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African American Parents' Perceptions of Police Racial Profiling and "the Talk" With Their Children

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Walden University
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Abstract

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MS, University of Phoenix, 2011

BS, Kentucky State University, 2001

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore African American parents' perceptions of racism and how it shaped their discussion, known as *The Talk*, that they had with their African American children. Critical race theory was the theoretical foundation. This theory helped explain the ideas and processes parents of African American children used to discuss perceptions of the African American culture. Through interviews, this generic qualitative study was focused on collecting data from parents of African American children who had to decide how to talk to their children about racial profiling. Ten parents raising African American children from age 13 to age 17 participated in open-ended interviews. Interviews focused on discussion topics that helped shape the parent-child conversation on what is perceived as proper behavior as an African American when faced with a police encounter. Saldana's steps of analysis to sort the data and arrange it in the desired order, collected and transformed the information into meaningful data, transcribed the data and converted it into a written document, analyzed the interview results and interpreted the data meaning, and finally summarized and interpreted the data. Results indicated that (a) trust/distrust of police is still a problem in African American communities, (b) racial profiling always existed and is an injustice, (c) the talk is still a necessary discussion in African American households, (d) parents fear for their children during police encounters, and (e) police inappropriate actions/behaviors frame parents' perceptions. Social change implication of this study was to help African American parents and general public to understand the influence of perceptions and attitudes about racial profiling and how discussions may help keep their children safe.

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Dedication

This study is dedicated to my mother, Brenda Ann Moffitt, who moved on to be with our savior in 2013, after battling cancer. It is because of my mom, that I'm the woman I am today. I know that she watched over me this entire journey and lifted me up when the times got tough. It is due to her love, support, and encouragement that I set high standards and goals for myself. I live my life in her beautiful image, and I work every day to continue to make her proud of me. I love you, mom. The Queen of my Heart!

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First and foremost, I'd like to thank God for providing me with the wisdom and strength to see this endeavor through to completion. I would like to thank my committee team, Dr. Tracy Jackson, Dr. Lamart Hightower, and Dr. Kelly Chermack for their support and guidance throughout this journey. Thanks for your patience with me and for motivating me to remain encouraged. I'd like to thank my family and friends for their love and support, and I'd like to send out a special acknowledgement to my son, Brendann. Thanks for being my rock and my ray of sunshine. You are the true human form of my reason, my season, and my lifetime. My true blessing, and you embody all the things I must be grateful for. My greatest gift, and through you I am reminded of God's favor every day.

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Chapter 1: Introduction of the Study

Racial profiling can be a difficult topic of discussion. Recent deaths of African Americans during encounters with the police and the creation of the protest movement Black Lives Matter has brought the public's attention to police discrimination and racial profiling claims from African American communities across the United States (Peirone et al., 2017). Many African Americans' perceptions of discrimination and unequal police treatment are social contributions to daily life in African American communities (Peirone et al., 2017). Chapter 1 includes the background, problem statement, purpose of the study, research questions, theoretical framework, nature of the study, definitions, assumptions, scope and delimitations, limitations, and significance. Many African American parents perceived some police encounters as dangerous. Parents found it necessary to discuss racial profiling and conduct during police interaction during the early stages of their children's lives (Peirone et al., 2017).

Background

African American parents have struggled with tensions related to raising their children in a hostile society. Data collected from 2013 to 2016 showed an increase in the number of African American fatalities during police encounters, which has caused a resurgence of concerns related to the historical tensions between police and the African American community (Whitaker & Snell, 2016). Several states have experienced increases in these numbers, including Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Illinois (Bor et al., 2018). According to Bor et al. (2018), these states had the highest rates of unarmed African Americans shot by police. A highly publicized incident was the police killing of

Dontre Hamilton, an unarmed mentally challenged African American man who was shot 14 times by police in 2014 (Mesic et al., 2017).

Another example was the case of the Facebook Live killing of Philando Castile, who had a permit to carry, voluntarily disclosed this information to the officer, and had not drawn any weapon but was killed by police in 2016 (Mesic et al., 2017). There have been hundreds of police killings of unarmed African Americans that occurred in Chicago, Illinois alone, and the reported cases documented confirmed these numbers (Mesic et al., 2017). According to Bor et al. (2018), there has been a heightened concern nationwide on how racial profiling continues to be a policing crisis.

Edwards et al. (2019) stated that African American men face nearly a 1 in 1,000 chance of being killed by police over their life course. According to Nordberg et al. (2016), the killing of African American people in the United States by police, security guards, or vigilantes occurs once every 28 hours. The average lifetime odds of being killed by police are about 1 in 2,000 for men and about 1 in 33,000 for women (Nordberg et al., 2016). Risk peaks between age 20 and 35 for all groups. For young men of color, police force is among the leading causes of death (Edwards et al., 2019).

One response to these circumstances was the decision by African American parents to have the talk with their children, specifically their sons. In the current study, I examined parent–child discussion on racial profiling. The talk referred to family discussions related to surviving interactions with police (Barragan & Kirpalani, 2017). In some African American homes, this discussion has become a rite of passage due to parents' fear of what will happen to their children during encounters with the police and

the anxiety from their inability to protect their children (Whitaker & Snell, 2016). Racial profiling by law enforcement on ethnic minorities has produced fear, anxiety, and panic (Doane & Cumberland, 2018). There is a history of distrust among people of color and law enforcement related to racial profiling.

Problem Statement

In 2016, African American men between 18 and 44 years of age were 3.2 times more likely than White men in the same age group to be killed by a police officer (Jones-Webb et al., 2018). Between 2010 and 2012, over 1,200 police-involved deaths nationwide were reported in federal crime data, and 78% of those deaths were African Americans (Isom, 2016). Carvalho et al. (2021) stated that the perceptions of African Americans as violent and dangerous individuals increase this group's exposure to police, and there has been a rise in discriminatory tactics that have led to accusations of ethnic profiling, institutional racism, and police discrimination. Beyond fatalities, practices such as stop and frisk, racial profiling, and million-dollar block demarcations in which law enforcement officials saturate a high-crime area with police officers result in African Americans' negative attitudes towards the justice system (Isom, 2016). As a result, police face the dilemma of establishing community trust (Delgado & Stefancic, 2016).

Creating trusting partnerships with the community can be a positive objective to mend the relationships between the community and the police that have been severed in recent years. According to Delgado and Stefancic (2016), a helpful police practice would be to adopt a policing model that involves police officers interacting with people in the communities they serve like they are friends. This form of community policing would

involve interacting with all community members, not just the opinion makers and solid citizens (Delgado & Stefancic, 2016). According to Doane and Cumberland (2018), in the early 2000s, an effective policing strategy included the beat system that required police officers to walk the streets and interact with residents. However, those practices over time evolved into a more rigid model of formal social control that allowed officers to ride in patrol cars and out of physical contact with the communities (Doane & Cumberland, 2018).

The benefit of police officers walking the beat has begun to resurface across states, and more departments are implementing similar programs to improve the community and police relationships (Ekins, 2016). The results of one study suggested that officers who live in the communities they patrol have a better relationship with the people in the community than those who do not live in the community (Doane & Cumberland, 2018). According to LePere-Schloop and Lumpkin (2016), some police departments do not provide incentives for officers to live in the communities they patrol, and not all officers support the required residency program, resulting in continued tension between police officers and predominantly the African American community. To improve relationships in these communities, a change in the culture of the department may be needed by implementing extensive training for officers who work in diverse communities (LePere-Schloop & Lumpkin, 2016).

Police must effectively reduce crime and engendering community trust; conversely, police officers are also expected to support standards of equity and fairness in policing (Carvalho et al., 2021). Implementing programs such as stop and frisk resulted in

criticisms and complaints of unfair police practices in the African American communities (Kramer & Remster, 2018). According to Kramer and Remster (2018), stop and frisk is controversial and helped create attitudes of distrust and fear because most individuals who are stopped are African American. From January 2004 to June 2012, the New York Police Department used this practice excessively, and of those individuals stopped, 83% were people of color (Torres, 2015). Many African Americans viewed these practices as a procedural form of racial profiling. Given the current climate of racial profiling, a growing number of African American community members distrust police officers and refuse to cooperate with police efforts (Torres, 2015).

In some African American communities, a perspective exists that police are willfully discriminating against ethnic minorities (Delgado & Stefancic, 2016). Although racial profiling exists, definitively stating that racial prejudice is the primary factor behind any given police officer's actions is difficult (Kahn & Martin, 2016). According to Kahn and Martin (2016), debates exist about whether police officers' biases are related to their racial attitudes or result from officers following systemically flawed police policies.

The number of African American deaths from law enforcement has sparked a national conversation. The incident of Eric Garner's death in Staten Island, New York, and Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, are examples of incidents in which an African American man died at the hands of law enforcement in a manner that the general public deemed unreasonable (Diversi, 2016). Although these incidents were later ruled justifiable, some citizens still wonder how to make sense of police killing unarmed

African Americans (Diversi, 2016). According to Nix et al. (2017), data provided evidence of a significantly higher death rate for unarmed African Americans compared to unarmed European Americans. The results of the multilevel modeling analysis revealed that an unarmed African American is 3.49 times more likely to be shot by police than an unarmed European American (Nix et al., 2017).

According to Diversi (2016), many parents are concerned about what will happen to their African American children when they are out in the world and encounter law enforcement. Racial bias in policing is not always accurately identified or perceived, making enacting change challenging (Kahn & Martin, 2016). Researchers have found that some African American parents are left wondering how to talk to their children in ways that help to prevent dangerous situations caused by racial profiling (Diversi, 2016). This disquiet serves as the foundation of what some African American families call the talk. For some African American families, conversations between parents and children about interacting with law enforcement are not new (Barragan & Kirpalani, 2017).

I found little research on how parents of African American children perceive police officers' current racial injustices relative to similar injustices during their childhoods, indicating a gap in the literature. The existing research did not address how these parents perceive their role in discussing possible injustices with their children to keep them safe during police encounters. Further study was warranted to address how effective the talk is in addressing the documented problem of a disproportionate number of unarmed African Americans' dying during police encounters.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this generic qualitative study was to explore how African American parents raising African American children perceive current police racial injustice compared to injustice during their childhoods and their role in talking to their children about racial justice and their perceptions and beliefs related to police violence. I conducted interviews to focus on discussion topics that helped shape the parent–child conversation on what is perceived as proper behavior as an African American when faced with a police encounter. I collected this information through open-ended interview questions with parents raising African American children age 13 to 17.

Research Questions

RQ1: How do African American parents of African American children perceive the differences between current racial injustices versus their childhoods?

RQ2: How do African American parents of African American children perceive their role in talking to their children about racial injustice?

Theoretical Framework

The framework for this study was critical race theory (CRT). CRT helped me explain the appearance of race and racism across dominant cultural modes of expression (see Barlow, 2016). CRT is a theoretical and interpretive lens to examine race and racism across dominant cultural modes of expression (Barlow, 2016). In adopting this approach, CRT scholars attempt to understand how victims of systemic racism are affected by cultural perceptions of race and how they can represent themselves to counter prejudice. CRT is connected to philosophy, history, sociology, and law. CRT scholarship traces

racism in the United States through its legacy of slavery, the Civil Rights Movement, and more recent events (Barlow, 2016). Barlow (2016) viewed this theory as an attempt to understand how victims of systematic racism or institutionalized racism are affected by perceptions. This theory has been used to frame the understanding of different cultures, perceptions of others, and environment adaptation relating to the deaths of unarmed African Americans by police officers of different races (Lemieux et al., 2020). This theory provided some direction for parents of African American children to discuss perceptions of their culture compared to others because racism is not aberrant; racism is embedded in everyday life, particularly in the lives of African Americans (Reese, 2019).

Nature of the Study

I used a generic qualitative inquiry approach to understand parents' perspectives. Generic qualitative inquiry research was suitable because it is used to investigate individuals' reports of their subjective opinions, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors. Other qualitative methods are used to answer questions about experience, meaning, and perspective, most often from the participant's standpoint (Marvasti, 2019). Qualitative data are usually not amenable to counting or measuring. Qualitative research techniques include small group discussions for investigating beliefs, attitudes, and concepts of normative behavior; semistructured interviews to seek views on a focused topic or with key informants for background information or an institutional perspective; in-depth interviews to understand a condition, experience, or event from a personal perspective; and analysis of texts and documents, such as government reports, media articles, websites, or diaries, to learn about distributed or private knowledge (Marvasti, 2019). By

conducting interviews with African American parents of African American children, I gathered data on personal experiences that influenced the mentality that the talk is a needed conversation with their children. The data gathered from these interviews were vital to the study because participants' perceptions warrant the conversation. It is a parental responsibility for African American parents of African American children to inform and educate their children about racial discrimination. This study was a step toward understanding African American parents' perceptions of racial discrimination and what may be needed when communicating with their African American children to keep them safe during hostile encounters with law enforcement.

Definitions

Adolescence: A transitional stage from childhood to adulthood between age 13 and 17 when physical and psychological changes occur (Kinghorn et al., 2018).

Discrimination: Distinguishing differences between things or treating someone inferior based on their race, sex, national origin, age, or other characteristics (Bhugra, 2016).

Encounter: An unexpected meeting (Fridell & Lim, 2016).

Injustice: A lack of justice; something unfair, and the quality of being unjust (Isom, 2016).

Perception: The understanding of something. Perception is awareness or comprehension (Thomas et al., 2017).

Racial profiling: An adverse action by police or law enforcement personnel that is directed at people because of their race (Mogensen, 2019).

Racism: The belief that one race is superior to the other, or the practice of treating a person or group of people differently based on their race (Barlow, 2016).

The talk: A conversation that African American parents have with their African American children about how to conduct themselves in the presence of authority, usually law enforcement or police officers (Barragan & Kirpalani, 2017).

Assumptions

I assumed participants would answer the interview questions truthfully and honestly. I also assumed the data collection method of interviews would be efficient and effective for this type of study. These assumptions were needed because interviewing African American parents of African American children was important to understand the participants' perceptions.

Scope and Delimitations

The delimitations of this study included study participants who met specific criteria to participate in the study. The study included only African American parents of African American children age 13 to 17. Interviewees were parents who had personal knowledge of the talk from their childhood experiences, meaning they had also received the talk from their parents. The potential for transferability was accomplished by interviewing African American parents and by various demographics that emerged among participants in this study.

Limitations

The limitations of this study included using a small sample size; therefore, the results of this study were not transferable to other contexts or settings. Also, I may have

been biased because I am a parent of an African American male. Although I am experienced as a mother, I am aware of experiences that appear unjust relating to the treatment of African Americans and the police. I addressed potential bias by maintaining a personal journal. Another limitation was that parents of other ethnic backgrounds raising African American children were not included in this study.

Significance

The significance of this study was that the results may help practitioners better understand African American parents' perceived role in warning their children about the threat of police racial profiling. This understanding could provide insight into the problem and help African American parents keep their children safe (see Voisin et al., 2016). A study of this nature could reveal misperceptions and lead to fact-based dialogue rather than fear-based dialogue. The findings may also provide strategies for effective parent–child communication training.

A study of this nature may also influence how parents visualize effective communication regarding racial discrimination and manage the talk when faced with it. African American parents teach their children racial and ethnic history as a part of child-rearing. As recipients of discrimination and prejudice, parents of color are often concerned about their children growing up in an unfavorable environment that may be hostile to them because of the color of their skin. African American parents try to use their experiences to influence the strategies that they teach to their children. Parents are concerned about the challenges that their children will face, and it is these barriers that influence the parents' and the children's attitudes and behaviors toward law enforcement.

This study may influence the desire to improve the negative attitudes and relationships between the African American community and law enforcement. The attitudes of African Americans toward the police are composed of fear and distrust. African Americans' opinions of the police regarding fairness, and use of excessive force have been unfavorable for many years (Moore, 2019). The current study may improve the understanding of perceptions and attitudes regarding racial profiling and community–police relations.

