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Relationships between Ethnicity, Attitudes toward Institutional Authority, and Hope in the African American Community

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Relationships between Ethnicity, Attitudes toward Institutional Authority,

and Hope in the African American Community

Garnadette Stuckey

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Community Psychology Doctoral Program

Dissertation Notification of Completion

Doctoral Candidate: Garnadette Farr

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                              TOWARD INSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY, AND HOPE IN
                              THE AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY

Certification: In accordance with the departmental and University
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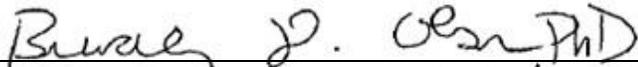
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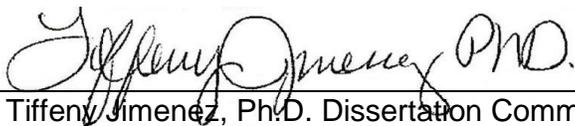
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Abstract

A set of two mixed method studies were conducted to examine attitudes toward institutional authority and to understand how the presence of societal authority and oppression can impact individual and community capacity for hope and full freedom. Researchers have discussed concepts such as attitudes to authority, suggesting that some individuals are naturally more resistant to authority (Rigby, 1985). However, in the United States, racial disparities are great, particularly when the "authority" is a police officer in an urban community and the individual is African American. In African American communities in the U.S., interactions with authority figures begin in childhood. African Americans have a significantly greater negative attitude toward institutional authority as it relates to the police. In Study 2, African American participants share stories of perceived racial oppression as it pertains to the economic, educational, and social aspects of our society. The themes that arise focused on ones related to a sense of hopelessness in the African American community around police violence and mass incarceration.

Keywords: police mistrust, abuse of police authority, racism and police brutality

Relationships between Ethnicity, Attitudes toward Institutional Authority,

and Hope in the African American Community

In our current political climate, acts of blatant racism and violent hate crimes are becoming commonplace. There has been an increase in hate crimes reported to the FBI in 2017. The number of hate crimes in the United States in 2017 topped a previous high, with law enforcement reporting 7,175 incidents – an uptick of 17% over the fire year high reached in 2016 (Barrouquere, 2018). Being exposed to violent images of African American men, women, and children being verbally and physically assaulted is simply a part of the American experience. Unfortunately, it always has been. White supremacy has been embedded in the United States of America from its founding as a matter of law (Battalora, 2013). There were laws that were written specially to oppress African Americans. For instance, the California Crimes and Punishments Act of 1850 provided that no black or mulatto person, or Indian shall be permitted to give evidence in favor of or against any white person" (Rose, 2017). More commonly known laws of oppression were the Black Codes which were created after the Civil War in 1865. During an interview with Democracy Now, Ava DuVernay stated that in the 2014 documentary by entitled 13th she initiated the conversation about the history of racism, oppression, and subjugation of black people in this country as it relates to the criminal justice system in this country (DuVernay, 2016). According to documentary in 2016, there were two million people incarcerated and of that number 40% were African American men. African American men have a 1 in 3 chance of being incarcerated in their lifetime. (DuVernay, 2016). At the core of the

problems with the disproportionate amount of African American men being incarcerated, is white supremacy. For many African Americans, this information is a contributing factor in the attitudes towards authority.

History of White Supremacy and its relation of social trauma

The legal history of white supremacy begins with the colonies of Virginia and Maryland in the early 1600's. Both were British Colonies whose economies were rooted in tobacco farming requiring a large amount of physical labor. Plantation owners made distinctions between African and European indentured servants based on differences in physical characteristics such as hair texture, skin color, and facial features. Also, there were laws in place that created privileges and advantages based on race. It is regarded as a divide and conquer strategy (Battalora, 2013). Other laws included the prohibition of free black holding public office, marrying whites, from possessing a weapon. This law essentially stripped free black men of their ability to hold patriarchal power (Battalora, 2013). Racism as a social construct has its purpose that tends to benefit the wealthy members of our society. Racial categorization creates social structures and assigns moral qualities to members of racial group in ways that benefit people designated to be white (Rose, 2014). This ideal sounds simple, but it has very serious ramifications that have endured centuries and has recently gained momentum with our most recent presidential election. Hence, the purpose of racial differentiation is to confer privilege upon the insider group white people juxtaposed with outsider groups: people of color (Rose, 2014). We as members of this society are socialized from childhood to the racial hierarchy in our country. We are inundated with verbal and visual messages that engrain into our core values that white is good, pretty, and nice while black is bad, ugly, and criminal. This was demonstrated in an experiment written about and presented by Drs. Kenneth and Mamie Clark called the doll test.

His research contributed to the success of the Brown v. Board of Education case. The study showed that children had more negative views about the black dolls. That school segregation was distorting the minds of black youth and causing them to internalize negative racial stereotypes. (Clark, 1947). The study was criticized for their methodology and that the study was not theoretically driven, that there is limited control of the study's variables and that the questions were leading with some biases toward the experimenters could have skewed the results. The majority of these children at each level indicate that the brown doll rather than the white doll, "looks bad." (Clark, 1947). The results of the study have contributed to the field of developmental and social psychology as it relates to experiments of racial stereotypes and self-esteem. The evaluative rejection of the brown doll is statistically significant, even at the three-year level, and is pronounced at the five-year level. The indicated preference for the white doll is statistically significant from the four-year level up to the seven-year level (Clark, 1947). This problem is connected to many of our social problems that we currently experience in our society. The Clarks agreed that they had to test those children. These children saw themselves as inferior and they accepted the inferiority as part of reality (Clark, 1947).

Many African Americans children and adults see themselves as inferior as evidenced by the ongoing depression, anxiety, and learned helplessness that is prevalent in some communities of color. The fallacy of racial supremacy manifests into painful and oppressing emotional and psychological trauma. This is a trauma that was created and supported by authority figures to reinforce white supremacy. The development of negative attitudes toward authority has many layers and is very complex. Society as a whole is reluctant to unpack it because at the center of it all is an insidious and intentional construct that has been allowed to remain.

Making the Connection from White Supremacy to Racism to Mistrust of Police

For the purpose of this study, racism will be defined as prejudice plus the power to oppress (DeGruy, 2008). This definition is important to ensure an advancement of the literature and discussion about race and racism. Racism is a choice that we as a country uphold through our laws and practices. If we acknowledge the permanence of racism in our society and legal structure, signs of racial subordination in the evidence context will come more clearly into view and can be addressed (Rose, 2016). Attitudes toward authority and mistrust of police are closely related to how people experience life in our society. For example, we as a country continue to embrace a racially segregated way of life.

We refuse to dismantle systems of oppression that flourish in our communities and our government. There is an ongoing unwillingness to acknowledge the true American History of the United States and take the time to palpate the connection to the current events. Upon doing so, our country would begin to comprehend that attitudes toward authority develops from various ports of information, experiences, and observations. Researchers and practitioners continue to debate the relationships among individual, organizational, and community levels of empowerment; whether the three levels can be addressed separately or simultaneously; and whether one level leads to another (Israel, Checkoway, Schultz, Zimmerman 1994).

The History of Policing, Racism, Brutality, and Mistrust of Police

When it comes to incidents of police brutality, engaging in a productive discussion is often very difficult. Generally, people find it difficult to believe that police officers engage in criminal behavior or that any of them would commit murder. Even with visual evidence, society is reluctant to hold a police officer accountable for an act that if perpetrated by an average citizen would result in imprisonment. This is a strong predictor of negative attitudes toward authority.

Many of us in the United States have not been educated about the true history America and the African people. That history holds very painful, oppressive, and inhumane behaviors that have caused the demise of millions of innocent human beings. The history of policing spans centuries in our country. In the Ohio State Journal of Criminal Law, an article entitled Interrogating Racial Violence studied causes and effects of police brutality, the authors discuss one of the reasons that racial violence exists. Throughout our nation's history, blacks have been variously construed as violent, hyper masculine, animal-like, criminal, and unintelligent, to name a few of the racial stereotypes that exist. These stereotypes help justify racial subordination and hyper incarceration (Richardson and Goff, 2015). This article shows a contrast of policing then and what we have come to know of policing in the United States now.

One article, *Policing and the Oppression Have a Long History*, discusses this point, providing clear and concise examples of how significantly racism played a role in the disproportionate amount of African American human beings that were and still are victims of police brutality. Carter examines the historical roots of, and the continuing mistrust between law enforcement and the Black community. He begins with assuring the reader that his intention to share this account in American History is not to "impugn the integrity of police officers anywhere. Yet if we do not study the past we'll never understand the present, and the history of policing in American is deeply intertwined with the violence of racial oppression" (Carter, 2015). This statement is profound and one with many would agree. Unless one is directly afflicted by what he refers to as 'the violence of racial oppression' these words do not impose much of an impact.

Typically, individuals who have not experienced police brutality have lack of empathy as it relates to those who have. It is profound ignorance or profound bigotry that creates the lack of

empathy about the horrors that African Americans have been forced to endure in the United States. Dr. Judson Jeffries is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Political Science at Purdue University. In his article entitled, Police Brutality of Black Men and the Destruction of the African American Community, Jeffries (2015) writes that black men are disproportionately the subjects of police brutality. He referenced the clinical psychologist and political activist, Bobby Wright (1978) who argued that "In their relationship with blacks many whites behave as psychopaths." Wright had an extensive definition of psychopath as it relates to this topic beginning with his belief that a psychopath is "one who is constantly in conflict with others, unable to experience guilt, completely selfish and callous and has total disregard for the rights of others" (Jeffries, 2015). Jeffries shared how Wright further examines the understanding of the psychopathic personality as "almost complete absence of ethical or moral development and an almost total disregard for appropriate patterns of behavior" (Jeffries, 2015). Jeffries then connects this definition to the June 7, 1998 murder of James Byrd Jr.

Three white supremacists, Shawn Allen Berry, Lawrence Russel Brewer, and John William King and tied Mr. Byrd to the back of their pick-up truck and drove for miles on an asphalt road. Reportedly Mr. Byrd was conscious through most of this horrific act of racism until his body came into contact with the edge of a culvert which severed his right arm and head. It is also believed that the three racist white men, dumped Mr. Byrd's remains in front of a black cemetery. These racist men are an excellent example of Dr. Wright's definition of psychopath. Had an accurate and truthful educational discussion occurred in elementary, high school, and college, African American people could have possibly experienced true equality. Generational ignorance has been passed on like a tradition thus leaving far too many Americans with a myopic view of such social problems.

Adverse Effects of the Lack of Accountably for Racial Violence.

Knowledge of how African Americans were murdered by European Americans for centuries, effects the attitude toward authority specifically toward police. In the south, lynching was used as a way of policing the activities of African American men. From 1880-1950 there were at least 3,500 lynchings. Furthermore, the majority of the victims of these lynchings were African American men who were frivolously accused of violating a racial norm of some kind. To put this in context, from 1890-1917 two to three African Americans (particularly those who lived in the South) were hanged, burned, or quietly murdered each week" (Chaney and Robertson 2015). It is reasonable to deduce that had this knowledge been included as a part of American History in our educational system, our society could at least express some empathy in observing via social media, the killing of unarmed black men, women, and children by white police officers and white civilians (e.g., George Zimmerman, Michael Dunn, Dylann Roof) and more frequently denounce this abhorrent behavior just like Germany does in relation to the Jewish Holocaust.

Racial discrimination has negatively affected African Americans in the United States for centuries and produced one of the most publicly recognized histories of social oppression (Hollar, 2001). Throughout history, people have protested racism and oppression. Unfortunately, it continues today. Ever since Africans were stolen from Africa and brought to the United States and made into slaves, crimes against Blacks have been a part of the socialization process. It has become the norm, a way of life, just the way it is for Blacks. Extensive research has shown the deleterious effects of racism on African American people and clearly demonstrated that perceived racism and discrimination may negatively affect the lives of the oppressed (Brondolo et al., 2008).

