

The Unexpected Experience: Positive Minority

Perceptions and Experiences of Policing

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"Because all human experience is experienced through the 6 senses. So whatever you cannot see you'll more likely believe it don't exist. This is why Black people find it hard to understand racism, because you don't see it. And why is that? Power is mostly felt. Never seen. It's like you walk in the room and you feel the racism but you don't see nothing. But you can feel it! Because power is felt, power doesn't have to reveal itself, you feel me; you don't have to see me." – Dr. Umar Johnson

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Abstract

For as long as Black men and police officers have co-existed in North America, tensions have persisted between the two groups. Issues of racial profiling, racial discrimination and other forms of racism have plagued Black men's experiences and perceptions. Currently, tensions between these two groups have been high resulting in the emergence of social activist groups, such as Black Lives Matter. Most of what is known about race and policing tends to focus on Black men, policing and its negative aspects. However, in addition to examining and studying the negative aspects, there is a need to provide discussion on the potential positive aspects. Little is known about the processes through which Black men identify and determine the positive elements that constitute a positive experience. This is a perspective that has not been explored in depth in the literature concerning policing and race in Canada. The present study addresses the gaps in the existing literature by conducting a thematic analysis of 10 in-depth interviews with Black Torontonians. In doing so, the interview gives voice to Black men by having them identify the elements of a positive and negative experience, and by providing clues to police and Black men's interactions in Canada. Drawing upon symbolic interactionist concepts, this study provides a Black perspective on the processes for Black men's daily interactions with police officers. Policy implications based on the findings section are presented at the end of the study, in addition to directions for future research.

INTRODUCTION

In 1988, an American hip-hop group named *NWA* released the record “Fuck tha police”. The song explored the issues of historical police harassment, racial profiling and the use of excessive force by police toward visible minorities within the Western World –and Canada was not immune to the issues that inspired the song. The relationship between visible minority communities and Canadian police services has been problematic (Henry & Tator, 2006). The way one comes to understand the relationship between visible minorities and the police depends on what particular issue is being examined.

Toronto stands as Canada’s most ethnically diverse and populated city, which makes it particularly useful to review (Henry & Tator, 2006). Understanding the relationship between the Toronto Police Service (TPS) and the city’s Black communities illuminates the underlying issues in policing, such as racial profiling and racial discrimination. Within the field of criminology, researchers such as Wortley and Owusu-Bempah (2011) have explored how race shapes an individual’s perception of police misconduct in Canada and Micucci and Gomme (2005) examined how police officers’ perceptions and tolerance of racial discrimination have stemmed from subcultures within the American police services. Evidently, there is a wide range of topics and discussions on the relationship between police and racialized groups.

To understand the severity of racial profiling, racialization, and racial discrimination within Toronto communities, one must understand the consequences of these issues. For instance, if members of certain racial groups are being stopped and searched more frequently by the police than others, then they are also more likely to be arrested for illegal activity than individuals from other racial backgrounds who engage in the same behaviour. This situation indirectly contributes to the over-representation of particular groups in the Canadian Criminal Justice System (CCJS) undermining legitimacy of the CCJS. As a result, individuals with a poor understanding and perception of the CCJS are less likely to cooperate with police investigation. So, it becomes very difficult for police officers to solve cases without the cooperation of those involved (Wortley & Owusu-Bempah, 2011). It is of particular importance to address these issues at an academic level to bring forth solutions that will help both policing and Black communities.

Concerning the Black men living in Toronto, there is no question that these perceptions of negative experiences exist. However, most of the research surrounding this issue emphasizes, and is based on (with good reason), the negative experiences of Black men. Rarely does the literature explore the potential elements of positive experiences of Black men. As a result, racial profiling, racial bias and racial discrimination have been identified to the police services as practices that are inherently problematic (Owusu-Bempah, 2014). Black men's positive experience is also a powerful object of study to examine their relationship with police. Therefore, the primary research goal is to identify what Black Torontonians consider to be the elements and projected desires for potential positive interactions. Exploring the potential positive experiences with the TPS for Black men will provide a different perspective on the issues of racial profiling, and identify what the police service is doing correctly and might build upon for more positive interactions with Black men.

To address the research goal, in Chapter 1, I will present a literature review that will inform the project and identify a potential gap on this issue. More specifically, in the literature review I will explore what has been researched about positive and negative experiences between the police and Black men. I will also explore empirical aspects about the relationship between police and Blacks living in North America. To inform this project, I will be using symbolic interactionism (SI) as a theoretical framework. I will review literature on major SI theorists who have been fundamental contributors. While SI theorists traditionally have applied SI to Eurocentric perspectives (i.e. white gang members and drug users), the SI literature would benefit from having Black men as the subject of analysis in order to provide new perspectives (Mead, 1972). Lastly, I will end this chapter by outlining the research questions that will guide this project.

In Chapter 2, I will provide an overview of the methodological approach and acknowledge my biases when engaging with these young-adult Black males. I also discuss the main concepts that are essential to creating the questions asked in the interview guide and overall project. I will present the justification of the semi-structured interview method and the thematic analysis, focusing on how and why I used these methods. Furthermore, I will discuss the reasons for how and why I selected my sample. In order to avoid forcing the data into the SI framework, I will be conducting an inductive

analysis so that respondents develop their concepts through dialogue and discussion. I will further explore the justification for the use of thematic analysis and how I plan to maintain validity and reliability within the project. Lastly, I will present the strengths and limitations in my research approach, and the ethical implications of the project.

In Chapter 3, I will present the findings on Black Torontonians' perceptions on the elements that constitute positive and negative experiences. Their suggestions to address the issue of racial profiling and racial discrimination will be explored. Respondents are quoted throughout this section to illustrate the themes that relate to the research questions. In Chapter 4, I will present a discussion and analysis of the findings, where I will discuss the consistencies/inconsistencies within the literature and my findings, where I will discuss the practical/theoretical significance of the results stemming from gaps previously examined in Chapter 1. I will also illustrate the process in which Black men perceive and interact with police officers from a SI perspective. More specifically, I will address the research questions and add to the current debates surrounding policing and race in Canada as they relate to Black communities.

Lastly, in the Conclusion, I will explore the policy implications of the findings, as it may assist in recommendations potential solutions. Furthermore, I will conclude this project with its strengths and weaknesses, as well as directions for future research. In applying the SI theoretical framework, I aim to present how Black men construct their reality when interacting with the TPS, and how they perceive their positive interactions. By presenting this project, I am hoping to aid in creating a new direction and perspective on the issue of policing and race in Canada and to provide new and relevant information to the debates currently taking place.

CHAPTER 1 : LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Literature Review

Historical Background of Policing and Race in Toronto

On October 19, 2002, the *Toronto Star* began a series of articles that made claims about the Toronto Police such as “justice is different for blacks and whites,” “blacks arrested by Toronto police are treated more harshly than whites”, and “Police target black drivers” (Melchers, 2003, p. 347). The *Toronto Star* first analysed arrest data collected by the Toronto police between 1996 and early 2002, which included 480,000 incidents (Owusu-Bempah, 2014). The newspaper concluded that Blacks and Whites were being treated differently. For instance, Blacks were twice as likely to be held overnight for a bail hearing compared to Whites (Rankin & Winsa, 2014). In 2010, the *Toronto Star* produced a second series on race and policing that focused on the issue of *police carding*, also known as contact cards. Contact cards allow police officers to stop citizens and document their personal details without arresting or charging the citizens (Toronto Police Service Board, 2014). The *Toronto Star*'s analysis found that between 2003 and 2008, Black males between the ages of 15 and 24 were 2.5 times more likely than their White counterparts to be stopped and documented (Rankin & Winsa, 2014). In 2012, the *Toronto Star* released another series that focused on “police carding” data between 2008 and 2011. The newspaper's analysis revealed that while Blacks made up 8.3 per cent of Toronto's population, Black men accounted for 25 per cent of those being carded (Rankin & Winsa, 2014). The *Toronto Star*'s analysis of the Toronto Police Service (TPS) data (Criminal Information Processing System) showed that Blacks were overrepresented compared to Whites, Browns, and other racial minorities when it came to police carding (Bailey, Ng, Rankin, & Patty, 2013). In addition to these reports, Black community leaders and advocates, as well as academics such as Dr Scott Wortley, whose research focuses on race and issues within the Canadian criminal justice system, came out in support of the Star and its conclusions.

The TPS responded by denying the accusations of singling out Blacks made by the Star. The TPS then commissioned an independent review of the *Star*'s analysis from

Alan Gold (a criminal lawyer) and Edward Harvey (a sociology professor at the University of Toronto). Their review concluded that the analysis made by the Star in its original series was “junk science” and that the article’s conclusion was “completely unjustified, irresponsible and bogus slurs” to be “put down at once” (Gold & Edward, 2003). In addition, the police union launched a class-action libel suit against the Star for \$2.7 billion (*Toronto Star*, 2003). The furore has since spread throughout the Ontario criminal justice system, with judges, attorneys, Crown prosecutors, and police officials making additional controversial statements supporting or refuting allegations of racial profiling (Melchers, 2003, p. 347).

Melchers (2003) contested the claims made by the *Toronto Star* of racial profiling by the Toronto police because of errors in the methodology. Melchers argued that the paper’s research committed the statistical fallacies of aggregation error and base error. A base error refers to “a rate [that does] not have the same units of count, or when the units of count are insufficiently interrelated” (Melchers, 2003, p. 350). An aggregation error is an error of interpretation, where “a small but very active group having an inordinate impact on how a more diverse larger group encompassing them is perceived” (Melchers, 2003, p. 351). For example, “a single address in a street block to which police are frequently called may result in an otherwise peaceful and law-abiding neighbourhood being branded as ‘crime-ridden’” (Melchers, 2003, p. 351).

In response to Melchers, Gold, Harvey and others who argued there were issues with the research methodology surrounding the Star’s claims, Wortley and Tanner (2003) challenged their analysis. Wortley and Tanner (2003) focus their critique on Harvey’s examination of the Star’s data and his conclusions that racial profiling does not exist in Toronto. They argue that he provided no concrete evidence that can disprove the Star’s claims; he failed to provide a transparent re-analysis of the Star’s findings; made several misleading and incorrect statements designed to discredit the Star; and ignored all published criminological literature on the topic of racial profiling.

More recently, Kitossa (2014) provided a response to Melchers, Gold and Harvey. She argued that Melcher’s restricts his criticism to only the Toronto Star and not the police who use social statistics in a similar way. In other words, Melchers maintains a bias or “only sees what he wants to see” when critiquing the Star. In addition, Kitossa

(2014) points out that for Melchers, Gold and Harvey, the determination of racial profiling is a matter of scientific inquiry. The problem here is that this scientific inquiry denies the truth claims of colonized and criminalized populations. She persists that for them, it is nothing less than the protection of order itself. That is, the Star's allegations of racial profiling will disrupt, and damage the reputation of the criminal justice system. For Kitossa, such a view fails to see its own violence in conjuring lies and claiming science as an authority which rests on Eurocentric specificity and White male middle class servants of power. Kitossa, Wortley, and Tanner contested the claims made Melchers, Gold, and Harvey illustrating the debates that exist in Toronto surrounding the issues of racial profiling.

Currently, in the Toronto media "carding" and racialization are two of the most discussed issues that TPS is facing. The following section explores these concepts and the impacts they have on the Black community.

Defining and Understanding Police Carding and Racialization

Police carding has become the centre of policing debates in Toronto and, arguably, across North America. Understanding and defining the notion of "police carding" is essential to this research. Police carding is "non-detention, non-arrest interactions between [a police] Service and community members that involve the eliciting and/or recording of personal information" (Toronto Police Service Board, 2014, p. 2). The police service records these interactions using "community safety notes," which are "investigative records of information that will be generated by some contacts" (Toronto Police Service Board, 2014, p. 2). Essentially, police carding allows police officers to stop citizens and document their personal details without arresting or charging them. More specifically, police carding is herein as a practice where Toronto Police Officers:

[...] extract highly detailed personal information from citizens in primarily non-criminal situations following vehicular or pedestrian stops. The information – which includes date of birth, [associates and family members], address, gender, skin colour, hair colour, eye, colour, weight, clothing, etc. – is recorded on a small card, commonly referred to as a contact card, and subsequently entered into a searchable database and retained for an indeterminate period of time. [...] Stops

that entail contact carding qualify as a form of intelligence gathering justified by police officials as an important component of their stated commitments to enhancing public safety. (Price, 2014, p. 17)

Race has become an important problem in relation to police carding; but, despite the significant decrease in carding in general in the past four years, racial discrimination and racial profiling still persist, as presented by the Toronto Star (Rankin & Winsa, 2014).

In 2014, lawyer Frank Addario and the Toronto Police Service Board (TPSB) developed a reform programme. In their report, both parties aimed to get rid of the alleged racial bias in police carding. In doing so, Addario and the TPSB recommended that the TPS only card individuals if the individual “infringed on public safety” (Toronto Police Service Board, 2014, p. 3). “Public safety” encompassed three criteria: investigating a particular offence or a series of offences; preventing a specific offence; and ensuring that the subject of the contact was not at risk (Toronto Police Service Board, 2014). Following the carding policy’s implementation (in April 2014), the Toronto Police Service Board instructed policy analyst Neil Price to survey 437 individuals about their experiences in the TPS 31 Division (Jane-Finch area). Price (2014) found a significant disconnect between what was written in policy (in reference to public safety) and what was actually happening: “There is a disconnect between what the board is trying to do and what is happening on the ground” (Price, 2014, p. 50). Two-thirds of Blacks – mostly youth and young adults – reported being stopped, documented, and carded. In addition, 60% felt that police prolonged encounters to get more information (Price & Patty, 2014).

To accurately examine the social phenomenon of young adult Black males’ experience with the TPS, it is important to outline appropriate definitions. In this project, race will first and foremost be understood as a social construction. In addition, when referring to, “Race and ethnicity” has been defined as “persons, other than [but not excluding] Aboriginal Peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour. Race includes Chinese, South Asians, Blacks, Arabs, West Asians, Filipinos, Southeast Asians, Latin [...], Japanese and Koreans” living within the Toronto Communities (Lewis & Ford-Robertson, 2010, p. 406). Furthermore, when referring to the “Black community”, it is to be understood as a shared membership in an imprecise identity and affective community.

Moreover, it is also crucial to define the concept of racial profiling. Melchers argues that it is difficult to define racial profiling; nonetheless, he references the African Canadian Legal Clinic to define the term:

Racial profiling is criminal profiling based on race. Racial or colour profiling refers to that phenomenon whereby certain criminal activity is attributed to an identified group in society on the basis of race or colour resulting in the targeting of individual members of that group. In this context, race is illegitimately used as a proxy for the criminality or general criminal propensity of an entire racial group. (Melchers, 2006, p. 13)

The term “racialization” will be defined as the “classification of people into groups by reference to their skin colour or physical features and the process of stereotyping that emerges as a result of this classification system” (Wortley & Owusu-Bempah, 2011, p. 402). The notion of racialization is important to identify; as Teeluchsingh (2006) emphasizes, “I consider the significance of racialization as a lens through which to examine the city’s dominant social relations, the ideology of multiculturalism, and the spatial structure of the city” (p. 3). She continues by stating that racialization is not an isolated process but rather an interrelated component of many other political, economic, and gender discourses and epistemological inquiries (Teeluchsingh, 2006). Conceptualizing racialization is to incorporate the vague notion of “race” within a framework that uses a historical construction of racial meaning. More importantly, Teeluchsingh (2006) argues that racialization includes a “class discourse”, since conflict and stratification result in differential access to resources and economic exploitation. Given this concept of racialization, it is important to note that it is fundamental to individuals, the state, and institutional practices – specifically, the police service – to make sense of how to manage race and race relations.

Moreover, neighbourhoods and communities will be defined in agreement with two categories – “Demographic Cohorts [community]: [...] people with similar demographic characteristics such as age [and race]; and Geographic Cohorts [neighbourhood]: defining community as location” (Fish, et al. 2008, p. 1383). The distinction will help to establish the difference between community and neighbourhood, which will later be discussed in detail.

Lastly, the term “systemic racism” will briefly be defined as the “prediction of decisions and policies on considerations of race for the purpose of subordinating a racial group” (Feagin & Zinobia, 2014, p. 1). Systemic racism is less overt and identifiable regarding specific individuals committing the acts but is still destructive to human life (Feagin & Zinobia, 2014). Ultimately, systemic racism occurs when the structures of society systematically provide an advantage to some groups while providing a disadvantage to others (Worcester Area Mission Society, 2013). Carding is an example of systemic discriminatory practices when it is used inappropriately. Amongst other factors, Blacks’ attitudes toward policing in North America are important to examine, as they influence their perceptions of police officers.

Visible Minority Attitudes, Experiences, and Perceptions of Policing

In a 2011 study, Wortley and Owusu-Bempah explored police stop-and-search activities in Toronto. Their research asserts that Blacks were three times more likely to experience multiple police stops than Whites or Asians, and were three times more likely to report being searched during police encounters (Wortley & Owusu-Bempah, 2011, p. 402). More specifically, Black males appeared to be particularly vulnerable to police stop-and-search practices and reported vicarious experiences. Wortley and Owusu-Bempah (2011, p.402) went further to conclude that “black racial background appears to be a master status that attracts police attention and significantly contributes to police decisions to conduct street interrogations”. Their study also concludes that not all minorities are subject to racial profiling in Canada, only certain groups are being targeted. More importantly, in relation to the research question, this research insists that Whites and Asians will have significantly different perspectives and satisfaction with policing compared to Blacks. The research concludes that Blacks are more likely to report negative experiences, while other racial groups are more likely to report having positive experiences.

Stemming from Wortley and Owusu-Bempah’s (2011) research, the concept of master status is important to explore, as it assists in understanding racial profiling and

racial discrimination as related to police carding. Researchers have investigated how various status characteristics and labels (i.e., homosexuals, drug addicts, obese, mentally ill, and criminals) are used to define individuals, limit alternative opportunities, modify their personal identities, and alter their subsequent behaviour (Meithe & McCorckle, 1997). “Master status” becomes more relevant to the project, as “One’s master status can affect being suspended and labelled for criminal activity by overshadowing and nullifying the effects of offence of characteristics in arrest practices” (Brownfield, Sorenson, & Thompson, 2001, p. 74). More significantly, the notion of master status may explain the differential treatment by race when considering the relationship between the police service and visible minorities (Wortley & Owusu-Bempah, 2011).

In relation to the North American context, Weitzer and Tuch (2004) analysed a 2002 national survey (conducted by Knowledge Networks, a Web-based survey research firm) of 1,792 participants, comprising Black, White, and Hispanic adults living within the U.S. metropolitan areas. Using the group-position theory, Weitzer and Tuch (2004) suggest that minorities are more likely to believe that police misconduct is a serious problem, whereas Whites tend to discount or minimize it and possibly view criticism as a threat to a “revered institution”. Weitzer and Tuch (2004) also noticed that visible minorities viewed police misconduct as a serious problem because of their negative experiences with police officers, their exposure to media reports of police abusing Blacks (i.e. using excessive force), and living in high-crime neighbourhoods where police practices may be quarrelsome. In addition, they find that individuals who feel they are treated fairly and respectfully are more likely to express favourable opinions of the police and cooperate with them. On the contrary, experiences of procedural injustice such as verbal and physical abuse as well as unwarranted stops lead to individuals having unfavourable opinions of officers.

Regarding positive experiences, Blacks often dismiss “good encounters” with police as being exceptional (Weitzer & Tuch, 2004). Moreover, the research finds that an individual’s knowledge of others’ encounters and experiences with the police may be internalized through vicarious experiences in which witnessing or being told about the mistreatment of a person (family members, friends, and acquaintances) is a disturbing experience for the observer. Weitzer and Tuch (2004) argue that although vicarious

experiences are rarely examined, merely witnessing police wrongdoing can significantly lower an individual's opinion of the police. Vicarious experiences may greatly influence a Black individual's perception of the police. For instance, given the current political state of policing and race in the United States, riots across the nation have emerged due to high-profile cases. Examples include the Eric Garner case, in which a Black male died while in a chokehold by a New York Police Department officer for selling illegal cigarettes (Bloom & Imam, 2014), and the Michael Brown case, in which a Black male was shot at least six times and killed by Officer Darren Wilson in Ferguson, Missouri (*The New York Times*, 2015). Therefore, perceptions of the Toronto police may already be negative based on the American context because of vicarious experiences. Weitzer and Tuch (2004) demonstrate the notion of vicarious experience in their study by describing how Blacks who have been exposed to media accounts of police misconduct and live in low-socioeconomic areas are more likely to believe that the abuse is common.

To compare Weitzer and Tuch's (2004) study with the Canadian context, Brown (2006) illustrates the perspectives of Blacks living in Canada in relation to race and policing. She provides a discourse analysis of interviews examining the Black male experience in Canada. She approaches the topic theoretically using critical theory to contest the constructs of ideology and hegemony, power and the powerless and domination and resistance, while also supporting the importance of discourse, discourse analysis, and dominant counter-narratives.

Three common incidents will best illustrate the Canadian context for the project as well as the realities of the social issue. First, a family service worker within an inner-city neighbourhood witnessed a police officer take a young Black male, who was travelling with his little sister, off a bus. It was in the middle of winter, and the youth's coat somehow came undone. The youth's little sister had begun to panic and scream when she witnessed what was happening. The police

[...] threw the youth's face down on the frozen car, where they held him for a prolonged period, despite his pleas to let him put his coat on. As his sister continued crying and trying to help her brother, the officer, she [the worker] said, grabbed the child roughly and held her up from the ground. (Brown, 2006, p. 160)

Another account illustrates the rage and anger towards the police service. As described, “Forever seared in listeners’ minds is the broken voice of an African Canadian businessman [...] the treatment he received at the hands of a security personnel and later the police after [the] seemingly simple act of returning merchandise went horribly wrong” (Brown, 2006, p. 156). Brown went on to portray the difficulty of the respondent in trying to describe his experience:

It’s gut wrenching to watch a tall, distinguished-looking Canadian businessman hang his head as he tries to fight back tears. [...] ‘They’ve broken me’, he says softly [...] What the businessman described that day was not just a debatable act of racial profiling – debatable as in ‘Was I treated this way because I’m Black, or because I deserved it?’ He was placing the treatment meted out to him by law enforcement officers in the context of shattered expectations how a person should be treated in such an incident. (Brown, 2006, p. 157)

Lastly, there is a type of incident that the respondents called “The Trap”, which usually involves “establishing a significant presence in a conspicuous part of a neighbourhood, such as a parking lot” (Brown, 2006, p. 157). The police wait in these spaces. “According to the police themselves, they’re waiting to see if criminal activity will take place. According to the youth, they’re waiting for some kid to lose nerve – or, in the officers’ interpretation, display guilt – and run” (Brown, 2006, p. 162). Once the youth begins running, the respondents said, “they don’t care if you’re guilty or innocent. You run. They run and the police chase” (Brown, 2006, p. 162).

These three incidents present only a minuscule sample of the dozens of other stories and responses within the Black experience. These narratives demonstrate the Black perspective of the police service as being negative. Given the accounts presented, it is evident why the relationship between visible minorities and the police service is perceived to contain different forms of racism. One can begin to notice the notion of surveillance, in which police officers engage in practices that target specific groups and areas. As a result, the encounters with police officers become more prevalent, and tensions between the groups rise. The narrative mentioned above suggests that Blacks living in Canada perceive themselves as being surveilled. As a result, Blacks’ experiences with police influence how they perceive their own reality (Brown, 2006).

Given these experiences, it is important to examine the key factors that may influence the attitudes and perceptions of police. The following section seeks to explore factors that influence attitudes toward policing to provide more context about Black Torontonians' perceptions of police officers.

Factors That Influence Attitudes Towards the Police: Race, Space, and Class

Compared to attitudes among Blacks, Whites' attitudes towards police officers and police misconduct differ significantly. Whites tend to deny the existence of police misconduct and subscribe to the idea that police officers do not participate in verbal abuse or unwarranted stops of members of society (Weitzer, 2000). There appears to be a dichotomy of perception, where Blacks tend to feel the complete opposite, suggesting that the relationship between Whites and the police is in a better state than the relationship between Blacks and the police, resulting in different perceptions of police service (Weitzer, 2000). Weitzer (2000) examined citizens' perceptions of racialized policing in three different neighbourhoods of Washington, D.C with various racial compositions and class positions: Cloverdale, a White, middle-class community; Merrifield, a Black, middle-class community; and Spartanburg, a Black, lower-class community. Cloverdale respondents were relatively consistent in believing that most Blacks are treated differently than Whites and that Black communities have worse relations with police. Cloverdale citizens tended to stereotype Black individuals and neighbourhoods as crime prone. In comparison, Spartanburg citizens agreed that the police treated Blacks and their communities worse. Like their Cloverdale counterparts, Spartanburg residents tended to equate Black neighbourhoods with poverty and high rates of crime and White neighbourhoods with affluence and lower crime rates. Although most of the respondents believed that police treated Blacks differently than Whites, the White respondents tended to rationalize officers' behaviour and therefore blamed Blacks rather than the police. For instance, White respondents felt that Black crime justified police bias against Black citizens. As stated by one of the respondents, "In mostly black neighbourhoods, it's almost like a war going on, so the situation is very different. You've

got situations where there are gangs or groups that are killing each other” (Weitzer, 2000, p. 143). White respondents from Cloverdale felt that these high-crime neighbourhoods were the reason for more negative police behaviour in Black communities. In comparison, Blacks in Spartanburg were more likely to define police mistreatment as racially motivated and discriminatory. That is, Blacks felt that Black criminality was an explanation but not a justification for discrimination and that all Blacks were burdened with the presumption of guilt. For instance, one Black respondent stated, “If you’re black, there’s a presumption of guilt, a presumption of wrongdoing if you’re stopped. I think white folks are probably treated with a great deal more respect, a lot more tolerance and patience” (Weitzer, 2000, p. 138).

Perceptions in Merrifield, however, were much more complex and significant. Although Spartanburg citizens agreed that Black individuals were treated differently, they did not subscribe to the view that Black and White communities were treated differently. In fact, Spartanburg residents insisted that neighbourhood class position was more significant than race. Furthermore, the Merrifield residents tended to disagree with the other two groups’ generalizations of Black neighbourhoods. The Merrifield residents distanced their community from places like Spartanburg and identified themselves with areas like Cloverdale. Those within the Merrifield neighbourhood were treated like those in White neighbourhoods and portrayed themselves as being on “the same level” as residents who were of “the same calibre of people” (Weitzer, 2000, p. 146). Most respondents in Merrifield had very few personal or vicarious negative experiences with police: “Because of the absence of crime and the lack of constant police patrolling, as I’ve observed it, there are very few confrontations with police officers in this area” (Weitzer, 2000, p. 146). One can begin to develop a different understanding of the topic when looking at racial discrimination from a class perspective. Doing so presents the ideology that middle-class Blacks and lower-class Blacks have less similarity with each other than one may assume.

