Recommendations and Strategies for Addressing Policing Disparities from a Community Asset Perspective

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Abstract
Black civilians experience the highest rates of disparate treatment by police officers when compared to all other races. Research on policing disparities highlights that Blacks encounter higher instances of over-policing, excessive use of force, and higher incarceration rates for drug crimes compared to other racial groups. This study, through a qualitative methodology and interpretative phenomenological analysis, explored Black business owners’ perceptions of policing in predominately Black urban communities in the Capital Region of New York State. This study also explored how these business owners perceived their role in addressing policing disparities through the lens of critical race theory and asset-based community development theory. The semi-structured interviews of three Black male business owners who resided and owned a business within the predominately Black community were analyzed, and the findings revealed three major concepts: intersectionality, motivation to act, and relationships to build a community. The findings in this study yielded three superordinate themes and four subordinate themes. The superordinate themes were (a) duality, (b) creating access, and (c) community inclusion. The subordinate themes were (a) Black man in America, (b) changing the narrative, (c) educating the youth, and (d) giving voice to Black communities. It is recommended that future studies include business owners of all genders, races, and ethnicities within predominately Black communities to increase opportunities for relationship building and expanding the knowledge of police practitioners. Further consideration should be given to exploring the perspectives of young Black males within predominately Black communities to understand how they interpret policing practices.
Recommendations and Strategies for Addressing Policing Disparities from a Community Asset Perspective

By

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

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Dedication

This study is dedicated to the advocates, mentors, and nontraditional leaders who stand in the face of adversity seeking freedom, justice, and equity for all. “The ultimate tragedy is not the oppression and cruelty by the bad people, but the silence over that by the good people” – Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

I would like to acknowledge the strongest woman I have ever known, my mother, Janna M. Brown; your spirit lives on in me and Sajiera. An extension of gratitude to my grandparents, James and Lorretta Brown, for their hard work and commitment to me and instilling the importance of an education. Thank you, Nana and Grandpa, your sacrifice was not in vein. I would also like to thank my husband, Anthony, for encouraging me and praying for me during all the moments I wanted to give up and for continuing to be my life partner in working toward being our best selves, despite all of the adversity we have faced. It is my hope this body of work will inspire my beautiful, amazing daughter, Rhianna, and my growing baby, who shall be named Freedom; you both are the light of my life, and I hope you always remember to walk in your greatness and never allow anyone to write your story or silence your voice.

During the past 3 years, I have received support and encouragement from a number of individuals. I would like to thank my Chair, Dr. Cynthia P. Smith, for pushing me beyond my limits and providing me with the guidance and wisdom I needed to endure this journey. To my Committee member, Dr. Lorretta Quigley, thank you for your honesty and your gentle yet stern nature, I am forever grateful for your support and
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Biographical Sketch

Veneilya A. Harden was born and raised in Long Island, New York. She completed her high school education in Albany, NY with the support of the Equinox Independent Living Program. Her determination and tenacity to change the historical trajectory for her family drove her commitment to education, advocacy, and volunteerism.

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Abstract

Black civilians experience the highest rates of disparate treatment by police officers when compared to all other races. Research on policing disparities highlights that Blacks encounter higher instances of over-policing, excessive use of force, and higher incarceration rates for drug crimes compared to other racial groups. This study, through a qualitative methodology and interpretative phenomenological analysis, explored Black business owners’ perceptions of policing in predominately Black urban communities in the Capital Region of New York State. This study also explored how these business owners perceived their role in addressing policing disparities through the lens of critical race theory and asset-based community development theory.

The semi-structured interviews of three Black male business owners who resided and owned a business within the predominately Black community were analyzed, and the findings revealed three major concepts: intersectionality, motivation to act, and relationships to build a community. The findings in this study yielded three superordinate themes and four subordinate themes. The superordinate themes were (a) duality, (b) creating access, and (c) community inclusion. The subordinate themes were (a) Black man in America, (b) changing the narrative, (c) educating the youth, and (d) giving voice to Black communities. It is recommended that future studies include business owners of all genders, races, and ethnicities within predominately Black communities to increase opportunities for relationship building and expanding the knowledge of police practitioners. Further consideration should be given to exploring the perspectives of
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Chapter 1: Introduction

Black communities in the United States experience the highest rates of disparate treatment by police officers when compared to any other race or ethnic group (Durr, 2015; Levy-Pounds, 2013; Moore et al., 2016). Hinton et al. (2018) described the disparate treatment of Blacks as engrained systemic differences for people who have origins to racial groups of African descent (United States Census Bureau, 2020). Some of these disparities include structural discrimination in access to social, economic, cultural, and environmental rights (Altman, 2020). Structural discrimination, for the purposes of this study, is defined as the continuous stereotyping and implicit bias of Blacks by police, rooted in slavery and perpetuated over generations (Gayet, 2018).

Historically, Blacks were regarded as human chattel and property of their slave owners (Durr, 2015; Hadden, 2001; Kolchin, 2003; Walker, 1980). As early as 1704, slave patrols were identified as the first forms of policing models in the United States (Cooper, 2015). The purpose of slave patrols during the 18th and 19th centuries was to capture fugitive slaves using formal and informal policing by White community members to ensure Blacks were compliant with plantation owners (Durr, 2015). It was permissible for slave patrols to abuse Blacks with impunity until the end of the Civil War (Walker, 1980).

Although the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863 declared all persons held as slaves within the United States be freed, it was not until after the Civil War, in 1865, when over four million Blacks were liberated from the bondage and servitude of slavery.
The 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution (U.S. Const. amend. XIII) was amended in 1865 to include “Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude except as punishment for a crime shall exist within the United States.” Consequently, new local and federal laws, known as the Black Codes, emerged to restrict the new freedoms of Blacks and Black communities (Kolchin, 2003). One of the provisions under the Black Codes laws specified that Blacks were required to maintain specific employment opportunities. These employment opportunities were predominantly contracted to plantations and, hence, to former slave owners. Blacks who did not comply were arrested and found guilty of vagrancy (Kolchin, 2003) and when incarcerated, were subject to convict leasing. Convict leasing was a system of enslavement by virtue of conviction (Hinton et al., 2018).

As Blacks struggled to manifest their new constitutionally guaranteed freedoms, Black Code laws evolved into the Jim Crow laws. The Jim Crow laws further perpetuated the disenfranchisement of Black communities between 1863 and 1877, known as the Reconstruction Era (Simmons, 2013). It was not until the 14th Amendment (U.S. Const. amend. XIV, § 2) was ratified in 1868 that former Black slaves were granted citizenship, and therefore, state and local governments were prohibited from denying equal protections under the law. Subsequently, the 15th Amendment (U.S. const. amend. XV, §1, §2) was ratified in 1870 precluding race and color as a barrier for Black males to vote.

In 1877, Jim Crow laws mandated the segregation and interactions between the Black and White races (Feagin, 1999; Levy-Pounds, 2013). Under the provisions of the Jim Crow laws, all public facilities, including transportation, education, hospitals, and
cemeteries, were segregated. Violation of these laws resulted in threats, brutality, and often, death of Black community members (Johnson, 2010). This mandate of segregation between the Black and White communities persisted until The Civil Rights Act of 1964, which expanded anti-discrimination legislation to prohibit discrimination based on race, sex, religion, and national origin, including the right to vote and the use of publicly owned facilities (Cole, 2019; Riches, 2017).

Nevertheless, over 150 years after the ratification of the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments, and over 50 years since the Civil Rights Act of 1964, racial inequalities, including policing disparities in Black communities, continue to exist (Lawrence et al., 2019). Current literature on racial policing disparities has revealed that Blacks are associated as “dangerous and innately criminal” (Burrell, 2010, p. 53). The negative associations of Blacks, such as the connotation of dangerous and innately criminal, contribute to implicit bias.

Implicit bias is defined as the development of attitudes, behaviors, and notions associated with racially diverse groups (FitzGerald & Hurst, 2017), which has been linked to disparate treatment of minority groups by police officers (Alexander et al., 2010; Burrell, 2010; Butler, 2017; Coates, 2015). In fact, Nellis (2019), reporting on Boncza’s (2003) study, attributed the 500% increase in incarceration rates over the past 40 years to bias in policing practices of law and policy.

In Figure 1.1, Bonczar (2003) depicted the disproportionate rates of incarceration between Black, Latino, and White populations and the likelihood of lifetime imprisonment of U.S. citizens born in 2001. According to Bonczar (2003), 1:3 Black men, compared to 1:17 White males, are at risk of incarceration. Similarly, 1:18 Black
women are more likely to be incarcerated than White females, who comprise 1:111 of those imprisoned women. Overall, people of color who were born in 2001, which include the Latino population, have a much higher propensity to be incarcerated in their lifetime than do Whites (Bonczar, 2003).

Figure 1.1

*Lifetime Likelihood of Imprisonment of U.S. Residents Born in 2001*

![Figure 1.1](image)


Chaney and Robertson (2015) indicated that the unfavorable view of Blacks has disproportionately targeted Black communities. This implicit bias aids the perpetuation of negative perceptions of Black community members by police officers. According to FitzGerald and Hurst (2017), under certain conditions, these negatively biased, automatic associations can influence behavior. In addition to implicit bias, researchers have indicated that some common themes in policing disparities for Blacks also includes police brutality and the war on drugs (Alexander et al., 2010; Butler, 2017).
**Problem Statement**

According to Hall et al. (2016), race has been a powerful and polarizing theme in the discourse concerning fatal encounters between police and Black civilians. As such, Blacks are more likely to be shot and killed by police in comparison to their White counterparts (Streeter, 2019). These relationships may present disassociation, hypervigilance, and avoidance of the notion that police are a community resource. Hannah-Jones (2015) and Lipscomb et al. (2019) posited that the Black population has often navigated emotionally draining experiences relating to policing in their communities. To this point, the war on drugs, which began during the 1970s, has led to increased incarceration for Blacks when compared to any other race or ethnic group (LaHee, 2016; Nordberg et al., 2016; Wildeman & Wang, 2017). Notably, as a result of three drug sweeps that were conducted in a predominately Black urban community in the Capitol Region of New York in 2006, 2009, and 2010, 50 Black men, all under the age of 30, who committed nonviolent drug crimes, were sentenced to more than 600 years of imprisonment (Green, 2012).

While exhaustive research on the topic of policing disparities exists, the body of research has just recently begun to focus on the development of community building through the identification of community assets. Scholars Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) defined citizens and citizen groups as the assets participating in decision-making on civic issues that affect the well-being of the community. Green and Goetting (2010) posited that community members have often relied on outside expertise because community members are unaware of how to bring about political change, thus often relying on outsiders to solve community problems.
According to Martinez (2014), Black community members have experiential knowledge of structural discrimination and have developed both coping mechanisms and ways to raise awareness of the issues affecting the Black community that are often overlooked and not considered. As such, the problem of this study is identified as a gap in the research regarding Black business owners’ perceptions of policing disparities in their predominately Black urban neighborhoods in the Capital Region of NY. Additionally, these Black business owners may not recognize their role as community assets in these Black communities and, therefore, may be underutilized as a valuable resource to help mitigate policing disparities.

**Theoretical Rationale**

Eisenhart (1991) defined a theoretical framework as the structure that guides research to explain a certain phenomenon. Thus, critical race theory (CRT) and asset-based community development (ABCD) served as the primary lenses through which this research was investigated regarding how policing disparities in predominately Black communities relate to the lived experiences of Black business owners within this community.

Historically, the critical race movement was derived from a group of scholars who were seeking to be agents of change, utilizing law, culture, and education during the civil rights movement in the 1960s and 1970s (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). The critical legal studies movement originated to address issues of power, race, and racism (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). The emergence of CRT began with the notion that racism is not aberrant in American society. In fact, DiAngelo (2018) purported that “Racism is deeply embedded in the fabric of our society. It is not limited to a single act or person. The
direction of power between White people and people of color is historic, traditional, and normalized in ideology” (p. 18).

CRT explores how race is structurally embedded within institutional structures that increase the likelihood of disparate treatment of minority communities’ and other marginalized groups (Bell, 1991). Burton et al. (2010) posited that four central tenets define CRT. Primarily, race and racism, which are eternal and widespread in the American social fabric. CRT seeks not only to challenge beliefs of impartiality and racial sympathy for the protection of authoritative practices by elite groups, but it also demonstrates a commitment to social justice and the elimination of racial suppression. Lastly, CRT endorses the realistic knowledge of women and people of color as a genuine and crucial to the consideration of dominate groups.

In the early 1970s, problem-solving approaches excluded the perspective of the community members and transformational solutions to the problems faced by minority groups (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). External experts often developed interventions based upon the communities and problems—without consideration of the assets already existing in the communities (Nel, 2018). These approaches consequently further disempowered and disenfranchised non-White community members (Cunningham et al., 2002; Kretzmann & McKnight, 1996). Critical race theorists emphasize the importance of giving voice to community members and providing diverse perspectives from the marginalized point of view (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001).

Critical race theory utilizes counter-storytelling as a method of storytelling through the lens of people whose experiences are not often told through the construct of marginalization. Counter-storytelling functions as a method to empower disenfranchised
groups through the formation of stories to intervene, expose, and challenge dominant racial ideologies, which, for this study, negatively influence the treatment and perceptions of the Black community.

Building on the work of CRT, asset-based community development or ABCD, was developed in the 1990s by social psychologists John Kretzmann and John McKnight. Kretzmann and McKnight (1996) visited more than 319 active community groups in order to assess opportunities for engagement toward addressing community problems. One of the communities was in the Grand Boulevard neighborhood of Chicago, which had received the distinction of the fourth poorest neighborhood in the United States. Kretzmann and McKnight (1996) discovered many of these neighborhood groups were willing to work on addressing community needs. According to Kretzmann and McKnight (1996), “our greatest assets are people but people in low income communities are seldom regarded as assets” (p. 173). ABCD is a theoretical framework for understanding the existence and value of community assets (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993). ABCD, therefore, aims to address a community’s needs through identification of community assets and resources for solving community problems. The guiding principles of ABCD are defined as gifts of individuals, which must be discovered, and that are utilized to engage the citizens as active members utilizing citizen associations and local institutions such as local businesses, nonprofits, and governmental agencies (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993, 1996).

Kretzmann and McKnight (1996) asserted that the dominance of deficiency-oriented social service models has led many people in low income neighborhoods to think in terms of local needs rather than being viewed from the standpoint of being or
becoming assets. A central theme of the theory is recognizing and enhancing the capabilities of all people including those who have been formerly excluded from participating in decision making and thereby prohibited from enjoying the rights of citizenship (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993). The ABCD construct has been one of the most widely used participatory approaches, which helps to explain the relationship-building strategies particularly related to vulnerable and marginalized groups (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993; Stoltenberg Bruursema, 2015). Community assets include the talents and skills of individuals which then influence and empower organizational capacities,

**Figure 1.2**

*ABCD Map*

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*Note.* From “Building communities from the inside out: A path toward finding and mobilizing a community’s assets” by J. P. Kretzmann and J. L. McKnight, 1993. Copyright 1993 by ACTA Publications.
political connections, buildings, and financial resources (Page-Adams & Sherraden, 1997). These gifts and assets of community members are identified, built and utilized in collaboration with citizen associations and local institutions. Mobilizing these social assets may activate formal institutional resources through which neighborhood assets can be identified and then connected to one another in ways that multiply the communities’ power and effectiveness. The principles that guide ABCD which is illustrated in Figure 1.2.

**Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of this qualitative, interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) study is to explore Black business owners’ perspectives of policing disparities in predominately Black urban communities in the Capital Region neighborhood in New York State. Information garnered through semi-structured interviews of Black business owners’ lived experiences of policing practices in this neighborhood may identify reasons for recommendations and strategies to mitigate policing disparities, and through better understanding their roles as community assets, may improve community relations with local police. The following research questions were used to guide this qualitative, phenomenological study.

**Research Questions**

1. What are Black business owners’ perceptions regarding the prevalence of policing disparities in their community?

2. What factors do Black business owners identify as those influencing the safety of their community?
3. What strategies are Black business owners taking to address policing practices in the predominately Black, urban communities in the Capital Region of New York State?

**Potential Significance of the Study**

The potential significance of this study is multifaceted. Black business owners’ perceptions and lived experiences of policing disparities in their neighborhoods, coupled with an examination of the participants’ role as a vital community asset, may help remediate and alleviate the problem of police disparities. Additionally, business owners may become models to lead the way for other identified community assets as purported by Kretzmann and McKnight (1996). As citizens and police establish more positive relationships with each other, the ideal of viewing each member as a community asset will establish voice and create new power structures. The aim of this study is to add to the body of knowledge of a select group of community members, identified as Black business owners, to assist in identifying barriers and supports regarding what behaviors and actions prevent or promote positive relationship building.

**Chapter Summary**

Chapter 1 discussed the historical origins of policing disparities and disenfranchisement between the Black community and police officers. Utilizing CRT and ABCD theoretical frameworks, this study explored the lived experiences of Black business owners and their perceptions of the existing policing practices and behaviors in predominately urban Black neighborhoods located in the urban communities of the Capitol Region of New York State. Additionally, the purpose of this study was to help identify Black business owners’ perceptions regarding what recommendations and
strategies exist in their respective community that can prevent negative relationships and promote positive relationship building between the Black community and the police.

