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A Living Nightmare: A Phenomenological Study of Black Males’ Lived Experiences of Racial Profiling During Traffic Stops

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A Living Nightmare: A Phenomenological Study of Black Males’ Lived Experiences of Racial Profiling During Traffic Stops

by

James C. Jackson III, Ed. D

A Dissertation Presented to the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences of Nova Southeastern University In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

December 4, 2017
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College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences

This dissertation was submitted by James C. Jackson III under the direction of the chair of the dissertation committee listed below. It was submitted to the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences and approved in partial fulfillment for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Conflict Analysis and Resolution at Nova Southeastern University.

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# Table of Contents

List of Tables ........................................................................................................... iv  
Abstract ......................................................................................................................... v  

Chapter 1: Introduction ................................................................................................. 1  
  Nature and Scope of the Problem .............................................................................. 11  
  Goals ......................................................................................................................... 15  
  Research Questions .................................................................................................. 16  
  Road Map for Dissertation ....................................................................................... 16  

Chapter 2: Literature Review ....................................................................................... 19  
  The Era of the Racial Profiling Issue ...................................................................... 19  
  Characteristics of Racial Profiling ......................................................................... 22  
  Problems with Racial Profiling .............................................................................. 24  
  Racial Profiling and Conflict Mediation .................................................................. 31  
  Implications and Challenges for Gathering Information ........................................... 34  

Chapter 3: Research Method ......................................................................................... 41  
  Purpose of the Study ............................................................................................... 41  
  Choice of Participants ............................................................................................ 41  
  Research Questions ................................................................................................. 42  
  Hermeneutical Phenomenological Research ........................................................... 42  
  Participants ............................................................................................................. 44  
  Data Collection ...................................................................................................... 46  
  Data Analysis ......................................................................................................... 47  
  Bracketing .............................................................................................................. 48
Instruments ..................................................................................................................49
Interview Procedures .................................................................................................49
Interview Session Protocol .........................................................................................50
Interview Qualifications .........................................................................................51
Implications .............................................................................................................51
Ethical Considerations .............................................................................................52

Chapter 4: Results .....................................................................................................55

Feelings of anger and distrust ........................................................................56
Forced to produce documents without a violation .............................................60
Confronted as though presumed guilty .............................................................64
Feeling powerless because of violation of rights .............................................69
Targeted because of being a Black male ............................................................81
Expectations of the use of physical force ............................................................91
Slight improvement, but no end to the issue ....................................................98

Composite Description .........................................................................................102
Description of Themes ...........................................................................................103

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion .................................................................107

Limitations .............................................................................................................124
Contribution to the field ......................................................................................124
Future Research ....................................................................................................126

References .............................................................................................................128
Appendix A: Individual Conducted Interview Questions ..................................133
Appendix B: Focus Group Questions ..................................................................134
Appendix C: General Information Form ................................................................. 135
Appendix D: Adult Informed Consent ................................................................. 136
List of Tables

Table 1. Summary of Interview Participant’s .......................................................... 46
Table 2. Major Themes ......................................................................................... 48
Abstract

For years, urban communities and specific ethnic groups within the US (mostly Blacks and Hispanics) have been targeted for racial profiling by our local police. Since the 1990’s, the outcry for justice by our Black and Hispanic communities increased the interests to find ways to address and fight against the act of racial profiling. This phenomenological study used a qualitative approach to collect information and gain the understanding and lived experiences of Black males between the ages of 20 – 49 who experienced racial profiling during routine traffic stops. Twelve Black Males between the ages of 20 to 49 were interviewed for the research study. Everyone was interviewed separately to gather experiences and meanings from their own points of view. In addition, 25 Black males within the same age group participated in a 1 hour focus group discussion. The information gathered from the interviews and focus group sessions were compiled into a Microsoft word transcript and reviewed and analyzed by the researcher to form seven themes. In order to come up with key findings, I isolated similar responses from the experiences shared by the research participants during the interviews and focus group session. In isolating some of the key responses revealed, I dissected racial profiling from a shared experience point of view based on common approaches practiced by law enforcement officers. The research study will contribute to field on conflict resolution through the voices of those who experienced racial profiling, and finding ways to encourage mediation through projecting the underlying concerns or issues to community leaders, government officials, concerned groups, and law enforcement agencies.
Chapter 1: Introduction

The studies of race and social classes have become a focal point of research study among social scientists to measure and interpret information relating to racial disparities and profiling. Since the 1990s, research on racial profiling by law enforcement officers has taken a preference to address the decision to stop, search, and/or arrests Blacks while driving their motor vehicles. In addition, greater consideration for understanding how racial profiling exist and is perceived has become a significant interest for our government, law enforcement agencies, academicians, our media outlets, advocacy groups, and the public. According to Glaser (2006), ”racial profiling is the use of race, ethnicity, or national origin by law enforcement officials to make judgments of criminal suspicion” (p. 395). This issue has become a wide-spread phenomenon across all major US cities.

While researchers in the field of social science have attempted to collect and report data on racial profiling that has become a common cause for conflict within our Black communities, many law enforcement agencies have not disclosed consistent data relating to stops and frisks, and/or arrests. Tomaskovic-Devry et al. (2006) in their research stated that “survey reports of police stops and driving behavior are a potential methodology for examining the magnitude and prevalence of the “Driving While Black” phenomena. However, estimates of the magnitude or correlates of racial disparity in police stops from self-reported survey data are potentially compromised if the accuracy of self-reports of police stops and driving behavior differ” (p. 279). This has motivated the researcher to collect information from Black males between the ages of 20 to 49 on their
experiences being stopped and searched, and/or arrested, perceiving that racial profiling took place.