Summary

This study was conducted to explore how African American parents raising African American children perceive current police racial injustice relative to injustice during their childhoods and how these parents perceive their role in discussing this situation with their children. Through semistructured interviews, I collected data from 10 African American parents of African American children age 13 to 17 who talked to their children about ways to prevent dangerous situations from racial profiling. Chapter 2 provides a literature review addressing previous studies related to the perceptions of African American parents raising African American children and current police racial injustice compared to injustice during their childhoods.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Researchers have found a difference in how African American parents experience and perceive racial discrimination and how they transmit racial socialization to their children to protect them from future injustices (Smith-Bynum et al., 2016). Since the Jim Crow laws of the 1960s, there has been the separation of races along with the discriminatory treatment that accompanied those laws. Although the Jim Crow laws were supposed to establish separate but equal liberation practices of civil liberties, there was nothing equal about the tactics imposed against people of color (Seigel, 2017). Seigel (2017) noted that during the 1950s and 1960s, African Americans formed a resistance that became the Civil Rights Movement. For African American parents, the resistance to adhere to unequal treatment under the law started at home (Whitaker & Snell, 2016). Much of the literature addressed racial profiling and the perceptions of racial profiling. There was little scholarly literature exploring the talk that African American parents have with their children about racial profiling. This chapter includes the literature search strategy, theoretical foundation, and literature review.

Literature Search Strategy

I used the Walden University library for the literature search as my main resource. I used databases like ProQuest and SAGE Premier. I searched for journals using phrases such as *African American parents*, *racial profiling*, *deaths by law enforcement*, and *parent perception*. I also searched for terms such as *shootings*, *deaths*, *discrimination*, *racism*, and *unarmed*. Through my research, I found information focusing on parents'

perception of racial profiling and discrimination and how their perception influences their discussions with their children.

Theoretical Foundation

CRT was developed in the 1970s by several lawyers, activists, and legal scholars across the United States who realized racism was evolving, so they thought new theories were needed to combat the forms of racism that were gaining ground (Reese, 2019). CRT has its underpinnings in the philosophical writings of Derrick Bell, an African American civil rights lawyer and the first African American to teach at Harvard Law School. However, a few other writers were Alan Freeman, Kimberle Crenshaw, Richard Delgado, Cheryl Harris, Charles R. Lawrence III, Mari Matsuda, and Patricia J. Williams in the 1970s and early 1980s (Reese, 2019). Bell (1976) explained that the frames of social racism were conceptualized by critical race theorists that have been woven into the theory that racial inequality is a structure comprising institutions, policies, and norms. CRT provided a clearer understanding of perceptions of certain groups regarding other groups, and helped me understand why the African American group is still stereotyped, stigmatized, dehumanized, and blamed for many social problems in society. According to Adedoyin et al. (2019), the negative stereotypes of African Americans create a negative perception of them, which may cause some police to claim that they feared for their life before shooting them. Adedoyin et al. concluded that some views about police were derived from personal and indirect experiences.

CRT is used to understand and change social situations and to determine how society is organized along racial lines. Dixson and Rousseau Anderson (2018) stated that

W.E.B. Du Bois and Carter G. Woodson used race as a theoretical lens for evaluating social inequality in education. Critical race theorists suggest that racial inequalities determine the educational experience of racial minority children and youths (Cole, 2017).

Critical race theorists use narratives and stories to understand how U.S. society views race and allows racial minority groups to share their perspectives. Heightened awareness and the reality that racism still exists may be gained from these stories. Furthermore, these stories give racial minorities a voice and knowledge that they do not have to cope alone. Their perceptions and experiences are a reality from a social justice or CRT standpoint. Their lens is a significant experience, which needs to be explored. In the current study, CRT presented an appropriate lens to analyze qualitative findings.

Cole (2017) described CRT's immediate project as questioning the outcomes of the Civil Rights era, legislation, and the underlying approach to understanding and redressing the racialized injustice in the United States. Cole explained that CRT is often used in education to examine the inequalities between marginalized and oppressed groups. Cole further explained that in education, critical race theorists explore the profound contradiction between the idea of schooling as the great equalizer and the reality of educational inequality. LaForett and DeMarco (2020) noted that the disproportionate amount of student discipline between racial minorities and White students is alarming. LaForett and DeMarco further explained that class and gender alone do not account for the high rates of school dropout, suspensions, expulsions, and failures among African American and Latino males. According to LaForett and DeMarco, students of color for the last 25 years were suspended at rates nearly 3 times that of their

White peers and were overrepresented in office referrals, corporal punishment, and school expulsion. Further, students from African American and Latino families were more likely than their White peers to receive an out-of-school suspension or expulsion as a consequence for the same or similar problem behavior (LaForett & DeMarco, 2020). LaForett and DeMarco also found that being suspended just one time in ninth grade increases the student's probability of dropping out by 32%.

According to Welsh and Little (2018), a Minnesota Department of Education report described dropping out of school as disengagement. The report argued that suspension and expulsion increase the probability of misbehavior while decreasing academic engagement (Welsh & Little, 2018). As interventions, suspensions and expulsions have the opposite educational outcome than school administrators and teachers intend. Welsh and Little (2018) explained that the racial and ethnic disparities in education range from the achievement gap to disproportionality in suspensions and expulsions to the dropout and graduation rates. By using CRT combined with a qualitative research design, I underscored the importance of race and the validity of researching within a social justice framework.

Literature Review

The literature review consists of themes presented in sections. The themes are presented in topics including the history of racial profiling; perception of racial profiling; history of police–community relationship; need to repair the relationship between law enforcement and the community; a tumultuous relationship; police violence and the vulnerability of African Americans; police violence and the vulnerability of African

Americans, the talk, an African American parent–child discussion; learning race; identity development; African American children developing strong, positive racial identities; African American family socialization; gendered racial socialization beliefs; and mothers' approaches to preparing children for bias.

History of Racial Profiling

Racial profiling has a history of profiling and slavery. Racial profiling is derived from general profiling (Adedoyin et al., 2019). Adedoyin et al. (2019) stated that slave patrollers were trusted to maintain and control the movement and behavior of slaves. These patrollers could operate with no accountability, and as a result brutal tactics such as castration, maiming, and lynching were used to maintain racial order (Adedoyin et al., 2019). During this time, there was little effort by the local government and law enforcement to protect the rights of African Americans (Shillingford, 2020). This trend of oppression and marginalization of African Americans resulted in African Americans being profiled as criminals and deviants (Shillingford, 2020).

Profiling can be effective in policing as a practice that law helps law enforcement effectively determine suspects of crime through evidence and criminal investigative analysis (Fox & Farrington, 2018). Similarly, Fallon and Snook (2019) referred to profiling as criminal, psychological, and offender profiling. Profiling is used to distinguish the type of person who is likely to commit a particular crime (Fallon & Snook, 2019). In comparison, according to Fox and Farrington (2018), criminal profiling is used as an applied discipline in investigations by law enforcement. Profiling began as an effective measure to assist law enforcement officers in determining potential suspects

during their investigations (Fallon & Snook, 2019). Fallon and Snook stated that profiling is used as expert evidence in complex investigations in several jurisdictions. Fallon and Snook also noted that some people question the validity and reliability of profiling as a science because there is no standardization in the profiling process.

Profiling may be effective, but the larger question is whether it is just. In contrast to Fallon and Snook's (2019) work, Cooper et al. (2021) suggested that profiling has morphed into something based on race, and racial profiling is stereotyping tied to prejudice. Racial profiling comprises several categories, such as physical, behavioral, or psychological, and involves targeting racial minorities (Cooper et al., 2021). Cooper et al. also stated that it does not matter the definition because many agree profiling uses race in a derogatory manner to determine those worthy of an encounter. Therefore, racial profiling has roots in racial prejudice by way of stereotypes.

Racial profiling began in the late 1990s. Racial profiling started with a 1994 lawsuit in New Jersey when state troopers were charged with stopping motorists based on race (Seigel, 2017). According to Seigel (2017), the meaning changes when comparing Cooper et al.'s (2021) meaning of profiling to racial profiling. Data suggested that when the race is implemented in the analysis, it becomes the predominant factor because people are identified primarily by how they look (Seigel, 2017). Although profiling became noticed in the instances of New Jersey motorists being stopped, the most famous case was the shooting death of Amadou Diallo in 1999 (Seigel, 2017). Diallo was a Guinean immigrant residing in New York (Seigel, 2017). In this incident, police fired over 100 shots hitting Diallo 41 times as he stood unarmed (Seigel, 2017).

According to Seigel (2017), the term profiling came of age in 1994 and began to resonate worldwide. Teasley et al. (2018) affirmed Seigel's assessment and stated that allocating race as the foundational influence on perceptions and behaviors to define criminal behavior is an act of injustice. Racial profiling is defined as a practice of law enforcement relying on race in selecting individuals for the scope of investigatory activities (Teasley et al., 2018). Since the 1960s, scholars have found that contact with the police is one of the variables that determines how African Americans perceive law enforcement. This contact with the police is why African Americans harbor negative perceptions of the police (Nadal et al., 2017). Nadal et al. (2017) suggested that police were racially profiling African Americans, which influenced how the African American community viewed procedural justice. Unarmed African Americans killed by police include Ramarley Graham, Tamir Rice, Eric Garner, Oscar Grant, John Crawford, Michael Brown, Walter Scott, Kevin Matthews, Leroy Browning, Cornelius Brown, Philando Castile, and Terence Crutcher (Martin & Varner, 2017). Martin and Varner (2017) suggested that these occurrences have declined over generations, but many feel the number of unarmed African Americans being killed is still too high. According to Martin and Varner, even in death the character of these unarmed individuals was questioned, often being misrepresented to justify their killing. Martin and Varner also said unfair police policies, which are possible because of the segregation of groups by race and class, play a major role in why these incidents happen.

Perceptions of Racial Profiling

Racial profiling has impacted law enforcements' relationship with the African American community. There is a major concern about whether police departments are improving the overall perception of police relationships with the African American community (McNeeley & Grothoff, 2016). Many African American parents associated Trayvon Martin's death with racial profiling (McNeeley & Grothoff, 2016). Perry et al. (2019) agreed and stated that each parent might have a different perception. Perry et al. suggested that Martin's death shaped some African American parents' perception of the death of African American children and their approach to instructing their children in preparation for discriminatory experiences. Martin's death was not because of an encounter with the police; rather, a security guard killed him (McNeeley & Grothoff, 2016). After this incident, some parents found themselves explaining the shooting to their African American children and making suggestions on how to act if faced with a similar situation (McNeeley & Grothoff, 2016).

Many in African American communities think that racial profiling is more pervasive in the African American community (Juckett, 2018). There is insufficient research explaining how this presence impacts African American perception, which is motivated by discrimination against African Americans through disproportionate social control (Juckett, 2018). In stark comparison, Cooper et al. (2021) explained that racial profiling disproportionately impacts African American communities; however, there may be different perceptions of racial profiling among different ethnic groups. According to Cooper et al., although the most publicized instances involve the police, security officers

also use racial profiling tactics in the public and private sectors. However, when discussing the difference in perception, African Americans likely find racial profiling more common than Whites (Burgason, 2017). Burgason's (2017) research showed the same outcome of perception when discussing the widespread problem. Burgason explained that African Americans had a stronger sentiment of racial profiling than Whites, and Whites felt stronger that racial profiling is justified.

There is a negative perception of the police among African Americans (Cooper et al., 2021). Some African American perceptions of police may come from personal experiences; however, one study showed some perceptions are formed through social media, news coverage, or intergenerational transmission of narratives and beliefs (Nadal et al., 2017). Alternatively, perceptions of police can also have different views when considering the participant's race and age, contact with the police, and neighborhood dynamics (Cooper et al., 2021).

Nadal et al. (2017) found that when African American people have frequent negative contact with police and feel they are targeted by racial profiling methods, their mistrust and negative perceptions of police increase. According to Nadal et al. (2017), the Vera Institute of Justice conducted a study involving young people in New York. Participants disagreed or strongly disagreed that the officers they encountered had a good reason to talk to them, treated them fairly, showed concern for their rights, or treated them with respect and dignity (Nadal et al., 2017). In contrast, McNeeley and Grothoff (2016) found strong evidence that young African Americans from low-income situations have the least support for the police. Wheelock et al. (2019) agreed with McNeeley and

Grothoff and stated that individual citizens' perceptions toward police are positive because they generally report high levels of satisfaction with the police. Some factors negatively impact police satisfaction, such as race, age, gender, income, and education (Wheelock et al., 2019). Race is an essential factor in profiling. One of the most notable findings in McNeeley and Grothoff's study was that an individual's race heavily influences their perception of the police.

Burgason (2017) took McNeeley and Grothoff's (2016) sentiments further and explained that a person could be satisfied with an officer's performance but still not trust the police. Burgason stated that an individual might have a relatively positive attitude toward police but still not trust the police. Many believed that trust is needed for the police to improve community ties effectively (Burgason, 2017). Robinson (2017) agreed and stated that police officers must gain residents' trust to gain full respect and cooperation in the community. Robinson indicated it is an unfortunate set of circumstances when people see officers on their streets but do not necessarily believe that the police have their best interest at heart. Research showed that the overwhelming perception of the police is that residents do not believe that the police have their best interest at heart (Burgason, 2017).

Skoy's (2021) study showed that the more contact with the police, the less satisfied the citizens were. In many communities, the presence of police promotes a sense of calm, and people feel safe. However, McNeely and Grothoff (2016), Burgason (2017), Robinson (2017), and Skoy (2021) confirmed that there is a significant negative association between African American perceptions of satisfaction, attitudes, and

legitimacy of the police. Adedoyin (2019) agreed and added there are negative perceptions of police in the African American communities. Still, negative societal stereotypes of African Americans cause the police to have negative perceptions. The general public has been conditioned to think that the human race is separate divisions based on visible physical differences. The physical differences give life to stereotypes, and perceptions are formulated when one stereotypes another individual (Adedoyin et al., 2019).

Kuhn and Lurie (2018) stated improving the relationships between the police and African American communities has prompted a reconciliation movement in several cities. The authors explained that during this phase, the police could research their history, admit mistakes, and listen to talk from the community no matter how hard the conversations may be. According to Kuhn and Lurie, these discussions are rare because people treat them as if these actions are in the past and have no merit in society today. The perception of racial profiling and injustices can be quite different depending on the groups having the discussion (Saunders & Kilmer, 2021). In contrast, Ekins (2016) explained that a favorable perception among some groups exists, but other groups of color believe policing suffers from systematic racial problems. Ekins explored the perception of police and that the disparity in deciding to use lethal force varied among the groups. She found that 73% of African Americans are far more likely than Whites at 35% to say that police are too quick to resort to lethal force (Ekins, 2016). Saunders and Kilmer (2021) concluded that some police departments and community leaders had made strides to recognize racial tension by recognizing historical racial injustices. Those

community leaders have begun commitments to bring about collaborative change in African American communities most impacted by structural racism (Kuhn & Lurie, 2018). The cities participating in reconciliation efforts are Minneapolis, Pittsburgh, Fort Worth, Birmingham, Gary, and Stockton. Kuhn and Lurie (2018) took their definition of reconciliation from the National Network for Safe Communities and the National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice.

Ekins' (2016) study was a national survey that found most Americans positively perceive police. Still, those who have experienced verbal and physical misconduct are disproportionately African American or another minority group. Although her finding is that not many groups are anti-police, she did find a disproportionate difference among races of color. Elkins (2016) stated that many people are satisfied with the police, but these views and attitudes change drastically over racial groups. O'Brien and Tyler (2019) concurred that the initiatives defined the process as the police and the community engaging in joint communication, research, and commitment to practical change to foster the mutual trust essential for effective public safety partnerships. These major steps are set forth to improve the community's perceptions of mistrust for the police. This can be seen as a valiant effort to make the needed progress to improve the overall perception (Fine et al., 2019). In comparison, Ekins' (2016) study findings suggested that there are less than favorable views of the police and a weakened assertion that these groups are anti-police. She found this assertion weakened because, from her findings, not many groups were willing to cut the number of police patrolling their neighborhoods, no matter their perception of the police.

History of Police–Community Relationship

Historically, there has been a relationship between law enforcement and the community. In the United States, law enforcement has viewed itself as an entity that brings offenders before the court to answer their crimes (Cunneen, 2020). Cunneen (2020) stated that bringing individuals before the court does not deter them from committing future crimes. It also does not discourage others from committing crimes. Muhlhausen (2018) agreed and confirmed this was the reason for police reform that changed policing nearly 40 years ago, seeing themselves as deterrents of crime with a strong emphasis on crime reduction. Policing initiatives like proactive policing turned routine encounters into disputes (Muhlhausen, 2018). Lum and Koper (2017) established that proactive policing helps prevent crimes by working with the community. One of the proactive policing tactics results can be depicted with the stop-and-frisk program used in New York and other states with similar Stop and Frisk programs (Lum & Koper, 2017). Jones (2020) agreed that tactics like Stop and Frisk were found to have no immediate effect on crime reduction but adversely affected public trust.