Chapter 2 presents a review of the empirical literature relating to implicit bias, police brutality, and mass incarceration associated with the war on drugs. Chapter 3 provides this study’s research design and methodology to assist in answering the research questions. Chapter 4 presents an analysis of the qualitative data gathered through semi-structured interviews with three Black male business owners from a predominately Black, urban community in the Capital Region of New York State. Chapter 5 connects the qualitative data to previous research and explores recommendations and strategies for addressing policing disparities.
Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

Introduction and Purpose

For many Blacks, disparities in policing have continued into the 21st century (Saunders & Kilmer, 2019). As a result, a systemic culture of oppression and marginalization of predominantly Black communities permeates every institution including policing (Moore et al., 2016). With increasing tensions between predominately Black communities and the police, there is an interest in improving individual and collective confidence in policing strategies (Chaney & Robertson, 2015; Saunders & Kilmer, 2019). The purpose of this chapter is to review empirical research that provided insight into how implicit bias, police brutality, and mass incarceration associated with the war on drugs impacted Black communities and shaped the communities toward policing practices.

Implicit Bias

Greenwald et al. (1998), in order to study bias, created a research tool known as the implicit association test (IAT). Since its inception, several scholars have utilized the IAT to assess implicit bias through incorporating a dual-categorization task to test the speed and accuracy of participant responses in relation to Black and White targets. According to Lundine et al. (2019), the concept of implicit bias is based on the belief that people act on internalized schemas. Although these unconscious mental paradigms allow participation in discriminatory behaviors without actual awareness or intent, scholars
posit that historical and current policing practices have perpetuated the disparate
treatment for racial and ethnic minorities (Saunders & Kilmer, 2019).

Hehman et al. (2018) examined implicit bias to explore what factors might be
associated with Black and White Americans being disproportionately killed by police in
relation to the community where they reside. Specifically, Hehman et al. (2018)
integrated the use of lethal force data and demographics to create a large database of
implicit and explicit biases. Utilizing the findings from the IAT, Hehman et al. (2018)
further assessed if implicit bias would be influenced by educational level and
socioeconomic status when Blacks were compared to Whites who reside in the same
geographical location with similar educational levels and economic status. According to
Hehman et al. (2018), the U.S. government does not mandate the reporting of lethal
force; therefore, the researchers utilized The Guardian (n.d.) news agency’s database of
individuals reportedly killed by police using lethal force. Their research focused, utilizing
the IAT, primarily on Black and White participants. In the year 2015, The Guardian
(n.d.) reported that of the 875 people killed by police officers, Blacks were
disproportionately represented. Data from The Guardian (n.d.) indicate Blacks
constituting 22.76% of lethal force used by police despite representing 11.76% of the
population in comparison to Whites who represent 78.7% of the population where lethal
force was applied at 77.24% (The Guardian, n.d.).

Hehman et al. (2018) found when controlling for education and socioeconomic
status, Blacks were killed by police through lethal force at a rate higher than Whites
within the same region who had comparable educational levels and socioeconomic status.
The results of the Hehman et al. (2018) study indicate that the implicit bias of White
police officers, $\beta = .354$, was associated with the disproportionate use of lethal force against Black community members, $p = .031$, perpetuating racial bias. A notable finding in this study was that, despite accounting for only 12% of the population, Blacks constituted 23% of the population killed by police who used lethal force (Hehman et al, 2018).

The purpose of Sternadori’s (2017) study, which also used the IAT, was to explore if positive news stories influence implicit bias. The goal of the Sternadori (2017) study was to explore whether news stories that contradict negative stereotypes about racial and ethnic minorities influence behavior and what effects are influenced by gender. The study used two experiments to explore how the effects of news stories about Blacks and Native Americans revealed implicit attitudes toward these groups. In the first study, Sternadori (2017) hypothesized positive news stories about Blacks would decrease implicit bias, negative viewpoints, and negative attitudes about Blacks among women. To test this hypothesis, a pre- and posttest was provided to 119 undergraduate students (87 females and 32 males) from a Midwestern university. The racial composition of the participants was 95% White and 5% Black.

All participants were provided with and read four positive news stories, gathered through Lexis-Nexis Academic and Google search engines, about successful Blacks who had overcome poverty and discrimination. For the first part of the experiment, participants read each story and rated it for positive or negative emotion and objectivity. Six images of Black faces (three males, three female) and six White faces (three males, three female) as well as lists of positive and negative words were downloaded from the virtual library for the project (Sternadori, 2017).
The participants were asked to categorize faces as either Black or White and assign labels to whether the image was perceived as good or bad. The second part of the experiment asked the participant to read a 300-word news story, within 120 seconds, about successful Black men. The independent variable was gender, with two pre- and posttest exposure sessions to the new stories. The dependent variable was the D score calculated by subtracting the mean response to latency on compatibility trials (grouping White faces with positive words, Black faces with negative words) and last, dividing the results by the standard deviation of the data set. A decrease in D scores indicated a decrease in implicit bias. To migrate variance loss, two D scores were calculated and averaged for the pre- and postexposure to the IAT. The participants’ average D score after reading positive news stories was significantly lower ($m = .24$) than at the start of the study ($m = .33$). The mixed-model ANOVA returned a significant effect of .064 for the first hypothesis and a nonsignificant effect for the second hypothesis of 2.30. Therefore, these findings suggest that positive news stories can abate negative perceptions of Black people thus decreasing implicit bias.

Similarly, using a quasi-experimental design, Legewie (2016) examined the impact of the use of police force against racial minorities. This study geo coded police stops in New York City and police citizen interactions between 2006 and 2012. The design compared police stops before and after four acts of violence were used against the police. Utilizing logistic regression analysis, Legewie (2016) focused on abrupt changes in the observed trend before and immediately following the shooting of a police officer in 2007 and in 2011 by Black suspects. Stops that were conducted within 2 weeks after a
violent event against police were coded as the treatment group and stops in the year before the event were coded as the control group.

The dependent variable in the Legewie (2016) study measured the use of physical force during stop-and-frisk operations. Legewie (2016) restricted his analysis to White, Black, and Hispanic populations in New York City. The use of force was measured with two different variables that were based on data provided by the police as part of their stop-and-risk report form. The independent variables included police precinct, exact geo-coded location of the stop, time of day, circumstances of the stop, race, gender, age, and height.

Findings were statistically significant for Blacks, $p = .20$, indicating a race-specific pattern in response to events with a pronounced use of force against Blacks but not against citizens of other races, where use of force remained unchanged. The logistic regression models estimated that the use of force against Blacks increased by 11.6% and 18.4% in the 3 days after the events, while having no effect for other racial groups. Thus, Legewie (2016) posited that implicit bias of Blacks as hostile and violent increases racial disparities in police use of force.

In an earlier quantitative study, Posick et al. (2013) assessed if confidence in police was attributed to how racial groups interpreted questions about the police. This research examined the differential functions of policing scales by using psychometric properties to explore racial differences in responses relating to confidence in police and procedural justice. Posick et al. (2013) utilized data from the National Police Research Platforms Survey to measure independent variables, confidence in police, and police legitimacy from three locations in the United States. One location was a large East Coast
police department, serving over 300,000 people; the second was a small city police
department in the Midwest, serving a population of 52,000; and the third was a small-
town police department, serving 12,000 people in the Midwest. Citizen encounters with
police were collected by research teams from September 2010 until March 2011 (Posick
et al., 2013).

The sample was derived through respondents of a participation letter sent from the
police chief to citizens who had an ongoing or recent encounter with an officer, inviting
them to participate in the survey. The total sample included 1,290 participants consisting
of 48% White, 44% Black, and 39% Hispanic. The participants were queried about police
performance, specifically police effectiveness, reliability, communication skills, and
treating community members with respect (Posick et al., 2013). Descriptive statistics
were used to measure the perceptions regarding how well police responded to addressing
crime and problems within their community. Utilizing the differential item functioning
scale, the findings revealed that Black and Hispanic respondents have a lower confidence
level in police, which is not likely due to inconsistent measurement, but rather, the
participants’ perception (Posick et al., 2013).

Utilizing a multivariant analysis, Mears et al. (2019) examined the legacy of
lynchings with contemporary Whites’ views on Blacks as criminal threats. Mears et al.
(2019) hypothesized the legacy of lynching has influenced the perception of Blacks as
criminals, and Blacks pose a criminal threat to the Whites who live in areas of
socioeconomic disadvantage. According to Mears et al. (2019), the root of the perceived
criminal threat of Blacks can be traced back to the post-Civil War era. The Blacks’
transition out of slavery and into mainstream employment caused a threat to the Whites’
social and economic norms. Thus, racial discrimination through social and economic disadvantage provides context to the racial animus Whites had toward Blacks.

Mears et al. (2019) sought to understand the salience of lynching and the racialization of crime both historically and contemporarily. Drawing on Blalock’s (1967) racial threat theory, which argues that majority groups use informal and formal social control methods to control minority groups when the threat of competing for resources, status, and economic factors are realized, Mears et al. (2019) suggested Blacks are assumed to be a direct criminal threat to Whites (the majority), which began at the departure of slavery and has persisted over time.

For the Mears et al (2019) quantitative study, two interrelated hypotheses were tested. First, Hypothesis 1 (H1) stated that Blacks are more criminal and more likely to commit crimes against Whites who reside in areas that experience high rates of lynchings. Hypothesis 2 (H2) stated that in contemporary America, this perception is pronounced among Whites who reside in areas marked by greater social and economic disadvantage or areas that are politically conservative.

Mears et al. (2019) analyzed two sets of data. The first and Southern set of data comprised 1,301 respondents within 11 states across 79 counties. The second sample was national and consisted of 2,408 respondents distributed across 168 counties in 38 states. The racial and ethnic background of the sample was 88% White, 7% Black, 3% Latino, and 2% Asian. A random telephone survey of 2,736 American adults, ages 18 or older, using random digit dialing, and a computer-assisted telephone interviewing system ensured accuracy in recording the data. The telephone surveys were conducted throughout 2013. The survey focused on respondents’ attitudes about crime and
punishment, and it collected information on Whites’ views about Black criminals. Participant interviews were conducted by phone and closely monitored by supervisors (Mears et al., 2019).

The independent variables framing the study were Black lynchings, concentrated disadvantage, and percent voting Republican. The dependent variables were perceived Black criminal threat and perceived Black-on-White crime. To assess the impact that the independent variables had on the dependent variables, Mears et al. (2019) used multilevel linear models to control for individual and county level factors that could impact the perceptions of Whites within the community. Thus, the multilevel model allowed Mears et al. (2019) to isolate the independent effects of both individual and county level variables. After controlling for individual and county level factors associated with punitive attitudes (H1), lynchings and Blacks perceived as a criminal threat were found statistically significant ($p = .306$). Similarly, for H2, a correlation ($p = .804$) was found between lynchings and areas of concentrated disadvantage perceiving Blacks as criminal. According to Mears et al. (2019), the effect of lynchings on perceived Black criminal threat were stronger in disadvantaged counties, $b = .070$, and $b = .008$. Mears et al. (2019) examined whether the results would differ for Black respondents and found that Black lynchings were not statistically significant on Black criminal threat or Black-on-White crime. Mears et al. (2019) postulated that the lineage of bias of Blacks dates back to the 1800s when the marginalization of Blacks was permissible and is now sustained in modern times, thus, sustaining the narrative of Blacks as a criminal threat, perpetuating police brutality.
Police Brutality

According to Jimenez (2018), the historical impact from the pre- and post-Civil War eras, Reconstruction, Jim Crow, and the urban riots of the 1960s, are still evident in biased policing and use of excessive and deadly force toward Blacks. Moore (2019) defined police brutality as the unwarranted or excessive and often illegal use of force against community members. Police brutality ranges in degree from police misconduct to facilitating an unlawful search or using unnecessary force. Scholars have posited that police brutality is long-standing, pervasive, and alarmingly resilient (Alang et al., 2017; Bandes, 1999). During the civil rights movement of the 1960s, police dogs and fire hoses were used as dispersion tactics by law enforcement to attack individuals marching in peaceful protests and sit-ins (Butler, 2017). These aggressive tactics were some of the most publicized examples of police brutality during this time (Butler, 2017).

Furthermore, in 1991, 24 years after the civil rights movement, the beating of Rodney King by police officers aired nationally, exposing police brutality to a broader audience (King, n.d.). Chaney and Robertson (2015) examined racism and police brutality by exploring policing practices 21 years after the publicized assault by police officers. At the time of the assault, Rodney King was a 25-year-old Black male who was driving in his car, when the police officers attempted to apprehend him for speeding. King eventually pulled over. Upon the officers arriving at his vehicle, they requested he step out of the car. He was then physically assaulted by four White police officers. The assault, videotaped by a community member, was the first publicized incident of police brutality. All officers were subsequently acquitted of any wrongdoing (Chaney & Robertson, 2015).
Chaney and Robertson (2015) also investigated the findings provided by the National Police Misconduct Statistics and Reporting Project (NPMSRP). These included narratives provided by 36 scholars. Three research questions were foundational to the study that included (a) what do findings from NPMSRP suggest about the rate of police brutality in America, (b) what is the individual perception of the police department, and (c) what implications do these perceptions hold for Black men in America? The findings revealed that the Blacks in Chaney and Robertson’s (2015) qualitative study consistently associated the following themes with police officers: contempt, suspicion, agents of brutality, and disrespect for police. These findings suggest that police brutality increases feelings of powerlessness in the Black community, diminishing perceptions of gains made by the civil rights movement.

In a similar study to Chaney and Robertson (2015), utilizing a computer simulation, Plant and Peruche (2005) conducted a quantitative study to examine police officers’ decisions to shoot Black and White suspects. The participants selected for this study were 50 police officers in the state of Florida. The sample consisted of 83% male police officers with a statistical mean age of 37. The racial background of these police officers was 84% White, 10% Black, 2% Native American, and 4% Hispanic. Digital photos of nine Black and White college aged males were presented to each participant. A picture of a gun and a neutral object was enlarged on each of the digital faces displaying an object in varying positions. For each participant, the computer randomly selected one of the pictures and displayed it on the screen until the participant responded or until time elapsed before displaying the next picture. Each participant completed 20 practice trials and 160 test trials. Separate race-of-suspect and object ANOVAS were conducted for the
early and late trials to explore the nature of the interactions. The analysis revealed a main effect of trials ($c = -0.05$), $F(1, 47) = 5.20$, revealing officers were more likely to shoot at an unarmed suspect when the suspect was Black ($c = -0.06$), in comparison to a White suspect. In contrast, White officers were more likely not to shoot White armed suspects $t(1, 47) = 1.60, p = 0.12)$. The study of bias and deadly force becomes important when police officers are making decisions based on a perception of danger. The Department of Justice (2015), noted that people may respond in unfair or discriminatory ways even when those individuals are not explicitly prejudiced.

Lipscomb et al. (2019) facilitated a phenomenological, qualitative study to examine the secondary impact of police-induced trauma for Black men. Lipscomb et al. (2019) interviewed 62 Black males residing in California with an age range from 18 to 65 years. These participants witnessed the fatal shooting of Stephon Clark by the Sacramento Police Department via social media. Clark, a 22-year-old Black male, was in the backyard of his grandparents’ home, where he resided, when the Sacramento Police Department received a call that a young, Black male was breaking into car windows in the same neighborhood. The police attempted to apprehend Clark because he was believed to have a weapon. The police responded by fatally shooting this unarmed Black male (Shooting of Stephon Clark, n.d.).

The findings of the Lipscomb et al. (2019) study indicate the themes of emotional reactions of anger and sadness, psychophysiological symptoms of hyper-vigilance, avoidance and disassociation from police officers, and feelings of injustice around Black men killed by police officers. The data further reveal that the Black men in the study struggled with the negative perception that Black men are criminals. Lipscomb et al.
(2019) posited that Black men’s distrust toward police derives from the narrative consistently perpetuated in the media that Black men are associated with criminal behavior. In fact, the study reported 72% of the participants reported feeling worried daily about being fatally shot by police—even in the absence of deviance.

In a related study to Lipscomb et al. (2019), Newton (2018) examined the disproportionate use of lethal force by police officers against Black males. Through the analysis of grand jury proceedings, Newton (2018) found that the lethal use of force in the cases of Black males, specifically Michael Brown in 2014, Tamir Rice in 2014, Eric Garner in 2014, and Terrance Sterling in 2016, where none of the officers were indicted. Newton (2018) posited that the legal standards in the United States, which regulate the use of force by police officers, are not consistent with international law. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (United Nations, n.d.) states the use of lethal force by law enforcement violates individual rights to life, right to security, and equal protection under the law. Furthermore, Newton (2018) postulated that the grand jury process is implicitly biased and results in impunity for Black civilian deaths. Although legal experts report rare incidents of grand juries not returning with an indictment, Newton’s (2018) study found this trend does not apply for police officers who use lethal force against Black males.