At times, racial profiling that was exposed to eyewitnesses has caused inner city divides between the Black residents and police resulting in the lack of trust in local police agencies. This has led to great tensions that resulted in conflict escalation after certain events involving stops and searches in the inner city. For example, the riot that resulted in the Rodney King traffic stop cost the city of Los Angeles millions of dollars from fires set and debris thrown that damaged properties, innocent White onlookers being brutally attacked, and theft from looters invading the retail businesses in the area, which were mostly Korean owned. For years beginning with the Jim Crow era, Civil Rights movements, and Affirmative Action, people have witnessed a great concern towards racial issues here in the United States. Racial relations have been a strain between Blacks and Whites for centuries because Whites have been granted institutionalized and societal privileges for years. Even with former US president, Barack Obama, more concern has been focused on race related issues in the US (e.g. economics, civil, voting, Miranda Rights, discrimination, etc.).

When Henry Louis Gates Jr., one of Harvard University’s most respected professors, was arrested for trying to get into his own house, in Cambridge, MA, many of his colleagues, and President Barack Obama responded by accusing the arresting police officers of racism/racial profiling (Greenberg, 2010). This caused a disturbance in the Boston, Massachusetts area among the Black community and leaders. President Obama urged the Black citizens not to take matters into their own hands. More recently, the incident involving Trayvon Martin, a teenager visiting his father and step-mother in
Sanford, Florida, who was killed by George Zimmerman, a resident in the apartment complex, because of suspecting Martin of trying to commit burglary. The event ended in a scuffle between Martin and Zimmerman, which resulted in Martin being shot and killed. This caused uproar in the South Florida areas like Miami and Sanford. The event also drew attention to civil rights activists like Al Sharpton, Jesse Jackson Sr., Senator Chris Smith (D-State), and other Senate and Congressional leaders, as well as President Obama. The most recent conflict in a race related matter took place in Charlottesville, VA, when neo-Nazis, also known as white nationalists, rallied displaying their hatred towards non-member ethnic groups. The rally, not only was a show of hatred, but also violence (Astor, Caron, and Victor, 2017). Another incident took place in Ferguson, MO, where Mike Brown, an 18-year-old unarmed Black male was shot by a White police officer while walking with his hands up. This led then-President Barack Obama to request the presence of then-Attorney General Eric Holder in Ferguson, MO, where violence resulting in riots erupted (Wax-Thibodeaux, Brown, & Markon, 2014, p1A). The prior and recent police shootings of unarmed Black males and the researcher’s own experience motivated the researcher’s interest in racial profiling to focus on a sample of the Black males who could share their lived experiences as victims to this social ill.

This research study discusses the importance of gathering and analyzing information from Black males revealing that they have been victims of racial profiling during traffic stops and searches in the inner cities of Miami, Florida. By gathering information based on personal experiences, the researcher discusses the importance of this data for future recommendations to implement programs or strategies to increase the awareness and support to strengthen the efforts to address and fight against racial
profiling. In addition, this research study provides the necessary perspectives by interpretation on perceived unlawful procedures performed by law enforcement officers, the lack of consistent reporting of the current data on traffic violations and arrests, and the physical and psychological implications suffered by the subjects, and some related issues that lead to racial conflicts and disparities in the Black community. Although the result of a racial riot may not occur because all incidents are not witnessed or reported, or some individuals or groups choose not to respond with violence, the need to understand the aggressive nature of law enforcement officers towards Black men, and the nature of aggressive reactions from the victims should be carefully noted as well as discussed for further reference when assault charges have been reported and filed by the victims of racial profiling in the court of law. It was anticipated that this research study would attract greater interests by social scientists, justice and peace professors and their students, law enforcement agencies, the US Government, civil rights attorneys and law professors and their students, and the public.

Police stops of Black citizens have long been controversial in minority communities, especially with the term “pretextual” stops being considered a bias in policing. Police have been accused from a conceptual point of view of pretextual stops. According to Miller (2009):

“Pretextual traffic stops have come to the fore in questions of police suspicion because, like mobile data terminal queries (mobile dispatches that sends communications to emergency vehicles, and records traffic stop communication; e.g. when an office calls in to check the validity of a driver’s license and registration), they are expected to be more discretionary in nature—in which the
extralegal basis of decision-making may be more pronounced—compare to other traffic stop decisions” (p. 566).

As these trends for pretextual stops continues, stemming from the drug policies of the 1970s, enforced by former president Richard Nixon, to the traffic laws, and to the fight against terrorism, races is the known identity for law enforcement in making these stops.

Even after years of protests for racial equality in America by civil rights leaders such as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, Harriet Tuttman, Rosa Parks, Al Sharpton, and Jesse Jackson Sr., racial disparities relating to pretextual traffic stops by police continue to exist in black communities. The ongoing attempts to address the racial profiling issue as it relates to the policing in our communities continue to exist, and remain a high priority for the Black community. History revealed time after time the obstacles set, physical and mental abuse, rejection, and injustice towards Black Americans. According to Ricker and Jackson (1992), the public and then-elected mayor of the City of Los Angeles blamed the jury for their verdict, which was deemed another racist blow to the Black community. After Miami insurance man, Arthur L. McDuffie, was caught in a police chase after performing stunts on his motorcycle was beaten and killed by several Miami police officers, Liberty City went up in flames and violence as the Black Community reacted in a riotous manner to revenge the death of another Black man.