Weitzer’s (2000) research also suggests that “blanket racial discrimination” is not the only decisive factor in structuring the Black experience with social institutions and their world-views, and that class inequality may be a significant factor as well. When examining potential positive experiences and police carding practices, race and class as

dynamic factors may influence perspectives. Within Toronto communities, certain racial groups may have different experiences, but classes within specific ethnic groups may also have differential experiences from each other. For instance, while Blacks in Toronto may have negative experiences with police carding, perhaps upper- and lower-class Blacks will have various levels of satisfaction and, as a result, have different responses to police carding. Weitzer's (2000) work suggests class is just as important as race. Thus, varying perceptions and experiences of carding practices and police interactions based on class and race are important to consider. Weitzer's research justifies why it is important to consider the neighbourhood context during research. Concerning the Canadian context, Weitzer (2000) argues that there is very little research done by academics in the field of race relations and policing that examines the Black middle class. Within a Canadian context, there is very little, if any, research on the perceptions of police officers in relation to the neighbourhood context in Toronto communities.

The neighbourhood context alludes to social class and the ecological context as well as how they influence citizens and their attitudes towards police. Weitzer (2010) argues that social class makes a small difference among Whites compared to "African Americans" and those responses are mixed. He concluded that some studies found no significant differences in class and Blacks' attitudes towards the police. Studies found more positive attitudes among middle-class Blacks than lower-class Blacks, and others have concluded that middle-class Blacks were more critical than disadvantaged Blacks. These different responses may stem from the kinds of policing issues being examined in the various studies. That is, race may trump class depending on the issue, while class may influence views on other matters. It is therefore not a "question of race versus class in the abstract but is instead issue-specific" (Weitzer, 2010, p. 120).

Weitzer (2010) explores these notions further by using the ecological frame of reference, as it may play a role in the relative impact of race and class. He argues that if the context is policing in a neighbourhood, then residents of disadvantaged areas are more likely to negatively evaluate police services (i.e., response time, crime prevention, treatment of crime victims and misconduct) than those in middle-class communities. However, if the frame of reference is broader – for example, citizens' views of general policing patterns throughout the country – then middle-class Blacks tend to hold more

critical views than their disadvantaged counterparts. The ecological frame of reference demonstrates that the class/neighbourhood context may impact on how Blacks come to understand policing and race and, more accurately, their experiences and perceptions.

Police practices vary to some degree across neighbourhoods (Klinger, 1997, as cited in Weitzer, 2010). Affluent neighbourhoods tend to have low levels of crimes and street disorder, and police tend to view these types of areas as “hospitable”. In comparison, inner-city neighbourhoods are frequent sites of social problems such as poverty, unemployment, and street crime (Klinger, 1997, as cited in Weitzer, 2010). Weitzer adds that these social problems translate into severe community disorganization. If police practices vary across different types of communities, then it is reasonable to expect residents’ views to reflect the differences (Reisig & Parks, 2000). First, residents from high-crime neighbourhoods blame the police for a lack of crime control and thus demand more vigorous policing (Cao, Frank, & Cullen, 1996). In addition, a significant number of Blacks and Hispanics, mainly those living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, feel that their communities receive insufficient police protection (Velez, 2001). As there is a demand for more policing and crime control in these kinds of neighbourhoods, these same residents complain about harsh practices, including physical and verbal abuse and unwarranted stops of pedestrians and drivers (Weitzer, 2010). Residents of the disadvantaged neighbourhoods become very frustrated with the police because there is a demand for more robust and sensitive policing that is not being met. Overall, it is not known if class will apply in the Toronto context, but it will be taken into consideration when examining responses.

Given the notion of the neighbourhood context, it is clear how space could play a significant role. In the Canadian contexts (though mainly focused on Aboriginals), Razack (2002) notes that the arrangement of bodies in spaces does not emerge naturally; rather, both explicit and implicit laws made in the past impact the shaping of spaces. She discusses this by examining interviews, historical accounts, and legal documents to unveil ideologies and practices of domination. For example, as Razack points out, the Indian Act made it illegal to be intoxicated on Indian reserves. One of the underlying themes is the notion of how “place becomes race” through legal arrangements. Razack (2002) is speaking about the issue of space and race, however, within aboriginal context.

Clearly, Razack (2002) maintains that spaces are organized to maintain unequal relations that “in turn reproduce the oppressive spatial categories” (Razack, 2002, p. 1). Teeluchsingh confirms the relevance of Razack’s discussion; race is still “mapped”, materially and symbolically “onto Canadian cities as an important organization principle in keeping with notions of desirability and undesirability” (Teeluchsingh, 2006, p. 1). The installation of surveillance cameras and private security guards at Dundas Square in Toronto sheds light on how specific actions were used to private public space and “reproduce dominant ideologies about inclusions and exclusion that racialized undesirable people, even in their absence” in the Canadian context (Teeluchsingh, 2006, p. 2). In addition, Sandra Bass (2001) states that “urban spaces are socially constructed to meet certain goals, ends, visions and dreams”, which would result in having neighbourhoods with low socioeconomic status occupied by racialized groups making them easier to control and police (Bass, 2001, p. 3).

Razack’s, Teeluchsingh’s, and Bass’s discussions are relevant to this research project because they help to develop the notion that space relates to race and policing. That is, a Black man’s responses and experiences are influenced by the space he inhabits or once inhabited. For example, those who inhabit, or at one time occupied, low-socioeconomic spaces will have different experiences and responses when referencing their encounters with the TPS in comparison to those from higher socioeconomic spaces.

It is apparent that race, class and space influence Blacks’ perception of policing. As this project focuses on elements that constitute positive experiences of policing for Black men, community policing needs to be explored because doing so may provide context and examples of how it functions for Blacks. The following section will examine how community policing affects Black men’s interactions with police officers.

Community Policing and Interacting with the Communities

The authors who have written about community policing demonstrate how relevant the discussion is to policing and race. One may consider the positive aspects of community policing when exploring the notion of positive policing experiences. Although community policing has many meanings, its most popular meaning is a philosophical definition. One of the dimensions of community policing is for officers to

engage citizens in positive interactions that assist in building familiarity and trust between communities and police services (Cordner, 1999). According to the philosophical definition, community policing encompasses citizen input, broad functions, and personal service (Skogan, 2007). These three elements require a brief description. Firstly, the rationale for citizen input is that law-abiding citizens can contribute to police processes (Skogan, 2007). Second, broad function refers to police officers' duty to go beyond calls for service and arrests by maintaining contact with the community, including by also engaging in conflict resolution, helping victims, and reducing fear of crime (Cordner, 1999). The broad function allows officers to engage with communities proactively and provide personalized service (Cordner, 1999). Lastly, personal service refers to the notion that communities should know, contact, and be able to deal with a specific officer in a friendly, open, and personal manner to satisfy them as "customers" (Cordner, 2007).

However, despite the philosophical goals of community policing, it may not be effective or sufficient in practice. Barret (2014) argues that good contact can create positive views of the police while negative contact can damage or reinforce negative preconceptions. These are the kinds of contact that frame experiences and overall perceptions of policing. For instance, Barret (2014) demonstrates that making active, positive efforts in direct and personal contact can serve to positively transform views of the police. In addition, it is apparent that poor communication between young individuals and the police can be detrimental to the police service. It is essential to create good communication practices because they are critical to establishing the foundations of a positive relationship with the police (Jackson, Bradford, Hohl, & Farrall, 2009). Conversely, the use of stop-and-search practices against visible minorities may override any direct positive experiences, thereby rendering them the "exception to the rule" (Barrett, MG, & Patel, 2013). Concerning the project, one could argue that individuals who have been carded in the past will have negative perceptions of the TPS. That is not to say that carding leads to negative perceptions of policing but rather that the reoccurrence of carding and the constant encounters with police that stem from carding result in negative perceptions of police. The project examines whether community

policing is a topic of discussion for respondents when they discuss positive experiences and if it influences how Black men perceive police carding.

Davis and Miller (2002) discuss some of the perceptions visible minority communities have of community policing (Davis & Miller, 2002). Community policing has been viewed by some as a way to improve and strengthen the relationship between police and visible minority communities. Community policing has been described as empowering minority segments of communities by eliciting the needs and concerns of visible minority communities. Furthermore, there is evidence that community policing can have beneficial effects on perceptions of the police, crime, and fear of crime. Skogan (1990) found that communities that adopted community policing had more positive perceptions than they had been prior community policing (Skogan W. , 1990). That is, public perceptions of social and physical disorder were down, fear of crime was down, and area satisfaction increased (Trojanowicz & Bucqueroux, 1990). More specifically, Skogan and his colleagues studied the implementation of community policing in Chicago over a period of seven years (Skogan, et al., 2000). They found positive changes with the police in three areas – police demeanor, police responsiveness, and police performance. They also found modest, but significant changes in perceived neighborhood conditions. For instance, drug and gang problems declined, as well as social disorder, property and street crime (Skogan, et al., 2000).

Conversely, there is another aspect to community policing. Saunders (1999) examines community policing from a mainly Foucauldian lens and elaborates on the use of discriminatory and problematic police practices by conducting field research over the course of 20 months including attending community meetings. As Saunders (1999) argues, community policing in North America is a political tool used to create surveillance of racialized communities while at the same time creating neglect for racialized groups that could benefit from community policing. Therefore, it is important to consider how community policing may influence Black men's responses.

Community policing is a form of policing focused on three axes: partnership, prevention, and problem-solving (Saunders, 1999). It also incorporates the latest information technologies into daily police practices in order to create knowledge pool and have officers take a proactive approach to achieve a resolution. Saunders (1999) argues

that it is a technique of observation and includes diverse methods of accumulating knowledge. He discusses the policing body but alludes to surveillance as the “official gaze” of police observing their subjects. That is, knowing when and where individuals participate in actions and practices allows for centralized authority to survey and regulate space and behaviour. The existence and extent of surveillance has grown more subtle yet more powerful, especially considering citizens’ participation in increasing surveillance in the private spaces of everyday life. Consequently, “without search warrants police are able to see into our homes; without setting up a ‘hot spot’ police are able to monitor our movements” (Saunders, 1999, p. 140).

Consequently, community policing is intensifying the policing gaze to produce a space potentially dominated by police power (Saunders, 1999). Given the strength of surveillance, the question arises: who is doing the surveilling, and who is being subjected to it? As Saunders (1999) points out, those who participate in community policing are upper-class Whites. Actors in community policing are the eyes and ears of the policing body. However, Blacks (especially in low-economic spaces) in particular are excluded from community policing and are instead subjected to slow response times and experiences of police being disrespectful and physically abusive. One can argue that although surveillance is everywhere, Blacks are unable to participate in the policing gaze and instead remain under surveillance while Whites take part in carrying out surveillance. Moreover, Saunders points out that when Blacks were conducting surveillance of the police service, they were neglected as a community because it was counterintuitive to the police service’s goals. It is here that the police service makes an effort to remain free from the surveillance of the city residents most intent on watching them (Saunders, 1999). The reason for this was because the politics and interests of the Black community did not align with the police officers, while for the White community it did. As previously mentioned, the Black community was interested in surveilling the police, which contradicted the interests of the police service.

Community policing remains a subtle and vigorous form of surveillance, as Saunders discusses. Mitchell and Heynen (2013) demonstrate that besides racialized surveillance, those who experience the most intense forms of surveillance are the homeless, who are monitored by closed circuit televisions (CCTVs) that exist in urban

spaces. Technology similar to CCTV has many purposes, but its most significant purpose is to “prevent homeless people from using dumpsters as beds” and provide greater police surveillance within the United States, making hidden spaces of survival visible and eliminating them (Mitchell & Heynen, 2013, p.618). Interestingly enough, CCTVs were installed because of the implementation of the “quality of life” policies that Sandra Bass (2001) also discusses. The quality of life policies resulted in the homeless being forced into total exposure. One can begin to see the parallel between racial groups and those of the lower class in urban spaces. Furthermore, one can see how race and class make individuals’ overall experiences either negative or positive. Moreover, in relation to the research project, surveillance could play a role in an individual’s positive and negative experiences with the TPS. Consequently, Blacks may feel as if they are under extensive surveillance when forms of community policing emerge in their Toronto communities.

This section has demonstrated that community policing can have both positive and negative impacts on how Blacks perceive police officers. During interactions between Blacks and police officers, it is important to consider how police culture may damage or mend perceptions of policing and aspects of positive experiences. Negative aspects of police culture may contribute to Blacks’ negative perceptions of police officers. The following section will address police culture and its impact on visible minorities.

Police Culture and Its Influence on Visible Minority Relations

Examining the subcultures within policing will provide officers’ perspectives on the relationship between them and visible minorities. What makes Micucci and Gomme’s (2005) work relevant is that they identify subcultures that exist within the police service, as opposed to acknowledging the police subculture as a culture that stems from the “dominant white culture”. They do so by analyzing survey data derived from the National Institute of Justice in 1997 of 3,200 officers within the United States. The research distinguishes two types of police officers. The first is known in police organizations as the “street cop subculture”, which acknowledges excessive force to be acceptable under certain conditions, specifically when an officer is being disrespected or threatened, or

when dealing with “disorderly individuals” (many of whom possess low socioeconomic status and minority status). The street cop is the officer who is concerned with doing the job “according to the street” and is mainly concerned with the “ends”. For example, making an arrest is prioritized over an individual’s constitutional rights. The street cop subculture is often acquired not from the department’s vision of reality but from the individual’s perspective, as determined by trying to “survive”. In comparison, “the management cop subculture” is concerned with the “means and ends” – how the final results are achieved are important factors when policing. These concerns are primarily associated with the managerial positions who focus on “departmental priorities, policies, and procedures” (Micucci & Gomme, 2005, p.489).

Given these two distinct ways of policing, the study illustrates that the street officers is engaged in the use of excessive force more frequently and finds it justifiable. In comparison, the managerial officers follows procedural practices while at the same time trying to eliminate the street officers’ practices of excessive force (Micucci & Gomme, 2005). Although this study is American based, and therefore cannot be unconditionally applied to the Canadian context, the approach to cultures within police organizations provide an additional way of understanding a police officer’s perspective on his/her relationship with visible minority groups. Additionally, different subcultures may be present within the Toronto Police Service, which could be a possible element in facilitating positive or negative experiences for minority groups.

Sollund (2008), similar to Micucci and Gomme (2005), categorize police officers into two cultural approaches to policing. Officers are either described as “law and order-oriented thrill seekers” who are in pursuit of law and order and as protector of justice, or as “the social worker” who wants to help and work with people (Sollund, 2008). The thrill seeker officer has a desire for action and excitement, causing them to perceive policing as a mission, while also causing them to have a distorted view of reality whereby they perceive members of the public as either “significant adversaries” or as “insignificant adversaries”. For them “real police work” means chasing the villains, and this distorted reality of what policing is leads to some negative experiences for citizens (Sollund, 2008).

What was particularly interesting and relevant to the project was the discussion on ethnic minority and the “law and order-oriented thrill seekers” officer. Firstly, he discussed his experience while on patrol with a police officer where officers were responding to gang fight. While there, they found no fight, only a handful of youths. However, police patrols were consequently outnumbered the youth. Officers were trying to making sense of the scenario by questioning the boys and found that one of them had stolen a wallet of one of the other boys present. Nonetheless, what he noticed that was that ethnic minorities were serotyped as gang members, the gang fight, then, not only constitutes action and excitement and the opportunity to deal with “significant adversaries” (Sollund, 2008). Unfortunately, Sollund did not go into ethnic minorities and the social worker as it would have likely provided perspective on positive impacts this particular police culture may have had on ethnic minorities. Nonetheless, his work suggests that certain aspects of the police culture can attribute to negative experience during the interaction process.

Brown (2006) examines the policing culture in Canada and, in doing so, approaches policing culture differently than Micucci and Gomme (2005). Instead of examining the subgroups within policing, Brown (2006) acknowledges the police culture as a subculture stemming from the dominant White culture. She states that “police officers are members of the society in which they live” (Brown, 2006, p. 93). Brown (2006) looks beyond the personal characteristics of the police themselves and instead examines the structures that produce the perspectives within the police service, such as the economic, social, political, and geographic factors, that contribute to racialization in contemporary society. For instance, if many forms of racism exist and are systemic in society, then by the time men or women are recruited and selected, they will have likely already absorbed common understandings of visible minority groups. This would suggest, then, that the police culture is rooted in White supremacy, and therefore would result in issues of racial profiling, racism, discrimination practices etc.

Brown (2006) argues that criminal profiling has become a part of the police subculture in Canada and is very problematic. Essentially, she illustrates that when recruits are trained to identify a killer, these characteristics include race and ethnicity as a predictor of crime. The police service identifies this practice as “criminal profiling” but

including race and ethnicity in their training (whether they are aware of it or not) indirectly (and directly) introduces implicit biases such as racial profiling and stereotypical ways of thinking about visible minority groups. Over the past two decades, a long series of task force reports and studies has concluded that relations between the police and the Black community in Canada are profoundly strained (Brown, 2006). In addition, the common recommendations in these reports have focused on changes in recruitment policies, training in relation to cultural sensitivity, establishing community advisory committees, and putting independent civilian review mechanisms into place (Brown, 2006). These strategies, however, have all proved to be limited, as little change has been demonstrated in the police service. There is still a lack of representation of minority groups joining the police services, and training in race relations and cultural sensitivity has failed to make a significant change (Brown, 2006).

Furthermore, she concludes that the cultural dispositions in policing are reinforced by cultural, political, and legal institutions within which the police officers work and live. Given the Canadian context, Brown (2006) takes a structural approach to examine the concept of policing as a subculture. For this project, Brown's research provides perspective as to how police culture plays a role in police and citizen interactions. Even more so, one could argue that if respondents believe there is a police culture, then it could be perceived as an element for facilitating negative experiences. Given the different factors that influence attitudes toward policing, it is important to understand what is, and what is not, a negative or positive experience for Black men. Thus, the following seeks to provide context to what the positive and negative experiences are for Black men.

Black Men and Negative/ Positive Experiences with the Police

Reisig and Parks (2000) provide additional context for satisfaction with police officers within the Canadian context. This research demonstrates that early studies on experience with the police focus on police–citizen encounters. For instance, the type of police contacts influences attitudes toward the police (Bordua & Tiff, 1971, as cited in Reisig & Parks, 2000). An example is that individuals who were “stopped and searched” were

more likely to report negative attitudes toward the police, such as feeling officers did not deserve respect. Given these findings, it is apparent then that Blacks would have negative attitudes toward police because they are stopped disproportionately often within the Toronto area (Owusu-Bempah, 2014). Furstenberg & Wellford also found that citizens who had requested police services were more satisfied when officers took the time to explain the reasoning behind their actions (as cited in Reisig & Parks, 2000). That is, officers who communicated the reasoning for their actions contributed to a positive experience. Conversely, 92 per cent of people who completed surveys reported being infuriated when an officer at a crime scene did not fulfill his/her expectations such as failing to perform an investigation (Bordua & Tiff, 1971, as cited in Reisig & Parks, 2000).

Reisig and Parks (2000) reaffirm that Caucasian and non-Black minority residents were significantly more satisfied with the police than Blacks. However, an interesting finding was that there were virtually no gender differences in satisfaction with police but rather a difference between age groups. People aged 18–32 reported significantly lower satisfaction than older citizens aged 37–98 (Reisig & Parks, 2000). Lastly, Reisig and Parks (2000) also reasserted Weitzer's (2000) work in relation to neighbourhood context and its significance. That is, neighbourhood conditions influence citizens' evaluations of their police (Reisig & Parks, 2000). In relation to the thesis, this work provides context to the notion that if individuals are coming from neighbourhoods with low socioeconomic statuses, then their perceptions of policing will be greatly different from those who reside in neighborhoods with high socioeconomic status.

To explore the notion of the positive experience for Black men and the TPS, understanding their daily interactions is essential. Jeffers (2014) refers to the concept of "racial micro-aggression", which is the subtle acts of racism that visible minorities experience during their everyday lives. These minor acts begin to accumulate over time, causing individuals to feel much strain even during those insignificant contacts with police. The perpetrator of the act will tend to believe that the target is overreacting; thus, from the officer's point of view, this is just one incident and is in accordance with his/her job and law. However, from a visible minority's perspective, this may stand as being another in a long history of similar incidents. Thus, in relation to the project, perhaps a

friendly “micro interaction” may be essential to facilitating positive experiences because, as the study would suggest, the everyday micro interactions between a police officer and a visible minority person can have profound effects. In contrast, these racial micro-aggression acts may emerge in some of the responses from the participants in my study. That is, the responses can be either negative or positive based on the individual’s experience in relation to micro-aggression or micro-friendly interaction.

Bradford, Jonathon, and Stanko (2009) say that during face-to-face interactions, it is harder to improve opinions than to damage them. These authors outlined and examined London School of Economics/Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) research from the British Crime Survey between the years of 1984 and 2006. From this point, evidence (conducted surveys) has emerged from the United Kingdom in which contacts deemed to be “satisfactory” by the public can have small positive impacts on opinions of the police. The authors emphasize how “positive contacts” are associated with “a small but significant increase in opinions about police fairness, and, in some cases, level of engagement with the community” (Bradford, Jonathon, & Stanko, 2009, p. 5). The study also suggested that the public is more satisfied with policing when officers focus on the quality of personal encounters as opposed to mundane police tasks such as returning stolen property. This suggests that how officers treat people and communicate their decisions is significant in creating a positive experience. Furthermore, the research reveals that positive outcomes, in relation to trust and confidence, can stem from personal contacts, while at the same time, unsatisfactory outcomes can have negative impacts. Personal contact with the police becomes vital to how individuals perceive the police. “What almost all researchers agree on, however, is that personal contact can influence people’s ideas about the police, sometimes in very major ways” (Bradford, Jonathon, & Stanko, 2009, p. 6). Ultimately, positive contacts with the police are essential to building trust and confidence in police services.

In addition, Bradford, Jonathon, and Stanko (2009) demonstrate that communication is a powerful tool for influencing public views. An officer’s actions and demeanour demonstrate that he or she is acting fairly and with respect, which can play a fundamental role in mending the relationship between Blacks and the police services (Bradford, Jonathon, & Stanko, 2009). The study demonstrates that contact matters. For

example, communication can be as simple as an officer explaining why someone has been stopped or how an officer intends to proceed with an investigation. These kinds of “transactions” or interactions help to create public satisfaction and positive experiences.

Andrea Boyles (2012) conducted a study by interviewing 29 Black men and one White man using grounded theory to emphasize the positive experience between Blacks and police officers in the Kirkwood suburb of St. Louis. Despite respondents’ unfavourable experiences with the police service, Blacks did not believe all officers were unethical. In fact, 26 of the 29 Black respondents discussed their friendly or helpful experiences with the police service. In addition, there were instances when the respondents were satisfied or thought favourably of police officers. For instance, accounts of positive experiences included when “officers waved, said hello to them, or engaged in very brief exchanges while patrolling” (Boyles, 2012, p. 107). Boyles (2012) also argues that “limiting the literature to solely knowing where and how policing has and continues to take a turn for the worse does not advance discussions, except that we too can account for where and how policing becomes positive” (Boyles, 2012, p. 106). This speaks directly to the research project, which will address this aspect within the Canadian context. However, one of the issues that Boyles (2012) encountered was that respondents were reluctant to discuss positive experiences. Instead, Blacks offered negative accounts of the police even when asked not to. Moreover, within the American context, she found that satisfaction with policing came when officers did their jobs accordingly. Two of her participants discussed that when encountering a burglary in their homes or at a neighbour’s, the participants were very satisfied with the police because officers followed procedural justice (Boyles, 2012).

This suggests that the dissatisfaction with the police service is not inherent and that Blacks are satisfied when police officers carry out the procedures correctly. One of the respondents argued that it meant a great deal when an officer “smiled”, acted as a “gentleman”, and extended himself or herself to solve problems (Boyles, 2012). Boyles (2012) did not illustrate or explore what being a “gentleman” entails from the respondent’s perspective; however, these small details are to be explored in this project, as doing so will give specific examples of what illustrates satisfaction. She also argues that the exploration of positive experiences is equally significant in extending the race,

place, and policing dialogue. Thus, she reports that the respondents illustrated positive experiences with the police interactions that stemmed from waving and speaking while out patrolling and engaging with the community (Boyles, 2012). Moreover, when respondents were asked about friendly or helpful experiences with the police, instances of waving, saying hello, or brief exchanges of conversation were deemed to be positive experiences (Boyles, 2012). These cases, although brief, were very meaningful for the respondents. Another example was officers' acts of "joking around" because sharing laughs with officers normalized or humanized them, making the officer seem "more citizen-like rather than authority-like" (Boyles, 2012, p. 123). Through these positive experiences, other respondents felt safer in the community when the officers greeted them. The respondents felt that officers' greeting them represented personal acknowledgment, which translated into personal accessibility. The way Blacks understood the experience was that if the police are personally available to speak to, then officers are also available to be beneficial in other ways. These positive personal experiences can have profound effects, therefore making officers approachable.

More specifically, Boyles (2012) illustrates a particular experience with one of her respondents, where the respondent felt that a friendship was forged. The respondent discussed how the police officer often checked up on her and her family, engaged in dialogue, and was "close" to the family overall. The respondent, being a single mother, felt that despite living in a community where there was little trust in the police service, she still embraced the officer as a friend. In Boyles' (2012) research, she also demonstrated how respondents embrace officers who get involved with the community (i.e., helping in setting up or participating in community events). These actions help contribute to the positive experience for Blacks, but it is important to explore this within the Canadian context.

Similar to this project, Owusu-Bempah (2014) examines 229 young Black men's (from three neighbourhoods with low socioeconomic status) perceptions of and experiences with the Toronto Police Service in a 2014 study. He used a mixed-method (surveys and interviews) approach with a critical race theoretical framework. He used content analysis to analyze the negative and positive experiences that the youths had with the TPS through interviews and presented many notions about the relationship between

Black youths and the TPS. First, the research illustrated that being Black was a strong predictor of experiencing stops and searches in Toronto. The research also confirmed that a Black racial background is a strong predictor for evaluations of police performance and perceptions of police bias that tend to be negative. His analysis illustrated that being stopped by the police was important in understanding Black citizens' negative perceptions of police performance and police bias. That is, his work demonstrated that Black Torontonians perceive police more negatively and have more hostile interactions with the police in comparison to other racial groups. This notion also solidifies why this project focuses on Blacks living in Toronto.