Meares (2018) matched those thoughts that public trust in law enforcement refers to the community's trust in the police to always or most of the time, do what is right and for the greater good of the community. Research indicates that people draw these conclusions since law enforcement personnel procedures are free of biases and treated with dignity and respect (Meares, 2018). O'Brien and Tyler (2019) similarly stated that redirecting policing as a civil service tool based on trust between law enforcement and the Saint Louis communities' officers to an oath to protect and serve is the only way to

reestablish trust between the two entities. However, in slight contrast, James (2018) stated that police associate African Americans with threats. This would indicate that the community does not feel they are treated with dignity and respect when it comes to the African American community.

Owusu-Bempah (2017) explained the role of social construction in determining the realities every individual subscribes to. The author's study points to the role of the environment and an individual's ability to interpret and classify the events around him. Reality turns out to be the intersection between abilities to decode the environment and surroundings' actual state. The social construction of reality entails a variety of disciplines, including philosophy, ethics, and sociology (Owusu-Bempah, 2017). In comparison, Braga et al. (2019) stated that reality had been identified as being socially constructed by itself, and society's perception of it is not distinguishable from absolute reality. The authors suggested that social construction aims to dissect the primary motivators of society's actions and evaluate society's role in the bigger picture of reality. Realism is, however, not an independent concept by itself; instead, it overlaps with other factors as characterized by the environment (Braga et al., 2019). Reinka and Leach (2017) stated that the reality, in African American communities, is that the African American male is seven times more likely to be killed by police than White males. The authors also stated that this is a problematic reality. These circumstances play a huge role in the distrust of the African American community with the police and the need to improve the African American community and police relationships.

The impact of communication on realism is a central building block towards society's understanding and perception of reality, and therefore imperative to study the interaction between language and society (Krippendorff & Halabi, 2020). Krippendorff and Halabi (2020) explained how communication enables individuals to define the reality of human experience rather than relying on the environment's influence over the encounter with reality. Boehme et al. (2020) suggested that people's behaviors in one's surroundings have been identified as having a profound impact on how people act. Humans are also highly influenced by others' behaviors, which has been why public relations have grown so prominent as a discipline. Humans' tendency to mirror the behavior of other people they perceive to be in a more lucrative position makes it relatively easy to manipulate the environment by people with more authority to beget specific behavioral patterns (Boehme et al., 2020).

Need to Repair the Relationship Between Law Enforcement and the Community

The relationship between law enforcement and the community may need to be repaired. Koslicki and Willits (2018) anticipated the significance of research and its effect on positive social change is that restoring the trust issues within the relationship between the police and the African American community created an atmosphere that promotes public safety for all. To be effective in their duties, law enforcement agencies cannot function alone. They need assistance from citizens (Koslicki & Willits, 2018). Makin & Marenin's (2017) added that studies of this nature improved administrative efficiency and efficacy by offering insight into recruitment and retention practices related to target populations' social constructions. The authors stated the study was essential to

the public policy and administration field because police administration and elected officials who implement policies for law enforcement agencies may benefit from insight into the police community trust problems, leading to long-term solutions.

Partnerships are essential to productive policing in today's society, and community policing is part of improving relationships with community members (Skogan & Hartnett, 2019). The authors stated that partnerships are just as imperative today as they were in 1829 when Sir Robert Peele formed the first specialized police force in London, England, and authored the *Pres of Law Enforcement.* Giwa (2018) added that despite strong evidence about the effectiveness of community policing, it remains the approach of choice to repair trust issues with the African American community. Nguyen (2019) similarly agreed and stated that community policing sought to repair the police's image, reputation, and capacity to solve crimes. The author suggested that in recent decades, perhaps the most celebrated reform to address both crime and citizen-police trust has been the introduction of community policing. Blair et al. (2020) suggested that the trust between law enforcement agencies and the people they protect and serve is essential. He highlighted the importance of trust for police effectiveness and in shaping citizen perceptions of the integrity of the criminal justice system overall.

Tumultuous Relationship

One result of the tumultuous relationship between police and African American citizens is the lack of trust on both sides. Establishing relationships with mutual trust between law enforcement and the community is essential to the law enforcement department's mission on public safety and effective policing in African American

communities (Pryce & Chenane, 2021). In comparison, Moore (2019) conducted a study that suggested that the African American communities, specifically the African American male, have a significant distrust for the police due to their personal experiences during police encounters and police officers' biases toward them. Pryce and Chenane (2021) added that for the police to earn the trust of African Americans, the police should treat African Americans equitably, invest in community policing, and respect African Americans. Although some respondents do not believe that their relationship with the police could be repaired, a small percentage of respondents, less than five percent (Pryce & Chenane, 2021).

Another result of this tumultuous relationship is the lack of community cooperation with law enforcement. LaVigne et al. (2017) stated that law enforcement needs the community's assistance to conduct their civil duties effectively. The authors suggested that once community members trust law enforcement, they are more inclined to provide law enforcement with details to deter crime. However, Griggs (2017) suggested that restoring the trust issues within this relationship will enable law enforcement to serve their communities but restoring the trust in African American communities has been challenging.

A significant result of this tumultuous relationship is officer-involved shootings. Kochel (2019) reviewed both lethal and nonlethal incidents of officer-involved shootings to determine that law enforcement in the United States' fifty largest departments shot at least 3,649 people from 2010 through 2016. The author discovered that St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department officers shoot suspects at a rate higher than other big-

city police departments across the country. The top three law enforcement departments' officer-involved shooting statistics from the Police Accountability Tool database are listed below. In contrast, Brunson, and Wade (2019) reported communities of color typically have low fatal and nonfatal shooting clearance rates due to poor witness cooperation. This results from a tumultuous relationship between law enforcement and the African American community. When law enforcement represents the interests of the communities, there is typically harmony within this relationship. When officers are not on the same page as the communities, there tends to be dissatisfaction and bickering (Brunson & Wade, 2019).

Police Violence and the Vulnerability of African Americans

African Americans may have a vulnerability to police violence. Fridell and Lim (2016) argued that the African American community's experiences with the police can be viewed as a crisis. Some believe police violence incidents involving African Americans are the trigger for the African American's overall perception of the police (Fridell & Lim, 2016). The disproportionate interaction police have with African Americans is well-documented, and this disproportionate interaction is also documented regarding the number of fatalities during these encounters (Paoline et al., 2018). There have been a few explanations as to the reason for the disproportionate encounters with police. Paoline et al. (2018) stated one explanation is African Americans have relatively higher involvement in criminal activity.

In contrast, an explanation is police have a racial bias (Dukes et al., 2017). According to Fridell and Lim, racial bias against African Americans has existed in police

departments since the agencies' existence. Data showed African Americans have been harassed and killed by police throughout history, but recent incidents bring perceptions of racial profiling in policing to the public forefront (Dukes et al., 2017). Some African Americans' perception is the police resort to tear gas and rubber bullets in White neighborhoods, while they use lethal force in African American neighborhoods (Dyson, 2017). Dyson also stated that when police encounter African Americans, the body cameras will conveniently fail to function properly or fall off. According to Dyson, this perception makes some believe why grand juries fail to indict the police, which convinces the African American community they will not receive justice. The current incidents involving police fatally shooting an African American suspect, such as the shooting of Michael Brown in Missouri, Tamir Rice in Ohio, and Philando Castile in Minnesota, have called for a review of police practices and relations with the African American community (Dyson, 2017). These shootings highlight racial profiling accompanied by racial bias and the results of an encounter between the police and African Americans when the element of race is present (Duke et al., 2017).

The number of police shootings involving African Americans is commonplace nationally for the African American community (Abdul-Alim, 2016). Milwaukee, Wisconsin, has become an epicenter recently with African Americans being shot by police; it is not alone with the high number of times these police shootings occur (Abdul-Alim, 2016). In 2014, Dontre Hamilton, a mentally ill man, was shot 14 times by police (Abdul-Alim, 2016). Peterson et al. (2018) added that after the shooting of Dontre

Hamilton, the police were equipped with bodycams to record the circumstance as they occur and reduce malicious tactics.

Woolington (2019) stated that when speaking of occurrences that involve the inconsistency of police treatment of the two races, consider a similar event in Oregon in 2013. Woolington (2019) reported, a White man, Jared Steven Leone, high on some drug providing him superhuman strength, entered a police records office, arguably looking for help; however, when the police approached, the man began swinging on them. Multiple police officers attempted to wrestle him to the ground, but he had an enormous amount of strength, which allowed him to break one of the handcuffs and grab a police officer's gun (Woolington, 2019). Woolington (2019) stated after obtaining this gun, the man fired the gun, and it took the officers seven taser attempts before they were finally able to restrain the man and take him into custody. Yet, he was not shot. By comparison, Andonova (2017) described Laquan McDonald's incident in Chicago Illinois, where a 17-year-old young man, high on drugs, carried a knife and walked away from the police. Andonova explained that the difference in this incident is video shows McDonald moving in the opposite direction of police and not approaching officers with the weapon. McDonald did not get in a physical exchange with officers, nor was there attempts to subdue him with tasers. Instead, only a few minutes after the encounter, McDonald was shot 16 times and killed (Andonova, 2017).

Rivera and Ward (2017) suggested strategies for defining analytical and ethical positions on race and police violence that draw from public administration and policy sources. Rivera's and Ward's intention was to provide a tentative starting point for

integrative analysis of race-related police violence against African Americans in the United States, emphasizing corrective options suited to public administration and policy. The analysis highlighted the necessity of increased police professionalism, including increasing ethnic and racial diversity within police departments, implementing community-based policing, and introducing cultural competency training and bias-reducing practices (Rivera & Ward, 2017). Spencer et al. (2016) took the position that most police officers do not intentionally discriminate and acknowledge the disproportionate number of young African American men jailed, subjected to police violence, or who otherwise suffer discriminatory consequences within the judicial system. In the discussion, Spencer et al. (2016) first sought to understand mental processes associated with implicit, as exposed to explicit biases, and how they interact within police policy and action. The authors offered psychologically based intervention strategies for law enforcement personnel, including (at an individual level) intergroup contact, counter-stereotype exemplars, and stereotype negation training and (at an agency level) banning racial profiling, training officers, and reducing officers' license to act at their discretion. The background statistics regarding parent/child communication about violence and perceived negative safety were relevant to this dissertation because they are fundamental to the established dialogue on family communication and perceived threats of violence in urban African American communities (Spencer et al., 2016). Background information surrounding the public policy approach to police violence and the vulnerability of African Americans within the current system will serve to theoretically ground this dissertation's problem statement (Rivera & Ward, 2017).

The Talk

There is a point in a child's life when their parent(s) have the *talk* with them. Many people believe that God guides how people should raise their children to walk a certain path (Barragan & Kirpalani, 2017). Nevertheless, this decision to follow those guidelines is a choice. It is the choice of the parent to guide in that direction, and it is also the child's choice to follow those guidelines (Barragan & Kirpalani, 2017). Despite that judgment call, most parents hope that their children make good decisions and remain safe through challenges in life (Voisin et al., 2016). According to Voisin et al., this parental concern guides many to have certain discussions with their children. Many parents view their most meaningful task as effectively communicating with their children about how to be responsible while remaining careful in making rational decisions (Voisin et al., 2016).

When most parents think of serious discussions with their children, the talks are generally regarding sex, consequences of drinking and drugs, and other possible questionable behavior during childhood (Voisin et al., 2016). However, in the African American family, Voisin et al. stated their talks with their children also consist of conversations about drugs, sex, and all those things mentioned. However, one conversation occurs in many African American families' homes that do not occur in other racial groups, and that conversation is known as *The Talk* (Voisin et al., 2016). Barragan and Kirpalani (2017) agreed and stated The Talk is motivated by parental concern but necessitated by real threats. However, a weakness could include having the Talk without any lived experiences to add authenticity and validity to the discussion.

Many decades ago, parents of African American children had to make certain their children were aware of their place in a racist world (Dyson, 2017). According to Dyson, an African American parents' nightmare was that their child, not knowing the color line, would cross the invisible racial line into a boundary that African Americans were not allowed to enter, and the consequences would be detrimental. Many African American parents began to discuss safety topics with their young children, especially the male child (Dyson, 2017). According to Whitaker and Snell (2016), this discussion was termed *The Talk* by African American communities. The term has persisted in referring to parents' warning about conduct in a racialized encounter with the police. The discussion is a repeated theme in the literature about being respectful of the police, keeping his hands visible, and not wearing his hood over his face (even if they are trying to stay warm).

According to Harris and Amutah-Onukagha (2019), these are some topics. Still, not all of The Talk because it is a common effort to teach their children that not all people will see them as gentle souls, they may be, but they will label them as thugs or delinquents before they even know their name. In comparison, Barragan and Kirpalani (2017) suggested some parents find this a challenging conversation to have because they find it tough to explain to their African American child that no matter how he looks, or no matter the content of his character, some may perceive him scary and prone to criminality simply because of the color of his skin.

According to Whitaker and Snell (2016), African American parents have struggled with raising their children in racially hostile societies. Racial hostile

environments have existed for many generations, and parents from previous generations have worked to improve these situations for subsequent generations (Haen & Thomas, 2018). According to the standards of many African American parents, making life better meant the succeeding African Americans would experience less racial hostility, exclusion, and violence than the previous generations (Whitaker & Snell, 2016). Cavanagh and Cauggman (2019) agreed that for several African American parents, their parenting style involves preparing their children to navigate an unfair and potentially deadly racial environment, which judges them by their skin color first. This parenting style includes racial socializing with their children through conversations and practices to prepare them to live in environments where they may not fit (Cavanagh & Cauffman, 2019).

Whitaker and Snell (2016) suggested that many African American parents felt a sense of powerlessness to protect their children when faced with certain racially tensed moments. Cavanagh and Cauffman (2019) explained that many African American parents have engaged in one of the most painful, heartfelt, uncomfortable, shameful, and counterintuitive racial discussions; with their children, known as The Talk (Whitaker & Snell, 2016). Over time, the content of this conversation may include a few components, but it remains consistent with preparation for young African American children, particularly boys (Cavanagh & Cauffman, 2019). While Whitaker and Snell wrote in detail about the contents of the African American parent discussions to prepare their children, research from Dotterer and James (2018) differed from Whitaker and Snell regarding parenting micro protection discussions that may buffer against these racially

discriminatory occurrences and questions if these types of discussions effectively protect children. Many African American parents visualize their young children as innocent souls and pure spirits (Dotterer & James, 2018). However, the authors noted it is challenging to sit that pure spirit down and have a conversation with them to explain that everyone is not going to see them in that image. Discussing racial and cultural differences can be confusing for a child; therefore, this becomes a more difficult conversation than the conversations parents of other races have with their adolescent children (Dotterer & James, 2018).

The conversation of how an individual's race can change how someone looks at them can be difficult. Still, it can be even more complicated to understand for an adolescent child who is just becoming familiar with their makeup to now have to incorporate race challenges in that equation (Voisin et al., 2016). The Center for Parent and Teen Communication (2018) described adolescent development in stages. The early adolescence from age 11 to 14 suggested that teens are more sensitive to experiences where race is an issue (The Center for Parent and Teen Communication, 2018).

Recognizing this may play into why African American parents start having The Talk with children beginning at this age (The Center for Parent and Teen Communication, 2018). This is the age where teens encounter discussions about race from comments from peers and even posts on social media (Rivas-Drake et al., 2019).). As this is a time for racial identity, some parents feel it may be wise to discuss with their children how they may be at risk in a racially tense situation (Rivas-Drake et al., 2019). During the middle adolescence age range, which is 14 to 18, the cognitive abilities

become more complex. Teens begin to understand more about what their race means to them and what it may mean to others (The Center for Parent and Teen Communication, 2018). At this age, teens are usually more knowledgeable of stereotypes associated with their race (both positive and negative) (The Center for Parent and Teen Communication, 2018).

The adolescent years are important age ranges because this is the time of critical understanding and the development formation of the mindset (The Center for Parent and Teen Communication, 2018). When African American parent discusses racial tension with their African American children, it is not meant to shape them to be hostile or negative about certain groups of people (The Center for Parent and Teen Communication, 2018). Hattery and Smith (2021) agreed that The Talk is meant to be an informative conversation of how an African American child may be viewed differently during certain encounters and how that view can change an arguably calm situation into a racially tense situation that can turn deadly. According to The Center for Parent and Teen Communication, this conversation is difficult but needed because society has stereotypes. Those stereotypes view some groups as heroes and leaders and others as victims, foreigners, or lawbreakers. According to Teasley et al. (2018), the presupposition that African American youths are violent and dangerous is too often part of the cultural narrative.