African Americans have been through a process of dehumanization in an effort to remove the dissonance of those who participate in physical, emotional, psychological, and economic violence against Black people. For the oppressors, however, it is always the oppressed (whom they obviously never call "the oppressed" but—depending on whether they are fellow countrymen or not—"those people" or "the blind and envious masses" or "savages" or "natives" or "subversives") who are disaffected, who are "violent," "barbaric," "wicked," or "ferocious"— when they react to the violence of the oppressors (Freire, 1968). Stereotypes factor into the dehumanization of black people. For example, the belief that "black men are violent has become so ingrained in white America's social consciousness that the behavior used to respond to this stereotype, excessive force, becomes normative and reflexive. Therefore, the use of excessive force by some white police officers against black men may be a reflexive, internalized, and cognitive or oppressive schema" (Jeffries, 2001).

Michael Brown was killed August 9, 2014 in Ferguson Missouri. Observing this trauma and how the typical process of dehumanization of Michael Brown and ultimately not accountability applied wreaks of historical trauma. The Department of Justice submitted a report that found no basis for bringing charges against the police officers who shot Michael Brown. To some this exonerated the officer to others it was another African American who was murdered. In March 2015, an article in the New York Times read that the data compiled on a six-month investigation revealed the Ferguson Police Department showed that between 2012-2014, African Americans were disproportionately detained by the police. Although Ferguson, MO is a third White, the crime statistics seemed to suggest that only black people were breaking the law (Aupzzo, 2015). Black people in Ferguson accounted for 85 percent of tickets and 93 percent of arrests. In cases like jaywalking, which often hinges on police discretion, blacks accounted for

95 percent of all arrests (Apuzzo, 2015). This author and others shared that the Department of Justice discovered that the Ferguson Police Department routinely violated the constitutional rights of its Black residents.

There are other investigations like this that clearly show the disproportionate amount of African American involvement with law enforcement. For example, the cities of, Chicago, New York, and Los Angeles are other examples where very blatant and controversial incidents of police brutality occur and are allowed. We have had data that provides concise statistics that show police brutality against black people, yet the level of accountability does not coincide. One of the questions this article is asking is why is that true? When we compare and contrast the details of Michael Brown, Eric Garner, Tamir Rice, Walter Scott and Oscar Grant they ring with a piercing familiarity to Jimmie Lee Jackson, George Stinney, Willie Edwards Jr., John Earl Reese and Cpl. Roman Ducksworth all of whom were killed by police officers or white citizens. These individuals were made to face zero consequences for the crimes they committed.

Jeffries again references Dr. Wright's explanation of the psychopath as he charges that they are not able to accept blame. Most whites have never accepted blame for blacks' condition that is to a large extent the result of white oppression. Not surprising then, few officers accept responsibility for their action when hauled into a court of law, even when video footage clearly show them to be the aggressor. Instead, blacks are at fault. In the minds of some police officers, blacks cause these situations to get out of hand by being combative, resisting arrest, obstructing justice, being disrespectful or by running away (Jeffries, 2015). The police officer who shot Laquan McDonald was allowed to collect his salary for 13 months until Journalist Brandon Smith and Activist William Calloway petitioned the court to release the video of the shooting. Law Enforcement denied any culpability into the matter including District Attorney Anita

Alvarez. The mayor of Chicago Rahm Emanuel denied any knowledge of the video. Meanwhile the entire Law Enforcement community conspired to protect the police officer. All aforementioned contributed to negative attitudes toward authority.

Trust and Generalized Attitudes Toward Institutional Authority Race-Related stress and hopelessness is prevalent in the Black community. It is often overwhelming, and people do not know what to do. They do not know what they can do. They do not know that anything they do, will matter. White supremacy is protected, perpetuated, and an accepted way of life. Many people suffer from anxiety, depression, and substance abuse. Jeffries (2015) argues that in America, "white masculinity has often been socially, culturally, and psychologically defined as the beating, lynching, torturing, and killing of the big black buck. To take down a big black buck allows some white men to shed their feelings of insecurity, thereby enhancing their self-esteem if only temporarily." (Jeffries 2015). This ideal and practice spans the entire history of black people in the United States. Ever since Africans were stolen from their homeland and brought to the United States and made into slaves, Black men, women, and children have been oppressed and murdered by racist white people with no consequence. From slavery until now, this has been an ongoing practice that is widely acceptable.

Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome (PTSS) is a theory developed by DeGruy (2008). She argues that the trauma many African American people endure is much like Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome (PTDS). An article, *Do you have Post-Traumatic Slave Syndrome?*, written by George (2015) for Ebony Magazine, a point is made that Dr. Degruy differentiates between the two by pointing out that PTSD results from a single trauma experienced directly or indirectly such as a war versus American chattel slavery which is not a single trauma. "Were talking about multiple traumas over lifetimes and over generations. Living in Black skin is a whole other level of

stress." (Degruy 2015). Dr. Degruy also questions what happens when stressed people do not have knowledge of or access to treatment for these traumas through the generations. She questions how have Black people coped. What are the adaptive behaviors that were created to cope with the generational traumas?

White Supremacy affects European Americans Differently

In an article Police Brutality of Black Men and the Destruction of the African-American Community, Jeffries, writes about the 1991 image of four White Los Angeles police officers beating and kicking Rodney King. The beating is so severe that Mr. King's eye socket is fractured, his cheekbone is smashed, facial nerve damage occurs, and his leg is broken. This incident of police brutality was recorded and shown on mainstream media. Many people were outraged. The police said they were provoked. They said Mr. King resisted arrest and was reaching into his pocket. The all-white jury acquitted the four officers despite video evidence demonstrating Mr. King being beaten while on the ground. This verdict resulted the infamous LA Riots. ABC news aired a phone discussion with two jurors who were on the jury that acquitted the four officers. On national television those two individuals said that the police used reasonable force. Four of those jurors did not agree and wanted to convict the officers. Ten Whites, one Hispanic, and on Asian. There was a federal trial after which two of the four officers were convicted and sent to jail. In other incidents, no convictions were made.

Benefitting from a white supremacist society, allows for opposing perceptions that create the racial divide and different attitudes toward authority. Because of incidents like this many people have a fear of the police. This fear is reinforced by the ongoing incidents that occur. Many incidents are recorded and placed on social media for many people to see.

According to Jeffries, During the 1980s eighteen citizens died as a result of the choke hold; sixteen of them were black males. The idea of black people being killed by the police is not a new concern. Jeffries talks about the relationship between blacks and the police has been oppressive. For example, the data shows that between 1920 and 1932, white police officers were responsible for more than half of all murders of black citizens (Mydral, 1944). Gunnar Myrdal argued in 1944 that the "United States has a history of using law enforcement to keep blacks subdued and subjugated, dating back to slavery." The argument that this dynamic between black people and the police spanning the history of black people being in this country is one that is a stain on the fabric of our country. Jeffries argues that the image of black men as criminals resonates with many whites. This argument demonstrates the cognitive pathways that allow so many black human beings to be beaten, murdered, and blamed for their own deaths at the hands of police officers.

Tools That Could Improve Negative Attitudes Toward Police

The results of this study that presents the differences in attitudes toward authority relative to police officers and African American participants should encourage members of our society to look deeper into this matter in light of our current political climate. There are ways in which this social problem can be ameliorated. Beginning with acknowledgement of the problem and providing a truth filled and thorough education on the core issues and causes of the problem.

Empirical assessments have found positive impacts of higher education that could impact attitudes toward abuse of authority. Attaining a college degree is associated with more humanistic values such as more liberal attitudes toward ending inequality, greater social

tolerance, and reductions in racial prejudice. Acquiring a college degree is also associated with beliefs and behaviors related to morality (Telep, 2011).

Ignorance continues to plague racial matters in our society. Ignorance is blissful and in many cases regarding negative attitudes toward police, willful. College has a positive net impact on principled moral reasoning. Empirical assessments have found positive impacts of higher education that could impact attitudes toward abuse of authority. Attaining a college degree is associated with more humanistic values such as more liberal attitudes toward ending inequality, greater social tolerance, and reductions in racial prejudice (Telep, 2011).

Negative attitudes toward police from African Americans are similar to those attitudes studied in Australia between Aborigines and non-aborigines. The attitudes toward the police were less positive among the Aboriginal children is not surprising. Police are highly visible in areas where there is a concentration of aboriginals including the locations from which the children in this sample were drawn. Conflict with institutional authority, particularly the police is a part of Aboriginal life (Rigby & Black 1993). It will be of great social benefit and personal benefit for information like this to be a part of the educational process. A number of children in the sample had witnessed such conflict between police and members of their family, and others were made aware of it by older Aboriginals or by their peers (Rigby & Black, 1993).

Attitude toward institutional authority is explained by Critical Race Theory developed in part by Crinshaw (1995). A significant predictor in differences of attitude toward authority was race. Other variables were closely related. Critical Race Theory examines the foundations of our society particularly, our legal structure and questions the bases of those foundations from a racial

standpoint. Critical Race Theory views the problem of racial differentiation and racism as linked inextricably to power.

Critical race theory posits that there are insiders and outsiders in American society and its legal systems. Insiders are white, generally male, heterosexual, and relatively affluent. Outsiders are people of color, women, LGBT persons, and the poor. The more a person is an insider, the more access to power he or she has. CRT argues that American society and its legal system are fundamentally slanted, if not heavily skewed, in favor of insiders and structurally designed to keep insiders in power. Critical race theorists believe that racial differentiation and racism are less about racial partiality and more about maintaining existing power structures. CRT posits that there is a distinct purpose behind both racial classifications and racism. Racial distinctions are not natural biological, scientific, or fixed. Rather race is a deliberate social construct. Humans share nearly all their genetics, as well as higher order traits such as intelligence, reason, and morality. However, our society chooses to underplay our extensive similarities and focus on a few physical attributes such as hair texture, skin color, and facial features to craft distinct races. Racial categorization then creates social structure and assigns moral qualities to members of racial groups in ways that benefit people designated to be white.

Research Purpose: The researcher is examining the perceptions and perspectives that previously incarcerated individuals have towards institutional authority.

The primary hypotheses for Study 1 were:

to examine whether equivalent environmental interactions with the police relate to overall attitudes toward the police. While history bears this out well, it is important to look at how these relationships play out empirically. In addition, what possible impact does having a particular

ethnicity, and a particular attitude toward police relate to one's emotional state in relation to avoiding high risk behaviors. The point is to help find more evidence that the way certain groups are treated in related to racism, create a societal-fulfilling prophecy that impacts their mental health and contributes to the cycle of arrest, ill health, and a sense of helplessness.

Study 1: Methods

Participants: This study uses secondary data analysis and is using variables that are provided within the dataset. The data examines individuals who have recently been released from incarceration from Cook County Jail or Illinois prisons within the last year. One of the primary measures included an instrument on Attitudes Toward Institutional Authority, including a section on attitudes toward police officers, which is the focus here.

Demographic characteristics were assessed including gender and ethnicity. Given that the all of the participants struggled with substance abuse one measure that was included was called the Drug-Taking Confidence Questionnaire (DTCQ). This measure assessed how confident participants were about their ability to avoid turning back to substances given certain environmental conditions. The subscale of interest to this study was the extent to which feel down, or emotional depression was seen to impact the participants' efficacy to avoid returning to using a particular drug.

Baseline secondary data collected from a National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) study was used that examined individuals with drug use histories who had re-entered the community from prison within the prior year. The research participants were recruited from treatment centers in Illinois. Measures included raw data that contain demographic information, criminal history, drug use history, substance abuse treatment history, addiction severity index information,

Attitudes Toward Institutional Authority and the DTCQ (Drug-Taking Confidence

Questionnaire) to measure self-efficacy.

The two hundred and seventy participants (N=270) included two hundred and twenty-

four males (83%), and 46 females (17%). Two-hundred (74.1%) were African American (163

males and 37 females) and sixty-seven (21.1%) were European American (61 males and nine

females). Alcohol was the commonly reported drug of choice followed by heroin/opiates, and

Crack/Cocaine 74.

Self-efficacy measures in the addiction world examine the confidence in one's ability to

manage a high-risk situation effectively. It can be used to determine the risk situations and

effectively arm an individual with skills to cope. An assessment of self-efficacy is important in

determining treatment plans and predicting future problems. In this case both the DASE and the

AASE were used, the Drug or Alcohol Abstinence Self-Efficacy Scale (AASE), respectively.

