Rafael Ramos and Wenjian Liu, were gunned down by a Black man from Baltimore as retaliation for the deaths of Eric Garner and Michael Brown (Wilson & Schwirtz, 2014). More recently, in 2016, the New York City police officer, Laing, was convicted of shooting an unarmed Black man, Akai Gurley, in a Brooklyn housing project in New York City (Yee, 2015). In St. Paul, MN, the death of Philando Castile, an unarmed Black man, killed by police prompted thousands to protest in various cities, such as New York City, Baltimore, MD, Ferguson, MO, and St. Paul, MN, against police conduct toward the Black community (Smith, 2017). Again, policing experts and the government called for diversifying the police department in an attempt to pacify the African American community (Ramsey & Robinson, 2015).

The Kerner Commission of 1968, appointed by President Lyndon B. Johnson, in response to major civil disorder in African American communities of that decade, recommended diversifying police organizations due to discriminatory practices by the police department and severe underrepresentation of Blacks in police organizations (Dulaney, 1996; Pinkney, 1969). Historians believe that, while in many cases it was the Black response to severe social problems in the communities that prompted the disorder, the shooting of an unarmed Black man or a rumor of such a shooting in urban communities of Blacks triggered the riots as well (Goldschmid, 1970; Pinkney, 1969).

The Kerner Commission (1968) sought to increase the number of Black police officers by multiplying recruitment efforts to attract qualified minority candidates; a cash incentive was offered to any other police officer who recommended a minority officer.
Additionally, the recruitment venues were diversified to include college campuses. Black community centers and minority newspapers were encouraged (Alex, 1969, Leinen, 1984). The federal, state, and local government issued grants to increase the recruitment efforts, created review boards to investigate all minority applicants rejected for employment, and eliminated height requirements to allow the possibility of Hispanics who fell below a certain height to be considered for employment (Leinen, 1984). Legislation was also passed that mandated and supported the hiring of minorities (Leinen, 1984). The Federal Civil Rights Act of 1964 was designed to ensure that Blacks and other minorities in both the private and public sector were not discriminated against because of race or ethnicity.

Similarly, in 2015, President Barack Obama appointed yet another commission to investigate the turmoil related to police conduct and behavior in African American communities, and to strengthen trust and collaboration between officers and the community (Kahn, 2016). The commission made 60 recommendations, including diversifying the police departments, increasing the use of body-worn cameras to create transparency, and providing police officers with the training necessary to conduct their jobs in a non-biased manner (Ramsey & Robinson, 2015). Other actions taken by the federal government to increase reform efforts for policing included the Department of Justice conducting investigations of law enforcement agencies, and establishing collaborative committees to improve the quality and practices of law enforcement across the country (Kahn, 2016; Todak, 2017).

The continuous recommendation of diversifying police departments is based on the assumption that Black police officers and Black residents are a homogenous group
(Brunson & Gau, 2015). However, Brunson and Gau (2015) suggested that, based on the nature of the police job, it attracts a nonrandom segment of any racial group. Moreover, Black officers may be different in many dimensions from those African Americans who do not choose a career in policing (Brunson & Gau, 2015). Nevertheless, there is limited qualitative research related to Black police officers (Alex, 1969; Moskos, 2008; Wilson & Wilson, 2014). According to Wilson and Wilson (2014), the perception of African American police officers is often ignored in policing scholarship. Instead the research focuses on African Americans as perpetrators of crime (Dixon, 2008; Entner Wright & Younts, 2009; Wilson & Wilson, 2014).

How Black police officers view their work as a part of the process of distributing justice provides insight into the impact they have on the profession itself (Bolton & Feagin, 2004; Wilson & Wilson, 2014). Black police officers reported feeling valuable in the communities they policed, by members of their own culture (Wilson & Wilson, 2014). However, concerning police organizations, Black police officers believe they are reprimanded more than their White counterparts, face discrimination in work assignments, and experience inequity with regard to promotion opportunities (Knafo, 2016; Muller, 2017; Wilson & Wilson, 2014).

A quantitative study was conducted by Wilson and Wilson (2014), with 62 African American police officers employed at nine different police agencies in the Northeast. The Black officers completed an online survey that included 21 questions in which they self-reported on the perception of their role, organizational integration, and community and peer support. A total of 44 responses out of 62, generating a 70.9% response rate, were analyzed using a statistical frequency analysis. The findings from the
study supported the belief that African American officers continue to face institutional and systematic racism, and that police organizations do not do enough to actively recruit or encourage minority candidates to apply for policing positions. There is also a lack of equity in promotions (Wilson & Wilson, 2014). The researchers also reported that Black officers feel that they are racially profiled in the workplace, being scrutinized more than their White counterparts.

Consistent with related research regarding Black officers and their lived experiences, the findings of Wilson and Wilson (2014) revealed that Black officers believe they are more knowledgeable of the local citizen groups in their communities, are more optimistic about community policing programs, and are more likely to respond favorably to neighborhood and family disputes. They are better equipped to manage the fear of crime, and have the ability to improve neighborhood conditions. These findings are supported by other research (Boyd, 2010; Lurigio & Skogan, 2000; Mastrofski, 1983). A majority of respondents 90% \( (n = 40) \) believed that within the communities they policed, they were highly valued by members of their own culture.

In a previous study, Moskos (2008) explored the overall differences between Black and White police officers after employing mixed methods that included interviewing, observing, and then surveying the participants. The mixed methods design provided the researcher the opportunity to triangulate the data. The study was conducted with the Baltimore police department while the researcher was employed as a police officer. Moskos (2008) conducted extensive informal interviews gathering data related to the perception of both Black and White officers and the Black community, and their jobs. He interviewed 25 Black officers and 25 White officers, (including one Hispanic officer).
The survey, a longitudinal 65-question survey was given to the class of 50 recruits at the beginning and end of the police academy. Although the researchers did not make mention of the statistical analysis test employed to obtain the survey results, Moskos (2008) mentioned that morale was measured quantitatively by obtaining the mean for the first 10 questions on the survey. The morale of Black officers measured at 3.8 out of 5 and for Whites measured at 3.9 out of 5. After a year, the Black police officers measured morale at 3.7 out of 5 while White officers measured at 3.2 out of 5. Black officers qualitatively highlighted the benefits of policing as a good and stable occupation. Black trainees were more attracted by an opportunity to do good and having the stability of a government job. The results of the survey indicated that at the end of the Academy, 83% of Black recruits, versus 43% of White recruits, listed the “chance to help people” as an important reason why they wanted to be police officers. Forty-three percent of Whites, versus 17% of Blacks, listed “job excitement” as a reason to want to become a police officer (Moskos, 2008).

**Attracting and recruiting African Americans.** In response to mandates and criticism faced by the police departments, the NYPD reported having taken great strides to improve the percentage of Blacks in police work in 2015 (Bratton, 2015). According to the NYPD, they select their candidates from a civil-service exam that all applicants must take (Bratton, 2015). Civil service law disqualifies those who have felony convictions, or domestic-violence charges; and similar to most police agencies, the NYPD applies extensive pre-employment screening to select the best applicants (Bratton, 2015). The NYPD administers the psychological assessment, background examinations
searching for criminal records, physical tests, interviews, and medical examinations (Annell, Lindfors, & Sverke, 2015).

The results of an NYPD internal investigation in 2015, created a need to reduce the length of the hiring process, as well as making the hiring process more personal (Bratton, 2015). The NYPD revealed that their process sometimes takes 4 years before a candidate is offered employment (Bratton, 2015). The NYPD has created a diversity task force to oversee reform strategies as well as having equipped all recruitment officers with phones with customer service apps to keep the candidates engaged (Bratton, 2015).

Previously, candidates were asked about being stopped by the police and this could have resulted in automatic disqualification, but these questions were eliminated from the police officer application. The change occurred as a result of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) complaints in August 2012, where a federal court discovered that out of the 532,911 New Yorkers who were stopped, questioned, and sometimes frisked in the same year, 55% were Black, 32% were Latino, and 10% were White, which had the potential to create yet another barrier for Black males.

Regarding recruiting minority police officers, police agencies have been criticized for their lack of effort and what is perceived to be institutional racism in the recruitment, retention, and promotion of Blacks and other racial minorities (Wilson, Wilson, Luthar, & Bridges, 2013). Wilson et al. (2013) explained that the recruitment of Blacks and other racial minorities for positions in law enforcement has much to do with community interactions and marketing practices. Moreover, the researchers explained that African American police officers are crucial to the recruitment of Blacks in policing
organizations, because, when citizens see that the police force is diverse, they have greater confidence that officers understand their problems and concerns.

Wilson et al. (2013) conducted a quantitative study surveying 110 local and state police agencies in the Northeast, South, Midwest, and West, that examined the marketing strategies used during recruitment campaigns to attract and hire racial minorities, as well as, examining the rank distribution of race, number of candidates who applied and were hired, in terms of race (specifically Blacks), to sworn positions in police. The survey was developed with the input gained from members of the National Association of Black Law Enforcement Officers (NABLEO), a non-profit organization that advocates and represents the issues and concerns of men and women of color employed in various criminal justice agencies.

Wilson et al. (2013) further explained that the study purposely examined racial identity, as opposed to ethnic and cultural identity, because African Americans have a unique set of life experiences and history that differ from other ethnic groups (slavery). The analysis conducted, examined the placement of Black officers and candidates in employment at surveyed agencies. It also examined recruitment strategies and the relationship between the agency and use of community partnerships. The findings revealed that high traffic areas prevalent to Black communities, such as historically Black colleges and universities, shopping malls, salons, and barber shops, were being ignored by state and municipal agencies of law enforcement.

Police agencies attract candidates through various venues, using a variety of advertising strategies that achieve the goal of casting a wider net. At the end of the 1990s, cities began to advertise on television and in policing publications to attract a broad range
of applicants. Marketing was strategically placed to attract certain groups, through sports venues, coffee shops, select TV channels, and the Internet. These were all used to target younger recruits (Jordan, Fridell, Faggiani, & Kubu, 2009).

According to Jordan et al. (2009), police agencies have restructured and prioritized their recruiting units, provided encouragement to current officers for identifying candidates, and have recruited civilian employees from agencies to become officers, in order to increase the applicant pool. Although the results of these different approaches are not known, in 2001, when police departments began to pay for expensive campaigns in NYC, Swope (2001) noted these were not successful. Jordan et al. (2009) reported that police recruitment campaigns were managed almost exclusively through word of mouth, brief visits to college campuses, or by using advertisements in those publications that catered mostly to the White community as a whole, or to a specific community interest of the agency.

Research explains that the recruitment of Blacks and other racial minorities for positions in law enforcement, has a lot to do with community interactions (Wilson et al., 2013). Further research suggests that due to negative relationships with police departments, African Americans males self-select out of a career in policing (Campion, 2016; Conti & Doreian, 2015; Kringen & Kringen, 2014). The NYPD has programs such as the Law Enforcement Explorers which is a community service, career-oriented program for youth ages 14-20, designed to educate young men and women about law enforcement. They also support the Summer Youth Academy, intended to establish a positive relationship between police and young people. While the NYPD does not use these specific programs as recruitment programs for applicants, the research has labeled
them part of the agency’s recruitment repertoire (Francis, 2001; Reuland & Stedman 1998).

The evidence suggesting that minority groups do not pursue a career in policing contends that the negative attitudes toward policing are based on personal discriminatory experiences interacting with police, particularly for African American males and the barriers perceived by them (Kaminski, 1993; Lord & Friday, 2003; Todak, 2017). Most studies related to law enforcement career choice were conducted with criminal justice students (Campion, 2016; Kaminski 1993; Lord & Friday, 2003; Todak 2017). These studies investigated what barriers potential applicants faced and what factors influenced their decisions to pursue a career in law enforcement.

Law enforcement career motivation. The reasons why people choose the profession of policing provides some insight related to the underrepresentation of minority groups (Foley, Guarneri, Kelly, 2007; Lester, 1983; Raganella & White, 2004; Todak, 2017; White et al., 2010). Due to the limited number of minorities in the police department, earlier research concentrated on why Whites choose a career in policing (Lester, 1983; McNamara, 1967, Westley, 1970). However, Alex (1969) discovered that earlier on, these officers were attracted to the job, more for the benefits of civil service, secure income, low risk of layoffs, and the opportunity for advancement, more than the police work itself. He concluded that White and Black police officers’ motivations for choosing a career in policing differed very little (Alex, 1969).

In subsequent studies that included minorities, the designs have been quantitative, and one of the limitations has been the small number of African Americans participants (Raganella & White, 2004; White et al., 2010). In the study conducted by Raganella and
White (2004), the motivation to pursue a career in policing by Black officers
demonstrated that Black and White officers were similar when it came to motivating
factors. Blacks were more likely to be motivated by economic benefits and the desire to
help others. The study revealed motivating factors varied by gender and race. Raganella
and White (2004) surveyed 278 NYPD police academy recruits that began academy
training in July 2001 and graduated in the spring of 2002. There were 37 Black males,
137 White males, and 57 Hispanic male recruits for a total sample of 278. The research
employed a modified version of a survey (Appendix A) used in the previous research of

The results indicated that Blacks were motivated to become police officers by the
desire to help other people, job security, employment benefits, and opportunities for
career advancement. White recruits listed the opportunity to help people, job security,
and job benefits, as most influential. Whites, however, ranked early retirement and
excitement to work, as more influential than Blacks and Hispanics. The statistical
analysis consisted of one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), to obtain the means of
each individual motivator, in order to compare the differences between Black, Hispanic,
and White officers, only to discover that most differences were not statistically
significant, except gender and race. Independent sample $t$-tests were used to compare
differences between male and female. Further analysis with the Bonferroni post hoc
revealed there were differences between the genders and races. In particular, there were
two relevant, statistically significant differences that emerged. First, the mean score for
the opportunity to help people was significantly lower for Whites than for Blacks and
Hispanics. Second, the mean score for good companionship with co-workers among
Black recruits was considerably lower than for White and Hispanic recruits (Raganella & White, 2004). Overall, the study discovered that influences were similar, regardless of gender and race.

White et al. (2010) reexamined the motivational factors of police officers in the NYPD in a quantitative study using the same modified instrument as Raganella and White in 2004 (see Appendix A). The sample in the study consisted of 22 Black males, 94 White males, and 24 Hispanic male recruits. The purpose of this study was to follow-up on the study by Raganella and White (2004), which examined the motivational factors that influenced the NYPD recruits. The study attempted to examine the same recruit class, after 6 years of being in the profession. The methodology employed in this study was different from the original study conducted by Raganella and White (2004), in that, many different factors shaped this design. For example, the researchers were not able to identify the officers who initially completed the survey, which included three additional factors (Appendix B) than the original survey. These factors addressed job satisfaction to reflect a measure of motivation fulfillment. White et al. (2004) contended that given the number of participants in the first survey and the dispersion of officers throughout the five boroughs of New York City, it became impractical to interview the recruits. Finally, 411 officers from the July 2001 recruit class were no longer employed by the NYPD.

The results of the White et al. (2004) study differed slightly from the Raganella and White (2004) study, in that, Black officers ranked job security, early retirement, and opportunities for career advancement, slightly higher than job benefits and the opportunity to help others. In the previous research of Raganella and White (2004), the Black officers ranked opportunity to help others first, followed by job security. The
stability of motivation over time (after 6 years on the street) for all officers, regardless of
gender or race, reinforced the strength of these motivators, meaning that the police
officers’ motivators had not changed much over the period of 6 years between the first
(Raganella & White, 2004) and the second study (White et al., 2010). This proved that
the desire to help others was a strong motivator for police officers (White et al., 2010).

Limited research has documented the link between lived experiences, career
choice in policing, and race (Alex, 1969; Campion, 2016; Moskos, 2008). In Campion’s
(2016) qualitative study, the African American male participants had chosen a degree in
criminal justice, with the hopes of becoming a law enforcement officer. Despite having
had a negative experience with law enforcement, these participants continued to pursue a
career in law enforcement, to become culturally educated on learning and understanding
the different minority groups (Campion, 2016).

Campion’s (2016) study included interviewing six African American criminal
justice students in a 4-year and a 2-year college (the researcher did not report the location
of these colleges) that had a prior experience of racial discrimination at some point in
their lives. The questions asked in the interview related to the primary motivational
factors identified by African American criminal justice students pursuing a career in law
enforcement, despite experiencing negative interactions with law enforcement. Other
questions included “Based on your lived experiences, what part of the criminal justice
system do you see as the most likely to engage in covert or secretive racial
discrimination” and “What specific event or person do you believe that was influential in
making your career decision?” (Campion, 2016, p. 56). The data were coded for patterns
and themes. The themes that emerged from this study were racism, discrimination,
parental explanation of cops, and peer interactions in the neighborhood. The participants reported previous negative experiences with police officers as prompting them to want to change the mindset of people – that not all police officers were the same. The participants expressed that despite the negative media attention police officers were garnering with incidents involving minorities, their families expressed support in wanting them to pursue a career in law enforcement. Additionally, the participants expressed wanting to work in an area with a greater number of minorities and expressed empathy for African Americans living in urban areas. They felt they could identify with the residents of these areas (Campion, 2016).