In doing so, Owusu-Bempah (2014) determined five main themes from his analysis. Positive experiences stemmed from police officers being involved in sports, schools, and other programs; providing assistance in crime prevention and crime-solving; police officers being friendly or respectful; and police officers making nice gestures. It should be noted that the research does not go into depth with the positive experiences in terms of addressing how or why these youths felt these were positive experiences. Rather, the emphasis is that the experiences were, in fact, positive and a part of their perception of the police. In being asked about their positive experiences, only one-third (31.3 per cent) of respondents said they had a positive experience with the police. Therefore, this project seeks to determine seeing if there is consistency with Owusu-Bempah's finding.

Overall, this section demonstrates the relevance of experiences and perceptions as they relate to race and policing. More specifically, positive experiences have been the focus of this section, despite how little the literature has addressed regarding the positive experiences with police within the Canadian and American contexts. However, all of the aforementioned sections address different aspects of how Blacks living in Toronto may perceive their experiences with the TPS. Given these discussions, this particular research project can contribute to the existing literature. The existing literature illustrates that there is a clear social issue with Blacks and policing. Understanding why this is problematic and the general gaps within the literature will be addressed in the following section.

Potential Contribution of the Proposed Project to the Literature – Problem Statement

Considering the strained relationship between visible minorities and the Toronto Police Service, it is important to outline the reasons why this is so problematic. The first problem is that negative experiences increase fear in victims, thus lumping all police together in one category as brutal and loathed (Micucci & Gomme, 2005). Second, it creates troubled relations with society's impoverished or visible-minority groups by providing them with unequal justice and protection under the law and by overly targeting them for abuse – forms of racial profiling (Micucci & Gomme, 2005). Third, it becomes a problem for “political legitimacy”, in that the public develops the perception that the police are lawless, leading to distrust in officers. Fourth, it simply adds litigation costs the city, the police, and, most importantly, the public tax dollars for cases such as police brutality and other forms of police misconduct. (Micucci & Gomme, 2005).

Despite the significant amount of American literature, there is little research that examines Black Canadian positive experiences (Owusu-Bempah, 2014). Rather, most Canadian literature focuses on the racial differences in perceptions of police bias (especially for youth), confirming the findings of American research that Blacks experience more police bias than other racial groups. However, very few Canadian studies have focused on within-group differences in Blacks' negative and positive experiences with the Toronto Police Service (Owusu-Bempah, 2014). This project seeks to contribute to the Canadian literature by exploring the positive experiences of young adult Black males, as opposed to the traditional emphasis on negative experiences within the Canadian context, while also examining within-group differences in Blacks' experiences.

Understanding the positive side of the relationship between the TPS and Black men is necessary for effectively controlling crime, leading to cooperation, such as obeying the law, working with the police to combat crime, and providing useful information to officers (Tyler & Fagan, 2008). In addition, the public will only collaborate with the police if officers are viewed as legitimate representatives of authority. The manner in which the police treat members of the public during interactions between the two groups is, in part, what produces that legitimacy (Tyler and Fagan,

2008). Therefore, the negative and positive treatment of young-adult Black men that these interactions produce may affect community safety by influencing their willingness to cooperate with the police (Owusu-Bempah, 2014).

Furthermore, the goals of the research are mainly to identify the reported elements of the positive experiences and how experiences with the TPS are constructed for young adult Black men. Additionally, it is in the interest of every police department to “not only reduce officer misconduct but to also be perceived as doing so, because this makes police work less contentious and more effective” (Weitzer, Tuch, & Skogan, 2008, p. 399). Citizen satisfaction with police is a powerful tool in facilitating crime control efforts and in enhancing the general legitimacy of the department (Weitzer, Tuch, & Skogan, 2008). This project aims to examine what young adult Black males think about police carding and whether they would improve, change, or replace it. Their perception of carding will help to demonstrate how it relates to and influences their experiences with the TPS. Given the issues presented and the consequences of ignoring them, it is important to understand the strengths and weaknesses behind the conclusions made in the literature review. The following section seeks to address the strengths and weaknesses of the literature.

Strengths and Weaknesses of the Literature

There are strengths and weaknesses in the literature that has addressed aspects of the relationship between visible minorities and the police. As previously mentioned, scholars Wortley and Owusu-Bempah (2011), Tuch and Weitzer (2008), and Barret (2014) as well as the Toronto Star (2011) have approached the problem of race and policing from a macro positivist paradigm, using content analysis and multivariate analysis to examine data found by research organizations in both Canada and the United States. Their analyses are framed by a range of theories, such as Tyler’s theory of legitimacy and compliance, Sherman’s deterrence theory, democratic racism theory, group position theory (conflict theory), and critical race theory. Their findings have more or less been that Black men do have a poor relationship with police for various reasons and that it is critical to mend this relationship. However, while this part of the literature provides

macro approaches, there is a lack of a micro-theoretical perspectives and qualitative approach.

To address this micro-theoretical gap, Brown (2006), Boyles (2012), and Owusu-Bempah (2011) provide a constructionist stance (although some of the researchers used mixed methods) in analyzing the relationship, experiences, perceptions, and practices between Black men and police in America and Canada. That is, the researchers conducted interviews and analyzed them using grounded theory, critical theory, and critical race theory to flesh out Black men's experiences and perceptions of police officers. Their works provide an in-depth understanding of Black men's negative experiences and perceptions of police and also humanizes this experience for readers, letting them see how and why these negative experiences affect Black men and the consequences of these approaches. Their findings suggest that Black men experience and perceive their encounters with the police as negative, which leads to their mistrust of the police. However, despite providing this micro approach, there is not enough emphasis on how Black men identify the critical elements of their interaction as either positive or negative.

Conversely, Razack (2002) and Saunders (1999) provide a post-structural perspective on policing and race. By examining policy, historical accounts, interviews, and legal documents as well as doing field research through a Foucauldian lens, Razack and Saunders demonstrate how and why certain concepts, policies, and laws work against racialized minorities. The strength and findings of these approaches demonstrate that some policies, despite their intentions, can be used against racialized groups, and one can begin to see how policies such as police carding can become very problematic. However, there does need to be a connection made between the post-structural stance and the everyday interactions between Black men and the TPS. That is, the connection between theory and practice is not made as explicit as it could be in relation to the realities for Black men and the TPS.

Given the abovementioned literature, it is clear that the research does not use the symbolic interactionist perspective (which will inform the methodological approach), and we more or less have confidence in certain aspects of their work—for instance, how and why Black men have animosity toward the police and what the predictors are for their

disliking of the police. Based on the aforementioned theoretical perspectives and literature, we still do not know, in depth, the elements that constitute actual positive experiences and Black men's projected desires for police carding. This project is proposing to study this from a symbolic interactionist perspective because it is ideal for fleshing out this gap, as we do not know enough about the elements of positive experiences. The following section will demonstrate how the symbolic interactionist theory is the optimal framework for analyzing the topic. Overall, this study responds to the strengths and weaknesses of the above arguments found in the literature.

I have provided a summary of what has been said about police carding and Black men's perceptions and experiences with the police. Most of the literature discussed is empirical and focused on how Black men experience stop-and-frisk actions and other negative interactions with the police and police carding in Canada, including their perceptions of these experiences. Owusu-Bempah (2014) provided research that is similar to this project in terms of context. More specifically, as previously discussed, Wortley and Owusu-Bempah (2011) examine Black Torontonians' perceptions of racial profiling empirically. The ways in which Black men appeared to be vulnerable to stop-and-frisk actions by the TPS, and the likelihood that they would report vicarious experiences with the police. Wortley and Owusu-Bempah (2011) sought to address the extent to which Canadians viewed racial profiling as a social problem and whether perceptions varied by racial background. Also, they aimed to answer the following questions: how do Canadians interpret their encounters with the police and does it vary by racial group? (Wortley & Owusu-Bempah, 2011). Are Blacks and other racial minorities in Canada more likely to be stopped and searched by the police than members of the White majority? (Wortley & Owusu-Bempah, 2011). This was answered by the data used in their research, which the Hitachi Research Centre gathered in 2007. Respondents were selected through a two-stage probability selection technique to produce a representative sample of Black, White, and Chinese people. The first stage required a random selection of residential telephone numbers within Toronto, while the second stage involved selecting an adult member of the household who happened to be approaching his/her next birthday (Wortley & Owusu-Bempah, 2011). Finally, a screening question was asked to ensure that respondents self-identified as Black, White, or Chinese (Wortley & Owusu-

Bempah, 2011). The research sampled 1,522 respondents who identified themselves within one of the three racial categories.

In addition, Owusu-Bempah (2014) provided an empirical study of adult males, asking: do Black males in Toronto hold different perceptions of police performance and police bias compared to Black females or members of other racial groups? Do Black males have more frequent police contact than Black females or members of other racial groups, and is the contact different in nature? Does the difference between racial groups, regarding the frequency and nature of police contact, help explain racial differences in perceptions of the police? (Owusu-Bempah, 2014). Owusu-Bempah (2014) also examined a sample of Black male youths who had experienced conflict with the law to explore several other questions: how do “at risk” young Black men in Toronto view Toronto police in terms of performance, levels of trust, confidence, and perceptions of bias and corruption? What is the nature of young Black men’s contact with the police, and does the frequency and nature of the young Black men’s contact with the police influence their view of the police? (Owusu-Bempah, 2014). These questions were addressed using data from a representative sample of Black, Chinese, and White adults from the Greater Toronto Area and by examining their racial and gender differences in terms of perceptions and experiences of the police. Secondly, Owusu-Bempah (2014) examined a sample of Black youth recruited in four of Toronto’s most disadvantaged and high-crime neighbourhoods to examine the views and experiences of those most targeted by the police.

These two particular studies are very relevant to my project and are similar in nature, as their work maps out important questions and domains within the Toronto context. However, taking into consideration the questions put forth by Wortley and Owusu-Bempah (2011), in addition to what has been discussed found in the literature, one could argue that there is a gap that needs to be addressed:

- 1) What are the required composite elements for young adult Black male Torontonians to have a positive experience with the Toronto Police Service?
- 2) How can police carding become a better experience and practice for young Black male Torontonians?

In relation to police carding, citizens and police officers understand that the police have to interact with the community. As I am neither for or against carding (as others would argue to abolish carding) I am trying to unpack which aspects of police-citizen interaction, practically in the Black community, (given that these interactions are inevitable because police have not been abolished) are most problematic. As not all police-citizen interaction is carding, but given the current context of police carding in Toronto is it now deemed a racist practice. However, it should be noted that not all police citizen interaction is inherently racist, but rather the way it in which it is used incorrectly can be identified as racist.

I will argue that symbolic interactionism is a suitable framework for the missing aspects found in their work and in the literature as well. Given the empirical nature of the questions in this project, from a theoretical perspective, the following study will make the argument that symbolic interactionism (SI) is an ideal approach with which to improve and develop the weaker aspects of the existing points in the literature.

Symbolic Interactionism

The literature clearly demonstrates that public perception of the police is an important social issue. The personal and vicarious experiences of Black men shape their views of the police. It has also been illustrated that attitudes toward the police are influenced by racial background (Owusu-Bempah, 2014). However, most of the literature has been empirical in nature and/or has failed to theoretically acknowledge and explore in depth the positive experiences and perceptions of the police among Black men or the practice of police carding. In order to do this adequately, symbolic interactionism (SI) is a suitable theoretical framework, as it has not been used in the above literature to discuss such topics in depth. In addition, there are other reasons why this is an ideal theoretical approach for discussing this topic based on the state of the current literature. The following section will discuss symbolic interactionism and its core principles and will then provide an argument as to why and how SI will fill the gap in the present literature.

What Is Symbolic Interactionism?

According to Blumer (1986), SI refers to the distinct and peculiar attribute of interaction or transaction between humans as it is taking place. This is distinguished from how humans define and understand, rather than react to, each other's actions. Therefore, human interaction is negotiated by the use of symbols, interpretations, and ascertainties of the meaning of another's actions (Blumer, 1986, p. 130). Three premises constitute the logic of symbolic interactionism. Firstly, human beings act in specific ways toward things based on their ascribed meanings. "Things" may include physical objects, other human beings, categories of human beings, institutions, others' activities, and guiding ideals. Humans will act in specific ways toward "things" based on the particular meanings that individuals have for them. In addition, Blumer (1986) brought attention to the notion that individuals may interpret the meaning or value of an object differently and that, therefore, individual interpretation should not be overlooked by the norms and values of society. As it relates to this project, understanding how Black men come to interpret policing and how it may vary between individuals is informed by this described notion.

Following this premise, the meaning of such things stems from "the social interaction that one has with one's fellows" (Blumer, 1986, p. 3). That is, things do not have an inherent meaning but are socially created through individuals interacting with each other in society. For instance, gestures, language, and practices exhibited toward police services in a specific culture, including sayings such as "fuck the police" or "stop snitching", may have significant meanings for those in a particular group of people. However, those from other cultures may not attribute the same meanings to these notions and may not be familiar with them. Thus, SI provides a way of interpreting how positive experiences exist for Black men living in Toronto.

Thirdly, individuals modify these meanings through an interpretive and transactional process when they interact with different "things". A person can understand the common meaning of a thing but may modify and change it. The same "thing" may have different meanings in different contexts (i.e., different settings, different individuals) depending on how the individual interprets the scenario. For instance, a familiar gesture such as a hand wave from a police officer may take on a different gesture than one from a

family member or a friend. This example demonstrates how a symbol becomes flexible and can take on various meanings for an individual. In relation to the project, SI provides a lens to reveal how Black men interpret their surroundings and experiences when interacting with the police.

It is important to go into depth for each premise, as doing so will demonstrate the paradigm of the research project. The position of this theoretical framework is that the meanings that things have for human beings are central in their own right. Therefore, to ignore or undermine the meanings of things and how they influence individuals' behaviour would be to falsify the behaviour being studied. However, given the first premise, it is too simplistic to profess that "human beings act toward things on the basis of the meaning of such things" (Blumer, 1986, p. 3). What differentiates symbolic interactionism from other theoretical approaches is the second premise, which asks what the source of "meaning" is. Traditionally, there are two ways of accounting for the origin of meaning. From the realist philosophical stance, meaning is regarded as an intrinsic value; that is, it is a natural part of the objective makeup of a thing. For instance, a gun is clearly a gun in and of itself, a table is a table, a riot is a riot, and so forth. Therefore, meaning comes from the thing being observed; thus, there is no process involved in its formation. In comparison, the other traditional stance is the nominalist philosophical stance. This view regards "meaning" as a subconscious accumulation brought to a thing by the person for whom the thing has meaning: "These fundamental elements consist of sensations, feelings, ideas, memories, motives and attitudes" (Blumer, 1986, p. 4). The meaning of any given object is then an expression of the given psychological elements that are brought into play in connection with the perception of the object. Therefore, an individual seeks to explain the meaning of a thing/object by isolating the particular psychological elements that produce meaning (Blumer, 1986, p. 4). Such processes of meaning are psychological in nature and include elements of perception, cognition, and so forth.

Symbolic interactionism has a more specific and unique stance on the nature of "meaning". SI views meaning as arising in the process of interaction between people. The meaning of an entity for an individual "grows out of the ways in which other persons act toward the person with regard to the thing" (Blumer, 1986, p. 4). Therefore, symbolic

interactionism views meaning as a social product formed through the activities and interaction of individuals.

This theoretical framework is not present in the current literature, yet it is arguably one of the suitable ways to understand how Black men construct their experiences and perceptions of the police. The theories found in the literature stem from conflict theory and critical race theory; however, SI can provide a perspective on how Black men view these interactions and issues in their communities and how Blacks come to understand them. This gap is of an oversight in the SI literature, because so few writers have attempted to understand Black men's experiences.

Basic Principles of Symbolic Interactionism

From the symbolic interactionist perspective, the nature of human society stems from consistent engagement of action between human beings. Individuals may act collectively, individually, or on behalf of organizations. The activities individuals partake in, nonetheless, belong to the acting agent. The significance of symbolic interactionism is that “fundamentally human groups or society exists in action and must be seen in terms of action” (Blumer, 1986, p. 6). In addition, any culture or social structure of human society, despite how it may have derived, begins when individuals engage in actions. This is because culture as a concept (custom, tradition, norm, value, rules, etc.) can only stem from what individuals do. Similarly, social structure, in the aspects of status, social position, authority, prestige, etc., refers to relationships stemming from how individuals act toward each other. Thus, in any human society, it is necessary for there to be an ongoing process of “fitting together the activities of its members” (Blumer, 1986, p. 7). It is this ongoing activity of engagement that establishes structure and organization within a society.

The nature of social interaction helps solidify the stance of symbolic interactionism. Symbolic interaction recognizes social interaction to be extremely important because it is a process that forms human conduct as opposed to expressing human conduct (Blumer, 1986). Furthermore, it becomes apparent that the importance of symbolic interactions in human society consists of people who are in association

(Blumer, 1986). Such associations stem from interaction that is characteristically employed on a symbolic level, as individuals acting either collectively or individually must take into account the actions of one another (Blumer, 1986). That is, the “human group” is a vast process of defining to others what to do, and incorporating their actions results in the formation of an individual’s conduct. Furthermore, symbolic interaction argues that human society is a formative process and not a space for the expression of pre-existing factors (Blumer, 1986). Ultimately, the processual nature of society is emphasized by the understanding that common social interaction influences behaviour and the character of society (Benzies & Allen, 2001).

The position of symbolic interaction on the nature of objects is also critical for the purposes of this project. SI maintains the position that the world exists for human beings and is composed of “objects” that are a product of symbolic interaction (Blumer, 1986, p. 10). According to the theory, an object is anything that can be referred to, i.e., a cloud, a police officer, or a religious doctrine. Furthermore, objects can fall into three categories: physical objects, such as chairs, bushes, and cars; social objects, such as students and mothers; and abstract objects or moral principles, such as philosophical doctrines, justice, exploitation, and compassion (Blumer, 1986, p. 10). The nature of the object, then, consists of the meaning “that it has for the person whom it is an object”, and these meanings determine how one perceives objects (Blumer, 1986, p. 10), which in turn determines the way one acts and talks about the object. In addition, an object may have different meanings for different individuals, which is also critical to the notion of the project. For instance, a police officer will be a different object to a lawyer, a Black nationalist, a teacher, etc. Also, the prime minister of Canada can be a very different object to a devoted member of a specific political party than to a member of the opposition, etc. Therefore, the meaning of objects for a person stems from the way individuals define themselves and others during interaction (Blumer, 1986). It is through the indications of others that a dog is a dog, that police officers are a certain kind of professional, and that the Canadian constitution is a given kind of legal document, etc. This stems from a process wherein “mutual indications of common objects emerge” (Blumer, 1986, p. 10).

One must consider, then, the practical application of this notion. There are consequences that follow from the foregoing discussion of objects. An environment consists only of the objects that the given individual recognizes and acknowledges. The nature of any given environment is set by the meanings of the objects occupying that environment, as stated by Blumer (1986, p.11), “people may be living side by side yet be living in different worlds”. For instance, consider a Black man and White man living in the same neighbourhood. The notion of race creates two entirely different worlds for the individuals in terms of their interactions with a White, male-dominated society. In order to understand the actions of individuals, it is a necessity to identify and understand their world of objects. Secondly, objects and their meanings must be understood as a “social creation” formed from the process of definition and interpretation through the interactions among people; all things must be formed, learned, and communicated through a social process. Therefore, society is a mass process where individuals are forming, sustaining, and transforming the objects of their world as persons grant meaning to objects. In addition, objects have no fixed-meaning status; meaning is sustained through indications and definitions that individuals create for objects. Thus, it is apparent that all objects can undergo change in their meaning. For instance, “A star in the sky is a very different object [in terms of how objects are perceived] to a modern astrophysicist than it was to a shepherd of biblical times; marriage was a different object to later Romans than to earlier Romans” (Blumer, 1986, p. 12). Ultimately, symbolic interactionism argues that society is a process where objects are created, affirmed, transformed, and cast aside. The lives and actions of people will always change in line with the changes taking place in their world of objects.

Understanding how the individual is an acting organism will also be significant during the analysis of the project according to the symbolic interactionist stance. Essentially, the individual is able to be an object of his or her own action and therefore is able to recognize himself or herself. For instance, a man can acknowledge that he is young, a student, a visible minority, trying to become a professional, raised in an ordinary family, and so forth. This demonstrates how in the given instances, he is an object to himself, “acts toward others on the basis of the kind of object he is to himself”, and ultimately creating the self. Similar to other objects, the self-object emerges from the

process of social interaction where other individuals are defining the person to himself or herself (Blumer, 1986, p. 12). Symbolic interactionism, then, argues that the human is like an organism, in that it engages in a process of “self-indication” where it makes an object of what it notes, grants meaning, and uses the meaning as the basis for directing action (Blumer, 1986). The nature of human action alludes to the notion that an individual confronts a world that he or she must interpret to act instead of an environment he or she responds to because of his or her organization. The concept of action stems from account for various things that one notes and creating a line of conduct on the basis of how he or she interprets them (Blumer, 1986, p. 15).

The general theoretical framework of symbolic interactionism becomes clear based on these fundamental understandings of the social world that were briefly described. Overall, this approach sees society as individuals engaged in a process of living where there is ongoing activity. This ongoing activity is where participants are developing lines of action in the multitude of situations they encounter through a process of interaction consisting of making indications to other individuals about what to do and how objects are interpreted by others. With participants living in the world of objects, it is these same objects that guide their orientation and action by the meaning of the objects, thus forming, sustaining, and transforming in their interactions with one another (Blumer, 1986, p. 21). Individuals form different groups, which influences how objects are viewed. Furthermore, the activities of the grouping are formed through a process of designation and interpretation. Symbolic interactionism’s fundamental concern is the relationship between the forms of social organization and an individual’s conduct (Blumer, 1986).

It also considers how individuals stem from social structures and social situations. It posits a link between the individual and the social structure that is based on the role of symbols and common meanings. The environment of man consists of objects that are constructs, rather than objects that carry intrinsic meanings (Denzin, 1992). Moreover, the focus of this theoretical framework lies in how an individual interprets his or her circumstances and chooses one course of action over another. Consequently, society and individuals are in a constant flux, as “definitions of each moment shift through the continuous dialectical process of interpretation and action” (Oliver, 2012, p. 411). Reality, then, is not external to an individual’s thoughts; rather, reality is actively

constructed by them. Overall, symbolic interactionism analyzes society by focusing on the subjective meanings that people impose on objects, events, and behaviours. Even more so, subjective meaning is given more value because it is argued that individuals behave based on their beliefs, rather than what is objectively true. Society, then, is constructed through human interpretation. Society is a social construction (Anderson & Taylor, 2009).

Critique of Symbolic Interactionism

Like all theories, symbolic interactionism is not without limitations. One of the most common critiques is that it does not present enough emphasis on the social structure (Kuhn, 1964; Meltzer et al. 1975; Benzies & Allen, 2000). That is, symbolic interactionism does not focus on the macro level of social interaction and may miss the larger issues of society by focusing too closely on the micro interactions. Moreover, critics suggest that SI does not emphasize emotional and unconscious elements in human behaviour enough (Meltzer, Petras, & Reynolds, 1975).

This perspective is criticized also for ignoring the influence of social forces and institutions on individual interactions. For instance, in cases of race and gender, this theory would struggle to account for social forces such as systemic racism or gender discrimination, which may influence what one believes race and gender to be. Consequently, one of its greatest weaknesses is its inability to approach race from the perspective of those who are racialized. That is, the way one comes to understand SI and its concepts is through the perspective and understanding of White middle-class males. In exploring SI, the question arises: “Whose interpretation of reality should be recognized as objectively real for the oppressed?” Often in SI, we examine social issues from the perspective of a White male without considering race as an important factor (Kitossa, 2014). For instance, within the debate of racial profiling in Toronto, Kitossa (2014) argues that Alan Gold presents the idea that racial profiling does not exist when examining it from a scientific view and that it is instead “junk science. Gold’s view assumes that science is always objective or neutral, but as Kitossa (2014, p.82) argues, this is unacceptable, as we know the issue is “socially and politically constructed by

dominant forces within unequal social relations”. Due to the lack of racial perspective, one may fail to see the damage: “They believe allegations of racial profiling will damage the reputation of criminal legal system [...] such a view fails to see its own violence in conjuring lies and claiming science as its authority” (Kitossa, 2014, p. 82). Some aspects of SI are based on Eurocentric specificity, thus positioning the White middle-class male servants of power as the lens through which to examine social issues. SI has mostly focused on the White middle class for an object of analysis. For instance, dominant contributors to SI such as Becker focused on White youth and drugs but missed any racial specificities that could provide a different perspective on youth and drugs. Therefore, this project will explore what aspects of police interactions are essential for positive experiences and how they relate to SI concepts. I will also respond to the critique that SI focuses on Eurocentric ideals and perspectives by addressing the theoretical questions with the perspective of Black males.

A common mistake with SI is when visible minorities become objectified by linking their experiences, attitudes, and beliefs to the dominant culture, class, or economic structure. That is, the relevance of a Black man’s unique experiences in defining and modifying their worldview is obscured. For example, measuring racial attitudes in terms of the prevailing class structure results in perspective empty of practice (Esposito & Murphy, 1999). In addition, SI as a Eurocentric perspective fails to allow Black communities to speak in their own voice, resulting in Blacks being “othered” and then studied and regulated (Esposito & Murphy, 1999). These critiques aid in informing the research questions that will be discussed in the following section.