These are 20-item self-report survey that measures a person's confidence in their own ability to

abstain from drinking in specific situations. The test results can help to assess an individual's

potential progress for drug or alcohol treatment and to determine the right mode of treatment.

High scores on the Alcohol Abstinence Self-Efficacy Scale indicate that and individual has more

confidence in their ability to abstain from using alcohol. Conversely, low scores indicate that a

person does not believe they can resist the temptation to drink alcohol.

There is strong evidence supporting the reliability and validity of the scales. Good

internal consistency has been reported for the scale. Self-efficacy scores at assessment were

significantly correlated with two measures of drug use severity and a measure of peer support.

Self-efficacy scores also increased significantly during each of the treatments but significantly

more so in the more intensive residential treatment. Self-efficacy assessed at the completion of treatment was a significant predictor of drug use outcome for both treatments.

Regression analyses were run, two predicting drug-related self-efficacy and two for alcohol-related self-efficacy. Each of these analyses were run separately for African American and European American participants.

Study 1: Results

Descriptive Statistics

The participants in this study varied demographically as to age, gender, and economic status. The participants identified identically on two factors as they were all formally incarcerated individuals and with some history of substance use. Out of the sample of 270 participants 224 (83%) were male and 46 (17%) were female. In terms of race/ethnicity, out of the 270 participants, 200 (74.1%) were African American and 57 (21.1%) were European American. This sample also had a 36.2% had experienced Anxiety in the last 30 days. The average age of the sample was 40.43. Their overall self-efficacy to avoid using drugs in emotional situations was 71% confident in their ability, and their level of negative attitudes toward the police was 3.4 on a 5-point scale, meaning they, as a whole, tended to agree on their negative attitudes (i.e., the police are not to be trusted).

1. Even among a sample who have had equivalent and difficult interactions with police officers, are there ethnic differences in attitudes toward institutional authority.

2. To what extent do ethnic differences in attitudes toward institutional authority relate to the way in which difficult emotional states converge with alcohol/drug-taking self-efficacy.

In addition, and independent samples t-test was run to see if African Americans had more negative attitudes toward the police than did European Americans. The test confirmed this hypothesis showing that African Americans had a higher mean of 3.49 (SD = .89) than the European American Mean of 3.10 (SD = .85), with t (187) = 2.62, p = .009.

Multiple Linear Regression Analyses

Results of the hierarchical multiple regression analysis

A hierarchical multiple regression was conducted to determine if a series of variables (e.g., race, black vs. white) predicted a significant amount of variance in *negative attitudes police as an institutional authority* (the dependent variable) after controlling for identified covariates. Age, gender, legal severity, employment severity, and race were predictors.

The results indicate that all of the predictors together explained 7% ($R^2 = .06$) of the variance in negative attitudes toward police scores. After controlling for age, gender, legal severity, and employment severity only race was a significant predictor of negative attitudes toward the police (*beta* = -.549, *p* = .002).

Model 1: Race Predicting Negative Attitudes toward the Police

A standard linear multiple regression analysis was conducted to understand the predictors of *negative attitudes toward police*. Several predictor variables were included, such as: race, age, gender, legal severity, employment severity. According to the R2, 7% (.066) of the variance is accounted for by this model. The only significant predictor of negative attitudes toward police was Race (B = -.549, p = .002), and given African Americans were coded as 1 and European Americans were coded as 2 this means that African Americans had more negative attitudes toward the police.

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	4.209	.483		8.722	.000
	Age	-.006	.008	-.066	-.744	.458
	Gender	.170	.179	.072	.948	.344
	*Race/Ethnicity	-.549	.174	-.269	-3.160	*.002
	Legal Severity	.322	.408	.061	.788	.432
	Employment Severity	-.057	.288	-.015	-.198	.844

a. Dependent Variable: Negative Attitudes toward Police

Model 2: Being black, having more legal severity, and more mistrust of the police being related to less self-efficacy.

A simple linear regression was calculated to predict unpleasant emotions (DV) and mistrust of police (DV) based on age (IV), gender (IV), legal severity (IV), employment severity (IV). An analysis of the independent variables revealed that race was the only significant variance in the amount of unpleasant emotions toward police as an institutional authority (R^2 = .148, 15%) that race was a marginal predictor (B = -970, p = .072. Because Race was coded 1 = African American and 2 = European American, and because the Beta was negative, African American's had lower drug use self-efficacy. However legal severity (B = -33.94, p = .006) with more legal severity related to less self-efficacy, and negative attitudes toward police (B = -5.350, p = .021), with more negative attitudes being related to less self-efficacy, were significantly predictive.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	Age	.378	.232	.138	1.629	.105
	Gender	-.778	5.387	-.011	-.144	.885
	*Race/Ethnicity	-9.700	5.365	-.152	-1.808	.072
	*Legal Severity	-33.942	12.285	-.206	-2.763	.006
	Employment Severity	-4.972	8.656	-.042	-.574	.566
	*Mistrust of Police	-5.350	2.289	-.171	-2.337	.021

Dependent Variable: Drug Use Self-Efficacy

Model 3: Mistrust of Police predicting Experience of Anxiety in the last 30 days.

A hierarchical multiple regression was conducted to determine if a series of variables (race: black versus white) predicted Anxiety in the last 30 days (the dependent variable) after controlling for identified covariates. After controlling for age, gender, legal severity, employment severity, and race as predictors, the results indicate that all predictors together explained 4% (R^2=.044) of the variance in negative attitudes toward police scores. After controlling for age, gender, legal severity, and employment severity only negative attitude toward the police was a significant predictor of anxiety in the last 30 days (B = -.549, p = .002).

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	Age	.000	.003	-.007	-.093	.926
	Gender	-.118	.091	-.091	-1.296	.197
	Race/Ethnicity	.032	.031	.073	1.024	.307
	*Negative Attitudes Toward Police	.093	.039	.171	2.402	*.017

Dependent Variable: Anxiety Last 30 days

Overall, the research question of whether there is a relationship between ethnicity and attitudes toward Institutional Authority was supported by the data. Participants showed a pattern across the analyses that supported the earlier predictions for the study. For example, African Americans scored significantly higher than their European American counterparts when asked about their attitudes toward police.

Model 1: Race Predicting Negative Attitudes toward the Police

In the first regression it was shown that race/ethnicity predicted negative attitudes toward the police such that African Americans, compared to European Americans, distrusted the police more, even though the participants had very similar demographic characteristics otherwise, including past incarceration and addiction to drugs and alcohol. Even when demographic predictors were in the model, and controlled for, ethnicity was still the strongest predictor.

Model 2: Being black, having more legal severity, and more mistrust of the police being related to less self-efficacy.

The second model showed that African Americans, more legal severity, and negative attitudes toward the police was also related to self-efficacy. In other words, participants who were African American and distrusted the police were less likely to feel confident in their ability to avoid drugs when they were in highly emotional settings.

Model 3: Negative Attitudes Toward Police predicting Experience of Anxiety in the last 30 days.

Model 3 showed that those who had negative attitudes toward police also had more anxiety in the last 30 days, which is one more piece of the puzzle, suggesting that perhaps there

are connections between the distrust of police and mental well-being, that if one does not trust the police after intergenerational and life experiences, and if one has anxiety around police, and have used drugs to self-medicate around those anxiety that there could potentially be lasting effects. While this is highly speculative at this point, it is not difficult to understand that the climate police have caused in our nation can be connected to severe mental distress and trauma.

The most important conclusion is that, when asked about attitudes toward police officers, African Americans reported a higher incidence of negative attitudes toward police officers than their European American counterparts. African Americans presented with more distrust of police officers. Their attitudes were reportedly connected to personal lived experiences. These experiences, especially when compared to the European Americans, engendered various emotional responses from participants. It is not unusual for African Americans to described fear when they felt that an encounter with a police officer was imminent, others report anxiety, chronic distress, and anger as well. Some others feel vindicated through the knowledge of consent decrees that report African Americans are disproportionately stopped, ticketed, arrested, and killed by police officers. The consent decrees were frequently regarded as evidence of racial profiling. The data showed that those who admitted to substance use problems associated the use of mood-altering substances to racism, police brutality, learned helplessness, and sense of hopelessness. Many African Americans report increased incidents of anxiety and depression as it relates to the potential of becoming involved with police officers. It is not hard to understand that when African American participants might experience that negative relations with the police made it harder for them to stop using drugs. It can be perceived as their only escape from the perception of living with a constant threat based on their race. These attitudes are likely to develop over time from direct for indirect contact with law enforcement officials.

In sum, while European Americans report similar attitudes toward institutional authority, African American participants do so at a higher level as evidenced by the data especially as it relates to law enforcement. This study contributes to the literature by revealing that the negative attitudes toward institutional authority is a significant contributing factor to fear, anxiety, depression, and diminished quality of life in African Americans. African Americans can, with the negative attitudes report, say they have physiological responses to seeing police officer due to witnessing incidents of African Americans being killed by police, witnessing the judicial system fail to bring charges, and judges' reluctance to apply justice adequately. Some experiences were detailed in stories passed down like traditions. Followed by or in conjunction with the socialization that reinforces emotional and psychological trauma African Americans commonly expressed a lack of knowledge on what to do, how to respond, and if they will manage to survive.

The results, as they relate to police and African Americans, are a reminder of how mistrust of the police continues to be a problem for our society. As mentioned in the literature reviewed for this study, there is a historic component to why African Americans hold negative attitudes toward police. At the very core of it all is our society's willingness to allow racism to prevail and at the core of racism is white supremacy.

To understand the connection between white supremacy and African American's mistrust of police, there has to be an ability to understand American History as it relates to chattel slavery. The literature reviewed for this study shows, a deliberate process of dehumanization of Africans to manage the dissonance of enslaving human beings and incorporating all of the associated horrors therein. Dr. Degruy's theory of Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome is applicable to many African Americans. Dr. Degruy presents the scientific evidence about how inhumanely

African slaves were treated. She discusses the human remains of slaves whose muscle detached from its bone due to exertion. In the discussion it is clear that African slaves were made to work in unspeakable conditions that contributed to early and excruciatingly painful death.

This information has been eliminated from the American History educational curriculum. Generally, the unabridged version of the trauma that slavery consisted of has not taught in school. However, in the homes and communities of many African Americans, there are shared experiences, knowledge, and stories that instill in those individuals the horrors that occurred. The connection to that trauma remains intact and creates a sometimes-lifelong emotional burden that is internalized just below the surface. It has been argued that this trauma is prevalent in the lives of many black people due to the perceived racial violence perpetrated and allowed to occur against unarmed black men, women, and children. This trauma manifests itself in various forms such as anxiety, fear, depression, anger, and despair. In an effort to manage, escape, or treat these states of being some rely on mood altering substances such as alcohol and other drugs.

It is important for those who do not know the history of policing as it pertains to the African American people, to learn. It is a direct pathway of knowledge that will help reduce the ignorance about why the attitudes toward police are sometimes negative. According to an article entitled How the U.S. Got Its Police Force, the author discusses how slave patrollers were considered the first police and had been created in the Carolina colonies in 1704. While there is a significantly low tolerance and low interest in discussing chattel slavery, it is absolutely essential for understanding the views, attitudes, and behaviors of African Americans toward police. Patrollers were given power and responsibility to chase, retrieve, and control slaves who attempted to escape. They were allowed to use any means available to facilitate the capture and

return of the property to its owner. They were called salve patrollers or paddy rollers and they were allowed to monitor and enforce discipline upon slaves.

Many black people view police officers today as descendants of those patrollers who captured slaves. The behaviors, beliefs, and practices stab with a familiarity when an experience with a police officers is imminent. African Americans endure the oppression that double standards of policing allow. It is normal to many African Americans to see European Americans face much lighter penalties upon entering the judicial system.