“His death outraged Miami’s black community. Six months later, on the morning of May 17, 1980, when an all-white Tampa jury found the four officers on trial not guilty, thousands took to the street, first in Liberty City and then downtown
and elsewhere. A few hours later they began throwing rocks and bottles at cars on 62nd street. This continued and escalated into a furious rage that caused over $100 million in damages” (Smiley, 2015)

The Black community in Miami was also angered by the selection and deliberations of an all-White jury from Tamp, Florida. After five months of deliberations, an all-White Tampa jury found the police innocent of any wrongdoings, which later resulted in days of riotous activities in the City of Miami (Gaines-Carter, 1980). McDuffie was a well-dressed and clean-cut insurance executive who happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. Although he was in the confinements of his own community, he was still a target for racial profiling and police brutality. Events like those mentioned have drawn great attention from researchers, our government, law enforcement, academics institutions, and interest groups across the US and globe.

Therefore, research projects of this kind will add value to the efforts of providing information and programs for the prevention of conflict escalation that could result in violent events such as police brutality and riots. Researchers, professors and students of race studies, our government, civil rights activists, and public must continue the awareness of racial profiling to motivate the implementation and continuation of efforts to address this problem. This is an unjust act that must be addressed on every level to prevent racial tensions in our communities.

Several other shootings of unarmed Black men in 2016, by police officers made national headlines; Alton Sterling, 37, in Louisiana, Akiel Denkins, in Minnesota, 24, in North Carolina, Gregory Gunn, 58, in Alabama, Samuel DuBose, 43, and in Cincinnati, Philando Castile, 32, to name a few that motivated marches and riots across the globe
(Funke and Susman, 2016). Sadly, these men lives were interrupted by police officers that acted upon their own impulses and ideologies, ending whatever hopes or dreams that these men had. This is why Schipp and Chiles noted that “it is crucial for young black males to educate themselves as much as possible about search and seizure laws, about probable cause, and about the rules and regulations that control the actions of law enforcement” (2014, p. 32). Until now, many would assume that remaining silent, allowing the police to search you or your car, was a way to bring a positive closure to the situations like those involving the victims of police shootings. That is not the best case all the time. When you come to know and understand laws that govern your rights as citizens, exercising those rights should not end in police shootings.

On September 15, 2017, former St. Louis police office, Jason Stockly, who was arrested on murder charges in December of 2011, for shooting and killing Lamar Smith after pursuing him in a high speed car chase, was acquitted of all charges (Berman, Lowery, and DE Grandpre, 2017). Demonstrators across the City of St. Louis gathered together in droves to protest against the acquittal of Stockly. Here is another example of what could happen in a situation where a Black male is shot while unarmed, but in the end another officer gets off the hook. Another reported police-civilian encounter took place involving a star NFL player, after one of the biggest professional boxing matches this year.

On August 26, 2017, after the Floyd Mayweather vs. Connor McGregor fight, the Seattle Seahawks’ football player, Michael Bennett accused a Los Vegas Police Officer for singling him out as a Black man after sounds like gun shots startled the crowd of people leaving the fight at the Cromwell Las Vegas Hotel and
Casino. In a letter written by Bennett to the public revealed that after he complied with the officer’s order to get down, the officer then put a gun to his head, handcuffed him, detained him, and warned him not to move. The letter revealed that Bennett consistently asked the officer why he was being detained. Bennett shared that the officer told him to shut up and just follow orders (Phillips, 2017).

According to Perez, a USA Today Sports reporter, the Las Vegas police responded to the NFL commissioner asking him to conduct an investigation on Bennett. Roger Goodell, the NFL commissioner said that he supported Bennett and the efforts of all members of the NFL in speaking out against racial profiling and would not conduct an investigation (2017). Michael Bennet is one of several NFL players that joined in with Colin Kaepernick, the former NFL quarterback for the San Francisco 49ers, who started kneeling during the singing of the National Anthem, in an effort to speak out against racial profiling.

Schipp and Chiles (2014) in discussing how the reality of being stopped-and-frisked, while also being illegally searched, they note that this is one of the most stressful and daunting experiences that will ever be encountered by Black males. The threat against Black males being stopped-and-frisked while they are driving can be a physical challenge as well as a mental one. Mentally, when your mind is always telling you to beware of the police while driving, it may lead you to worry a lot, experience a lack of concentration for important things, and also cause paranoia. Physically, stress can cause a negative effect on the body. For example, stress can cause high blood pressure, it can affect the heart, and also cause headaches. It is enough that drivers have to watch out for other drivers on the road. But to have to watch out for the police and other drivers can be
a stressful task. So why don’t law enforcement agencies report more stops involving Black males? Will this open up more evidence that racial profiling occurs among Black males more than any other group?

Law enforcement agencies, when asked to report race and gender on traffic citations to measure racial profiling, failed to do so. According to Ridgeway (2006), because of the increased response to the demands of the community, legal settlements, and laws governed by states concerning racial profiling, police departments throughout the US have been adapting programs to collect data on traffic stops (p. 1). The data collected has not been consistent with the number of stops, and or voluntarily searches performed by law enforcement officers and how they reported the data until U.S. Representative John Conyers (State-D) introduced a strong legislative approach to combat racial profiling (Whitney, 2008). The efforts by Conyers became untenable because of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks (Conyers, 2014). At this point the hard fought battle against racial profiling became a sidebar. After the 911 tragedies, the “Patriot Act” was passed, causing racial profiling to go well beyond the approach of just pulling Black motorists over.