Campion’s (2016) qualitative study underscored how lived experiences influenced the desire of African American criminal justice students to pursue a career in policing. Some of the participants reported that previously experiencing discrimination would exempt them from being affected, if and when it happened on the job. The concept of race was a prominent factor in these participants’ desire to pursue a career in law enforcement because they felt that they could assist in changing the system (Campion, 2016).

Todak (2017) also qualitatively examined university students who planned to apply to become police officers after graduation. The purpose of the study was to examine why criminal justice students made the decision to become police officers, in light of the legitimacy crisis characterized by negative interactions with citizens, and amplified racial tensions. The participants were chosen from criminal justice and criminology classes in an unnamed university. A total of 42 participants were interviewed regarding their knowledge of police work, reasons for wanting to become a police officer,
and expectations of police work. The sample consisted of 28 women ranging from the ages of 18-25 years old. The sample identified as 19 White, 15 Hispanic, two Native American, two Asian, and one Black (who did not specify male or female). The semi-structured questionnaire was used to guide the interviews and asked questions such as, “Tell me about your decision to be a police officer.” “Tell me about your other people you know in law enforcement.” The questions regarding expectations that were asked were “Tell me about what you look forward to about being a police officer” and “as a police officer, tell me what you think your workday will be like” (Todak, 2017, p. 258).

The findings suggested that motivating factors were similar to previous studies (Raganella & White, 2004; White et al., 2010). This sample revealed that they looked forward to serving the community, helping people, and joining the police brotherhood (Todak, 2017). A few of the participants in the study revealed that they were motivated to become police officers by the desire to change citizens’ negative opinions of the police: “It really does just take one person to make people think differently about a police officer” (Todak, 2017, p. 8). Overall the study revealed that pursuit of a career in policing was not deterred by the negative perception of police officers. It must be noted however, that there was only one Black participant in the study. The research supports that the African American population is the most underrepresented in local law, and also has the most contentious relationship with police (Bratton, 2015; Brunson & Gau, 2015; Weitzer & Brunson, 2015; Weitzer & Tuch, 2004; Weitzer et al., 2015).

**Police organization and socialization.** In an attempt to understand how the police organization and socialization impacts the recruit, Goldstein (1970) in *Policing a Free Society*, described the policing subculture as “the pressures of conformity are so
strong that the new officer will either be forced into the police subculture with the values and orientation of the larger group replacing his own or his life that will be made so unpleasant that he will decide to resign” (Goldstein, 1977, p. 259). The researcher indicated that the role of the police culture plays an important part in understanding the everyday functions of police officers, and that the role of police officers incorporates three major functions they are expected to perform in society: order maintenance, law enforcement, and service. It is a culture characterized by a *them versus us* mentality, with an element of danger so fundamental to officers, that the clear awareness of it might provoke emotional barriers to police work (Paoline, 2003; Skolnick, 1994). The officers tend to unify against the perceived chief source of this danger – the public (Paoline, 2003).

According to Paoline (2003), officers develop a coping mechanism to deal with the stress and anxiety of the constant presence of danger, “suspiciousness,” and “maintaining the edge” (Paoline, 2003, p. 202). The researcher stated that police officers are suspicious of the public, but also of any recruits that have not earned their trust, threatening the group cohesion. Maintaining the edge relates to the ability of the officer to display authority (Paoline, 2003). These coping mechanisms are often transmitted through a socialization process inherited by the recruit, across occupational generations in the training academy, and throughout the career of the officer (Conti, 2009; Paoline, 2003).

Bolton and Feagin (2004) described an exclusionary police culture. They said that despite the advances made by Black police officers since the 1970s, integration policy has been forced on police departments. They contended that the “blue culture” is a
“White culture,” (Bolton & Feagin, 2004, p. 30) and that African Americans experience racism and often hold middle management positions that are racialized, such as minority recruitment officers or equal opportunity enforcement officers (Barlow & Barlow, 2002; Bolton & Feagin, 2004). Black officers are often employed in Black communities, denied positions of advancement, and are subjected to harsher discipline processes (Wilson & Wilson, 2014). Bolton and Feagin (2004) believed that despite the promotion of some African Americans, once they are promoted, they are often barred from developing networks among African Americans, and are not allowed to formally mentor African American talent (Conti, 2009). Racism is often evident by the promotion of unqualified Black officers over qualified ones to give the impression that Blacks are incapable of performing executive functions (Bolton & Feagin, 2004; Jollevet, 2008; Leinen, 1984).

Conti and Doreian (2014) echoed the sentiments of Alex (1976) when he described the circumstances of African Americans in the police department as a double marginality by highlighting: (a) as minorities they were marginalized by society and (b) as police officers, they were marginalized by their race. Conti and Doreian (2014) offered a third marginality – Black police officers segregation in a predominantly White occupation (Conti & Doreian, 2014). While the conditions for African American police officers have improved, specifically in the form of increased representation, studies reveal that their social situation has not (Bolton & Feagan, 2004; Wilson & Wilson, 2014). Studies have recognized that there is a lack of collegial support, disproportional criticism, verbal harassment, and employment discrimination against ethnic and racial groups (Bolton & Feagan, 2004; Hassell & Brandi, 2009; Wilson & Wilson, 2014).
According to Manning (1970), organizational socialization is a process by which, individuals who prefer to be recognized as members of an organization, adopt the necessary behaviors and positive attitudes to be acknowledged as part of that organization. The main objective is congruence between action and values of the officer and the organization (Conti, 2009). Socialization in the policing context at the academy, is characterized by a model to elicit frustration, emotional overload, and personal crisis (Conti, 2009). The research describes a paramilitary training which is designed to induce high stress that revolves around a series of degradations and obedience tests (Chappell, 2008; Conti & Doreian, 2014).

Relating to this, Conti and Nolan (2005) described the academy as an initiation into the occupational subculture that embraces humiliation, sacrifice, and pain, as pedagogy designed to build character. Another element of the academy training is the suppression of the civilian identity, in combination with the transmission of demeanor, bearing, and competence suitable for an idealized elite police role (Conti & Nolan, 2005; Shernock, 1998). This elite status gives rise to a level of cohesion and solidarity among police officers that has long been noted as one of the most highlighted, yet unusual aspects of policing (Conti & Nolan, 2005, 2009; Hahn 1971; Wilkins & Williams, 2008).

Sklansky (2006) offered that the occupational subculture of a monolithic White, male, heterosexual police officer, has been in decline since the times of the overwhelmingly White, virtually all-male police force of 30 to 40 years ago. He stated one of the greatest organizational effects of diversity on the police has been the social fragmentation. He asserted that even though police officers report lines of division, distrust, and resentment; this is a good thing because it has allowed for a decline in
solidarity, but, has not hampered the effectiveness of police fighting crime. For operational purposes “blue is blue” (Myers, Forest, & Miller, 2004; Sklansky, 2006, p. 1232).

Conti and Doreian (2014) argued that among the recruits in the academy, there was still evidence of segregation. In their mixed methods study, the researchers examined the effects of the socialization process on the relationships between recruits. Adding to the socialization literature by conducting both an ethnographic and a quantitative study, the researchers observed one cohort in a Midwestern academy. The cohort sample had a total of 70 recruits consisting of one Asian recruit, six Latino recruits, 46 White recruits, and 15 Black recruits.

The study was considered longitudinal since it lasted the entire duration of the 21-week course in the academy. The ethnographic data was analyzed through grounded theory and consisted of field notes and observation notes coded for themes and patterns. The quantitative data consisted of the main dependent variable which was the extent of knowledge that the recruits had of each other, which included possessing knowledge of others in the academy environment, and the development of friendships. The independent variable – race – was operationalized within three categories, because the Asian recruit was excluded from the analysis to protect the recruit’s confidentiality, since there was only one Asian recruit. The data was captured at different points in the academy. These phases were labeled T1 (non-civilian phase—entry into the academy), T2 (paramilitary phase—weapons training, physical fitness, and self-defense), and T3 (anticipatory phase—end of the academy) (Conti & Doreian, 2014).
Conti and Doreian (2014) discovered that after conducting an analysis of variance (ANOVA), and the quadratic assignment permutation (QAP) regression, (which allowed the link of distributions of social relations at different points in time to each other), significant differences between Latino, Black, and White recruits emerged. Levels of social knowledge and friendship were highest among Latino recruits, followed by Blacks, and was lowest among Whites. Another finding of interest was that Latinos had the highest level of relations at all points and all configurations, whether in the same squad, or seated together, or seated apart. Blacks and Whites continuously scored lower among each other for social relations, knowledge, and friendship, and this occurred more in T3 than in T2. The significance of this finding is that even though the cohort members spent so much time with each other, relationships did not develop among the racial groups for Blacks and Whites in T3. Social knowledge and friendship rated higher among Blacks in comparison to Whites, but not as high as the Latinos.

Conti and Doreian (2014) concluded through the findings, that while the recruits did not form social relationships, evident by squads that had members of different races, they scored low on the levels of social knowledge and friendships, and the academy failed to forge ties between recruits from different races. The ethnographic data revealed that since 70% of the academy, including instructors, were White. Ideologies prevailed in the academy that Blacks were inferior, the academy standards were lowered, and Whites were being cheated to afford Blacks better-qualified positions. It should be noted that Blacks were significantly less in numbers than Whites. This racial bias was often supported by White instructors who shared their own prejudices with the White recruits.
The relevance of the study by Conti and Doriean (2014) not only supported an exclusionary culture as described by Bolton and Feagan (2004), but also supported the claim that police management does not manage to send a message of inclusion and diversity (Holdaway, 1991). According to Skolnick (2008), for Black officers, the police officer identity may be more salient. For some, Black police officers are considered race traitors (Skolnick, 2008). Skolnick (2008) asserted that Black police are aware of this possibility and respond to it differently. This research reported that some view themselves as police or professionals, while others, like 100 Blacks in Law Enforcement Who Care (an organization established in 1995 by Black police officers in NYC), as advocates of minority rights, and they publicly and actively make reform demands and fight for minorities to be promoted within the department. Still, the research points out that others turn against their jobs and become anti-police (Skolnick, 2008).

**Person-organization fit theory (P-O fit).** To frame the examination of how the perception of the police organization and racial identity has influenced this perception for African American males to choose a career in policing, this research used person-organization fit theory (P-O fit) (Chatman, 1989; Cable & Judge, 1996, 1997; Swider, Barrick, & Zimmerman, 2015). The theories of person-environment (PE) interaction have emerged against an interactionist backdrop that has been prevalent for over 100 years in management literature (Lewin, 1935; Pervin, 1968). The term interaction, according to the research, means that both the individual and situation combine to determine when, and to what an extent, they can be combined to predict behavior (Schneider, 1987). Lewin (1951) proposed that behavior is the outcome of the interaction between the environment and the person.
P-O fit theory is derived from the central premise that certain individuals’ values influence the attraction to certain types of organization. The broadness of the definition lends itself to the creation of several distinct types of fit that have developed and garnered attention (Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005). Researchers have developed different types of fit, such as person-environment fit, person-vocation fit, person-job fit, person-organization fit, person-group fit, and person-supervisor fit; this study will concentrate on P-O fit (Harrison, Shaffer, & Bhaskar, 2002; Judge, & Ferris, 1992; Kristoff, 1996; Kristoff-Brown et al., 2005; Van Vianen, 2000).

P-O fit emphasizes the fit between the perception of congruence with the individual’s values and the organizational values (Chatman, 1989). Although some researchers have attempted to operationalize P-O fit as personality-organizational climate (Chistiansen, Villanova, & Mikulay, 1997; Kristoff, 1996; Muchinsky & Monahan, 1987; Ryan & Schmitt, 1996), it is Chatman’s (1989) seminal theory of P-O fit that focused on values as the determination of fit, which has been widely accepted (Kristoff-Brown et al., 2005). Kristoff-Brown et al. (2005) and Chatman (1989) posited that values are critical to self-identity and influencing behavior, attitudes, and judgments, and are essential in assessing fit, which is one of the theories used in this study.

In Chatman’s (1989) research, predictions of the degree of fit were dependent on personal characteristics. Although not every situation and the personal difference was considered, differences in demographic characteristics were mentioned as influencers of P-O fit. For this study, it is important to highlight that the prediction that is most relevant to this study is the selection and socialization phase, which is characterized as an antecedent of P-O fit (Chatman 1989). In her research, she further indicated that
individuals will choose an organization based on congruence of values if they spend more
time with an organization and are involved in a variety of organizational activities before
being hired, and that this will increase the perception of value similarity. The second
prediction made was that if there are high (intense) levels of P-O fit upon entering an
organization, the individual will conform to the essential norms of that organization, and
changes in individual values will affect the high P-O fit.

Socialization is another point to consider in this theory (Chatman, 1989). According to the research, socialization is the process by which individuals come to understand the values, abilities, expected behaviors and social knowledge of the organization (Louis, 1980). It assumed that P-O fit mediates the relationship between socialization experiences and outcome behavior, meaning the socialization process teaches the employee the norms and values of the organizations. Thus, the proposition Chatman (1989) made is that in organizations that have strong values and more activities, such as social and recreational events and mentor programs, there will be a positive connection with P-O fit that will change the individual’s values over time to produce a greater fit (Chatman, 1989).

Cable and Judge (1996), in their quantitative study, examined two types of congruence related to a job seeker’s perception of P-O fit. They examined both value congruence and relational demography or demographic similarity. They argued that if a job seeker finds a demographic similarity to others in the organization (regarding age, race, gender, or socioeconomic status), they appear to enjoy benefits such as communication and liking, more than less similar individuals (Cable & Judge, 1996). The study by Cable and Judge (1996) used three surveys related to the perception of
organizational values, the importance of P-O fit in their job search and job choice decisions, the perceived fit of the organization and job, and their job satisfaction. The job seekers came from 35 organizations recruited from a large northeastern university. The goal of the study was to test whether the congruence between job seekers’ perceptions of an organization’s values and their perception of their values positively affected their perceptions of fit within that organization. In addition, they wanted to determine whether demographic similarities between the job seekers and the organizations’ recruiters, positively affected job seekers’ perception of fit within that organization (Cable & Judge, 1996; Judge & Cable, 1997).

The study was conducted in a series of stages. In the time 1 stage, the researchers reached out to recruiters of 35 organizations. Twenty recruiters from 18 organizations completed the survey regarding demographic information. Each organization averaged about 14 interviews for a total number of 506 interviews. A confidential list of job seekers was provided to the researchers, and a survey was emailed immediately after the interview. The job seekers reported on the attractiveness of each job’s attributes (location, salary) their perceived fit, and perceived company’s values. There were 324 surveys returned. Respondents ranged in age from 19-45, with the average age being 23.4 years of age, of which 56% were women, and 70% were Caucasian. The grade point average of the respondents was also captured ranging from 2.3 to 4.0 with a mean of 3.5. Of the job seekers, 51% were undergraduates, 59% were interviewing for paid internships, and 41% were seeking full-time employment (Cable & Judge, 1996).

The respondents reported on the attractiveness of their job, their perception of company values, the perceived fit of their organization and their job satisfaction (Cable &
The instrument used in times 1, 2, and 3 was the Organizational Culture Profile (OCP), developed to assess P-O fit (O’Reilly, Chatman, & Caldwell, 1991) and advocated by Chatman (1991) as a tool to investigate organizational entry information. In this study, the survey was reduced from 54 items to 40 items, all of which assessed applicants’ values, perceived P-O fit, perceived person-job fit, attractiveness of job attributes, importance of P-O fit in job choice, job choice intentions, demographic characteristics, perceived job opportunities, organizational commitment, job satisfaction, intent to leave, and willingness to recommend organizations. The data were analyzed by multiple regression analysis, and further post ad-hoc analysis was completed to examine the predictors of job seekers’ P-O fit perceptions. The analysis sought to determine if there were any relevant interactions between variables.

The evidence suggested that job seekers’ P-O fit perceptions stemmed from the alignment between their perceptions of their values and the organizational values. This was measured at time 1 with the question “To what degree do you feel that your values match or fit this organization and the current employees in this organization?” To verify and extend the validity of this measurement, in time 3 the following questions were asked: “My values match those of current employees in the organization?” and “Do you think the values and ‘personality’ of this organization reflect your own values and personality?” (Cable & Judge, 1996, p. 299). Another regression analysis revealed that job seekers’ P-O fit perceptions were not affected by their demographic similarity with an organizational representative, meaning the recruits gender, race, or age did not impact the perception of fit for the job seeker. Demographics were measured with specific questions regarding age, gender, race, the number of children, socioeconomic status, place of
undergraduate education, and undergraduate major. Results of this indicated that for this
sample of job seekers, the connection was not made between the recruiter’s demographic
characteristics and their perception of fit with the organization (Cable & Judge, 1996).
The results also indicated that the alignment of values between applicants and perception
does predict organization selection, which led this researcher to use the theory for this
study as an appropriate one to determine if there is a fit between Blacks and the police
organization.