There is an inordinate amount of police shootings of unarmed African American men with, most of the time, zero accountability. There have been instances when police have stood by and watched while black protestors are being attacked historically and currently. This is not unusual, just unacknowledged. There are unimaginable amounts of microaggressions that are endured by African Americans such as the current trend of black face. Designers, politicians, and college students have all participated in this blatant disregard for historical trauma of African Americans. Apologies are insulting and disingenuous. The stigmatizing of natural hair is another way microaggressions cause emotional pain intentionally to African Americans. Policies are being created to exclude the natural hair of African American children from what is normal or acceptable. The frequent harassment of black people by racist white people often goes unpunished as the police are rarely seen imposing consequences for false reports. The allowing of police offices to murder a twelve-year boy, Tamir Rice, on video and not be held accountable, continues the same powerful oppressive message sent throughout history. The ongoing mistrust of police encompasses hundreds of years of oppression, murder, and injustice at the hands of police and by the permission of our society.

When encountered by police, African Americans often are report being disrespected, profiled, or harassed. Some are racially so frequently that they are permanently altered. Many African Americans feel that they are deemed unworthy of respect by police officers. Respect is very important and a valuable tool that could be used to begin to repair and change the perceptions of police by African Americans.

Though the participants scored similarly on many of the variables, the African American participants stood out in how their experiences with police affected several areas of their lives. For example, many found that their perceptions of police directly relate to their lack of ability to abstain from substance abuse. Many find that their levels of anxiety about police were elevated even when they were not in immediate vicinity of police. The negative relationship between African Americans and the police is significant and it is valuable toward furthering the research to study the core problems of this finding.

The distinction between attitudes toward authority and certain authoritarian personality traits namely intolerance and ambiguity, dogmatism, low creative independence, low emotional activation, and creative independence, low emotional activation and, and cognitive simplicity is justified on theoretical grounds (Rugby & Rump, 1982). The data also suggests a possible connection between African American and police relations with mental health problems. African Americans report feeling traumatized directly or indirectly by police beginning at young ages. Some African Americans believe that they are subjected to being incarcerated unfairly, brutalized by the police, or killed by the police. The data shows that African American participants mistrust the police significantly more than their European American counterparts. This belief is manifested in the sense of hopelessness that there will ever be justice from police

violence, full freedom from the double standards perpetrated by our legal system, and relief from the documented overrepresentation in the penal system.

The results of this study can help to demonstrate the need for policy changes beginning with accountability of police brutality. Many African Americans feel that no matter how brutal an incident with police becomes for African Americans, there will not be justice for the victim. It is an unyielding reality that African Americans have to endure and bear witness to visual images of police shooting of unarmed African American people and the police officer being allowed to escape adequate consequences. It is watched over and over again and after a while, it becomes a normal and expected part of life.

African Americans have a uniquely traumatic experience in the United States beginning with chattel slavery. The trauma that those African Americans suffered has, in many families, been passed down at least in some form as generational trauma. The trauma manifests in various ways, many of them negative. For example, poverty, leaned helplessness, violence, substance abuse, lack of education, lack of employment, lack of self-esteem and lack of self-worth.

Policies that are in place in our society do not allow access to individuals equally. In fact, many polices create systemic racism that hinder African Americans at extremely high rates. For example, mass incarceration disproportionately effects African Americans. Disinvestment in communities of color has caused irreparable harm for its residents as poverty, violence, and crime increase. Policies that facilitate community divide, racial divide, and economic divide are in need of being eliminated. Stop and frisk has been ruled unconstitutional, yet many African Americans continue to suffer with police harassment. It is important to consider the

psychological, emotional, and physical trauma that occurs with incidents of police harassment. It contributes to the decline of mental health in many African American families.

African Americans who use mood altering substances can find some comfort in a temporary escape from the social injustices that are ever prevalent in our society. For many of them, it is difficult to be mentally and emotional present for the lived or perceived trauma that has been endured by African Americans in the United States. The byproduct of slavery continues to permeate the minds, bodies, and spirits of some African Americans many of whom feel that it is more unlikely that they will be able to stop using the mood-altering substances that allow for some relief albeit temporary.

Mental illness in the African American communities is often underreported and underacknowledged. Another double standard than frequently occurs in our society is the excusing of violence caused by European Americans as a mental illness while violence caused by African Americans are due to inherent criminality. Even though people like Dylann Roof who expressed hate toward African American people, and others, was still presumed to be mentally ill when in 2015 he murdered seven parishioners at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston South Carolina.

Anxiety and depression are very much a part of daily life for many African Americans. This is directly related the mistrust of police. The fear of police officers is largely due to the knowledge of and witness to seeing unarmed African Americans being brutalized at the hand of police officers. Many African Americans feel that they are not seen as human. Therefore, it is normal and acceptable for them to be killed often with no remorse or consequence. Subconsciously, people in the African American community understand from lived experiences

what Paulo Freire discussed in the Pedagogy of the Oppressed: "Concern for huminization leads to at once to the recognition of dehumanization, not only as an ontological possibility but as historical reality and as an individual perceives the extent of dehumanization, he or she may ask if humanization is a viable possibility."

What needs to be added to the literature is the data of the consequences that has occurred with being forced to live with and internalize the oppression and dehumanization that allows for the lack of accountability of police brutality. There is a mistrust of police by African Americans that has a correlation to mental illness and substance abuse. The oppression and dehumanization often create a sense of hopelessness in the African American community. It is important to thoroughly research this avenue to facilitate positive change. When people like Colin Kaepernick takes a knee, sacrifices his professional football career to raise awareness of this pandemic, it should encourage us a society to ask why and hopefully engage in the conversation.

The true American History includes the stories of how poorly African Americans have been treated ever since Africans were stolen from Africa and made into slaves. There have been reports done such as the Kerner report of 1967 which concluded by stating "Our nation is moving toward two societies, one black, one white – separate and unequal. Discrimination and segregation have long permeated much of American life; they now threaten the future of every American." Unfortunately, learning of the information in the report did not inspire much change in our society. According to an Article entitled Four Figures That Explain Racial Inequality in America, author Dwyer Gunn writes that 50 years after the Kerner report, the poverty rates for African American is still dramatically higher than European Americans. It is also stated that homeownership has remained about the same as it was in 1968 for African Americans. The infant mortality rate for black infants is twice as high as is for white infants. As far as

incarceration, the author writes that blacks are 6.4 times more likely than a white American to be incarcerated. Many studies have shown that African Americans are disproportionately incarcerated. Methods of racial profiling such as stop and frisk also have shown to disproportionately target people of color. There are many avenues that all lead to the mistrust of police by African Americans.

The data in this study illuminates the disparities in attitudes toward institutional authority as it relates to police based on race. The experience that African Americans perceive as their reality has remained the same. This study could be used to continue the discussion on policy changes that would ensure greater equality and increased freedom for African Americans. Policy changes should include increased acknowledgement and awareness of the core reasons for the differences in attitudes toward authority based on race. Future research that would facilitate positive change would incorporate studies about how social and economic supports along with quality mental health services improve communities in our country from a micro and macro level. Investments in such projects would prove to be fiscally and socially responsible while working toward insuring all citizens have full freedom.

Study 2

This second study uses a qualitative approach to examine the lack of accountability of police brutality and how it facilitates a sense of hopelessness in the African American community. It also asks the question, What actions are perceived to be helpful in inspiring hope? Qualitative interviews have been conducted to examine the experiences that African American men and women have had with the police throughout their lives. It is theorized that many African Americans perceive that shootings like Michael Brown, Terence Crutcher, Philando Castile, Alton Sterling, Tamir Rice, and so many others happen because it is allowed in the broader society and even encouraged in certain quarters. When there is a lack of consequence and accountability, there is no deterrent, and a frustration is likely to develop, over time, a lack of hope. It is hypothesized that the lack of accountability of police brutality facilitates a sense of hopelessness in the black community that will only be rectified by awareness, acknowledgement, and imposition of adequate consequences on a consistent basis.

As Kaylynn Two Trees puts it, "privilege is a learning disability." Consequently, one may look but still not see, listen but still not hear, touch but still not feel (Symonette, 2004). While the quantitative research in Study 1 is helpful, the best next step is to engage in qualitative research, to hear from the voices of those most impacted and find patterns and themes. This problem is very enigmatic and can be deeply wounding. Nevertheless, this research can help develop ways that African Americans who are directly or indirectly affected by incidents of police brutality can begin to grasp their sense of hopelessness and find meaning in their work.

While participants may use coping techniques to avoid this topic, they are likely to be articulate about their memories and psychological experiences. Those not so situated within the

power-and-privilege hierarchy maintain high consciousness nearly all the time of this topic because such consciousness enhances opportunities for access and success and more fundamentally enables survival (Symonette, 2004).

While it is well known that African Americans have been systemically excluded from the full rights and privileges of their European American counterparts it is important to better understand the psychological or phenomenological experiences of living in a world where this oppression exists. African Americans experience undue hardships with the police such as stop and frisk measures, mass incarceration, racial profiling, police violence, and police murder at disproportionate rates, but what experiences feel the most traumatic too them and where they continue to find hope is less known. The life story narrative approach to interviewing is helpful to understand not only their individual experiences but also the intergenerational and historical incidences that have impacted them the most. It is important to examine how generational trauma has been passed down in deliberate and subconscious ways.

Although communities of color have long been aware of ongoing violence towards Black Americans by police, Americans outside these communities were much less aware of this violence until recently. (Crutchfield, Fisher, & Webb, 2017). Because of social media, videos of racist incidences of police terror are easily accessible, and this may have positives and negatives associated with it. It is normal in our society for African American people to be racially profiled, injured, and murdered by the police who have not been held accountable, contributing to a sense of hopelessness that these actions of injustice will ever end. The sense of hopelessness also encompasses the idea that as many incidents that we know about, there are many that go unreported. It is a crime that there is no generalizable, national, database on police killings of Blacks (Chaney & Robertson, 2014). The African Americans who express such sentiments are

often faced with the dismissal, disbelief, anger, and rejection. Some people cope by ignoring racism unless it happens to them. They are free to decide to be their very best despite societal hardships and persevere without complaining.

For the purpose of this study, racism is defined as prejudice plus the power to oppress. Since the 2016 election, hate crimes have increased according to Ross (2018). Black Americans have been the most frequent victims of hate crime in every tally of bias incidents generated since began collecting such data in the early 1990s. Ross cites the FBI hate crime statistics. At the core of police brutality lies racism. Previous research using a "shoot/don't shoot" videogame has confirmed that racial stereotypes linking Blacks to danger are responsible – at least partially – for racial bias in decisions to shoot (Kahn & Davies, 2010).

"We will have to repent…not merely for the vitriolic words and actions of the bad people but for the appalling silence of the good people" (King, 1963). Hope comes in various guises, but perhaps none more illuminating than white allies. We know the problem, we need to focus on a solution. One of the ways to inspire hope is to do something. Take action. Increase intelligence. Leave the blissfulness of ignorance. In this researcher's own experience the use of life story narratives can be powerful.

In an article entitled From Racism to Hope, author Jessie Longhurst (2013) stated, "We learned how racism came about, how it developed, and how it affects our attitudes, feelings, and behavior, even when we do not realize it. She stated that most importantly, she began to understand that "racism affects everyone, including me". Jessie Longhurst at the age of 17 years was encouraged by her father to attend a two day event about racism. Not only did she attend, but listened and learned. She stated that she allowed herself to become enlightened and began to

understand and accept that even though she was socialized to have certain expectations, beliefs, and perceptions about people of color, it did not mean she was a bad person (Longhurst, 2013). Longhurst stated that she did not allow the infamous white guilt to prevent her from embracing new information and applying that knowledge. The experience, for her, was the reality of the oneness of human kind, the fact that we are all one race—the human race. Her experience is one that inspisres hope.

Developing empathy is essential. It is very easy and very much a human response to minimize someone's experience with racism. It is commonplace to become annoyed with it and find ways to dismiss the conversation altogether. It is difficult to take on just one more thing in our busy and stress filled lives. When someone chooses to do so, it inspires hope. As does experiencing when European Americans become allies. Longhust stated that she had only given occasional thought to racism before her training, she leared that for some African Americans, not a day goes by that they don't have to deal with racism in some form. She learned that racism was more than being called a "nigger" or being pulled over by the police repeatedly for suspicion of drug possession. Racism is knowing that for many African American human beings, every day they have to prove to others that they are not uneducated, incapable, unreliable, or dangerous (Longhurst, 2013). Hope is knowing that an ally won't just say "I get it." and "That's really sad." then move on to what is really important to them. Hope is knowing that an ally will find ways to do something even if it is just saying no to injustice. Longhurst recalled that when she left the Healing Racism training, she was prepared not only to begin her journey to make changes in herself and encouraging others to do so also (Longhurst, 2013).