Specific Concepts of Symbolic Interactionism and the “How” of Constructing Reality

The following section will introduce different approaches to SI from various thinkers such as Mead, Garfinkel, Goffman, and Becker. I will also explore whether there is a need to add to the current theoretical literature. One of the unique aspects of SI to consider is the “dramaturgical” perspective, as coined by Erving Goffman. This perspective views social life as a staged drama (Cahill, 1998, p. 191). For Goffman,

social interactions are equivalent to theatrical performances in which social interactions take place with an audience, actors, and direction in the performance (Goffman, 1969). Goffman approaches this nuance and provides an in-depth illustration of this notion, although for the sake of this project, I will focus on the concepts of “frontstage” and “backstage” (Cahill, 1998). To describe frontstage, individuals are expected to present themselves in a specific way within society. When in front of others or an “audience”, individuals are expected to act differently in different settings. For instance, the way one acts and dresses for a job interview is different from the way one acts and dresses for a night club (Cahill, 1998). It is through individuals’ appearance and mannerisms (or personal front) that they are able to manage others’ impressions and influence their definitions of situations and conduct. Goffman (1969) argues that this activity to influence others is a “performance” in front of an audience. Furthermore, Goffman points to how human beings commonly divide social settings as evidence of a staged character of everyday life. From this, Goffman argues that most social settings consist of a “frontstage”, where performance is given, and “backstage”, where “the impression fostered by the performance is knowingly contradicted” (Cahill, 1998, pp. 112, 193). Both stages are separated by barriers and perceptions, with the “audience’s” access to that region being restricted. Cahill illustrates it this way:

[sic] In the Backstage kitchen of most restaurants food is placed back on plates after on the floor and staff ridicule customers. It is well out of sight and hearing from the frontstage dining area, where the impression of careful food preparation and polite service is dramatically fostered. (Cahill, 1998, p. 193)

That is, the backstage is where the performer can step out of character, be completely separate from the frontstage, and the performer’s actions do not have to please anyone but the performer in the backstage (Appelrouth & Edles, 2008). Audiences, then, perceive the performers (individuals who are in the frontstage) in a favourable light. This aspect of SI begs the question of how it can be applied to the current thesis regarding perceptions and experiences.

Herbert Mead is another theorist who enhances SI by exploring the “I” in contrast to the “me”. Mead (1972) discusses the “me” (the social self and self), which is “the organized set of attitudes of others which oneself assumes” that creates the values and

norms of individuals living in a society (Mead, 1972). PAGE???In comparison, Mead also presents the notion of the “I” (Charon, 1998), which is described as being one of two sides of the self, as every individual has an “I” and a “me”. Action, then, arises from a “conversation between the ‘I’ and the ‘me’, the ‘I’ being the actor as subject and the ‘me’ being the actor of object” (Charon, 1998, p. 207). Furthermore, the distinction becomes more complex, as the “I” is the free actor and the “me” becomes the socially shaped and controlled actor. Simply put, the “I”, for Mead, is what one does in a non-social, non-controlled part of our self. It is an action that does not arise from a conscious thought but even surprises the individual, as we sometimes ask ourselves, “Did I really do that?” (Charon, 1998).PAGE? One may label actions as being impulsive, unlearned, unpredictable, and unplanned. As a result, the “I” can lead to destructive or creative actions, but its essence is that it is neither learned nor controlled. Overall, the “I” is the “free person” in the self. The “I” presents that we do engage in action that is not thought out or planned, and it is best described by Charon:

This is exciting in the sense that action can be taken, thinking about it can occur afterward, and new ideas about the world can arise, new directions can be taken. I say “no” to my master without thinking, and afterward I realize the possibility of refusing to conform and “no” becomes a thinking act (Charon, 1998, p. 207).

Within this thesis, there may be a possibility for respondents to have their own interactions between their “I” and the “me” and discuss their experiences and perceptions.

Harold Garfinkel illustrates, through his discussion on degradation (as an example), how individuals attempt to shape their identities in social interaction. Garfinkel describes degradation as a “situation whereby the public identity of an actor is transformed into something looked on lower in the local scheme of social types” (Charon, 1998, p. 87). This demonstrates that convincing others about who an individual may be can influence the definition of that individual and thus the action toward him or her and ultimately the interaction with that person. To better illustrate, Garfinkel provides four ingredients that create the notion of degradation (Charon, 1998). The first is the event – it must appear to stand out from mundane situations, and the actor must stand out from other people, such as an act of copying an exam. Second, both the event and actor must

be typed (Charon, 1998). They must be treated as part of a type of event and actor. Referring to Garfinkel's example, the event is "cheating" and the actor is the "cheater". Third, the denouncer must carefully identify himself or herself with the listeners and the community (Charon, 1998). In addition, the denouncer needs to show that the denunciation is not personal but rather "from an identification with the rules of the community itself" (Charon, 1998, p. 165). For instance, one may state, "'We all suffer when there is cheating.' The whole system of education is denounced. There can be no fair grading where cheaters are not punished" (Charon, 1998, p. 165). Lastly, the one who is denounced must appear to be distanced from everyone who supports the role of the group. He or she must be made "strange" (Charon, 1998). One may say, "We all want to succeed in college but we are not cheats! Here is a cheat" (Charon, 1998). PAGE? Given these steps, the power of a successful denunciation illustrates that one can influence the direction of the interaction and the interaction itself by shaping the labels that others attribute to the actor and the acts that one initiates (Charon, 1998).

Therefore, as we interact with others, label them, and tell them who we think they are, our acts become a symbolic statement by us (Charon, 1998). Acts by an assortment of people will have an impact on who the actor thinks he or she is. In any given situation, this can be defined in a multitude of ways; over time, however, a consistency emerges and an identity is formed. This identity is taken on, and we act more consistently with it. As Charon (1998) describes and concludes Garfinkel's position:

The more we become someone, the more we act accordingly; the more we act accordingly, the more likely others will see us for what we have become; the more others see and label us in this manner, the more we will continue to become that someone. (Charon, 1998, p. 166)

This aspect has not been especially pushed forward in the literature on race and policing from a theoretical perspective.

Howard Becker also brings forth a different perspective on symbolic interactionism from the cultural perspective (Charon, 1998). Over time, cooperative symbolic interaction creates culture, and as every society has a culture, culture helps create continuity over time and is taken on by the actors as guides to action. Individuals enter situations with all kinds of tools to guide them as they interact with others, but the longer they interact with others, the more likely something new will enter their guides for

action. To better illustrate, Becker argues that groups find themselves sharing common situations and problems. Various members of any given group will attempt to experiment with possible solutions to a problem and will report their experiences to their peers. Becker goes on to illustrate that over the course of group members' discussion, a definition of a situation, its problems, and its solutions will be put forth, in addition to the most appropriate ways of behaving. Thus, consensus "constrains the activities of individual members of the group, who will probably act on it, given the opportunity" (Charon, 1998, p. 178). Culture, then, means the consensus of the group, agreements, shared understanding, language, knowledge, and the rules that are supposed to govern action. According to Charon (1998, p.182), Becker writes that "culture persists and antedates the participations of particular people in it: culture can be said to shape the outlooks of people who participate in it". In contrast, everything is always changing and, in relation to cultural understandings, must be "reviewed and remade continuously" (Charon, 1998, p. 182). Culture, then, is communicated, tried out, applied, and altered by cooperative individuals in real situations. If it works, then there is reason to use it continuously; otherwise, it is altered. Concerning SI, this discussion brings forth the idea that culture is negotiated. Negotiation means:

[...] that something among actors emerges out of the acts of all to each other. Each does not get his or her own way exactly, but instead the input by each affects the net result to some extent. Ideas, rules, direction of the group, direction of the individuals – all are negotiated in interaction (Charon, 1998, p. 168).

Social interaction, symbolic communication, and cooperation create culture. Culture then becomes important for ongoing and social interaction, and is used to guide an individual's actions, as it is ever changing and negotiated.

SI provides a different approach to understanding racialization, as it is uniquely positioned to claim how race is shaped by social context (Morris, 2007). SI perspectives on race identify the social construction of racial categorization and the importance of these racial categories in influencing privileges and disadvantages (Morris, 2007). SI suggests that race is not simple and straightforward, especially when visible markers might be considered socially ambiguous. Furthermore, SI suggests that racial categories and understating are critical for how individuals see themselves and react to others

(Morris, 2007). Moreover, a perspective cannot be easily shared when interaction is cut off between societies (or races), nor can acts be understood by the other. As a result, problem solving becomes increasingly difficult, resulting in emotion and habitual response replacing cooperative symbolic interaction between groups (Morris, 2007, p. 244). This aspect of SI as it relates to race will help to frame what the discussion on policing and race brings forth, which has yet to be produced in the literature. Therefore, the more detailed research questions for this project are:

- 1) What are the critical elements for young adult Black male Torontonians that constitute positive and negative experiences with the Toronto Police Service?
- 2) What is important for young adult Black male Torontonians to have positive interactions and experiences with the Toronto police?
- 3) Within positive and negative interactions with the Toronto Police Service, which is more important, frontstage production or backstage production?
- 4) How do the “I” (self-identity) and “me” (social-identity) contribute to creating or reducing positive experiences with the Toronto Police Service?
- 5) How does the label of the Toronto Police Service influence how young adult Black men interact with the police officers?
- 6) How does the negotiation of “culture” affect Black men’s interactions with the Toronto Police Service?
- 7) How does racialization influence how Black Torontonians see themselves and react to the Toronto Police Service?
- 8) How can police carding become a better experience for Black male Torontonians?

Given the research questions presented, there are still significant reasons as to why SI is the most suitable theoretical lens for addressing this research project.

Why Use Symbolic Interactionism for This Project?

In the aforementioned literature, much of what is known about the Black man’s world in Canada fails to address how he thinks, how he organizes ideas, and what is deeply meaningful to him when analysing positive and negative experiences. Black men

maintain more negative relations with the police, but little is understood about the elements that constitute positive relations with the police (Owusu-Bempah, 2014). SI becomes especially useful in identifying what is required to create and sustain positive (or negative) relations by the police (Crooks, 2001). Examining the thinking of Black men is a central part of what it is to be human or, rather, what it is to be a Black man living in Toronto who encounters the TPS (Crooks, 2001). To fully comprehend this, we need to explore what Black men have experienced, we need to learn what Black men have learned, and we need to study how Black men have adapted in dealing with the TPS. SI moves the scientific inquiry from the causation model in the existing literature to the processual model, which is absent in the literature (Crooks, 2001). This viewpoint acknowledges perceptions, understandings, and actions as they change over time and how new experiences and information are integrated. Furthermore, SI has the tools and concepts that allows me to get into what people self-present and what they think is important when interacting with the police.

SI becomes an ideal tool for discovering the stages of that process, the factors within the stages, and most importantly in relation to this project, the connection between them that creates a phenomenon and, once in existence, allows it to sustain or recreate itself (Crooks, 2001). Thus, this is an interpretive research project that is lacking in the existing literature and addresses the identified gap. SI is ideal for exploring notions such as experiences, actions, variations across time, context and is therefore an ideal theoretical framework for this research project. Interestingly, none of the abovementioned works uses the SI lens to examine the experiences of Black men (Crooks, 2001).

By using the SI theoretical framework in this particular research, I can search for and identify elements systematically, categorize the thinking, and understand the meanings of the elements (Handberg, et al., 2015). For instance, instead of just presenting the notion of “respect” that Black men seek as contributing to positive experiences, this project will focus on the specific elements of respect that Black men perceive as constituting “respect”. The term respect carry a different meaning for different individuals. SI will help us come to understand what this difference is and how Black men come to construct what respect from a police officer is.

This kind of depth and integration of interactions can add value to our understanding of racial profiling and racial discrimination that goes beyond just reporting more conventional qualitative reports, as found within the existing literature. Thus, part of the rationale for using SI is because it distinguishes between the underlying mechanisms and relationships that explain the conditions of occurrence, such as how Black men living in Toronto act when interacting with the TPS. Ultimately, then, SI has a clear advantage in relaying the analysis toward the broad concepts and meanings for Black men through their actions, interactions, perceptions, and experiences (Handberg, et al., 2015).

Furthermore, SI stands on the key principle that human complexity can only be understood through inductive inquiry (Oliver, 2012). Blumer, according to Oliver (2012), argues that deductive research is “bad science”. He claims that the hypothesis rarely addresses the totality of the theory to be tested, forcing the researcher to start from a fixed position that might have no connection to the ever-changing worlds of participants (Oliver, 2012). This pattern is evident throughout the existing literature; therefore, by using the SI theoretical framework, the inductive approach will help to have a better understanding of positive experiences for Black men living in Toronto (Oliver, 2012).

As a result, this project will contribute to the criminological literature in four ways. First, it will document and identify Black men’s potential positive perceptions, experiences, and practices as they relate to TPS. Second, applying SI concepts to the area of research may reveal new findings in relation to the Canadian context. Third, it will provide Black men with a voice for their thoughts and opinions on the issue of police carding. Lastly, this research will help champion SI as a new theoretical framework with which to address the area of investigation in Toronto and address the gap described in the literature review.

This thesis explores a fundamental question: What composite elements constitute positive experiences with the Toronto Police Service for young adult Black male Torontonians? Exploring the potential positive and negative experiences between the TPS and the young adult Black males may provide different perspectives on issues such as racial profiling. Uncovering the composite elements of positive experiences will demonstrate what specifically facilitates a positive experience. The data I have is

sufficient for using SI, as I have a small number of in-depth interviews that will not only help to address the empirical questions but also the theoretical questions as they relate to SI.

CHAPTER 2 METHODOLOGY

Gaining insight into the experiences of young-adult Black men can be difficult for researchers if they lack an intrinsic connection to the community. I maintained an open and reflexive awareness of the conditions and context under which the data collected was gathered and for the methods used for analysis and interpretations (Oliver, 2012). In the following chapter, I will describe and justify the general approach to the research, the methodological gap identified in the literature, the data collection method, sample selection, information gathering, and the strengths and weaknesses of the methods. I will also discuss the data analysis procedures and techniques, along with the ethical considerations that are present in this research.

By acknowledging that I have had my own negative and positive experiences with the TPS, it is apparent that there will be a bias in the research project. Conversely, being a member of the Black community served as a benefit because the subjects were likely to share their experiences with another Black man (Weitzer, 2000). That is, throughout the research project, I maintained a reflexive awareness of my understanding of the project given my familiarity with the Black community.

Firstly, key concepts will be operationalized to guide the study and interview questions.

Definition of Terms and Concepts

The guiding terms and concepts for the research included “positive experiences,” “negative experiences,” “escalation,” “de-escalation,” “Black man,” and “police carding”. These concepts were operationalized as they were present in the interview guide. I conducted an inductive analysis project, thus the terms “negative” and “positive” experiences were created, understood, and described as the participant saw fit. This was because providing a definition for their experiences would result in limiting the flexibility and exploration of responses from participants. Nonetheless, when referring to “escalation,” it was understood to be an increase in the “severity of the coercive inducements used and increases in the scope of participation within a conflict” (Kriesberg, 2007, p. 150). In comparison, “de-escalation” was referred to as the decrease in the severity or scope of a conflict (Kriesberg, 2007). A “Black man” was referred to as

an individual who is of African or Caribbean decent, and is a visible minority. As aforementioned in Chapter 1, “police carding” was referred to as a practice where Toronto police officers:

[...] extract highly detailed personal information from citizens in primarily non-criminal situations following vehicular or pedestrian stops. The information – which includes date of birth, [associates and family members], address, gender, skin colour, hair colour, eye, colour, weight, clothing, etc. – is recorded on a small card, commonly referred to as a contact card, and subsequently entered into a searchable database and retained for an indeterminate period of time. [...] Stops that entail contact carding qualify as a form of intelligence gathering justified by police officials as an important component of their stated commitments to enhancing public safety. (Price, 2014, p. 17)

These concepts were used in the interview guide. Although these concepts have been defined, I remained open to other definitions and understandings discovered and described in the interview by the participants.

Methodological Approach to the Research

Qualitative research is particularly well suited for stimulating the stories, experiences and perceptions of Black males, many of which are often ignored or lost in the larger social debates (Boyles, 2012, p. 45). Qualitative techniques allow researchers to share in the understandings and perceptions of others and to explore how individuals structure and give meaning to their daily experiences (Chartrand, 2002, p. 42).

As previously discussed in Chapter 1, SI was the theoretical framework that informed this project; thus it assisted in building the methodological approach (Grant & Osanloo, 2014). From an epistemological perspective, SI research is based on a constructionist position and would, as a result, argue that reality is based on how an individual perceives the world (Morrison, 2006). Therefore, as discussed in Chapter 1, through the existence of the multiple constructions of reality, individuals connect subjective meanings to various aspects of their lives and social settings (Morrison, 2006). According to SI, subjective epistemology is the most efficient way to produce, attain and present knowledge (Morrison, 2006). For SI, because knowledge is created through

discussions of ideas and opinions between the research participant and researcher, when I was engaging with participants, I was able to acquire a significant understanding of their experiences and perceptions (Palys & Atchison, 2008). As previously mentioned, I proposed that this research is an inductive project, and this is because SI views research as being an inductive process that is exploratory (Herman, 1994). As SI seeks to understand social life and create meaning, it is dependent on the qualitative methods, such as in-depth interviews where dialogue between the researcher and participant results in illustrating a constructed reality (Potter, 2009). Overall, because I used SI as the theoretical framework, the qualitative methods were the ideal fit for facilitating this project. In addition, qualitative methodology worked in conjunction with SI, allowing for accurate descriptions, interpretations and explanations of issues most sensitive to Black men.

In Chapter 1, I presented the different methods that had been used in the literature on the topic of Black men and their negative perceptions and experiences with police. The literature typically consisted of a mixed-methods approach. Therefore, based on SI's ontological (nominalism) and epistemological (constructionist) paradigms, I explored the perceptions and experiences of Black men using semi-structured interviews. This allowed me to probe participants and facilitate the opportunity for rich information to reveal the elements and desires of Black men's positive experience.

In relation to the research area, Brunson (2010) argues that the qualitative methods allow for a narrative to be introduced and provide a voice for Blacks that often are quantified and reduced to numbers. He demonstrates a gap in the literature in that there needs to be more depth in understanding the phenomenon of race and policing as opposed to observing it at a quantitative level. In addition, qualitative methods are best suited for a better understanding of the social world from the view of participants. Qualitative methods allows for researchers to arrive at meanings and culturally embedded normative explanations of behaviour and representing the different ways in which one perceives themselves, others, and the social worlds (Brunson, 2010, p.225). This becomes especially important for understanding the experiences of the Black population because aggressive policing tactics disproportionately target them.

Data Selection and Gathering Methods

According to Owusu-Bempah (2014), Black men tend to have negative perceptions and experiences with the Toronto police compared to other racialized groups. However, as the research had examined Black youth's experiences and perceptions, I had decided to focus on young-adult Black men's experiences and perceptions because this is also a gap. It is one of the core reasons why I decided to interview Black men who have encountered the Toronto Police at some point in their lives.

Participants had to have resided in Toronto for at least one year at some point in their lives, and specifically come from the neighbourhoods of: Rexdale, Jane and Finch, Regent Park, Mount Pleasant West, Richmond Hill, Rosedale Moore Park or Scarborough. Black men living in the Rosedale Moore Park, downtown sector, and Richmond Hill will be considered to be living in (or lived) neighbourhoods with higher socioeconomic status. Black men living in the other neighbourhoods mentioned above will be considered to be living in (or lived) lower-socioeconomic status neighbourhoods. The area was essential to identify as there is a gap in the Canadian literature that does not take into account the neighbourhood context. However, I was unable to recruit participants from these specific neighbourhoods. Instead, I was only able to interview Black men who had lived in the areas Rexdale area, Jane and Finch area, Scarborough area, and the downtown core of Toronto. A total of ten Black men agreed to share their perspectives and experiences with the Toronto Police and police carding. The reason only ten Black men were interviewed was because the data I attained had reached thematic saturation after eight interviews (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006).

Of the ten Black men, six were from urban neighbourhoods, and four were from suburban neighbourhoods. Despite their geographic differences, they still generated similar responses based on different experiences (Weitzer, 2000). Nine of the respondents held a university Bachelor's degree, while one respondent held a college diploma. Further, the youngest respondent was 23, while the oldest respondent was 26. One respondent had just been hired by a police service, while the others held non-policing occupations. It should be noted that I chose to keep the police officer in the data set because, despite his occupation he is still a member of the Black community. Lastly,

during the interview process, some of the respondents shared their cultural backgrounds, while others did not.

Proposed Sampling Design and Methodology

The sampling design used was snowball sampling and purposive sampling. The reason I used the snowball sampling method was to avoid attaining participants that I may personally know in the Black community as I did not want to encounter bias in the responses. In the same respect, it allowed me to gain access to a “closet” population. Based on the relationship I have with the Black community, I used this technique to gain access to some of the participants. However, the main danger of snowball sampling is that it may influence the shape of the results (Palys & Atchison, 2008). Those contacted are likely to know other individuals who have similar perspectives. In order to avoid this, I decided to “start several different snowballs in several different niches” (Palys & Atchison, 2008, p. 55). This is the most efficient strategy to avoid creating a biased sample, while gaining access to the population. In contrast, I also recruited Black men through purposive sampling for two main reasons. First, there was an opportunity and accessibility for gaining access to a population of those who have encountered the police because I am a member of the Black community. It was easy for me to gain access to the men interviewed because we had personal contact prior to the interview from a previous university institution and Toronto community events. Second, it allowed me to attain and examine information-rich cases to conduct in-depth research in relation to their experiences with the TPS (Palys & Atchison, 2008). In doing so, however, some of the responses may have been biased because of having personal contact. Overall, the Black men interviewed qualified because they fit the age range, had lived in Toronto for at least one year, and had encountered the police at some point in their lives. In order to deal with the biases, I remained transparent and reflexive throughout the process of conducting my research. Furthermore, researchers have supported this strategy in avoiding bias, “In qualitative research, rather than claiming to be ‘removed from the bias’ the effect of the researcher on all parts of the research is acknowledged” (Cheek, Onslow, & Cream, 2004, p. 149).

Method of Data Collection: Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews are justified based on the research questions presented. In order to answer the research questions, detailed experiences and perceptions must be recorded and analyzed in-depth to give context to the social issue discussed (Polkinghorne, 2005). Using semi-structured interviews allowed for a description and clarification of experiences as it is lived and constituted in awareness in relation to policing and race (Polkinghorne, 2005). Capturing the depth of individual's experiences has been particularly vital to the research - not only to address a gap in the literature, but also to provide more context to Owusu-Bempah's (2014) work on Black men's perceptions and experiences in Toronto. Not only is it important to purposely select those who have had experiences with police (both positive and negative), but those who can adequately reflect on their experiences and verbally describe them through dialogue and discussion. This was essential to answer the aforementioned research questions.

Semi-structured interviews allowed for the opportunity to word the questions differently during discussion and allowed for the ability to probe participants during the interview process to explore themes that may emerge and relate to the theoretical framework (Barriball, 1994). In addition, semi-structured interviews allowed for the clarification and exploration of perspectives and inconsistencies in responses. Using this method also allowed for a flexible interview process where I was able to alter questions depending on how participants discussed their experiences with the TPS. Thus, I was able to discover the themes that explored how Black men perceive the elements that constitute negative and positive experiences, and their projected desires for policing interactions.

In addition, responses were especially interesting to me because I share similar demographics with the interviewees. Weitzer (2000) demonstrated a strategy to take into consideration when conducting semi-structured interviews. I "shared membership" with the respondents (Miller & Glassner, 2004, p. 128). The strategy illustrated the significance of being Black myself. Thus, in accordance with this strategy, I assumed participants would be more thorough in their responses because they felt they could identify with me (Weitzer, 2000).

Despite this method being an ideal fit for answering the research questions, semi-structured interviews have limitations. There were times when I found it difficult to know when precisely I should probe respondents during the interview process because of my limited experience in conducting interviews (Doody & Noonan, 2013). Also, because I am a Black man, aspects I was probing and exploring might have been biased because of my subjectivity concerning policing and race. The aspects of the dialogue I saw fit to probe potentially stemmed from my demographic background; thus there was a potential loss of objectivity. In addition, as a research instrument, I unknowingly may have reacted to responses in ways that may not have been appropriate, which could have resulted in the framing of responses. In order to avoid these issues, I was able to practice the interview process in pilot interviews during several qualitative courses to understand how to conduct an interview. In addition, there is no guarantee that the respondents provided an entirely accurate account of their narrative. For instance, interviewees may have provided a generic opinion or position on a topic as opposed to their true personal views (Miller & Glassner, 2004). This would lead to the possibility of participants exaggerating or underemphasizing aspects of their responses in order to conceal emotional or embarrassing issues that would contradict traditional Black perceptions of police. In the same respect, their inaccurate responses may have stemmed from poor memory, lack of understanding of the question, or misunderstanding the definition of police carding. As a result of these limitations, there is the potential that I was not able to capture authentic responses of the Black men's subjective experiences, (i.e. respondents being able to remember their experiences/encounters with police officers, or not understanding what police carding is) which could have harmed the research findings.

To overcome these limitations of inaccurate responses, I discussed the use of the data with participants, I avoided being judgemental when they responded to questions, and I listened attentively to participants (Berg, 2009). I also was aware that respondents especially wanted to discuss their negative experiences; thus, I provided opportunities to discuss their negative accounts of the TPS. As a result, building a rapport was fairly simple as I participated in taking actions that would aid in their comfort (i.e. having casual conversations before the interview started). Lastly, due to using SI, during the

interview process, I was careful to ensure that Black men's responses were viewed as being social constructions of reality.

In recruiting participants, it became apparent that due to their schedules and location it was challenging to conduct face-to-face interviews. Thus, an alternative was using video-conferencing as it was a viable, cost effective, tool which and allowed me to reach participants who were outside the province (Deakin & Wakefield, 2014) . Despite not being able to conduct face-to-face interviews in some instances, video-conferencing interviews allowed for more reflective responses and the opportunity to ask more sensitive questions as respondents were interviewed from their own comfortable spaces (Deakin & Wakefield, 2014). It also became apparent that participants preferred to be interviewed through video conferencing as opposed to face-to-face interactions. I gave participants the option of a face-to-face interview or video conference, and most chose to engage in the latter.

I used Skype as the video-conferencing tool to interview participants because of its international recognition. This provided me with an opportunity to talk to participants and see them in real time, as it has increasingly become an interview method used by other researchers (Deakin & Wakefield, 2014). For me, the only noticeable difference between interviewing face-to-face versus Skype was the geographical proximity. In addition, the most significant setback of using Skype was the "drop outs" where the conversation would have to stop because the video conference lagged. Another issue was the inability to hear the respondents, causing me to ask them to repeat themselves. A significant potential drawback of using Skype was that individuals were more likely to withdraw from the interview by simply disconnecting (Deakin & Wakefield, 2014). This, however, did not take place.

In order to collect the Black men's accounts of positive and negative police encounters, I first developed an interview guide (see Appendix A). This guide contained six questions that reflected my research questions and goals. Once my interview questions were finalized, I organized my topics in a logical order; I placed all questions pertaining to experiences with police together, while questions pertaining to carding were together. In addition, I started each interview with general mundane discussions prior to the interview (i.e. sports). This allowed me to build rapport with the research participants.