Racial/cultural identity development model (R/CID). Racial identity research
has been well documented for years (Cross, 1971, 1991). The most influential and well-
documented model of psychological nigrescence, (the process of becoming Black) is the
Cross (1971) model of Black identity development (Sue & Sue, 2008). The original Cross
model was developed during the civil rights movement and delineates stages in which
Blacks in the United States move from a White frame of reference to a positive Black
frame of reference (Sue & Sue, 2008). According to Berry (1965), minority groups,
including Blacks, have similar patterns of adjustment to cultural oppression. As a result
of previous models and knowledge about the similarity in minority experiences,
Atkinson, Morten and Sue (1998) developed a five-stage minority identity development
model (MID). Sue and Sue (1999) later elaborated on this model by renaming it R/CID to
include a broader population (Sue & Sue, 2008).

This model is not meant to be used as a comprehensive theory, but a framework to
aid in understanding minorities’ different values, attitudes, and behaviors. The model
explains five stages that oppressed people experience as they struggle to understand
themselves regarding their culture, the dominant culture, and the oppressive relationship
between the two cultures (Sue & Sue, 2008). This model has been chosen to explain the impact of racial identity on the career choices in policing by African Americans because it considers cultural and racial identity as a common experience (Yeh & Hwang, 2000). The stages were used in this study to identify values of participants as they related to racial identity and to determine the perception of how these values influenced the P-O fit of Black law enforcement officers.

The first stage of the model is the conformity stage, where the individual regards White culture as superior and the identification with the dominant culture is quite strong. The individual prefers the dominant culture’s value over one’s own. This stage represents the most damning indictment of White racism because it has such a profound effect on the person of color (Sue & Sue, 2008). Members of the minority group tend to adjust themselves to the group possessing the greater prestige and power to avoid feelings of inferiority. Sue and Sue (2008) indicated that this is precisely where the minority individual becomes ambiguous regarding their identity. The cost to the minority individual of assimilation and acculturation to the dominant culture, is low self-esteem, internalized racism, and shame associated with physical characteristics, that is, traditional modes of dress. They go on to say that this minority individual is trying to identify with the dominant culture by displaying similar beliefs toward not only their culture, but toward other minority groups as well (Sue & Sue, 2008).

The second stage of the R/CID model is the dissonance stage, where the minority individual has mixed feelings between self-deprecating and self-appreciating attitudes and beliefs. This stage is triggered in a minority individual when they encounter a situation inconsistent with their culturally held beliefs, attitudes, and values. The
individual begins to question stereotypes associated with other people of color (Sue & Sue, 2008). The third stage is the resistance and immersion stage, which is characterized by the full endorsement of the minority individual’s values and the rejection of the dominant values of society. The individual rejects White social, cultural, and institutional standards as having no personal validity (Sue & Sue, 2008).

An overwhelming desire to eliminate oppression of the individual’s minority group becomes the motivation for behavior. Individuals move into this stage because of two reasons, one is that the previous stage allowed for a greater understanding of the social forces of racism, oppression, and discrimination, and this allows for the individual to understand their role as a victim. Second, the individual begins to question why should they feel ashamed of themselves (Sue & Sue, 2008). In this stage, individuals develop a strong alliance with people from minority groups. There is a feeling of connectedness to other members of racial and cultural groups.

The fourth stage is the introspection stage, where the minority individual is focused on autonomy and expression. Less energy is invested in being angry with White people. Sue & Sue (1999) contended that individuals move into this stage due to several reasons. One, the individual begins to discover the feelings of anger toward White society is psychologically draining and does not permit the individual to concentrate on themselves. The minority individual becomes more proactive versus reactive. They begin to deem certain actions from the resistance and immersion stage as extreme, and they learn that there are many elements of the American culture that are highly desirable and functional. The individual begins to feel a lowering of distrust and intense anger toward the dominant group (Sue & Sue, 2008).
The fifth stage is the integrative awareness stage, where the individual feels a sense of security, autonomy, and racial pride. They begin to appreciate unique aspects of their culture while also accepting the dominant group’s culture as well. The conflicts and discomfort experienced in previous stages have been resolved. The minority individual is more likely to accept the certain acceptable and unacceptable aspects of all cultures. The minority person has a strong commitment and desire to eliminate all forms of oppression. They begin to understand that European Americans (White Americans) were also victims of racism (Sue & Sue, 2008). Sue and Sue (1999) noted that the R/CID model should not be taken as a global personality theory with specific identifiable stages that are fixed categories. The process of cultural identity is not linear; it is a dynamic process, not static (Sue & Sue, 2008). According to the researchers, minority and majority individuals may move from one stage to another; some may move faster than others, some may stay in one stage, while others may regress.

The revision by Sue and Sue (1999) of the original MID was used in the professions of therapy and counseling. The model had been operationalized previously in this context only. West-Olatunji et al. (2007) used the case study method to understand the rich complexities of a Vietnamese American. Through analyzation, the researchers discovered that the client was in the conformity stage based on his responses to an in-depth interview that captured the data related to the model. The major constructs of the R/CID model used to guide the interviews were based on the effects of history and oppression and for immigration purposes (West-Olatunji et al., 2007).

According to Roysircar, Arredondo, Fuertes, Ponterotto, and Toporek (2003), movement within and between stages of this model is dependent on specific compelling
circumstances. Individuals’ responses to interpersonal interactions can trigger movement from one stage to another. The researchers also noted that for a therapist using this model, they must be aware of the individual’s and the client’s group affiliation (Roysircar et al., 2003). For this study, the model is used to gauge if racial identity (as defined in each stage) influenced the perception of fit since there is evidence to suggest that lived experiences factor into the career decisions in law enforcement for African American males (Campion, 2016; Chaney & Robertson, 2014).

Chapter Summary

The history of African Americans and police reveals a relationship that has, for decades, been marred by discrimination, mistreatment, and negativity. Police organizations have not progressively evolved to accept diversity but have been forced into it through legislative mandates and socio-political forces. Police administrators and management have failed to effectively convey the message of diversity and inclusion (Alex, 1969; Browne, 2015; Dulaney, 1996; Leinen, 1984). As a result, African American police officers describe an organizational culture that is racially biased and discriminatory toward them, however, considering this, there are still African Americans who choose the career of policing (Moskos, 2008; Wilson & Wilson, 2014).

The recruitment and hiring of minorities, particularly African Americans, into policing has been a direct result of politics or implementation of court orders. The result of the forced admission of Blacks into policing has created challenging circumstances for Black police officers, and even more difficult, has been the recruitment of Blacks into police agencies (Conti & Doreian, 2014). The research suggests that while many factors may contribute to the problem of African American males’ underrepresentation in the
police department, the factor least studied has been the influencing factors for African American males on law enforcement career selection. In previous limited police career motivation literature, the main reasons for pursuing the path of a police officer was the desire to help others and the availability of economic benefits. (Raganella & White, 2004; White et al., 2010). Most notable in the review of literature is that there are even less data related to the negative relationship between the African American community and the police, and the influence this has had on their career decisions (Campion, 2016).

From a research perspective, there is limited qualitative research related to the problem of underrepresentation; studies related to career motivation have been quantitative (Lester, 1983; Raganella & White, 2004; White et al., 2010). Very little qualitative data explores the complexities of why, given the fragmented relationship between police and African American males, they decide on a career in policing (Alex, 1969; Leinen, 1984; Moskos, 2008). Chapter 3 discusses design of the study, instruments used, procedures for data selection, and selection of research participants.
Chapter 3: Research Design Methodology

Introduction

The goal of this phenomenological study was to explore the factors that influenced African American police officers in New York City to choose a career as a police officer, despite the historically negative relationship between law enforcement and the African American community. Although decades of government and policing experts have called for diversifying police departments, one of the largest and most diverse police departments struggles with the recruitment and hiring of African American police officers (Bratton, 2015; Guajardo, 2014). Most studies related to career motivation and policing have been quantitative, with a limited number of African Americans participants (Foley et al., 2007; Lester, 1983; Raganella & White, 2007; White et al., 2010).

The history of the literature has described the racial tension and hostility that has persisted in the law enforcement profession since its inception (Alex, 1969; Dulaney, 1996). Research affirms that the negative perception of law enforcement among minorities has been a substantial barrier to recruiting African American officers (Brunson & Weitzer 2009; Conti & Doreian, 2014; Weitzer & Tuch, 2005). Negative perceptions have been reinforced by racially biased policing, racial profiling, and media coverage of numerous high profile deaths of Black citizens at the hands of police (Todak, 2017). Hence, the aim of this study was to find out if there is a perception of fit and how race affects that perception for African American males that choose a career in law enforcement. This phenomenological qualitative research used the theoretical
frameworks of P-O fit (Cable & Judge, 1996; Chatman, 1989; Judge & Cable, 1997), and the R/CID model (Sue & Sue, 1999, 2008).

According to Creswell and Poth (2013), the phenomenological qualitative method is used to describe the lived experiences of individuals about a phenomenon as described by the participants. Qualitative research is also conducted when the problem is so complex, there is a need for a more in-depth understanding (Creswell & Poth, 2013). Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) described the role of phenomenology in qualitative, interview-based research, as helping to make sense of the participant’s world, expressed in their normal language, and does not aim at quantification.

The central purpose of this study was to explore the phenomenon of the Black police officer by examining, within the framework of P-O fit and racial identity, their decisions to become police officers. Considering the definition of phenomenology by Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), a qualitative methodology was chosen, consisting of semi-structured interviews and written reflections, as the most appropriate design to conduct this study. Semistructured interviews provided the opportunity to listen to the stories of these police officers since the goal was to capture the essence of the phenomenon while remaining objective to express fidelity to the phenomena investigated.

**Research Questions**

The research questions this study addressed are the following:

1. Does the perception of fit influence the decision of African American males to become police officers in the NYPD?
2. Does racial identity influence the perception of fit for African American male police officers in the NYPD?
3. What individual factors influence African American males to become police officers in the NYPD?

**Research Context**

According to the United States Census (2015), New York City’s population was 8,426,743 in 2015. The racial and ethnic composition is Black or African American – 24.5%, White – 44.3 %, and Hispanic – 28.9 %. Geographically, New York is a city with five boroughs: Manhattan, Bronx, Kings County (Brooklyn), Richmond County (Staten Island), and Queens (Department of City Planning, 2018). According to the NYPD (2015), the 34,323 uniformed sworn officers on the police force were dispersed throughout precincts, transit bureaus, and housing bureaus.

The NYPD is divided into major bureaus for enforcement, investigations, and administration. The patrol division is the enforcement bureau of the organization (Dempsey & Forst, 2015). According to the NYPD, the patrol unit oversees most uniformed officers (New York City Police Department [NYPD], 2015). There are 77 patrol precincts of employment; of these 23 are in Manhattan, 11 are in the Bronx, 23 are in Brooklyn, 16 are in Queens, and four are in Staten Island. There are 12 transit bureaus of employment and nine housing bureaus of employment in New York City (NYPD, 2015).

**Research Participants**

The purposively convenient selected research participants for this phenomenological study were nine Black male NYPD officers. Researchers assert that while generalizability is surrendered in qualitative research, the sample size should be large enough to elucidate the phenomenon (Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007) Charmaz (2006).
argued that the goal is saturation. The inclusion criteria for the participants in this study were the following: (a) must be an active patrol officer with 6 years or less in the NYPD, (b) self-identify as African American or Black, and (c) be male. The criteria of 6 years or less were identified in the study by White et al. (2010) as a period that could affect the motivational factors of recruits, due to the socialization process of the police subculture, and thus, this was used in this study to build on past research. Patrol officers were chosen for this study because they have daily exposure to the public (Skolnick, 1966). African American women were excluded in the study because research supports that women have unique experiences when employed in a male-dominated field (Kringen, 2013). The participants did not need to be assigned to a specific precinct.

The researcher ensured the confidentiality of the prospective participants by not using names, badge numbers, or any identifying precinct information. Pseudonyms were created by the researcher and participant before the interviews began. This process allowed the researcher to establish a rapport with the participants. The recruitment technique is described below. Participants were made aware that the study was voluntary, and they could have withdrawn without penalty or job loss.

**Positionality.** Critical to the discussion of objectivity is the discussion of positionality, which is paramount to research design (Maxwell, 2005). The researcher is not a police officer and is not employed with the NYPD. The researcher does not identify as African American, Black, or male. Thus, the researcher can suspend all judgment as to the existence or nonexistence of the content of this experience. According to Brinkman and Vale (2009), the suspension of judgment of the experience is called *phenomenological reduction.*
Snowballing technique was used in this study, and as the most appropriate technique given the sample size. Woodley and Lockard (2016) assert that within the qualitative design, the snowballing technique provides the researcher with access to marginalized populations by “harnessing the power of social networking and personal connections” (p. 322). This method allowed for thorough analysis of individuals and groups that would otherwise not be accessible.

This researcher was formally employed at an institution where she had oversight of the criminal justice program and interacted with former and current police officers in the NYPD. The researcher’s professional and personal network includes current and former police officers who are also members of the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Association (NOBLE), who do not have a working or friendly relationship with the researcher. The researcher did not collaborate with NOBLE to recruit participants. The researcher asked the network to distribute the research flyers to all individuals that met the criteria. The initial professional contacts generated between three to four participants. The researcher contacted the potential participants via email. Once the participants agreed, the written reflection was sent to the officers. The researcher requested the written reflection within 1 week of the scheduled appointment for the interview. Once the interviews began, the researcher asked the participants to hand out the flyers to police officers that met the criteria for the study to secure additional participants. Participants were not asked to identify other Black officers but instead hand out a research flyer developed by the researcher. The participants were not paid. The researcher did not initiate any contact or post any flyers until obtaining IRB approval.
The NYPD was not asked to recruit participants for this study. Therefore, permission was not requested of the department to conduct the study.

**Instruments Used in Data Collection**

The primary instrument in data collection was the researcher. Semi-structured interviews were conducted by the researcher, with a total of nine African American male police officers. Once the recruitment process was over, participants were provided with the description of the study (Appendix C), a letter of informed consent (Appendix D), a demographic questionnaire to gain background information about the participants (Appendix E), the recruitment flyer (Appendix F), and an invitation to participate in the study. Appendix G provides the interview questions. The researcher sent the participants a written reflection to fill out via email prior to the interviews (Appendix H).

The written reflection was developed by the researcher based on the R/CID model (Sue & Sue, 1999) and was used to address research question 2. Constructs that were addressed in the written reflection related to R/CID; these were attitudes toward self, attitudes toward minority groups, attitudes toward the dominant group, and attitudes toward other minority groups (Sue & Sue, 1999). The first participant did not return the written reflection. The second participant suggested he answer orally to the written reflection. Subsequently, the researcher incorporated the written reflection into the interviews. The written reflection was used as a comparable data point among the participants.

All interviews took place at a mutually convenient time and place, or over the telephone when necessary. A semi-structured interview is purpose driven and involves a specific approach or technique (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). This methodology allowed
the researcher to ask, not only predetermined questions, but also questions based on the respondents’ answers. It also facilitated capturing the participants’ unbiased account of what factors they believed played a part in their decision to pursue the career of policing. The researcher audiotaped the interviews with the knowledge of the participants and took notes while interviewing the participants (Creswell, 2014).

The questions for the semi-structured interviews were developed by the researcher and aligned with the main concepts that materialized from the research on P-O fit theory (Cable & Judge, 1996, 1997), and the R/CID model (Sue & Sue, 1999, 2008). See Appendix I for alignment of the interview questions to conceptual frameworks. Questions one through 10 are located in Appendix G along with sub-questions. The researcher developed questions one through five to align with the P-O fit, specifically the demographic similarity and values concepts of the theory and these questions relate to research question 1. The remaining questions six to 10 are related to R/CID and align with research question 2 and research question 3. The researcher tested and reviewed the interview questions by having a panel of experts, composed of two police administrators, one African American male, to ensure the questions were appropriate and to establish face and content validity. Based on the feedback given, adjustments were made to the interview questions. This process ensured the researcher had an approximate time to communicate to the research participants. The interviews were approximately 45 minutes in length. Research participants were not compensated for their participation in the study. The research interviews will be stored in the researcher’s home office under lock and key in a cabinet for a period of 3 years.
Procedure for Data Collection and Data Analysis

The data collected consisted of transcribed interviews, written reflections, demographic questionnaires, email correspondence, and notes taken during the interviews. The researcher then cross-checked the transcribed interviews with the recordings to ensure the reliability of the transcriptions. To ensure qualitative reliability and data integrity, the researcher shared a draft copy of the transcribed reports with the participants of the interviews to confirm accurate descriptions of the participants’ experience. This technique of member checking also allowed for follow-up interviews if necessary (Creswell, 2014).