Another avenue of hope focuses on investment in education. Knowledge concerning mother–child conversations about school and education in African American, low-income

families is important insofar as it can address widely held stereotypes and provide educators and policy makers with insights that can affect attitudes and practices that support parents and children (Ispa, Chang & Jihee, 2013).

Not all educational experiences offer an honest account of American History inclusive of the African American experience. It is important to use text books that depict honest accounts of historical content and reject those with dishonest accounts. If we are to be honest about many aspects of our nation's history most notably, although not exclusively, its troubled racial past-it is impossible to present an uncomplicated, celebratory narrative. Yet it seems that, in the name of "patriotism," we are being told to do so (Bacon, 2003). In 2015 a mother reported that her son's textbook read that Africans immigrated to the United States as workers. That is a deliberate lie because immigrated indicates choice and workers indicates pay neither of which were true.

We must study those African American leaders who have continually challenged America to become a better, more egalitarian nation, from the Black abolitionists who protested slavery before most White reformers began to confront the institution to present generations of leaders who have insisted that we must candidly discuss the legacy of slavery and consider reparations (Bacon, 2003). Our country has a deep and painful history as it relates to African Americans and if we actually learned it accurately, we would be a far less ignorant and a far more empathic society. Among the reported discriminatory treatments were unjustified questioning by police and/or threats, receiving second-class health care treatment, unfair labor practices (being fired or not promoted when otherwise qualified), treated with disrespect, considered less intelligent, having teachers discourage them from further education, and unfriendly neighbors who made life difficult for them. According to microaggression theory, these individual forms of discriminatory behavior can be classified as microassaults,

microinsults, and microinvalidations that vary on a continuum from being overt, intentional and explicit to subtle, unintentional, and implicit (Sue, 2010; Sue et al., 2007).

The history of hope came in the form of the Deacons for Defense, Black Panther Party, and Black Wall Street all of which were destroy by racism, racial violence, and racist political structures. For many, the philosophy of non-violence was an untenable position and the call for Black empowerment was the next step (Austin, 2006; Joseph, 2010). As Austin (2006) explains,

> *''Police brutality, lack of opportunity, and the realization that opportunity was not forthcoming in the near future led many Blacks to conclude that armed self-defense coupled with self-help was the only way to end the despair'' (p. 69).*

The brief reprieve from the police violence provided hope that African Americans could realize their place in America and will have their rights respected and their rights protected. The Black power movement can be defined as a collective movement for self-determination and reclamation of humanity (Pope & Flanigan, 2013).

Allies who stand up against racism and injustice, inspire hope. It is a significant act that can be duplicated and emulated by those who have the fortitude to join this fight though they do not really have to. It is one that will take courage, sacrifice, and perhaps become the hardest work one may have ever do.

Study 2: Methods

In this qualitative study the researcher is using a life story narrative approach examining the perceptions and perspectives of how police officers interact with African America men, women, and children. It is hypothesized that the lack of police brutality against African

American men, women, and children facilitates a sense of hopelessness that can only be resolved by implementation of appropriate consequences and adequate accountability on a consistent basis. The primary research question for this study were:

1. How does the lack of accountability of police brutality facilitate a sense of hopelessness in the African American community?
2. What actions are needed in our society to inspire hope?

This study examined the extent to which particpants believed that individuals who reign in positions of socieital authority negatively affect the ability for African Americans to achieve full feedom in the United States.

Qualitative data were obtained and analyzed from the interviews of eight participants consisting of three female and five male African American participants. The researcher was intent on studying the perceptions and perspectives that Black people have when it comes to their experiences with law enforcement. This study examined how police brutality against Black people affects their quality of life. The study is qualitative, and the data obtained will illuminate the lack of accountability of police brutality and how that contributes to the physical, emotional, and physiological adversities reported by Black people. The study identified factors of learned helplessness and the sense of hopelessness that could be facilitated by adverse relationships between Black people and law enforcement. The study also attempted to explore ways in which members of the Black community find hope and work toward positive change. Particpants were asked to respond to questions about their community, education, experiences with societal authority figures, perceptions of police, racial oppression, and hope. The reserchers interviewed particpants about their response to the lack of accountability of police brutality and how it affects their abilty to have hope. The questions were engeneered to minimize the researcher's biases.

The researcher and supervisor developeved questions that were open ended and requested a narrative respose.

Researcher recruited participants using the snowball method via social media and other online means of communication. Researcher ensured that participants were informed that their involvement in this study was totally voluntary and they should determine if they are comfortable contributing to this research topic. Participants were advised of the content and purpose of the study prior to beginning the interview process. Participants were offered an opportunity to ask questions that address any concerns of problems they may have or anticipate. Participants were advised that at any time, they choose to disengage with this study, they will be able to do so without any complications. Participants were assured that they have complete anonymity and that the researcher will not share any personal information or the responses to the interview questions. The researcher scheduled a time with each participant for this study. The interviews occurred in-person at a previously determined safe and private location.

This research explored the intersectionality of race, inequality, class, and poverty. In essence the goal was to examine to what extent do participants perceive a lack of accountability of police officers and if incidents of police brutality facilitates a sense of hopelessness. While history may be a significant factor in the perspectives of the participants, the goal of this study is to identify ideas that particpants have toward not only ameliorating the problem, but resolving it all together. This study examined what would bring hope to the individuals who do not currently find any? The role of the white ally was examined. Particpants were asked to consider what would it look like to have a world that is not plagued by racial oppression and discrimination? How do we achieve this goal? What steps do you think would ensure success?

The application Otter was used to transcribe the data. The researcher and supervisor watched a single interview together and pulled out themes, and the researcher alone coded the remaining interviews. Hope was always a focus of this study, and therefore was sought throughout the transcripts. Other themes emerged during the coding. Once key quotations under each theme were found, a second round of coding was done under each theme. Upon this researcher obtaining all of the data, the superisor and researcher identified an initial interview to review together and determined what key ideas, actions, and responses met the criteria of themes that addressed factors indicated in the hypothesis. The researcher watched all recorded interviews and reviewed the transcripts for purpose of identifying codes. The codes incuded economic and educational resources, community diversity, perceptions of societal authority, negative and positive interactions with law enforcement, outlook on hope. While revieweing the data, the researcher labeled words respresentative of the themes such as hopelessness, learned helplessness, distressed powerlessness, mass incarceration, police violence, solutions, ethnic identity, self-efficacy, resilience, and hope.

Study 2: Results

A qualitative study was conducted to examine how African Americans respond to the lack of accountability of police violence. This study had eight participants three women and five men. All participants were African American. Each participant was asked 12 questions that focused on how they experienced their community, educational system, perceived racial oppression, and direct or indirect interactions with police officers. Common themes were identified together with the supervisor who reviewed one recorded interview together. The researcher and supervisor collaborated on how to code the interviews and agreed to include Hopelessness, Learned Helplessness, Learned Efficacy, Resilience, Serendipity, Courage, and

Hope as themes. The participants expressed shared experiences and common responses that encompasses these themes.

Themes:

The Problem

Hopelessness/Learned helplessness

Participants referenced how adults and children are emotionally and psychologically affected by witnessing police violence against other African Americans specifically someone they know and love. This was a common response from all participants.

> *"Three to four Calumet City Police officers approached me as we're pulling off. They jump out and pull their guns. They open my door. My son said "Daddy did they shoot you?"*

All participants expressed that they have observed the actions of police officers who were violence with civilins avoid accountabililty from their supervisors, judges, and the federal government. Particpants also mentioned the unwillingness of the political systems to act in favor of eradicating police violence against African Americans. This is all directly related to the learned helplessness experienced so prevalent in our society. All of the male participants expressed a psychological response to seeing a police officer such as a "welling up" and "stomach dropping" or heightened awareness of the presence of the police. All female participants expressed a sense of fear as it pertains to the possibility that their husbands and Black male children were likely to come in contact with police officers.

All participants expressed an awareness of the historical component. For instance the history that connects police violence that is currently occurring to what happened during chattel slavery with slave patrols. All participants expressed a sense of hopeless that those individual in positions of power will choose to hold perpetrators of police violence accountable for their killing, brutalizing, and unjust incarceration of unarmed Black people. All participants responded that White supremacy ideology and practice of systemic racial oppression is the core problem. There is not now nor has there ever been any indication that police violence, that disproportionately harms African Americans, will end. Five of the six male participants expressed feeling fearful of the police.

> *"Every experience with the police, I feel fearful. I don't know if it's because of what tv shows us but it's their word against mine and I can be telling the truth and be right and still go to jail. So every encounter is that same fear. Your body wells up."*

Two of two female participants expressed feeling fearful for their husband or sons. Participants expressed that as African Americans we are not capable to being unified and are not equipped to prevail over the systemic racism.

> *"We were never taught unity. We were taught to be in competition with each other. You go to jai and observe the Mexicans feed each other. People from Mexican decent,demonstrate unity as if they are showing everyone we're going to feed you because we don't want you in here (jail) looking bad. Blacks don't do that. We were never taught to fight for each other. Our parents tried. I couldn't come home and my sister got beat up and I don't have a scratch on me. My dad would whip me too because we didn't fight as a family. They fight as family."*

Participants expressed that systemically unity is what works to keep African Americans oppressed. For example, an individual who works at the district attorney's office stated:

"You got one prestigious family controlling the district attorney's office, another family controlling the lawyers, the CIA. We can't win because we have nobody strategically in position to fight for us. We thought we was cool because they gave us Obama. No offense to Obama, but he didn't win the election, they gave him to us so that we can shut the fuck up."

Participants recall incidents of racial trauma as children that are profound. Children are inundated with messages that shape their belief system about themselves and others. For instance, one participant stated:

"My first realization that I belong to a race that was demoralized and considered not worthy was when I watched the movie Roots by Alex Haley. I remember feeling extremely sad and angry. I was seven years old. I internalized that the white race was in control and had power over my race. An example of how I believed that the white was better was displayed in high school. I was on the track team and competed against white people. When competing against white people, before the race was even ran, I feared that they were better and would win. I can recall allowing a white student to take the lead; I slowed down. In my mind, I wasn't supposed to win that race because the white student was supposed to win better, they were better."

As the reader can see there was a self-handicapping, purposely losing due to fear or some other guilt around white people.

Distressed Powerlessness:

This participant expressed her feelings as they relate to perceived racial disparities.

"I am disturbed and distressed every day. The feeling of being powerless often consumes me. I feel like I walk through life in a continuous snowstorm with no shelter in sight."

Others showed an awareness of political oppression:

"*I have always been aware of racial oppression; I was raised learning about it questioning why is that mom? Why is that dad? That's the way they treat us son. I was like you're grown you're an adult. They said no. That's how they treat us son."*

As the reader can deduce, this participant is experiencing learned helplessness.

The following quote describes the coping mechanism in place to navigate life.

"I hold my head down and keep walking knowing that this is my life."

As the reader can see, this participant has expressed a lack of hope.

"I cannot even imagine a future that is solidly grounded in pure hope and faith in the goodness of other human beings because it would not benefit those in power."

"There would have to a legal system that holds everyone accountable including police officers, lawyers and judges. There would have to be laws in place that force all institutions including the financial and educational to insure equality for all. This would ensure that everyone would be on a level playing field. Everyone would have access to all resources. Again, I have to ask, how would that benefit the dominant race?"

In the text above, the participant has provided an anyalysis of what would inspire hope.

Here is the answer of another participant responding to being asked about what inspires hope.

> *"I don't see the system changing much it is designed to keep them you know, gaining. And now they become more international with what they're doing. So I think we're in a system where things that need to change are never going to change, it's never going to change to our benefit."*

Mass Incarceration

The participant is expressing how racial disparities and difference in policing can lead to the mass inceration that disproportionately affects African Americans.