This research focused on racial profiling by law enforcement officers in Miami, Florida’s, Coconut Grove (West Grove) community. This area was chosen based on historical information on prior conflicts that took place because of police stops and searches that resulted in what was viewed as police brutality and unlawful arrests and shooting victims. Also, the West Grove is heavily populated by Black residents that have lived there for years since the settlement of the early Bahamian descendants and others that founded the community. East, North, and South Grove are heavily populated by
upper middle income and upper income residents from professional athletes, attorneys, doctors, nurses, CEOs of corporations, and many other high-level professions. Later in the research study, other areas of Miami were included because of the low number of participants that chose to participate from the Coconut Grove area.

In addition, the barriers that cause skewed data for racial profiling was examined to explain the limitations placed on reporting the percentages of Blacks stopped, searched, and beaten, versus Whites, leading to an arrest or no arrest. Whitney (2008) discussed barriers that will cause traffic stop data to be skewed liked exclusion of race being included in the police report, if the police officer searched the driver’s vehicle, if the police officer frisked the driver, if the police officer did not issue a ticket or warning for a moving violation, and if the police officer let the driver go while not reporting the traffic stop at all. The goal (reducing the overall criminal activities) of law enforcement agencies as it relates to drug trafficking arrests, traffic violations, and other criminal acts prevented by Blacks and Whites will be examined for the use of data comparison for racial profiling measurements. The researcher gathered the most recent City of Miami Police traffic stop statistical data to see whether police officers report race when stopping Black men, reason for stop and frisks, and/or arrests. Some states (e.g. Massachusetts and Missouri) have made it mandatory to include race when completing routine traffic stop reports. While some of the data obtained from law enforcement agencies were not consistent with the proposed research results collected from the interviews and focus group sessions, the question of efficacy (seeking an intended result) relating to racial profiling was carefully examined. This allowed the researcher to gather information from prior research, and interview and focus group transcripts from this research to analyze
and discuss to show whether data from law enforcement agencies were consistent with
the mandated laws that require police officers to include race in their traffic stop reports.
Although my research was based on a qualitative approach, statistical data from
quantitative research was reviewed as a cross-reference to point out the number of Black
males stopped, searched, and arrested to see if the disparities found in these studies
relating to the function of the justice system were real.

Nature and Scope of the Problem

The problem of racial disparities and profiling has existed in the African
American communities since the early twentieth centuries and continuing into the twenty
first century. Blacks have often been the victims of unlawful stops and searches based on
being stereotyped as the most likely to commit or be in the process of committing a
crime. Stereotyping Blacks as the likely ethnic group to engage in criminal activity has
been the leading motivator… “Suggesting that they are disproportionately the subject of
routine traffic stops and other security related practice” (Feder, 2012, p. 1). Law
enforcement agencies’ reliance on race as a common factor for traffic stops and frisks has
been accepted in our communities for decades. Due to the perception of non-minorities
and law enforcement agencies that most Blacks commit crimes or are drug transporters,
Blacks have been and continues to be the target for traffic stops and frisks. This type of
stereotyping has been forced into society since the early 1900’s, and continues
throughout the present century. As noted by Behnke (2017), “Racial profiling in the
United States arises from deeply ingrained stereotypes, often unconscious beliefs about
the characteristics and behaviors of certain groups of people based on oversimplification
and outright inaccuracy” (p. 10). What makes this more visible is when Black men as
Is the information or statistics from traffic stops and frisks during routine traffic stops by law enforcement officers being reported properly to government agencies, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), and the public? Prior research on racial profiling has revealed that law enforcement agencies are not consistent when producing and sharing data about the number of Blacks that are stopped and frisked, while no citations were issued or arrests made (Baumgartner, Epp, Shoub, and Love, 2016). Without concrete data that is not manipulated or withheld, the problem of racial profiling cannot be addressed or confronted properly. In addition, to prevent the perception that racial profiling is mere rhetoric or misleading, data must be collected in an ongoing effort to motivate racial dialogues. Tomaskovic-Devey et al. (2006) state that “it is the most disturbing, and it is becoming increasingly clear that police often do not record all stops, representing a serious source of selective bias in analyses that rely on police-generated data” (p. 280). For example, when a police officer stops a Black male driving through a community, and after checking the status of the driver’s license and registration, and then letting the driver go without writing a ticket or giving a verbal warning, the officer could very well decide not to record the stop at all. Another example is, when a police officer(s) stop Black males while driving, and then issuing a ticket for a traffic violation, if the officer(s) decide not to record all the data according to state or local policies (i.e.
race), then the data will not be accurate for future use. Data collection will also be important in the efforts to hold law enforcement agencies accountable for reducing racial profiling among all ranks and files of law enforcement officers.