When I began the interview I opened with a general question about their experiences with police officers to allow them to provide some of their background on policing in general.

The setting in which the study took place was carefully taken into consideration. As many of the respondents either were working or students, I had to work around their schedule and allow them to propose the setting. However, most of them had requested that the interview take place via Skype. Once all of my data was collected, I transcribed each interview word-for-word into Microsoft Word documents and removed any identifiers (i.e. names). I then printed the interviews and engaged in data analysis.

Method of Data Analysis: Thematic Analysis

There are many forms of analysis to answer the research questions, but thematic analysis is the most effective analytical approach. To explore the notion of “thematic analysis,” it must first be defined. Firstly, thematic analysis is a method made purposely for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns and themes within a data set; furthermore, it interprets various aspects of a research topic (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In contrast to other methods (i.e. narrative analysis, discourse analysis, or content analysis), thematic analysis is not bound to a theoretical framework, so it can be used within different fields of research. For instance, it can be utilized with a realist approach that reports experiences, meanings, and the reality of participants. Conversely, a constructionist approach can examine the ways in which events, realities, meanings, experiences, etc. affect a range of discourses working within a society. Thematic analysis can be a method that works to reflect reality or unravel the surface of “reality.” Thus, SI tends to rely on methods like thematic analysis to uncover deep and rich meanings (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). When analyzing the texts, I brought my own experiences to the text to uncover the connections between the respondents and overarching themes that exist for Black men. In addition, SI and thematic analysis proved to be ideal tools to acquire information as they complemented each other in providing a deeper understanding of Black men’s perceptions and experiences.

Given that the basis of a thematic analysis is themes, it is essential to define what a “theme”. In the literature of thematic analysis, the term is described as using multiple

“adjectives and descriptive phrases” and is able to be expressed explicitly and implicitly (DeSantis & Ugarriza, 2000). However, a theme may be defined as an abstract entity that brings meaning and identity to a recurrent experience and its various manifestations (DeSantis & Ugarriza, 2000). As such, a theme captures and unifies the nature or basis of the experience into a meaningful whole (DeSantis & Ugarriza, 2000).

There are different forms of thematic analyses (inductive versus theoretical thematic analysis) and different types of themes (semantic or latent themes) (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This project will use inductive thematic analysis to reveal the latent themes, as it is most appropriate for the project. That is, when coding the data, I did not fit it into a pre-existing coding frame, or analytic preconceptions. The themes identified were strongly linked to the data themselves, which would not only give a voice to Black men, but provide a genuine perspective on their experiences and the TPS that is not altered by my conceptions.

Thematic analysis is a way of making sense “of seemingly unrelated material; a way of analyzing qualitative data; and a way of systematically observing a person, interaction, a group, a situation, an organization, and culture” (Floersch, Longhofer, & Derrick, 2010, p. 408). The significance of thematic analysis is in the skillful identification of new themes, the confirmation of themes identified in the pre-existing literature, and in the confidence of the systematic nature of coding. In addition, the significance of a theme is determined by what is known in the literature as “substantive significance.” This concept refers to the consistency of themes across study participants, and the significance when finding deeper understandings of “extant knowledge about the object of inquiry” (Floersch, Longhofer, & Derrick, 2010, p. 408).

Given the purpose and significance of thematic analysis, it is important to justify in general why this is the ideal approach to address the research question. In the general research area of race and policing, the debate currently centres on methods and conclusions (Kitossa, 2014). The literature also suggests that criminological and legal positivists’ tactics are used to disqualify, subordinate, ridicule and, ultimately, invalidate truthful claims of racial profiling victims’ conclusions (Kitossa, 2014). Thematic analysis, then, offers a counter-narrative to the invalidation of truthful claims by the Black Torontonians by making sense of their experiences by thematizing the responses

(Kitossa, 2014). In relation to the literature, there are very few - if any at all - thematic analyses that are used to examine the experiences of the young-adult Black male within the Toronto area. Instead, they are often quantified and reduced to numbers (Brunson, 2010). From a methodological standpoint, there is a gap in the literature that does not address experiences and projected desires of policing from this analytical perspective (Brunson, 2010). In addition, in the literature, as presented in Chapter 1, content analysis was the dominant analytical approach to the social phenomenon. There were other approaches in analytic methods such as discourse analysis, but the gap that is most evident in the literature is the absence of thematic analysis.

Part of the power of themes is not in the ability to identify a number of themes that emerge, but rather what they reveal about the social world. Being reflexive and interactive with the data can illustrate what themes and sub-themes reveal about the research topic. The thematic analysis does not need to be applied using foundational rules; rather it enables perspective in that it can identify dominant themes within a small number of participants (Wiginton & Lee, 2014).

To further justify and explain thematic analysis in relation to the project, the advantages and disadvantages are important to identify. One of the benefits of thematic analysis is its flexibility (Vaismoradi, Turunen, & Bondas, 2013). Thematic analysis can be used across a range of epistemologies, research questions, analytical options and thus allows for a broad range of global statements that can be made about the data. Another strength that exists in this analytical methodology is its normative action to inform policy development.

Alternatively, there is also a disadvantage where it can be potentially paralyzing to researchers trying to decide what aspects of their data need to be prioritized. In addition, as a novice qualitative researcher, it is a relatively easy and quick method to learn and execute. This stands as one of the core advantages of thematic analysis for me because during the analysis stage in the project, I was able to complete the analysis properly, which was imperative in terms of validity and reliability. Therefore, due to a lack of experience in analyzing qualitative data, it was strategic to use an analysis method that could be realistically completed correctly and in a reasonable time frame.

Moreover, thematic analysis can highlight similarities and differences across a data set. It becomes apparent that unanticipated insights can be generated from this thematic analysis which in turn allows for a respondent's voice and interpretations to come through in the analysis with evidence from the data that support the claims (Alistair & Green, 2011).

Conversely, one weakness of this method is that some themes may overlap (Attard & Coulson, 2012). This problem would lead to an unconvincing analysis and inconsistency if the overlapping appeared too frequently. To avoid this, all aspects of the theme were created to bind around the central idea or concept (Attard & Coulson, 2012). One of the other disadvantages that may appear is that there is a possibility for a mismatch between the data and analytical claims that are made. This mismatch can be very problematic as it may contradict claims made in the actual data (Tuckett, 2005). To avoid having a mismatch, I made sure that my interpretations and analytic points were consistent with the data extracts (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

There are two types of analysis: Latent Thematic Analysis (LTA) and Discourse Analysis (DA). This project will be conducting a latent thematic analysis in which I will be identifying the underlying ideas, assumptions, conceptualizations and ideologies. The latent approach aims to identify the features that give a theme a particular form and meaning. As this analysis comes from a constructionist paradigm, this form overlaps with the DA, "where broader assumptions, structures and/or meanings are theorized as underpinning what is actually articulated in the data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 13). Latent thematic analysis and discourse analysis are very similar, but can be distinguished by three main notions. First, LTA can be applied to a wide range of critical frameworks, such as SI or feminist post-structuralism (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 13). It can be used to analyze all forms of qualitative data and can address different types of research questions posed by constructionist and critical researchers, whereas DA mainly focuses on qualitative data. Second, LTA has a defined set of procedures and is therefore advantageous for me because I am a novice researcher. In comparison DA is difficult to describe and learn because it does not have a set of procedures making it difficult to access and use (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). Lastly, although LTA recognizes the "constitutive nature of language and discourse," it is limited in that it does not generally

include a micro analysis of language use. As a result, it does not require a technical knowledge of language practice as one would if they used the DA approach (The University of Auckland, 2013).

I analyzed my data through three phases from the thematic latent analysis method. First, since I approached my interview transcripts inductively, I read my texts repeatedly to immerse myself in the data and discover meaning, patterns and so on (Braun & Clarke, 2006). During the transcription process, I began familiarising myself with the data, as some had seen this phase as key step in data analysis in interpretive methodology. As there is no one way to conduct a thematic analysis when transcribing, but at minimum I was prompted to provide a rigorous and vigorous account of all verbal utterances.

In phase two, I began to code the data into three stages. First, by going over the data I had extracted the initial meaning of what the respondent was conveying into one column where I summarized the initial meaning of their statements. Following this, I created a second column where I would take that initial meaning from the first stage and reduced it to a sentence or two that summarized column two. Finally, in column three, I summarized the sentences from the second column into one or two words. It should be noted that these codes differ from the units' analysis (themes) which are often broader.

In phase three, I had a long list of different codes that I had identified across my data set (interviews). I focused on the analysis now on the broader level of themes, as oppose to codes. This involved sorting the different codes into potential themes. To do so, I began thinking about the relationship between the themes, the codes, and the different level of themes (i.e. the main overarching themes, and sub-themes within them). Some codes formed main themes, whereas others formed sub-themes, and other codes were discarded and were categorized into a theme called miscellaneous as they did not seem to belong in themes created. At the end of this phase, I had a collection of candidate themes, and sub themes, as the extracts of data had been coded in relation to them. I then began to review and refine the themes, as it became evident that some themes did not have enough data to support theme or were too diverse, while others collapsed into each other (i.e. two separate themes formed one theme) (Braun & Clarke, 2006). During the review process, I re-read the coded data extracts, and checked to see if they formed a coherent pattern. If they did not, then I considered whether or not the

theme itself was problematic in which case I either reworked the theme, created a new theme, or moved the data extracts to an already existing theme. If they did form a coherent pattern, I considered the if the theme accurately reflected the meaning in the data as a whole. By the end of the phase I had identified my themes and how they fit together which made sense of the data.

Discussion of Validity and Reliability of Instruments

For qualitative research, reliability considers a range of sources and employs multiple measurement methods, rather than “being locked into the quantitative-positivist ideas of replication, [and] equivalence” (Neuman, 2011, p. 214). In addition, reliability for this type of methodology accepts the notion of different researchers having alternative measures to find different results” (Neuman, 2011, p. 214). This is because data collection for this type of methodology is an interpretative process, “in which particular researchers operate in an evolving setting whose context dictates using a unique mix of measures that cannot be repeated” (Neuman, 2011, p. 214).

To ensure validity in this project, I followed three essential steps. Firstly, I focused on achieving authenticity rather than realizing a single version of “truth”. Authenticity refers to offering a fair, honest, and balanced account of social life from those being interviewed (Neuman, 2011, p. 214). Thus, quotes were made explicit to illustrate themes that appear concerning their experiences. Secondly, I focused on providing a detailed account of how those studied understood their events. This will stem from creating good open-ended questions, questions that will not frame responses. Lastly, avoiding false or distorted accounts and creating the links between an individual’s ideas and statements about the social world will help emphasize the validity of this project (Neuman, 2011, p. 214). For instance, asking good questions, having the respondents explore their experiences, and “breaking the ice” demonstrates the validity. I ensured that these actions were taken into consideration during the interview and analysis process (Hand, 2003).

Lastly, it is important to note that due to the sample size, generalizations cannot be made about Black men. Similarly, it is also important to acknowledge that I will have

biases when conducting analysis and is, therefore, a subjective project. More specifically, those biases will stem from my cultural background, how I identify as a Black man, and a novice academic, all in which will influence how I interpret the data. In order to negotiate these biases, I acknowledged their existence to then recognize my assumptions. Although, it should be noted that I could never be bias free. By recognizing these the notion of sample size and bias, it adds to the validity of the project because of the awareness of the central limitations.

Ethical Safeguards and Precautions for the Protection of Human Subjects

As I have focused my project on human subjects to answer my research questions, there are significant ethical considerations that needed to be discussed and acknowledged before conducting my study. First, prior to any interviews, I informed all the participants about the goals of the present study and the types of questions that would be asked. I also explained the potential risks both verbally and in writing via the consent form that they also had to sign. All 10 participants in this study signed the consent form and were informed that I would be keeping their names anonymous by assigning pseudonyms. I also attempted to minimize the possibility of participants feeling that they had been coerced into the study by emphasizing that their participation was voluntary and that they were free to leave at any time during the interview process (Tracy, 2010). In addition, the audio files and transcripts have been kept confidential within a secure location and the electronic data collected will be kept on a password-protected computer. Hard copies of data (i.e., consent forms) will be stored in a secure manner under lock and key in the office of the supervisor.

In the present study, I attempted to minimize any risk or harm to the interviewees (i.e. emotional breakdowns, anxiety etc.) by avoiding emotional questions; instead, I asked broad questions which allowed them to select what information they chose to disclose. Lastly, I allowed participants to discuss any other topics on policing they would have liked to add to the discussion, and I provided my contact information. Lastly, this

project was granted ethics approval by the University of Ottawa Research Ethics Board prior to any interviews taking place.

CHAPTER 3: FINDINGS CHAPTER

This study discovered several themes in relation to Black men and positive and negative experiences with the TPS, perspectives of police carding, and solutions for police carding. These themes were put in order of dominance (how often they were mentioned). Thus, the results from the interview will be presented according to the relevant themes.

Community Engagement through Sports and Coaching

Some of the Black men discussed their positive experiences with the TPS and referred back to coaching or sports and the impact it had on them. Clark discussed the influence a police officer had on him and how he helped him in numerous ways both on and off the football field:

My defensive coordinator was a police officer at Don Bosco, so that's one reason I wanted to become a law enforcement officer. He was a very good guy, positive, umm he showed me the values about life and everything and he was a very positive guy. A good guy he even bought me cleats. He took care of me, like he gave me money when I didn't have money [...] He encouraged me to become a police officer [...] I can call him today and say, how you doing coach. (Clark)

Coaching plays a significant role in how Clark views the Toronto Police and policing in general. When discussing his positive experience, being coached by a police officer clearly had an impact on his perspective, “like that guy was a great influence in my life. Great role model” (Clark). The experience had such an impact that it influenced him to want to become a police officer. Even more so, this officer who was a coach had clearly taken an initiative in supporting Clark, for instance, buying football cleats, and teaching him “life values”, which overall influenced his perception of police officers.

Bruce discusses his experience with the TPS where he volunteered coaching alongside a police officer and the impact it had on his perception. Bruce also witnessed how much the officer cared about the youth and how it influenced their perspective of the TPS: “I just volunteered my time to be there to coach one of the kids and I was coaching alongside the guy and I saw how much he cared and how hard he tried” (Bruce). He continued:

A lot of these kids are from like hoods and stuff. So I remember one time a couple of his police officer buddies were there and one of the kids was, like man 'why are these officers here?' Another kid was like 'man these aren't those cops that you don't like type of thing, you know they're here to watch you play, they support you, they want you to do well'. So it was something where just from seeing that guys character, I was able to look at the other officers there too and feel like 'hey I can approach these guys'. (Bruce)

The idea that this officer is “not like the other officers”, but rather is there to support the youth and the community impacts Bruce’s experience and perception of the TPS. Bruce can approach these police officers who were participating in the football events which creates a positive experience. Bruce discusses how avoiding the police is something he would usually want to do; however, this police officer, through coaching and community engagement, made him feel otherwise:

With that guy, I got to know him for the person that he was because I wasn't meeting him when he was on duty, you know? He might make an announcement about something the police were trying to do at practice and what not, but he was only there for coaching kids like I was coaching kids. It wasn't like we were having a bunch of conversations about law or politics. It was all about football so you know it was something where I got to really level with the guy and see the human side of the officer. (Bruce)

What this demonstrates is that coaching humanizes police officers. He views the police officer as a coach before seeing him as a TPS member, and that they are coaching as equals. Similarly, Logan provided a perspective of building a relationship with a police officer through sports. The friendships created from sports influenced his experience while at social events allowing him to engage in a positive manner:

I meet quite a few officers through martial arts and they've always been very down to earth. They help people out, they've been great guys [...] just very social, friendly, warm, and welcoming. (Logan)

Although this is not directly related to coaching, there is an overarching pattern where community engagement through sports facilitates a positive experience. Community engagement through sports can be used to create positive experiences for Black men. Other participants mentioned sports to some degree, for instance, John discussed:

At the barber shop, which was in a plaza, they always had an officer patrolling, doing foot patrol, or driving through. So anytime you went to that plaza, like

where I got my haircut and stuff, you'd see an officer out there and just be like oh talk about sports or something like that. (John)

It is evident that sports and coaching serves as a gateway to positive experiences and a form of community engagement for Black men.

Categorizing Respect within Black Men and Police Interactions

During the interview process, many of the respondents introduced the concept of “respect” to create a positive experience. However, it is important to explore what “respect” meant specifically for Black men and how they came to understand it. It became apparent that respect was linked to various forms of communication (verbal, i.e. tone, and non-verbal body language).

All the respondents felt that respect needed to be demonstrated through communication. The common words that were stated amongst all respondents were “tone”, “words”, and “gestures” as being important for creating positive experiences. John first explains what communication is for Black men:

There are a lot of things you can do, usually its tone. It can be gestures and mannerisms, it can be voice infliction, and then after that when an officer exhausts all of those deescalating techniques, they try and teach you how to read body language. (John)

What John discussed here is what all other respondents emphasised when discussing respect in relation to communication. Some of the respondents discussed how they would engage Black men if they were police officers conducting a stop:

First of all, I'll talk to him on why he went over the speed limit and ask him 'why did you go over the speed limit?'. Get to know why he did it and maybe he has a good excuse. But I am still going to give him the ticket, but try to be his friend. I would talk to him like a human being and try to calm him down. I wouldn't put my hand on him. I would try to calm him down and understand the reason why he is speeding [...] I'd ask were you going to a party? Were you going to church? Were you going to pick up a friend, why were you rushing? [...] Instead of saying shut up and I am giving you a ticket. You should know the kids story and why he is speeding. (Clark)

Acting in a professional way by saying 'hey this is why I am talking to you' and then after that I would say in a very quick and efficient explain to that person why the they're being investigated. (John)

You have a right to know why you're being stopped you know if you didn't do anything wrong then the officer can't lawfully stop you. (Bruce)

They felt that this explanation of why someone was being stopped or ticketed would illustrate respect, and that being respectful was essentially being professional. It is important for the officer to discuss why a Black man may be violating the law. They also discussed that the right communication causes less problems for the officer as respondents stated:

If somebody approached me like that, I personally believe I would be less angry. (Clark)

Why wouldn't you want to make your job easier, rather than come in and start talking to me in a condescending tone because you're only going to get 'F U bro', 'I don't want to help you', 'get the hell out of my face'. (Peter)

For Black men, communication is an important component to creating a positive experience. Allowing Black males to explain how and why they are participating in whatever they are doing. The respondents added that communication demonstrates respect, as well as disrespect if used incorrectly:

I believe you have to be tougher than those kids, but some of those kids take it as disrespect. Especially when they're with their friends and you say, 'yo move!'. You can't talk to some of those kids like that, some of them are actually good kids. There are a few that are bad, but some of them are actually good. You have to treat all of them fair, but they don't treat all the kids fair. (Clark)

'how are you doing young man is it ok if I ask you a few questions please?' Like 'yes sir' rather than 'hey you come here, come here, we need to ask you questions!' (Peter)

I've been called outright blatantly bad things like 'block nigga', I've been called a block nigga by a white officer before. (Logan)

I don't think that they speak to these people with respect I think they treat them on a lesser life scale. (Tony).

This demonstrates how officers should, and should not, be speaking to Black men. The respondents also argue that it is how police officers speak to Black youth that will demonstrate respect. It is not what the officers say, but rather how they say it. For Clark, however, officers need to be cognisant of the youth's peers that are present during the interaction. It may be perceived as being even more disrespectful if the officer is speaking in a poor tone and using explicit language in front of the youth's peers. As presented above, respondents demonstrated how communication can be used as disrespect for Black men. The connection between communication and respect becomes increasingly evident.

For Black men, the reason why communication is so important is because it can eliminate some level of a power dynamic that exists between police and citizens; as Peter explains, *“respect is when you take out all the other possible factors, and it's just eye to eye, mouth to mouth, and body to body in terms of equality of two individuals”* (Peter). Communication becomes a tool that can be used to demonstrate respect when interacting with Black men. There needs to be awareness from the officer that neither individual is greater or lesser during the interaction.

Although “respect” was greatly linked to communication throughout the interviews, another aspect of respect appeared, such as being courteous. Arthur recalls a time when he had been stopped while driving and had to wait outside while officers searched his car. Arthur, who was very passionate about his negative experiences with the police, felt that being “courteous” would demonstrate respect to him. He refers back to an incident where he was stopped by the TPS while driving a vehicle during the winter season:

You clearly see me cold, assess the situation, you're asking me questions in the dead of winter. O.K, he should be asking me, 'you want to grab your jacket? It's a little cold out here.' instead of me having to ask. Then when I went to put my freezing hand in my pocket, you shouldn't be reaching for your weapon. So, acknowledge the fact that I'm cooperating with you, that's being courteous because I feel like I was respectful of them the entire process. (Arthur)

Being courteous is very important for Arthur and is similar to a form of customer service where his needs should have been taken into consideration.

Most of these responses were referring to the officer respecting the citizen; however, some respondents were stringent on respect coming from the citizen. Two respondents who felt strongly about this were John and Clint. They both felt that respect was important but Black men needed to show it to the police officer too:

It's about manners and how you talk to someone. You don't need to raise your voice in a bad situation. Yea sometimes cops do pull you over for no reason, and it might feel like they are wasting your time, but you don't have to give them attitude right? If you don't show them attitude, they aren't going to show you attitude. They treat y'all how you treat them. (Clint)

The police officer has a duty to protect, keep the peace, public interest, officer safety and all those things. I think that a citizen of any the country or municipality also has a duty to show respect to the authority at the same time, because we live in a society of laws and rules or else it would just be anarchy. So people can't just assume that because I'm a young black man and I might feel there is some system oppressions or whatever that I can just act however I feel like toward authority figures. (John)

They felt Black men should not provoke the police officer and show respect to the officer. In addition, Clint argued that it is to the advantage of the Black man to not be disrespectful, as it would avoid conflict and harsher punishments. For John, just because a Black man may have a perception as to how they are treated by the police, it does not justify or give the right for that individual to be disrespectful toward the police officer. Communication and respect become the responsibility of both the police officers and the Black man.

All those who mentioned respect in their interviews put forth that it was linked to communication in terms of tone, speaking, and how words are expressed, etc. avoiding “condescending” speech (a term the respondents used to describe police negative communication however, I was unable to explore this concept). Most of them felt that it was the officer’s duty to show respect, but Clint and John articulate that it also the responsibility of the citizen. T’Challa provides a counter argument to what Clint and John propose, and introduces race as a significant factor as he illustrates through his experience and perspective:

I haven't needed police and I haven't necessarily chatted with them per se. I haven't felt the need to, or had the courage to talk to them. You know based on my

experiences, and based on what I've seen, I'm not really motivated to be nice to them either. (T'Challa)

What is evident here is that his experiences may influence him not to show respect to the police officer. Furthermore, T'Challa introduced the notion of race as its role in communication and respect:

I don't think talking your way out of it works very well for Black people. Being reasonable while its already escalating is then already too late. Because I think part of the escalation itself is the fact that your Black. So it's already the factor that's making both parties have less patience for each other right? (T'Challa)

T'Challa argues that communication for Blacks may not be adequate in demonstrating respect. That is, Black men trying to convey respect through speaking may not be a viable tool, as race may hinder this from being effective. This point contradicts what Clint and John were trying to convey; however, each respondent's position may be dependent on their experiences as a Black man. T'Challa also suggests that being Black would actually sever any chances of respectful communication, thus creating the inability for Blacks to facilitate a positive experience through communication. Ultimately, for Black men, communication can be used for demonstrating respect as a Toronto police officer. However, it is debatable if Black men can show respect to police officers and have similar results in facilitating a positive experience.

Black Men the Symbolic Nature of the Badge, the Human and Respect

Many respondents discussed a concept of “the badge” and often contrasted it to “the human”. The badge was linked to a type of police ego that exists amongst officers that consequently diminishes the positive experiences with police. In contrast, when a police officer acts more like “the human”, this facilitates a positive experience for Black men. Clark alludes to this idea when discussing how a police officer waving to him made him feel:

I feel like they have respect, it makes me feel good, I feel like I want to become a police officer and they're doing their job. Just because they are a police officer

doesn't mean they have to be so strict like a Robocop. They're human beings too, right? (Clarke)

The officer waving his hand to Clarke made him feel respected, and it also humanized the police officer as opposed to invoking the image of the “Robocop” which is the idea of police officer’s being very strict in their interactions. In contrast, Peter alludes to the badge being connected to a police ego where the officer has an arrogant attitude, while Tony discusses his experience of encountering the badge while being pulled over:

The cop coming into a situation thinking he knows everything. Thinking he could talk in a certain way to these kids, and these kids are saying ‘no sir, you got me wrong, you got me F’d up’. [...] You [The officer] get shown up, and then your frustration creates a hostility because now your position has been threatened. [The officer is] like ‘ooo dang’ I try to come in here as superior and was shown inferior so now I need to bring that level playing field back to my court. That’s when they say ‘you know who you’re talking to? I’m the officer of the law’. Of course I know you’re the officer of the law, you look like an officer of the law, you drive an officer of the law vehicle, I know who you are bro. (Peter)

[The Officer] pulled me over and umm he asked me for my licence and registration. At that time I had my G1 and my G2. I gave him both of them and he said ‘oh you can’t have this G1 card’ and I said back ‘ok I didn’t really know that’. He was trying to say this was ‘another case’ or ‘another fine’ and I guess he wanted me to get flustered and start yelling back and having an argument. He ripped the card out of my hand, he ripped it up or crumpled it up and said ‘I’m taking this now’. And I thought to myself, ‘ok, you’re the big guy, do whatever you want’. (Tony)

For Black men, “the badge” is when the police officer feels they are superior which in turn creates conflict or a negative experience. Peter and Tony continued the description of the badge, however Peter adds that officers need to be aware that they are human and the only separation between the citizen and the officer is the badge:

I’m saying that’s where the respect is, you let that badge become bigger than you. This is when a lot of issues can occur. You think you can get away with certain things, but, it’s like, you’re a man you bleed the same way I bleed. (Peter)

He’s just a cop who wants to abuse his power and was probably getting picked on at school as a little kid. So he thinks ‘let me hide behind a badge and be something I’m not’. I was just looking at him like ok are you happy now? You proved that you’re the big shot like you know you crumpled my I.D, just let me go about my business you know? (Tony)

Officers who attempt to impose their status as an “officer of the law” and act in a way that presumes that they are better than the citizen is an aspect of the badge. Both felt that allowing the badge to become the center of identity for officers is problematic and takes away from the human element. Peter also goes further to explain the badge and how it becomes a mask of the human, in that officers hide behind their badges:

For a cop, don't let the badge, your position, or the uniform become bigger than you as a human being. Remind yourself, at the end of the day that when a cop takes off that uniform he's going to be a father like any other father in the streets, whether he's a bum or not. When he takes off that uniform, when he gets rid of that gun he's going to be as vulnerable as somebody else who doesn't have a weapon in any type of circumstance. If he dies he's going to die like any other person, there's no difference at the end of the day all it is the uniform. (Peter)

Therefore, Peter puts forth that this value of the human demonstrates respect in that the officer acknowledges himself as a human being who is not superior to the citizen. In a practical sense, Peter demonstrates how the badge influences police citizen interactions through communication:

They speak to you in a condescending tone where you're forced to feel like we are verbally retaliating in a sense. Where you either become sarcastic or you become hostile and that's where the whole consent of F the police comes in. (Peter)

Peter introduces the concept of “F the police” that maintains a hostility toward the police that stems from how police officer's treat Black men. Additionally, the poor communication from the badge leads into negative perceptions and experiences with the police. Bruce goes further in illustrating the dichotomy between “the badge” and “the human”, and how that human creates that positive experience:

I see you have a badge on then it kind of sets off the alarm belt. As with that guy I got to know him for the person that he was because I wasn't meeting him when he was on duty you know he might make an announcement about something the police were trying to do at practice and what not but he was just there as coaching kids like I was coaching kids. (Bruce)

Some of the respondents' recollection of events demonstrated that TPS officers taking initiative and demonstrating the human aspect more in depth. Logan demonstrates

this when he discusses a narrative where he got picked up by a police officer at a bus stop in the rain with no umbrella:

I got a ride home in the rain one time from an officer. That was really nice of the officer, and this was at a time I had nothing but trouble with the police. I wasn't as receptive to the person being friendly, as I was on my guard with them but they proved to be very nice in helping out when no busses were coming (Logan).