Newton (2018) also examined the Violent Crime Control and Enforcement Act of 1994 (GovTrack.us, 2020) that requires the documentation and publication of civilian death by lethal forces. Although the FBI’s Supplementary Homicide Report indicates that 32% of people shot by the police have been Black, a proportion—two and a half times the 13% of Blacks in the general population—have been shot by the police. Newton
(2018) compared this information to data reported from *The Guardian* in 2015, which reported that young Black men between the ages of 15 and 34 were nine times more likely than other Americans to be killed by police officers in 2015. The data further indicate a total of 1,134 deaths of Black males by police use of lethal force were reported. When Newton’s (2018) study is “paired with official government mortality data, this finding indicated that about one in every 65 deaths of a young African American man in the US is a killing by the police” (p. 1068). Newton (2018) made five recommendations: all use-of-force data be collected federally to include demographic data; enact legislation in compliance with federal law; institute sustained police training, which would include implicit bias; create community and police relationship building; use external and independent prosecutors in police use-of-forces cases; and increase representation of police who are responsive to the diverse needs of the communities they serve.

Kramer and Remster (2018) concurred with Newton (2018) by speculating that the relationship between prosecutors and law enforcement perpetuates a system of impunity and inequality. According to Kramer and Remster (2018), the vagueness of what constitutes permissible reasonable use of force by police officers is based upon the officer’s perception of danger during citizen interactions. Therefore, racial bias in the use of force by police officers was examined to determine if Blacks were more likely than Whites to be subjected to the use of force during police encounters in New York City. Four hypotheses concerning the relationship between race, civilian behavior, age, and police use of force were explored. H1 was that Black individuals are more likely to be subjected to force and, specifically lethal force, during police interactions than White individuals. H2 indicated that any observed racial disparity in police use of force will be
large during stops when contraband is found, or the stops resulted in arrest. Hypothesis 3 (H3) indicated that any observed racial disparity in experiencing police force will be greatest for stops of teenagers and will decrease with age, and Hypothesis 4 (H4) indicated that the New York Police Departments (NYPD) had a reduction in stops and changes in officer training beginning in 2013 after *Floyd v. City of New York*, the federal lawsuit challenging the NYPD’s stop and frisk policy.

Kramer and Remster (2018) performed an analysis of NYPD recorded traffic stops between 2007 and 2014 of over two million stops of Black and White civilians. Two dependent variables were analyzed using descriptive statistics of investigatory stops where any force was used by police, and if a gun was drawn or pointed at a civilian by police. The individual characteristics compared in this study were race, gender, and age. The data reveal police use of force against Blacks was 22.3% in comparison to 16.4% of Whites. Additionally, Black teenagers in this study experienced the highest rates of police use of force during stops in comparison to White teenagers. According to Kramer and Remster (2018), the results indicate that Blacks are more likely to experience force, including lethal force, at the hands of police than Whites. In 2019, on the Mapping Police Violence (n.d.) website, it indicated that despite being only 13% of the population, Black persons were three times more likely to be killed by police compared to any other race or ethnicity.

**Mass Incarceration and the War on Drugs**

The war on drugs began in 1971 when President Richard Nixon launched a federally funded campaign to target the illegal drug trade in the United States by declaring that drug abuse was public enemy number one in the United States (Crutchfield...
& Weeks, 2015). For more than four decades, what became known as the “war on drugs” led to a transformation of the criminal justice system. Despite the intent of legislatures, judges, police, and prosecutors to protect citizens and communities, the unintended consequences for Black communities with the war on drugs is the over policing and disparate treatment of predominately Black communities (Alexander et al., 2010; Butler, 2017).

The war on drugs has had an unambiguously larger impact on Black and Hispanic communities than any other race or ethnic group—shifting from the significance of the drug problem to the profile of drug offenders (Koch et al., 2016). This shift has contributed to the overrepresentation of Blacks in U.S. prisons and jails (Crutchfield & Weeks, 2015; Gaston & Brunson, 2020). Tucker (2017) posited that Blacks represent just 12% of the population, yet they are incarcerated two times more than Whites who represent 64.2% of the U.S. population. According to Tucker (2017), there is a correlation between mass incarceration and drug use among Blacks. Although the war on drugs began as a deterrent for drug crimes and drug abuse, statistics reflect significant disparities in drug sentencing (Crutchfield & Weeks, 2015).

Mitchell and Caudy (2015) examined the racial disparities in drug arrests to see if racial or ethnic disparities could be explained by a combination of factors such as racial ethnic differences in drug sales, non-drug offending, and the greater minority presence in high-crime neighborhoods. Data from the 1997 National Longitudinal Survey of Youth were used for the Mitchell and Caudy (2015) study (13 rounds were conducted). A panel study was conducted with a nationally representative sample of 8,984 youths between the ages of 12 and 16 who were living in the United States and who had been previously
arrested. The data utilized responses from Blacks, Hispanics, and Whites, with an initial response rate of 91.6% and retention rates ranging from 81.7 to 93.3%. Participant information was collected through online, self-administered questions, which included questions regarding juvenile and adult criminal justice systems.

Descriptive statistics were used to measure race and age. The analysis examined the magnitude of disparity in drug arrest by age. At ages 17, 22, and 27, Blacks were 235% more probable than Whites to be arrested. Although analysis of the data revealed Whites and Blacks before age 17 had similar likelihoods of drug arrests, racial disparities grew substantially at age 22 for Blacks compared to Whites. The odds of arrest increased by 78% for individuals residing in urban communities with an increased police presence (Mitchell & Caudy, 2015).

Mitchell and Caudy (2015) found the policies pursued under the war on drugs disproportionately incarcerated Blacks compared to Whites. Specifically, after controlling for differences in drug and non-drug offending community crimes, Black offenders had an increased likelihood of drug arrests. Mitchell and Caudy (2015) concluded that the disparity in drug arrests between Blacks and Whites could not be explained by racial differences. The scholars posited that in this sample, Blacks were equal to Whites in drug offending, and arrests of Blacks were more likely attributed to over policing of predominately Black communities. The findings further indicate that 85% of Blacks had a higher probability of drug arrests that were not attributed to differences in drug use, drug sales or non-drug offending, or neighborhood context when compared to Whites. Thus, Mitchell and Caudy (2015) suggested the arrests of Blacks compared to Whites were due to racial bias in policing.
Implications for racial disparities between Blacks and Whites for drug-related criminal involvement was further explored through the research of Rosenberg et al. (2017). Their analysis compared characteristics of Blacks and Whites who were convicted of nonviolent drug crimes; specifically, differences in the offenders’ charges, drug of choice, severity of drug problem, and reentry opportunities mandated by probation and parole. Data to conduct this analysis originated from a larger study known as the Structures, Health and Risk Among Re-entrants, Probationers and Partners (American University, 2020). Eligible participants took a computer-based survey that included questions on family history, criminal justice history, history of housing, employment, and drug use (Rosenberg et al., 2017).

Four rounds of interviews were conducted at 6-month intervals. Of the group of participants, 60% identified as Black, and 40% identified as White. Multinomial logistic regression analysis was used to estimate whether race was associated with the likelihood of having a specific drug-related charges. Chi-square and t tests were used to describe the differences among Blacks and Whites in terms of demographics, drug use, and services accessed within the criminal justice system (Rosenberg et al., 2017).

Results indicate substantial incarceration differences between Blacks and Whites. When controlling for the racial breakdown of participants, the results indicate substantial incarceration differences; 24% of Blacks were charged with drug sales or possession compared to 80% of Whites who were charged with similar offenses. Yet, Blacks were more likely to be incarcerated on charges explicitly labeled drug related and they subsequently faced disproportionate sentencing (Rosenberg et al., 2017). Scholars posit
differences in arrest and incarceration rates are associated with crime policies perpetuating disparate treatment of minority groups (Norris & Billings, 2017).

Norris and Billings (2017) analyzed how presidential rhetoric influenced images of criminality and how colorblind language was used to facilitate the process. According to Williams (2011), color blindness denies negative racial experiences and invalidates the unique perspectives of minority groups. The Norris and Billings (2017) research employed qualitative content analysis to examine presidential speeches related to crime policies from 1969-1996. This time frame was chosen by Norris and Billings (2017) based on the passing of the Civil Rights Act in 1964.

Results of the study reveal criminal activity was primarily articulated as being committed by young, Black, impoverished males (Norris & Billings, 2017). The sample included seven presidential speeches delivered by former Presidents Richard Nixon, in 1969; Ronald Reagan, in 1981; George H. W. Bush, in 1989; and Bill Clinton in 1993, all retrieved from the American Presidency Project. The analysis examined the speeches describing drugs as the greatest social problem to American society. According to Norris and Billings (2017) racial and ethnic groups were implicated in all seven speeches, which were analyzed through references of urban cities, public housing, and crack gangs. Drug users and dealers predominantly associated with Black communities were labeled as more threatening and in need of tougher sentences. Characteristics of criminal activities were associated with single mothers, absent fathers, and drug use in urban communities. The references to crack use was implied only to impoverished communities compared to cocaine users, who were not associated with a specified community or association with criminal activity. In addition, Norris and Billing (2017) attributed the labeling of drug
abusers as individuals, who were not a part of traditional families and who were referenced as criminal and not being members of a proper family structure. Poor Black males living in low-income neighborhoods were implicitly defined as drug users, gang members, and individuals who engaged in criminal activity. Whites were implicitly exonerated from the social construction of threatening groups by virtue of their geographical distance from inner city urban communities (Norris & Billings, 2017). Subsequently, this became the start of the criminal characterization of Black neighborhoods and communities.

**Black Community Members’ Perspectives**

Research over the last 50 years indicates that policing organizations were mandated to diversify police department communities (Bolton & Feagin, 2004; Dulaney, 1996; Jimenez, 2018; Rousey, 1987; Sklansky, 2006; Todak et al., 2018). Historically, the community perspective in police policymaking has long been a controversial part of American policing that arose during the civil rights movement (Walker, 1980). Demands for inclusion of the Black community’s perspective were initially rejected by the International Association of Chiefs of Police in 1964 on the grounds that community members lacked the expertise and knowledge about policing practices. In 1967, President Lyndon B. Johnson established the Kerner Commission to determine the cause of urban riots. The findings of the Commission concluded the cause was the division between police and predominately Black communities that perpetuated institutional racism and police brutality (George, 2018). To address the divide, community leaders, advocating on behalf of communities, asserted that inclusion of community members can reduce police
misconduct, policing disparities, and develop trust particularly in Black communities (Walker, 1980).

According to La Vigne et al. (2017), the experiences, views, and attitudes of community residents are often underrepresented in research on the perception of policing practices. The purpose of the La Vigne et al. (2017) study was to examine residents’ views regarding law enforcement. The survey data was combined with publicly available census data on poverty and disadvantaged communities to create a data base of concentrated crime and poverty. In the study, a purposeful sampling methodology was used to represent residents in communities with the most tenuous relationships with police officers. In-person interviews were conducted in partnership with local organizations in the cities of Birmingham, AL; Fort Worth, TX; Gary, IN; Minneapolis, MN; Pittsburgh, PA; and Stockton, CA. Using the compiled data index, the top 10% cities were ranked by the highest index of concentrated crime and poverty each year. Among the 3,750 households, a total of 1,278 adults completed the mailed survey, which made up 34.1% of the valid sampling frame. Of those households surveyed, 66.3% identified as Black, 11.9% identified as White, 10.6% identified as Hispanic, 4.9% identified as other, 2.6% identified as mixed race, 2.2% identified as Asian, 1.3% identified as American Indian, and 0.2% identified as Hawaiian or Pacific Islander. The median household annual income for 35% of the participants was $10,000 or lower. Questions relating to procedural justice revealed that 26% of the residents did not believe police behaved or acted in procedurally just ways according to the law (La Vigne et al., 2017). Of the total respondents, 55% believed police officers treated people differently based on their race or ethnicity. La Vigne et al. (2017) purported that negative views of the police
contributed to community members’ lack of cooperation with police officers and to perception of bias policing by community members. Thus, a police department’s effectiveness in controlling and preventing crime can be closely related to residents’ perceptions of the law.

Similarly, Gau and Brunson (2010) explored experiences and perceptions of young men arrested in St. Louis, MO. This qualitative study compared the experiences of men who had involuntary experiences with law enforcement and those who were involved in delinquency to examine aggressive policing through the lens of procedural justice. Gau and Brunson (2010) conducted in-depth interviews with 45 males between 13 and 19 years old between the fall of 2005 and the spring of 2006. The participants were recruited through a community-based organization working with at-risk youth. The respondents in this sample comprised young men who lived in socioeconomically disadvantaged neighborhoods, characterized as impoverished, and residing in female-headed households. The methodology was purposive and designed to be representative of young men who likely had experiences with police. Themes and subthemes were coded as they were derived from the survey portion of the interviews. The data reveal that participants had both personal and vicarious negative experiences with police officers. Of the 45 participants, 78% reported being stopped by police at least once—in addition to 45% reporting to have been arrested at least once. Six participants in the overall sample believed police were easy to talk to compared to 40% of participants who depicted police as never polite. Participants believed police frequently stopped and questioned them based upon their self-reported status as poor, urban, Black males. According to Gau and Brunson (2010), these findings indicate the unfavorable views of police were based on
the perception that police overpoliced their communities and based on the aggressive
treatment of community members.

Doane and Cumberland’s (2018) research utilized the seminal framework of
Witkin and Altschuld (1995) to conduct a needs assessment on policing services to
Blacks in a northeastern city of the United States with a population of 31,000, of which
71% (22,010) of the residents identified as White and 7% (2,170) identified as Black.
Although the study occurred in a predominately White community, the study provides
insight that it is relevant because one of the researchers, who is a police officer, wanted to
address the needs of Blacks perceived to be neglected in comparison to Whites. The
participants selected for this study were all, diverse in age and gender, and selected
through an assessment committee. The three-phase model for conducting a needs
assessment included preassessment, assessment, and post assessment.

The phenomenological research was guided by two questions: what are the
current attitudes of Blacks about the police, and how does the Black community
conceptualize effective community policing? A needs assessment committee (NAC) was
used to provide guidance, ensure progress, and serve as advocates. The NAC included a
total of five members holding the positions of investigator, chief of police, sergeant,
officer, and director of community police board. The role of the NAC study followed the
recommendations described by Witkin and Altschuld (1995) and Altschuld and Eastmond
(2010). NAC members provided access to sample populations or potential data sources
within the community. All participants in the study resided within one Northeastern city
and within the jurisdiction of one police department. Many of the participants had lived
within the city for at least 3 years. The study relied on triangulation methods of data
using focus groups, interviews, and archival data. Thematic analysis revealed a gap existed between community policing efforts and meeting the needs of the Black community members. Doane and Cumberland (2018) posited that the findings from the focus groups indicated communication, demeanor, and social interactions were lacking from the police by the Black communities. Community members further indicated that increased engagement of police in their communities through social interactions would increase community safety and better relationships with law enforcement. A total of five recommendations were formulated to increase the social interactions between community members and police: community barbeques, police department hosted events for youth, department open houses, citizen police academies, and fundraisers sponsored by police and community groups. Saunders and Kilmer (2019) posited that identification of strategies are critical for policing agencies seeking to improve citizen satisfaction. Improvements in technology has expanded opportunities for dissemination of information to communities.

Parry et al. (2019) attributed advances in technology as a predictor of citizen perceptions. The study assessed technology-mediated exposure to police citizen encounters utilizing quasi-experimental methods and video footage of an actual police/citizen encounter. Using a large sample of students, and drawing upon theories of procedural justice, cognition, and media effects, Parry et al. (2019) sought to examine four research questions: does viewing cell phone videos of police citizen encounters influence perceptions of law enforcement, does this influence vary based on the point of view presented in a video does this influence vary by the ordering of exposure to these videos, does this influence vary by whether individuals see multiple videos of an
encounter? The data was derived from self-administered, online surveys distributed to 573 adult students enrolled in a large, American, Southwest university in the spring of 2015 as part of a broader project examining technology and perceptions of law enforcement.

Participants in the Parry et al. (2019) study were asked about their perceptions of police, shown a randomly assigned video of police citizen interaction, and, again, questioned regarding their perceptions. The sample of 56% women and 44% men included: 64% White, 6% Black, 3% Asian, 3% Native American, and 24% other races. Two videos were used in the study from a police and citizen encounter that occurred in 2014. The videos were shown from four different perspectives to the randomly assigned groups. One group saw the video from the citizen’s perspective; the second group viewed the video from the officer’s perspective; the third group was shown both videos, first the citizen’s perspective, and then the officer’s perspective; and the fourth group viewed both videos, first viewing the officer’s cell phone footage of police/citizen encounters.

Consistent with the prior research of Reisig et al. (2007), four global measures to assess antecedent, dimensions, and consequences of police legitimacy were measured on a 4-point Likert scale. The analysis was captured in three steps. First, comparisons of means within and across treatment conditions were examined. Secondly, a comparison within and across groups who viewed only one video or both videos was examined. Last, Parry et al. (2019) compared means within and across groups who saw both videos. Repeated ANOVAs were utilized to assess pre- and posttest outcomes. Analyses were conducted using SPSS software. The results indicate that exposure to the videos influenced the participants’ perceptions of the police. Despite evidence of the impact of
these videos on the public’s perceptions of the police, little evidence supported the communities’ point of view, number of videos, or ordering effects. Mathie and Cunningham (2003) noted that studies have indicated mobilizing community assets can activate formal institutional resources and connect them to one another to multiply communities’ power.