Another problem that exists in the efforts to address the issue of racial profiling is how individuals define and view this practice implemented by law enforcement; and whether the secure communities’ perception motivates racial profiling. Because there are opposing sides in the fight against racial profiling, definitions and views may differ to support the stances of the victims, the organizations speaking out against it, and why law enforcement agencies feel that this is not an inappropriate practice. Is racial profiling a fact or fiction? Can it be defined by those that have experienced racial profiling, while others perceive that it does not exist? In the dissertation research, the 12 participants selected for the interview process was asked to share their lived experiences when stopped and frisked by law enforcement. When former New York City police commissioner, Ray Kelly, initiated a stop-and-question-and frisk tactic for reducing crime, it showed that the majority of individuals stopped were of African American descent, bringing criticism from his predecessor, Commissioner Bill Bratton (Moore, 2015). A tactic such as this one promoted by commissioner Kelly clearly reveals that specific ethnic groups (e.g. Blacks and Latinos) are targets for racial profiling, while anticipating that this is a viable crime fighting mechanism. Many critics claim Kelly’s controversial stop-and-frisk policies sparked some of the divisions between police and communities of color (Tracy, 2016). This information led the researcher to seek various defined meanings of racial profiling through the lived experiences of Black males in an urban area just as those stopped and searched in New York City.
Many would see the NYPD tactic as unlawful and discriminatory, while attempting to lessen crime in a large urban city, but without paying close attention to the rights of these citizens. This clearly promoted a guilty verdict on the victims involved without a hearing, and therefore without the process of being presumed innocent until proven guilty. When former NYPD Police Commissioner Ray Kelly arrived to lecture on proactive policing at Brown University, on October 29, 2013, he was greeted with protestors speaking out against the stop-and-frisk tactics he used that targeted blacks more than any other race (Hudson, 2013). The participants in the researcher’s study all pointed out that they believed themselves to be victims of criminal stereotyping and racial profiling by law enforcement, and a white society groomed to label Black men as such. This motivated the researcher to seek deeper into the notions that Black men cannot live without being racially profiled, stopped and searched, physically abused, and even arrested. As noted by Behnke,

“Most experts conclude that racial profiling is pervasive throughout US society. People of color face a dramatically higher level of suspicion in almost every aspect of their lives, a situation that some call ‘breathing while brown.’ The ACLU writes that racial profiling occurs every day, in cities and towns across the country, when law enforcement and private security target people of color for humiliating and often frightening detentions, interrogations, and searches without evidence of criminal activity and based on perceived race, ethnicity, national origin, or religion. Racial profiling has led countless people to live in fear, casting entire communities as suspect simply because of what they look like, where they come from, or what religion they adhere to” (pgs. 8-9).
Because of this phenomenon, people of color, mostly Black males, are in fear of their lives. This is not just in any area of the US, but also in their own communities.

**Goals of the Study**

The first goal of this research was to gather information through interviews and focus groups from participants that have experienced being victims of racial profiling. Most research relating to racial profiling has been conducted through quantitative approaches (Smith and Petrocelli, 2001; Petrocelli, Piquero, and Smith, 2003; Golub, Johnson, Taylor, and Liberty, 2002; Garner, Maxwell, and Heraux, 2002; Russell, 2001), resulting in analysis on statistics gathered from law enforcement agencies, and other research entities. The researcher gathered information based on actual lived experiences that included a thematic analysis from the Black male participants’. The second goal of this research was to bring awareness to those that hold interests in this topic by providing information based on prior research and from the research participants relating to their perceptions of the existence of racial profiling, and how it is defined and used to target Black males. Numbers from quantitative research can only provide data that can sometimes be flawed because of missing items not recorded during traffic stops and frisks (e.g. Race). As stated by Whitney, 2005), “any statistical study of racial profiling must address: (1) whether racial profiling is related to the frequency of traffic stops and searches; (2) how strong of a relationship between the racial profiling and stop/searches exists; and (3) whether the observed measure of disparity in treatment by law enforcement can be explained by some factor other than racial profiling” (p. 266). Narratives or stories from experience through interviews and focus groups can be validated by recorded data that is similar in context from various participants. This
information would then provide a basis for the themes discovered by the lived experiences of the research participants, thus suggesting the need for providing grounded quantitative research to cross reference and analyze the issue of racial profiling.

The third goal of this research was to provide information that can be used to contribute to the continued efforts for the awareness by allowing the voices of the Black male participants in this research to share their perceptions on racial profiling, and further research to be conducted and provided for law enforcement agencies, government, public, and researchers. Researchers using a qualitative approach based on lived experiences can cross-reference their work with that of other racial profiling research that has been implemented. Researchers of this topic can also cite several works as a part of their collected research data. It makes the research more valid when there is other cited peer reviewed research included.

**Research Questions**

To accomplish the research purpose of examining racial profiling, the following research questions were implemented for examination:

1) How do Black males who describe themselves as victims of traffic-related racial profiling perceive and define racial profiling?

2) How can the perceptions shared by Black males gathered through lived experiences contribute to the efforts of addressing and researching racial profiling, and promoting continued awareness?

**Road Map for Dissertation**

Chapter One discusses why the study of racial profiling is on a rise, historical accounts or events that triggered the interests to focus more on researching racial
profiling, the importance of gathering data through a qualitative approach, the controversial perceptions of the existence of racial profiling, various descriptions of racial profiling, the nature of racial profiling and how it triggers community conflict, and the proposed research questions to be considered.

Chapter Two, the Literature Review and Theoretical Framework, discusses the background related to the characteristics and problems that exist in racial profiling. Various research articles will be selected to provide the necessary information needed for the audience to review and understand the characteristics and problems of racial profiling discussed by prior researchers. The chapter will provide 4 sub-topics based on the selected areas of racial profiling to be researched by the writer of this dissertation. Sub-topic 1 discusses the characteristics of racial profiling, sub-topic 2 will discuss the problems with racial profiling, and sub-topic 3 discusses how the contributions made by the researcher to the field of conflict and mediation, and sub-topic 4 discusses the implications and challenges of gathered data reported by law enforcement agencies to justify the existence of racial profiling during traffic stops and frisks.