Learning Race

Parents play a role in the way a child learns race. Beneke et al. (2019) explained that humans are naturally inclined to categorize, allowing for cognitive efficiency for

learning and making inferences. Children and adults use categorical labels to make inferences about a person based on their phenotypic categories (Beneke et al., 2019). Young children are susceptible to grouping and dependent on stereotypical interpretations of the differences among individuals considering the reliance of the brain on knowledge classifications (Beneke et al., 2019). Zheng (2018) added that parents play an important role in influencing their children's attitudes on race and racial stereotypes. Opposed to ignoring race, the authors stated that parents should be more proactive. The author further noted that parents could convince their children to identify and discuss racial differences while maintaining that racial prejudices are wrong. Zheng stated that parents actively engaging with their children in conversations on race can considerably impact their child's sense of self, interaction with others, and achievement success.

Children view differences in race and try to understand them by creating stereotypical knowledge. They are curious about the social world, and their brains are set with cognitive structures for social group categorization (Erwin et al., 2021). The authors explained prejudices are not preordained but pliable, molded by a dynamic blend of cultural beliefs and social circumstances. People fundamentally are hardwired to hold prejudices against those who seem dissimilar or unfamiliar to them, and it is possible to override the worst impulses and reduce these prejudices (Beneke et al., 2019). However, this requires broad social efforts to challenge stereotypes and get people to work together across group lines (Erwin et al., 2021). There are theoretical claims on how to challenge stereotypes and promote intergroup relationships. The authors stated one assertion is the contact hypothesis, which explained that contact between different racial group members

can reduce prejudices. Research on school integration can help to show that merely placing students together is insufficient (Beneke et al., 2019). According to Zheng (2018), discrimination awareness and bias can help children understand the group nature of racial prejudice and prevent accepting stereotypes as truthfulness.

Christia Spears Brown, a developmental and social psychologist, explored how children expand their awareness of prejudice and the factors leading to discrimination (Benner et al., 2018). Brown states that when a child deals with a negative outcome or detrimental treatment, two significant ways exist where the child could construe the experience: (a) a case of nondiscrimination that is accurately interpreted as nondiscrimination, (b) a case of discrimination that goes detected or undetected (Benner et al., 2018). Zheng (2018) suggested that many factors can help to influence if a child understands a situation as discriminatory, including situational factors, where are ambiguous vs. unambiguous discrimination: individual characteristics, which is a child's ability to use social comparisons, moral reasoning; understanding multiple and hierarchical classifications and certain socializing factors including discussions of race by parents might impact discrimination perceptions of children and adolescents (Zheng, 2018).

Children's perceptions of discrimination are linked to positive and negative outcomes (Zheng, 2018). In comparison, some research found that assigning negative feedback to discrimination instead of personal inferiority increases resilience and motivation (Tighe & Davis-Kean, 2019). Recognizing discrimination is related to heightened symptoms of anger and depression in children. The evidence that positive and

negative outcomes can result from perceived discrimination shows a fragile compromise (Zheng, 2018). Zheng (2018) suggested that if a person has an unfair experience contingent on race, that person may respond with angry or depressive feelings. Children and adults must cope with ascribing those feelings to a biased and unfair system and no signs of personal inferiority, which is the emotional task (Tighe & Davis-Kean, 2019).

Benner et al. (2019) similarly explained that perceptions and awareness of racial bias are commonplace among children. A study of 350 African American, White, and Latino elementary school students showed that African American and Latino 4th grade students were more conscious of racial bias than White students (Beneke et al., 2019). The most significant bias cases included being prohibited from activities or verbally harassed as a result of their ethnicity (Benner et al., 2019). African American and Latino students also identified many significant experiences of bias, such as receiving poor or late service at a restaurant compared to White families (Beneke et al., 2019).

The findings from Benner et al. (2019) helped to support the claim that racial discrimination is widespread and normative for African American youth. Gender differences suggest that African American males and females do not equally see discrimination in all situations (Zheng, 2018). Many factors, such as differences in messages from parents on racial dignity and racial barriers, may add to the disparity in the perceptions of girls and boys on discrimination (Zheng, 2018). Nearly 600 African American youths in grades 7 to 10 were studied by Benner et al. (2018) to understand how experiences of racial discrimination, practices of parent racial socialization, and outcomes related to academic achievement were interconnected among the sample.

African American parents have the challenge of preparing their children to identify bias correctly and prepare them not to be overwhelmed or hindered by the prevalence of racial discrimination and bias (Benner et al., 2018). The authors explained that parents help children through distressing, biased experiences by supporting their racial identity development. Positive racial identity attitudes may safeguard African American adolescents against discrimination to perform well in school (Benner et al., 2018). Without a sense of pride in ethnic heritage, merely identifying with a negatively stigmatized racial or cultural group may hinder youths' self-beliefs of youths because they are unprepared to endure despite stereotypes and discrimination (Benner et al., 2018). African American children and adolescents require explicit and implicit advice to adjust to dissenting views and racial discrimination (Anderson, McKenny, & Stevenson, 2019).

Authority figures must support cross-group relationships to reduce prejudiced beliefs among children (Paasch-Anderson et al., 2019). Paasch-Anderson (2019) suggested such adult support includes actively helping children share common goals. They must cooperate to succeed and ensure that all children are treated as equals and have positive interactions. White et al. (2020) suggested that social relationships with people from many groups reduce prejudice, decrease social anxiety, and help generate positive experiences between groups. These relationships are a key factor in shaping prejudices, reactions to stigma, and academic achievement. In comparison, Schafer et al. (2021) stated that ethical and antiracist social engineering could and should be employed to disrupt the natural tendency toward bias and stereotypes.

Given the hierarchy of America's racially stratified society, the consequences of stereotypical knowledge on White children's sense of self are fundamentally different from its consequences on African American children's sense of self (Schafer et al., 2021). Hagerman (2020) stated that White children naturally learn that they belong to a race with more power, wealth, and control in society, which provides a sense of security. In contrast, Durante, and Fiske (2017) stated that African American children learn to belong to a race with less status, power, and wealth. The authors suggested the consequences of belonging to a negatively stereotyped group include vulnerability to low teacher expectations and stereotype threat.

Unreflective acceptance and internalization of negative racial stereotypes can be detrimental to a child's sense of self and achievement (Durante & Fiske, 2017). Kinney (2020) agreed and stated that the impact of stereotypes on performance had been repeatedly evidenced in studies on stereotype threat. Stereotype threat theory posits those perceptions of low expectations may hinder individual performance (Kinney, 2020). For example, Hampton and Feller (2020) showed several studies conducted by Steele and Aronson, which indicate that African American students underachieve relative to their actual intellectual ability in situations where African American students perceive intellectual ability as a salient factor. Stereotype threat theory suggests that when African American students are told they will be testing intellectual ability, African Americans' stereotype as unintelligent is activated in their minds (Hampton & Feller, 2020).

The neuroscience and psychological research provided evidence that children indeed recognize racial differences and act based on their understandings of what those

racial differences mean (Leath et al., 2019). Leath et al. (2019) stated that children of marginalized racial groups have a greater awareness of discrimination than youth from non-marginalized groups. Butler-Barnes et al. (2019) agreed and stated that based on data from 175 African American, White, and Latino children aged 7-12, researchers found that African American children were best able to define the concept of race accurately, and Latino children reported the highest frequency of racial discrimination experiences. Rollo (2018) agreed and stated that at some time, nearly all children are likely to feel that they have been mistreated because of their racial or ethnic minority group membership. The author suggested that children and adolescents who have a more excellent knowledge of stereotyping and discrimination and parents who discuss discrimination with them are likely to perceive more discrimination than others.

Complementing research on the prevalence of discrimination awareness among elementary school-aged children shows that teenage African Americans also commonly report being stereotyped and discriminated against (English et al., 2020). The author stated that researchers found that in a multiethnic sample of 177 teenagers, African American adolescents thought people perceived them as unintelligent and threatening. Brown (2017) agreed and suggested that African American adolescents also thought racial bias contributed to harassment by police and unfair discipline in school. Hope et al. (2017) determined that based on data from 13- to 17-year-old, who completed the National Survey of African Life, which surveyed 810 African American youth and 360 Caribbean Black youth, most respondents reported experiencing a recent incident of racial discrimination. The author also mentioned that 87 percent of African American

youth and 90 percent of Caribbean Black youth reported at least one discriminatory incident in the previous year.

Jones et al. (2020) reported the most commonly reported incident was some African American youth who felt as if other ethnic groups treated them like they were better than them. Of the youth surveyed, boys perceived more discrimination than girls, and older adolescents (age 17) perceived more discrimination than their younger counterparts (Jones et al., 2020). Tynes et al. (2019) supported these findings, reiterating that racial discrimination is pervasive and normative for the youth of color. The gender differences suggest that African American males and females do not equally perceive discrimination in all settings.

Dunbar et al. (2017) stated many factors, including differential messages from parents about racial pride and racial barriers, may contribute to the difference in girls' and boys' perceptions of discrimination. DiAquoi (2017) referenced a study that explored mothers' perceptions of how girls and boys differentially experience discrimination and mothers' gender-specific messages about discrimination awareness. Major (2020) similarly presented a study of 548 African American adolescents in grades 7-10 to understand how racial discrimination experiences, parent racial socialization practices, and academic achievement outcomes were interrelated among the sample. Major (2020) found racial discrimination experiences to be associated with decreased academic curiosity, persistence, and self-reported grades. The author also found that parental messages emphasizing racial inequality awareness were associated with higher school grades. Malone-Gonzalez (2019) agreed that messages about racial inequalities might

counteract African American adolescents' painful experiences with discrimination. Self-worth messages may allow children to perceive the world much more optimistically. The author stated it is apparent that African American children and adolescents commonly perceive that they have been discriminated against.

Identity Development

Many factors may adjust identity development. Identity is an established system of beliefs on self that depicts a person's behavior in significant social settings (Saafir, 2020). While many factors can help to alter identity development, people initially see themselves based on inferences from significant others, including their family members, peers, and teachers. The author noted that people gain increased self-awareness of their true beliefs and attributes with maturation (Saafir, 2020). The progress of individuals in understanding race, membership in a racial group, and the effects of that membership during racial identity (Saafir, 2020). Saafir stated that racial identity involves the perception of shared racial heritage with a particular group. As the aforementioned study suggested, Johnston-Guerrero (2016) explained that the resilience resulting from positive African American identity could theoretically safeguard against the negative effects of racial prejudice and bias. Oyserman and Lewis' (2017) developmental model of racial-ethnic self-schemas further supports the significance of developing healthy, positive racial identities of children (Tang et al., 2016). The researchers theorized racial-ethnic minority identity as a theoretically schematic part of self-concept or a racial-ethnic self-schema. Oyserman and Lewis termed four types of racial-ethnic schemas. They examined

how schemas are related differently to children's reactions to negative stereotypes, including choosing to participate or not engage in school (Tang et al., 2016).

Oyserman and Lewis (2017) stated that racial minorities who held racial-ethnic schemas that focused on positive connections with the in-group, or those focusing only on positive associations with the broader community, had a heightened risk of susceptibility to negative stereotypes and disconnected from school. Tang et al. (2016) suggested that children who identify with their in-group membership assign negative feedback to prejudice and consequently diminish and detach from domains that convey negative feedback, such as academic domains. Saafir (2020) similarly believed that the racial-ethnic schemas that help shield children from negative stereotypes are centered on positive relationships to the in-group and relationships with the larger society (Saafir, 2020). Children with schemas centered on positive in-group connections and positive connections with larger society can recognize and address prejudice while staying connected in the larger society (Saafir, 2020).

African American Children Developing Strong, Positive Racial Identities

African American children develop strong, positive racial identities. The revised nigrescence model by Psychologist William Cross (2017) defined racial identity development progresses in four stages. The first two stages include children and adolescents (Cross, 2017). Children are primarily in the pre-encounter stage where their racial group membership does not include individual significance (Cross, 2017). Kyere and Huguley (2020) agreed and stated that children in the pre-encounter stage might uncritically accept White culture values, seek approval from Whites, have negative

perceptions of African American people, or view themselves negatively because of their race.

The encounter stage is catalyzed by events that promote a consciousness of racism and encourage reconsidering racial group preference (Cross, 2017). Cross (2017) stated once racial group membership is made relevant, individuals often go through the immersion-emersion stage, evidenced by an appeal in bordering with African American people and understanding more about African American history and culture. In comparison, Kyere and Huguley (2020) suggested that individuals in the immersion-emersion stage may also show anti-White attitudes. The last stage, internalization, denotes self-acceptance of racial group membership. People cycle through the stages of racial identity development during their lives when faced with dissimilar events that underline their racial group membership (Cross, 2017).

Complementing the stage model of racial identity development, scholars also proposed a multidimensional racial identity (MMRI), emphasizing the varying beliefs and attitudes associated with being African American (Willis & Neblett, 2020). The authors stated this model defined African American racial identity as both the importance of race in an individual's self-perception and the meaning of being a member of this racial group. Ozier et al. (2019) agreed the multidimensional model integrated theories of identity with qualitative findings regarding African Americans' lived experiences. White et al. (2019) agreed and emphasized the MMRI is based on four major assumptions. The model assumes that identities are mostly stable and mutable and influenced by situations. The model also assumes that individuals' multiple identities are hierarchical; for

example, people place varying significance on their multiple identities, such as race, gender, and occupational identity (White et al., 2019). Endale (2018) similarly stated that the MMRI considers a person's identity construction to be the most valid indicator of identity. Therefore, the MMRI privileges individual meanings of being African American. Working from a phenomenological approach, the MMRI does not claim healthy and unhealthy identities. Sullivan et al. (2018) referenced Cross's stage model and stated, unlike that model. The MMRI does not claim a person's identity within a developmental sequence. The MMRI describes an individual's racial identity status at a given point in time. The MMRI acknowledges that the significance and meaning of race can change over time (Sullivan et al., 2018).

Bernard et al. (2018) indicated four dimensions of the MMRI, including salience, centrality, regard, and ideology, based on these assumptions. Racial salience and the centrality of identity are the two dimensions that refer to individuals' significance on race-related to their self-definition. The authors mentioned two dimensions that refer to the meaning individuals ascribe to being African American: the regard (positive or negative) for one's racial group and the ideology one associates with the identity. Mason et al. (2017) agreed and gave an example of the perceptions of how African Americans should act. Using the MMRI, researchers can examine the complexity and heterogeneity of meanings individuals ascribe to African Americans (Mason et al., 2017). Researchers have argued that African American parents play a crucial role in African American children's racial identity attitudes.

The family serves at least two critical functions in the African American child's early development. Nelson et al. (2018) suggested that family helps foster a personal frame of reference for self-identity, self-worth, achievement, group identity, and other social behaviors. Second, it provides comfort and affection, which lessen the negative and other deleterious consequences of racism. Marcelo and Yates (2019) agreed that African American parents who discuss race with their children contribute to their children's stronger racial and ethnic identities and more positive attitudes about African Americans than children whose parents do not discuss race. Similarly, Wang et al. (2020) presented literature on children's developing conceptions of race evidence, the way the brain operates underlies children's recognition of race and racial differences. Adults can influence children's application of stereotypes by teaching them to be conscious of bias and inhibit it (Nelson et al., 2018). The authors assert that children need to be presented with information about the nature and scope of racial inequality. Although there is evidence to the contrary, most studies suggest that being aware of racial discrimination confers positive effects on African American children by preparing them to face racial discrimination challenges and persevere despite bias.

African American Family Socialization

Race can have an impact on family socialization. Jakoubek and Budilová (2019) noted that many aspects of African American culture in recent history, including parenting, have been ignored. In a 1963 study of ethnic groups in New York, Glazer and Moynihan found that Negroes were only Americans and nothing else, with no values and culture to guard and protect (Jakoubek & Budilová, 2019). Loyd and Gaither (2018) also

reported that Boykin and Toms in 1985 offered a revisionist framework of African American child socialization to disrupt African American families' deficit discourse. The authors also explained that Boykin and Toms sought to theorize the successful socialization of African American children as more than how these children fit into a Euro-American social-cultural frame of reference.

It is essential to acknowledge that race has many different levels of meaning for African American individuals and families (Godsay & Brodsky, 2018). Fletcher (2021) agreed and suggested that there may be conflicting images of what it means to be African American. The presentation of a multidimensional model of racial identity further explained that the experiences of African Americans are heterogeneous and have resulted in variability in the significance and qualitative meaning that they attribute to being a member of the African American racial group. In comparison, Carter et al. (2020) suggested that some African American people may place little significance on race. In contrast, others may consider being African American a critical aspect of their self-concept. Even those who place great significance on African Americans may differ in their conceptions of African Americans (Carter et al., 2020).