Brunson et al. (2015) examined the involvement of Black clergy in local youth violence and reduction initiatives. The purpose of the qualitative study was to understand whether the Ten-Point Coalition (TPC) and Boston Police Department (BPD) partnerships have been effective in increasing police legitimacy and enhancing community crime prevention and investigation of existing policies.

The Brunson et al. (2015) study approach drew upon in-depth interviews conducted with four key constituencies: the BPD managers, Boston TPC members, Black ministers, and community organizers working in disadvantaged neighborhoods. The research examined how these partnerships (a) improved police legitimacy in Black communities, (b) enhanced police crime prevention and control efforts, and (c) contributed to the existing literature on the BPD and the Boston TPC partnership and helped with persistent issues that would arise in the day-to-day work of the groups. Data were specifically drawn from systematic interviews with 70 participants: 30 interfaith TPC clergy, 30 BDP managers of varying rank and experience, and 10 community organizers working in disadvantaged neighborhoods. The study participants comprised 90% male (n = 27) who self-identified as 73% White. At the time of the interviews, of the BPD, the most officers held the rank of sergeant (n = 9), followed by deputy superintendent (n = 7). The remaining majority were patrol officers (n = 14). The TPC
clergy were 80% male (n = 24) and over 93% self-identified as Black (Brunson et al., 2015).

All participants were recruited with the assistance of community liaisons, for the clergy and community organizer interviews, and the BDP command staff recruited for the police manager interviews. Brunson et al. (2015) used snowball sampling procedures to enroll additional participants by obtaining the help of those previously interviewed. Sampling was purposeful: key participants were asked to identify and approach individuals who were known to work in the study neighborhoods. The goal was to interview activist clergy, police managers, and community organizers who had decades of experience working in disadvantaged neighborhoods. The interview schedule was semi-structured, consisting of both closed and open-ended questions that allowed for considerable exploration. IPA posits that understanding the point of view of participants through interviewing allows the researcher and the participants to engage in dialogue (Smith & Osborn, 2007).

The Brunson et al. (2015) study suggested that police and clergy partnerships have the potential to improve police/community relations and garner community support for crime control initiatives. All participants mentioned the importance that clergy provided in enhancing trust, transparency, and legitimacy with Black communities. Of the participating officers, 56% voiced a long history of bad relationships between the BPD and the Black community; 33% of officers recognized that it was particularly valuable to seek advice from clergy members on planned law enforcement operations before implementation. The interview responses show that 76% of the TPC clergy emphasized their ability to forge an effective partnership with the BPD that was centered
around their success at brokering trust from community members. Half of the community respondents applauded the TPC for serving as a perspective for the Black community. Results of the Brunson et al. (2015) study revealed that 66.6% of the clergy respondents consistently praised the work of the police officers, while one third of the BPD managers \((n = 10)\) felt that the clergy were not involved with the residents of disadvantaged Black neighborhoods, and they did not actually represent the views of the community.

**Chapter Summary**

Through the examination of relationships between police officers and predominately Black communities, scholars have posited the importance of identifying the factors that research suggests are present in predominately Black communities. The research has underlined there is a lack of trust for police officers within predominately Black communities. In order to create partnerships between police and communities, members must be allowed to have a perspective in identifying and solving neighborhood problems. According to Todak et al. (2018), Black communities and police require shared strategies and techniques to work collectively. Catanzariti (2018) asserted the methods used to police the Black community reinforce urban community members’ legal cynicism, impacting the way police work in these neighbors. The research reviewed in this study explored implicit bias; police brutality; mass incarceration in relation to the war on drugs, which is associated with the disproportionate policing of Blacks; and last, community members’ perspectives were highlighted in order to provide strategies for improving policing disparities in predominantly Black communities.

Chapter 3 discusses the methodology for addressing policing disparities in an urban, predominately Black neighborhood in the Capital Region of New York State.
Chapter 3: Research Design Methodology

Introduction

The literature regarding Blacks and policing practices continues to suggest that predominantly Black communities are increasingly subjected to disparate treatment in comparison to any other racial or ethnic communities (Alexander et al., 2010; Pegues, 2017). Researchers have focused their attention on the needs of at-risk communities and have identified that the most effective way to engage Black communities is to build upon assets that are embedded within those communities (Green & Goetting, 2010; Martinez, 2014). Strategies for mobilizing individuals, associations, and institutions can be established through ABCD (Green et al., 2006; Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993). The ABCD approach is a community-building model designed to strengthen relationships between communities and public servants.

According to Simon (2016), community is defined by the shared attributes of the people, or by the connections among them, who feel some sense of belonging or interpersonal connection. Therefore, community leaders are essential in bringing forth community needs through a process of reflection, dialogue, and inquiry (Nel, 2018). Currently, Black males within predominately Black communities face the highest rates of implicit bias, police brutality, and incarceration (Alexander et al., 2011; Butler, 2017; Coates, 2015; Stevenson, 2014). As a result, scholars propose that experiences of minority groups are better understood through the perspective of the members within those minority communities (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Thus, giving voice through
counter stories of Black business owners’ experiences and providing opportunities for these community members to provide insight as to what strategies and recommendations they have might help address policing disparities within their predominately Black communities.

As such, this study examined Black business owners’ perspectives on addressing policing disparities in predominately Black urban communities in the Capital Region of New York State through the utilization of a qualitative IPA. IPA is an approach that is “participant oriented” and provides novice researchers with the best opportunity to understand the “lived experiences of participants through qualitative analysis” (Alase, 2017, p. 9). IPA assumes that people are self-interpretive beings and are actively engaged in the process of interpreting the phenomena and the people in their lives (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). Thus, IPA allows the researcher to capture rich and detailed descriptions of how participants experience a phenomenon through in-depth one-on-one interviews, reflecting on the individual participant’s lived experiences followed by an analysis of these phenomena conducted by the researcher (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). Therefore, successful IPA studies encompass a meticulous analysis of the participant’s life, and it requires commitment to the exploration of the meaning and sense making of the phenomena (Smith & Osborn, 2007).

The concept of phenomenology was introduced by Husserl (1931), seeking not to rationalize knowledge, but as an alternative to shed light on the idea of knowledge (Alase, 2017). Thus, IPA researchers attempt to understand what it is like to stand in the shoes of their subject, and through interpretative analysis, to ascribe meaning to their subject (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014).
Tuffour (2017) postulated that qualitative inquiries are inductive and designed to study people’s life experiences as opposed to counting, measuring, and preoccupation with prediction in favor of describing. In order to fulfill the purpose of this interpretative study, Moustakas (1994) recommended that IPA researchers utilize a “bracketing” technique whereby researchers acknowledge preconceived notions, setting aside the researcher’s prior knowledge. The use of bracketing allows researchers to be aware of their own personal biases, thereby becoming more focused on describing the lived experiences of the participant (Alase, 2017; Larkin, 2012). As such, interpretative phenomenological studies are experiential and complex, seeking to reveal patterns of unanticipated phenomena, examining homogenous groups, constructing their identity, and ascribing meaning groups attribute to their social roles (Tuffour, 2017). Therefore, this study explored the lived experiences of Black business owners and their perceptions of police disparities within the predominately urban Black communities that the business owners reside within, as well as exploring their role as assets to recommend strategies to mitigate these disparities.

Larkin (2012) asserted that IPA research questions are exploratory, not explanatory, and focus on the meaning and sense-making of the phenomenon. This qualitative phenomenological study proposes to explore Black business owners’ perceptions regarding policing disparities through the following research questions:

1. What are Black business owners’ perceptions regarding the prevalence of policing disparities in their community?

2. What factors do Black business owners identify as those influencing the safety of their community?
3. What strategies are Black business owners taking to address policing practices in the predominately Black, urban communities in the Capital Region of New York State?

**Research Context**

The setting for this study was located in the predominately Black, urban Capital Region of New York State. Specifically, three to five business owners who, at the time of the study, resided in the predominately Black communities within the city of Albany were identified by the Common Council leaders to participate in this study. Albany’s population comprises 97,279 people of which 54.21% are White, 29.89% are Black, 29.89% are Asian, 6.96% are two or more races, 3.29% are other races, 0.25% are Native American, and 0.02% are Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (World Population Review, 2017). Of this population, 52.9% are female, and 47.1% are male, with a median age of 31 years. Of the 15 legislative districts or wards in Albany, seven are identified as predominately Black communities. These neighborhoods include: South End at 72%, Arbor Hill at 80.6%, Second Avenue at 78.1%, North Albany at 65.5%, Sheridan Hollow at 67.4%, Krank Park at 72.3%, and the Mansion Area at 48.4% (Statisticalatlas.com, 2018).

**Research Participants**

The participants were identified through purposeful sampling to identify Black male business owners who, at the time of this study, had resided in the predominately Black community for at least 3 years and who owned businesses within the same community. Purposeful sampling involves identifying and selecting participants who are knowledgeable or experienced with the phenomenon of study based on the judgment of the researcher (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). IPA utilizes purposeful sampling for
homogenous groups that are more closely defined and for whom the research questions are significant (Smith & Osborn, 2007).

According to Flick (2014), the sampling strategy in a qualitative study is predetermined based upon the logic and demographics in which the sample is defined. Larkin and Thompson (2012) asserted that participants should be chosen based upon the participant samples’ ability to understand the topic, understand the topic has relevance, and understand the pragmatic considerations.

IPA studies generally require small sample sizes, focusing on the quality rather than the quantity of participants (Larkin & Thompson, 2012). Additionally, IPA studies are rich and descriptively deep when conducted on relatively small groups and, therefore, the aim is to find a reasonably homogenous sample (Alase, 2017). As such, the sample may be drawn from a population with similar demographics and conducted within one particular community. Pietkiewicz and Smith (2014) posited that there is not a general rule for the number of participants selected, but Smith and Osborn (2007) recommended three to five participants for novice researchers using IPA for the first time. Therefore, three participants were purposively selected from a homogenous sample selected for validity and reliability.

The qualifications for participation in this study included (a) residence within the city of Albany for a minimum of 3 years, (b) self-identify as a Black male, and (c) own a business within the city of Albany. To identify three to five potential participants, the researcher utilized a professional network within the Capital Region of New York State, known as the Common Council leaders. Common Council leaders are elected representatives who serve as the legislative branch of the city of Albany’s government.
(City of Albany, NY, 2020). These leaders are constituents residing within the communities who regulate and protect the interest of the residents within their respective, geographical ward. Thus, Common Council leaders assisted the researcher in identifying Black business owners with shared experiences of one phenomenon of interest to inform the researcher who would qualify for this study.

Prior to conducting research and upon approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at St. John Fisher College (Appendix A), the Informed Consent Form (Appendix B) was provided to each participant. The consent form advised each participant of their confidential participation within this study. In accordance with the ethical standards to non-maleficence (avoiding harm), pseudonyms and encrypted files were used for each participant to maintain confidentiality (Flick, 2014). Each participant was advised of their voluntary participation and ability to opt out of the research at any time without negative recourse. Participants who completed the study will be provided with an electronic copy of the researcher’s dissertation upon request.

Identification of the potential research participants took place in two phases. Phase 1 included an email to the Common Council leaders who resided in predominately Black urban communities in the Capital Region of New York State (Appendix C) to enlist their assistance in identifying participants. Phase 2 included an email (Appendix D) to Mission Accomplished Transition Services, one of the leading not-for-profit organizations in the Capital Region and a member of the Black Business Council, to enlist their support in identifying business owners through their professional network. This organization assisted in identifying additional participants if a successful number of qualifying participants did not yield from the Common Council Ward leaders’ efforts. An
invitation to participate in the study was emailed or mailed to business owners who were identified through the Albany Common Council Ward leaders and/or individuals garnered from Mission Accomplished Transition Services (Appendix E) that included a demographic questionnaire (Appendix F) that was to be completed by each potential business owner to ensure the participant criteria was met.

**Instruments Used in Data Collection**

The researcher was the main instrument for data collection. Semi-structured interviews are the most popular method to acquire the rich detailed experiences of participants in an IPA study (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). IPA interviews are not prescribed, Smith and Osborn (2007) suggested creating an interview schedule in advance, which allows the researcher to think explicitly about the aim of the study and align the interview questions with the research questions. As such, each interview question was designed to elicit the lived experiences from each participant through the lens of critical race theory and garner their perceptions on how to address police disparities from an asset based community development perspective. These interview questions (Appendix G), were modified based upon the participant responses to allow for exploration into areas of importance (Smith & Osborn, 2007). Formulating questions and prompts in advance to encourage participant engagement was considered by the researcher (Smith & Osborn, 2007).

It is the researcher’s responsibility to ensure the conversation aligns with the intended topic through guided questions, rather than dictating what will happen. This interview method allowed both the researcher and the participants to engage in dialogue in real time, providing the opportunity for flexibility with little prompting from the
interviewer (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014; Smith & Osborn, 2007). Smith and Osborn (2007) suggested four interviewing techniques known as prompts. These prompts include allowing the participant time to respond to questions, utilizing minimal probes, which encourage the participant to tell more about a particular experience or a statement, asking one question at time, and monitoring the effects the interview may be having on the participant, which maybe expressed through nonverbal cues. The process of funneling utilizing an interview schedule through a series of established questions provides the respondents to give their own views (Smith & Osborn, 2007).

Pietkiewicz and Smith (2014) suggested researchers have developed their interviewing skills, active listening, and the ability to ask open-ended questions prior to beginning their research. The success of an interview relies on the ability of the researcher to enable the participant to talk about the subject. As such, asking questions that elicit the views of the respondent is more likely to provide unbiased data. Smith and Osborn (2007) purported asking questions that are neutral and refraining from leading through the use of open-ended questions and avoiding jargon are more likely to allow respondents to talk about their thoughts or feelings. The interview was approximately 60 to 90 minutes in duration for each participant (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014; Smith & Osborn, 2007).

In general, the date, time, and place for the interview is based upon the comfort and convenience of the participant. However, in accordance with the national, state, and local guidelines which prevents in-person, face-to-face interviews, due to the current Coronavirus pandemic, interviews were conducted through tele-research and virtual technology per St. John Fisher IRB updated guidelines. Although traditional methods of
pad and pen are important and should be utilized to capture observations, verbal and nonverbal cues that occur during the interview process, in this unprecedented instance, two digital records were used to assist in data collection (Alase, 2017). Typically, semi-structured interviews are done face-to-face; in-person online interviewing provides an alternate option closest to performing in-person interviews (Flick, 2014). Online technologies, such as Zoom, replicates face-to-face interviewing by offering real-time interactions, which include sound and written text (Archibald et al., 2019). While comparable virtual platforms, such as Skype, exist, the advantage of using the Zoom site allows researchers with the ability to record and store interviews securely, which is particularly important in research studies (Archibald et al., 2019). Thus, Zoom was used for the participant interviews. The researcher conducted a pilot test with two colleagues to familiarize the researcher with the interview protocol, determine participants’ understanding of potential interview questions, test the Zoom online technology platform, and test the Temi professional transcription services.

**Procedures for Data Collection and Analysis**

IPA is utilized by researchers who are interested in learning something new about the respondents’ psychological world, which may be in the form of the respondents’ counter stories (Smith & Osborn, 2007). Therefore, the aim of IPA is to understand the content and complexity of the respondents’ meanings, which involves the researcher engaging in an interpretative relationship with the transcript, utilizing the proposed steps for IPA. According to Alase (2017), the process of interpreting and analyzing the interview data can be strenuous and confusing. As such, establishing an organized system of data collection and sound analysis is vital.
The researcher’s initial step of multiple reading and making notes involved close reading of the interview transcripts multiple times to identify common themes, words, or phrases that were repeated in the participants’ responses, verbatim. The researcher moved between emic (from within) and etic (from the outside) perspectives, to illuminate concepts or understanding of the problem (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). The field notes taken during the interview were useful to highlight distinct phrases and relevant notes that can help formulate a concise phrase at a higher level of abstraction (Alase, 2017; Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). Repeated listening to the audio recordings was done to provide new insights and thoughts of potential significance. This systemic process will help the researcher condense words and sentences into a transcript of meaningful units (Alase, 2017; Smith & Osborn, 2007).

The second step was to transform the notes into emergent themes to formulate comprehensive notes reflecting concise annotations of the comments generated from the interview. In this process, the researcher identified categories, themes, and patterns for each participant’s transcript. This process was meant to help the researcher break down the responses and terms used by the participants during the interviews to ascertain the core essence of the participants’ lived experiences as they related to the subject matter (Saldaña, 2015). The researcher’s next step was to seek relationships and cluster themes identified from each entire transcript and utilize this final list of superordinate themes and subordinate themes (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). The superordinate themes are described as the overarching connection of the experiences expressed by each participant during the interviews. The subordinate themes are the participants’ individual responses in relation to the phenomenon.
Alase (2017) described the category phase as the final stage that allows the researcher to narrow down the words of the participants to encapsulate the central meaning of their responses in clustered themes. Smith and Osborn (2007) posited the clustering of themes should be checked within the transcript to be sure the connections are made from the primary source, the participant. Copies of the transcript were provided to the participant to review, a process known as a member check to ensure the accuracy, validity, and reliability of the data. Once the final themes were interpreted, a narrative account of this data was summarized and presented, utilizing Quirkos (2020) software to interpret the qualitative analysis.