The interviews and the written reflections were transcribed by a professional and they went through three cycles of coding. The transcriptions, analytical memos, and researcher’s notes were read by the researcher several times in order for the researcher to become intimate with the data. The first cycle of coding was the in vivo coding. In vivo coding uses the direct language of the participants to code the data (Saldana, 2016). The research data produced perceptions and influences related to career choice for the participants. A priori codes were used during the second cycle of coding to categorize and analyze the narrated data. A provisional list of codes was developed, generated from the theoretical frameworks. Sample of the a priori codes were these: a desire to help others, socialization, organizational values, and individual values (Cable & Judge, 1994; Lester 1983, Raganella & White, 2004; White et al., 2010).

The final cycle of coding consisted of value coding. This coding method captures the data which reflects the participants’ values, attitudes, and beliefs, representing the participant’s perceptions (Saldana, 2016). The researcher then analyzed the codes for
frequency, created a spreadsheet to analyze the frequency of codes and themes. From these, patterns emerged. The written reflections were also coded using a three-cycle process. The data obtained from this study will be appropriately destroyed 3 years post research.

Summary

The researcher conducted this phenomenological qualitative study with data collection using semi-structured interviews, demographic forms, and a written reflection by the participants. The participants were identified through professional and personal networks known to the researcher to access the population, due to the nature of positionality. To ensure confidentiality, the researcher ensured that the participants understood the parameters of the study before they volunteered to participate. The participants were made aware of the voluntary nature of the study, and were advised that they could decline participation at any time, without penalty or job loss.

One participant was invited to a mutually convenient place, and the other eight were interviewed over the phone in a private room. The data was collected via audio tapes and notes were taken by the researcher; the data was then professionally transcribed. The researcher immersed in the data by reading it through several times and then began the coding process. Coding was done in three cycles using in vivo coding, a priori coding, and value coding. The researcher coded during, and after the interviews. Once the data was collected a final report was given to the participants, as a form of member checking, to ensure the data was accurately described. Once the final coding was conducted, categories were created, and themes developed based on the frequency of the participants’ responses.
Chapter 4: Results

Although police departments across the country have accomplished significant diversification of police personnel since the 1960s, African Americans continue to be underrepresented in many police departments (Brunson & Gau, 2015; Guajardo, 2014; Kringen & Kringen, 2014; Wilson & Wilson, 2014). Despite being one of the largest and most diverse police departments in the country, the New York City Police Department struggles with Black male underrepresentation (Bratton, 2015; Guajardo, 2014). The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the factors that influence African American males to choose a career in policing, considering the historical dissonance between African American males and law enforcement (Alex, 1969; Bolton & Feagin, 2004; Brunson & Gau, 2015; Weitzer, 2015).

This study used nine African American patrol officers with 6 years or less on the force, to explore if the perception of fit (congruence between individual values and organizational values), and racial identity for the police officers, influenced their career choice in the NYPD. The method of data collection included a demographic questionnaire, semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions, and a written reflection. The data collecting tools allowed the participants, African American police officers working in the NYPD, to be reflective of their experiences and perspectives. Understanding these experiences and influential factors, as well as those related to the perception of the NYPD by African Americans males that choose a career in policing, can assist the NYPD in addressing the lack of Black males on the police force.
Through the snowball sampling technique, the nine African American police officers were identified, and data was collected. During the interviews, the participants shared experiences related to the recruitment process, hiring process, experiences with the police before becoming police officers, and their perspectives on race and how it contributes to the way they perceive the policing organization. This study adds to the body of literature related to African Americans and police because of the limited qualitative studies about police officers, but also contributes to the sparse research on the career choice of African American males in policing. This chapter presents the findings that emerged from the data collected in this study.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. Does the perception of fit influence the decision of African American police officers to become police officers in the NYPD?
2. Does racial identity influence the perception of fit for African American male police in the NYPD?
3. What individual factors influence African American males to become police officers in the NYPD?

The theory of person-organization fit (Cable & Judge, 1997; Chatman, 1989, 1991) and the racial-cultural identity development model (Sue & Sue, 2008) informed the study. The elements of P-O fit that were used to generate themes were values, the extent of the agreement between the participant’s values and the NYPD’s organizational values, and the effect of socialization on the selection process for the participant. The R/CID
elements explored were the participant's perception of racism, race, equal opportunities, and identity in the context of the workplace.

**Data Analysis and Findings**

**Participants.** Nine African American male police patrol officers with 6 years or less on the force participated in this study. A purposively selected sample was recruited using the snowball technique. The researcher’s professional network was activated once IRB approval was received. The first participant received the researcher’s contact information. Once contact was made, the participant received an email. This professional contact generated three participants, and those participants then referred more participants, until all nine participants were emailed a description of the study, a letter of consent, a flyer, and the written reflection.

The nine participants chose a pseudonym of their choice. The first two participants failed to return the written reflection. The researcher then incorporated the written reflection scenario into the interviews. All but one participant verbally responded to the written reflection. All interviews and written reflections were transcribed by a professional transcription service.

The nine police officers volunteered within a month of IRB approval. The researcher conducted the nine semi-structured interviews; some were conducted over the phone, and one was conducted face-to-face. The one face-to-face interview was recorded using a recording device, and was conducted in a private office on a college campus. The other eight interviews were conducted over the phone in a private office and were recorded. Follow-up questions were asked throughout the interview to allow for member-checking. The researcher sent all the participants the copies of the final report for
member-checking. None of the participants returned any of the final reports with corrections. All recordings, coding, and related work will be kept in a locked safe marked with the name of the researcher and disposed of 3 years later in accordance with the St. John Fisher College guidelines. Table 4.1 presents data on the participants and the demographic information of their colleagues.

Table 4.1

*Participant Qualification and Colleague Demographic Data*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>Number of years on the Job</th>
<th>Perceived Precinct Demographics (Participants’ Colleagues)</th>
<th>Precinct location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John Doe</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Black &amp; Hispanic</td>
<td>Bronx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chris</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Caucasians</td>
<td>Upper West Side, New York City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jack</td>
<td>1 ½</td>
<td>Black &amp; Hispanic</td>
<td>Bronx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctor</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>Washington Heights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Binary</td>
<td>3 ½</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>Bronx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JB</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Blacks, Hispanics, Asians, &amp; Caucasians</td>
<td>Did not disclose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Blacks, Hispanics, Asians &amp; Caucasians</td>
<td>Did not disclose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AT</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Blacks, Hispanics, Asians &amp; Caucasians</td>
<td>Queens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TG</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Half Caucasians, the other half are mixed between Middle Eastern, Asian, Black &amp; Hispanic</td>
<td>Harlem</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The participants in this study ranged in age from 24 to 38 years. The majority were single except for one, and five out of nine had family members that were in law enforcement. Their work location represented the different boroughs of New York City,
and the majority were born and raised in New York City. Three out of the nine had always considered a career in policing, and the others were interested in different careers, including computer science, the military, security, and dentistry. All the participants had more than 1 year on the force and less than 6 years, and all but one of the participants had 4-year college degrees.

**Coding process.** Participant interviews and the written transcriptions were coded and analyzed in a series of stages that included several reads of the data, coding, recoding, and analyzation. The researcher began manually coding while collecting the data. This process included coding the written reflection which was incorporated in the oral interviews. The data was coded and recoded for accuracy in three cycles. The first cycle of coding consisted of in vivo coding also known as *verbatim coding* (Saldaña, 2016). According to Saldaña (2016), in vivo codes consist of the direct language of the participants. Examples of in vivo codes from this study were “You don’t wanna to lose your identity,” “I want to help others,” and “I am Black, and I am a cop,” which represented emerging themes that were produced from participants’ perceptions.

The second cycle of coding employed a priori codes to categorize and analyze narrated data. The researcher developed a provisional list of codes before collecting data. The list of codes was derived from the conceptual frameworks P-O fit and R/CID model used in this study. These a priori codes were individual values, organizational values, a desire to help others, and socialization. An example of an a priori code that emerged from the data and was supported by previous research on reasons why individuals become police officers was, a desire to help people (Lester, 1983; White et al., 2010). In previous research that employed Lester’s (1983) questionnaire *The reasons for choosing a police*
career, one of the top five reasons for choosing a career in policing was a desire to help other people (Raganella & White, 2004; White et al., 2010).

The final cycle of coding was value coding, which was done to capture the data that reflected the participants’ values, attitudes, and beliefs, representing their perceptions or worldviews (Saldaña, 2016). Examples of value codes from this data were “you don’t wanna lose your identity” and “autonomy” when describing the complex interplay, influence, and effect between and among thoughts about police officers and the Black community, feelings about racism and discrimination, and the actions of choosing a policing career (Saldaña, 2016). The researcher then separated the value codes into categories. The categories were related to the reasons for choosing to police: values, individual factors, organizational factors, and self-identity. Reoccurring words, patterns, and phrases were categorized into themes. See Appendix J for codes and categories.

The validity of the data was accomplished in several ways. The three-cycle coding, in vivo, a priori, and value codes were also used to code the written reflections (which became oral reflections) to ensure data triangulation. The written reflections allowed the researcher to assess the accuracy of findings with a distinct data source that was separate from the interviews. Member-checking allowed the data to be reviewed by the participants to ensure accuracy. A peer-debriefer allowed the researcher to ensure another level of accuracy of the data. The peer-debriefer reviewed the data, asked questions about the study, coding process, and findings. This allowed for validity because it ensured the interpretation beyond the researcher (Creswell, 2014).

Table 4.2 illustrates the themes, subthemes, and corresponding research questions.
Table 4.2

*Themes and Corresponding Research Questions*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research question</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RQ 1</td>
<td>Values</td>
<td>a) Desire to help others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>b) Relationships/mentorships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1. family/friends</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. relationship with investigator</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. family at work</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>c) Career opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>d) Community relations</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>e) Impact on their city</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ 2</td>
<td>Self-identity</td>
<td>a) “you don’t wanna lose your identity.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>b) Impact on the community</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>c) Racial differences</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>d) Negative experiences</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>e) Autonomy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ3</td>
<td>Individual factors</td>
<td>a) Career choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>b) Benefits</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Research question 1.** The first research question asked: Does the perception of fit influence the decision of African American police officers to become police officers in the NYPD? The category of values emerged from the participants’ responses: what they valued most in the NYPD when making the job selection, what they perceived the NYPD values as an organization, along with what the respondents personally valued in their lives. Table 4.3 provides a summary of the themes and subthemes that emerged through the interviews with the participants and their personal written reflections.
Table 4.3

Research Question 1 and Written Reflection – Themes/Subthemes and Theme Frequency.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>John</th>
<th>Chris</th>
<th>Jack</th>
<th>Doc</th>
<th>Binary</th>
<th>JB</th>
<th>#7</th>
<th>AT</th>
<th>TG</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A desire to help others</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships</td>
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<tr>
<td>Subtheme- Family and</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friends (interview questions</td>
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<td>and written reflection)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Subtheme- Relationship</td>
<td>√</td>
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<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>w/Investigator</td>
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<tr>
<td>Subtheme- Family at work</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>√</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Career opportunities</td>
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<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community relations</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
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<tr>
<td>Impact on community</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

In responding to the question of the perception of fit with the NYPD, most participants described the best part of their job as police officers was the desire to help others. This emerged as a theme that described their perception of fit (agreement of individual values and organizational values) with the NYPD. Six of the seven participants identified this as being very important to them as police officers. The participants described the nature of the job of policing allowed them to do what they love to do, help others. This desire fits well with the goals of the NYPD. Participant JB stated, “I enjoy being able to go to work and help people that truly do need help, assistance.” Participant #7 agreed: “I enjoy helping others.” John Doe expressed the same sentiments:

What I love about being a police officer is that you’re almost like a social worker. Like, you’re always talking, and I’m compatible with a lot of people. I like to talk
and make people feel better. Like, when they call I like for them to feel that I did something right. (John Doe)

Chris commented on what motivated him. He discussed the importance of helping others by catching the criminals and protecting people.

Well, I feel like the number one role of a police officer is to ultimately catch the bad guy. So, taking bad people off the street is kinda like my motive. It keeps me motivated and knowing that I ultimately, possibly, saving somebody’s life or preventing crime from occurring in the future, cause a lot of criminals I feel are recidivists. (Chris)

Jack commented on his desire to help others and improve relationships in the community. He discussed his belief that some police officers did not understand the Black community. As a Black police officer, Jack felt he could help improve community understanding and relationships.

I became a police officer to help, especially because of the Black race, cops don’t understand us, the cops don’t understand – it’s getting to the point where there is a lot of talking and no action. So, I felt me being a black cop I bridge that gap between you know between Blacks and the police. (Jack)

AT noted the challenges of being a police officer with the benefit of always trying to help people. Every day could be different and yet, what he liked about being a police officer was the idea of always being there to help people.

What I love about it is, you would never know. It’s different. You can never be like, “oh today is going to be an easy day.” It pretty much, it’s always going to come down to you helping one person, or you’re helping a couple of persons. You
can never predict what’s going to happen in a day. It’s like every day is different, and that’s what I like. (AT)

TG also had the same strong feelings about helping others. He stated what he enjoys best about his job:

I guess helping people, and this is not even a fake answer, like helping people. If they need aid or assistance, I feel like we’re doing our duties because it’s clearly not the money. It’s not the department, Yeah, I would say helping people. (TG)

The second theme that emerged from the interviews as relating to the perception of fit, was the influence of relationships with people who were involved with policing. Most participants described having a relationship with a police officer who provided mentorship and allowed them to ascertain the values of the NYPD, prior to obtaining the job. Three relationship subthemes emerged from the relationship theme: relationships with family or friends, relationship with the hiring investigator, and a sense of family at work. These relationships assisted the participant in understanding the role, norms, and values of the NYPD.

Family members or friends who were involved with police work were particularly influential in some participants’ decisions to join the NYPD. Participant Binary stated “You know what, I always had a fascination with it, just because of the fact that I grew up in an NYPD home, hence my dad. I always had a fascination with it.” (Binary’s father had been an NYPD officer for over 20 years.) “You know what, my uncle played a big part too.” (Binary’s uncle has also been an NYPD officer for 13 years.)

Jack described the influence of his uncle who was a police officer. Jack stated:
I had an uncle that was a police officer in Jamaica. He was very high up in the ranks like a chief to us. Growing up I always seen pictures and he would take us around in Jamaica. That was what started it – that was the beginning of me wanting to be a police officer. (Jack)

Participant JB also stated:

I’ve also had influential people in my life, who were role models and mentors, become police officers throughout their career. I saw the basis of what they have to do, and it opened my eyes to a lot of things. So, if they were able to do that, then you know, I figured I’d be able to handle it as well. (JB)

Doctor described multiple relationships that influenced his career choice. Not only were his family members police officers, but an important person in his religious community was also involved in policing.

Two of my uncles are police officers and police commissioner back in Jamaica when I was a kid. And my dad took us to Jamaica when my uncle was still a cop, a commissioner, there. He was in his office, you know, he showed us around. And it was like, the best thing. You know? It’s something that I’ve always wanted to do ever since I see that. Also at my church as well, cause I’ve been going to church since I was a baby, there is also, an elder, he’s also a police officer in the NYPD . . . They’ve been telling me how it is, and it’s like a big mentorship until I actually got the job, they tell me how the job is, what they encountered. (Doctor)

The written reflection component of the research study offered additional insight into how these police officers thought about youth in the community (identified as the theme, community relations), and how mentorship and guidance in relationships were
important. Their responses showed their willingness to provide support to youth, and to help others who might wish to become police officers. This came up in the written reflection for two participants. In response to the written reflection, #7 orally responded to Barry, the 17-year old African American male, who was considering being a police officer.

Well, I would tell him basically if he wants to pursue it, I would say to look into it. Make sure he goes to school, and he gets the proper education, enough credits, everything he needs to get him the job, I would tell him to do some research, and I would tell him if he needs it, I would basically offer my help. If you need to talk to me, or talk to anybody, any of my colleagues, I’m here. (#7)

Jack’s oral response to Barry reflected not only the willingness to develop a relationship with Barry but also to provide any help that might be desired.

I would tell him never let any negativity impact your goals. I would give him my job work number- our job phone and I tell him at any given time call me. There are plenty of times I communicate with kids, that have nothing to eat, I take money out of my pocket and give them food. (Jack)

TG reported that he would talk to the male’s (Barry) family about his desire to become a police officer.