He goes further to discuss how he feels about this experience, “*Umm made me feel like not everything is black and white not everything is one way*” (Logan). When the police officer took initiative, this created a new perspective for him in that not all police officers are bad and that there are some who are genuine. Even more so, one could argue that Logan experienced the human side of a police officer, where instead of stopping and questioning him, this officer took the time to assist a youth in getting home.

Peter discussed a similar experience where a police officer aided in informing him on his passport during a pedestrian stop. Essentially, an officer had stopped him, identified him, and then let him know that his passport was about to expire. The officer encouraged him to renew the passport so that he would not have to partake in a long process of getting a new one. For him, this was the officer taking an initiative to give him new information, “*he helped me, he gave me information that I might not have had unless I had to speak to this dude had spoken to me?*” (Peter). The police officer aided Peter by going beyond his duties and telling him about the passport. This is important to illustrate because when Peter was asked about his positive experience this was the only one that came to mind. Therefore, one could argue that these types of initiatives leave lasting impacts on Black men. Tony illustrates this in his experiences as well, where he recalls being a youth and stealing from a store and being caught by two TPS officers. He stated that he was not arrested or made an example of, but rather they spoke to him and told him why he should not be stealing:

I was arrested when I was 14 and the experience wasn't that traumatic. I wasn't arrested and put into any handcuffs, they didn't make an example of me so that was ok [...] they sat me down and said 'we understand that you made a mistake. We can tell just by your stature, by your judgements, and how you're answering questions that you know this was something you were experimenting with. We are not going to handcuff you and bring you outside, we are just going bring you to your parents' house and drop you off. (Tony)

What he demonstrated in this narrative was that police officers were trying to be lenient and understanding with him. He deemed this to be a positive experience especially for the officers sitting him down and not “making an example” out of him. This remained a strong memory for him when referring back to his positive experiences. What these responses demonstrate is that officers who take initiative and who use discretion when interacting with the community help create positive experiences for Black men.

Micro-Interactions and the illustration of Respect for Black men

During the interviews, some of the men discussed “Micro-Interactions” (a term I have extracted from the literature and used to describe quick and subtle interactions with police) with TPS officers that were deemed to be both positive and negative interactions and experiences. These small interactions had significant impacts on their experience and perceptions of the police officer. Earlier, Clark discussed his experience with how waving had demonstrated respect. The officer waving his hand had a significant impact on how he perceived the TPS. To better illustrate the significance of these types of interaction, T’Challa, who was very critical about the TPS and police in general, still felt it was a positive experience:

One time I was driving from work on the DVP and it was gridlock traffic. A cop car drove past me and I was expecting to get the usual annoying look, but since he looked at me, or he was already looking at me I was like ‘ok what does this guy want’. He gave me a thumbs up and drove off. (T’Challa)

However, when asked how the thumbs up made him feel he stated that he felt:

surprised, it made me feel good but not about police it just made me think that I realized ok well there are some of these cops that aren’t completely you know, uhh, vindictive” (T’Challa).

Thus, the gesture surprised him because it went against what he traditionally thought about Toronto Police Officers. Although it may not have changed how he viewed

policing, it did suggest to him that there are good police officers. Alternatively, it also would demonstrate that because he was surprised, officers might not engage in these micro-interactions with Black men.

Given these two incidents, Arthur brought forward another aspect of micro-interactions. This would illustrate that what Canadians perceive as a traditional sign of respect or positive experience actually equates to a negative experience for Black men. This is evident when he discusses his experience with shaking the officer's hand:

I wanted to leave like a good impression for me and my friends safety. They didn't find anything in general, so I was just like I'm just going to try and be courteous. I basically didn't want them to know we were pissed off that they stopped us for bullshit. So I said 'ok alright I know you guys are just doing your job' or whatever. I shook their hand and then the officer, who was the passenger that was in the squad car, [...] refused to shake either of our hands, he looked me up and down with a scowl and just walked away. In my mind I was like fuck you too, I didn't tell them to pull us over (Arthur).

Clearly, refusing to shake his hand was clearly a very negative experience for Arthur. However, when the lead officer did shake his hand:

At the time I was thinking maybe well they kind of have to shake my hand. Well, not have to but I feel like they're just doing it because maybe they felt bad for pulling us over in the first place. Especially since they had nothing to find or anything. But it's like I said, I was just doing it to make sure we didn't get our asses beat or anything (Arthur).

Even when the officer may be engaging in a generic positive gesture that usually signifies respect, it can actually create a negative experience. The handshake in this context was perceived to be disingenuous, and not a positive experience. Therefore, micro-interactions such as waving or giving a thumbs up have an effect on experiences; however, this is not to say that shaking hands creates a negative experience, but rather the context of the micro-interaction can dictate the type of experience and perception and the impact that it may have.

Positive Interactions Created in Reasonable Negotiations

When discussing positive experiences for these Black men, police being “reasonable” was a concept that was significant. The following will introduce different perspectives and stories of what it is to be a reasonable police officer that would help facilitate a positive experience. Logan first proposed that the difference between good officers and bad officers is the quality of being reasonable, in contrast to racial profiling, “*I feel like racial profiling is real. It’s very real but for the most part, especially in Canada, police are reasonable for the most part especially the younger officers*” (Logan). The question then arises what does it mean to be reasonable, and other respondents provide examples of this.

For Black men, being reasonable is when officers are lenient and use discretion. Some of the Black men interviewed provided narratives of a police officer being reasonable:

We had a barbeque yesterday and we didn’t have a permit right? You’re not supposed to drink, like you can still go out there but you’re not supposed to or are allowed to drink. They came 10:30 at night and they saw everyone drinking and they could have given everyone tickets. But they came and just talked to us like ‘look we know you don’t have a permit but there is nothing wrong with you being here’ and they said ‘I’m giving you 30 minutes to clean up and leave’ [...] they just talked calm you know what I mean? So they come and feel respected. Some people say no I am not leaving, you take that route and they are going to arrest you, or they could give you a ticket. (Clint)

We had a party, we were really loud and there was a big noise complaint, and there was a lot of people in one spot. Usually they would just shut the place down, but umm in this case they were like ‘you know guys keep it down there are a lot of people here, you guys are making a lot of noise, and we would shut this down but I know you guys are trying to have a good time so its just best if you can keep it to a minimum. Maybe you can tell a couple people to leave and then come back later on.’ You know that really helped out a lot. (Bart)

In these narratives, Black men described police as being reasonable where they approached them and the situation in a reasonable manner, and recognized police could

have been harsher. For Bruce, when he got pulled over in front of his home, he experienced the police being both unreasonable and reasonable:

The issue was I had a ticket on my car and I had actually just paid it off but I guess it hadn't been cleared from the system yet. I guess they started following me and decided to run my plate, they see the ticket on my car and so I was not suppose to be on the road according to what the ticket is saying. They were trying to say 'we are going to take away your licence plate, we are going to tow your car' or something like that. They were trying to decide what to do, I'm trying to tell them that 'hey look I just paid this ticket and my receipt's in the house'. They were saying 'no you cannot go in the house'. They wouldn't let me in the house, so when I am sitting in the car I had to call my mom. This was in the middle of the night, probably 3 o'clock in the morning. I had to wake up my mom and say go in my room and look in my room for the receipt. I had to hope I remembered exactly where I put it, and she came out running out there to the officers showing that I just paid it and the police were like ok. (Bruce)

He continues to discuss how they were reasonable and unreasonable specifically:

They were reasonable once my mom brought out the letter. But I guess even before that they weren't being reasonable [...] They know I live right there because they're looking at my licence, they are on the street, and my receipt is right there. It's not like my car is going to drive away when I go into the house or I'm going to go into the house and they can't come up to the door or something like that. So I was saying let me just go in, and I'll come right back and they weren't trying to let me go and so in that sense they were being unreasonable. (Bruce)

What is evident here is that TPS were not being lenient at first, but after clearing up the confusion, they became much more reasonable in giving time for the ticket to show up in the police database. Thus, being reasonable and unreasonable does have an impact on how they perceive their experiences with the police. Bart had a similar experience as Clint and reached a similar conclusion in terms of being reasonable. These Black men also illustrated their appreciation for the officers being reasonable because they felt that the officers could have been much worse, *"It is very easy in a position of authority to just lay the hammer down"* (Bart). For Black men, this leniency becomes an aspect of what it is to be reasonable. Police officers who enter scenarios with Black men and demonstrate a leniency become categorized as a positive experience. However, T'Challa discusses the issue of race in that Whites are more likely to encounter police being reasonable in

comparison to Blacks. He felt the TPS officers are much more reasonable with Whites than Blacks:

Cops have discretion. They can stop you for speeding and then if they talk to you and feel like you're reasonable they can let you off with a warning. In those instances, where someone else would get a warning, even if you're being as polite as can be its really difficult to hit the same averages as getting warnings as other people. (T'Challa)

He brings forth a very interesting aspect to consider when it comes to being reasonable. Initially what he introduces is that if the police have discretion, Blacks only encounter this notion of police being reasonable if they Blacks are being reasonable as well. In those instances, T'Challa argues we would see discretion, however, he feels that on a broader scale, in comparison to Whites, it is difficult for Blacks to experience this notion of police being reasonable. It happens to Whites or in his words “*other people*”, much more often, whereas when it happens to Blacks, they must fulfill a criteria of being calm, not resisting, etc. in order to experience this notion of being reasonable. This also demonstrates that Black men perceive that the treatment by police officers varies between racialized groups. Simply, Black men feel they are treated poorly because they are Black, and Whites are treated more favourably because they White.

Black Men Engaging in Police Etiquette to Facilitate Positive Experiences

Many respondents discussed this notion of having ‘police etiquette’ or being educated on how to interact with the police. Others argued that it was not the responsibility of Black men to be educated on how to interact with the police, and explored reasons why there was a lack of police etiquette for young Black men. First, it is important to understand what police etiquette is. Tony and John introduce what this notion means to them:

I would say that young Black males don't have a lot of police etiquette on how to deal, and speak to police. When you start yelling at police and raising your voice that riles them up. That's what they want to hear and that's what they want to see so they could call 3 or 4 of them to circle you around and make your day a living hell. (Tony)

There is a way you should carry yourself and a way you should approach the police and I don't think that's taught too much. It's just assumed I don't need to talk to this guy because I am a taxpayer, or I am this, I am that, or I make more money than him or whatever the case may be right? And I think that that's not a good thing to do because obviously if the officer feels that he has a reason to stop you, it's within his grounds. (John)

Interestingly, we are brought back to the notion of communication as a critical way in how Black men interact with the police. More importantly, both of them demonstrate that there is a certain way Black men need to act around police officers. Tony goes further to explore this significance of being educated on dealing with the TPS officers:

When you're driving while Black you have to be educated on these things. Not necessarily all the time [...] during interactions with the police they'll be pulled over for no reason. But the car is of significance, and once again those stereotypes exists where most officers think that Black people don't really work or they do illegal activity. They want to pull you over, and find out about what are you doing, and why are you driving a BMW or a Mercedes Benz. (Tony)

Black men need to be aware of the social issues (such as racial profiling) in terms of stereotypes that officers may have when interacting with them. Otherwise, it can lead to having a negative experience with the police.

Clark and Bruce discuss why some young Black men may lack police etiquette. Clark argued that due to the demographics and social circumstances, some Black men would have difficulty in using police etiquette:

Some of these kids are from the inner city I believe they do not have a father figure. So when someone tells them to move or somebody is more aggressive to them they don't know how to act or it's because they are around their friends. They are trying to act tough, they are trying to get street credit and at that age of 16 to 18 that's the time that your friends matter the most right? So that's why I feel like when those inner city kids don't have a father figure in their life and someone disrespects them it's really hard on those kids. (Clark)

It's just because they don't understand how to handle the situation properly, how to make sure they're complying without giving the officer a reason to be kind of harsh with them. (Bruce)

Clark felt that some Black men who are raised without a father, within inner cities, may not understand how to deal with authority properly, or rather may not have police etiquette. Both discussed how due to a lack of experience in dealing with authority

figures in their early years, they often act inappropriately with police officers. Clint speaks to this experience as he recalls when it happened to himself and a friend who got pulled over by the TPS:

I've been in situations where they pulled over my friend for no reason. But it's the way he talks [...] he gives the cop a reason to try and give a ticket. My friend had no warrant, but he fuckin' got arrested [...] just because of the way he talked back and that's the way the officer took it, you know what I mean? You'll see the difference in treatment because of how you talk to them. You're not raising your voice, they're not raising their voice, and most of the time, they're not going to fuckin' be the aggressor. (Clint)

For Clint, Black men demonstrate police etiquette by not giving the police a reason to become aggressive, which would avoid receiving harsher punishments. This narrative demonstrates this by a situation where his friend was speaking to the officer in an inappropriate way, which led to his arrest. Police etiquette, for Clint, is a concept that influences his interaction and experiences with the TPS. One can see how Black men actually facilitate negative experiences by not having good police etiquette. John discussed how some would argue that there is a form of systemic racism that these Black men do encounter, but says it does not dismiss having poor police etiquette:

You can't just assume that because I'm a young black man and I might feel there is some system oppressions or whatever that I can just act however I feel like toward authority figures. (John)

For John, systemic oppression is not an excuse to have poor police etiquette, rather Black men need to be taught more on how to deal with and respect police officers in general. Alternatively, T'Challa provides a counter position, and his feelings are quite opposite than those of John. He provided an experience where he felt that he was robbed by the police officers while he was a youth and was not able to defend himself due to a lack education of knowing more of how to deal with the interaction. In this sense, him and John align in that there needs to be more education on how to interact with the police. He argues that police etiquette is not the responsibility of the Black men:

A citizen doesn't know anything about cop right? So citizens shouldn't be well behaved because of how he looks, even more particularly more well behaved than someone else because when you're in the situation no one is there to help you. Everyone assumes you're there as another criminal and if you get taken down to the police station they are already giving you the worst treatment, so its you have

no one to defend you. All the frustration builds up and I think that's a big problem there, it's an interactive problem of course but fortunately the people who have the job have the responsibility, it's not the other way around. (T'Challa)

For T'Challa, a Black man should never have to behave in a particular way in the presence of a police officer because he is Black. This police etiquette mainly applies to Black men, and thus, the need to act a specific way in comparison to other groups when interacting with the police because they are Black is inherently problematic. For T'Challa, the assumption when being stopped is that he is a criminal by default for the police officer because he is a Black man. Therefore, police etiquette is not on Black men, but rather the police officer is responsible, as it is their job to do so and ensure positive experiences.

The Relationship Between Neighbourhood Context and Black Men Living in Toronto

Some of the respondents touched on the neighbourhood context. Some of them felt that positive experiences would be influenced by where they were being stopped and one's social status. Clark and Tony discuss these notions and illustrate the neighbourhood context and its influences on the positive experience. Clark begins by providing his position on what dictates how the officer treats a Black individual:

If a police officer is somewhere like Rexdale and he met a Black person he would treat that kid differently then if he went to an area like Mississauga, Yorkville or Forest Hill. Personally, I think the area it influences the cop [...] Usually those kids are rougher and tougher. (Clarke)

Police officers mostly come to my inner city neighbourhoods. Certain cops come here and get the impressions that these guys are from the hood and they don't have the sense of understanding. (Peter)

For Black men, treatment may be different depending on the location. To solve this issue, Clark proposed a solution; he felt that having individuals who were raised in those environments but who became outstanding citizens should be hired as police officers. In the same respect, he felt White police officers, and middle-class Black police officers

would not be effective because they would not be able to identify living in urban neighbourhoods. Thus, Clark is suggesting that the city needs officers who come from those urban spaces or communities to police those same communities. Here, class becomes more prevalent in that the notion of driving while black is related to class. Moreover, Tony feels that the type of car he drives will influence if he gets pulled over and the kinds of questions he will be asked. This suggests that class would influence his experiences as the vehicle represents a class position:

A cop pulls over a Black male in a nice car he's going to say how did you get this vehicle you know? Which is a question, but you are questioning someone's integrity right off the bat. Automatically if Black man is driving a nice car he's more susceptible to be in an illegal activity than any other person, a person of Asian descent, Caucasian descent, or whatever it may be right. (Tony)

In comparison to the other sections in this chapter, this is clearly the shortest of the themes presented. Although, I found this topic to be interesting to explore, there was a lack in responses from the participants. However, I would argue that it is still important to discuss for some respondents it still has an influence on their attitudes and perceptions of the TPS. Again, the respondents would have had to approach unravelled this theme more in order for me to provide more discussion on the topic. Nonetheless, I will explore what is presented here in the following chapter.

Police Carding and Black Men's Solutions

Most respondents felt that carding led into racial profiling and that it would damage the relationship between Black men and the TPS officers:

Most of the time when they do carding it's in the inner city. I personally believe they target minority groups that's my take on it. (Clark)

Just because a kid might sag his pants, wear a T shirt, a fitted cap, or a hoodie it might just mean he's identifying with his culture but it doesn't mean he is a bad kid. But you need to take his information and back him into a corner or make an example of him. (Tony)

That policy doesn't protect Blacks from anything because they're already being targeted. It's assumed that they're the ones infringing on public safety. (T'Challa)

At the end of the day they're just targeting minorities and that has to stop. I have a good number of White friends that I know for a fact that they're doing a lot of illegal stuff. (Arthur)

Others felt that Blacks were more likely to be carded than Whites, and the questions being asked by police officers were “*none of their business*” (Clint). However, the purpose of this section is to move past the continuous issues of carding that I, and these Black men recognize, and rather, put forth legitimate solutions from their perspective. Carding for these respondents needed to be abolished because of its facilitation of racial profiling and ruining relationships between Black men and the police. They felt carding made them feel they were already being identified as criminals, “*there are people who think ‘man why am I being stopped? Am I criminal? I feel bad, I feel like I’m a criminal’*” (John). However, John, who is a Black man who was living in the Jane and Finch area and is now a police officer, defends carding and argues in favour of carding in different ways which is important to discuss as it is not discussed in the literature or media and therefore provides an alternative voice that it is in favour for it. First, he felt that carding was a policy that was made without much police input:

The policy is created without [pauses] There might not have been a lot of input from the police officers themselves or sometimes there may have been but we just lean on a lot of what the public are saying or how the public feels right? But sometimes the police officers are, you know those are the guys in the community, those are the guys that are working. (John)

For John, officers need to be more involved in the making of the policy as opposed to a bystander observing it. It would also suggest that part of the problem with carding is that those who practice police carding may have more appropriate ways of using it that would be better for police and the public.

John also provides some context as to why officers card certain areas and neighbourhoods within the city of Toronto, and that first it is used “*for intelligence purposes*” (John):

You know unfortunately, sometimes a lot of the violent crime and certain people who are perpetuating all types of stats showing certain things. Oh certain areas are being over policed, other than certain places but you have to look at it like this; this is a community who’s also asking for the police presence. If there is a

gun shot in your community every other night you're going to be asking 'man where's the police' you'd rather have them than not have them right? (John)

Thus, there is often over policing of Black communities as opposed to White communities. For John, high crime communities (ex; Jane and Finch area) need police carding to control and surveil??? crime. John also discussed how certain communities ask for police presence in order to protect that community. Furthermore, he discusses his experience of being carded:

I was carded before because of the neighbourhood I was in and the people I was associated with. I get stopped and they say let me see I.D and they'll explain. Sometimes I'll have really good officers, and they'll explain to me 'well we just want to make sure that everybody who is in this community and in this neighbourhood lives here because we are getting a lot of reports from other people who are coming in and causing problems'. (John)

This suggests that carding is meant to ultimately protect citizens, and for him was a positive experience when the police explained to him why he was being carded. He continues to discuss that it is the high-risk neighbourhoods that are often targeted because of the high rate of drug transactions that take place in those neighbourhoods populated by visible minorities. John also provides the reasons why and how we should have carding and why it is a necessity in policing:

Identify people how are you going to identify people every time you get stopped in a traffic stop what does a police officer as for? [Interviewer: ID] Exactly he wants to know who you are. You're just driving the car and it's like man, who are you? You can be a murderer, you can be a rapist, there could be a Canada wide warrant out for you. I don't know who you are, and the court expects that too so we are going to press charges on somebody we have to identify. (John)

Other respondents felt that it hurt the relationship, fed into racial profiling, was used to surveil??? Black men and needed to be abolished because it facilitates negative experiences, "I'd get rid of it because it's just another more it's just more justification for stereotyping and assuming" (Peter). It has become apparent that limiting carding and controlling it is what these particular Black men wanted to see be done:

Instead of just doing one area, let's just say I'm a police officer, and you have 20 cards a month you can't just do 1 area. You would have to do 5 cards in different areas, so like 5 in Rexdale, 5 in Yorkville, 5 in Forest Hill, 5 in Jane and Finch, 5 in Jane and Wilson. Distribute it don't do 15 in this one area then, 2 in Forest

Hill [...] I can put money on this but I can bet you most of the carding happens in the inner city where minority people live. I do not know the stats, but I bet if you look on it, more of the carding are in minority neighbourhoods instead of place likes Forest Hill or Yorkville. (Clark)

If you're going to collect data on people, there should be an expiration date on it. I don't think it should be kept for years, but if you're collecting data to solve something that is happening recently that's fair. But to keep data for years on end it seems unnecessary and sort of an invasion of privacy. (Bart)

Explain to the person why you are pulling them over and why are you carding and why you're asking for personal identification. (Tony)

Thus, there were certain aspects they felt needed to be altered, for instance, Clark felt that limiting carding and putting a strict number on how many times one can card within a month and what areas he felt would help in eliminating the racial aspect of carding. Other respondents felt that the time the information was stored in the database needed to be reduced, while others, like John, felt that simply explaining why someone was being carded was essential. Alternatives to police carding was generally discussed in these realms when trying to think of alternatives to carding. However, the most significant response that all respondents, including John, had spoken of or either alluded to was the notion of community policing in replacement of police carding. To best illustrate this, Bruce provides a response as to why community policing/engagement is better than carding, why it could replace carding, and why it would be better for TPS officers and Black men. He begins by discussing how poor the relationship is between the TPS and Blacks:

I'm sure you remember in high school maybe even in middle school when you know Dipset and all those guys were rolling around with their 'stop snitching' shirts and everything. That was a big thing, everyone was running around with that right? Majority of people that are walking around saying stop snitching and all that they aren't criminals, they aren't people doing anything wrong, they aren't involved in any type of illegal activity. But they're getting caught up in the hype of 'let's protect the criminals' or 'let's protect those who are supposed to be considered dangerous in our community', 'let's protect them from the ones who are supposed to protect us'. The question is why and it's because the people that are supposed to protect us, well we don't feel like they protect us, we don't feel safe, and because we don't feel we are safe from them. (Bruce)

He continues to discuss carding and how to replace it:

The whole practice of carding just creates hostility and that's adding to the problem that's pushing people away, when you want to pull them toward you. Things like that officer was doing, coaching the kids and everything, I think things like that is what the police need to be doing to constantly. Be a face in the community but be there helping, not just standing there with your gun and your badge just looking at people. Come there dressed like a normal person, announce your presence, hey I'm an officer and I'm here to help. (Bruce)

He then explains how it affects communities:

You know if a kid is growing up and knows one of their coaches is a cop, and they live in dangerous area but they've had negative interactions with cops, if this one cop is able to level with them that shows them 'hey they are not all bad'. This cop might be the one that the kid feels he can trust and he can talk to when he has an issue. That's the type of thing you want to create throughout the force, so I mean if I was a police chief, instead of mandating carding I would mandate that every officer has to be involved with one chairmen or one sports team. You don't need to show up every day or anything like that, but show up at least once a month and say 'hey', talk to people, shake some hands, kiss some babies, [laughs] you know just create good will amongst the patrons of your community. (Bruce)

Finally, he concludes his stance, which echoed with many respondents' answers:

If you create an environment of trust within the community you're more likely to get a positive response from people. If you have things like 'tips' or 'crime stoppers' and you want people to report those crimes you have to make people feel comfortable with your officers, you have to make people feel like I can trust the police. (Bruce)

Bruce brings forth many aspects here when discussing carding but mainly replacing it with community policing it is creating trust. It is clear that carding will not alleviate the issues as it is clear that it only damages the relationship and leads to racial profiling. In addition, it is even clearer that the themes that emerged in the positive experiences are important for Black men in getting rid of carding. For instance, the coaching as previously discussed, helps eliminate that tension, creates trust and opens up dialogue between Black men and the TPS. Therefore, as Bruce describes, implementing community policing where all officers must participate would eliminate the need for carding because the relationship with Blacks would be a trustworthy relationship with the

TPS. Although most align with this idea, John brings forth an interesting point that would argue against community policing. He felt that it would not work in Toronto:

In a city like Toronto that's a hard thing because its huge and diverse city. It would be hard for officers to start knowing everybody, but that would be the only way to let me find out who's who in the community right? It would be more on the officer to go out and shake hands with people. Unfortunately, you don't have time to do that, because of how it works right and you're getting high volumes of calls.
(John)

Despite what community policing may offer in this situation, John proposes that it may be impossible to actually execute it properly. It may be unrealistic in a city that is so diverse and with such a massive population.