The heterogeneity of African American people is partially influenced by social class. As a race, class is a complex construct that holds various meanings for individuals, particularly in the African American community (Morrison et al., 2019). Assari and Moghani-Lankarani (2018) submitted that class or socioeconomic level does not foreordain a value system for many African Americans. For example, based on income, a family classified as poor may have middle-class values. McNeil-Smith and Landor

(2018) agreed that social realities of race and class and their meanings contribute to African American families' lived experiences. The next section describes research that has examined the impact of social class on African American parenting.

This section included a review of research on the role of social class in African American families' childrearing efforts. Huguley et al. (2019) explored evidence that social class is more influential than race in family socialization practices. The author also examined evidence of African American middle-class families' distinct experiences and highlighted unique experiences at the intersection of race and class for this population. Labella's (2018) research on the different childrearing beliefs and practices within the African American middle-class is detailed. The author's study contributed to these lines of research by highlighting African American middle-class families' racial socialization experiences and analyzing the varied approaches to racial socialization among a group of middle-class African American mothers. Huguley et al. (2019) and Labella (2018) agreed social class is more impactful on childbearing than race.

Zucker and Patterson (2018) presented an ethnographic study of 12 families (six White, five African American, and one interracial) with a nine or 10-year-old child, and the authors found that family social class status was the critical discriminating factor among differential parenting practices. Scott et al. (2020) compared this to African American and White working-class and low-income families. They discovered African American and White middle-class families were alike in many ways, particularly how middle-class parents taught their children to interact with adults in social institutions.

African Americans experience what DuBois in 1903 called twoness who is American, and a Negro with two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings: two warring ideals in one dark body. Dubois added that strength alone keeps it from being torn apart (Loyd & Gaither, 2018). Varner et al. (2018) agreed and stated that according to the triple quandary framework by Boykin and Toms, African Americans must deal with mainstream American and African American cultural values and contend with their ethnic minority status, which confers oppression and racism experiences. Loyd and Gaither (2018) confirmed that Boykin and Toms classified the American portion of DuBois' twoness as the mainstream socialization agenda of parents, contending that the values of African American parents, practices, and outlooks are affected by mainstream American society, which preferences individualism, and competition (Loyd & Gaither, 2018).

The third element of the triple quandary framework is the racial minority socialization agenda of African American parents, which includes practices and tasks that help develop the adaptive reactions of children, coping styles, and adjustment techniques when reacting to racism and bias (Loyd & Gaither, 2018). Anderson et al. (2019) agreed and stated that African American parents face the triple dilemma of dealing with the mainstream African American culture. Minority realms of experience must decide what messages to provide their children and how certain messages may affect the self-perception and actions of their children. Perry et al. (2019) agreed and stated factors that determine parental socialization focus on the racial identity of parents and parents' experiences with racism.

When raising African American children, racial socialization becomes teaching a positive sense of self despite societal biases (McNeil et al., 2016). The authors suggested the three commonly used types of racial socialization are preparation for bias, promotion of mistrust, and cultural socialization. Perry et al. (2019) made a similar suggestion by expressing that racial socialization promotes racial pride, the development of knowledge of African American culture, and preparation for bias and discrimination.

Gendered Racial Socialization Beliefs

African Americans may have different racial socialization views. According to Stokes et el. (2020), African Americans historically have experienced different racial socialization beliefs. During the enslavement of Africans, oppressors tried to annihilate any sense of family and take apart manhood's meaning (Stokes et al., 2020). African American men, after slavery, were methodically forced out of White male-dominated commerce spaces, limiting the abilities of African American men to take on the role of sole household provider (Stokes et al., 2020). According to Davis-Tribble et al. (2019), African American women consequently were situated to work outside the home to help support their families. Compared to other races, African American families dealt with less intense gender divisions between economic and domestic work. The structural and racist forces that expanded the roles of African American women may have devalued the role of African American men (Davis-Tribble et al., 2019). The differential treatment of African American men and women remains evident, as African American boys perceive that they are feared in society and think they are stereotyped as threats (Davis-Tribble et al., 2019). Leath et al. (2020) agreed that African American boys and girls are conscious

of the negative stereotypes about African American people. They find these stereotypes important to their experiences in life. The prevalence of racism and the related gender dynamics are social truths that African American mothers navigate while raising their children (Leath et al., 2020).

Similar research shows that African American boys and girls get different messages on race and self (Stokes et al., 2020). Studies showed that boys are more likely to deal with negative stereotypes and coping strategies for addressing racism (Stokes et al., 2020). Girls are more likely to get messages about education, racial pride, preserving independence, and acknowledging physical beauty (Stokes et al., 2020). Scholars suggested that boys are stereotyped and targeted more. Mothers are likely to be more overprotective of their sons and have lesser expectations for their sons in advancing in society than daughters (Stokes et al., 2020). In comparison, Davis-Tribble et al.'s (2019) studies have found that children's perceptions of racial socialization messages have a varying impact on boys and girls. African American adolescents who endorsed racial socialization girls experienced improved self-esteem and diminished sadness and despondency (Davis-Tribble et al., 2019).

Self-esteem diminished with boys, and they experienced more profound sadness and hopelessness. Girls were more susceptible to cultural socialization messages than boys, and boys were more responsive to messages from parents about prejudice than girls (Davis-Tribble et al., 2019). Stokes et al., Leath et al., and Davis-Tribble et al. agreed that boys and girls may get dissimilar messages from parents and may internalize these messages differently irrespective of gender, including messages about self-pride. Self-

pride and racial pride messages favor boys and girls, predicting more positive self-beliefs, less anxiety, depression, and fewer behavior problems (Davis-Tribble et al., 2019).

Davis-Tribble et al. (2019) explained that cultural socialization includes messages about racial or ethnic heritage and history, cultural customs and traditions, and racial pride. Cultural socialization is widespread among African American families (Davis-Tribble et al., 2019). Findings show that cultural socialization messages are among the first things parents mention in responding to open-ended questions on child-rearing practice (Davis-Tribble et al., 2019). In addition to parents' emphasis on racial pride, studies have also explored parents' messages on self-pride and personal development as important aspects of racial socialization (Leath et al., 2020). While messages about African American pride and self-pride are commonplace aspects of racial socialization, more information is needed to understand why mothers decide to share these messages with their children (Davis-Tribble et al., 2019). Stokes et al. (2020) added the perceptions of mothers of the distinct social realities of their sons and daughters might play an important role in engaging in racial socialization (Stokes et al., 2020). Mothers give different messages to boys and girls, and these messages are likely responses to mothers' perception of the social reality for their children (Stokes et al., 2020; Davis-Tribble et al., 2019). In both studies, the authors consider why mothers have been found to socialize their sons and daughters to racial issues differentially but have yet to ask mothers directly about their reasoning (Stokes et al., 2020; Davis-Tribble et al., 2019).

Mothers' Approaches to Preparing Children for Bias

There are approaches to preparing children for bias. Scott et al. (2019) researched stigma and prejudice to explore how being a member of a stigmatized group or the target of discrimination can prepare children for bias. The findings suggested that being the target of discrimination has negative consequences, including institutional and structural barriers, increased stress reaction (Scott et al., 2019). Evidence also suggests that awareness of the possibility of being a target of discrimination can be self-protective (Scott et al., 2019). Similarly, Saleem et al. (2020) stated racism shows ideologically, structurally, and interpersonally. Ideological racism includes instituting oppressive social relations to create a social illusion that oppression is justifiable and warranted because African Americans are naturally inferior. Cogburn (2019) stated structural racism includes how institutional practices and cultural patterns can disseminate racial inequity without depending on racist actors, such as racially neutral policies that strengthen racial stratification and systematically result in worse outcomes for minorities. Interpersonal racism includes direct and explicit experiences of prejudice and discrimination during exchanges with people holding racist beliefs (Saleem et al., 2020).

Specifically, attributing an adverse event to discrimination rather than inferiority can result in self-esteem protection for members of stigmatized groups (Scott et al., 2019). Perceiving oneself as a target of discrimination can also incur negative consequences, such as recognizing yourself as devalued in society and subjected to uncontrollable adverse events. Attributing a negative event to discrimination can increase feelings of hostility (Scott et al., 2019). Saleem et al. (2020) found mixed results on the

benefit and harm of giving children preparation for bias messages, similar to findings that perceiving oneself as a target of discrimination can yield positive and negative results.

Several studies found that preparation for bias messages supports children's resilience and problem-solving strategies. Other studies suggest that preparation for bias may increase feelings of depression and anger, increase anti-social behaviors, and decrease self-esteem and academic engagement (Saleem et al., 2020). The adverse outcomes of the preparation of parents for bias messages suggest that specific cautions about discrimination for children may have unintended consequences (Saleem et al., 2020). Despite conflicting findings of how preparation for discrimination impacts children, research suggests that African American parents mainly support preparing children for bias (Scott et al., 2019). In a literature review, percentage estimates of African American parents reporting preparation for bids ranged from 67% to 90% across four samples (Saleem et al., 2020).

Saleem et al. (2020) conducted a study of 104 African American parents and found that 96% of respondents believed preparing their children for bias was important. Research shows that African American parents prepare bias messages because they see discrimination as unavoidable and seek to provide children with tools for dealing with the possibly damaging psychological repercussions (Saleem et al., 2020). Scott et al. suggested parents hope to protect against unavoidable discrimination experiences by reinforcing children's determination and optimism by preparing children for bias (Scott et al., 2019). According to Saleem et al. (2020), the most common type of racial bias is preparing their children for blatant and subtle interpersonal biases. Smith-Bynum et al.

(2016) agreed that preparation for bias includes messages about how racism affects children and how children should act given the pervasiveness of racism. Similarly, Banales et al. (2020) suggested that preparation for bias is a buffer to negative experiences by helping children ascribe a negative experience to the perpetrator's ignorance and not to their inferiority and teaching children how to deal with prejudice.

Summary

Chapter two was a detailed literature review about how African American parents experience and communicate racial discrimination to their young children. This chapter began by outlining the history of racial profiling, followed by a discussion about perceptions of racial profiling, along with African Americans and incidents of police violence, and finally concluding with how African Americans talk with their young children about racial tension and discrimination. The literature consensus was that there is a large difference in how African Americans perceive policing versus how Whites view policing. The different perceptions come with consequences. Effective policing depends on police working with communities and establishing a level of respect and trust for the two to be able to work together (Ekins, 2016). The perceptions discussed varied depending on the group relaying their views. In the case of this study, Juckett (2018) discussed law enforcement offers relevant statistics related to police violence and insight into the current dialogue surrounding racialized policing. All these articles yielded valuable information to this study because they depicted the influence of parents' personal experiences in discussions of racial discrimination with their children. Many of these researchers found that perceptions of racial profiling were discriminatory and

general across these multiple contexts; the same was found to be true for perceptions of effectiveness (Cooper et al., 2021).

Tilly et al. (2019) explained that African Americans are well aware of the permanence of racism. Unfortunately, they have become desensitized to the presence of racism in their lives. The Talk parents have with their children about coping with racism supports this assertion (Tilly et al., 2019). While the nature of the conversation changes to reveal the particular nuance of a racial period, The Talk between African American parents and their children has been happening since slavery (Tilly et al., 2019). The longevity of this talk, or the practice of speaking with one's child about racism, shows that African American people have constantly lived with an understanding of the normality and longevity of racism. Doucet et al. (2018) explained that not all parents provide explicit messages to their children about race, but all parents transmit racial socialization messages, whether consciously or not, through their actions. Doucet et al. (2018) stated that these practices often become routine family activities that the children later pass on to their own families, highlighting and celebrating them on their terms, rather than viewing them as deficient in comparison to the mainstream. Such practices will contribute to a culture-sensitive understanding of social development that values multiple perspectives and experiences (Doucet et al., 2018).

When parents engage in racial socialization, African American children learn their perceived inferiority when encountering police and prepare for harassment and discrimination (Lipscomb et al., 2019). Due to the tragic slaying of men and women over the past few years, as previously mentioned, African American parents often have "The

Talk" to discuss the importance of survival when encountering law enforcement (Tilly et al., 2019). Such conversations offer survival strategies to children when they interact with the police. The Talk is a protective factor for African American parents to prepare children to face discrimination and serve as a socialization tactic (Tilly et al., 2019). African American males are typically taught that when encountering police, they must keep their hands in plain view, make no sudden movements, and remain courteous and respectful towards the officers (Lipscomb et al., 2019).

Contrary to popular belief, "The Talk" is not about avoiding criminal behavior; rather, it is about avoiding the perception of criminal behavior (Cobbina et al., 2019). Calvert et al. (2020) agreed that while conversations about how to interact with police when stopped is a survival mechanism that parents try to pass on to their kids, there are unintended consequences. African American children may perceive themselves as inferior once they learn that they may be stopped and searched unnecessarily by the police (Calvert et al., 2020). Perceived as dangerous and threatening by the broader public, African Americans risk being suspicious by the police. Consequently, African American children may internalize these biases when they learn that they are often considered guilty for their skin's mere color (Calvert et al., 2020).

There is a gap in research that focuses on exploring African American perceptions of police officers through a theoretical frame of Critical Race Theory (Cole, 2017). This study addressed the gap and provided new public policy and administration information. In Chapter 2, an introduction, literature search strategy, theoretical foundation, social relationship theory, the application of the social relationship theory, the cause of distrust

of police by African American males, African American males' perceptions of police issues, and a summary and conclusion. Chapter 3 identified the study design and methods, procedures, sample, and collecting and analyzing data. Chapter 3 concluded with an explanation of validity factors.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this generic qualitative study was to explore how African American parents raising African American children perceive current police racial injustice compared to injustice during their childhood. I also explored how these parents perceive their role in discussing this situation with their children. I examined African American parents' perceptions and beliefs related to racial profiling. The sections in this chapter include the research design, role of the researcher, methodology, and issues of trustworthiness.

Research Design

In this study, I used the qualitative method. The qualitative method was suitable for this study because it helped me explore a complex phenomenon by identifying various factors that coincide with one another (see Padget, 2016). Padget (2016) explained that researchers use qualitative methodology to look beyond numbers and figures to understand feelings, impressions, and viewpoints. In addition, Padget explained that insight is gained into the participants' perceptions by using smaller, targeted samples. Qualitative interviews are extensive and can last nearly 4 hours allowing for truthful and difficult responses. The result is rich, detailed data, including insight unavailable from quantitative investigative methods (Padget, 2016).

Qualitative research is flexible, focused, and efficiently designed. Qualitative research is not without weaknesses and limits; mishandling or misinterpretation of qualitative research is routine (Padget, 2016). According to Padget (2016), the data collection and analysis in qualitative research includes smaller sample sizes and is often

biased. A quantitative approach was not suitable for this research because participants responded to broad questions in an unstructured manner, not numerically (Padget, 2016).

Three qualitative designs are phenomenology, grounded theory, and ethnography. Research showed generic studies blend the methods or claim no formal framework at all (Kahlke, 2018). Within established methodologies, researchers discuss acceptable methodological rules; however, there are also discussions about research methods that do not fit within the established methodologies (Kahlke, 2018). Because generic qualitative approaches do not fit these guidelines, a broad definition is formed.

Generic qualitative approaches are not defined strictly enough to be methodologies, so they are often referred to as generic qualitative approaches (Kahlke, 2018). Building on traditions and ideas before, generic studies are viewed as a study that refuses to claim allegiance to one established qualitative methodology (Kahlke, 2018). The benefit of using a generic qualitative approach is that the researcher seeks to understand how people interpret or make sense of their lives and experiences (Kahlke, 2018). Kahlke (2018) also suggested a generic study focuses on how people interpret their experiences. The current generic qualitative study focused on how African American parents raising African American children perceive racial injustices relative to injustices during their childhood. I also explored parents' experience in their discussions of this subject with their children. To meet the research objectives, the following questions were explored:

RQ1: How do African American parents of African American children perceive the differences between current racial injustices and those experienced during their childhood?

RQ2: How do African American parents of African American children perceive their role in discussing racial injustice with their children?

Role of the Researcher

The first role of the qualitative researcher is the data collection instrument. For a researcher in a qualitative study, another role is informing participants of the nature of the study (V. Williams et al., 2020). I had no personal or professional relationship with the participants. A key similarity was that I am an African American parent. To avoid any biases in this study, I made certain to record data from the participants, verbatim, and not paraphrase. None of my personal experiences or views were included in this study as the researcher. To make certain there were no ethical issues, I made certain to review all of the participants' answers to make certain they reflected their answers to the interview questions and made certain that those answers were relayed directly in their words with no personal interpretations.