I would tell his family he – This is what he wanted to do. You have to support him. You have to support him and be there for him. It’s a dangerous job. I’m going to tell them about the inequality, and the danger of the job, but I’m also going to tell them the good about the job. So I would speak to his family. (TG)
These officers provided their insights into how relationships with family members and friends influenced their decisions to become police officers. They also shared their perspectives on encouraging others to get involved with police work through relationships with people in the community.

A subtheme that emerged from the relationship theme was the relationship with their investigator. In the police department, the background check is conducted by an investigator. The investigator collects data related to the participants, that include criminal background, medical background, and family history (Kringen & Kringen, 2014). The investigator is assigned to the applicant for the entire hiring process. Most of the participants described the hiring process as taking no less than 3 years, from the time they took the police civil service exam, to the time they entered the academy.

The relationship with the investigator occurred for a period of more than a year. Some participants gave credit to the investigator for keeping them on track during the hiring process. Additionally, some of the participants described a good relationship with their colleagues, which further reinforced their perception of fitting in after job selection. Most participants described the relationships with their investigator as being professional; they kept them on track to produce the documentation needed to get hired. John Doe described his relationship with his investigator.

Once I got to know who my investigator was, he would always email me and stay in contact if I’m missing something or if he needed some more stuff from me. He continued to say his investigator was an Asian male, “he was nice to me, very friendly like he was on top of me because he really wanted me to go in. (John Doe)
Jack, who was a cadet before he was a police officer, stated regarding his investigator “it was great because as a cadet you have the same investigator – it was a great relationship.” Participant #7 described his investigator as a Hispanic woman with whom he had a good relationship, and they spoke “quite often.” JB also had very positive feelings about his investigator. He stated:

It was actually good; he treated me with respect. He was very straightforward; he was very on top of things. Whenever I called to drop off paperwork, or whatever the case may be, he was always attentive to make sure that he was there to get it, and there were no mishaps there. (JB)

Chris had a female investigator who was viewed as being instrumental in his getting the job. “My investigator was very helpful; it was a female. She played a very active role clearly, in my hiring. And she was there for every step of the process” (Chris).

Not all participants, however, had the same positive views and relationships with their investigators. TG did not feel any special connection with his recruiter. TG had a different experience with his recruiter; he reported, “It was really no connection. She just requested documents, and that was it. I don’t remember her name.” TG originally wanted to work for another state police department but was dismissed from the academy due to reasons he did not wish to disclose. He described the other state police department as having “great respect” from the community. He described the NYPD as “taking anybody” (TG).

Another subtheme that developed within the relationships theme was the feeling of family in the work setting. A few participants described the relationship with their colleagues at work as being similar to a family. This subtheme underscores the
perception of fit within the precinct, after job selection. Jack described his precinct as “a welcome home party” because he was a cadet in the same precinct where he now worked. He described the demographics of his precinct as being predominantly African American and Hispanic. John Doe noted that he enjoyed the relationships with his “family” at work. They enjoyed spending time together and genuinely enjoyed each other’s company.

For the most part, we’re pretty good. I feel like the bond is there. Everybody works together, and everyone backs each other up. We all talk and try to hang out and do things together throughout the holidays or summertime with barbecues, and it seems family oriented the precinct that I am in. (John Doe)

John Doe described his precinct as having mostly minorities – Blacks and Hispanics. AT described his precinct as mixed, meaning Blacks, Hispanics, Asians, and Whites. He stated that his coworkers supported him and they looked out for each other:

It’s great I would say, I just come to work, and I’m sure people would do the same thing that I would do for them. Like if I were to call for help, if I would go on the radio, they would know it's me. They could come within a split second. Never really got any issues where I work. (AT)

Doctor also had very positive sentiments about his coworkers. “Everybody talks to each other. It’s like a big, big family. Everyone talks and gets along” (Doctor). However, TG did not report a good relationship with his colleagues. TG stated:

This one other Hispanic officer, we always joke around and call each other punks, whatever this and that. But I never played a race card. I don’t say “oh you’re Spanish,” or whatever. So he comes to me. He’s like “Hey you’re a perp.” That’s
the lingo they use, “you’re a perp with a gun.” I was like “Hold up because I am Black?” And he just froze because I was like, “What because I’m Black?” (TG)

The third theme that emerged was about career opportunities. The interviews with the participants conveyed an appreciation for the NYPD, as compared to other law enforcement agencies, because of the career advancement opportunities available to them since they worked for a reputable and “huge” police department. The participants expressed having applied for different law enforcement agencies. However they chose the NYPD because it was well known and afforded them many opportunities. Doctor stated:

The way I see NYPD is a huge organization. Huge, huge, see with the NYPD now, because it’s a huge organization, there’s a lot of cops. So there’s a lot of cops, you need a lot of more bosses. So, it, it’s like an ever-growing type of thing.

(Doctor)

Participant #7 echoed the same sentiments of professional pride because of the opportunities: “I feel like the NYPD; it’s the best.” John Doe also stated:

Well, NYPD is, like such a big branch and like, you always hear NYPD even if you’re not from here. If you’re someone who’s like a go-getter you can move up and go to so many places on this job, so it’s definitely, like a career driven branch.

(John Doe)

JB noted similar sentiments about the opportunities within the NYPD: “yeah, I definitely think there’s so much to do, and there are different routes to go down, so there’s a lot of options for me. So, it’s good just to stay put, and kind of just about those options.”

Another theme that emerged from the participants when discussing what other elements of the NYPD attracted them to the organization, was the fact that they were
born and raised in the community they were serving. Chris expressed that he could have applied for another law enforcement agency, but he wanted the NYPD.

Growing up in the New York City, knowing New York City, I think it’s definitely better, and you make more of an impact working in an urban neighborhood and working in, a particular city as opposed to state-wide. I don’t feel those type of agencies (referring to state-police or any other agency besides the NYPD) can give the same impact that a local police precinct can do. I’m a firm believer that if you wanna see change, you have to do it from within. (Chris)

Doctor had similar sentiments about working in the city where he was raised.

An African American male, who lives in the city, and works as an officer, they would have a better experience in handling certain situations. Change always happens from the inside out, not from the outside in. So how can it get changed? Trying to join the job. It takes time, yes. But change can always happen. (Doctor)

Jack believed he was more effective as a police officer as a result of his growing up in the community.

Because of the area, I was raised in, is the area I sort of patrol. The people that know me for years can always say he not that type of cop. He was always a good kid growing up. Having that type of bond with the community. Knowing that they can trust me and I can trust them is what I like. (Jack)

AT and TG both echoed the sentiment that being an insider can help find solution to the problems between the community and police in New York City. “It’s like, I don’t want to be part of the person who criticizes it. I want to be part of the solution” (AT). TG stated that Black men should join the police department “because you can’t complain
about a problem and you’re not a part of it. Just become an officer and make it better. So be the solution.”

The process through which individuals learn the norms, values, and expected behaviors, and social knowledge of an organization is called socialization (Chatman, 1989). According to Chatman (1989), socialization teaches the employees the norms and the values of an organization. Only two participants in this study discussed their socialization in the form of a mentorship program – the NYPD Cadet program and NYPD Explorers Program. In response to what drew him to the profession of a police officer, Chris stated:

I was originally part of a program as a younger child when I was 14 years old. It was called the Explorers Program. Well, it gave you really good insight on what it is that police officers do, because you’re based inside a local police station, and you’re working in tandem with the Community Affairs officers and Youth officers, who are ultimately are, in turn, the Explorers coordinators. So you learn about the penal law. You also learn about how police officers handle certain jobs by conducting scenarios, putting yourself in the same shoes that police officers are. (Chris)

In response to the question, “What made you take the exam?” Jack stated:

So what I did while I was college- I became a cadet, the NYPD cadets. It is a paid internship, while you are in college. You do the administration work, you help do paperwork. In the precinct, you work with crime analysis- they handle all the paperwork, whatever happens on that day- whatever homicides, rapes, assaults, murders, whatever we get that day. Robberies and burglaries- all the
paperwork that goes through crime analysis. Through that, I learned to read 61s. 61s are the complaint reports; it helped because I became a cop- I knew how to make my stories sound proper so that the judge and district attorney could read them. (Jack)

These officers described the influence of being part of the community and its impact on their decisions to become police officers. From the time of their youth, growing up in their communities, and for some, being involved in youth programs, positively influenced their career decisions.

The final theme within the first category was community relations. Most participants repeatedly mentioned “community relations” in response to the question regarding what they perceived the NYPD values. The participants felt they contributed to that overall goal of community relations and felt valued as a result. Binary shared his perspective on community relations.

I think community policing is trying to get done, but I mean when you are doing community policing, you can’t force anything. You know, you really can’t force it. You have just to have it; you know it has to come together by itself. Like, you can’t say “you know what, we need to stop this in person in the middle of the street, what’s your name, what’s your number? All right, that’s community policing. No, I mean if these guys want to come up to you and talk to you or if you just want to talk to somebody to just shoot the shit with them, that’s cool and all, but if you just looking to talk to a person, you know because that’s considered activity, that not a good way to community police, you know? You’ve got to want in your heart to do it, but sometimes it’s not the goal, you know. (Binary)
Participant #7 provided these thoughts:

I think they value principles and making sure that everything is running right and in terms of knocking out crime and making sure the community is right. I value the same thing, the principles, making sure when I go to work every day I’m doing the right thing. I’m holding up the standards of the NYPD. (#7)

Doctor indicated how he viewed community relations and how important it is:

I mean now, now how the job is with our new commissioner, O’Neil, is that neighborhood policing. Neighborhood policing is the presence within the community. We want to have a relationship with the community, the people. You want to; you want to bring it back, so it’s like the community is not afraid of the police. The way I see it is that at the end of the day, we are all human beings.

(Doctor)

Jack reiterated the importance of community relations and the NYPD:

Community relations. Well, they value highly community policing. The department is headed toward community relations; they are not trying to arrest people. They are trying to give them a second chance. The community has to take responsibility. The department wants the cops to interact with the community, to go and be proactive, talk to the community, to the shop owner, so that they know the officers and say “hi.” (Jack)

Chris shared his views on community relations. He mentioned his concerns about how the media can portray the police in certain situations. He believed that developing relationships with community members was an important goal.
Community relations, now I think they value that very much so I think they value how they’re viewed. I also value community relations. So, that’s where I’m, you know, where I ‘m on par with that. And, uh being viewed a certain way. I definitely don’t like, like for example, how the media portrays police officers to be negative. (Chris)

John Doe indicated that he believed he was a good fit for the NYPD because of who he is. He shared that it is important for the NYPD to hire the right people with the right perspective to work with the community. John Doe said:

They probably like my character, and who I am as a person, then they know that I could definitely make an impact on society. They want positive people because, first off, as a police officer you have to carry a gun, and you have to carry all this equipment, and you have to work with people and stuff like that, and you don’t want to be, you want to have a cop out there that- who is disgruntled and who’s out there with bad manners and doesn’t treat anyone with respect because he’s a police officer, and you feel that you have some type of authority, but um I do think they, we share some values in common because it’s definitely a big job.

(John Doe)

Five themes resulted from the discussions relating to research question 1 – Does the perception of fit influence the decision of African American police officers to become police officers in the NYPD? Clearly, the perception of fit has a significant impact on African Americans who consider becoming police officers. Relationships, community relations, a desire to help others, career opportunities, and impact on the community, all influenced the participants’ perspectives on their fit within the NYPD.
Research question 2. Research question 2 asked: Does racial identity influence the perception of fit for African American male police in the NYPD? The second category that emerged across the participants’ responses, regarding the questions of racial identity and how it impacts their perception of fit, was self-identity, and it incorporated five themes. These themes are presented in Table 4.4. One of the themes in this category also emerged in the coding of the written reflection. These themes are: (a) “you don’t wanna lose your identity,” (b) impact on the Black community, (c) racial differences, (d) negative experiences, and (e) autonomy. The participants were aware of their racial identity in an organization where their superiors were mostly White; it was in this environment they wanted to make a difference. Equally important was the acknowledgment by the participants that they perceived the disparity in police practices were the reason African American males did not wish to join law enforcement. As a result of this acknowledgment, the participants believed they performed differently on the job.

Table 4.4

Research Question 2 and Written Reflection -Themes and Theme Frequency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>John</th>
<th>Chris</th>
<th>Jack</th>
<th>Doc</th>
<th>Binary</th>
<th>JB</th>
<th>#7</th>
<th>AT</th>
<th>TG</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“You don’t want to lose your identity.”</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Impact on Black community</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racial Differences</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Experiences</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autonomy (interview question and written reflection)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The first phrase listed in Table 4.4 served as the first theme for the second category of self-identity. The first theme for question 2 demonstrated the intensity of the participants’ identities; this was relevant because P-O fit describes values for individuals and organizations, not only in content, but by intensity as well (Chatman, 1989). Intensity and strength of the value matters in the P-O fit interactional model, because it can predict how impactful the organizational values will be on the individual’s values over time (Chatman, 1989).

Chris felt strongly about his identity. He did not want to have to conform to standards that did not fit with his own identity. He needed to be able to be himself.

I feel that, in some places, different precincts, the job itself you’re supposed to conform to a certain standard. And sometimes you don’t really agree with that all the time because that is not who you are. So, in doing a job, you don’t wanna lose your identity. I think I’m a very strong individual and don’t really care for what people have to say or what they think, to the point, where it makes me wanna change who I am as a person, I think I am great how I am. (Chris)

JB added how important it was to be himself.

I believe I can be myself; I just don’t believe that you’re meant to . . . Not everybody’s your friend. Whether it be internally or externally. You can intervene with people on the street that you stop from doing something, and they may come back years later, and say “thank you for doing that for me, you saved my life.” Or you might intervene with people that might want to put a death threat on you. Even internally, you could be yourself, and just do what you gotta do, and there are people that are gonna gravitate to you, and there are people that are not gonna
like you for being good-looking, ugly, working hard, not working hard, you know, it just really depends, but for myself, I can be, I know I can be myself, because at the end of the day, being anybody else, wouldn’t be the reason why I took this job. (JB)

Doctor expressed with pride, his individualism, and when asked how he described himself, he reported he could be both Black and a police officer. Both are not mutually exclusive. “You can always be yourself. You can never let somebody change you. You have to be yourself. I am Black, and I’m a cop” (Doctor). Binary described himself in relation to what he can do rather than what he looks like “I am a complete nerd. I’m horrible, and everybody knows it too. It’s like I can’t even hide it, you know? I mean I’m telling you I’m like the computer person inside the NYPD” (Binary).

AT agreed: “whatever you are, whoever you are, you can just be yourself, like I’ve been myself, so, yeah. I like to play around. I just come to work and just play around, like cracking jokes and we laugh and everything.” John Doe stated:

Yeah, I do think that I can be myself and stuff like that, for the most part. Well throughout my precinct, I can’t speak for others, but I feel as if, like, I’m me no matter what. I will be the person that I’m gonna be, and that’s how I was raised and, if you don’t like it, I can’t really change who I, whom I grew up to be, you know. (John Doe)

Jack and TG echoed the sentiments of individuality and were adamant nothing would change them. “Don’t assume because I am a cop all my ways have changed – I was born and raised a certain way, and that is always going to stick with me” (Jack). TG
reported that he does not try to “fit in” with others in the police department, he stated he
is true to his identity.

Fitting in, like fit in with the NYPD to me is you have to be part of a clique or
something. You have to be on the same page. You can’t have your own agenda,
your own ideas, you have to be on the same page. So, I don’t think I ever tried to
fit in. Because, as I said, it’s going to go a different way because I see how they
police, and I don’t agree. I don’t agree with how they police. So, I never tried to
fit in because I’m from the community that they’re policing. I come to work, and I
show up, uniform squared away. And there is a job, I go to it, and I go home. I
don’t do anything in between. I don’t try to show off. I don’t try to make friends. I
don’t . . . Just come in and go home. (TG)

All participants had strong feelings about their personal identities. They felt they
had to stay true to who they were and were not going to change, just to fit in. Their racial
identities absolutely influenced their perception of fit within the NYPD.

The second theme that arose for question 2 was identification of the impact on the
Black community. The participants’ responses demonstrated a sense of awareness of the
Black community and their responsibility to help that community. They believed being
Black made them appear to be relatable by the community. Binary shared his thoughts
on how Blacks in his community saw him. He felt other Blacks were more comfortable
speaking to a Black officer.