Chapter 3 covers the methodology for the research. The researcher discussed the method chosen for the research study by providing the background and reasons for using the qualitative approach. In addition, this chapter discusses the selection of the participants, the use of interviews and focus groups to gather qualitative data that will include ages of the participants, number of times stopped by law enforcement officers, in what community they were stopped, if they were frisked, if they were arrested or not, if the vehicle was searched or not, and if they thought that the police office had a valid reason for stopping them. Chapter 3 also covers the data analysis for the research report,
and the limitations that exist for collecting and reporting valid data on racial profiling.

Chapter 4 covers the findings for the dissertation report. The chapter consists of information gathered from interviews and a focus group discussion. Themes and sub-themes have been defined and discussed from the responses retrieved through the interview and focus group transcripts and included as indicators of important shared points of information.

Chapter 5 covers the conclusion and recommendations for further research on racial disparities and profiling, as well as the inclusion of mediation processes.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

The literature presented in this research study is relative to the disparities and issues that build upon the urgency of this phenomenon. After reviewing the research literature, the researcher of this study found that the lived experiences of Black males are necessary to draw an understanding of the perceptions of racial profiling. It is also important to know how racial profiling came into existence, and the negative effects that it causes between Black males and the police. Mentioned here are also laws (Jim Crow) that supported racial profiling, and laws that prohibited racial profiling (Fourth Amendment Laws). The literature review concludes with the urgency of discussing and considering the perceptions of the racial profiling phenomenon from the participants’ point of view.

The Era of the Racial Profiling Issue

The tension between police and Blacks has been a continuing issue in society since legalized slavery was in existence, along with the Jim Crow days. Since the slavery days, Blacks were treated as criminals, hunted, captured, and chained, while being forced into laboring for Whites without pay. Even after slavery was abolished in the United States, in 1865, Blacks continue to be targeted, searched, arrested, and sometimes physically abused through law enforcement tactics because of being stereotyped as the face of crime. Due to this ongoing racial disparity, and the increase of illegal drug sales and use, in the mid-1980s, the United States Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) initiated “Operation Pipeline” in an effort to combat against drug trafficking (Ramirez, Hoopes, & Quinlan, 2003). In this study, Ramirez, Hoopes, & Quinlan discussed how the operation pipeline was used to target Blacks more than any other race in combating
against drug trafficking. This program motivated an aggressive approach towards the racial profiling of Black drivers. It was no coincidence that this effort lead by the DEA would turn out to be a means to target blacks as the main drug traffickers as they drove along the highways and roads of the United States. This would lead to stops and searches of Black motorists even without them committing a moving violation, or what would become known as ‘investigatory stops’.

As the level of interest in addressing and researching racial disparities and racial profiling continued to increase from the 1990s until the present, Feder (2012) notes that “racial profiling, or consideration of race by police and law enforcement, is a subject that the courts have reviewed on several constitutional grounds, including whether such profiling constitutes a violation of the Fourth Amendment’s prohibition against unreasonable search and seizure or the equal protection guarantee of the Fourteenth Amendment” (p. 1). Such laws have led many to question the continued behavior of the police and law enforcement agencies that continue to use race as a consideration for traffic stops and searches. This has increased research on racial profiling of Black men in the United States among social scientists, race and ethnicity researchers, and political scientists. In addition, social and justice research from criminal justice journals have published such articles (Kowalski & Lundman, 2007; Miller, 2009; Lundman, 2010) to measure race relations and racial injustice as it relates to traffic stops in the United States. In this research study information was gathered and examined in order to provide a channel for further discussion based on a qualitative approach by reviewing data collected from interviews and focus groups relating to prior experiences leading to the act of racial profiling, unlawful arrests, and/or police brutality.
Additional data was gathered from criminal justice reports issued in the most current year, and prior reports obtained over the last 2 to 5 years. For example, Baumbartner, Epp, Shoub, and Love (2016) reported in their statistical analysis research that 4.5 percent of Black males versus 2.61 percent of White males in North Carolina, were stopped, searched, and arrested (p. 8). Articles that discuss the phenomenology of racial profiling were examined for definitions and historical data relevant for the research study. For example, in the wake of the shooting of 25-year-old Freddie Gray, of Baltimore, Maryland, a report from the Justice Department revealed that out of 410 individuals stopped, Blacks accounted for 95-percent (Oppel Jr., Stolberg, and Apuzzo, August, 2016). The article showed that the possibility of Blacks being stopped and facing physical abuse of some kind by a police officer is higher than any other race. More so, the article also showed that there is a high risk for Blacks being shot by a police officer than any other race. Participants in this article revealed that they were singled out, while also experiencing some physical abuse, and also, in some situations a gun pointed at them. During a research project conducted by Gideon’s Army (2016), a civil rights activist organization in Nashville, Tenn., the following results were reported:

“Not only are black drivers more likely than white drivers to be stopped, they are also more likely to be stopped multiple times in a year. In 2015-2016, the rate for drivers who were stopped 2-5 times in a year was 113% higher than the rate for white drivers. Black drivers are 374% more likely than white drivers to be stopped 6-10 times in a year, and 364% more likely than white drivers to be stopped more than 10 times in a year. Some of the black drivers we interviewed reported being stopped at least once a month, and multiple interviewees reported
being stopped up to three times in one day in their North Nashville neighborhood” (p. 9).