Saldaña (2015) offered a variety of coding methods for qualitative researchers. Although descriptive coding is customary for most qualitative studies, descriptive coding is not recommended for smaller samples which do not reveal much insight. In vivo coding methodology is particularly appropriate for novice qualitative researchers, and it is particularly useful in coding actual words to deepen the understanding of cultures and worldviews (Saldaña, 2015). In vivo codes provide imagery and concept development, in comparison to descriptive coding useful for longitudinal studies and comparative analysis. Therefore, in vivo coding was used for this study.

The researcher was aware of phrases and areas of emphasis by the participants, responses that appear to be significant to a participant should be provided an in vivo code in quotation marks. Saldaña (2015) suggested organizing the in vivo codes and organizing outlined clusters that suggest categories from macro to micro order next to every line of data. Organizing coding is done through researchers’ reflection of analytic memo writing and second cycle coding of in vivo codes. Consistent with IPA, this
researcher adhered to the ethical standard of working this study until it was void of explicit or implicit biases that may have jeopardized the integrity and validity of the study. This was done by removing any of the researchers’ personal experiences or biases from the lived experiences of the research participants who were identified prior to conducting research.

**Summary**

This chapter described the IPA qualitative method of inquiry that was used to study Black business owners’ perspectives in addressing policing disparities in the predominantly Black community. An overview of the IPA design was presented and provided reflective first-person accounts from Black business owners’ lived experiences toward answering the research questions. The research context, participants, and instruments, as well as the data analysis, was presented as well as a completion timeline for this study.

Chapter 4 reports the results of this study. Chapter 5 discusses the interpretation of those findings, implications, and limitations, and recommendations are made.
Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore Black male business owners’ perspectives on addressing policing disparities in predominately Black urban communities in the Capital Region of New York State. IPA was used to interview three Black male business owners who have resided in the identified communities collectively for over 20 years. The use of IPA during the interview process allowed the researcher to explore the commonalities in the lived experiences of the three Black male participants. Additionally, IPA relies on the synthesis of reflective experiences of the participants within their unique context, which allows for a more robust study (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014).

Chapter 3 highlighted the use of purposive sampling in two phases. Phase 1 included an email to the Common Council leaders who resided in predominately Black urban communities of the Capital Region in New York State to identify participants within their communities. Upon implementation of Phase 1, no eligible participants were identified. Thus, the researcher implemented Phase 2 of the recruitment process. Phase 2 was implemented to secure participants through the collaboration with Mission Accomplished Transition Services, which is one of the leading not-for-profit organizations in the Capital Region. Through the professional network, Mission Accomplished Transition Services identified five viable Black male business owners. The researcher contacted these potential participants of which four Black male business
owners responded to the inquiry. One of the Black business owners did not meet the minimum qualifications of owning a business for 3 years. As such, three Black male business owners were invited to participate in this study.

Semi-structured, in-depth interviews of these three participants conveyed vivid examples of the participants lived experiences and allowed for the participants to share their thoughts and feelings relating to the phenomenon of policing disparities within their predominately Black communities. The participants’ ages ranged from 30-50 years old, which is consistent with the 18 or older criterion for participation outlined in the consent form (Appendix B). In compliance with St. John Fisher’s IRB guidelines, due to the novel coronavirus, COVID-19, all participants were interviewed online utilizing the face-to-face video software, Zoom. Each participant interview was conducted confidentially for approximately 60 minutes. Upon completion of each interview, the participants were provided transcripts and follow-up emails to address any questions, concerns, or changes to the interview transcript. Two of the three participants responded to the researcher’s inquiry to provide additional information (a participant’s store code of ethics and a participant’s poem) to add to their interviews.

The participants, at the time of this study, had businesses that specialized in merchandising, consulting, and youth development. These business owners had a combined total of over 25 years of business acumen within their field. The analysis of the data reflects the experiences and perspectives of each participant. The participants in this study agreed to be referred to as Participant 1 (P1), Participant 2 (P2), and Participant 3 (P3), and thus, they are identified this way throughout this manuscript to protect their confidentiality.
The researcher sought to understand the perceptions and lived experiences of the Black male business owner participants concerning police disparities in their neighborhoods of business and how each might inform strategies for addressing policing disparities from an asset community member perspective. Transcripts of the semi-structured interviews were disseminated into three superordinate themes and four subordinate themes. The finalized themes were further examined utilizing Quirkos (2020) qualitative data analysis software, which provided a visual analysis of the themes. The following three research questions guided this study:

1. How do Black male business owners perceive policing practices in their community?
2. What do Black male business owners identify as factors that influence the safety of their community?
3. What strategies do Black male business owners recommend for addressing policing practices in the predominately Black, urban communities of the Capital Region in New York State?

Data Analysis and Findings

IPA was used to explore the lived experiences of three Black male business owners, residing in the Capital Region of New York State. Pietkiewicz and Smith (2014) suggested researchers immerse themselves into the data to develop a deeper understanding of the investigated phenomenon police disparities. This process of immersion helped the researcher identify key concepts, themes, phrases, and statements made by the participants. Emergent themes were then identified from each transcript and compared across all interviews to capture the essence of the participants’ lived
experiences. Utilizing in vivo codes, the participants’ interview transcripts were coded and revealed rich metaphors, examples, and commonalities among the three Black male business owners (Saldaña, 2016). The research employed the use of Quirkos (2020), a qualitative research software program, to analyze the data and validate connections garnered from the participant interviews. The Quirkos (2020) software program provided a visual representation of the codes that were used to qualify the participant findings as depicted in (Appendix H).

The final codes were examined through CRT and ABCD theory frameworks, and they were categorized into concepts and themes. These concepts and themes provided deep insight into strategies and recommendations for addressing policing disparities. The analysis of the findings is organized by the three concepts, three superordinate themes, and four subordinate themes that emerged from the data. Smith et al. (2009) described a superordinate theme as a group of emergent primary themes that are connected and described by each participant in the study at a slightly higher level of abstraction. Subordinate themes are the reflective responses of each individual participant. As such, the researcher sought to connect the overarching themes among the participants interviewed, which were directly related to CRT and ABCD theory frameworks that guided this phenomenological qualitative study. CRT explores how race is embedded within institutional structures that increase the likelihood of disparate treatment of minority communities and other marginalized groups (Bell, 1991). CRT emphasizes the importance of “giving voice” to members of disenfranchised groups, using “counter stories.” Counter storytelling allows for underrepresented groups, whose voices are not
typically reflected in the literature, to tell their stories by intervening, exposing, and challenging dominant racial ideologies.

Building upon this framework, ABCD theory utilizes a participatory approach in collaboration with communities to identify strategies for problem solving. The presented themes in this chapter collectively describe parts of an experience that are reflective of each individual participant and also connect with the common themes among all the Black male business owners in this study.

This comparative analysis allowed the researcher to make note of participant phrases and combine them into meaningful units. The meaningful units were captured in short phrases directly from the participants’ responses. According to Quest (2014), “IPA is an iterative process with theme names moving back and forth from the researcher’s words to participant' words and from individual participants to the group of participants” (p. 62). The findings from the data analysis of the participant interviews relating to three specific concepts derived from CRT and ABCD theory are detailed in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1**

*Summary of Concepts, Superordinate, and Subordinate Themes*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept</th>
<th>Superordinate Theme</th>
<th>Subordinate Theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intersectionality (CRT)</td>
<td>Duality</td>
<td>Black Man in America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Changing the narrative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation to Act (ABCD)</td>
<td>Creating Access</td>
<td>Educating the youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships Build a Community (ABCD)</td>
<td>Community Inclusion</td>
<td>Giving voice to the Black community</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Concept: Intersectionality**

The first concept, intersectionality, emerged as a consistent category to describe the participants’ lived experiences and how their identities as a Black man, community member, and business owner overlapped. Critical race theorist, Crenshaw (1989), described how race, class, gender, and other characteristics “intersect” and provide a lens into how individuals view the world. Intersectionality provides an overview of the Black male business owners’ lived experiences and is the underpinning of beliefs, thoughts, and actions these participants expressed during their interviews. The superordinate theme that emerged from this concept was “duality,” which refers to the positionality of the Black male participants in different spaces. The two subordinate themes directly related to the superordinate theme were: “Black man in America” and “changing the narrative.”

**Superordinate Theme: Duality.** This superordinate theme emerged from the participants’ perspective, directly linked to Crenshaw’s (1989) concept of intersectionality. Duality is the intersection of race and gender and explores the historical lived experiences of minority groups (Crenshaw, 1989). Each participant shared the experience of being a Black man in America and how becoming a Black male business owner changed the perceived narrative of those Black males. According to Delgado and Stefancic (2001) the racial depiction of Black men is embedded in the psyche of Americans as a result of messages, images, and stereotypes “changing the narrative through words can undo the meaning others have attached to those same words” (p. 51). The participants in this study shared how their lived experiences shaped their personal view of themselves as Black youths, as Black men, and as Black business owners. The superordinate theme of duality was expressed by this study’s Black male business
owners. All described their experiences with police as young men and adults, which shaped these individuals’ perceptions of policing practices. Each participant described their individual experiences with police, which was believed to be in relation to their race and gender within a predominately Black community. Each participant’s past experiences with the police had impacted their ability to engage with the police on a voluntary basis.

At the time of this study, P1 was a Black male who owned a consulting business and provided performing arts training for youth and adults within his community and the surrounding communities. This participant was born and raised in the Capital Region of New York State where he primarily resided for over 30 years. P1 shared that his familial upbringing was rooted in valuing education. Additionally, P1 described how, throughout his childhood, his parents reinforced the importance of knowing his history as an “African American” in the United States and being proud of his culture. When queried about policing practices, specifically relating to being a Black male business owner in his community, P1 expressed concerns about his safety in light of the deaths of Breonna Taylor and George Floyd as a result of police brutality.

I don’t feel safe when I am traveling to do my job because I can be stopped, detained, or abused by police. I travel a lot by car and many incidents with police are during traffic stops for Black people.

The intersectionality of P1’s historical and modern-day meaning of being a Black man in America provided insight into the duality he faced as a Black business owner. P1 looked intently at the researcher and said:

I need to be more aware of my surroundings and the fact that I am a Black man. I recently began to think about how I was locked out of one of the buildings I
frequent to do business, and I was peeking into the window to see if anyone was in there. Although I am trusted and respected within my community, this could have ended badly for me if someone called the police with the belief that I am acting suspiciously.

Pausing briefly, P1 continued, “although I am safe in my home office in a Black neighborhood, I can still be seen as a suspicious character by the police, which is the fear most Black people have—that narrative has not changed.”

P2 described his experience with policing practices as a Black man, father, and businessman. At the time of his interview, P2 was a 36-year-old Black male business owner who had resided in the community for over 15 years. This business owner specialized in youth development and advocacy. P2 described policing practices in his community as particularly troubling in relation to Black youth. P2 stated:

I believe police should work with youth in a different way, but I don’t think that is their purpose. Although I now have good experiences with police, it is because I know them, and I understand the system and don’t try to step out of my comfort zone.

After a brief pause, P1 stated: “This is confidential correct?” After concern was expressed about the confidentiality of this interview, the participant continued with:

Okay so, I use to be an optimist, but now I find myself thinking more militant. I recently learned Black businessmen were hung, historically and literally, from Jim Crow through the 1960s, and police were and still are a part of the KKK. I am a Black man at all times, and I grew up being harassed by police; however, now as a business owner, the police officers who frequent the area know me. Although I
am a Black man in America, as a business owner, I know that I am seen as someone who is in power. A lot of my work is in the Black community. I have not had any negative interactions with police since I was 21-years-old. I think Black youth have more negative experiences with the police, as I did, and I don’t believe that narrative has changed.

P3 was originally from New York City but relocated to the Capital Region to pursue his career in merchandising over 20 years ago. P3 described his experiences with police in the community as a business owner.

In the last 15 years, my interactions with police has been business related, initially I was not introduced to police. When I expanded my business moving about a half mile from my initial location, where there are more individuals who come to work in this area, I was then introduced to beat officers. The police would come in and say hello and let me know who they are, and I would do my best to treat them (the police) like men and women while keeping in mind who they are, I never lose sight of who they are.

The researcher asks the P3 to expand upon the point of never losing sight of who the police are.

Sure, no problem, basically, the goal of a Black man is to have the least amount of police interaction as possible whether conscious or unconsciously. For me, as a business owner, I had to switch my mentality a bit although I am still conflicted with that as far as my upbringing (not to trust the police) versus where I am today (police as a community partner), I have to table my feelings and think in business owner mode before I call the police and remember they are public servants, and I
have that understanding to put me mentally in a place to interact with police. I have had my share of break-ins from youth, or drug addicts trying to get a come up (quick money), but I don’t think it is less safe. I think it’s the environment. My location is in between “the hood” and the business district. There are outpatient programs, shelters, halfway houses, and that melting pot of people doesn’t make it unsafe because I have never felt unsafe in either of the locations my businesses were located because of my reputation in the community. My only concern is when I am not here. The current atmosphere has impacted my business with protests and what led to the rioting here (death of George Floyd) and around the world. There are people who have not stuck to the script of not messing with Black-owned businesses, and while I understand it, I don’t condone it. I don’t want small businesses to suffer as a result of our protests and movements, which is the eradication of racism to bring social justice to Black people. Systemic racism has been the crux of what has been wrong around the world. I don’t like the term “Black Lives Matter” because it is obvious, I feel like I should not have to tell you my life matters, we have value. I don’t like it, but I understand it as a battle cry because of the narrative systemic racism has put on my life at a devalued state without consequence. It angers me to say “Black Lives Matter”; it should be obvious.

Gathering his final thoughts, P3 continued:

Being a Black business owner is, overall, in my opinion, the polar opposite of being a slave. Being a Black business owner is the opposite because when we were first brought here to the United States we were brought here as property. The
slave owner was the business owner and he utilized us as the servants who were not being paid and our value was only that of a servant and property. After slavery was abolished and we went through Jim Crow, being an entrepreneur has flipped the system from being the chattel and property, and now you are in the position to enrich your community, which was not done when we were brought here. We were at the lowest ring; we had no chance of being a business owner during slavery. Being a Black business owner is truly tremendous from what we came over here as, and I take that very proudly. The Black business owner is the anti-slave.

Each participant conveyed a message of skepticism and distrust of law enforcement stemming from historical and personal experiences. Additionally, all the participants indicated that while their relationships with police had improved as a Black male business owner, each still had a fear of police officers within and outside of their communities. These Black male business owners each described their perceptions of police disparities through a multidimensional lens from childhood and adulthood, and the participants’ experiences as business owners, thereby answering Research Question 1 of this study. The duality each participant faced as a community member and business owner was relative to their consciousness of being a Black man in America which emerged as a subordinate theme described by each participant.

**Subordinate Theme: Black Man in America.** Black men in America have been represented largely as criminal and dangerous (Burrell, 2010). The Black male business owners in this study specifically stated an awareness of being a Black man in America and the risk and responsibilities that come with their identities. P1 stated:
Being a Black man in America, I have to remember [that] in predominately White communities, I can’t arrive to an appointment too early to prevent looking suspicious. The bottom line is the perception of a Black guy looking suspicious anywhere can be seen as threat, as we have seen recently in the death of Ahmad Aubrey, Breonna Taylor, and now George Floyd.

P2 stated:

I am a Black man in America, and I am aware that I am Black man at all times. If I just stayed home, I may be less at risk, but I cannot stay home when there is work to be done in the community.

P3 stated: “The goal of a Black man is to have as less police interaction as possible whether conscious or unconscious. When I get pulled over, I must take necessary precautions as a Black male.”

Each participant highlighted the recent and historical killings of Black men and women by police, which heightened their awareness whether these participants were at work or in the community. Additionally, each participant underscored the shift regarding how each is perceived depending upon the space they are in. Thus, the subordinate theme changing the narrative emerged as a critical subordinate theme described during the interview of each participant.

**Subordinate Theme: Changing the Narrative.** Each participant described being viewed by the world and, conversely, how each depicted himself as Black male business owners who were fathers, role models, and community advocates. The theme of changing the narrative was derived from each participant’s motivation to be seen as an individual and the expressed desire for the elimination of negative stereotypes that put them each at
a greater risk for harm. All three participants described a transformation regarding how each interacted with police upon becoming a business owner. P2 stated:

As a youth, I remember being harassed by police; as a business owner, my experiences have been good. This is in part because of what I do in the neighborhood where certain officers frequent. Supporting Black businesses is what I do, and as an adult working in the community, I have not had any negative interactions with police. I believe this is because I know them, and I understand the system, and I don’t try to step out of my comfort zone.

Similarly, P3 stated:

Police interaction after incarceration has been very few. In the last 15 years has been business related. They come in and say hello and let me know who they are, and I do my best to just treat them like men and woman and keep in mind who they are I never lose sight of who they are.