It’s very easy for me to communicate with these guys because we have a common
ground, they know that I’m Black, they’re Black, they’re probably come straight
to me than anybody else and start talking to me. I mean they do like that. They
look at a White officer and say “you know what, this guy doesn’t understand me. Let me just go to the Black officer; he probably understands what I’m going through.” (Binary)

Jack commented on how being Black helped in the community:

I am always a Black first because I was Black before I became a cop- I always tell people I have only been an officer for 2 years, but I have been Black my whole life. As a Black cop, we get approached more by the community than those that are White because of the fact that we are Black. For the community, it matters that we are Black. People feel more comfortable around people that are similar to them. I became a police officer to help, especially because of the Black race- cops don’t understand us, the cops don’t understand- it’s getting to a point where there is a lot of talking and no action. So, I felt I can – being a Black cop I can bridge that gap between you know Blacks and the police. (Jack)

John Doe did not believe it mattered – as much as character and personality, however, he did perceive that being African American made him more relatable to the African American community. John Doe said:

I don’t think it matters as long you are positive, respectful, and you treat everybody fairly. It just doesn’t matter, but I also feel like African Americans can be a hope only in the sense of that . . . it’s like different cultures and stuff like that and like a Spanish person will be able to understand a Spanish person better, and they’ll be able to know how to speak so that they know what they like. I feel like being African American; it kind of helps me understand, like, what other people
are going through. Yeah, for the most part, I understand the culture of African Americans, and I understand, where they come from. (John Doe)

AT made these points about his experiences. Agreeing with the other officers, he also felt that other African Americans, or people of color, have a greater comfort level in dealing with him because he is Black. There was a connection.

I would say, for example; I am Black, Haitian, speak Creole from Haiti, most of Queens has this . . . Like this is who you are, this is what life brought you. Just be yourself. Like when you go to a job sometimes, you understand where the person’s coming from. You’ve dealt with this situation better. I feel like to me; this is what they appreciate. It helps me understand somebody else who probably, you know, my complexion, who goes through the same thing that I do. It’s like, I’ve been to places, I’ve been to jobs before and the person was like, “Oh, thank God you’re Black!” But then, again, that’s their assumption. That’s their way of feeling. But, hey, I feel I could relate more to this guy. Sometimes it’s like what I’m saying to them is no different than what the other person’s color would tell them. Like if a White person would say it, but they feel like it’s better if they hear it from me. (AT)

Similar to most of his peers, #7 agreed that being Black made him relatable.

Like I said, trying to go there and if I could make a difference and help people out and have a positive impact on people, they see officers like me that they can relate to and that they know that’s not gonna just judge them, just because of how they look, or whatever. Where they live and everything like that. In terms of if they see me and they see another officer that doesn’t look like them- I think that
they would maybe want to come and talk to me and explain their story or situation and try to reach out to me. (#7)

For Doctor, being African American and from the city, made an individual better at handling certain community situations “an African American male, who lives in the city, you know, and works as an officer would have a better experience in handling, certain situations” (Doctor). Similarly, JB believed minorities are good for the department:

I think in general, regardless of whether it’s African American, I think being a minority is a positive thing because you’re working up the ranks. The way I look at it, especially as African American, I can do the best that I can to be a good influence. (JB)

Chris commented on the fact that his race made a difference to his White colleagues by saying “I think they definitely see that African Americans are people.” TG recounted a story of picking a Black woman to be his partner, he later said it didn’t work out, but when he picked her, he thought it would make a difference.

I could’ve picked this White guy I connected with, but I wanted to be with a Black officer. Because this is a Black community, I think we could help each other out and help the community. But it didn’t go that way. (TG)

When asked why he became a police officer despite his negative experiences with police TG stated:

Because the community deserves to know that we are all not the same. We’re not the same. And that’s how I interact with the community. There will be guys on the corner, and I will just go ahead and talk to them. I wouldn’t tell them to move
because to me there is no reason they should move because I like to tell people their rights and I’m not going to enforce, tell people to move. Because when I was younger, I was the one hanging out on that corner. (TG)

All the officers felt they made a positive impact on the Black community. They related to the people in their communities and felt a connection to them.

The third theme for question 2 which emerged from the participants when asked the question “describe to me what it is like being a Black cop,” demonstrated that the participants were aware there were racial differences in this organization, but they expressed that this did not hinder them in selecting the job. These racial differences served as motivators to performing their jobs differently.

Chris responded by illustrating the bias between Black and White males in the hiring process.

I feel like White males are not held to the same standards as a Black person when it comes to the hiring process. I think some things get overlooked if they’re Caucasian, and I think that they don’t know when they’re Black. They’re more scrutinized. (Chris)

Binary agreed with Chris’s observation.

I definitely do believe that humans are naturally racist or . . . Humans are naturally biased in some type of form or way. So, if they see a White individual applying for a police officer, they might favor them more than an African American or a Hispanic, just because of the fact that,” oh why are you trying to apply to be a police officer? Do you have bad intentions? Do you have negative intentions?” Like I know that you did something in
the past, whereas if you are the White individual you probably already assumed that they grew up in a suburban neighborhood, so you don’t have anything to prove to me. (Binary)

For other participants, diversity was more about networking and diversifying the police department. “I believe there’s equal opportunity, but at the end of the day, I feel like it’s whom you know, it’s not what you know” (#7). Doctor responded by saying the “job is predominantly White. You can go right now, above a Captain, you the deputy chief, like those rankings, all the way up – you will predominantly see them more White” (Doctor). “I feel like racism plays a part in how far we can go. That’s not the entire reason of someone being held back; sometimes it is your own individual choices of the person” (Jack).

TG stated he had witnessed it first hand, as he related the story he continuously said, “I have stories,” and his tone was angry as he spoke about the disparity in policing between Caucasians and African Americans. TG was the participant who initially wanted to apply to another state police agency, not the NYPD. He did not feel the NYPD was selective enough in their hiring process.

I sit in the car with these officers, and as soon as a Black male comes over, they’re on high alert. They see a car with young Black men, its “oh, let’s stop them.” For what? What are they doing? So, I don’t police the same way. (TG) He went on to say this regarding the purpose of the NYPD:

I think our purpose; I’m not even going to lie to you, is to criminalize the community, and criminalize minorities because, I not saying that’s what they’re doing, but in certain areas, that’s what they want officers to be doing. So, they
want you, if a 15-year old is seen smoking, they want you to enforce that. Some ends in arrests. Later on, he has been stamped. He has a record now. That’s going to hold him back in the future, as opposed to a suburban area where mostly White people are free to smoke whatever they want there, and White officers are going to respond, see them smoking, and just tell them to go home. (TG)

The participants clearly established that racial differences impacted their work in the NYPD. They perceived differences in policing practices and standards.

Next, the fourth theme that emerged from question 2 was the influence of negative experiences on the officers. Four of the participants reported they did not have negative experiences with Black or White police officers prior to becoming police officers. However, five reported they had negative experiences with the police prior to becoming a police officer, and this only helped them become better police officers. “It didn’t change my view of police officers. It just made me know what not to do when I become one and how not to act because perception is everything. Perception can be somebody’s reality” (Chris). In response to how his negative experiences influenced his career decision, #7 noted that he took more time in deciding to be a police officer.

Well, in terms of becoming a police officer, it, I guess I could say [it] prolonged my decision in terms of not wanting to be an officer. But now I go out there every day and do what I do. I don’t look at anybody and profile. I don’t profile. I treat everybody the same way. I don’t give anybody any different attitude. I give everybody the same respect. (#7)

AT stated that his past influenced how he handled situations as a police officer:
It’s like you know how you felt when that happened to you, so when you do it to another . . . when something like this happens to a person, you approach things differently. Because of your past, like I wouldn’t want to do the same thing to another person. So for example, if I pull you over, let’s just say you’re blasting your music. And I pull you over. I’ll tell you the reason why I stopped you because you’re blasting your music. It’s too loud, which is a ticket. But I don’t make things up like “oh, your car fit the description of something.” I don’t do things like that. There are no reasons for me to lie to you. (AT)

Binary described a negative encounter he experienced at the age of 15:

“Let me see your hands, let me see your hands,” and I’m like “all right cool, I’ll let you see my hands.” It’s like kind of scary as a kid. A preteen. So, we let them see our hands, and they frisked us, and they let us know that “all is right, cool.” They actually told us that, “three people just committed an armed robbery fitting your description. I guess they committed an armed robbery that fit your description running this direction.” They actually told us that, which is actually pretty good. But in my mind, at the time I was like this kind of sucks because I’m a Black person you know, and I’m a person that . . . You know all Blacks don’t look alike. You know what, we don’t all look alike. So why would you blame me for a crime that I didn’t do? (Binary)

Participant Binary further stated the following regarding what he told his police officer father when he went home. After talking to his father, he better understood the perspective of the police officer who had stopped him.
The fact is that he’d done it before too, just because of the fact that it’s a . . .

The description comes over, and they look for the first person that they see matching pretty much almost the same exact by clothing and skin color, and you know how many people are with them. I knew what he was talking about because its winter time and you know me and my brother is like, you know what, if you think back to like 6 months prior to that stop, I’m like “yo dad, I want a North Face coat. My brother’s saying, “I want a North Face coat too,” so we both got a North Face coat. My cousin is coming along; we were going to the movies, he gets in a North Face coat too. So, it’s like everybody in the Bronx has a North Face coat. (Binary)

TG had more than one negative experience that impacted him. He shared this:

I remember when something happened, I think I was 14 or 15. I lived in a bad neighborhood, so I guess somebody, they were fighting or something. I don’t know what happened. And I’m just standing there looking. And the cop just punched me. Everybody starts running, and he just punched me. And I started running. I don’t know what happened, but he just hit me.

TG recounted another time, “I remember just walking up the block. Officers would just run down on me and search, frisk me. It would take like three seconds. They would jump out on me and frisk me, and go back in their car.”

Finally, the last theme from question 2, concerning autonomy, documented that the participants often referred to individualism and autonomy when referring to their choice of becoming a police officer or choosing a career. The R/CID model refers to individuals that express being focused on individual autonomy and self-expression, while
feeling a strong sense of responsibility to eliminate oppression in constructive ways, as being in the *integrative awareness* stage (Sue & Sue, 1990, 2008). “I’m more open to things that most people are” (about his career choice) (John Doe).

The participants shared their thoughts on how they follow the guidelines, but have the freedom to do things in their own way within those guidelines. JB shared: “I think that maybe some African Americans don’t like this job because maybe of the certain persona of the police, or maybe they’re just not interested. It all depends on the person.” Doctor shared this: “The job is, basically telling you, there are guidelines that you have to abide by, but you do it in your own way because like I said, everybody’s different, so they have different ways of doing certain things.” (Doctor)

AT stated that “Every cop is different. You work with one person; it’s different from working with another person.” AT also said in reference to racism that it was more of a “personal assumption.”

There’s racism. This is why I can’t do this,” but they don’t even get up and do it. Because like, I have the same opportunity as someone who was born here, and I’m coming from Haiti, and I became a police officer. So, if you were born here, then you got another excuse. But if you don’t want to do it because you assume that “hey I’m Black. I can’t do it.” Because if you just get up, you take the test and your record is clean, and you never did anything, and you feel like. “They tell me I can’t do it.” Then you can say these things” (in reference to racism). (AT) Chris made an important point regarding why African American males do not wish to pursue a career in policing. He stated “I think Black men don’t always want the
job. They don’t wanna be perceived as sellouts to their counterparts.” When asked by the researcher why this didn’t happen to him he responded:

I’m a strong individual and I kinda just, what I want I want. It's not for anybody else. And I’m not saying that I could care less what somebody thinks, but I’m more concerned with my happiness and my self- preservation than looking good in somebody’s eyes. (Chris)

JB echoed the same sentiments with regards to race versus autonomy:

So, it really depends on the person; I really don’t believe it depends on the race, at all. It just depends on the person. Everybody has a calling, and not everybody is meant to be a chief. Not everybody’s meant to be a leader. Not everybody’s meant to be a boss. Not everybody’s meant to be a detective, or even be in a police department. (JB)

TG stated (when asked if he is perceived by the community to be more effective because he is Black):

I can tell you this, off duty I don’t carry my gun. I don’t carry my gun because I would hate to be in a situation when I would have to provide enforcement or shooting, and they just see me as a Black male with a hoodie, and that’ll be me as an officer. And the officer responding shoots me. So, people are like, “why don’t you carry a gun?” I was like “I don’t want none of you motherfuckers shooting me. You guys are not shooting me.” He further stated, “and without the uniform, I’m just a Black man with a gun. That uniform protects me. (TG)
Most participants also highlighted the theme of autonomy in response to the written reflection, in the advice they would offer Barry, 17-year old African American male who had negative experiences with the police.

I would tell him that becoming a police officer, like several other jobs and careers is kinda of like a calling. So, you honestly deeply know inside whether it’s something that you really want to do or not. I feel like you want the support of your family that you don’t have, and you don’t necessarily need all the support from other people to do what it is that you want to do in life. At least for me, I didn’t, and don’t. I feel that it’s a great career choice. I feel like the negative experiences you’ve had can help you to become a better police officer than the people that you’ve had those negative experiences with, which can ultimately shape you to be a fantastic police officer nonetheless. (Chis)

Doctor added these thoughts on the topic:

Family probably is not gonna support him because of it, but at the end of the day, the family’s not gonna be paying the bills. If being a police officer is something that you want to do, then you know, go and achieve it. Go take your test and everything. There are a few bad apples, but don’t let that stop you because there is a lot more good people. (Doctor)

AT had this advice for the young male:

I would say that he could do whatever he felt like doing. If that’s what you love to do just do it. And as far as having a negative experience with the police, it’s like once you become a police officer, you will understand why at the time when he
did this, they went after you that way. And if your family doesn’t support you, I
would say still do it because, you know, that’s your life, your decision. You are
going to have to live with the choice you made. (AT)

JB echoed the same sentiments to Barry:

I would tell him to follow his heart, do what he believes will make him happy,
and at the end of the day, regardless of whatever he decides, to become a police
officer, or not to become a police officer, as long as he’s staying focused on one
particular goal, he will be okay. (JB)

Given research question 2 – Does racial identity influence the perception of fit for
African American male police in the NYPD? – it was evident that racial identity had
significant impact on the participants and their perception of fit as NYPD police officers.
The participants shared how their self-identity influenced how they perceived their
relationships with the community and how they chose to work within the culture of the
NYPD.

**Research question 3.** Research question 3 asked: What individual factors
influence African American males to become police officers in the NYPD? The third and
final category, individual factors, generated two themes, career choice, and benefits.

Table 4.5 indicates which officers discussed these factors.

Table 4.5

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<th>Research Question 3- Theme and Frequency</th>
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<tr>
<td>Theme</td>
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<td>Career Choice</td>
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Benefits

For some of the participants, a contributing factor to selecting the NYPD was that it was a career choice versus just a job. They sought to establish a career with benefits. JB had this to say:

I value the fact that with the way this job is set up, I’ll hopefully be able to take care of my family in the near future, and I’ll be able to create a better living for myself. My perception was based on me having a vision, but not necessarily knowing what’s gonna be at the end of the rope. Just because I joined the NYPD, doesn’t mean I’m gonna stay with the NYPD. I know this is a stepping stone for me to where I need. (JB)

AT related the story of telling his friends about becoming a police officer and the fact that he had always expressed to them the fact he wanted a career. AT had these comments:

When he heard that I got that news, he was excited for me. When I told other people, it was like “wow, congratulations, you’ve made it.” Because they knew how bad I wanted to make a career decision like, “Oh, I want to have a career already.” And they were really happy for me. (AT)

In addition, for two of the participants, the benefits were important and what made the job a “good job” (TG). Participant #7 stated in terms of what influenced him to become a police officer, “Just to become an officer, to be on the force. To help others, the benefits, the stability, and thinking about when I retire, pension and everything after that” (#7). TG agreed “the good is the benefits. It’s the career.”

Summary of Results
Chapter 4 presented the results based on the research questions that guided this qualitative phenomenological study. The findings consist of data gathered through a demographic form, semi-structured interviews consisting of open-ended questions, and a written reflection which became an oral reflection. The participants were nine Black/African American NYPD police patrol officers with 6 years or less as a police officer in the NYPD.

The findings emerged based on the participants’ responses to whether the perception of fit influenced their decision to become police officers in the NYPD; in addition, whether racial identity influenced that decision. Five major themes emerged from the category of values with three subthemes. Five themes emerged from the second category – self-identity and two major themes arose from the third category of individual factors. The frequencies of the respondents’ answers determined whether the theme was considered major or a sub-theme. Most of the themes that emerged were consistent with the Chapter 2 literature review, which will be further discussed in Chapter 5. In addition, Chapter 5 will cover the limitations of the study and implications and recommendations for future research.
Chapter 5: Discussion

Introduction

The purpose of this phenomenological qualitative study was to explore the influence of the perception of fit (agreement between individual values and organizational values) of nine Black male police officers on their decision to become police officers in the NYPD. Additionally, this study set out to examine whether racial identity, as an extension of individual values, impacted the career choice of African American males in policing. In 2015, then Commissioner Bratton of the NYPD, called for an examination of the hiring processes involving African American males. He reported that the NYPD was struggling to retain qualified African Americans in the hiring process (Bratton, 2015). In late 2014, a maelstrom ensued over several police killings of unarmed Black male civilians, reminiscent of past times in our history. Also, reminiscent of the past was the call to diversify the police departments across the country (Brunson & Gau, 2015; Dulaney, 1996; Kerner Commission, 1969). As a result, experts and researchers attributed the lack of Black male representation on police forces across the country, on past and current events, which caused Black citizens to question police legitimacy and police allegiances to their community (Brunson & Gau, 2015; Hall, Hall, & Perry, 2016; Ramsey & Robinson, 2015).