Categorized Negative Experiences

After examining the positive experience of some Black men, the following will present the negative experiences of Black men. As it was discussed in the literature review, the focus is on the positive experiences but also touches on negative experiences. The biggest issues that appeared were racial profiling, excessive force, and poor police treatment toward Black men. To first illustrate, when discussing the positive experiences, it was evident that the damage of negative experiences was very apparent. As Arthur explained what a positive experience was for him, *"A good experience with the police force is them leaving me alone"* and continues *"Man my positive experience is the police leaving me alone. Through high school, I've gotten that 'oh you fit the description', I was actually in a black hoodie walking home from high school"* (Arthur). If leaving him alone is a positive experience, then it illustrates how poor the relationship is between him and the TPS. Almost all respondents discussed assumptions and racial profiling as being normalized, *"Honestly, Black people in general get racial profiled all the time you know and I'm like it is what it is"* (Clark). Most responses and experiences sounded very similar to Clark and many times individuals argued it stemmed from a history between Blacks and Police:

Umm I think if an officer approaches somebody because we already have a history as Blacks. We are naturally going to be defensive, although this generation might be different, in the past we were naturally defensive with

authorities because we were taught that they don't treat us the same. Through example they've shown us that they don't treat us the same, and this leads the whole discussion on profiling. (Logan)

A Black guy getting stopped might feel like 'hey you know there's a whole history of racism toward Black people in North America'. It still feels fresh to a lot of people, so when they are being stopped, they feel they are being targeted. (John)

Some respondents had accounts that demonstrated excessive force. T'Challa discussed how he witnessed his friend being killed by an undercover police officer while Peter provided a narrative on his family experiencing excessive force when his cousin had been violating his curfew by being outside his home:

I'm opening the door and my mom is right behind me, I'm like 'yo why you running?' and as he was running, he's like 'yo these guys are trying to freakin swing on me'. I guess one of the cops tried to swing at him when he was talking to them. He freakin' gets to my door and as I'm saying 'yo what are you guys doing?', my mom comes in and like several cops tackle, stomp and punch him in the face [...] me, I was just cussing at them. Some of the cops, who like had a hand on my cousin are still good, and I was just cussing these guys because they put a gun to my mom's face and all this stuff I'm just snapping at the police. So that's one of the experience I had already felt like I am not really cool with police. (Peter)

Many of the Black men discussed their negative experiences and how they come to have distaste for the TPS officers. These are just an example of the types of negative encounters Black men have with TPS officers.

Lastly, the discussion of the difference in treatment with regards to White versus Black came up throughout the interviews. They felt that Whites were treated better than Blacks. Although John felt that this was not the case as he put forth the argument that members of Hells Angels are stopped frequently based on how they dress and look and yet are not claiming racial profiling. Alternatively, other respondents felt that Whites still received better treatment. To summarize this stance:

I know for a fact that they're doing a lot of illegal stuff. But they could just be walking in some cargo shorts and a T-shirt and have a pound of cocaine in their backpack or something and will just walk past the police like 'how are you doing officer' and have him go about his business. But me, just based off the colour of my skin I'll get stopped and yea it's just not right. (Arthur)

Overall most of the discussion on the negative experiences did not present any initial surprises, as the stories were generally horrific and connected to racial profiling, racialization and racism.

CHAPTER 4 DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

In this chapter, I will discuss the significance of the results, in accordance with the SI framework and literature review. As discussed in Chapter 1, the fundamental gap this project seeks to address is the lack of in-depth exploration of positive experiences for Black men with police within Toronto. The following will address this in conjunction with the literature and findings sections.

Black Men’s Categorization of Positive Experiences with the Toronto Police Service

Based on the findings, a categorization of positive experiences for Black men stems from “Community Engagement through Sports and Coaching”; “Reasonable Negotiations”; “Demonstrating Respect between Blacks and Police Officers”; and “Policing as Humans and Taking Initiative”. These four themes were categorized as being empirical aspects of positive experiences with the TPS.

Owusu-Bempah (2014) had discussed positive experiences with the TPS for Black youth and found the theme “police officer involved in sports”. However, as he focused on Black youth, he did not provide enough context as to how and why police officers’ involvement in sports provides a positive experience, but rather that they were factors for perceptions of positive experiences. In relation to the findings section, there is consistency with my findings and Owusu-Bempah’s (2014) work as both projects discussed coaching and sports as a tool for facilitating positive experiences. However, I have addressed the gap by illustrating the context as to how and why it has lasting impacts. Many of the respondents referred back to “Community Engagement through Sports and Coaching” as a positive experience because of the lasting impact it had on their perceptions of police officers. When police officers engage with Black men through sports and coaching, they humanize police officers. Black men no longer see officers as being “authoritative” and “oppressive”; instead, they are viewed as community members, teachers, role models, partners, etc. Once these Black men were able to humanize the police officers into these other roles, this facilitated positive experiences, which resulted in outcomes such as staying in contact with those respected officers, despite some Black

men admitting that they are usually distant in engaging with police officers. Sports and coaching, then, when used to engage Black men, become tools that facilitate a positive experience that forms perceptions of the TPS because it changes the police officers' role in Black men's lives. As Owusu-Bempah (2014) presented this theme, I have provided more context and have contributed to this aspect of the literature.

The literature on positive experiences did not discuss any themes similar to the notion of "reasonable negotiations". More specifically, Owusu-Bempah (2014) and Boyles (2012) analyzed Blacks' positive experiences and they did not encounter this theme. However, by conducting an inductive exploratory approach to their experiences, I was able to present a possible new theme for Black men and their positive experiences. For Black men, reasonable negotiations take place when officers are able to use discretion and are lenient when enforcing the law. When officers are lenient and use discretion, Black men are able to recognize how officers could enforce the law, and, thus, appreciate when they do not. For instance, a respondent discussed when officers responded to a noise complaint and told the respondent that they were allowed to continue their festivities, but that they needed to lower the volume of the music, rather than have the officers shut down the event and begin issuing tickets. This exchange was perceived as officers being lenient and using discretion in favour of the respondent, thus ultimately creating a positive experience because the officer did not enforce the law. Therefore, when officers are negotiating reasonably, Black men appreciate those instances because such a situation could, alternatively, be handled in an undesired manner. Black men desire reasonable negotiations because they are aware that officers can be unreasonable. A subtle significance of this theme is that, for Black men, when officers are being reasonable such an exchange provides the perception that Black men are being treated as first-class citizens under the law. That is, they are no longer treated as individuals who are lesser than members of other racialized groups. However, as reasonable negotiations are categorized as a positive experience for Black men, it gives the perception that Black men are treated equally when interacting with the TPS. One could consider whether or not Whites encounter reasonable negotiations much more often than Blacks. Although reasonable negotiations are categorized as a positive experience,

such exchanges also allude to the issue of inequality of treatment for Blacks in comparison to Whites.

Bradford, Jonathon, and Stanko (2009) discussed how individuals (excluding race as a factor) living in the United States of America and the United Kingdom have positive experiences when officers focus on the quality of personal encounters. For instance, the way in which officers treat citizens and communicate decisions is important for creating positive experiences. Personal contacts and communication with the police become vital with respect to how people form ideas about the police, suggesting that contact is essential in personal experiences and demonstrating who police respect. My project reaffirms their findings which emphasize the significance of communication and treatment of citizens within a Canadian context. However, more specifically, this project provides a more in-depth analysis by linking communication to respect for Black men living in Toronto.

Within this project, Black men categorized their positive experiences through the notion of respect in three distinct ways. Firstly, for Black men living in Toronto, respect is demonstrated through various forms of communication. This element was present in this study in that the respondents discussed how personal contact with police must have communication that demonstrates respect, as it affects their perceptions of the police. In order for a positive experience to exist when interacting with the TPS, respect must be present, otherwise interactions lead to conflict. First, it is through communication (speaking, language, tone, etc.) where respect is present for Black men. For instance, respect is demonstrated during a police stop when officers provide explanations for their actions, or when officers allow Black men to voice their concerns and reasoning for their actions. Once again, there is a parallel between the literature and the findings; however, I have provided greater in-depth context and have shown how it applies to Black men and their positive experiences.

In the literature on police subcultures, Micucci and Gomme (2005) discussed the subcultures that exist within police organizations. They found two types of subcultures: “the street cop culture” and “the management cop subculture” (Micucci & Gomme, 2005). Of the two, the street cop culture was the topic of interest because it viewed excessive force as acceptable if an officer is being disrespected, threatened, or is dealing

with disorderly individuals (who were often those of minority status). In addition, this subculture demonstrated a perspective where officers who subscribe to the “street cop culture” are engaging in “real policing”. Given this subculture, it became apparent that it could influence the interaction with Black men. More specifically, Black men may have encountered police officers who were from different subcultures within the TPS, but we do not know this for certain. As a result, the project provides, more or less, insight into these possible implications. In relation to this project then, it is evident that communication stands as a fundamental component of respect for Black men as it reduces the power dynamic that exists between them and police officers.

More specifically, respect falls into two subcategories after communication: the “Symbolic Nature of the Badge and the Human” and “Micro Interactions”. For Black men, there is a dichotomy between “the badge” and “the human” that demonstrates respect and disrespect when officers are interacting with citizens. Firstly, the badge is a part of a police ego that exists amongst police officers. This concept is similar to what is known in the police culture of the “street cop” (Micucci & Gomme, 2005). For Black men, this police ego plays a role in the day-to-day interactions with Black men that becomes interpreted as the badge. The badge is an extension of the street cop culture in which Black men perceive the officer to feel superior to them.

Conversely, Boyles (2012) alluded to the concept of “the human”. Boyles (2012) discussed how officers who smiled, acted as “gentlemen,” and extended himself/herself in an effort to solve problems meant a great deal to respondents. She also explored how friendly and helpful experiences with the police stemmed from officers waving and saying hello, and looked at how brief exchanges of conversation and “joking around” were ways in which officers were normalized or humanized, making officers seem “more citizen-like rather than authority-like” (Boyles, 2012, p. 123). However, similar to Boyles’s research, this project not only provides context to these gestures, it also incorporates the Canadian context and demonstrates how and why Black men attribute these practices to a positive experience as it relates to respect. For Black men, the human is where the officer acknowledges himself/herself as an equal, as opposed to a superior, and is able to demonstrate respect through communication. When the officers are able to communicate effectively with Black men, such an exchange facilitates the positive

experience because Black men no longer perceive the officer as being superior to him; they are viewed as equals. Furthermore, the human aspect of policing is demonstrated when officers take initiative. When officers take initiative, it becomes categorized as a positive experience because it eliminates negative stereotypes of police officers for Black men and leaves lasting impacts on their perceptions and experiences regarding the police. For instance, one respondent discussed a scenario he experienced as a youth where the police officer had picked him up while he was waiting at the bus stop in the rain. This interaction made him feel that officers were not inherently bad individuals; therefore, he found it to be an experience that was positive.

Jeffers (2014) discussed the notion of “racial microaggression” that referred to subtle acts of racism which visible minorities experience during their daily lives. These exchanges accumulate over time, causing an individual to feel an encounter with a police officer to be more contentious when it may not be. Alternatively, Owusu-Bempah (2014) and Boyles (2012) discussed concepts of micro-interactions where officers having brief exchanges or making nice gestures had impacts on Black men’s perceptions of the police. Both authors demonstrated that it influenced perceptions of police, but neither of them provided an in-depth context as to how and why these interactions can be deemed both positive and negative within the Canadian context.

My findings add to the literature by providing more context to this type of interaction and illustrating how it can facilitate both positive and negative experiences for Black men. In addition, as both authors discuss these gestures and their lasting impacts, I present these interactions as being a type of micro-interaction for Black men that plays a role in facilitating a positive experience. Nonetheless, my work was consistent with their findings where the positive micro-interactions did have lasting impacts on Black men’s perceptions of the police. More specifically, it became apparent that the context of the micro-interactions did shape Black men may perceive the police. Micro-interactions can be both positive and negative, depending on when and how they are used when interacting with Black men. For instance, when one of the respondents was discussing his experience when shaking an officer’s hand (after being pulled over), he felt that the officer was disingenuous, which resulted in a negative experience. Conversely, when

another respondent had an officer wave at him, he categorized it to be a positive experience because he was simply walking by.

Clearly, these are two micro-interactions with the police, but two different perceptions and experiences on that interaction because of the context surrounding the transaction. In addition, as a micro-interaction demonstrates either respect or disrespect, it lends itself to a form of communication, which is body language. Therefore, a micro-interaction can be categorized as a positive experience because of its lasting impact on the perceptions of the TPS, but can also be categorized as a negative experience. In relation to the literature, this contributes by not just merely discussing that these interactions are positive for Black men, but also how context influences these kinds of interactions, specifically for Black men living in Toronto.

Given the aforementioned themes, communication and respect become the overarching concepts that emerge that are fundamental to facilitating positive experiences. I have demonstrated that, without respect, Black men cannot have positive experiences with the TPS. Therefore, once the TPS has acknowledged and applied what Black men deem to be respect and its different aspects, it is then that the police can begin to create positive experiences on the day-to-day interactions. This is a gap that the literature has not addressed, and this project adds to that discussion by providing more context to that particular topic.

Important Factors for Black Men in Facilitating Positive Experiences

The findings section demonstrated that there are certain factors that aid in facilitating positive experiences. Black men demonstrated that, along with respect and communication, a neighbourhood context, and police etiquette, there are factors that influence when positive experiences can take place for Black men.

One of the significant factors attributed to the attitudes of the police was the neighbourhood context, as addressed by Weitzer (2000). Weitzer examines how Black men's perception and attitude of the police depends on the neighbourhood in which they reside (Weitzer, 2000). More interestingly, he found that Blacks from a middle-class

community had more positive attitudes, and more positive experiences and perceptions of police officers for various reasons, such as less police presence in those neighbourhoods, which led to fewer police confrontations with Blacks (Weitzer, 2000). Conversely, in a later study, Weitzer (2010) found that there were studies that had inconsistencies within the literature with class being a factor in attitudes toward policing, though responses on this topic varied depending on the respondent's frame of reference. For instance, an individual from a low socioeconomic status neighbourhood who is providing an evaluation of police services in his/her own neighbourhood will be more negative, referring to poor response time, misconduct, and crime prevention. However, when middle-class Blacks discuss general policing, they are much more critical than their disadvantaged counterparts because they were more likely to be educated and therefore aware of the systemic racial issues (Weitzer, 2010).

What this observation demonstrates is that Black men are influenced, to some extent, by a neighbourhood context. In addition, Razack (2002), Teeluchsingh (2006), and Bass (2001) discussed the notion of space and race. Their work suggested that, depending on the space a visible minority occupies will influence their experiences and perception of the police. For instance, Black men who occupy urban spaces (low socioeconomic neighbourhoods) will have a different experience and response when referencing their encounters with the TPS compared to Black men occupying suburban spaces (high/middle socioeconomic neighbourhoods). The existing literature, then, illustrates the gap as to how the neighbourhood context and space influence Black men's positive experiences with the TPS.

One of the themes that demonstrated this gap was the "Neighbourhood Context for Black Men Living in Toronto." For the few Black men who discussed this topic, there was the perception that the location where they were interacting with police officers influenced how officers communicated and demonstrated respect to Black men. The space in which Black men interact with police officers will shape whether or not the experience will be positive or negative. One of the respondents echoed that officers treat Black youths and Black men differently if they reside in urban neighbourhoods, such as Jane and Finch. Alternatively, those who live in suburban neighbourhoods, such as Richmond Hill, would more likely encounter positive experiences. Thus, space and

neighbourhood context operate as two factors that influence how officers interact with Black men from their perspective. With a neighbourhood context in combination with space, it is evident that socioeconomic space is an underlying element for Black men when engaging with police officers. The literature separates neighbourhood context and urban space; however, from the perspective of Black men, these elements are interchangeable because these two concepts facilitate positive and negative experiences. Black men feel that police officers racialize these socioeconomic spaces as being “desirable” and “undesirable” when interacting with community members (Teeluchsingh, 2006).

Similar to what Weitzer (2000) discussed in his work, it was apparent that the neighbourhood context strongly influenced how these Black men perceived the interactions of the TPS. The neighbourhood context became more apparent when their negative experiences with the police happened while living in the poorer neighbourhoods. For instance, one respondent discussed how the TPS had used excessive force on his cousin and mother during a police encounter in front of his home, which was within one of Toronto’s lower socioeconomic neighbourhoods. Most of the respondents worst encounters with the police had taken place in the low socioeconomic neighbourhoods, this could suggest that my findings were consistent with what Weitzer (2000) proposed in relation to the neighbourhood context and perception; those who come from lower socioeconomic neighbourhoods would likely have negative perceptions and experiences with the police. Conversely, respondents who had now entered the higher socioeconomic status had a much more positive outlook on policing in general; they were more likely to have a pro-police outlook on policing or wanted to be police officers themselves. This suggests that the neighbourhood context and space has an impact on perceptions and experiences with the Toronto police. As men move between statuses on the social strata ladder, their experiences and perceptions may shift as well when interacting with the police. However, one of the situation to consider was “driving while black”. One of the respondents suggested that as he moves up the socioeconomic ladder, police officers harass Black men more because there is an assumption that they could not legitimately afford luxury vehicles. Therefore, it does suggest that the experiences are more dependent on the race than class.

One finding that was not present in the literature was this notion of “police etiquette”, which was a factor that influenced positive experiences. The theme of “Black Men Engaging in Police Etiquette to Facilitate Positive Experiences” is referring to the notion that there is a certain way that Black men need to act when engaging with police officers, as it influences whether or not an experience will be positive or negative. This theme was important because it demonstrated that if Black men show respect and communicate in a respectful manner, they felt officers would be more inclined to treat them better. This observation presents an interesting shift in the thought processes of respondents in that the responsibility for positive police interaction belonged to the Black man, rather than the police. Some respondents think Black men needed to be taught how to interact with police. However, one of the respondents echoed that the problem emerging is that positive interactions become Black men’s responsibility, when it should be the responsibility of those who are professionally trained in law enforcement. Therefore, although Black men perceived police etiquette as a factor in facilitating positive experiences, it was also apparent that there was a disconnect in how they viewed the function of police officers.

There were more theoretical implications of our findings.

“Frontstage” and “Backstage” Performances between Black Men and the Police

In the literature, I discussed the SI notion of the “Frontstage production” and the “Backstage production” (Goffman, 1969). Goffman (1969) discussed this form of social interaction as being a theatrical performance; however, the literature has failed to address how these concepts are used for Black men, specifically when interacting with the TPS (Kitossa, 2014). As previously discussed, the Frontstage production is where individuals are expected to present themselves in a socially acceptable way in front of others, e.g., how one acts and dresses for a job interview versus how one acts and dresses for a nightclub (Cahill, 1998). It is through these personal fronts that individuals can manage others’ impressions. Thus, for Goffman, most social settings consist of the Frontstage. Alternatively, the Backstage production is where the performer can step out of character,

is completely separate from the Frontstage, and can relax (Appelrouth & Edles, 2008). However, given this understanding of these two SI concepts from a White perspective, the literature presented a gap in which we knew little about Black men and the Frontstage and Backstage. My data demonstrated that Frontstage is a protection mechanism that protects Black men from having negative encounters with police officers. The SI literature on this concept failed to address this aspect due to the use of the Eurocentric lens to examine interactions (Kitossa, 2014). That is, by understanding the frontstage and backstage productions from the perspective of White males, SI missed the **other functions of these concepts**. Specifically, how it functions for racialized minorities is different for Whites.

From the racialized perspective, the process during the interaction between Black men and police demonstrates a different way of understanding the two SI concepts. For Black men, the Backstage is the awareness and perspective on racial discrimination and racial profiling by police officers. Black men's perspective on policing exists in the Backstage and reveals itself during conversation with other members of the Black community. Despite their positions on policing, they never allow it to emerge in the Frontstage. Rather, they call for a completely different performance when interacting with police officers, which is "police etiquette." Although Black men act respectfully toward police officers (Frontstage), they may not think respectfully of police officers due to their negative experiences (Backstage). What this revealed was that these Black men are cognizant that there is a particular way they should act when interacting with the TPS. Black men recognized the need for police etiquette, as it was how they perform in their Frontstage (Goffman, 1969). For Black men, police etiquette is the adaptation of the appropriate Frontstage when dealing with the TPS and showing respect. The reason for the act is to protect against negative experiences with the police. As a Frontstage production, police etiquette is a protection mechanism. For instance, the reason these particular Black men feel that police etiquette was essential when interacting with the police was because officers sometimes use excessive force, act disrespectfully, administer tickets, and so on, ultimately creating a negative experience. Another example was when one respondent discussed a micro-interaction with a police officer during which he wanted to shake the officer's hand. The reason behind the respondent wanting to shake

the officer's hand was so that the officer would not harm or perceive the respondent negatively. Despite wanting to shake the officer's hand so he would not have a negative experience, his Backstage presented a critical outlook on TPS and animosity toward the police. Therefore, Black men must perform police etiquette despite how they feel about policing to protect themselves from harm and attempt to facilitate a positive experience.

The notion of Frontstage performance and police etiquette reveals two problems concerning Black men and policing (Goffman, 1969). The underlying issue with police etiquette is that the responsibility of the performance and facilitating a positive experience now belongs to Black men, although police officers are the ones who are equipped with the training to deal with a range of citizens. In practice, this would lend itself to blaming Black men who are victims of police abuse for their non-criminal actions. For instance, in the United States, the narrative of police abuse has emerged from the right wing, where Black men must perform police etiquette to avoid being killed by police officers (King, 2016). This creates the narrative that Black men are killed, not because of police incompetence, fear of the Black community, racism, and so on, but rather due to their inability to act appropriately when interacting with police. Therefore, placing the responsibility on Black men to perform police etiquette can lend itself to a troubling narrative. Secondly, this alludes to the idea that Whites do not need to perform police etiquette because the social issues are not as severe for them (Owusu-Bempah, 2014). This suggests that police etiquette is only applied to Blacks and no other groups. This demonstrates inequality in treatment under law enforcement practices. That is, Black men as a social group must develop police etiquette, whereas other groups do not have to do so. To go further, as it relates to racialization, this particular characteristic is more than a defence mechanism (police etiquette) that only Black men experience, but rather it is a reaction to racialization. The fact that the Black men have to justify themselves if they are driving a nice car, they have to quickly show they are University students by showing their student I.D etc. Therefore, as Black men are worried about the police reaction during an encounter, they have to show that even if they are a Black person, they are a good productive citizen.

Ultimately, what became clear after examining positive and negative interactions was that Black men's Frontstage performance is more important than their Backstage

performance. This is because the Frontstage is a defense mechanism that saves them from having negative experiences with the TPS. It is best for the Backstage not to emerge during social interactions with the police, as it can prove dangerous for Black men's well-being. This is a particularly interesting finding because the SI literature failed to understand these concepts from the Black perspective.

The “I” (Self-Identity) and “Me” (Social Identity) and Black Men’s Experiences

In the existing literature on SI, the “Me” (i.e., the socialized aspect of the individual; the social self) to which Mead (1972) referred was an organized set of attitudes that creates values and norms for individuals in society. Alternatively, the “I” is the free actor, or the non-social, non-controlled part of the self. Given these two concepts, within the SI literature, there is little on the topic of Black men and how these two concepts contribute to creating or reducing positive experiences with the TPS. This project addressed this gap within the findings chapter and adds to the literature by applying these concepts to Black men and their interactions with the TPS. There exist two sides of the self, the “I” and “Me,” and it became apparent through their experiences and interactions with the TPS that both emerged. My data shows that Black Torontonians are reluctant to reveal the “I” during their interactions with the police because the consequences are much higher for racialized people. This is a major shortcoming in the SI literature because the “I” and “Me” management is often discussed from a White perspective and therefore tends focus on social stigma; however, it fails to acknowledge fatal consequences that Blacks experience (Kitossa, 2014).

Firstly, the “I” (the free actor, non-social, non-controlled), was not discussed by most respondents, although one did mention that he began yelling at Toronto officers when stopped in front of his home. For him, it was “out of character,” and he felt he was lucky the TPS did not harm him. It became apparent that during these social interactions, Black men cannot let the “I” emerge, as it facilitates negative experiences despite how they may feel at the time. That is, Black men are aware that the free actor cannot be free when engaging with police because the perception is that the consequences are much more severe because they are a racialized group. Specifically, if they are a racialized

group, they are more likely to have negative encounters with the police, and acting as the “I” only increases the likelihood of negative experiences. Therefore, it is for their safety that the “I” does not emerge. There cannot be a “Did I really do that?” moment because it could have fatal consequences. Some have discussed how it could lead to more officers appearing or causing the officers to act more aggressively (Charon, 1998). In the SI literature, by using a White perspective to conceptualize the “I,” it is clear that the concept has failed to consider race and racial discrimination. In other words, incorporating race has revealed not only a shortcoming in understanding the “I” but a different way of understanding the unique process in which racialized groups engage on a daily basis.

During the positive interactions with the TPS, the “Me” facilitated the positive experience. Based on the personal and vicarious experiences when interacting with the TPS, Black men develop the socialized “Me” to produce favourable encounters when interacting with officers. Through the accumulation of knowledge of the Black experience, they develop the “Me,” which therefore facilitates how Black men attempt to act when interacting with police officers (Charon, 1998). For instance, some respondents stated that during the interaction, they would make an effort to demonstrate that they were students. The assumption is that if they can be seen as productive members of society who comply with the rules that govern them, it would result in officers treating them better. The “Me,” then, is the internalization of society’s norms and values coming through in the interaction that Black men believe would facilitate positive experiences. As long as Black men are embodying what society deems to be law-abiding citizens, officers will treat them appropriately.

As the “I” and the “Me” are always interacting with each other internally in Black men, the respondents gravitated more toward the “Me” as a means for facilitating the positive experience, whereas they demonstrated through their recollection of police interactions that “I” facilitated negative experiences (Charon, 1998). Given this discussion, we know more about how the “I” and the “Me” contribute to creating or reducing positive experiences with the TPS.