I am going to treat them like men and women who are on a playing field, although mentally, I don’t forget who they are and what their intentions may or may not be. I expect them to treat my business with respect. When they see me outside of my business, the rapport has been built and they [police] say hello when I am out with my family. Black business owners make police take a second look at me and not just see me as a street thug just, by the way that I dress, which causes them to take another glance or look at me and not think I am up to no good. It allows at least the police that have gotten to know me to take a second look and reconsider Black males who look like me and address him with respect instead of attack mode.
Additionally, all three participants indicated the importance of viewing themselves as assets, leaders, and activists for Black people. P3 further stated:

My business is an asset because I have been in the community for over 10 years. I see youth coming in all the time and for them to see a young Black man in charge of his own business is empowering, like Barack Obama, when he became president, many Black children said “I want to be the president,” which was not said before him. Me being in the community opens children’s eyes to the possibility.

P1 reflected upon his upbringing, which led him to advocacy and consulting:

I have parents’ family members who were conscious of being Black in the world we live in and having that responsibility; therefore, I had preknowledge to consider the impacts of race, identity, and diversity. But even with that preknowledge, I didn’t have the context to speak or advocate for myself when I was being an outlet for bias and being pushed around by someone with privilege and lacked the context and knowledge to advocate for myself. I was lucky enough to get professional educational training through college. The narrative for Black people around the world has not changed. Black people have had to bear witness to the death of someone who looks like them, not just one person, but three people, in a short span of time. We are currently dealing with shock of those deaths. We have had to find a way to pull ourselves out of a depression, shock, and emotional unrest to express tools and our own experience to do what we can to educate. As an advocate, this led me to wanting to give voice and create access.
The second concept, motivation to act, is grounded in the ABCD theoretical framework and emerged as a category because all three participants collectively referenced the importance of engaging community members to contribute within the community.

**Concept: Motivation to Act**

According to McIntosh (2012), “citizens possess the power and ability to move change forward when they are able to recognize the power and the gifts of the community” (p. 24). One of the primary goals of ABCD theory is to organize community members for a collective purpose. P1 stated:

Business owners need to attend community events. [It is] important to be seen and establish relationships with police and community members to let them know who you are. For Black community members, this is important because Black business owners are one more person that looks like them and lives in the community. A voice that has capital, has relationships, and as, I believe, that I aspire other community members to go after their dreams.

According to Green et al. (2006), people in leadership in everyday life (associations, congregations, neighborhoods, and local business) must be at the center of community initiatives rather than just helping agency leaders. It is essential to engage the wider community as actors (community members) not just as recipients of services (clients).

The Black male business owners in this study agreed that while the motivation to act is essential, creating access is equally important which emerged as a superordinate theme.

**Superordinate Theme: Creating Access.** This superordinate theme emerged from the participants’ perspective that was directly linked to the Green et al. (2006)
concept of motivation to act. Each participant shared how he leveraged his platform as a business owner to influence community members to engage and create access to promote community building. P1 reflected on how his business helped the community:

Here, I had all of this knowledge, and I thought about how I could give back where funds are not the leading thought to prevent individuals from pursuing their dreams. I want to provide an opportunity for youth, I believe that I am role model and my role is impacting the community by providing a service that is “fronted” [led] by a Black man. When I think about it, there are so many myths about the Black community that impact community growth. Sure, my space and other Black businesses are a place of refuge. Our spaces mean a lot more to us because we don’t have many of them. Having a Black-owned business means we can be seen and heard and where we matter.

Similarly, P2 discussed his role in the community as a business owner and active community member.

I see myself as a role model, mentor, and peer, and advocacy is at the heart of what I do. I found that working with the youth was what I was passionate about like, “what are youth doing with their time?” I originally wanted to create a safe haven for children, which was my original concept, but I was preparing at the time to become a father myself. So, instead, I began to teach performing arts around the city for free. I remember not knowing where to find resources as a youth, and now I am able to implement those tools in my teachings.

Reflecting upon his youth experience in relation to access, P2 recalled growing up in the Bronx:
I only had what I needed and what was available in front of me. Coming to the Capital Region, I became a search-and-find type of person, and I believe that having that level of drive has helped me. I began to put myself around people who have resources and know how to utilize them. Having those tools readily available to me was a huge part of my development and a big part of now being able to assist the people around me. As a business owner, I believe I am seen as a person in power in the Black community. I work with other community organizers and we work in the community to empower the members and disrupt the bullshit systems that we have. We live in a capitalist society, and with my knowledge, I realize that I have to be conscious of those systems. It’s kind of like having a safety plan for the safety plan.

Translating this into his work with youth education, P2 added:

Well, teaching the youth how to be entrepreneurs is what I was getting to. I work with other leaders and local organizations showing youth documentaries on 1804 (film about the Haitian revolution), having think tanks, and advocating at common council meetings with recommendations. Being in that space to push individuals makes me feel that there are things that come with the activities that I do—meaning opposition. If I were sitting on my couch watching football, I would be less of a threat. Joining in this fight for social justice is dangerous.

P1 and P2 discussed the use of activism, education, and advocacy to engage community members. Conversely, P3 utilized his business to create a culture and experience for patrons of his business. When asked about how his role impacted community members, P3 stated:
Before relocating to the Capital Region, I was arrested at 17 and went to jail for 3 years. Being in jail changed my mind. When I was incarcerated, I learned the majority of youth and adults were undereducated. Many were unable to pass the GED, and I realized being behind those walls was not for me, and I acknowledge the fact that education was not there. Only a few individuals were educated, which were the few I gravitated towards who were of like mind but 80-90% were not educated.

When prompted to further explore the concept of how being in jail changed his mind, P3 responded:

I recognized that the culture of who I was, and what I needed to do to survive needed to change. I knew I needed to aim for success, which would be better for myself. So, when I relocated here from Brooklyn, and I earned two college degrees before opening my first business in 2006, I went from the dynamic of a survival mentality to a success mentality, which are totally different. Think of it like this, before I got locked up, I had a rabbit mindset, I was running around town like a rabbit with his head cut off without a focus. Being behind those walls [in jail] made me tap into my turtle. Life is a marathon, and I can win this race if I grind slow versus running around like a rabbit with my head cut off. I always had an entrepreneur spirit in that I recognized a need and a thought to make money.

When the researcher asked P3 saw himself as an asset in the community, he responded:

Yes, in many ways. When I started my business, I didn’t just want to be a merchandising store. I knew I needed to be more, and one of the things I created [was] a code of ethics that were given to every customer, when they come into the
store, it changes the atmosphere. It is not just about what I am selling, it’s about
enhancing the outer and the inner as well as building a rapport that goes beyond
my business. My atmosphere is so important to me, and, currently, COVID-19 has
impacted my ability to give out free samples and providing an experience in the
way I would like to provide to my customers due to the guidelines and social
distancing rules. Secondly, as a young Black man, although I am not that young, I
am in proximity of younger Black males, and I understand them. My age and
understanding of the street dynamic allows me to have that relatability. I am in
charge of products they [customers] desire, and this provides me with an in to be
able to talk to them. My business is an asset because I have been in the
community for over 10 years. I see youth coming in all the time and to see a
young Black man in charge of his own business is empowering like when Barak
Obama became president. When he became president, many Black children said
“I want to be the president,” which was not said before him. Me, being in the
community, opens children’s eyes to the possibility. The word “can’t” no longer
lived in our vocabulary when our people realized this was real and no longer a
fantasy. Whatever you can see, you can be.

Echoing the sentiments expressed by P3 regarding the importance of role modeling and
positive Black images and messaging, Sternadori (2017) found in his study that the use of
positive images and characterizations of Black males decreases the stigma associated
with historically Black male stereotypes.

Research Question 2 asked, “What do Black male business owners identify as
factors that influence the safety of their community?” Overall, the participants indicated
that communities are defined by a group of people who live within a neighborhood and have shared values, and the residency of police officers is believed to be a critical barrier in establishing a relationship with police who do not reside in their communities. The absence of police officers who are from the community is believed to further perpetuate discourse between community members and police, thus decreasing opportunities for engagement, collaboration, and role modeling for youth in the community. This superordinate theme was identified as a critical factor to building stronger community and police relations.

**Superordinate Theme: Educating the Youth.** This superordinate theme emerged from the participants expressing the importance of education and knowledge throughout each participants’ interview, recalling how each incorporated teaching and learning into their businesses. P1 spoke passionately about exposing the Black community to performing arts, “There was not really a lot of performing arts instructors that provide the opportunity for youth in Black communities, and if you didn’t’ know this existed, you missed out.

P2 discussed youth engagement and strategies for working with youth to promote positive relationships:

We need to stay engaged with the youth. I found my joy in working with youth and help youth translate their experiences into something positive. I am a role model, mentoring and peer support advocacy is the heart of what I do. When you are young, you are more impressionable, and I think police can work with youth in a different way. Real collaboration that is not driven by funding, rather [by the]
police and business owners, should come together to support Black and Brown communities and it starts with the youth.

P3 proudly discussed how his mission statement encompassed informative and inspiring messaging that was reflective of the youth in his community.

When I started my business, I didn’t want it to just be another merchandise store. I knew I needed to be more and one of the things I created was my customer code of ethics. They were like 10 commandments that were given to every customer. When customers come in for the first time, it immediately changes the perception and the atmosphere. It’s not just about selling a product, it is about enhancing the outer and the inner, as well so the rapport that I build goes beyond the purchase of my product.

Overall, all three participants specified that educating the youth within their community is the fabric of their business and their core values aimed towards creating relationships and community building which emerged as a concept in this study.

Concept: Relationships Build a Community

The third concept, relationships build a community, is directly related to the ABCD theory guiding principles for engaging communities through intentional strategies to build relationships. This participatory approach engages members from within the community to identify solutions in collaboration with local organizations and associations. This concept emerged from participants’ recommendations and strategies for addressing police disparities. The themes derived from this concept are of community inclusion and identifying the subordinate theme of giving voice to the Black community.
Superordinate Theme: Community Inclusion. The superordinate theme, community inclusion, developed from the participants’ perspectives that relationships help to build a community. According to Green et al. (2006), transformation begins with finding useful ways to build bridges through inclusion. The subordinate theme “Giving voice to Black communities” was directly related to how policing disparities may be addressed in their communities.

Doane and Cumberland (2018) suggested that increased engagement of police through social interactions within the communities would increase community safety and better relationships with law enforcement. The participants were asked what recommendations and strategies each believed were needed to address policing disparities. P1 stated:

Police officers should have to live or become connected with the culture of the communities they serve. It is a deadly, irresponsible mix to have officers in a community they don’t understand or reside in. If nothing else, more training or education, or nothing will work.

When prompted to elaborate as to what additional training is needed, P1 replied:

It should be essential for officers to be trained in anti-racism or bias and the culture of Black people and what that entails. Anti-racism is a must toward Black people. If you live in the community, you should attend community meetings. It would be ideal if people who live or have businesses in the community stood up for members who are abused; that would be a huge step in giving voice to community members who are excluded.
P2 recommendations included:

Police and Black business owners should focus on the youth. When you are young, you are more impressionable. Focusing on the youth could help police focus on the real criminals. We need to keep in mind that youth have an ability to change in comparison to career criminals.

When prompted to elaborate on any additional recommendations or strategies, after a few seconds of silence, P2 stated:

I would recommend real collaboration. I don’t think police are all bad people, but I think if the entity of police were reconstructed, then police would actually walk their beats and engage all community members. Real collaboration that is not driven by funding, rather, police and business owners should come together to support Black and Brown communities starting with the youth.

Appearing to have more to say but struggling with how to verbalize his thoughts, P2 paused and then concluded:

I was just thinking, to be inclusive of police, there is a need for police to be of that community they serve. Not necessarily even Black but of that community. It is necessary to have peace, and if you have that, it allows for Black business owners to have real conversations even if they didn’t grow up there, they understand each other, which would help reduce crime and the dynamic between Black communities and police. I am usually an optimist but listening to this book regarding historical events and treatment of Black people during the 1960s, I find the issues during that time are still relevant today and it is disheartening. I am glad I have my kids that help me stay grounded.
P3 responded to recommendations and strategies of Black business owners in this way:

Being a Black business owner makes police take a second look at me and not just see me as a street thug just by virtue of the way that I dress. I cause them to take another glance and not look at me like I am up to no good. It allows at least police who have gotten to know me to reconsider Black males who look like me and address him with respect instead of attack mode. Interactions are important. We should all treat each other like men and women. When police officers approach people, there should be no fear. When I get pulled over, I have to take the necessary precautions as a Black male. I always take those precautions because I am far from thinking that it [police brutality] can’t happen to me. However, when I am at my business, it’s like my house, and I don’t treat police any different. When the police enter my business, I expect them to approach me and my business with respect. When I see them outside of my business with my family, rapport has been built and the police say hello, “you see me as a man when I am out with my family or just out with my kids.” This lets the officer know I am a tax-paying citizen. Their job is to protect and serve, and the relationship for the Black business owner is so crucial; because I look like the brother, they are pulling over in the street, the police knowing I am a business owner makes them take a second look at me and not judge or automatically stereotype me, and this is how it should be for everybody. At the very least, the police who I come into contact with are given a different context about Black men and take a second look or have a second thought about who Black men are that they don’t know but might look like me or not.
Police protect areas that pay them—the people who pay the taxes—especially in the business district. They protect the area because of the prevalence of state workers and other businesses.

When queried about recommendations for Black business owner, P3 stated:

Yes, and there are a lot of Black businesses in the community doing excellent work already, but I would recommend that business owners attend community events not just rallies. Going to community events would help to establish relationships and let the community and police know who you are, which is one more person who looks like them. Black business owners should make their presence known to police and get involved in the community—let the community know who you are. The more people the police know, it’s another person to help change the way police view of Black people. I would also include the politicians—let them know who you are.

Research Question 3 asks, “What strategies do Black male business owners recommend for addressing policing practices in the predominately Black urban community of the Capital Region in New York State?” The participants identified training specific to anti-racism and funding which targets real collaboration between police and community members. According to the participants in this study, the funding would be reallocated to prioritize youth development inclusive of Black business owners. Thus, expanding the knowledge and collective efficacy of giving voice to Black communities as described in the final subordinate theme identified by all participants.

**Subordinate Theme: Giving Voice to Black Communities.** All three of the business owners identified as having power. Through business ownership and advocacy,
each leader identified the use of their platforms for positive messaging and images for community members and police, which could provide opportunities for change and treatment of Black community members. Additionally, all the participants indicated that it is their duty to engage members within their community to participate in community initiatives so they can start to build relationships and share their voice, ideas, and concerns, thus, giving agency to members within the community.

According to La Vigne et al. (2017), the experiences, views, and attitudes of community residents are often underrepresented, which contributes to community members’ negative perceptions of police. Similar to the participants’ recommendations, Newton (2018) recommended police training, community and police relationship building, and increased representation of police who are responsive to the diverse needs of the communities the police serve.

**Interpretative Analysis**

The three participants in this study shared their experiences as Black male business owners in the Capital Region of New York State. The superordinate themes and subordinate themes provided insight into how business owners can serve as leaders in the community to help address policing disparities in predominately Black communities. Utilizing CRT as the underpinning for the superordinate theme of duality and the subordinate themes of Black man in America and changing the narrative, these themes highlight the prominence of intersectionality between race, gender, and overall identity. ABCD theory served as the framework for the three superordinate themes of creating access and community inclusion, and the subordinate themes of educating the youth and giving voice to Black communities. Collectively, the themes provide a lens for the
examination of how Black business owners serve as assets to the communities, and the
themes highlight the recommendations these Black male business owners had for
addressing policing disparities. When coupled together, ABCD and CRT help to explore
a deeper meaning into the perspectives of the three Black male participants’ lived
experiences that guided the study.

Summary of Results

The purpose of this interpretative phenomenological qualitative study was to
identify recommendations and strategies for addressing policing disparities in
predominately Black communities in the Capital Region of New York State from an asset
perspective. Three Black male business owners were interviewed to explore their lived
experiences and how these experiences shaped their perceptions, behaviors, and
engagement practices with police as Black male business owners. This chapter presented
the results and data analysis from the participants and includes the CRT and ABCD
theory frameworks as a lens for this study.

The findings in this study yielded three superordinate themes and four subordinate
themes. The superordinate themes were (a) duality, (b) creating access, and (c)
community inclusion. The subordinate themes were (a) Black man in America,
(b) changing the narrative, (c) educating the youth, and (d) giving voice to Black
communities. The concept of intersectionality was directly related to CRT. Each
participant identified race and gender as factors relating to policing disparities. The
concepts that emerged from the ABCD theory were motivation to act and relationships
build community. These two concepts were derived from Green et al. (2006) principles of
engaging community members from an asset-based perspective, promoting the
identification of individuals’ gifts and resources toward community-building initiatives. As such, community engagement was found to be a critical element in building relationships with community members, police, and local business owners. Each participant discussed his motivation to create access to community members using each business owner’s platform to inspire and develop relationships to collaboratively eliminate policing disparities.