According to the Lee et al. (2010) study, the social distance and the controversial nature of the relationship between the police and African Americans is an integrated part of their ethnic and racial identity. To determine the influence of value congruence
between the individual and the organization, and the influence of racial identity on the perception of fit on career selection of African American males, a qualitative methodology was used, guided by the theoretical frameworks of person-organization fit theory and racial/cultural identity development model. The semi-structured interviews examined the research questions:

1. Does the perception of fit influence the decision of African American police officers to become police officers in the NYPD?
2. Does racial identity influence the perception of fit for African American male police in the NYPD?
3. What individual factors influence African American males to become police officers in the NYPD?

This study added to the recent small body of literature related to police career choice addressing the underrepresentation of minorities in police departments (Foley et al., 2008; Raganella & White, 2004; Todak, 2017; White et al., 2010). Additionally, this current study addressed racial identity and its influence on career choice for African American males. Previous studies related to the career choice of law enforcement employed quantitative methodology using Lester’s (1983) survey (Foley et al., 2007; Lester, 1983; Raganella & White (2004); White et al., 2010). The results varied in each study. However the reasons minority officers pursued a career in law enforcement were much the same as White officers’ motivations (Raganella & White, 2004; White et al., 2010). Raganella and White (2004) indicated that the top reasons for pursuing a career for Black officers were (a) a desire to help others, (b) job security, (c) employment benefits, and (d) opportunities for career advancement. White et al. (2010) reexamined
those motivating factors with 22 Black officers and results were slightly different. White et al. (2010) found these: (a) job security, (b) early retirement, and (c) opportunities for career advancement, scored slightly higher than job benefits and the opportunity to help others.

As noted in Chapter 1, there is limited qualitative studies that give voice to the African American police officer since most studies focus on African American males as consumers of the criminal justice system, rather than partners in the pursuit of justice (Alex, 1969; Leinen, 1984; Moskos, 2008; Wilson & Wilson, 2014). However, the existing literature focuses on the conditions of police officers once they have chosen the career of policing (Alex, 1969; Leinen, 1984; Moskos, 2008; Wilson & Wilson, 2014). This study focused on the perspective of African American males regarding value congruence and racial identity when choosing a career in policing.

These perspectives are valuable to provide insight on the determining factors of African American males when choosing a career in policing. This study also adds to the P-O fit literature because the broadness of the definition of P-O fit lends itself to oversimplification of the complex decision of an applicant’s P-O fit perception during the recruitment process, which requires the applicant to gather information and form evolving perceptions (Swider et al., 2015). According to Swider et al. (2015), the existing literature on P-O fit focuses on the perception of applicants who perceive high levels of overall P-O fit with an organization at a given point in time, but much less is known about when and how the applicants develop and modify their perceptions over the course of recruitment. Although this study does not focus exclusively on recruitment, it does
incorporate questions regarding the perception of fit prior to job selection by the participants.

Implications of Findings

The data collected from semi-structured interviews using open-ended questions generated three categories, 10 themes, and two subthemes. The themes were divided into categories of (a) values, (b) self-identity, and (c) individual factors.

Values. The first research question asked: Does the perception of fit influence the decision of African American police officers to become police officers in the NYPD? Elements that were important to the officers were categorized as values – these were the components identified by the officers as being important to them. Five major themes and three major subthemes emerged from this category.

Theme 1: a desire to help others. The participants mentioned the main reason for becoming a police officer was to help others. Most participants perceived the profession of policing as a calling; they valued the idea of helping others, and the NYPD afforded them the opportunity to fulfill that calling. Consistent with the previous quantitative studies related to a policing career choice, the participants believed the nature of the job was the main reason for choosing the career of law enforcement (Foley et al., 2007; Lester, 1983; Raganella & White, 2004; White et al., 2010). Some participants used the words love to describe what they valued most about being a police officer.

Brunson and Gau (2015) described those who are attracted to the occupation of policing as being a “non-random segment of the population,” due to the nature of the job. They further reported that individuals who sought a career in policing, regardless of their race or ethnicity, are qualitatively different from those who do not (Brunson & Gau, 2015
p. 235). Notably, Moskos’s (2008) qualitative study revealed that Black officers were more attracted to the job because of the opportunity to do good. The data revealed that 83% of the Black officers in Moskos’s study listed the “chance to help people” as an important factor for becoming a cop (Moskos, 2008 p. 65). The results of this study are aligned with previous research on why Black officers are attracted to police work. The goal of doing good and helping others was consistent.

**Theme 2: relationships.** Most participants described a relationship with a Black police officer or police officers, prior to selecting the job of policing, which provided a mentorship that allowed them to understand the job description. This finding is consistent with the literature regarding the recruitment of African American males in the police department. Wilson et al. (2013) suggested that the recruitment of Blacks and other racial minority groups has a lot to do with community relations. Moreover, Wilson et al. (2013) explained that when citizens see diversity in their police departments, they have greater confidence that officers understand their problems and concerns.

Jackson et al. (1991) noted that job seekers find that relational demography to others in the organization provides the benefits of communication and liking, and these job seekers have a greater perception of fit. Relational demography is based on likeness in experiences stemming from many demographic attributes such as age, gender, race, educational level, and social-economic status (Jackson et al., 1991). Hence, the subthemes relationship with investigator and family at work both are consistent with the hypothesis generated by Jackson et al. (1991). Some of the participants in different precincts reported having a more cohesive relationship with their colleagues and describing it as a family. The two participants who were in the majority White precincts
(Chris and TG) did not make this observation related to the relationship with colleagues at work.

Notably, in the study by Cable and Judge (1996), the relationship with the recruiter was examined to measure the degree of person-organization fit, as an essential aspect of career selection, since applicants have little opportunities to learn about organizations prior to working there. Although the recruiter in the police department is not the same as the investigator, the findings suggest that the relationship between the investigator and the participant does contribute to the perception of fit for police officers, as illustrated by the words of the participants. Most of the participants stated that the relationship with their investigator was positive, and even described them as instrumental in getting the job.

This relationship could be considered consistent with increased perceived person-organization fit since the investigators become organizational representatives encouraging the participants. The investigators transmit signals of persistence and acceptance, which in turn, help the participants judge the perception of fit (Cable & Judge, 1996). Additionally, part of the hiring process of policing requires extensive interaction with the investigator, as they are gathering paperwork and information for the background investigation. The participants reported this hiring process taking between 1 year and 3 years before they were hired. It should be noted that the P-O fit of the participant did not change during this time, as evidenced by the career choice made.

Critical to the process of selecting a career is the process by which individuals learn and understand the norms, values, and expected behavior of members of the organization; this is known as socialization (Chatman, 1989). This researcher described
socialization as activities and programs such as mentorship programs, social and recreational events, and mentor relationships that contribute to the person-organization fit. Only two participants described a formal program which taught them how things were done and provided them with certain informal training regarding norms and values. Both participants acknowledged these programs were instrumental in teaching them the ways of the police department and allowing them to the network prior to selecting the job.

**Theme 3: job opportunities**: The participants of the study perceived the NYPD as providing an opportunity for career advancement. Career advancement, as a reason for choosing a career in policing, was confirmatory of previous studies (Foley et al., 2007; Raganella & White, 2004; White et al., 2010). Career advancement scored within the top five reasons for choosing a career in policing for Black officers. This is contrary to the Wilson and Wilson (2014) study where African American officers in a small police agency perceived there were fewer opportunities for advancement and gaining promotions. The participants expressed feelings of disparity when it came to special duty assignments and other duties viewed as preferable to routine patrol work (Wilson & Wilson, 2014). Contrary to these findings, participants in this current study reported that because the NYPD was a larger agency, they felt the opportunities were equal when it came to promotional positions. However, the officers in this study did acknowledge that opportunities were also made available to those that network and have cohesive relationships within the department.

**Theme 4 and theme 5: impact on their community and community relations**: Most of the participants responded to the question of what they perceived the NYPD values as an organizational value, by identifying community relations. In regard to how
they fit with this organizational value, the participants responded by saying they believe they make an impact because they understand the community, since they come from New York City. These themes are interrelated because the perception of fit is clearly illustrated by the interplay between both themes. Chatman (1989) suggested that strong organizational values are widely shared, and defined as strong cultures in firms (Chatman, 1989; Deal & Kennedy, 1982). Additionally, Chatman (1989) noted that, to determine the effects the organizational value will have on the individual, the extent of the agreement must be determined. Some participants in this study were confident that they understood the region of New York City and it was the reason why they chose to be in the NYPD, as opposed to another neighboring police agency. These findings are also consistent with the previous research related to African American police officers being more optimistic about community policing programs and improving neighborhood conditions than their White counterparts (Boyd, 2010; Lurigio & Skogan, 2000).

**Self-identity.** The utilization of the theoretical perspective of the racial-cultural/identity development model provided the basis for the following findings. Research question 2 explored whether racial identity influences the perception of fit for African American males in the NYPD. The literature related to person-organization fit theory acknowledges that in the context of organizational entry it is important to determine if the individual’s values interact with the organizational culture, to predict their subsequent selection of the organization (Cable & Judge, 1996; Chatman, 1991). Participants described one of the factors that influence the selection of a policing career was the negative experiences they had prior to joining the police department, due to their race. Five major themes emerged from this category.
Theme 1: “you don’t want to lose your identity.” The phrase was taken verbatim from one of the participant’s words. Participants in this study continuously reference the salience of their identity over fitting in within the organization. According to the R/CID, the five stages of development explain the behavior and attitudes that oppressed people experience as they struggle to understand themselves in terms of their own culture and the dominant culture (Sue & Sue, 2008). Most of the participants valued a sense of self that characterizes the integrative awareness stage of the model. In this stage, individuals feel a strong sense of pride of their cultural group without having to accept the group’s values. Participants expressed feeling comfortable with being individuals at work and not changing for the organization. In the integrative awareness stage, the model suggests that individuals develop a strong sense of self-worth and confidence. The participants shared a positive self-image that includes racial pride in identity and culture that is characterized by this stage (Sue & Sue, 2008).

Theme 2: impact on the Black community. All the participant felt a sense of responsibility for their cultural community. Participants felt that because they were Black, they were perceived by the community to be more valuable. Consistent with the findings of the Wilson and Wilson (2014) study of African American police officers, the findings revealed that the officers felt they were worth more, and valued more, by members of their own culture. According to Sue and Sue (2008), in the integrative awareness stage, individuals feel a strong sense of pride of their cultural group without having to accept the group’s values. In this stage, (which was characteristic of the participants in the study) the individual has strong feelings of empathy with the group experience, to the extent they feel they must behave in a positive way to affect societal
and community change. In reference to the issues between the Black community and police, the participants felt that they need to be a part of the solution. Therefore they joined the police department.

In the interactive model of P-O fit, the impact of the individual on the situation is considered when determining if the model is complete. Consistent with the literature on P-O fit, where individuals choose their situations because it challenges them, the participants have chosen their situation of becoming police officers (Chatman, 1989). According to Chatman (1989), there is also evidence to suggest that individuals change situations. Individuals can influence their jobs more than jobs can influence individuals (Chatman, 1989). According to the research, individuals with more intellectual complexity can enhance the complexity of their work. The participants in this study believed that joining the police department was addressing the problems between the community and law enforcement. They acknowledged these problems exist; however, being part of the solution means being proactive, rather than reactive.

Policing literature also acknowledges that more Black officers may make a difference in police practices, as further noted here. Nicholson-Crotty et al. (2017) acknowledged that there is evidence to suggest that a higher percentage of African American officers in larger police departments (where there is already a high percentage of African American police officers) could mean that the Black officers are more inclined to assume a minority advocacy role.

**Theme 3: racial differences.** Another prominent theme regarding race was the acknowledgment by participants that there is a racial disparity in the treatment of African Americans and their White counterparts by the organization. While the participants
acknowledge the disparity, this did not hinder them from selecting the career of law enforcement. The R/CID recognizes this behavior as part of the integrative awareness stage (Sue & Sue, 2008). In this stage, individuals are aware of the racism and oppression faced by individuals of the same group, but feel a sense of responsibility to eradicate oppression in any form (Sue & Sue, 1990, 2008).

**Theme 4: negative experiences.** The value of having had a previous negative experience for some of the participants was that it allowed them to empathize with the residents of their community. This finding is consistent with previous research (Barlow & Barlow, 2002; Campion, 2016). According to Barlow and Barlow (2002), having lived the experience of racial profiling provides the Black officer with a greater level of understanding and allows them to cope adequately. In Campion (2016), the lived experiences of the criminal justice students influenced the desire to change the criminal justice system and increased their desire to choose the career of policing. The participants in this study reported similar attitudes toward these negative experiences. Most participants underscored that these experiences taught them “what not to do” as a police officer (#7; Chris).

However, contrary to previous findings regarding negative experiences of African Americans with the police dissuading them from choosing a career in policing, the participants in this study selected a career in policing to perform the job differently (Conti & Doreian, 2014; Lord & Friday, 2003; Tartaro & Krimmel, 2003). Conti and Doreian (2014) asserted that the negative experiences of African American males were a deterrent to the recruiting of African Americans in the police department; a sentiment echoed by a few participants “why do you think the police department has difficulty recruiting
African American males?” The participants also cited the negative stigma that police officers receive from the media.

**Theme 5: autonomy.** The participants expressed the individualism and autonomy characterized by those individuals in the integrative awareness stage. According to Sue and Sue (2008), individuals in this stage possess more control and flexibility of their circumstances. The person develops a high sense of autonomy. The individual becomes multicultural (accepting the good and bad of the dominant culture), without a sense of having sold out one’s integrity. The participants perceived themselves as autonomous individuals who have a unique level of identity – individual identity, racial-cultural identity, and identity as members of the human race (universal level of identity) (Sue & Sue, 2008).

**Individual factors.** A few participants identified other factors that influenced their choice of policing as a career. The identified theme fell under career choice and benefits. Some participants acknowledged that there were multiple reasons for choosing a career in policing, specifically, that it allowed for career development, which leads to stability and benefits over time. White et al. (2010) also reported that Blacks ranked this idea as one of the top five reasons for selecting a career in policing. A notable shift in the ranking of “altruistic reasons to more practical reasons” had occurred in ranking from the Raganella and White (2004) study, to the White et al. (2010) study. White et al. (2010) contended that the shift could be related to the passage of time and the maturity of the officer. Most of the participants in this study who reported these practical reasons were in their 30s and had 3 years or more in the police department. According to White et al. (2010), officers that enter the police department have idealistic hopes regarding their
ability to help others. Over time, this perspective likely shifts with the everyday realities of the job (revolving door, criminal justice system, bureaucratic red tape, etc.) to a more realistic perception of the profession (White et al., 2010).

Limitations

There are several limitations that should be considered when interpreting these findings. However, there is a strength that should be mentioned in this study. The sample of individuals were Black police officers, while previous qualitative studies on police career selection have only been conducted with students (Campion, 2016; Lord & Friday, 2003; Tartaro & Krimmel, 2003; Todak, 2017). The first limitation is that the study is limited to one police department – the NYPD. While the concentrated focus on one police department allowed for a thorough qualitative analysis of the data, the generalizability is limited. The NYPD is one of the largest and most diverse police departments in the country. New York City is 25% Black, although the department does report struggling to recruit, and thus, the pool of applicants is larger than smaller police departments (U.S. Census, 2010).

The background for this research centered on the increasing and long-lasting recommendation to recruit African Americans to the police department. However, the use of only men poses a unique limitation on the ability to understand the perception of the police department on the career selecting decision, as being unique to men. Future research should address the females’ perception of fit with the police department.

Another limitation was that the timing for this study coincided with the holidays. The police officers were working overtime for the Thanksgiving parade and Christmas holiday. As a result of this timing, eight interviews were conducted over the phone. In-
person interviews may have added more depth to this study. It is important to note, that two of the research participants in this study were former students in the researcher’s former position as the director of a college criminal justice program.

The final limitation is related to the theoretical framework of P-O fit in the organizational entry phase. Qualitative analysis requires the goal of generalizability to be relinquished in favor of greater in-depth analysis. Nevertheless, the findings from this study offer a testable, theoretical background for quantitative research. Implications for future studies are discussed.