Although the researcher of this study did not use a quantitative approach, without the use of statistical data, relying on the shared experiences of the research participants, many indicated that they were stopped multiple times during the year.

This chapter is divided into 4 sub-topics. The first describes the characteristics of racial profiling. This section discusses (1) characteristics of racial profiling from the point of view of various researchers, (2) perceived notions of racial profiling characteristics defined by participants, and (3) distinctions between defined characteristics and active characteristics. The second sub-topic describes the problems with racial profiling. This section discusses (1) how race is used to profile a suspected perpetrator, (2) racial profiling as a form of racism, and (3) racial profiling as a tool for crime prevention. The third sub-topic discusses the contribution to the field of racial profiling. This section discusses racial profiling as a growing topic of interest in the field of academics, law enforcement, criminal justice, and civil rights. The fourth sub-topic discusses how mediation can be a tool to assist in bringing forth concerns and underlying issues in racial profiling.

**Characteristics of Racial Profiling**

Racial profiling has been described by researchers from various social science and academic approaches. Glaser (2006) studied the efficacy and effect of racial profiling from a mathematical simulation approach. In his study, Glaser provides the characteristics and descriptions of racial profiling as practice initiated by police officers that leads to targeting a specific racial, ethnic, or national origin groups leading to an
increased mode of surveillance. In this research study project, as the focus will be on the population of Black males, taking the most common approach in racial profiling would be police officers stopping Black men between the ages of 20 to 49 operating a vehicle near their own inner-city neighborhoods, and in upscale neighborhoods. For clarification purposes, we will use the common language of “stop and search” of Black men. Glaser (2006) reports that 42 percent of African American men are involved in traffic stops compared to all women, White men, and other ethnic groups (p. 396). This type of injustice or unlawful act would also be known as racial bias towards Black men on the part of the perpetrating law enforcement officer. As noted by Weitzer & Tuch (2005), “Racial bias by police includes such things as racially profiling motorists, racial prejudice among police officers, and discriminatory treatment of minority individuals and minority neighborhoods” (p. 1009). In patrolling inner city neighborhoods, police officers assigned to those areas have been known to make more arrests than in the upscale neighborhoods (Brunson and Miller, 2006). Blacks have been taught to listen and not resist police officers when they are stopped and searched. Based on the views of Dahrendorf (2004) as it relates to his work on conflict theory, individuals that are in a position of authority (e.g. police officers, sheriffs, state troopers, etc.) will exercise a dominant role in some cases. Law enforcement officers take on a dominant role when they fall into the act of racial profiling while stopping and searching the automobiles of Black men.

Juan A. Juarez, a former Chicago Police officer, shared in his book entitled, “Brotherhood of Corruption”, that during his time on the force in the 1980s, he witnessed his colleagues using excessive force on Black males that did not commit any crime to
experience the abuse they received (2004). As several participants shared their experiences, they revealed that they received brutality, whether it was physical or mental, but had not committed a crime. Behnke (2017) relates this type of physical force by police towards Blacks as a continuation from the days of slavery, and the Jim Crow era. When Blacks were being targeted during the time of slavery, paid slave bounty hunters, and law enforcement would track down, capture, and then beat the slaves, or kill them. Today, in the various events discussed in this research study, many of the victims mentioned either experienced physical brutality, or were shot and killed by the police.

**Problems with Racial Profiling**

Blacks have always felt threatened by the policing tactics in the inner/urban cities. The use of police force, searches, and sometimes arrests in the urban communities prove that the policing is different than that in a suburban or wealthy community. As noted by Ship and Chiles (2014), “we have become a nation where many police forces have resorted to quick and easy racial identifiers to determine who is suspect, who is criminal, who should be locked up. In recent years this practice has come to be known as racial profiling, but for groups like African Americans it has long been a dispiriting, inescapable part of our existence” (p. 14). These are the differing tactics that reveal the racial disparities that exists in our society as it relates to the criminal justice system. Police behavior that motivates the way they police the urban cities have escalated into a norm based on the stereotyping of Black communities being the base for crime. “Police behavior including coercive crime control mechanisms such as the use of police force partly reflects deeply rooted social divisions that separate dominant and subordinate racial and ethnic groups” (Legewie, 2016, p. 38). Since the days of slavery, a great
percentage of Blacks have not been able to obtain a high net worth of wealth due to Whites controlling the corporations hiring practices, and most of the economic wealth. Blacks were not even allowed to get the same quality education as Whites, as well as obtain high paying jobs. This stagnated the Blacks from obtaining the knowledge and skills necessary to perform entry to upper level job duties. The majority of Blacks have represented the lower class in society for centuries because of the barriers set up to keep them from getting the wealth necessary to be classified in a higher economic status as most Whites are. It was not until 1930’s that Blacks started to obtain jobs, but the lowest and dirtiest ones (sanitation). There are three economic classes that have been commonly known to exist in the society. These economic classes are basically categorized by how much one’s financial net worth is, their education level, profession, cars owned, and value of property owned (house). The upper class is considered the top tier, the middle class is considered the second tier, while the lower class is considered the third tier, or the poor—below the poverty level. Meehan and Ponder (2002) stated, “Minority motorists, particularly African Americans, have long complained that the police, especially in suburban areas, stop them for no legitimate reason but solely because they are black: a practice referred to as racial profiling” (p. 400). However, this may not be the case—but socioeconomic status may be a factor in racial profiling also. Meehan and Ponder (2002) found in their research study that “Profiling, as measured by the proactive surveillance of African American drivers, significantly increases as African Americans travel farther from black communities and into white neighborhoods” (p. 422). In other words, police that stop African Americans that drive through white neighborhoods, may factor in social class along with race as a legitimate reason for the stop. One of the participants in this
research study shared that he was driving in one of Miami’s ritzy communities to visit a friend, and out of nowhere a police officer pulled him over and asked why was he in the community, and where was he going. The participant described his car as an older model Chevy with some dings on the passenger side door. “On the street, the most visible symbol of class is a driver’s vehicle” (Epp, Maynard-Mood, and Haider-Markel, 2014, p. 68). The make, model, and year of an automobile has been a symbol of status since the Twentieth Century.