Chapter 5 summarizes the study and reiterates the significance for addressing policing disparities from a community asset perspective, discusses the limitations of the study, the implications of the findings, and makes recommendations for further research.
Chapter 5: Discussion

Introduction

The literature regarding Blacks and policing practices continues to suggest that predominantly Black communities are increasingly subjected to higher rates of incarceration and police brutality in comparison to any other racial or ethnic communities (Alexander et al., 2010; Pegues, 2017). Researchers have focused their attention on the needs of at-risk communities and have identified that the most effective way to engage Black communities is to build upon the assets that are embedded within those communities (Green & Goetting, 2010; Martinez, 2014). This study addresses the gap in research on recommendations and strategies from an asset-based perspective. The purpose of this study was to explore Black male business owners’ perceptions of policing practices in their predominately Black communities. In this chapter, the researcher briefly (a) outlines the major findings, (b) discusses how the findings relate to the current body of literature, (c) highlights implications for the findings (d) acknowledges limitations and delimitations of this study, (e) and provides recommendations for the further study and practitioners of the field. The following research questions guided this study:

1. How do Black male business owners perceive policing practices in their community?
2. What do Black male business owners identify as factors that influence the safety of their community?
3. What strategies do Black male business owners recommend for addressing policing practices in the predominately Black urban communities of the Capital Region in New York State?

The first phase of this research process involved the identification of the participants as indicated by IPA protocol. Three Black male business owners who resided and owned a business in a predominately Black urban community for a minimum of 3 years qualified and agreed to participate in this study. The second phase of the research process was achieved by employing a qualitative, interpretative phenomenological design to gain an understanding of the topic through the lens of Black male business owners through conducting one-on-one, semi-structured interviews employing open ended questions. Analysis of the data included repetitive reading of the transcript, noting development of themes, phrases, and connections of the participants’ patterns relative to the phenomenon. This study includes the findings based on the collection and analysis of data provided by three Black male business owners who, at the time of this study, resided and owned a business in a predominately Black urban community directly related to CRT and ABCD theory, which guided this phenomenological qualitative study. The three concepts that emerged from the Black business owners’ perceptions derived from the two theoretical frameworks. The three superordinate and four subordinate themes reveal a unique lens of factors that contribute to the thoughts, beliefs, and perceptions of policing practices.

This final chapter of this study connects the themes identified in the literature regarding recommendations and strategies for addressing policing disparities from an asset perspective. Additionally, this chapter provides the implications of this study’s
findings, which are applicable for police practitioners and reflect practical considerations for supporting engagement in community initiatives and intentional immersion within predominately Black communities. This new information may serve to inform practitioners, researchers, and local and state officials about the lived experiences of a small sample group of Black male business owners who reside in predominately Black communities and the importance of leveraging the community members’ voices to work proactively to improve community members’ relations with police. The implications that emerged from the study are discussed in the next section.

**Implications of Findings**

In this study, three Black male business owners were asked to share their lived experiences and perceptions of policing practices within their communities in the Capital Region of New York State. The findings from the lived experiences of these Black male business owners aligned with the theoretical frameworks of CRT and ABCD theory, which guided this study. The three concepts that emerged from the analysis of the participant data were intersectionality, motivation to act, and relationships build a community. The superordinate themes that emerged from the three concepts were (a) duality, (b) creating access, and (c) community inclusion. The subordinate themes were (a) Black man in America, (b) changing the narrative, (c) educating youth, and (d) giving voice to Black communities. This novel approach of utilizing CRT and ABCD theory underscores the importance of utilizing the counter stories of community members for addressing policing disparities from an asset perspective.
CRT

CRT served as the primary theoretical framework for understanding how the Black male business owners assigned meaning to their experiences of policing practices. The theory helped to conceptualize the research findings by centering the voices of these Black male business owners as community members who provided useful strategies for improving community and police relations. Specifically, CRT, as a framework, reflects a degree of cultural responsiveness regarding policing disparities and suggests the need for more cultural training and gives insight into how members of predominately Black communities perceive policing practices. These perceived practices in policing are related to race, gender, and racial differences in police practices that are perpetuated in predominately Black communities (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). To the degree to which the study participants understood their experiences with police disparities is consistent with CRT. The researcher notes that the participants’ acknowledged CRT through the expression of counter stories from their lived experiences of their interactions with police, specific to their race and gender as a Black man in America and as Black male business owners.

The Black male business owners in this study each expressed a shift in interactions with police upon becoming a business owner within their community. Prior to becoming a business owner, each participant expressed negative interactions with police particularly as youths. Each participant stated feeling targeted, marginalized, and mistreated by police. However, relationships with police became more positive, garnering more respect from police officers, due to their elevated community status as a business owner. Thus, the participants suggested that the shift from negative to positive
interactions with police was specific to their status in the community as Black male business owners. Additionally, the participants indicated that being a Black male is received differently depending on their status within the community. The perceived differences in treatment by police within their communities was relative to their experiences as Black male community members in comparison to Black male business owners.

**Duality**

The Black male participants in this study discussed their exposure to police throughout their life stages: as youth, as adults, and as Black male business owners. According to Smith and Silva (2011), the stigma of being Black in American society impacted the racial identity and predicted negative psychosocial outcomes in Blacks more than any other youth. The participants’ interviews highlight the differences among their interactions within and throughout those various stages, and interviews further detail how those experiences shaped the way each participant viewed and interacted with police. The differences in the treatment of these Black men are relative to their business titles and/or race and gendered positionality within the community.

This study’s findings align with the researcher Waymer’s (2008) study about Black male identity. In his study, Waymer (2008) described the interplay of competing ideologies regarding Black male identity. The findings of his study indicate that Black men often construct their identities in contrast and in resistance to negative messages they receive as youths. Waymer’s (2008) findings indicate that Black men often struggle with who they are and how they are perceived in America.
The participants in this study indicated that the formulation of their identity as Black men in America took shape during their youth. The counter stories from the participants in this study expressed that from an early age, as Black youth, each were stereotyped or identified as an offender without cause because of their intersecting gender and racial identities. At the individual level, these experiences contributed and reinforced the historical narrative of Black men as dangerous and criminal. The findings from this study are consistent with previous studies exploring the perceptions of Black men in America. Gau and Brunson (2010) interviewed Black male youth between the ages of 13-19-years-old reporting negative interactions with police perceived to be in relation to their status as poor, urban, Black males. Similarly, Norris and Billings (2017) analyzed how presidential speeches relating to crime policies influenced images of criminality, perpetuating the treatment of minority groups. According to Norris and Billings (2017), Black males in this study were explicitly defined as drug users, gang members, and individuals who were likely to be involved in criminal activity. Collectively, the findings from these studies recognize the importance of changing the narrative for Black men in America. Historical negative perceptions of Black men continue to perpetuate a dissonance between police and Black men, which limit the collective effort to addressing policing disparities.

Changing the Narrative

The participants in this study connect their modern-day experiences with police as equivalent to the historical treatment of slaves and Black communities post-Civil War era. P3 specifically described the Black male business owner as the “anti-slave.”
contextual metaphor relates to the historical inability of Black entrepreneurs to exist, given their status as slaves who were the property of their slave owners. According to the participants in this study, entrepreneurship for Black male business owners provides an opportunity for economic development, autonomy, and a way to utilize their skills and talents for financial gain. The participants in this study described how their businesses served as a platform to create and represent a progressive view of Black men and Black communities. According to Wingfield and Taylor (2016), race drives entrepreneurship in ways that shape Black business owners’ decisions and meaning-making processes. Similarly, the findings of this study suggest that entrepreneurship boosts the morale of Black communities, advances the knowledge of community members, and encourages participants to establish businesses that challenge racial, structural, and gendered inequality. Furthermore, the findings further suggest that experiences with race and racial discrimination are often the catalyst for entrepreneurship. Additionally, intersectionality of race, class, and gender are major factors shaping the decision for Black individuals to become entrepreneurs as a mechanism to combat perceived discrimination.

Each participant utilized his business as a platform to improve the communities in which they resided, which was done by providing mentorship, advocacy for policy changes, think tanks with youth, and promoting a code of ethics to build character. Throughout their interviews, each participant reflected upon the familial influences, life experiences, and relationships contributing to their trajectories as business owners and community leaders. These participants exercised a motivation to create access through inclusion of predominately Black community members, thus changing the narrative for
Black males who have been perceived historically and contemporarily as criminal as opposed to assets with undiscovered gifts.

**ABCD**

ABCD theory emphasizes a need for an alternative path leading toward the development of policies and activities based upon the skills and assets of marginalized communities (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993). The ABCD theoretical framework recognizes the key to community building is to utilize the existing businesses, organizations, and embedded resources and connect community members and assets to one another to multiply their power and effectiveness. The Black business owners in this study identified themselves as assets within their communities and identified their responsibility to use their status to advocate, mentor, and model the way for community members—particularly the youth. Practitioners of ABCD theory begin with resources that are present in the community and the capacities of its residents, they do not begin with what is absent. ABCD theory is a relationship-driven strategy, which is already recognized by community organizers. All the participants identified a motivation to act for the purpose of building stronger relationships for the community and to eliminate negative interactions between predominately Black members and the police officers who serve them. The business owners discussed how their work with customers and/or community members encourages members to participate in community initiatives and positively engage with community organizations and associations.

**Creating Access**

The Black male business owners counter stories provided insight regarding how the lack of access to resources and the knowledge that they experienced as youths
growing up in predominately Black communities influenced their decision to use their businesses as a resource for members within the communities that they serve. Moore et al. (2017) posited that the path to success for Black males may be influenced by their understanding of their past and present conditions in this society. The Black male business owners in this study discussed the various pathways for achieving access, which included creating alliances and establishing values and principles to maximize their creativity. P1 discussed the absence of affordable performing arts programs and classes to teach youth and adults the art of speaking to promote self-advocacy. P2 reflected upon his experience as a youth and discussed how his business idea was developed to create the access for youth that he did not have growing up within his community. Similarly, P3 discussed his mission to create and promote positive imagery to build character for Black community members who aspire to have their own businesses. These Black male business owners proudly expressed the ability to provide community members with a space of refuge for education and access as an additional resource within their community.

*Educating Youth*

All the participants highlighted education as a core value that each participant espoused. While not ignoring policies and predisposed racial ideologies that play a role on what is normative in society, these Black male business owners also provided insight for opportunities that could be made available through making linkages and connections with other Black-owned businesses in their community to promote collective change. The counter stories of these participants draw attention to the racial consciousness of Black males in relation to challenging and changing policies and practices. Moore et al. (2017)
suggested that Black males in America need to reimagine who they are and visualize their lives void of racial stereotypes. As such, Jennings (2014) postulated that exposure to entrepreneurial and educational programs have been found to support the engagement of young Black males, promoting autonomy and mitigating involvement in high-risk behaviors, thus widening the space for collective citizen voice and participation in community initiatives.

**Community Inclusion**

The finding of community inclusion is twofold and was identified as a critical element for police and community members by all the participants in this study. According to the participants, police officers and communities would have better relationships if the police were representative of those communities and/or had experiential knowledge of the people within the community. Trochmann and Gover (2016) found in their study that the residency of police impacted the communities that the police served, and the findings suggest those communities had less conflict between officers and community members. Additionally, all the participants also discussed the importance of engaging in community initiatives and public meetings as a means for collaborating with police officers, politicians, and other public service members. The philosophy inherent in their responses was that by meeting and connecting with police officers, the officers would have more positive associations and trust in the communities they serve, thus formulating positive relationships in predominately Black neighborhoods with police officers. The findings of Doane and Cumberland’s (2018) study also suggest increased social interactions between community members and police by way of community barbeques, police department hosted events for youth, department open
houses, citizen police academies, and fundraisers sponsored by police and community
groups. These interactions were suggested to help strengthen relationships between
communities and police.

*Giving Voice to Black Communities*

The Black male business owners in this study recognized their role and
responsibility to give voice to the members of the communities where they work and
reside. As assets of their communities, these leaders believed the view that predominately
Black communities are often depicted as one sided. Mathie and Cunningham (2003)
posed this one-sided view inadvertently compromises communities rather than
contributes to community building. All of the participants in this study described giving
voice to Black communities as a form of activism, a form of mutual respect, and essential
for community building. Wilson and Johnson (2015) found exerting the voice of Black
community members has been effective historically and contemporarily in town hall
forums, school board meetings, legislative testimony, organizing marches and protests,
and creating community-based educational program within their communities.

The Jakes et al. (2015) study similarly suggests allowing community members to
identify the assets within their communities helps practitioners to consider how
organizations and associations could be mobilized. As such, the Black male business
owners in this study identified an array of Black-owned local businesses of barbershops,
film-making companies, advocates in education, grass roots organizations, and eateries as
assets contributing to predominately Black communities.
Unexpected Findings

This study revealed three unexpected findings: The death of George Floyd, Black male business owners as the “anti-slave,” and the provision of hope. The death of George Floyd as a result of police brutality led to a global uprising in communities across the world. Each participant discussed the emotional and psychological impact of yet another death of another Black man by police.

The individual counter stories of each participant began with the challenges each male faced during their youth, which impacted their perspective and beliefs towards policing practices. For these participants the underpinning of police practices historically and contemporarily is rooted in slavery. Despite the adversity each participant expressed the undercurrent from each participant is a message of hope. The analogy of a Black male business owner representing the polar opposite of a slave owner by virtue of enriching his community instills a message of hope for predominately Black communities. The hope for Black males is to be entrepreneurs and the hope is to break historical strongholds and change the narrative for Black males viewed as dangerous and criminal towards a community asset.

Limitations

IPA provided the researcher with the opportunity to explore the lived experiences of Black male business owners. The goal of this research was to identify recommendations and strategies for addressing policing disparities from an asset perspective. The participants in this study provided rich descriptions and counter stories of their lived experiences of policing practices within predominately Black urban communities. Data were collected from Black male business owners in the Capital
Region of New York State. A purposeful sample of three business owners volunteered for the study. The aim of IPA is to explore, in detail, how participants are making sense of their personal and social world and how the meaning attributed to those experiences (Smith & Osborn, 2007).

All of the participants in this study were male, which excluded the female perspective. This particular design was intentional but conducting research to include varying perspectives could undoubtably lend valuable insight into the experiences of members within predominately Black communities. Therefore, because the study was limited to Black male business owners in the Capital Region of New York State, other racial minorities and ethnic groups’ experiences were not reflected. IPA suggests researchers should be able to identify with the participants in their study. As a Black female who does not own a business, the researcher does not share a similar role as a Black male business owner. As such, the researcher interpreted the lived experiences of the participants and conducted in-depth analysis without personal bias. To mitigate bias, the researcher carefully followed the interview protocol, asked clarifying questions, and provided each participant with their transcripts for review and accuracy.

An additional limitation to this study was the distinct differences in businesses for the selected participants. Two of the three business owners in this study were consultants who worked collaboratively with organizations around the community. Therefore, there was only one store-front business owner who participated. Future opportunities for research could extend this study to include all Black-owned businesses in urban communities.
According to researchers Larkin (2012) and Smith and Osborn (2007), IPA is not a recommended research methodology for novice researchers due to the complexity in data collection and rigorous, painstaking data analysis. The researcher of this study is a novice researcher who was enrolled in an accelerated program of study. Therefore, the researcher had time constraints within which this study could be conducted.

**Recommendations**

This study provides recommendations and strategies for practitioners, leaders, social justice, and future research. These recommendations are based on the themes, analysis, and conclusions drawn from this study that were aimed at helping community stakeholders and police with strategies to address police disparities. The initial recommendations are for the practitioners of policing regarding strategy suggestions to assist and collaborate with police toward establishing new roles and effectiveness.

**Recommendations for Police Practitioners**

The findings of this study suggest that police practitioners and key stakeholders will need to develop new practices that are focused on eliminating discriminatory protocols and procedures for more equitable policing practices in predominately Black communities. Collectively, the participants in this study recommended diversity training for all officers to decrease bias policing in predominately Black communities and to demystify historical policing practices.

**Anti-Racist Training**

“Anti-racist policy is any measure that produces or sustains racial equity between racial groups by policy written and unwritten rules, procedures, processes, regulations, and guidelines that govern people” (Kendi, 2019, p. 18). The use of colorblind language,
such as dangerous, criminal, thug, and threatening, are often associated with Black males and often exacerbated in the media as the predominate perpetrator of crime. Anti-racist policies work toward dismantling historical practices in policing that have stigmatized Black males and negatively impacted police and predominately Black community relations. The Black male business owners identified new training, targeting the elimination of discriminatory practices that are pervasive in predominately Black communities. Given that Black men are arrested, killed, and incarcerated at higher rates than any other racial group—despite representing less than 20% of the population, the need for innovative solutions remains imperative.

The findings of this study are in agreement with Ward (2018) who stated, “when civil authorities resist racist laws (norms) and place policing practices at the center of securing human and civil rights that include equal recognition, equal representation, and equal protection policing can have neutralizing or even progressive outcomes” (p. 169). Furthermore, Ward (2018) posited that inequalities are further exacerbated when police officers are protected by impunity, despite the numerous killings of unarmed Black and Latino civilians, as the result of police brutality. Therefore, anti-racism training is perceived as a critical factor for improving policing practices and building positive relationships within predominately Black communities. Similarly, Grabiner’s (2016) study recommended police education and training that would require mandatory classes on racism and sexism to teach all police officers on-duty training as part of their regular curricula. This new education and training will help practitioners to identify and correct their own implicit bias while also helping practitioners to respond with a sense of cultural
awareness for the predominately Black communities they police, which is a key element towards eliminating policing disparities.