Recommendations

This section contains a discussion of recommendations for future research and the practice of recruitment of African Americans in the police department. There are several recommendations as a result of the findings. This study sought to add to the body of literature by qualitatively examining how the perceptions of P-O fit and racial identity as an aspect of fit, influenced the career choice of African American males in the police department. The recommendations include developing mentorship programs and recruitment strategies that address the relationship between the community and the police, and benefit from the altruistic reasons individuals enter the police department. Efforts to recruit African American males should highlight the reason African American males are entering the police department – the desire to help others. The study should be repeated after the participants have 10 years or more on the job, in order to compare the results and determine how the job has influenced the values of the participants.

Mentorship program. Although some participants did not have negative experiences with police officers, the majority reported having had negative experiences.
Despite the mention of summer youth programs in the literature, only two participants encountered socialization programs. The negative experiences served the officers in developing a level of empathy and relatability toward the community. The findings also reveal that some of these negative experiences were reconciled by the positive mentorship and encouragement given to the participants by senior Black police officers in their lives. The NYPD should consider developing a mentorship program in middle schools that mirror the NYPD Explorers and NYPD cadets with senior Black officers in socializing the youth to the police department. These mentorship programs should include (including all racial and ethnic backgrounds), officers that wish to serve as mentors to youth in their respective work communities, as well as ongoing training of the officers on cultural diversity and cultural competence. Consistent with the findings of Brunson and Gau (2015), it should be noted that police administrators should recognize that an officer’s race is not a substitute for training or better community recruitment.

**Recruitment.** Most of the participants were all 4-year college graduates with degrees in criminal justice. The NYPD should consider developing a collaboration with criminal justice programs in the neighborhood colleges that have a high population of minority students. The program should train, inform, and underscore the positive (and negative) aspects of a career in the police department. Once the individual graduates from the program with a post-secondary degree, they will have an established pathway to the career of policing. The program will also underscore the importance of having a clean criminal background. The participants in this study mentioned that some African Americans are deterred from the career of policing because they might believe they are not eligible, due to encounters they have had with police officers in the past.
The findings also suggest that the NYPD, as an organization, should take into account the extent the applicant perceives a match between organizational values and their own characteristics and values. The recruitment process is important, but so is the investigator as part of the hiring process. To continue to promote career commitment while the recruit awaits the hiring process, the NYPD should consider the perceived importance of the hiring investigator in the process. The findings also suggest that NYPD marketing strategies should benefit from the good aspects of the policing job, such as impacting your own community to recruit more African Americans. This finding is consistent with most studies regardless of race; individuals enter the police department because of the helping aspect of the work (Raganella & White, 2004; White et al., 2010).

**Future Research**

Future research should focus on other police departments to determine if the perception of fit for a Black police officer is attainable within smaller organizations. Related to the final limitation previously mentioned, future studies should consider surveying the police officer participants employing the organizational culture profile (OCP), used initially in Chatman’s (1989) study. It was developed expressly to assess P-O fit in an organizational entry context. With a larger sample of police officers, it will assist in making a comparison of races and ethnicities. Gathering both qualitative and quantitative data from police officers, so that their views about race and the perception of fit and values congruence can be explored, would be beneficial. This would allow for a more comprehensive study.

Another future aspect researchers should consider is examining the strength of the organizational values on the individual values over time. The P-O fit model is an
interactional model that considers the influence that people have in situations. Future research should consider reexamining the perception of fit after 10 years or more on the police department, to determine the influence of the organizational values on the individual’s values, and to determine the impact minority police officers have on the police organization.

**Conclusion**

The purpose of this study was to examine how the perception of fit (agreement between organizational values and individual values), influenced the career choice of African American males in the NYPD. Furthermore, this study explored the impact of racial identity as an element of the individual values on said career choice. While the exploratory results of the study cannot be generalized due to the qualitative design of the methodology, it is clear that Black New York males are influenced by organizational values of the NYPD and their racial identity, in selecting a career in the policing. Therefore, the study should provide a framework for use in follow-up P-O fit studies with a larger generalizable sample.

Historically, police departments have been predominantly White male organizations. It was not until the late 1800s and the early 20th century that Blacks gained access to the police department. The literature reveals that since the time of slavery, American policing had a history of subjugation and enforcement of African Americans. According to the research, over the last 50 years, policing organizations were forced through political influences, legislative and judicial mandates, to diversify police departments in an attempt to gain the trust and cooperation of African American communities. The perception of police organizations by African American communities
has been characterized by decades of struggle related to biased policing, continuous racial profiling, disrespectful encounters, and excessive and deadly force on African Americans. Researchers assert that as a result of the disharmonious relationship between the police and the African American community, challenges persist for the police organization to hire African American police officers.

The findings of this study suggest that African Americans males do perceive value congruence between their individual values and the values of the NYPD as an organization. Despite negative perceptions and encounters with police, Black males select a career in policing to help others and to become part of a perceived solution. Black police officers believe they are valuable to their community and make a difference. They believe they have a better understanding of the community than their White counterparts. Moreover, African American police officers perceive that the community values them because of this relatability.

Selecting a career in policing for African American males is a complex decision which involves an interplay between the interactive issues related to the environment and the individual, hence the selection of the P-O fit to analyze the results of this study. The interactional model lends itself to exploring the interaction between the individual values and the organizational values. Future research should consider exploring how external processes and organizational perceptions limit the selection of police careers for African Americans.
References


Contemporary Ethnography, 38(3), 409-432.


Lord, V. & Friday, P. (2003). Choosing a career in police work: A comparative study between applicants for employment with a large police department and public high


**Raganella & White 2010**


U.S. Census Bureau, 2015 need specific info link doesn’t work

https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tablesview.xhtml?src=CFA


133
# Appendix A

The Reasons Questionnaire (Lester, 1983)

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<th>Somewhat Important</th>
<th>Very Important</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Structured like the military</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Early retirement with good pay</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The excitement of the work.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. It provides an opportunity to help people in the community</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Job security</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. To fight crime</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. The profession has prestige</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. You work on your own a lot; have a good deal of autonomy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. To enforce the laws of the society</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. The job pays well</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Good companionship with your coworkers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Because you have friends/relatives who were police officers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. The job carries power and authority</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. There was a lack of other job alternatives</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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</table>
### Appendix B

Modified Version of the Reasons Questionnaire (White et al., 2010)

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<th>Somewhat Unimportant</th>
<th>Very Important</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Opportunity for advancement</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Structured like the military</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Early retirement with good pay</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The excitement of the work</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. It provides an opportunity to help people in the community</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Job security</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. To fight crime</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Profession carries prestige</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. You work on your own; have a great deal of autonomy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. To enforce the laws of society</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. The job pays well</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Good companionship with your co-workers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Because you had friends/relatives who were police officers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. The job carries and authority</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. There was a lack of other job alternatives</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. To use this job as a stepping stone to a better career</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Because it has been my lifelong dream or aspiration</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Job benefits (pension/medical)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dear Police Officers,

I am currently working on my dissertation research, which investigates the impact of racial identity on career choices of African American males pursuing a career as a police officer in the New York City Police Department. My study is explained in detail in the letter attached. Please email me back if you would like to participate in the study. Your information will be kept entirely confidential.

Thank you for your time.

Pamela Jimenez
Appendix D

Letter of Consent

Please allow me to introduce myself. My name is Pamela Jimenez, and I am a doctoral candidate at St. John Fisher College (Ed. D in Executive Leadership) (Cohort 7, Iona College, Campus, NY). My dissertation focuses on your career choice of policing. There are three main topics we will cover a) your perception of your values and the values of the NYPD, b) your recruitment and hiring experience, and c) doubts or thoughts regarding discontinuing this path of career employment.

Title of the study: Career Choices of African American Males in the New York City Police Department.

Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Shelley Jallow, phone 301-442-2621

Purpose: The purpose of this phenomenological study is to explore the factors that influence African American males to choose a career in policing considering the historical dissonance between African American males and law enforcement for New York City African American police officers.

I appreciate you taking the time to read the information regarding my study. You are eligible for this study if you identify as Black or African American male and if you have become a police officer in the NYPD within last 6 years, and if you are currently a patrol officer. The study will take place in New York City, and the method of data collection is semi-structured interviews.

I will be conducting confidential interviews, and it will take approximately 1 hour. You will be asked ten questions, and if you choose not to continue, you may withdraw as a participant at any point without penalty or job loss. The one-on-one interviews will take place at the time and place of your choosing. If you cannot make the in-person interview there is a telephone or Skype option is available. No one other than myself will have access to your name or any identifying information. There is minimal risk involved with anyone participating in this research. I will also email you a written reflection; which you may complete on your own time and email back to me within a week of the interview.

Again, all identifying information will be kept confidential; I am the only one that will have access to this information. The researcher will not collect any information related to your badge number, name, or precinct. The study is entirely voluntary, and you may withdraw at any time. You will be asked to sign this letter as written consent for your voluntary participation in the study. You may withdraw at any-time from this study without penalty or job loss. Your information may be shared with appropriate governmental authorities ONLY if you or someone else is in danger, or if we are required to do so by law. You also have the right to be informed of the results of the study. After a 3-year period, the information will be destroyed.
If you wish to participate in the study or have further questions regarding this study, please contact the researcher Pamela Jimenez at (914) 733-5557 or email me pj01492@sjfc.edu as soon as possible.

Thank you again for your attention and willingness to participate in my study. I look forward to hearing from you.

This study has been reviewed and approved by the St. John Fisher College Institutional Review Board (IRB). Concerns or complaints about this study may be addressed to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at St. John Fisher College, 3690 East Avenue, Rochester, New York, 14618, and (585) 385-8000 or by email at irb@sjfc.edu.

Participants’ Signature: __________________________ Date: __________________

Researcher’s Signature: __________________________ Date: __________________

If you have any further questions regarding this study, please contact the researcher(s) listed above. If you experience emotional or physical discomfort due to participation in this study, please contact your personal health care provider or an appropriate crisis service provider.

**You may also contact Jodi Ames-Frankel, Ph.D. is a licensed psychologist in practice in Mount Kisco, NY specializing in the treatment of trauma, grief, depression, and anxiety in individuals. She can be located at New York Center for Emotionally Focused Therapy**

352 Seventh Avenue, Suite 1005
New York NY 10001-5021
(646) 741-4873

The Institutional Review Board of St. John Fisher College has reviewed this project. For any concerns regarding this study/or if you feel that your rights as a participant (or the rights of another participant) have been violated or caused you undue distress (physical or emotional distress), please contact Jill Rathbun by phone during regular business hours at (585) 385-8012 or irb@sjfc.edu. She will contact a supervisory IRB official to assist you.

All digital audio recordings and transcriptions of interviews will be maintained using a private, locked, and password-protected file and password-protected computer stored securely in the private home of the principal researcher. Electronic files will include assigned identity codes and pseudonyms; they will not include actual names or any information that could personally identify or connect participants to this study. Other materials, including notes or paper files related to data collection and analysis, will be stored securely in unmarked boxes, locked inside a cabinet in the private home of the principal researcher. Only the researcher will have access to electronic or paper records. The digitally recorded audio data will be kept by this researcher for a period of 5 years following publication of the dissertation. Signed informed consent documents will be kept for 5 years after publication. All paper records will be cross-cut shredded and professionally delivered for incineration. Electronic records will be cleared, purged, and destroyed from the hard drive and all devices such that restoring data is not possible.
Appendix E
Demographic Questionnaire Form

Please complete by circling or filling in appropriate answer:

1. What is your age?________

2. Place of birth?_______________

3. Are you married? ___________

4. Were you married when you became a police officer? ___________

5. Have you always considered a career in policing? Yes _____ No_____

6. Are you currently employed with the NYPD? Yes_____ No_____
   a. If yes, how long? ____________

7. What is your household income?
   a. $0-$24,999
   b. $25,000-$49,999
   c. $50,000-$99,999
   d. >$100,000

8. Are any of your family members police officers? Yes _____ No_____

9. Have you ever considered any career besides policing? Yes _____ No_____
   If so, what other career did you consider?

10. What city were you raised in?
Appendix F

Research Study

Career Choices of African American Males Police Officer in the NYPD Officers.

Candidates Needed

Purpose of the study: To examine the factors that influenced the Black Male Police Officer to choose a career in policing.

Criteria:

- 6 years or less as a police officer
- Patrol officers only
- Self-identify as a Black male

Participation involves

- One hour of your time at a mutually convenient coffee shop or library
- Confidential

Contact Researcher: Pamela Jimenez

Email: Pj01492@sjfc.edu
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Question</th>
<th>Probing Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Tell me what you enjoy most about being a police officer?</td>
<td>Do you enjoy being around your colleagues?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Why did you become a police officer?</td>
<td>Describe the match between the NYPD and you? Why not state police or county police? Why not fire department?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. What influenced you to become a police officer?</td>
<td>Did you have other family members that were officers? Were you familiar with the job description of a police officer? Did you get on the NYPD website to learn about the job? Were you applying for other jobs while trying to go through the process of becoming an officer? Did your college major teach you about local law enforcement? What about the NYPD made you say this is the job for me?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Tell me about the experience of becoming a police officer?</td>
<td>Where did you get recruited as a police officer? Did NYPD recruitment staff come to your school? What was the race of the recruitment staff you encountered? Did you go to a career fair? Did you see any ads related to NYPD recruiting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Can you describe your experience with hiring process from beginning to end?</td>
<td>How long did the process take to become a police officer? Did you ever attempt to pursue another career while you were waiting to hear back? Can you describe your relationship with the investigators? How often did you communicate with the NYPD investigator during the process?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Tell me about a time you had any difficulty fitting in as a police officer?</td>
<td>Did you ever have any doubts about becoming a police officer? Do you believe racism holds African Americans back from pursuing the career they want? How would you describe your experiences with police prior to being hired by the NYPD? Do you think African Americans dislike the police?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Describe to me what it is like to be a Black cop?</td>
<td>Why do you think some African Americans do not pursue a career in policing? Do you believe the opportunities are the same for all people in the NYPD? Do you believe you can be yourself (whoever that is) at your place of work? Do you think being African American makes you a better police officer for the community you police?</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>---</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Why do you believe the police have trouble recruiting African Americans males into the police department?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Tell me about how your friends and family handle you being a police officer?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>What were your experiences with Black police officers prior to becoming a police officer?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix H

Written Reflection

Please respond to the following situation:

A 17-year old African American high school student, Barry, comes to you, while you are in the middle of patrolling in his neighborhood. You are wearing your uniform, and he asks you to help him figure out if he wants to become a police officer. He states he loves the idea of being a cop, but he also reports having had negative experiences with police officers and has limited support from his family.

What would you tell him regarding your job, his career aspirations and his lack of family support?
## Appendix I

### Interview Protocols

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Theory</th>
<th>Research Question</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Tell me what you enjoy most about being a police officer?</td>
<td>P-O Fit</td>
<td>1. Does the perception of fit influence the decision of African American males to become police officers in the NYPD?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Why did you become a police officer?</td>
<td>P-O Fit</td>
<td>1. Does the perception of fit influence the decision of African American males to become police officers in the NYPD?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Who influenced you to become a police officer?</td>
<td>P-O Fit</td>
<td>1. Does the perception of fit influence the decision of African American males to become police officers in the NYPD?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Tell me about your experience of becoming a police officer?</td>
<td>P-O Fit</td>
<td>1. Does the perception of fit influence the decision of African American males to become police officers in the NYPD?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Can you describe your experience with the hiring process from beginning to end?</td>
<td>P-O Fit</td>
<td>1. Does the perception of fit influence the decision of African American males to become police officers in the NYPD?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Tell me about a time you had any difficulty fitting in a police officer?</td>
<td>R/CID</td>
<td>2. Does racial identity influence the perception of fit for African American male police officers in the NYPD?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Describe to me what it is like to be a Black cop?</td>
<td>R/CID</td>
<td>2. Does racial identity influence the perception of fit for African American male police officers in the NYPD?</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Why do you believe the police have trouble recruiting African Americans males into the police department?</td>
<td>R/CID</td>
<td>2. Does racial identity influence the perception of fit for African American male police officers in the NYPD?</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Tell me how your friends and family handle you being a police officer?</td>
<td>R/CID</td>
<td>3. What individual factors influence African American males to become police officers in the NYPD?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. What were your experiences with Black police officers prior to becoming a police officer?</td>
<td>R/CID</td>
<td>3. What individual factors influence African American males to become police officers in the NYPD?</td>
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<td>Reasons</td>
<td>Job Opportunities</td>
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<td>Values</td>
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<td>Values</td>
<td>Mentorship</td>
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<td>Impact on community</td>
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<td>Org Value</td>
<td>Community relations</td>
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<td>Professional Pride</td>
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<td>Mobility</td>
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<td><strong>Socialization</strong></td>
<td><strong>Cadets/Explorers</strong></td>
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<td>Discrimination</td>
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<td>I want to be part of the solution</td>
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<td>AT, Jack, Doctor</td>
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<td><strong>Reasons</strong></td>
<td>Responsibility</td>
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<td>the nature of the job</td>
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