> *"They pulled us over for no reason. We were doing everything we were supposed to be doing no mistakes were made. We were doing the right thing. White people are policed differently than black people."*

> *"I'm 33 (years of age). Father of three. And I just think there's some things that my kids know and everybody else knows about what happens to me on a regular basis and other black men and people of color on a regular basis."*

Participants are expressing their beliefs that racism is the core problem as it relates to mass incarceration.

> *"I believe that disproportionate amount of black people who are incarcerated in the U.S. is directly related to racism."*

> *"Racism is a word but it's also an action."*

This participant is of the belief that incarceration is connected to money.

"I mean, it's all about money. I mean, we were brought here for them to make money. So they need to reinvented ways that they can make money on us. The prison is all about money. You know, it's about big money. And if I can get a contract to at least to sell toilet paper I could earn good money instead of doing other things to survie and end up in prison. You know, I can get all my brothers in it and others too. Let me make some money on my brothers too. That's big money and they will continue to make money."

"We just want to live. To be left alone. That's all we want. You know, but they know that they have done so many bad things and they know that we should return retaliate. And that's what this whole treatment is about. They don't want us to retaliate."

This participant is explaining the importance of mass incercation in order to maintain White Supremacy. Participant is expressing the ways in which those in power continue to recreate ways to profit off of low wage prision labor.

Police Violence

Participants exhibited knowledge of incidents of police violence in detail. They all expressed insight into the complicit nature of the response by political entities such as local, State, and Federal government. All participants have developed an understanding of their reality that includes having to go to work, attend school, participate in social activities, and interact with individuals who have a lack of empathy and awareness for them all while experiencing random, deliberate, and often predicable acts of racism.

"I have a strong interest in this study because the potential impact is directly related to the plight of my loved one's involvement with police officers and the possibility of police violence. I am disturbed and distressed every day. The feeling of being powerless often

consumes me. I feel like I walk through life in a continuous snowstorm with no shelter in

sight. I hold my head down and keep walking knowing that this my life."

The following quotes are describing perceiptions of police and how particpant's

experience interaction with police officers.

"I am fearful and distrusting of police. I witnessed police officers talking to my son who

just sitting in his parked car waiting for me. The police made my son exit the vehicle as

they search his car. I asked what the problem was and was told to stay back. I was

terrified that they would harm my son and/or his dog."

"When I witnessed my son interacting with the police. I was fearful because I didn't trust

that the police would treat my son with respect. I felt that they saw a black man with no

value. I was praying that the incident would end with no physical injury to my son."

"Every experience with the police, I feel fearful."

Every time you pass them, and you think they are going to bust a u turn. It's the same

feeling. Pretty much every time they come they come with guns drawn and if there is

more than one person, they are coming with their guns drawn."

Female participants expressed a innate fear or feeling of discomfort when their Black

sons leave home. However, the female participants noted how hard to manage that fear, and to

try to avoid imposing it upon their children. They express the understanding that the next time

police violence occurs it could be their son. Male participants also expressed their awareness that

their son or daughter could have a negative encounter with a police officer. All participants share

the same revelation that their experiences are unique in this country and they are not defeated and not depleted.

> *"It's modern day slavery. Jail is slavery, they just retitle it. Some people deserve to be in jail but look at the ones in jail for very minor offenses that should have been time served versus the white guy who raped a woman. Did he even get any jail time? There are different standards. We are not treated the same and not policed the same."*

As the reader can see, this participant is sharing a perspective of the legal system benefitting from the loophole in the 13th amendment of the US Consittution wherein it states that slavery is illegal except as a punishment for a crime and conviction.

> *"My son, he saw that at three, you know, I mean, they just try to do what they want to do because oh, they have badges and guns and all that. That's racial oppression. And he knows that at his age."*

This participant is sharing an example of how African American children's childhood is stolen with the level of awareness they are forced into while observing police violence.

As the reader can see below, the participant is reflecting on an example of good policing and how it should be encouraged.

> *"I've had several positive experiences with police, particularly Chicago police. One officer in a neighborhood that has a large organization clubs when he when I told you about. So I'm driving down the street and I see the officer help the lady with her groceries. He said, we're not all about just shooting people in the back. He was just joking. But, you know, to see him doing that I just, you know was positive. I think he's*

retired; I hadn't seen him in a while. But, you know, I would see him all the time and always spoke to him. So I try to encourage more of this type of policing so now I work work with the commanders."

As the reader can see from the data below, this participant could only share one positive example with law enforcement.

"Sadly, the only positive experience that I can recall having with the police is when they arrive at my front door to inform me that I live in area where there is a high burglary rate."

"Cal City police cars pull up jump out the car and now we're pulling off as everything is going down because fireworks already gone, they jump out pull out the guns they open my door and my son said daddy do they shoot you? I'm yelling at the cop like no I didn't do anything. I really didn't appreciate that because I'm not saying I pay their salary but they're here for me. Don't pull a gun out on me. I didn't have a gun."

As the reader can see, this participant is describing an incident of engagement with local law enforcement while a child is present.

"I met a cop that my boss befriended and he was nice. I know not all cops are bad."

Here is a participant who is sharing a positive experience with a police officer.

Solutions

Ethnic Identity

Positive ethnic identity was expressed by all eight participants. All participants are aware of their value and worth. Participants expressed a high esteem for themselves and their families. Participants discussed their understanding of African American history and the enormous sacrifice of African Americans ancestry. Regardless of how well the curriculum is developed it must include contributions of African Americans. Participants expressed deliberate miseducation.

As the reader can see, according to this participant, there is deliberate erasure of African American history and other information from the school curriculum.

"Absolutely, it's an intentional misinforming it's an intentional miseducation. Carter G. Woodson summed it up very well the Miseducation of the Negro and I mean it's intended to keep us disoriented and disassociated from our actual selves in our actual history."

As the reader describes the lack of honesty about information presented in academic environments, it is a clear insidious intent that drives this ongoing maliciousness that hinders positive self esteem, worth, and value.

"It erases important historical facts that would be conducive to acquiring positive ethnic identity. The institution is an American institution and is full of lies. So now you have distrust for the teacher. For the school system. They need to revamp it in some kind of way it is really set up to continue to enslave us."

Participants expressed that in order to develop positive self esteem in their family structure, it was necessary to teach African American history to their children and family. Black history month is reduced to Martin Luther King, Jr. and Rosa Parks. While there is so much more

to African American history, it is an iridous calculation that has withstood centuries of formal and public education.

As the reader can see, this participant expresses the sentiment that Black history is frequently reduced to a select few individuals. Black history is not just about oppression, but includes a historical and contemporary and continuous fight for freedom.

> *"Black history is not watching videos of Martin Luther King and people throwing bricks at his head. It's not watching Rosa Parks being thrown off the bus because she was tired. That's not Black history to me. They never talk about Nat Turner. That's Black History. Somebody that got fed up and went after their ass like they came after us and didn't care about the consequences."*

Community

All of the participants discussed they perceived value in and the devaluing of their "Community." All particpants have resided in racially diverse communities and all of the participants have resided in communities with predominately Black residents. All particpants expressed that the latter had significantly less economic resources.

As the reader can see, this participant is describing his community as is typical for many African American communites.

> *"I live in an impoverished neighborhood. There are many dilapidated and boarded up homes. The neighborhood is plagued by violence and crime, although there is a police station four blocks away."*

The participant has lived in different communities, but as an adult returned back

to the community where he spent his youth.

> *"I've had the privilege to actually be part of different communities. I've lived in a lot of different places growing up. I've lived in better neighborhoods. I've lived in, not so great neighborhoods, but always seem to return back to the same neighborhood."*

This participant is remarking how the chity of Chicago remains very segregated.

As the reader can see, the participant is also referring to gentrification.

> *"I grew up on the west side, Chicago. I consider all of Chicago one big community. However, I do see it as a segregated city."*

> *"No one wants to be in our community, but yet we see white folks moving in. But we're moving out where they are scaring us out and then moving in buying up our properties."*

Education: Lack of Education

The following statements are addressing perceptions about the how well African American History is incorporated into the curriculum. This particpants is communicating with the reader that African American history is taught using what is considered the same few stories and indidivuals.

> *"In elementary school, Dr. King, Rosa Parks and the fact that my ancestors came from Africa and worked as slaves summed up my African American history studies."*

This data is expressing to the reader that there is some injustice done to African American students with the inetntionaly removal of African American history in schools.

"To teach U.S. history without the inclusion of African American history is robbing an

African American student of their values."

Educational Experience

Particpants have various experiences with educational institutions as stated below. This data considers the third grade educational expreince inadequate.

"When I think about my educational experience, the word inadequate comes to mind. I

remember learning how to read as a third grader."

As the reader sees this data, the participant is expressing how disruptions in the home negatively effect a child's academic experience.

"I was not a focused student as homelife was distracting throughout elementary and high

school. I barely graduated from high school as my attendance was very poor. I became a

mother in my sophomore year in high school. It wasn't until I entered college, that I

obtained a thirst to learn."

This participant expressed how differently it was to reside with a parent who is working and going to school and not just being able to parent.

"But I can say growing up and living in single parent household and kind of getting my

education at the same time my parents were getting an education was definitely a strain

because my mom's working and going to school."

The reader is offered a perspective of how African American students lose interest and trust in the educational system.

"So now you have distrust for the teacher. For the school system. You know, it They need to revamp in some kind of way is really set up to continue to enslave us."

As the reader can see, this participant is expressing the reason the educational system is perceived untrustworthy.

Choice Education

This participant is expressing at what level of education African American history was accessible. Additionally expressed is a sense of pride and appreciation for the contributions made by African Americans.

"While in college, I took a course on African American history. It was then that I learned a wealth of information about my race and our vast contributions in science, literature, math, technology, music, art and everyday life."

This participant expresses appreciation and value for a book about African American History. This data is an expression of interest in something that is representative ones culture.

"When I was in second or third grade, my mother doesn't remember that for my birthday, she bought me this black history book. It was big, but I loved it. And I read all of it. I knew everything about black people because she decided to buy me this book. It was a nice thick book and I wish I could find it now. It was a really good introduction for young man to explore black history."

This participant expresses how teaching African American History is a choice that benefits children.

"But I try to teach them because I have some really, really bright kids. I try to teach them

Black history."

The data communicates to the reader a decisiveness of the importance of teaching an

honest curriculm of American History that includes the unpleasant portions such as chattel

slavery and its legacy.

"You know, they have to tell the truth about history and all the things that happen and

they have to be honest about some things."

As the reader can see, this data is a revelation of how detrimental it is to learn that your

ancestry is merely being enslaved.

"And then when I did learn about me about black people, I was enslaved and in chains. I

mean, come on, that kind of works on your psychic. You know, I wasn't the king and all

this stuff we talked about now, you know, thank God. We have hidden colors."

Empowerment

All participants engaged in various forms of activism that is geared toward helping

African American people progress toward full freedom. They raise awareness through

conversations with potential European American allies via friendships, co-worker relationships,

networking experiences, educational experiences, social justice organizations, and self-

awareness.

As the reader can see, this data expresses action that was taken to improve the current

status of African American children.

"I started a mentoring program for eighth graders. And I introduced them to college as well."

Participants take deliberate action to empower themselves and others in the community.

"I don't remember any occasion where I had a teacher teach about Black people. I had to learn from other places and became self-taught. And now I told you I have mentoring programs after school program. So, I make sure I teach it all the time."

Racial Identity

This data shows contrasting views on racial identity, reflecting on childhood experiences.

"The opposite of white is black…okay. So, if God is white, if Jesus is white then the devil must be black. How can I be proud of myself and be from the devil?"

Self-Efficacy and Trust

The opposite of learned helplessness is self-efficacy or collective efficacy. Participants discussed their ability to succeed in their adult responsibilities such as parenting, working, continuing their education, being their best. Participants are motivated to help others to engender positive outcomes for communities. Some examples include engaging youth in intellectual conversations about reading, planting a vegetable garden to produce healthy food items for the communities where there are food deserts, protecting children from negative social influences, partaking in community outdoor activities with family, and refusing to willingly submit to the adversity experienced by systemic oppression.