The “Toronto Police Service” Label and Interactions

The existing literature presented the concept of labelling from the SI perspective and suggested that as we interact with others, we label them and tell them who we think they are; our acts thus become a symbolic statement (Charon, 1998). Furthermore, as discussed in the literature, as individuals interact with others, we label them:

The more we become someone, the more we act accordingly; the more we act accordingly, the more likely others will see us for what we have become; the more others see and label us in this manner, the more we will continue to become that someone (Charon, 1998, p. 166).

As individuals label people, they take on the identity given to them and act more consistently with it (Charon, 1998). This project added to the literature by examining how the label of the TPS influences how young adult Black men interact with them. This aspect of SI is demonstrated in the findings section, which slightly advances the discussion on race and policing. Two aspects to this idea of labelling from the SI perspective were evident in the findings section. First, Black men attribute labels to police officers because of their interactions with them over time, as discussed in the literature. The most consistent label that emerged from the negative experiences and interactions was “the badge.” Alternatively, the label that emerged from positive experiences and interactions was, as previously mentioned, ‘the human’. Police officers’ actions are thus symbolic statements. For instance, the officer engaging in community policing is viewed as “the human”, whereas the officer facilitating negative experiences with condescending tones (i.e., a term they noted as an officer being better than the citizen) and negative forms of communication are seen as “the badge”. Therefore, police officers’ actions toward Black men become symbolic statements of negative and positive experiences (Charon, 1998).

In the findings, a respondent recalled an incident when the TPS was coaching alongside him. The Black youths that were present at the time defended the officer and the officer’s colleagues. SI suggests that act of defending the police officer would stem from the youths’ labelling the officer as “the human”. In the same instance, SI suggests that the officer takes on the role of the coach (the human) and therefore acts appropriately

toward Black men because he is admired by the Black youth. These labels Black men attribute to officers can influence how Black men interact with police when police fulfill a role that is outside of how Black men normally perceive the TPS. As officers participate and earn the label of being “the human” through positive experiences, Black men act positively toward them. Conversely, when officers participate in the label of “the badge”, through negative experiences, Black men may be reluctant to cooperate and interact positively with police. It then becomes evident that as Black men label police officers based on their experiences, their actions toward police officers shift as well.

Negotiations of Culture for Black Men When Interacting with Police

The existing literature presented the definition of culture from the SI perspective and how it influences individuals’ actions (Charon, 1998). The main point of that discussion was how culture is negotiated between the actor and the group through interaction. Ideas, rules, direction of the group, and individuals are all negotiated in interactions. Given this theoretical perspective on culture and negotiation, how this idea influences Black men’s interaction with the TPS has yet to be addressed. This project adds to our knowledge of this concept of culture and negotiation within the Black Torontonians context.

Through the negotiation of culture and Black men’s interaction with the TPS, it became apparent that it varied between when they were young and their young adulthood (Charon, 1998). Interestingly, as there are many subcultures in the Black community, the overarching culture in the Black community demonstrated that when Blacks recounted their experience with the TPS, it was assumed to be a negative experience. During the interviews, it was apparent that these Black men felt that we needed to discuss the negative experiences first and foremost. This could be because the culture operates within a framework of negative experiences. Due to the negative history between Black men and police officers, Black individuals share a common understanding of policing. Thus, due to their immersion in Black cultures, SI suggests that Black men perceive that they can only have negative experiences and perceptions of police officers. In other words, the concept of a positive experience for Blacks is absent or does not exist. Similarly, Black

youth (and men) recounted how they negotiated with their cultures while interacting with the TPS. The idea of “no snitching” or “stop snitching” demonstrated that the Black men, despite wanting to interact with the TPS to report crimes, refused to cooperate with the TPS during investigations. As one respondent argued, the negotiation with the hip-hop culture influenced Black men’s perceptions and interactions with police (Charon, 1998).

In the hip-hop culture, there was a rule that reporting crimes to the police was unacceptable despite the fact that Black men’s opinions did not reflect this position. Thus, it became apparent that the interaction with the police was a common problem; therefore, the consensus for the solution was to stop engaging with the TPS as dictated by hip-hop culture, despite individuals being unable to see the benefit in doing so. To Black adults, it became clear that this notion of disengagement (i.e. stop snitching) was problematic and needed to stop; the culture was thus negotiated (Charon, 1998). The respondent felt that the idea of not talking to the TPS was not a viable solution to maintaining a safe community for many Black men once they grew older. Therefore, it is evident that Black men are negotiating with their culture and are attempting to alter this aspect of Black culture because it is detrimental to the well-being of the Black community.

Moreover, there also existed the notion of “fuck the police;” also existed, with one respondent arguing that this idea stemmed from a history of negative interactions with police. As a culture, Black men shared common problems (e.g., racial profiling, excessive force, police harassment) with the police. The culture defined this frustration with police with the phrase “fuck the police.”

Therefore, when discussing their positive experiences, Black men struggle to account positive experiences, as they negotiate internally with these types of cultural influences. For instance, some found it difficult to denounce police carding after understanding its purpose while at the same time assimilating to the idea of “fuck the police” or that they had to “stop snitching”. However, when interacting with police officers, Black men are reluctant to cooperate with the police. That is, cultural impact influences how Black men interact with the police when officers are seeking to complete an investigation.

Racialization and its Influence on Perceptions of the TPS

The approach to racialization is positioned to reveal how race is shaped by social context according to SI (Morris, 2007). SI also reveals the importance of how these racial categories influence privileges and disadvantages and that racial categories and understanding are important for how individuals see themselves and react to others (Morris, 2007). Given what we know about SI and its perspective on racialization, we do not know how Black Torontonians see themselves and react to the TPS from this theoretical perspective. Therefore, my data highlight that generic strategies (from a White perspective) to have positive interactions with police does not work for Blacks. Rather, race was an element to facilitate negative experiences with police officers, which is not emphasized enough because of the Eurocentric framework (Kitossa, 2014).

As it relates to SI, racialization was a significant concept that appeared throughout the interviews with these Black men. Firstly, all of the Black men acknowledged the disadvantages that arise from the racial categorization of Blacks when dealing with the TPS (Morris, 2007). When trying to facilitate a positive experience, generic strategies (e.g., such as remaining calm) did not work for Black men. Black men felt that by default, being racialized as Black already fed into daily negative encounters when interacting with the TPS. In other words, being Black escalated interactions into conflict and, ultimately, negative experiences. This finding implies that remaining calm in a situation with the TPS would not deescalate a situation for Black men. This would, however, work for White men because they are not racialized. Black men interpret their interactions with police to be inherently discriminatory because they are Black. Adding to the frustration for Black men is that they feel there are Whites who do not have the same experiences.

Other respondents perceived being a Black man within a White male-dominated society was a disadvantage when interacting with police. For instance, one individual felt

that Whites had the privilege of interacting with police officers while possessing drugs and that officers would not stop, question, or be suspicious of Whites despite their engagement in a criminal activity. In comparison, the perception was that even when Blacks were not engaging in criminal activity, they were suspected of it. Similar to Wortley and Owusu-Bempah's (2011) findings, Black men suffer the experience of racial profiling due to being systematically stopped and searched, whereas other groups who engage in the exact same behaviour (i.e. drug possession) but do not suffer racial profiling (Wortley & Owusu-Bempah, 2011). Thus, Black men's awareness of racialization causes them to perceive their encounters with police to be generally negative and, therefore, react to them defensively.

Black Men's Voices on Solutions to Police Carding

The literature on police carding and community policing were discussed in separate segments. As the literature review presented, in police carding in Toronto between 2003 and 2008, police mainly carded young Black men (Rankin & Winsa, 2014). Black males between the ages of 15 and 24 were 2.5 times more likely than their White counterparts to be stopped and documented. In addition, in 2012, the *Toronto Star* released data showing that although Blacks made up 8.3% of the population, they accounted for 25% of those carded and were thus overrepresented compared to Whites, Browns, and other racial minorities (Rankin & Winsa, 2014). To eliminate the racial bias, lawyer Frank Addario was asked by the Toronto Police Services Board to reform the carding policy. He introduced the policy that officers could only card individuals who infringed on public safety (Toronto Police Services Board, 2014, p. 3). Despite this implementation, Neil Price (2014) found that Blacks were still being disproportionately carded. Clearly, the new policy did not resolve the racial issue. It is apparent, however, that during the process of creating a new policy or fixing the issue of police carding, those who were disproportionately targeted gave little input. Thus, this project attempted to address a gap in the literature by bringing Black men's solutions and suggestions regarding the police carding policy to the forefront, as we knew little about their input.

As discussed in the literature, community policing was an aspect one could consider to facilitate positive experiences. One of the definitions of community policing is when officers engage and come into contact with citizens during positive interactions, resulting in the development of relationships that maintain familiarity and trust between communities and police services (Cordner, 1999). However, despite this idea of community policing, it was difficult to determine whether or not young Black men would experience this approach in practice. For instance, Saunders (1999) suggested that community policing is a form of surveilling Black communities; thus, Blacks are unable to participate in philosophical description of community policing. Given these two positions on community policing, for Barret (2014), community policing can either help or hurt the relationship between Black men and police officers. In this project, Black men were explicit in stating that the philosophical understanding of community policing was an excellent method to replace and alter police carding.

First, the Black men all agreed that they were more likely to be “targeted” by police for police carding and police stops. Almost all respondents felt also that police carding was bad because it facilitated negative experiences, such as racial profiling. When discussing solutions, some Black men presented unique ideas, such as limiting the time in which the carded information lasted in the database, whereas others suggested limiting the amount of carding an officer can perform within a month. However, the most prevalent and consistent solution was to replace carding with community policing and engagement. These Black men felt that if the relationship with the TPS was in good standing, the Black community would cooperate with them in solving crimes. For instance, one of the respondents who had been coached by a police officer discussed how he would be more willing to cooperate with that police officer because of his relationship with him. This would suggest these bonds that are created through community engagement and community policing are powerful tools in facilitating positive experiences that, in turn, create trust on the part of Black men and ultimately influences them to willingly participate in solving cases. However, it should be noted that this impact likely varies between individuals. For example, one respondent felt that an officer made such an impact on him that it inspired him to become a police officer himself. Other respondents felt that they, minor interactions would suggest that not all officers are

“vindictive”. Therefore, it varies between individual whether these things would have a lasting impact.

One respondent suggested that it would be impossible to replace police carding with community policing/engagement in Toronto due to the range of diverse communities and population size in relation to the number of police officers. However, I argue that the solution is not for the range of diverse communities in Toronto but for those who are constantly targeted and have negative experiences with police, i.e., young Black men. Overall, for Black men, community policing and engagement are deemed to be a sufficient replacement for police carding because they build trust and facilitate a positive experience, which then leverages Black men to provide intelligence and information when officers are attempting to solve a crime.

The other possible solution that would enable carding to become a better practice and experience is for officers to take their time to explain to Black men why they are being carded. However, there needs to be a clear distinction here because, as one respondent outlined, when officers stop Black men, there is a common script that the officers use - “You fit the description,” which is then used to then justify why they are being stopped. This is not a good enough response for why someone should be stopped because it does not tell the citizen anything useful and it causes Black men to think that the officer is lying. Instead, as one respondent described, when an officer can provide a descriptive reason as to why he or she is carding a person, it will shape the experience. For instance, a respondent discussed how when he was being carded, the officer explained to him that the Jane and Finch area had individuals from outside of the neighbourhood trafficking drugs. Therefore, the officers wanted to be certain that the respondent was from that neighbourhood. The respondent did not categorize the experience to be negative or positive; rather, it was neutral. I argue that this should be categorized as a positive experience mainly because the respondent felt that the officer was trying to protect the respondent and his community. Therefore, if officers were more effective in communicating their reasons for carding Black men, Black men would be more likely to comply and feel less offended when being carded.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I review the purpose and significance of this study. I also discuss the overarching policy implications of the findings and discussion. Lastly, I conclude with the study's strengths, limitations, and directions for future research.

The existing literature on Black men's experiences has provided an understanding of Black men and the relationship with policing and race in general. According to the literature, Blacks living in Toronto generally have negative perceptions and experiences with the TPS (Owusu-Bempah, 2014). In addition, police carding has been discussed in the literature as a practice that has been disproportionately used to target Blacks; specifically, young Black males living in Toronto (Price, 2014). However, there was very little discussion on Black men's positive experiences with the police. Even more so, with the current debate surrounding police carding, it became apparent that as Blacks are disproportionately targeted, they are also the group whose voices are least presented when discussing the carding policy (Rankin & Winsa, 2014). From a theoretical perspective, researchers often tend to use a Eurocentric lens when applying symbolic interactionism (Kitossa, 2014). SI from the perspective of Blacks, has not been adequately developed.

It became apparent, after reviewing the literature, that there was little application of SI to explain the processes through which Black men engage with the TPS and have positive experiences (Charon, 1998). Due to this, the SI framework has been applied to the project and therefore was able to contribute to the literature by moving beyond negative experiences and statistical implications. Instead, it examines the processes in which Black men interact, construct, and perceive the elements that constitute a positive experience with the TPS. By analyzing the interviews, I have uncovered themes that tell us more about Black men and their positive experiences and their positions on police carding.

Theoretical Implications

When discussing the concepts of "I"(self-identity) and "me" (social-identity), it became clear that Black men gravitate toward the "me" rather than the "I" when interacting with TPS (Mead, 1972). When interacting with police, instead of complying with the

individualized aspect of the self, these Black men needed to resort to the “me” in order to avoid fatal consequences for themselves and maneuver through their police encounters safely. For instance, some Black men would show their student cards, or mention they were university students in order for the officer to treat them in a desired manner. Alternatively, Black men avoided the “I,” as it was an element for facilitating negative experiences. They actively avoided using the “I” during their interactions with the TPS because it could have fatal consequences. This finding has illustrated how SI fails to take race into consideration when discussing its main concepts.

In the same respect, there is a defense mechanism that Black men use when interacting with the TPS to reduce negative experiences. For instance, Black men use the “frontstage,” to protect themselves from having a negative experience with the TPS. Thus, it was apparent that the frontstage was more important for these Black men than the backstage. Historically, SI has examined social interactions between deviants in society, such as gang members and marijuana users who were notably White respondents (Charon, 1998). However, this project has used SI from a racialized perspective and uncovered new ways of understanding its concepts. As discussed in Chapter 1, SI argues that individuals manage impressions in the frontstage but step out of character in the backstage. As discussed in Chapter 4, this is consistent in that Black men are performing “police etiquette” during the frontstage when interacting with the police in order to protect themselves from harm. Alternatively, within Black communities, Black men engage in the backstage when discussing issues of racial profiling and racial discrimination.

This presents a perspective on SI where using this lens has presented a different way of understanding Black men and their interactional processes. Throughout the project, I have discussed how culture becomes negotiated between the actor and the group through interaction from the SI perspective (Charon, 1998). Based on the findings, it was apparent that Black adults were negotiating a culture that they found to be problematic. This was because some Black men felt that the culture rejected any interaction with the TPS, despite the individual not truly seeing the benefit in doing so. Black men saw aspects of the culture in the Black community as problematic (such as attitudes expressed by phrases like “fuck the police” or “stop snitching”) because they

needed to work with the police, as to do otherwise is detrimental to the well-being of the Black community. Therefore, they had to negotiate with these different aspects of culture by altering their ways of thinking. Culture negotiation influences Black men's interaction with the TPS in that they interact with police to keep their communities safe despite what members of the community may believe.

From a racialized perspective, the Black men interviewed acknowledged that being a visible minority had some influence on how they constructed their reality. However, some felt that they had to be a participant in facilitating a positive experience, but it would be difficult because their race was perceived as a negative attribute when dealing with the TPS. This is to say, these men felt their race influenced their interaction with police, but in relation to SI, race constructed their reality in that being Black would lead to more negative experiences. Furthermore, they also acknowledged that they were more likely to encounter negative experiences compared to other groups, which was consistent with the literature (Owusu-Bempah, 2014). Racialization becomes an important factor in Black men's interaction with the TPS, in that it influences how they see themselves and the TPS. It also contributes to negative experiences with the police.

Alternatively, as it relates to how Black men label themselves and the TPS, this project revealed how labels could potentially aid in facilitating a positive experience. As discussed in Chapter 4, Black men react to the label of TPS by assigning officers with labels that either embody "the human" or "the badge." These labels are attributed to police officers by Black men depending on their experiences with officers. Negative experiences with an officer will more or less be given the label of "the badge," while positive experiences with an officer will be given the label of "the human." Given these labels, Black men will then act accordingly toward the TPS officer.

Practical implications

As previously discussed, this project wanted to take an in-depth observation of Black men's positive experiences with the TPS. As Owusu-Bempah (2014) had demonstrated, young Black males have recounted a few of their positive experiences, such as police officers being involved in sports, police officers making nice gestures, and providing

assistance in the aftermath of a crime. What this project has done is provide an in-depth presentation of the elements that constitute a potential positive experience for Black men. Given the findings, we now know more about Black men's positive encounters and experiences with the TPS and, more so, how to better facilitate a positive experience. The way Black men construct a positive experience with the TPS has thoroughly been explored by providing more context to their interactions. This project has also presented a better understanding of the social world from the point of view of Black men living in Toronto by providing a rigorous examination of respondents' accounts and arriving at meanings and culturally embedded normative explanations for behaviour and perception.

There are some policy implications and recommendations that should be noted pertaining to community policing, police carding, and police encounters with Black men. In terms of police carding in Toronto, these Black men have demonstrated that for the most part, they wanted it removed. However, as argued by one of the respondents, it is a necessity when policing. Therefore, adjustments need to be made to the policy, where officers can still gather intelligence and Black men are not discriminated against in the process. What has become apparent is that Black men feel community policing needs to be integrated into police carding or must replace police carding. As researchers have argued, if police agencies rely on community members for crime control, residents may be reluctant to come forward with information if they view police negatively (Micucci & Gomme, 2005). However, as I have demonstrated, by applying the elements of a positive experience and community policing, Black men will view police officers positively, and will more likely proceed in coming forward with information to aid in crime control. In addition, the themes I have previously discussed could potentially help provide new approaches. For instance, these Black men suggested that all TPS officers should participate in community engagement (such as coaching a sports team) at least once a month. This is based on their experiences, where officers who do engage in these practices have lasting impacts on Black men; therefore, this should be considered when implementing the carding policy.

To go beyond carding, if the TPS is trying to strengthen and provide more positive experiences for Black men, this project provides an in-depth presentation of their perspectives. These concepts of positive experiences could be applied in police training.

The Ontario Police College could implement these findings in its training curriculum when discussing policing tactics. For instance, by applying these themes in their training, police officers can be given new and accurate perspectives on generic concepts such as “respect.” As aspects of respect vary between social groups, this project has provided specifics as to what respect means for Black men when interacting with the TPS. Thus, implementation of those practices could aid in facilitating an overall better relationship with Black men living in Toronto. A Toronto police officer who is aware of the elements that constitute a positive experience for Black men could execute sufficient policing in Black communities and break through racial and cultural barriers.

Strengths, Limitations & Directions for Future Research

This study used semi-structured interviews to gather Black men’s experiences and their perceptions of negative and positive experiences with the TPS. While the positive experiences were similar to those found in the literature, there were new findings and more context behind their perceptions and experiences. For instance, community engagement through coaching and sports was important for facilitating positive experiences and I was able to see how and why coaching is significant for these Black men. In addition, I was able to understand these Black men’s feelings toward the TPS and what elements constitute a positive experience. Alternatively, this has not been as extensively explored in relation to the negative experiences for Black men in this project. We now know more about positive experiences of Black men living in Toronto when interacting with the TPS. In addition, this project has given suggestions to deal with the issue of police carding in Toronto from the perspective of those who encounter carding disproportionately.

Given these strengths, there are still weaknesses with this project that particularly lie in the methodology. First, there is a possibility that having similar demographics with respondents may have swayed their responses (Miller & Glassner, 2004). Because I as the interviewer “shared membership” with the Black community, the responses might have been bias (Miller & Glassner, 2004). For instance, some respondents may have

exaggerated their negative experiences. Moreover, as the study only had a sample of 10 respondents, it was difficult to make general claims. The experiences may only apply to these particular men and not to all Black men living in Toronto. A larger sample may have resulted in different responses. Further, due to the exploratory nature of the project, a small and non-randomized sample, in addition to personally knowing the respondents, could potentially make responses bias. As a result, I am unable to make claims that apply to all Blacks living in Canada. For instance, Blacks living Ottawa may have a different perception and experience with the Ottawa Police Service, in comparison to Toronto communities and the TPS.

Overall, as mentioned, if I cannot make generalizations then there needs to be additional qualitative studies focusing on positive experiences to help officers facilitate these kinds of encounters more often. As a researcher, I have had personal encounters with the police - both positive and negative - and I grew up in Toronto and The Greater Toronto Area. I was aware that when I analyzed the data, there would be unavoidable assumptions. It was difficult to avoid having personal experiences of racialization influence how I analyzed and categorized themes and responses. At times, I was able to identify with their experiences, as I had similar stories which would pull me to analyze those responses more in-depth. Similarly, there is the possibility that I would have misinterpreted things White academics would have identified as they are disconnected from these experiences. This is both a strength and weakness when interviewing respondents. As a result, more Blacks need to explore the issue of policing and race at an academic level as they will have a different perspective (due to racialization and more likely encounters with police) on how to engage with this social issue, as opposed to the Eurocentric researchers who may often miss points of interest. Lastly, this project did not add gender as a factor because it was apparent in the literature that Black males were the ones who were targeted most often. For future research, however, gender should be taken into account. Ultimately, more researchers should consider positive experiences as it can tell us more about Black men's perspective, in addition to the negative experiences of policing and race.

As academics who have explored the issues surrounding policing and race, we should continue to identify solutions by looking at what the police are doing correctly.

We must also continue to emphasize the significance of both positive and negative police encounters for Black men.

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ANNEXES

Appendix A

Interview Guide

- 1) What are your experiences with the police service in general?
- 2) What are your positive experiences with the Toronto police service when you were living in Toronto?
- 3) What are your negative experiences with the Toronto police service when you were living in Toronto?
- 4) Based on your experiences and opinion, what escalates a conflict between a Police officer and a Black man?
- 5) Based on your experiences and opinion, what deescalates a conflict between a Police officer and a Black man?
- 6) Do you know about “police carding” in Toronto? If so, is carding a good or bad police practice? Why or Why not? What would improve it? What would be better than it?



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Appendix B

Letter of Invitation: Policing and Race

Title: The Unexpected Experience: Positive Minority Perceptions of Policing

Dear Sir,

My name is Jeremy Bediako and I am a Master's student in the (Department of Criminology at the University of Ottawa. I am working on a research project under the supervision of Associate Prof. Michael Kempa.

I am writing to you today to invite you to participate in a study on policing and race. This study aims to explore how Black men characterize their experiences with the Toronto Police force. You are eligible to participate if you are a Black male, between the age of 21 – 26, who has lived or are currently residing in the Toronto who have had experience the Toronto Police Force, and speak English.

This study involves one 60 minute interview that will take place in a mutually convenient, safe location. With your consent, interviews will be audio-recorded. Once the recording has been transcribed, the audio recording will be conserved for five years and then destroyed.

While this project does involve some emotional risks (such as anger or frustration), care will be taken to protect your identity. This will be done by keeping all responses anonymous by using pseudonym.

You will have the right to end your participation in the study at any



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All research data, including audio-recordings and any notes will be encrypted. Any hard copies of data (including any handwritten notes or USB keys) will be kept in a locked cabinet at the University of Ottawa. Research data will only be accessible by the researcher and the research supervisor.

If you would like to participate in this research project, or have any questions, please contact me.

Sincerely,

(Insert signature)

Jeremy Bediako



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Appendix C

Title of the study: The Unexpected Experience: Positive Minority Perceptions of Policing

The main researcher Jeremy Bediako, Department of Criminology, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ottawa. Supervisor Dr. Michael Kempa, Department of Criminology, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ottawa.

Invitation to Participate: I am invited to participate in the master thesis study conducted by Jeremy Bediako under the supervision of Dr. Michael Kempa.

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of the study is to explore how Black men categorize their experiences the Toronto Police Force. In addition, the project will explore what escalates and deescalates conflict between the Black men and the Toronto Police Force. Lastly, if applicable, this study will explore positions on the issues of “police carding”.

Participation: I understand that my participation in this study will consist of an individual interview of approximately one hour during which I will respond to a series of questions on my experiences with the Toronto Police Force. Should I agree to it, the interview will be recorded but I understand that I can interrupt it at all times or request a recess if needed. The one session has been scheduled for a mutually agreed upon space, July 2015. I may withdraw from the study at any time, refuse to participate or refuse to answer any particular question without prejudice. My withdrawal would imply that all information provided would be destroyed.

Risks: My participation in this study will entail that I volunteer personal information and experiences, and this may cause me to feel emotional. I have received assurance from the researcher that every effort will be made to minimize these risks by allowing me to withdraw from the interview and provide breaks in between the interview if needed. In addition, I am guaranteed anonymity where my name will not be used.

Benefits: My participation in this is to contribute to the progress of knowledge and, more specifically, to a better understanding of the relationship between Black men and the Toronto Police force in the domain of policing and race.

Confidentiality and anonymity: I have received assurance from the researcher that the information I will share will remain strictly confidential. I understand that the contents will be used only for research, and publication purposes and that my confidentiality will be

protected with the guarantee that any information about my identity will not be revealed (pseudonyms will be used when quoting).

Conservation of data: The data collected of audio recordings and of interviews and transcripts and consent forms will be kept in a secure manner under lock and key in the office of the supervisor, professor Micheal Kempa (Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ottawa). The electronic data collected will be kept on a password-protected computer. Only the principal researcher and supervisor will have access to the data and will be conserved for 5 years after the completion of the project.

Voluntary Participation: I am under no obligation to participate and if I choose to participate, I can withdraw from the study at any time and/or refuse to answer any questions, without suffering any negative consequences. If I choose to withdraw, all data gathered until the time of withdrawal will be destroyed.

Acceptance: I, _____, agree to participate in the above research study conducted by Jeremy Bediako of the Department of Criminology, Social Sciences, University of Ottawa), which research is under the supervision of Dr. Michal Kempa.

- I agree to the recording of the interview
- I don't agree to the recording of the interview

If I have any questions about the study, I may contact the researcher or his supervisor.

If I have any questions regarding the ethical conduct of this study, I may contact the Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research, University of Ottawa, Tabaret Hall, 550 Cumberland Street, Room 154, Ottawa, ON K1N 6N5
Tel.: (613) 562-5387
Email: ethics@uottawa.ca

There are two copies of the consent form, one of which is mine to keep.

Participant's signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher's signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix D

Certificate of Completion of the Ethics Research Course