Biases were minimized by respecting the dignity of the research participants, observing basic principles of ethics, and considering all variables (see V. Williams et al., 2020). The researcher can avoid design problems by understanding the limitations of the sample group. Bias can occur when certain groups are omitted. V. Williams et al. (2020) explained that the researcher must ensure that the research participants are independent and protected from exploitation. To ensure they are not selected based on a desire to

prove a specific research objective, the researcher should allow participants enough time to complete questionnaires. Procedural bias can occur if too much pressure is placed on participants (V. Williams et al., 2020).

Researchers often mitigate bias by conducting several interviews and anonymous questionnaires. Researchers understand that people will sometimes tell the interviewer what they think they want to hear instead of being truthful (V. Williams et al., 2020). The researcher must ensure that the study results are accurately recorded to avoid reporting bias and to show an understanding that certain biases exist and that every effort was considered in the analysis (V. Williams et al., 2020).

Methodology

In qualitative research, sample size and sampling are not often an issue because generalization is not a goal (Marvasti, 2019). Participants in the current study met certain criteria to participate. The most effective sampling strategy was criterion sampling (Anderson, 2017), and the parents were required to have children of a certain age (13 to 17), be African American, and have had the talk or were planning to have the talk with their children. The parents were familiar with the term the talk. Potential participants filled out the demographic questionnaire or self-identified to indicate whether they could participate. The questionnaire elicited descriptive data about each participant and ensured that each participant was best suited to help me examine and explain the phenomenon in question. The information from the questionnaire was used to display the demographics of the study participants.

Participation Selection Logic and Recruitment

The selection criteria were being African American, having African American children age 13 to 17, and having had the talk or were planning to have the talk. I trusted the parents to disclose whether they fit the criteria. The number of participants was determined by the chosen research design. There was no requirement on whether the family consisted of two parents or one. I selected participants who fit the selection criteria and provided a casual introduction to the study. I expressed the importance of participation and asked whether they would be interested in answering interview questions. The sample size for this study was 10 parents. This number was chosen because it was the minimum number needed for qualitative research, and it avoided the potential for an overabundance of repetitive information (see Sim et al., 2018).

Common nonprobability sampling methods include convenience sampling, purposive sampling, snowball sampling, and quota sampling (Elfil & Negida, 2017). I used only the snowball sampling technique to recruit participants. This process was continued until data saturation was attained. Guest et al. (2020) explained that saturation is reached when there is enough information to replicate the study, when the ability to obtain new information has been reached, and when further coding is no longer practical.

Elfil and Negida (2017) explained that snowball sampling is a convenience sampling method. Snowball sampling is used when it is difficult to access subjects having the target characteristics. In this method, the existing study subjects recruit future subjects among their acquaintances. The snowball method takes little time and allows the researcher to communicate better with the potential participants because they are

acquaintances of the first participant. The first participant is linked to the researcher (Elfil & Negida, 2017).

Naderifar et al. (2017) stated that the snowball sampling process is similar to asking subjects to nominate another person with the same trait as the next subject. The researcher then observes the potential subjects and continues in the same manner until a sufficient number of subjects has been reached. According to Naderifar et al., the advantages of snowball sampling include (a) the chain referral process allows the researcher to reach populations that are difficult to sample when using other sampling methods; (b) the process is cheap, simple, and cost-efficient; and (c) this sampling technique needs little planning and fewer workforce compared to other sampling techniques. Disadvantages of snowball sampling include (a) the researcher having little control over the sampling method and recruiting additional subjects relying mainly on the previous subjects observed and (b) representativeness of the sample is not guaranteed. Initial subjects are likely to nominate people that they know well. The subjects may share the same traits and characteristics. The sample that the researcher will obtain may be only a small subgroup of the entire population (Naderifar et al., 2017). Other sampling methods such as purposive, convenience, and quota were not considered for the current study.

In purposive sampling, the researcher recruits individuals from the population who appear to be representative of the population based on the researcher's knowledge and judgment (Elfil & Negida, 2017). Etikan and Bala (2017) stated that purposive sampling, one of the most common sampling strategies, is used to recruit participants

according to preselected criteria applicable to a particular research question. Sample sizes may or may not be fixed before data collection, depending on the resources and time available and the study objectives. According to Etikan and Bala, purposive sample sizes are often determined based on the point in data collection when new data no longer bring additional insights to the research questions. Therefore, purposive sampling is most successful when data review and analysis are done in conjunction with data collection.

Convenience sampling, conversely, is the weakest method of sampling (Elfil & Negida, 2017). The risk of bias is low when the population is homogeneous in terms of the target characteristic under question. In contrast, in nonhomogeneous populations, this sampling method has a higher risk of error (Elfil & Negida, 2017). Convenience sampling is perhaps the easiest sampling method because participants are selected based on availability and willingness to take part (Elfil & Negida, 2017). Useful results can be obtained, but the results are prone to significant bias because those who volunteer to take part may differ from those who choose not to (volunteer bias). The sample may not represent other characteristics, such as age or sex (Elfil & Negida, 2017).

Quota sampling, sometimes considered a type of purposive sampling, is also common. In quota sampling, the researcher decides how many people with certain characteristics to include as participants (Etikan & Bala, 2017). Characteristics might include age, residence, gender, class, profession, marital status, use of a particular contraceptive method, HIV status, etc. The chosen criteria allow the researcher to focus on people most likely to experience, know about, or have insights into the research topic (Etikan & Bala, 2017).

Although purposive and quota sampling are similar in that they are used to identify participants based on selected criteria (Elfil & Negida, 2017), quota sampling is more specific concerning the sizes and proportions of subsamples, with subgroups chosen to reflect corresponding proportions in the population. If, for example, gender is a variable of interest in how people experience COVID infection, a quota sample would seek an equal balance of COVID-positive men and COVID-positive women in a given city, assuming a 1:1 gender ratio in the population (Elfil & Negida, 2017). Researchers employ purposive rather than quota sampling when participants are more of a target or an approximate rather than a strict quota (Elfil & Negida, 2017). Although these sampling techniques are described, I used only the snowball sampling method.

To meet the inclusion criteria in this study, participants were required to be (a) African American, (b) have African American children between age 13 and 17, (c) be in one or two-parent families, and (d) live in inner urban cities, suburbs, and even small rural communities. Participants responded to recruitment posting on Facebook Messenger or Facebook groups to indicate whether they met the inclusion criteria. Individuals not meeting the criteria based on their responses were excluded from the study. Personal family and friends were excluded as participants. There were multiple family sizes used in this study, but only one parent was interviewed, establishing transferability. Transferability was also achieved by various demographics that emerged among participants in this study (see FitzPatrick, 2019). The parents were selected from inner urban cities, suburbs, and small rural communities.

I used Facebook and Facebook Messenger postings to recruit potential participants. When responding to the Facebook or Facebook Messenger post, participants reviewed the eligibility criteria and agreed to the informed consent Form. If the prospective participant agreed to the consent form, they entered their contact information to schedule interviews. Participation was strictly voluntary. I assumed that the participants in this study would answer all of the questions truthfully and would be impartial in their responses. Participants had the right to refuse to answer any question during the interview. I continued to recruit participants until I had 10 African American parents who had had the talk with their African American children or were planning to have the talk. Guest et al. (2020) explained that saturation is reached when there is enough information to replicate the study, when the ability to obtain new information has been reached, and when further coding is no longer practical.

Instrumentation

As the researcher of this study, I was the key instrument for data collection to conduct interviews with 10 parents. The interview questions focused on topics that shaped the parent–child conversation on what was perceived as proper behavior as an African American when faced with a police encounter. The most common type of data collection among qualitative researchers is the interview (Marvasti, 2019).

I collected this information through open-ended interview questions with the parents from low-, middle-, and high-income families. These African American parents were from various demographics such as the inner-city urban neighborhoods, suburbs, and small rural communities. Interviews were useful for exploring a participant's

experience. As the interviewer, I gathered in-depth information on the topic study through the interview questions.

Data Collection Procedures

Data were collected by manual notetaking and recordings of the conversation so none of the information would be missed. The interviews were conducted via Zoom. I forwarded a recruitment posting to possible candidates via the Facebook social media platform and scheduled the interview. After receiving the candidate's agreement to participate, I determined that they were eligible. The participant contacted me by the email address I had provided in the Facebook posting; once the participant agreed to participate, I replied to their email by sending them the consent form. They replied "I consent" to the email if they consented. The participant was interviewed in a Zoom meeting. I recorded the Zoom meeting for accuracy and noted comparisons. After the interview, the participant was thanked for their participation.

Data Analysis

When analyzing the data collected, I listened to the audio recordings of the interviews and transcribed that information. I reviewed the transcripts and took notes from those transcriptions. I reviewed each transcript and made notes of similarities, differences, and opinions related to the answers the parents provided during the interview. I repeated these steps for each interview. I did not use a software package to help code the data, and I manually coded the information and determined what was relevant to my study. I analyzed themes and sub-themes which emerged from the data. Saldana (2017) described coding as simply a word or short phrase that symbolizes an

attribute for a portion of language or visual data. Coding is one way of analyzing data, not necessarily the way, but one way. Coding makes it easier to analyze and interpret the participants' feedback (Saldana, 2017). I used Saldana's steps of analysis to sort the data and arrange it in the desired order, collected and transformed the information into meaningful data, transcribed the data and converted it into a written document, analyzed the interview results and interpreted the data meaning, and finally summarized and interpreted the data. Saldana's recommended manually coding on hard-copy printouts, with paper and pen, for first-time or small-scale studies (Saldana, 2017). I coded using a combination of paper and pen and Microsoft Word.

Issues of Trustworthiness

To establish a credible study, I discussed the nature of the study and made certain they were comfortable with the questions I asked them. I was transparent about my approach, methods, and procedures. The interviews were recorded. Also, I took notes during the interviews. The audio recordings assured that everything a participant stated was documented precisely. Credibility and validity were accomplished by interviewing different parents and obtaining different experiences and perspectives. Credibility involved the researcher's authentic and suitable account, with specific reference to the level of agreement between participants and the researcher. Validity in a qualitative sense means gaining knowledge and understanding of nature, such as the meaning, attributes, and characteristics of the phenomenon under study (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Collecting different perceptions and viewpoints from the families confirmed this validity and credibility.

This study involved interviewing African American parents, for this study. I interviewed one, establishing transferability. Transferability was achieved by various demographics that emerged among participants in this study. Korstjens and Moser (2018) stated that transferability involves providing readers with evidence that the study findings apply to other contexts, situations, times, and populations. The parents in this study were selected from inner urban cities, suburbs, and even small rural communities.

I reviewed the data collected with the participants after the interview to be comfortable with the information I had collected. This established dependability and reliability. This was achieved by maintaining a personal journal. Being aware of potential biases ensured credibility because understanding how my views on the study could negatively impact my study allowed me to effectively manage those biases to make certain they are not present in the study.

Ethical Procedures

To ensure all ethical procedures were being followed, I made certain that I had their permission to interview them for this study; by having the participants complete a consent form, I agreed that the participant was willing to interview with me. By assigning pseudonyms for participants, ensured confidentiality. I kept journaled notes, interview transcriptions, and any identifying participant data secured in a locked filing cabinet and/or encrypted in files, only accessible by myself.

The participants were informed that their participation was voluntary, and no coercion methods were used to acquire participation. During the interview, if there was confusion about the questions or the answers, clarity was provided to make certain

everyone agreed with the information being collected. To minimize any risk to the participants, I made certain they understood they should speak with me openly. I did not incorporate any biases or judgments during our interview. No participant was discovered to be suffering from any emotional stress during their participation. In that case, I would have concluded the interview and provided the information to the Wayne County Community Health Department to receive free help. Participants were informed that their information collected from the interview would be stored in a locked file cabinet, only accessible by myself, and destroyed by shredder after being secure for 5-years, as the university requires.

A $5 Target gift certificate was provided to the participants in this study, and due to the small monetary value, no ethical guidelines were diminished according to those standards. Participants were informed that their participation would provide knowledge to others seeking the information they have to share through their experiences.

Summary

In Chapter 3, I outlined the research study by detailing the methodology and study design. The interview structure allowed effective means of gathering detailed information through the research questions about the participants' experiences. By recording the interviews, while manually taking notes, I gathered the participating parents' insights effectively.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this study was to explore how African American parents raising African American children perceive current police racial injustice compared to injustice during their childhoods and their role in talking to their children about racial justice and their perceptions and beliefs related to police violence. I selected 10 African American parents raising African American children between the ages of 13 and 17. I interviewed these parents to gather information regarding their experiences to answer the following research questions: (a) How do African American parents of African American children perceive the differences between current racial injustices and those experienced during their childhoods? (b) How do African American parents of African American children perceive their role in talking to their children about racial injustice? Chapter 4 includes the data collection, data analysis with emerging patterns and codes from the transcripts, and a table to illustrate the findings. This chapter concludes with a summary of the answers to the research questions.

Setting

Lifestyle changes created by the COVID-19 pandemic brought about challenges for recruiting and interviewing. All of my contact with participants was performed online over the computer. I posted the recruitment post on Facebook and made my selection of participants from several respondents. As described in Chapter 3, I contacted the selected participants by email and attached the participation consent form to the email. Once they agreed to the terms of the interview, they replied “I consent” to the email. After receiving their consent, I scheduled Zoom meetings to conduct the interviews. I scheduled the date

and time of the Zoom meetings according to what time worked best for the participants. The interviews and transcribing of the interviews were completed in approximately 2 months.

Demographics

The demographics of the study's participants were obtained by having the participants answer some questions and from the demographic information the participants reported during the initial screening at the recruitment phase. Participants were African American parents with African American children, and the participants resided in the Southeast region of Michigan. The only other question that was asked outside of the self-reported information was the age range of the participants' children and the parents' age range, which varied from early 40s to late 50s.

Data Collection

I interviewed 10 African American parents, recorded the interviews in Zoom meetings, and took manual notes in a journal. The interviews were conducted in the Eastern Standard Time zone after 5:00 p.m., and for the interviewee's privacy, I was alone in my home office during the recordings. I blocked off 2 hours in Zoom for the interview. However, none of the interviews required more than that allocated time. Each interview lasted 30 to 60 minutes. At the beginning of each interview, I stated the purpose of the study to explore how African American parents raising African American children perceived police racial injustice today relative to injustice during their childhoods and how these parents perceived their role in having the talk with their children. I presented the interview opening statement and thanked each participant for

taking the time to interview. I reminded them that the interview would be confidential and their participation was voluntary. If at any time during the interview they wanted to stop, they were told they had the right to conclude the interview. I informed each participant that I would ask 11 interview questions, and I asked if I could continue the interview; each participant agreed to continue the interview.

There were no unusual circumstances during the interview. There was a range of emotions encountered during the interview, including laughter, silence to reflect before responding, and pondering moments to gather thoughts before answering questions. There were even some sighs heard that would indicate an experience reacting. However, there were no indications of distressful emotions or reluctance to continue the interview, and no participants suggested a desire to discontinue the interview. After the final question, I asked the participant if they had any questions for me and any additional information to add that I had not asked. I concluded the interview with the closing statement, thanked them for their participation, and thanked them for sharing their viewpoints. There were setbacks due to schedule conflicts, so Zoom meetings had to be rescheduled on several occasions, but no other unusual circumstances occurred during data collection. The variations in data collection occurred because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Data Analysis

After the interviews, I analyzed the data and listened to each audio file recorded. I transcribed each audio-recorded interview, captured the information verbatim, and saved it into a text file. From the audio recordings, the transcripts, and journal notes, I manually

highlighted recurring words and phrases and created coded categories from the data collected from the interviews. I charted a table for each participant's transcribed interview, and I labeled participants with pseudonym names. I went through each transcript and pulled out commonly used words and created categories to relate to those words. I also pulled out phrases and pattern designs and organized them into categories. I compared the information from the 10 interviews conducted and identified a range of codes:

- bad apples,
- protect and serve,
- loaded question,
- judging a book by its cover,
- pulled over,
- get home safe,
- have credentials readily available,
- treated differently,
- be polite and respectful,
- viewed as a threat,
- treatments,
- behaviors,
- personalities, and
- actions.

By using manual coding, I avoided personal assumptions and was able to increase the validity of my findings. I reviewed all 10 participants' transcripts line by line and pulled out common words and phrases from the data. I analyzed the interview results, interpreted the data meaning, and summarized the findings according to Saldana's (2017) recommended steps for manually coding on hard-copy printouts with paper and pen for small-scale studies. In Table 1, I present the codes, categories, and emergent themes.