This data is reflective of the level of awareness to understanding that no matter the social or economic status of an African American family, there is doubt that is is safe to trust European Americans.

"My family was very active in the civil rights movement and later in the Black Panther Party. And so, it was always a very big part of our identity the awareness and even though my parents moved away from the kind of policical element of it toward Black striving and progress, economic striving and progress and that whole Black enterprise vibe of the 80s; Dominique Deveraux Dynasty vibe was more along their idea of Black progress looked like there was still very much an underlying element of distrust for White people."

"Based on an awareness of the racial disparities in our society, families were then and continue to be unable to trust White people in general. Racism permeates throughout our society the same now as it has all along and poor education is a significant factor in that problem."

"I had two Black teachers my whole life. I don't think my education was for my own benefit. How can somebody who did this to me, teach me about it?"

Participants have relied their ability to educate themselves about African American History, particularly given that our society has failed to incorporate the truth about American History as it relates to African Americans. Participants expressed that poor education is due to determination to preserve Whtie Supremacy. This participant is expressing the inability to trust White people due to an inability to know who is racist and who is not.

"They say that not all White people are racist, but you have the same blood running through your veins so if your grandfather is racist, you are too. If your family had slaves then you feel the same way about that as they did. The trick of it is, is that people want to be proper for society. You want to be one way outside your household, but when you get home, we are niggers again."

This participant is expressing how calling to report police violence to a superior, is a waste of time and energy.

"I called the police station and reported the officer for pointing his gun at me. The response from the superior was that there were gun shots in the area. I told him there were fireworks, he said that the police were responding to what they thought were gunshots. I'm a taxpaying citizen. I pay a lot of taxes in this city and I really didn't appreciate that. Find out what's going on before you pull your guns. My son was in the back seat. He saw that and there were other children in the near vicinity so they saw that too.

As the reader can see, the participant is sharing activities that are developed in the community that afford its members quality activities and opportunities.

"And so I had always been involved in the community, all my life, you know, as a kid, as participant or as creating programs and that's kind of what I do does create more progress myself for the community. Have a huge community garden spot, a black wall."

"We like play chess. So, I built Some, some chess tables are out there. So you can see them like six in the morning playing chess."

Resilience

Participants express that in addition to all of the so called normal economic, physical, emotional, and social stressors in life, African Americans have to also bear the burden of racism. Having to navigate the systems of oppression from very early ages snatches away their childhood. It was expressed that African Americans are worn down and become tired of the constant fight against racism, but cannot give up. The generational trauma also factors into their ability to cope because it is a reminder of how long African Americans have endured this social hardship. Participants expressed that children who are exposed to racial experiences are subjected to feelings of inferiority and may struggle more with finding positive ethnic identity.

Participants state as parents not only do they have to find a way to be resilient themselves, but find it necessary to teach their children to be resilient on a level that their European American counterparts do not have to endure. There is a determination to continue fighting for full freedom.

Participants have had direct or indirect experiences with violence and it has shaped their perception of their societal environment.

> *"I had early experiences with violence. Black on Black, White on Black, America versus Blacks, the whole world is on Blacks. It is what it is."*

Additionally, participants demonstrated a sense of resilience that is perceived to be unique to African Americans due to the unique circumstances of being enslaved. Participants are unwilling to accept the double standard of justice. Participants are unwilling to accept police violence as just the way things are in this country for Black people.

"We shouldn't have to go through our day to day lives, fearing that we're going to be subject to police brutality, or scrutiny, just because we look different, or we act different."

Participants have developed an analysis on the status of African Americans in this society. This data is a rejection of the victim blaming rhetoric that is prevalent in our society. As the reader can see, the statement provides an example of how slavery has evolved.

"They say we're poor. We're not poor, they are poor. Everything they have they go off the sweat and the backbone of our ancestors. They are making 100% profit in prisons because they use prison labor for everything from haircuts, to repairs. I got $ .16 an hour for doing jobs that if I didn't do, I was sent to the hole for 90 days."

Hope

Seven of eight participants expressed that the election of Barack Obama inspired hope. That being able to elect an African American (by society's standard) president was deemed unexpected. Participants expressed that hope is an action that is executed in the various forms of fighting for full freedom and human rights. Eight of eight participants expressed hope is a feeling that is nourished by consistent incidents of justice and progress. Hope is strongly connected to self-awareness and their ability as a people to persevere throughout history. Hope is found in working together with White allies who don't have to take up the fight, but choose to and stand up against injustice. While participants believe that all levels of law enforcement including the judicial system are complicit with the disproportionate amount of police brutality against African American, hope is identified in the cultural and societal progression that has been made and will

continue to be made such as academic and economic advancement. This data reflects a pathway to progress and hope.

"I believe if we can improve our financial status, improve our education status that will help end police brutality. To me, if you hit somebody in their pockets, they're going to remember that. If you hit the police departments or the government in their pockets, they're going to leave you alone.

Participants are open to hope and have identified precise measures that need to be in place to inspire hope.

"The Black president. I didn't think I would see that in my lifetime. It let me see that we can get somewhere it's not a ceiling. It's not impossible.

"The hope is there. I would love to see things different, but I don't believe it will be. I can't even get my brain around that idea that it would be different.

"Body cameras are a good start. It's a step in the right direction."

As the reader can see, hope is a desired attribute. Consistent incidents of accountability are needed to inspire hope. This participant is clear about how hope is difficult because of the historic and current incidents of violence that are allowed, justified, and normalized.

"My son is five now and I'm worried about him. I can't make myself that naive. It's too much. It's built into me. They said all these things were going to change and they haven't. They are still teaching it. They have eradicated that type of hope. I don't want to be negative about it but I don't see that type of progression."

Discussion

Eight African American participants were interviewed to better understand the role of accountability pertaining to police violence. All eight participants agreed to in person interviews. Participants were adults age 30 years and older. There were three female participants and five male participants. Participants were asked to provide some historical information about themselves and their communities. The interviews included topics such as racism, police violence, social injustice, and hope. All participants have been directly or indirectly connected to and affected by the topics and want to contribute to the literature in an effort to raise awareness, inspire hope, and facilitate positive change.

All participants have worked with, lived in areas with, attended school with members of a different race. Participants shared indepth knowledge of the economic and social disparities that many African Americans are forced to accept as their way of life. The participants have demonstrated a determination to continue working toward social justice and economic equality.

This study would have benefited from more participants in number and in race. This could be considered a limitation of this study. A contrasting perspective would have provided a view into how differently African American particants perceive interactions with police officers than their European American counterparts. This researcher believes that having some White participants would further illuminate the racial disparities that inundate the African American community disproportionately.

Children were a significant focal point in this study as the exposure they have to police violence and racial oppression robs them of the opportunity to have a fun and care free experience their European American counterparts can take for granted. This burdon of racial

trauma experienced by African American children disproportionately is unacceptable and often hinders these children from realizing their full potential. It changes their brain as well as their ability to feel carefree. Their focus shifts to managing anger, fear, and sense of hopelessness. Participants shared how many African American youth do not believe they will make it to adulthood for various reasons including community violence and police violence. Participants expressed a greater fear of police violence than community violence.

The current social and economic condition of African Americans continues bear a powerful resemblance to that of the past. Although significant changes have occurred, additional significant changes need to occur around racial violence. Six of eight participants have stated that they have unresolved traumas that, when triggered, can produce an emotional response such as fear, anxiety, and anger. There were elevated tones during some of the interviews. There were emotional vulnerabilities that were present when participants recalled incidents of racial oppression or violence. These damaging events are still very powerful largely because of the lack of accountability. Too many of the incidents of racial violence that occur against African Americans goes unchecked. This sends the powerful message to racists and their victims that the behavhor is condoned. This reality is relived with each new incident observed or experienced being eerily familiar. It is the collective hope that with each conversation some progress is possible. The participants continue work hard to protect themselves and their children as best they can from the reality of racial violence and economic disparities. Barack Obama inspired hope for many reasons including that White people enthusiastically voted for him as well and Black people.

Incidents of police violence against Black people and the officer is arrested, charged, convicted, and sentenced also inspires hope. Participants find ways to choose hope by working to

improve their communities. Participants worked to expand opportunities for themselves and other African Americans, providing healthy food options in areas where there are none, and creating positive recreational spaces for youths. Hope is also realized in showing up for work even when you feel that traveling to work is dangerous because of all the racial profiling you have experienced.

Participants create platforms to inspire hope such as non-profit organizations, mentorship programs, community organizing, and contibuting to academia. All participants expressed that the lack of accountability of incidents of police violence has a negative effect and diminishes hope. All participants expressed that there needs to be consistent incidents of accountability where perpetrators are made to accept consequences for unlawful acts of violence. This will allow some healing to occur and hope can begin to replace the hopelessness. Some do not believe this will happen in their lifetimes due to the lack of consequences for and acknowledgment of the core problem of White supremacy. Participants were clear in their responses there is no option for quitting. Working together with allies was another significant focus for the participants. It is essential for European Americans to work in conjunction with African Americans in this fight for full freedom. One of the participants expressed that in sharing this information it is the expectation that it means something and counts for another step toward social, racial, and economic justice.

Critical race theory asserts that racism is normal and natural (even if unacceptable) in the culture of the United States, it employs the use of stories to counter presumed objective perspectives, it is critical of liberalism, and it asserts that Whites have benefited substantially from advances made during the Civil Rights Movement (Delgado, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1998) (Logan, Hilton, Watson, & Kirkland-Holmes 2018).

Participants expressed that there needs to be consistent incidents of accountability where perpetrators are made to accept consequences for unlawful acts of violence. This will allow some healing to occur and hope can begin to replace the hopelessness. Some do not believe this will happen in their life time due to the lack of consequences for and acknowledgment of the core problem of white supremacy. Participants were clear in their responses there is no option for quitting. Working together with allies was another significant focus for the participants. It is essential for European Americans to work in conjunction with African Americans in this fight for full freedom. Participants are interested in hope as an action and expressed that in sharing this information it is the expectation that it means something and counts for another step toward social, racial, and economic justice.

Hope in the African American community, is a rare and valuable commodity. Inspiring hope in the African American community begins with acknowledgement and action. Lack of accountability for incidents of police violence is prevalent in our society. Members of the community continue to protest and work to change this reality. Learned efficacy is also present and has continued to encourage hope while working to facilitate changes within the community.

According to Snyder 2002, hope is more than an emotional thought it consists of I want something and behaviors "I'm going to do blank to get what I want" that communicates emotions with efficacy expectancy cycle much like that described by bandura 1993 in his self-efficacy theory (Snyder, 2002). Those who have experienced police brutality directly or indirectly continue to work toward improving outcomes as they relate to social justice. In Synders (2002) hope theory, hope does not exist without specific goals on which to place one's hopefulness. Specially, he suggested that there are two types of goals first being positive goals that include things people want to attain and the second being negative goal types consisting of

that people strive to avoid. Specifically advocates of social justice are working to ensure

consistent incidents of accountability.

Hope is connected to the acknowledgement of and action against crimes like Emmett Till

(1955), Trayvon Martin (2012; Mary Turner (1918), Nia Wilson (2018); Issac Woodard (1946)

Terence Crutcher (2016), Eric Garner (2014) Darius Tarver (2020). In Synder's (2002) hope

theory, hope does not exist without specific goals on which to place one's hopefulness.

Specially, he suggested that there are two types of goals first being positive goals that include

things people want to attain and the second being negative goal types consisting of that people

strive to avoid. Protestors and activists are working hard to ensure that those who commit

incidents of police violence are arrested, charged, convicted, and sentenced appropriately. The

engrained practice of white supremacy is the root problem and is why the systems of oppression

were constructed and have remained. Economic disparities remain prevalent.

Even more disturbing are the ethnographic accounts of how limited opportunities impact

hope. In California, fatalism and hopelessness among young people are the results of long-term

disinvestments in urban communities of color, and gross investments in incarceration and

punishment. (Ginwright, 2016). Acknowledging who we are as a society is the first step to

making the necessary paradigm shifts. The current systems of oppression that are in place were

constructed and thus can be deconstructed. It is a choice. Moreover, state-sanctioned violence in

the form of police departments stop and frisk practices, police brutality, increasing deportations,

mass incarcerations, and zero tolerance policies in school disproportionally criminalize young

boys and men of color (Skiba & Knesting 2001).