**Required Residency**

Community members who reside in predominately Black communities are often policed by officers who do not reside within or come from the communities in which they serve. The participants in this study identified the absence of police from within the community as a barrier to community building. Thus, police officers may have a challenge relating to predominately Black communities as a result of not being familiar with the social patterns of the Black community or the area, which can hinder community and police relations. The literature has shown that when community members and police work together in partnership, there is a reduction in crime, hence, it is recommended that police officers come from and or reside within the communities they serve.

**Engagement of Business Owners**

The participants in this study identified the utilization of business owners to actively engage in community initiatives and to attend public meetings in order to create interactions with police who serve their community. As identified leaders of their community, business owners are uniquely positioned to model the way for community members and to show case how to participate in community initiatives. Additionally, Mathie and Cunningham (2003) posited the recognition of assets to increase communities’ capacities to begin the construction of a new lens and the mobilization of informal networks.
**Reallocation of Funds**

As identified assets within the community, business owners have talents and skills that could be leveraged in partnership with police and local and state officials to provide new opportunities for youth within their communities. The findings in this study highlight the need to establish positive relationships with youth to prevent negative interactions with police. The current funding utilized by police departments for community initiatives should be reviewed in collaboration with community members to determine how monies could be redistributed toward building relationships with community members.

**Recommendations for Community Leaders**

The findings of this research revealed that giving voice to community members in nontraditional leadership positions provides an innovative opportunity to build stronger communities. As indicated by Kouzes and Posner (2017), everyone is encouraged to act like a leader regardless of their positionality. The business owners identified themselves as assets after considering their contributions to the community. These Black business owners discussed how other members should utilize their platforms to educate members of their communities. According to these participants, established Black business owners have the ability to inspire other community members. Enabling others to act requires a group collaboration and facilitation of relationships (Kouzes & Posner, 2017).

**Recommendations for Social Justice**

Through the lens of CRT, it is important to research strategies and recommendations for addressing policing disparities as it relates to predominately Black communities. Practitioners must intentionally work with community members and
leaders to address the root cause of where the bias began in order to help change the narrative. CRT emphasizes the importance of utilizing counter stories as a pathway toward reimaging predominately Black communities and other marginalized groups. Equally important is having the support to dismantle stereotypes and develop plans to eradicate the systemic marginalization of minority groups. As such, the policing practices must be transformed to support human civil rights for all (Ward, 2018).

**Recommendations for Future Research**

Two recommendations were identified and suggested, based upon the research findings and limitations of the study, for future research involving strategies for community building to address policing practices. Further researcher should include business owners from a mix of gender, race, and ethnicities, nationwide, within predominately Black communities. By expanding the research, recommendations and strategies can be identified from all business owners, which would increase the opportunities for relationship building and advancing the knowledge of police practitioners, which could be universally applied and would not be specific to certain regions in a state or within the nation.

In addition to business owners, members of predominately Black communities should be studied to have a better sense of how different members within those communities view the police and how they are treated by the police. Based upon the findings of this study regarding the participants’ experiences as young Black males, further study on young Black males’ perceptions of policing practices in their communities should be considered to garner the perspectives of youth within
predominately Black communities to better understand how they interpret their experiences with police and business owners within their communities.

**Conclusions**

Current literature regarding policing disparities has revealed that Blacks are associated as innately criminal and dangerous perpetuating the increase in police brutality and higher rates of incarceration when compared to any other racial or ethnic group. As such, Blacks are more likely to be shot and killed by police in comparison to their White counterparts (Streeter, 2019). In fact, Nellis (2019), reporting on Boncza’s (2003) study, attributed the 500% increase in incarceration rates over the past 40 years to bias in policing practices of law and policy. These relationships present disassociation, hypervigilance, and avoidance of the notion that police are a community resource for Black communities.

The importance of policing practices has been well documented in the research regarding Black community members’ attitudes toward the police. As a community member and advocate within a predominately Black community, I joined the community police review board to better understand and bridge the gap between the community and the police. I could not understand why community members and police were not working collaboratively to address community issues and concerns. The research regarding community members is often from the perspectives of traditional leaders within the community. I decided to explore the perceptions of Black male business owners within predominately Black communities. The goal of this study was to explore the lived experiences of these nontraditional leaders relative to policing disparities. This study builds on the theoretical frameworks of CRT and ABCD theory to identify strategies and
recommendations for addressing police disparities from an asset perspective. The participants in this study revealed the presence of hope, advocacy, and mentorship as their motivation to act, create access, and utilize their relationships foster building healthier relationships. The findings suggest that positionality within predominately Black communities makes a difference in how Black men are treated by police and in their perceptions of police officers. The findings of this research further highlight the importance of community members’ voice as a valuable tool for police training, community building, and reallocation of funds for collaborative programming. The recommendations in the areas of practice, research, leadership, and social justice all highlight the importance of these participants as assets in improving the relationships between police and community members within predominately Black communities. This research provides a perspective on policing disparities specific to the nontraditional leaders within predominately Black communities and addresses the gap in the literature that relies on the perspective and recommendations of community members in improving policing practices in the communities where they reside. The participants in this study remind us that change is possible not by the ideas in your mind, but the conviction in your heart (Stevenson, 2014).
References


Kretzmann, J. P. & McKnight, J. L. (1993). Building communities from the inside out: A path toward finding and mobilizing a community’s assets. ACTA Publications.


U.S. Const. amend. XIII.

U.S. Const. amend. XIV, § 2.

U.S. Const. amend. XV, §1, §2.


Appendix A

St. John Fisher College IRB Approval Letter

Veneilya Harden
St. John Fisher College

Dear Ms. Harden:

Thank you for submitting your research proposal to the Institutional Review Board.

I am pleased to inform you that the Board has approved your Exempt Review project, “Recommendations and Strategies for Addressing Policing Disparities from a Community Asset Perspective”.

Please note, to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and to help mitigate community transmission, St. John Fisher College has temporarily suspended all in-person activities (recruitment and data collection) among researchers and study participants for all IRB approved human subjects research until further notice. Studies that do not involve any direct subject contact, e.g., pre-existing records, electronic surveys, tele-research, and remote interaction via device/app/software are still permissible, along with data analysis from previously collected in-person sessions.

Should you have any questions about this process or your responsibilities, please contact me at irb@sjfc.edu.

Sincerely,

Eileen Lynd-Balta
Chair, Institutional Review Board

File No: 4112-05212020-20

Eileen Lynd-Balta, Ph.D.
Chair, Institutional Review Board
ELB: jdr
Appendix B

Informed Consent Form for Participants

St. John Fisher College Institutional Review Board

St. John Fisher College Institutional Review Board

Statement of Informed Consent for Adult Participants

Strategies for addressing policing disparities from an asset perspective.

SUMMARY OF KEY INFORMATION:

- You are being asked to be in a research study of business owners’ perspectives to gain insight into how business owners, residing in a predominately Black community perceive policing disparities and what these business owners believe their role is in the community. As with all research studies, participation is voluntary.
- The purpose of this study is to identify strategies for addressing police disparities from an asset perspective.
- Approximately [3-5] people will take part in this study. The results will be used to inform the existing literature on how the perspectives garnered from Black business owners may inform policing practices and identify innovative, asset-based strategies within the Black community.
- If you agree to take part in this study, you will be involved in this study for one on-line interview lasting no more than 60 minutes. The interview transcript will be returned to the participant for accuracy.
- Interviews will occur during a mutually agreed upon time and date utilizing Zoom online technology.
- The expected risks and benefits are outlined below.
- We believe this study has no more than minimal risk.” Minimal risks and/or inconveniences such as the amount of time required to complete procedures, abstention from food, length of time participants may be required to sit or stand as a result of the study procedures.
- The expected benefits will be that each participant will receive a final electronic copy of the dissertation once released by St. John Fisher College upon request.
DETAILED STUDY INFORMATION (some information may be repeated from the summary above):
You are being asked to be in a research study of Black male business owners. This study is being conducted at during a mutually agreed upon time and date with each participant utilizing Zoom online technology. This study is being conducted by Veneilya Harden under the supervision of Cynthia P. Smith, Ed.D. RT(R) and Lorretta Quigley, Ed. D, RN, CNE in the School of Education at St. John Fisher College.

You were selected as a possible participant because of your professional position as a Black male business owner in the Capital Region of New York which makes you an ideal candidate for this study.

Please read this consent form and ask any questions you have before agreeing to be in the study.

PROCEDURES:
If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to do the following: Participation in this study will require participant to audio-recorded. Participation is voluntary. The interview will be approximately one hour length and take place during an agreed upon time and date via Zoom. You may decline to answer any of the interview questions. Furthermore, you may decide to withdraw from the study at any time without negative consequences by advising the researcher. The interview will be audio recorded to facilitate collection of information, and later transcribed for further analysis. Upon completion of the interview, I will send you a copy of the transcript to provide you an opportunity to confirm the accuracy of our conversation and to add to or clarify and information. All identifiable information will be removed to protect your identity. All information you provided is considered confidential. Your name or any identifying information will not appear in any reported results from this study.

COMPENSATION/INCENTIVES:
You will not receive compensation/incentive.

CONFIDENTIALITY:
The records of this study will be kept private and your confidentiality will be protected. In any sort of report the researcher(s) might publish, no identifying information will be included.

Identifiable research records will be stored securely and only the researcher(s) will have access to the records. All data will be kept on a password-protected laptop by the investigator(s). All study records with identifiable information, including approved IRB documents, tapes, transcripts, and consent forms, will be destroyed by shredding and/or deleting after three years. Electronic records will be cleared, purged, and destroyed from the hard drive and all devices such that restoring data is not possible.

VOLUNTARY NATURE OF THE STUDY:
Participation in this study is voluntary and requires your informed consent. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with St. John Fisher
College. If you decide to participate, you are free to skip any question that is asked. You may also withdraw from this study at any time without penalty.

CONTACTS, REFERRALS AND QUESTIONS:
The researchers(s) conducting this study: Veneilya Harden. If you have questions, you are encouraged to contact the researcher(s) at (___) ___-____ or by email at _________@sjfc.edu. You can contact my supervisor, Dr. Cynthia P. Smith , by phone at (___) ___-____, or by email at ____________@gmail.com

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 the SJFC IRB administrator by phone during normal business hours at (585) 385-8012 or irb@sjfc.edu.

STATEMENT OF CONSENT:
I am 18 years of age or older. I have read and understood the above information. I consent to voluntarily participate in the study.

Signature:_______________________________________________ Date: _________________

Signature of Investigator: _________________________________ Date: __________________

I agree to be audio recorded/ transcribed ____Yes ____No If no, I understand that the researcher will [explain alternative to audio recording, if any. If no alternative, state this clearly].

I agree to be video recorded/ transcribed ____Yes ____No If I do not wish to be videotaped, I will inform the researcher, who will instead [explain alternative to video recording, if any. If no alternative, state this clearly].

Signature:_______________________________________________ Date: _________________

Signature of Investigator: _________________________________ Date: __________________

If this is an online study, remove the signature sections above and instead use this language: “Electronic Consent: Clicking on the “Agree” button below indicates that:

- I have read the above information.
- I voluntarily agree to participate.
- I am at least 18 years of age.

If you do not wish to participate in the study, please decline participation by clicking on the “Disagree” button below.”
Appendix C

Email to Albany Common Council Members

May 2020

Dear Common Council Members,

My name is Veneilaya Harden, and I am a Doctoral candidate in the School of Education at St. John Fisher College under the supervision of Dr. Cynthia P. Smith. This letter is an invitation for you to recommend potential participants for my study. The following information explains the purpose of this study.

**Title of the Study**: Recommendations and Strategies for Addressing Policing Disparities from an Asset-Based Perspective.

**Purpose of the Study**: To explore Black business owners’ perspectives of policing disparities in a predominately Black community in the city of Albany, NY. Information garnered through semi-structured interviews of 10 Black business owners’ lived experiences of policing practices in this neighborhood will better identify supports and barriers that help or hinder community relations with local police.

To participate in the study, the participant must meet the following criteria:

- Black male
- Resident of a predominately Black community in Albany for a minimum of 3 years
- Own a business within a predominately Black community in the city of Albany

Please note this study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through the Institutional Review Board at St. John Fisher College. It is my hope that the results of my study will provide community leaders, community members, and police with innovative strategies and recommendations for eliminating policing disparities.

**Identified participants**: Please provided me with the following contact information for potential participants you have identified for this study: **full name, email address, and phone number**. Each potential participant will be emailed an invitation to consider participation in this study.

If you have additional questions regarding this study or would like additional information, please feel free to contact me by phone: (___) ____-______, or by email:
________@sjfc.edu. You may also contact my supervisor, Dr. Cynthia P. Smith, by phone: (___) ___-____, or by email: _________@gmail.com

Kind regards,

Veneilya A. Harden
Doctoral Candidate
Doctoral Program in Executive Leadership
St. John Fisher College
Rochester, New York
Appendix D

Email to Mission Accomplished Transition Services

May 2020

Dear Community Partner,

My name is Veneilya Harden, and I am a Doctoral candidate in the School of Education at St. John Fisher College under the supervision of Dr. Cynthia P. Smith. This letter is an invitation for you to recommend potential participants for my study. The following information explains the purpose of this study.

Title of the Study: Recommendations and Strategies for Addressing Policing Disparities from an Asset-Based Perspective

Purpose of the Study: To explore Black business owners’ perspectives of policing disparities in a predominately Black community in the city of Albany, NY. Information garnered through semi-structured interviews of 10 Black business owners’ lived experiences of policing practices in this neighborhood will better identify supports and barriers that help or hinder community relations with local police.

To participate in the study, the participant must meet the following criteria:

- Black male
- Resident of a predominately Black community in Albany for a minimum of 3 years
- Own a business within a predominately Black community in the city of Albany

Please note this study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through the Institutional Review Board at St. John Fisher College. It is my hope that the results of my study will provide community leaders, community members, and police with innovative strategies and recommendations for eliminating policing disparities.

Identified participants: Please provided me with the following contact information for potential participants you have identified for this study; full name, email address, and phone number. Each potential participant will be emailed an invitation to consider participation in this study.

If you have additional questions regarding this study or would like additional information, please feel free to contact me by phone: (___) ___-____, or by email:
________@sjfc.edu. You may also contact my supervisor, Dr. Cynthia P. Smith, by phone: (___) ___-____, or by email: _________@gmail.com

Kind regards,

Veneilya A. Harden
Doctoral Candidate
Doctoral Program in Executive Leadership
St. John Fisher College
Rochester, New York
Appendix E

Invitation to Potential Participants

Hello, my name is Veneilya Harden, and I am a Doctoral student at St. John Fisher College under the supervision of Dr. Cynthia P. Smith. Thank you for your willingness to participate in my study. The following information explains the purpose of this study.

**Title of the Study:** Recommendations and Strategies for Addressing Policing Disparities from an Asset-Based Perspective.

**Purpose of the Study:** The purpose of this study is to explore Black business owners’ perspectives of policing disparities in a predominately Black community in an urban, Capital Region neighborhood in New York State. Information garnered through semi-structured interviews of three to five Black business owners’ lived experiences of policing practices in this neighborhood will better identify supports and barriers that help or hinder community relations with local police.

To participate in this study, the participant must meet the following criteria:

- Black male
- Resident of the Albany community for a minimum of 3 years
- Own a business within the City of Albany

If you have additional questions regarding this study or would like additional information, please feel free to contact me by phone: (___) ___-____, or by email: _________@sjfc.edu. You may also contact my supervisor, Dr. Cynthia P. Smith, by phone: (___) ___-____, or by email: _________@gmail.com

Kind regards,

Veneilya A. Harden
Doctoral Candidate
Doctoral Program in Executive Leadership
St. John Fisher College
Rochester, New York
Appendix F

Participant Demographic Profile

Pseudonym: ___________________________ Date: ____________________

Business Title: ___________________________

Gender: __________

Age: __________

Do you identify as Black: Yes  No

Do you identify as Hispanic: Yes  No

1. Are you a business owner in the city of Albany, New York? ________________

2. How long have you owned your business? ____________________________

3. What ward do you reside in? ____________________________

4. How long have you resided there? ____________________________
Appendix G

Interview Questions

1. Tell me more about your life as a resident in Albany, NY?
   Probe: What memberships or local associations are you engaged with?
   Addresses RQ # 2

2. Tell me about any safety concerns you may have as a resident and as a business owner in a predominately Black, urban community.
   Probe: How would you rate your feeling of safety at your business location on a scale of 1-3. (1 not safe, 2 fairly safe 3. safe) Justify/Why.
   Purpose: RQ #1

3. Tell me about any personal or business interactions with police officers you have experienced in this neighborhood.
   Purpose: RQs #1 & 2

4. Tell me about any organizations, and/or people who have contributed positively to this community?
   Purpose: RQ # 3

5. How do you believe your role as a Black business owner is impacting the community in a positive way?
   Purpose: RQs #2 & 3

6. What recommendations do you have for Black business owners of this community to influence positive policing practices in your predominately Black urban community?
   Purpose: RQ #3
Appendix H

Quirkos (2020) Visual Representation of Codes