Table 1

Codes, Categories, and Themes

Code	Category	Theme
bad apples, protect and serve, loaded question judging a book by its cover, pulled over,	Racial Profiling / Distrust	1. Trust/Distrust of Police Still a Problem in African American Communities 2. Racial Profiling Always Existed and is an Injustice
get home safe, have credentials readily available treated differently, be polite and respectful,	The Talk	3. The Talk is Still a Necessary Discussion in African American Households
viewed as a threat,	Fear for their children	4. Parents Fear for Their Children During Police Encounters
treatments, behaviors, personalities, actions,	Police actions and behaviors	a. Police Inappropriate Actions/Behaviors Frame Parents Perceptions

I put the collected information into a Word document and used color coding shading to distinguish the related words and phrases. Five themes emerged:

1. Trust/distrust of police is still a problem in African American communities.
2. Racial profiling always existed and is an injustice.
3. The talk is still a necessary discussion in African American households.
4. Parents fear for their children during police encounters.
5. Police inappropriate actions/behaviors frame parents' perceptions.

Most of the data collected and analyzed indicated very similar personal experiences and viewpoints. However, there was one discrepant difference by Mary (pseudonym) that was slightly different from the others. Mary's husband is an African American police officer. As a result, I wondered if raising her African American children was different because of her husband's status. Nevertheless, I thought it was valuable information to add her experiences and viewpoints to my study so there would be no bias to eliminate her views whether they aligned or contrasted with the viewpoints of others.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Credibility

I established a credible study when I discussed the nature of the study with the participants and made certain they were comfortable with the questions I asked them. I was transparent about my approach, methods, and procedures. The interviews were recorded. Also, I took notes during the interviews. The audio recordings ensured that everything a participant stated was documented precisely. Credibility and validity were accomplished by interviewing different parents and obtaining different experiences and

perspectives. Credibility meant that my account was authentic and suitable, with specific reference to the level of agreement between participants and me. As Korstjens and Moser (2018) stated, validity in a qualitative sense means gaining knowledge and understanding of the nature, such as the meaning, attributes, and characteristics, of the phenomenon under study. I collected different perceptions from the parents, which confirmed the validity and credibility of the findings.

Transferability

I interviewed African American parents for this study. Korstjens and Moser (2018) stated that transferability involves providing readers with evidence that the study findings could be applied to other contexts, situations, times, and populations; this was established using participants' quotes and patterns that emerged from the data collection. Transferability was also achieved by various demographics that emerged among participants in this study. The parents in this study were selected from inner cities, suburbs, and small rural communities in Southeast Michigan.

Dependability

The findings of this study were dependable because of the assessment trace used. The path included recruitment posting, consent form, in-depth interview questions, audio recordings of those interviews, line-by-line transcriptions of those recordings, and codes and patterns that emerged from the data. These allowed me to analyze the different perspectives, which allowed transparency and dependability.

Confirmability

I achieved confirmability when I informed participants that their participation would be voluntary, and no coercion methods were used to acquire participation. During the recorded interview, I verbally communicated to the participant the purpose of the study and asked whether I had their permission to continue with my interview question. Once agreed, I asked the participants 11 open-ended interview questions that addressed their personal lived experiences and viewpoints. If there was confusion about the questions or the answers at any time, clarity was obtained to make certain everyone agreed with the information being collected. To minimize any risk to the participants, I made certain they understood that they should speak with me openly, and I did not incorporate any biases or judgments during the interview. None of the participants were discovered to be suffering from any emotional stress during their participation. Participants were informed that their information collected from the interview would be stored in a locked file cabinet only accessible by me, and would be destroyed by shredding after being secured for 5 years, per Walden University requirements.

Results

In the interviews conducted, 10 African American parents elaborated on their viewpoints, their lived experiences with police officers, racial profiling, and how these experiences formulated their discussions with their African American children about how to conduct themselves during an encounter with the police. The following themes were used to answer the research questions:

RQ1: How do African American parents of African American children perceive the differences between current racial injustices versus their childhood?

1. Trust/distrust of police is still a problem in African American communities.
2. Racial profiling always existed and is an injustice.
3. The talk is still a necessary discussion in African American households.

RQ2: How do African American parents of African American children perceive their role in discussing racial injustice with their children?

1. The talk is still a necessary discussion in African American households.
2. Parents fear for their children during police encounters.
3. Police inappropriate actions/behaviors frame parents' perceptions.

All of the participants described their children's gender, ages, and personalities. Several categories were derived from that information, including personalities, behaviors, feelings, and emotions. The following sections include the five major themes that emerged from the data analysis: trust and distrust of police is still a problem in African American communities, racial profiling always existed and is an injustice, the talk is still a necessary discussion in African American households, parents fear for their children during police encounters, and police inappropriate actions and behaviors frame parents' perceptions.

Theme1: Trust/Distrust of Police Is Still a Problem in African American Communities

There can be a spectrum of stances on whether to trust or distrust the police, and these opinions varied among my study participants. However, all the participants agreed

that there is still an existing problem in the African American communities surrounding trust in the police. Out of the 10 participants, eight expressed a level of distrust for the police and the other two reported they did not have a view one way or the other because they had never personally had a bad experience. Nevertheless, they were very reserved when it comes to the police because they had witnessed African Americans being treated unfairly and differently by the police. For example, John is a divorced 51-year-old African American male who stated he grew up in Detroit, Michigan. John is raising two African American daughters, ages 17 and 19. John described his children with personalities ranging from outgoing, social, and friendly to private and reserved. John described that he mostly trusts the police. However, he described how he believes that police have implanted thoughts, so sometimes there are police officers who break the rules.

Jack agreed with John that there are "bad apples." Jack is a 55-year-old single African American male who grew up in Detroit, Michigan. Jack has three children, two girls and one boy, ages 13, 20, and 22. He stated that their personalities are strong-minded, naive, vulnerable, protective, aware, sensitive, and unique. Jack explained that he finds it hard to trust the police because of the bad apples on the force. Overall, he stated he does not trust the police because he has seen growing up. Jack described whether he trusted the police as a very intuitive question. He stated, although he does not trust them, he knows of good officers, and they have a difficult job, but no one takes the time to see it from their side. Jack described the job of a police officer as difficult because they put their lives on the line daily.

Mary is a married 46-year-old African American female. She reported growing up in New York but resided in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Mary has two African American boys aged seven and 16 years old. She described her children's personalities as sheltered, mild-mannered, artsy, very creative, non-confrontational, aware, perceptive, and empathetic. Mary's status was more unique than the other participants because her husband is a police officer (detective). When asked about her trust in the police, she described it as a loaded question and stated that she did not view either way or the other but always had a guard up because of what she had seen in their actions. She stated that growing up, as a child in New York, she did not fear the police, but her views changed when she moved to Michigan. In New York, the police walked the neighborhoods and knew the community, but when she moved to Michigan, she noticed they didn't take the time to know the communities. Hence, she noticed the relationships between the African American communities and the police change negatively.

Like Mary, Teddy believed trust or distrust of police was a loaded question. Teddy is a married 55-year-old African American male. He has two children, a boy and a girl aged 13 and 27. He described their personalities as ranging from outgoing, social, and bubbly to introverted. However, Teddy reported both are educated and respectful. Teddy said he grew up in Detroit and stated that he trusts the police in Detroit because he knows many of them personally; however, he does not trust the police as a whole. He said his experiences framed that distrust.

Sara is a 46-year-old single African American female. She has three sons aged 10, 13, and 25. She stated she lives in the city of Detroit. Sara described her children's

personalities range from laid back to anxious and silly. Sara stated that she does not trust the police because they are supposed to help resolve situations and sometimes escalate situations into harmful occurrences.

Jason agreed with Sara and stated that he also doesn't trust the police. Jason is a 41-year-old divorced African American male. Jason said that he lives in a suburb of Detroit and has three children, two boys, and a girl aged 10, 13, and 15. He described his children's personalities as average, down-to-earth kids. Jason said his reason for not trusting the police is because they don't have our best interests and needs at heart, and they are not looking out for our safety, which he believed they are supposed to be doing.

Susie is a 44-year-old married African American female. She reported she resides in Detroit but grew up in Troy, Michigan. She has three children, including a twin boy and a girl aged 13, and a 14-year-old daughter. She describes her children as level-headed, docile, following instructions, and being rule stretchers. Susie trusts police officers that look like her more than she does those officers that live outside of urban communities. Susie stated her parents grew up during segregation and were not allowed to attend white schools. Her father was born on a plantation, so her talk as a child focused on law enforcement. Susie doesn't believe all police officers are racist with intent, but in her experience, she said that she knows that there is intentional/unintentional bias.

Tom is a 46-year-old divorced African American male. He reported that he resides in Detroit, and he has two children, a boy and a girl aged 17 and 20. He describes his children as protective, great personalities, sheltered, and intune. Tom stated that he does not trust or distrust the police because, from his experience, sometimes they are on

their jobs and other times they are not. Tom remarked that if the rules are broken, there are consequences to those actions, and sometimes those consequences may involve the police. Tom stated that his experience growing up, the parent's concern was more about their child being roughed up by the police, but times have changed, and now people are being killed at the hands of police officers, women, men, boys, and girls.

Oscar is a 41-year-old married African American male. Oscar stated he resides in Detroit and has five children aged nine, 12, 14, 15, and 22. Oscar stated that all his children are athletes with various personalities, many articulate and some bossy. When asked if he trusts the police, Oscar stated that he trusts them to do their jobs depending on the area they are in, and due to the things they put up within certain areas, their jobs can be difficult and dangerous. However, he trusts them to be them. Being them can mean several things, both good and bad. To clarify, if the officer is a bad apple, he trusts him to stay true to that, and if the officer is good, he trusts them to be good. Oscar indicated that tension has increased in African American communities between residents and police. Social media has detailed many police encounters that have gone bad, which has made the entire society more aware of the problems but has made African Americans angrier that the brutality still exists.

Mike is a 45-year-old divorced African American male. Mike reported he resides in the suburbs of Detroit and has six children aged 13, 20, 21, 23, 24, and 25. He stated that his children's personalities range from outspoken to reserved. When questioned about his trust in the police, Mike remarked that he ultimately trusts the police. However, like other participants, he acknowledged bad apples in police departments. Most

participants suggested African American communities distrust the police because of their experiences of being profiled and treated unfairly or observing someone being treated in a discriminatory manner by the police.

Theme 2: Racial Profiling Always Existed and Is an Injustice

Several participants described experiences of being racially profiled by police and being pulled over or stopped as a result. All of the participants described racial profiling as a form of injustice that has existed for many generations, and it still exists. Over time, many African Americans have experienced being treated in a different way because of how they looked or the color of their skin. One of the participants, John, described racial profiling as purposedly picking out a group of people from a specific racial group and treating them differently and unfairly, while Jack explained that racial profiling is a form of systematic racism, and it is something that is seen every day in society. He described it as people not being treated equally because of their race, and not being offered equal opportunities because of the color of their skin. He further explained systematic racism as something which overwhelms institutions such as police forces and it impacts processes and procedures. Therefore, racists become the major decision-makers creating discriminatory policies which give birth to racial profiling along with other discriminatory practices. Mary agreed and stated that racial profiling is "targeting a particular subset of people based on their racial identity." She provided an example of African American boys walking together in a group, and they are profiled as being up to no good.

Teddy similarly described racial profiling as putting a person in a negative connotation because of how a person looks. Teddy stated that racial profiling is bound to happen sooner than later and is inevitable. In comparison, Sara said that racial profiling puts people in a category because of appearance. She provided an example of African Americans being seen as criminals, thieves, and robbers in hoodies. They are also labeled if they hang with the wrong people. Oscar expressed it as stereotyping, judging, and profiling or perceiving a person differently by how they look, their race, or their social-economic status. He further stated that just because a person lives around crime does not make them criminals. He declared, "African Americans don't opt to live around crime. Sometimes their economic status plays a deciding factor on where they can live, and often that is in crime-infested communities." As a result, by living around crime, their entire community is profiled, and the entire neighborhood gets treated as criminals just because they have no other living alternatives. Many participants shared the opinion that racial profiling meant judging a book by its cover and people being treated differently because of how they look or the color of their skin.

Theme 3: The Talk Is Still a Necessary Discussion in African American Households

All participants rationalized that their talk with their children included potential scenarios of being pulled over by the police and how to conduct themselves during that occurrence. All 10 of the participants stated that it is still necessary to have the talk in African American households because there is an unjust difference in the way African Americans are treated during encounters with the police. John's talk with his children included the dos and don'ts and how to do the right thing. He stressed the importance of

pulling over in a well-lit area. Jack and other participants collectively had the same reaction about pulling over in a well-lit area. He also tells his children to have their registration, license, and insurance information readily available. This response was echoed by almost all the parents interviewed. In addition to having the paperwork available, many agreed that they also tell their children to keep their hands in plain view, be respectful and polite, don't make any sudden moves, don't argue, comply, and many expressed to their children that the goal is to get home safe.

Similarly, Oscar agreed with the others about what he talks to his children about. Still, he added that it is strategic for the African American community when dealing with the police. He quoted, "when the talk was given to me, we were told just always to be respectful to officers and show the utmost respect." He further added, "now, it's like more of a strategy to deal with the police, so you gotta be very strategic on how you approach any situation with the police, and you have to break down different situations with your kids."

Mary described that her talk with her boys needed to be more in-depth because her husband is an officer, and her boys see officers doing wrong when they believe officers are there to help because of their father's profession. Her talk included information about self-pride because many of the people being killed by police are African American. Mary told her boys, "Don't allow anyone to make you feel less than you are and be proud to be black." She echoed the sentiments that other participants discussed with their children, and that was to conduct themselves so that they both come out of the situation. Mary described telling her children to "do as they are told and get

them in the pocket." When asked to clarify that statement, Mary elaborated by saying that if the police officer is wrong in their actions, they can submit complaints later, depending on the seriousness of the situation; possibly sue the police, which is hitting them in their pockets.

In comparison to many of the participants, Teddy reinforced that the goal of the talk is to get his children home safely after an encounter with the police. He added, whether the police have probable cause or not, just be respectful and keep hands in plain sight. Teddy stated that the talk takes on a more critical form when the parent's experiences have been more negative. His talk was to provide his children with the tools they need to be polite, respectful, and deal with things accordingly. Be careful, put your hands on the wheel, and don't give them a reason to believe you are a threat remotely, is part of the conversation Teddy had with his children.

Susie had parents who grew up during segregation. The talk they gave her centered around being treated unequally and law enforcement. She talked with her children more about how African Americans are expected to run faster, be smarter, and things along that line. Nevertheless, she stated that her talk includes some instructions about police encounters, such as following the rules, not moving too fast, don't look this way, and don't walk that way. Susie said, "The talk is moving, one day, you feel one way, the next day, you feel another." She instructs her children to de-escalate the situation and get home safe. Because her children didn't grow up in segregation, Susie stated that she feels her talk must include teaching her children how to recognize when someone is racist or prejudiced. All the participants found it necessary to have a

discussion with their children about how to conduct themselves during a police encounter because of the awareness of the difference in treatment by police in comparison to other ethnic groups.

Theme 4: Parents Fear for Their Children During Police Encounters

When questioned, many parents expressed fears in combination with concerns that they have for their children during a police encounter. Out of the 10 participants, eight blatantly expressed their level of uneasiness as fear, while a couple of parents expressed a level of concern and worry, but not to the extent of fear because they refused to live in fear every time their children left the house. They conveyed that their spiritual belief is to pray and leave it in God's hands. With prayers and the hope that they reared their children appropriately, they trusted that would be enough to keep them safe. Even with spiritual confidence, many still worried about their children being shot and killed during an encounter with the police.

John explained that his fear for his children is that they would be caught in the wrong place at the wrong time. Jack stated that he fears that a hot-headed officer will pull his children over and shoot them for no apparent reason. In comparison, Mary's fear is that because her son is an African American man he will be viewed as a threat, and things will be taken too far. Being viewed as a threat came up with many of the parents.

Sara feared they would be killed, and Susie feared that her children would not have a voice and would not have the opportunity to explain themselves fast enough or clear enough. She stated that she gets butterflies because her son wants to be himself and wear braids and look different, but this is concerning for her as a parent because she fears

him being profiled. She said she wants her children to be themselves, but the dangerous times are concerning. She mentioned that she knows of parents who do not allow their children to wear hoodies because of the things happening with profiling and biases. She stated that her concern is not just for her children. She proclaimed that her stomach was in her throat when her husband got pulled over by the police.