Disproportionately black communities experience severe poverty and frequent violence. Community members including children are exposed to or are involved in traumatic events that can and often facilitate a sense of hopelessness. The resulting accumulated trauma among African American and Latino youth has been dramatic. First, research suggests that both chronic and acute exposure to traumatic stressors erode young people's aspirations. The ability and capacity to envision a promising future is fundamental to having hope. Without hope, young people are more likely to experience depression, anxiety, and hostility and resort to substance abuse and are more prone to engage in violent behavior (Ginwright, 2016).

Ignoring the problem does not make it go away. In contrast it exacerbates it more so. It is worsened when it is minimized and dismissed with the typical justifications that deepens the hopelessness. Inspiring hope should be identified as a high priority goal for us to achieve as a society. There is a lot of work to be done from the grassroot level through the legislative level, but it can be accomplished. When people build a sense of collective hope, they are more likely to engage in activities that will improve their neighborhoods, schools, and cities (Ginnwright, 2016).

Progress in changing systems of oppression would contribute to a sense of hope and relief that finally some changes have been implemented. For example, accountability and consequences for those white people who harass black people or call the police on black people for various reasons including but not limited to resting in a common area of a university, for cooking out in a public park, for swimming in the community pool, for cooking out in their own yard, or preventing a resident access to his own apartment building.

We as a society must continue to speak up for those who are disenfranchised in order to help create the changes that are so desperately needed. There is an eerie silence among some educators and researches when confronted with the question "what are the root causes of stress for young people in low-wealth communities in the first place?" What is needed is more balanced attention to both the policies that create and sustain poverty and therefore stress, as well as the biological, psycho-spiritual consequences of living in poverty (Ginnright, 2016). Violence is normal in areas of extreme poverty. It is an emergency to improve and eliminate this way of life experienced by far too many human beings. Even more disturbing are the ethnographic accounts of how limited opportunities impact hope. Kordowitz provides a poignant example of how such conditions destroy hope in the description of Diante, a nine-year-old boy caught in a crossfire between rival gangs while he was playing on the playground swing (Ginnright, 2016).

Policies that constitute structural violence are significant not only because they limit opportunities and criminalize young people of color, but overtime these conditions erode hope, which is critical for effective political and civic engagement. If we choose to reverse this reality for those who are currently experiencing it, there are steps that we can take on the pathway to hope. For example, partnering with the community to find out what they are most interested in working on first. As it pertains to police violence, a meeting with the local police chief would allow for an opportunity for community members to be heard and to hear from law enforcement. Yet the presence of hope is one of the most significant factors to evoke social and community change.

Clearly, we have to have some idea the kind of society we hope for before we can assess the grounds of that hope (Smith, 2005). Members of impoverished communities are well aware of what is needed to create the social environment that would be conducive to racial and

economic equity. Hope theory is a construct in the area of positive psychology that has acquired a substantial amount of empirical support over the last 18 years. Hope was hypothesized as a cognitive motivational construct with reciprocally related elements of goals, pathways, or strategies, and agency or motivation to achieve goals (Snyder, Harris, Anderson, & Holleran 1991).

Police officers who brutalize unarmed black people while they are not posing an imminent risk of harm to the officer, themselves, or the general public, should be made to accept appropriate consequences. Hope from a sociological point of view involves shifting from an individual perspective toward an understanding of hope that is shaped by social and environmental systems, institutions, and opportunities. Hope involves acting on collective possibility where community members envision the change they seek. (Ginwright 2016).

We must act as a society in order to illicit the hope we want to inspire. Unfortunately, the idea and action of working together as a society, has not been successful despite its many requests. White America was ready to demand that the Negro should be spared the lash of brutality and coarse degradation, but it had never been truly committed to helping him out of poverty, exploitation or all forms of discrimination (King, 1967). We must work together to show those who have learned helplessness and feel a sense of hopelessness clear examples of why it is safe to feel hopeful.

Conclusion

For the purpose of this study, racism like other isms (ageism, sexism, classism), is defined as prejudice plus the power to oppress. Since the 2016 presidential election, hate crimes have increased according to NBC News author, Janelle Ross' article entitled: In Every Talley of

Hate Crimes Blacks are the Most Frequent Victims. Black Americans have been the most frequent victims of hate crime in every tally of bias incidents generated since began collecting such data in the early 1990s (Ross 2018). Ross cites the FBI hate crime statistics in her article that shows the correlation between racial violence and how it impacts African Americans disproportionately.

At the core of police brutality lies racism. Previous research using a "shoot/don't shoot" video scenarios has confirmed that racial stereotypes linking Blacks to danger are responsible – at least partially – for racial bias in decisions to shoot (Kahn & Davies, 2010). The intentional focus on implicit biases would work toward raising awareness in potential White allies. For example, On May 12, 2020 and in response to the February 23, 2020 murder of Ahmaud Abery in Brunswick Georgia, Richard Demick a former youth pastor ran two miles in his Florida neighborhood with a television on his shoulders to demonstrate the racial disparities that exist. Mr. Demick is a White man who admits that he and many other White people are very ignorant Minimizing ignorance We will have to repent…not merely for the vitriolic words and actions of the bad people but for the appalling silence of the good people (King, 1963).

Participants in this study were asked what inspires hope for them in the midst of direct or indirect exposure to police violence. Besides the presidential election of Barack Obama, participants shared that action inspires hope. According to Synder, hope is not an emotion, but rather a cognitive motivational process in which emotions follow cognitions, and then feedback to reciprocally interact with future appraisals in the process of goal pursuit. (Shorey, Snyder, Rand, Hockemeyer, & Feldman 2002).

One of the ways to inspire hope is to do something. Take action, increase intelligence, decrease ignorance. In this researcher's own experience, they examination of life story narratives can be powerful. Over the course of the two-day training, the facilitators presented us with many new concepts, including the definition, pathology, and history of racism. We learned how racism came about, how it developed, and how it affects our attitudes, feelings, and behavior, even when we do not realize it. Most importantly, I began to understand that racism affects everyone, including me (Longhurst, 2013).

Connecting with potential White allies who make the decision to learn about the impacts of societal oppression, inspires hope in some of the participants. The perception is that when we as a society know better, we will do better. Learning stories of such a journey is also inspiring. A girl age 17 years was encouraged by her father to attend a two-day event about racism. She could have declined, but not only did she attend, she listened and learned. She allowed herself to become enlightened (Longhurst, 2013).

Participants found that their concerns are often minimized and dismissed by their non-Black counterparts. Participants agree that empathy is essential. While I had only given occasional thought to racism before this training, he informed me that not a day goes by that he does not deal with racism. To him, racism was more than being called a "nigger" or being pulled over by the police repeatedly for suspicion of drug possession. Racism is knowing that every day he would have to prove to others that he was not uneducated, incapable, unreliable, or dangerous. (Longhurst, 2013). Hope is knowing that an ally won't just say "I get it." and "That's really sad." then move on to what is really important to them. Hope is knowing that an ally will find ways to do something even if it is just saying no to injustice. When I left the Healing Racism training, I was prepared not only to begin my journey in changing myself but to encourage others to do so

also (Longhurst, 2013). Participants believe that if politicians would stop using racist language and denounce racist and racist's behavior, that would also inspire hope.

"Racism is taught. It is learned. If you stop teaching racism, racism will die."

Recommendations:

Additional studies would be helpful that initiate conversations and further learning. This researcher recommends that greater efforts are developed to learn about what can be done to deconstruct the systems of oppression that allow White supremacy to inherently deprive African American human beings from realizing full freedom. These systems are operational by choice and implemented by the societal authority. For example, the doctrine qualified immunity which continues to protect police officers and law enforcement officials from frivolous law suits and financial liabilities. This doctrine was introduced by the United States Supreme Court in 1967 and shields government officials from penalties and liabilities even in instances where there is clear violation of the Constitution. Overtime the use of the doctrine in cases of fatal police violence continues to allow perpetrators to escape liability and providing them with complete immunity. Currently the death of George Floyd has been a catalyst for the Supreme Court to take a case that challenges the doctrine. In the meantime, it continues to be criticized and looked upon as a tool that allows police offices to be protected for their wrong doing denying citizens full benefits of their constitutional rights. Incidents of police violence disproportionately affect African American human beings continue because there are no measures or policies enforced to deter these acts.

African American families continue to be subjected to ideals outlined in the 1857s Dred Scott Decision wherein it clearly states in part that Blacks were so inferior that they were

believed to have no rights the White man was bound to respect. This was the law that any free

Black might lawfully be reduced to slavery for the White person's benefit. The focus should

become how there are members on every level of the Executive, Legislative, and Judicial

branches of government who are complicit in the preservation of our deliberate, unjust, and

dominant cultural norm. As human beings, when we know better, we often do better. Adequate

education is essential. Our educational system should include a more inclusive account of our

society. Learning about the true American History, including the harsh and heinous realities of

chattel slavery, the legacy of systemic oppression and racial injustice, could instill in our future

generations a different perspective. This perspective would compel them to act on the behalf of

all human being—to realize full freedom.

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Apendix

Interview Question

Good morning and welcome. Thank you for your participation. The time you spend here and the information you provide is very important. I encourage you to be as open and honest as you can be. Your information and responses are completely confidential.

As previously determined, we will be talking about some very serious and controversial topics that may illicit some strong emotions such as anger, sadness, fear, and loss.

Please remember that this is a safe sharing environment. We have a clinical therapist available to help you process those feelings. You are always free to end the interview at any time. You are encouraged to ask questions at any time. Do you have questions or concerns before we begin?

1. Ok let's begin with a little history. Tell me a little bit about yourself and what why you are interested in being a part of this study.

2. Tell me a story about your community. Did you grow up in a different community? Who resides in your current community? Would you consider your community to be diverse? What economic opportunities do community members benefit from or lack? What are some important characteristics about your community?

3. What story comes to mind when you think about your educational experience? How would you describe access to academic resources and quality education? How do your experiences contrast and compare to others in our society?

4. Tell me about a time when you became aware of racial oppression in our society. What does racism mean to you? How serious of a problem is racism in our society? Do you think it can be corrected? Do you think it is exaggerated? Is racism minimized in our country?

5. This questions is intended to get you thinking about your experiences with how well think the school system incorporates African American History in the curriculum. Tell me a story about how you learned about the history of the United States. How well do you think people in our society know about the black experience in American from a historical perspective?

6. Now, I am going to ask you to think about your experiences with police officers. Please share a story that helped form your perceptions about law enforcement. How equally are blacks and whites policed in the United States?

7. How do you explain the disproportionate amount of black people who are incarcerated in the United States?

8. Please tell me about a time when you have had a positive experience with the police. Describe what happened, where you were, and how you were feeling.

9. Tell me about the first time you became aware of your race. What story do you recall that describes what race means in our society? What are some differences? What are some similarities?

10. Tell me about an experience you have had with police that made you fearful. Describe where you were what you were doing and how you were feeling.

11. What has occurred in your life's journey that brings you hope about the racial, social, and economic equality in our society? How do your beliefs align with your family, friends, members of your community?

12. Now I am going to ask you to do something a little different. Your relation with yourself, with the police, with family and with history is not only about the past as you remember it, but it also includes the future as you imagine it today. Please imagine for a moment a very different life for you, your family, and your community than you do today.

    Imagine the future now, rather than the past. I want you to imagine a scene from the future. This would be an event or happening that could realistically happen in your life but one that is solidly grounded in pure hope and faith in the goodness of other human beings. Imagine and describe the world as you would like to see it. Tell me the story:
    What might happen? Who might be involved? What might you be thinking and feeling in this future event? Why would this event be important? What impact might this imagined future event have on you, if indeed this event were to happen in the future? What impact would it have on your family? And your life, and the way you experience the world?

    Okay, now given your wisdom, everything I've seen and heard from you throughout this interview. With full confidence, tell me how we get there?"

13. Do you have anything to add that was not covered by these questions?