Oscar agreed and stated his fear was his children would be too scared to make a sound decision. Teddy reported that he was concerned that his children would not be in sound mind, but he stated that he does not fear but prays. He said he refuses to live in fear, but it doesn't eliminate the concern. Tom said he fears that his children won't come home. Many of the interviewed parent's concerns reaffirmed each other and illustrated both fears and concerns any time their children encounter the police. There was not one participant that did not express apprehension.

Theme 5: Police Inappropriate Actions/Behaviors Frame Parents' Perceptions

Many of the participants described the police treating African Americans differently and treating them as a threat instead of being talked to first. They described this different treatment resulting in police brutality, aggression, racism, inequality, prejudice, and unfair treatment. Out of the 10 participants, a pair of the participants provided a different ideology and mentioned that police also could be scared and in fear while doing their job. As a result, several participants suggested that the fear that police have resulted in them hostilely policing people they are afraid of.

John described that there are levels of integrity amongst police officers. He mentioned not to give law enforcement any reason to question your behavior or

judgment. John felt that the job of police could be a catch 22 situation because some are out to do a good job and protect and serve, while some are equipped with racial corruption, which was birthed a long time ago. John discussed that those officers are considered “bad apples.”

Mary suggested that police are quick to assume the worse, and it is those assumptions that result in a simple traffic stop going too far and police assuming individuals were going for guns. Teddy elaborated about a problem in policing because the police are dealing with people they fear. He revealed that he has a clinical background, and he believed those police officers, patrolling urban neighborhoods, should be knowledgeable of what people have experienced to understand people’s viewpoints. Teddy added that police should know the people and know about the people they police. If they don’t live in the community they are policing, they shouldn’t be policing that community without proper culture sensitivity training. He stated that people are being pulled over, not knowing which cop personality they will get. Through experience, he expressed that those parents growing up in the South or who grew up in the South have different views of the police. He mentioned, “many southerners’ experiences were different, in a negative way, so they negatively viewed police.” All of the participants agreed these expressed experiences framed their discussions with their children, and the lessons trickled down generations.

Summary

This qualitative study aimed to examine how African American parents of African American children perceive the differences between current racial injustices

versus their childhood and how African American parents of African American children perceive their role in discussing racial injustice with their children. Ten African American parents took part in this study, and the results of the data received from the interview questions was an accurate account of the participant's views and experiences. The five themes that emerged from the participant's views and experiences: (a) trust and distrust of police still a problem in African American communities, (b) racial profiling always existed and is an injustice, (c) the talk is still a necessary discussion in African American households, (d) parents fear for their children during police encounters, and (e) police inappropriate actions and behaviors frame parents' perceptions. In chapter five, I will discuss the interpretation of the findings and provide the study's limitations. I will also discuss recommendations for future research, provide the potential impact for positive social change, and finally conclude with a message that will capture the essence of my study.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this generic qualitative study was to explore how African American parents raising African American children perceive current police racial injustice compared to injustice during their childhoods and their role in talking to their children about racial justice and their perceptions and beliefs related to police violence. I conducted interviews to focus on discussion topics that helped shape the parent–child conversation on what is perceived as proper behavior as an African American when faced with a police encounter. I collected this information through open-ended interview questions with parents raising African American children age 13 to 17.

To understand parents' perspectives, I used a generic qualitative inquiry approach. Generic qualitative inquiry research was suitable to investigate individuals' reports of their subjective opinions, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors. Other qualitative methods are used to answer questions about experience, meaning, and perspective, most often from the participant's standpoint (Marvasti, 2019). Qualitative data are usually not amenable to counting or measuring. Qualitative research techniques include small-group discussions for investigating beliefs, attitudes and concepts of normative behavior; semi-structured interviews to seek views on a focused topic or, with key informants, for background information or an institutional perspective; in-depth interviews to understand a condition, experience, or event from a personal perspective; and analysis of texts and documents, such as government reports, media articles, websites or diaries, to learn about distributed or private knowledge (Marvasti, 2019). By conducting interviews with African American parents of African American children, I gathered data on personal experiences that

influenced the mentality that the talk is a needed conversation with their children. The data gathered from these interviews were vital to the study because participants' perceptions warranted the conversation. It is a parental responsibility for African American parents of African American children to inform and educate their children on racial discrimination. This study was a step toward understanding African American parents' perceptions of racial discrimination and what may be needed communication to their African American children to keep them safe during hostile encounters with law enforcement.

I compared the information from the 10 interviews conducted, and what emerged from the findings data was a range of treatments, behaviors, personalities, actions, feelings, and emotions. In addition, I created tables I used to report the codes, categories, and patterns. From the tables created and the data analyzed, five major themes emerged: (a) trust and distrust of police is still a problem in African American communities, (b) racial profiling always existed and is an injustice, (c) the talk is still a necessary discussion in African American households, (d) parents fear for their children during police encounters, and (e) police inappropriate actions and behaviors frame parents' perceptions. The key findings were 100% of the participants felt the African American community is treated differently by the police. The following codes were used to describe the different treatments:

- treated as criminals,
- assumed guilty,
- treated as a threat,

- approached with aggression,
- treated as feared,
- not provided the same opportunities,
- treated unfairly,
- treated harshly, and
- treated unequally.

All participants personally had personal encounters with the police. During those encounters, 40% feared for their lives while the other 60% felt that they were being harassed. When participants were asked whether they trusted the police, a scale of answers emerged. Of the 10 participants interviewed, 30% said they mostly trust the police who look like them and those from the city of Detroit, 30% stated they do not trust the police, 20% stated they trust the police to be them so if being them is being bad or good than they expect them to be that. The last 20% mentioned they do not have a view one way or the other regarding trust or distrust, but they do have their guards up when it comes to police tactics, behaviors, and actions. All participants described the talk they had with their children about being profiled, differences in how they may be viewed or treated because of their race, and how they should properly conduct themselves during an encounter with the police. When asked if they feared for their children's lives during an encounter with the police, 80% of participants stated they feared their children being shot and/or killed, and the other 20% mentioned they would be more concerned than fearful. Participants clarified their concern because they thought African Americans were treated differently during police encounters.

Interpretation of the Findings

The interpretation of the findings confirmed and extended the information from the literature. Cooper et al. (2021) suggested that profiling has morphed into something based on race, and racial profiling is stereotyping tied to prejudice. The current participants confirmed these findings with their combined definitions of the meaning of racial profiling. As a whole, they agreed that racial profiling was stereotyping and judging someone according to their race. Most agreed the stereotypical judgments came from prejudiced mentalities of some police officers, but not all.

All participants mentioned they had concerns and fears of their children having encounters with the police. They mentioned how the evolution of social media platforms and the media had brought many police shootings and killings to the attention of many in society. African American communities have known this for many years.

All participants agreed that African Americans and their communities are treated differently than other ethnic groups and communities. This extended research conducted by Juckett (2018) who stated that despite the recognition that racial profiling is more pervasive in the African American community, there is insufficient research showing how this presence impacts the African American perception, which is motivated by the discrimination tactics against African Americans through disproportionate social control. In stark comparison, Cooper et al. (2021) explained that racial profiling disproportionately impacts African American communities. The current participants' interviews added information on the impact on African Americans' perceptions when they elaborated on how the difference in treatment influenced their conversations with

their children about racial profiling and how to conduct themselves during possible encounters with the police.

Cooper et al. (2021) mentioned that African Americans' perceptions of police can also have different views when considering not only the participant's race but also the age, contact with the police, and neighborhood dynamics. Martin and Varner (2017) said unfair police policies, which are possible because of the segregation of groups by race and class, played a major role in why African Americans have hostile encounters with the police. This was confirmed in the findings, by how the participants varied in their responses about their trust and distrust for the police. There were 30% of participants who stated they trusted police who were African American and familiar with the African American communities they patrolled. These participants had less trust for the police outside of the urban communities. Nguyen (2019) suggested that in recent decades perhaps the most celebrated reform to address both crime and citizen–police trust has been the introduction of community policing.

Nadal et al. (2017) spoke of a study conducted by the Vera Institute of Justice involving young people in New York who disagreed or strongly disagreed that the officers they encountered had a good reason to talk to them, treated them fairly, showed concern for their rights, or treated them with respect and dignity. All of the participants in my study substantiated this information. They spoke of instances when they were younger and adults being pulled over for no reason, treated unfairly, disrespected, and having their rights violated.

According to Voisin et al. (2016), many parents viewed their most meaningful task as effectively communicating with their children about how to be responsible while remaining careful in making rational decisions. There was a similarity to this sentiment in my findings because 80% of the parents expressed that when they talk with their children, they reinforce the importance of making good decisions, recognizing right from wrong, doing the right things, and understanding their choices have consequences. Barragan and Kirpalani (2017) suggested that some parents find this a challenging conversation to have because they find it difficult to explain to their African American child that no matter how they look, or no matter the content of their character, some may perceive them as scary and prone to criminality simply because of the color of their skin. All of the participants in the current study reiterated this. They stated they discuss with their children how they can be perceived as a threat and how wearing a hoody may constitute them being labeled a thug or a criminal and assumed guilty from the onset. Cavanagh and Cauggman (2019) agreed that African American parenting styles involved preparing their children to navigate an unfair and potentially deadly racial environment that first judges them first by their skin color.

Nine out of 10 of my participants had at least one girl child in this study. I found a relationship between how participants with female children felt it necessary to have the same talk with their female children as they do with their male children. However, the discussion with their female children was less detailed than the talk with their male children. They attributed this to the notion that African American men are treated more harshly by the police. Leach (2017) affirmed that the reality in African American

communities is that the African American male is 7 times more likely to be killed by the police.

Cavanagh and Cauffman (2019) explained that many African American parents have engaged in this talk with their children and described it as painful, heartfelt, uncomfortable, shameful, and counterintuitive. One of my participants described the talk as unfair but necessary. Another spoke of a moment when her son wished he was not African American. She corrected him by telling him never to allow anyone to make him feel ashamed of who he is and that he should be proud to be African American.

CRT was the framework for this study. This theory is a theoretical and interpretive lens to examine race and racism across dominant cultural modes of expression (Barlow, 2016). Barlow (2016) viewed this theory as an attempt to understand how victims of systematic racism or institutionalized racism are affected by perceptions. The findings from the current study supported the CRT. This theory provided some direction for parents of African American children to discuss perceptions of their culture compared to others because racism is not aberrant; racism is embedded in everyday life, particularly in the lives of African Americans (Reese, 2019). Reese (2019) also suggested the foundation of CRT is that race consumes every fabric of society and institutions, which affect people's lives daily. Therefore, CRT provides a lens for viewing law enforcement and racial minorities' views and skepticisms of each other.

The interviews in the current study produced findings of African American parents' perception of the different police treatment of African Americans compared to other ethnic groups. Those perceptions informed their discussions with their children

about racial profiling and how to conduct themselves during police encounters. The findings also indicated the parents' perceptions of how they viewed the police and provided insight into possible contributing factors for the negative relationship between the police and the African American communities.

Limitations of the Study

There were a few limitations to this study. Some of this study was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. This impacted some of the data collection methods and how recruitment was conducted. The initial plan for recruiting was to post flyers in different areas; however, due to shutdowns and social distancing guidelines, I was concerned not enough people would see the physical posters. Therefore, I posted the notice on Facebook. Face-to-face interviews also proved to be a challenge due to the pandemic, and this was corrected by doing virtual interviews by Zoom.

The limitations of this study also included using a small group sample size. The study may have benefited from a larger sample size related to the affluence of the data obtained. Another limitation was that parents of other ethnic backgrounds raising African American children were not included in this study. There were other demographic limitations as I selected only individuals from the Southeast region of Michigan due to the pandemic.

Recommendations

Recommendations for future research would be to expand the participant pool to include a larger sample size, including parents of other ethnic backgrounds who have adopted African American children, and those who have given birth to multiracial

children. In addition, future research could include grandparents or other guardians raising African American children. Because the scope of this study was limited to the Southeast region of Michigan, future research could include areas outside of Michigan. Another recommendation could be to conduct a quantitative study collecting statistical data rating African Americans' views of those who received the talk as a child and how useful and beneficial the talk was for them in their adult years.

Implications

For positive social change to occur, everyone must recognize that a problem exists, and the only way they can know of this problem is to be made aware of it. This study promoted social change by increasing awareness of the problem. Recent deaths of African Americans during police encounters have brought the public's attention to police discrimination and racial profiling claims, which have existed for African Americans and their communities for years. The findings of this study confirmed existing research on the topic and extended the research to continue to raise awareness of the problem.

This study is important not only for African American parents and their African American children but also for the entire society, including the police, because it is important to understand how perceptions influence attitudes about racial profiling and how this impacts community–police relations. My study may be helpful in convincing naysayers and others that a problem exists and to help raise awareness of cultural perceptions that other cultures may not be aware of. This may be helpful to improve attitudes toward others and prevent fatal encounters with police from happening. With media coverage and social media presence, fear of deadly police encounters, which has

existed in African American households for generations, is now being exposed for every household's awareness. More exposure and awareness of the difference in treatment of African Americans by the police is making other ethnicities uncomfortable along with African Americans, so positive social change is gradually happening, and this must continue.

The benefit of using a generic qualitative approach was that the design features seek to understand how people interpret or make sense of their lives and experiences (Kahlke, 2018). Using this design allowed me to explore how African American parents raising African American children perceive racial injustices relative to injustice during their childhoods. This study also included an analysis of parents' experience in their parental role discussing this subject matter with their children.

Conclusion

This study confirmed why many African American parents perceive some police encounters as dangerous and find it necessary to discuss racial profiling and conduct during police interaction during the early stages of their children's lives. The relationship between African Americans and the police is strained, and this study confirmed this information. The findings show African Americans feel they are not treated with dignity and respect by the police. The findings also suggested that the participants in this study are concerned for their children during police encounters, which has evolved to the level of fear. This study magnified the seriousness of parents' fears and concerns. This disquiet served as the foundation to what some African American families call The Talk.

As one participant in my study stated, the world has come a long way in strides for equal treatment, but there is still much work to be done. With national media exposure, showing the mass of instances of African Americans being killed at the hands of the police, this only confirms the fears of the parents in my study and solidifies the need for the talks with their children to continue. Studies like this are necessary to continue raising awareness to promote social change to transform the relationships between African American communities and the police.

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Appendix A: Recruitment Posting

Dear Parent,
I am seeking to interview African American parents living in Southeast Michigan who have African American children between 13 to 17 years of age. I would like to interview you for my research study if you fit this criterion. The purpose of this study is to explore how African American parents raising African American children perceive police racial injustice today relative to injustice during their childhoods and how these parents perceive their role in having *The Talk* with their children.
Participation in this study includes the following:

- An interview (To be conducted via Zoom or phone due to COVID 19 restrictions)
- Consenting permission
- Zoom Meeting or phone access

For more information about this study, I can be contacted at 574-315-6801 or email at tammara.moffitt@waldenu.edu. If you are interested in this study, please contact me via one of the contact methods listed.

Thank you in advance!
Tammara Moffitt
Walden University Doctoral Candidate

Appendix B: Interview Protocol for Participating Parents

Study: Examining Parent-Child Discussion on Racial Profiling: *The Talk*
Purpose of Study: This study aims to explore how African American parents raising African American children perceive police racial injustice today relative to injustice during their childhoods and how these parents perceive their role in having *The Talk* with their children.
Time of Interview:
Date:
Location:
Interviewer: Tammara Moffitt
Interviewee:
Interview opening statement: Thank you for taking the time to interview me. Your participation is voluntary. If you want to stop during this interview, you have the right to conclude this interview at any time. May I begin the interview now?
Questions:

1. Tell me about your children. How many/ages/gender/personalities, etc.?
2. Do you trust the police? Why/Why not?
3. What is your definition of racial profiling?
4. What is included in the discussion with your children about racial profiling?
5. Describe an encounter with the police where you feared for your safety or the safety of someone else?
6. Give examples of how the police treat African Americans compared to other ethnic backgrounds?
7. What is your fear, for your children, during an encounter with the police?
8. How do you define “The Talk” in the African American community?
9. What is included in The Talk you have with your children about conducting themselves during police encounters?
10. What age were you when this talk was given to you? Who gave you the talk?

11. How has the content of The Talk changed from the time you received the talk compared to the talk you have with your children?
12. Is there anything else you would like to add that I haven't asked about? Do you have any questions for me at this time?

Interview closing statement: Thank you for your participation, and thanks for sharing your viewpoints.