Types of jobs held and employment status also plays in as a factor to racial disparities and how police may use this as a method of profiling Black males. Lower income wage earners typically will not drive the most luxurious cars, own or rent in the upscale communities, dress in the finer clothes, or associate with the wealthy.

“A frequently criticized form of racial profiling involves “pretextual” traffic stop—that is, detaining minority group members for routine traffic violations to conduct a more generalized criminal investigation” (Feder, 2012, p. 3). This existing problem occurs too often according to several researchers, civil rights activists and organizations, leaders of the Black community, and others. This problem according to Lever (2007) is that, “Racial profiling encourages us to see black people as perpetrators, rather than victims of crime; and it encourages us to believe that the face of crime is black although, for obvious reasons, white people are the majority of criminals in a society that is overwhelmingly white” (p. 23). This can be the motivating problem for the misconceptions occurring in the Black community that triggers racial profiling, and the lack of Blacks holding a positive view towards police officers. As noted by Fallik & Novak (2012), “Racial profiling involves the police differently using race and/or ethnicity
rather than behavior as the primary factor that directs officer decision making during self-initiated encounters” (p. 146). The problem with race being used to identify someone as a perpetrator for criminal activity is that it could cause police to implement unwarranted searches/frisks, arrests, and even physical force. According to Lever (2007):

“In short, one of the problems with profiling is that you do not need to suppose that the police are especially racist or brutish to worry about innocent civilian deaths: you simply have to suppose that if police believe that they are facing a potentially dangerous criminal, they are far more likely to anticipate the lethal use of force, and to respond in kind, than would otherwise be the case” (p. 24).

Blacks, as noted by Behnke (2017) have been the target of perpetrators of criminal activity because of the perceived notions established in a white privileged society. This is not only on a personal level of perception, but institutionalized. Juarez (2004) noted that the law enforcement agencies train their cadets to identify individuals as criminal suspects based on established stereotypes. Focus group participants in this researched study shared that the long history of stereotypes forced on Blacks serves as a motivator for racial profiling.

This phenomenon would therefore, through this belief among police officers, allow many innocent Black civilians to become victims of racial profiling that could eventually lead to unwarranted stops, searches/frisks, arrests, and the use of physical force. Again, the issue with NYPD commissioner Kelly and his approach trying to instill fear in Blacks and Latinos from committing crimes was unwarranted. As noted by Whitney (2008), “racial profiling in traffic stops has resulted in the proportion of African-Americans among the drivers searched by police far exceeding the proportion in the
general population of drivers” (p. 264). Not being able to drive or walk in your neighborhoods because of being Black and unjustifiably targeted by the local police could lead to fear, which would lead to mistrust. As Shipp and Chiles (2014) stated, “the Fourth Amendment grants you the right to be free of unreasonable searches and seizures. You also have the right to not lose your life, your liberty, or your property without due process of law” (p. 25).

Another characteristic of racial profiling stems from stereotyping of groups or individuals. Blacks have been considered symbols of criminal activity and violence since the Jim Crow era. As noted by Carbado and Rock (2009), “it bears noting, as a preliminary matter, that the perception of African Americans as violent and dangerous relates to, but also departs from, the reasons police officers might stop and African-American man to begin with” (p. 167). Stereotyping comes from certain beliefs and information that is passed on from one generation to another. As noted by Khan, Benda, and Stagnaro (2012), “stereotypes are most generally defined as beliefs about the characteristics, attributes, and behaviors of members of certain groups” (p. 3). For example, if some white families are brought up to believe that all Black men with dreadlocks are dangerous, then they will either fear them, not associate with them, or seek to keep them secluded away from the communities where they live. As stated by Shipp and Chiles (2014), “ever since Africans were dragged to these shores, black bodies have been treated by white society as a demonstrable threat, a simmering mass of anger and affront, close by and yearning for retribution” (p. 50). This also provides focus into why so many Black men have been incarcerated and separated from the general mainstream of society. As stated by Alexander (2012), “Large majorities of black men in
cities across the United States are once again subject to legalized discrimination effectively barring them from full integration into mainstream, white society. Mass incarceration has nullified many of the gains of the Civil Rights Movement, putting millions of black men back in a position reminiscent of Jim Crow” (p. 192).

Since the days of slavery, a great percentage of Blacks have not been able to obtain a high net worth of wealth due to Whites controlling the corporations hiring practices, and most of the economic wealth. Blacks were not even allowed to get the same quality education as Whites, as well as obtain high paying jobs. This stagnated the Blacks from obtaining the knowledge and skills necessary to perform entry to upper level job duties. Majority of Blacks have represented the lower class in society for centuries because of the barriers set up to keep them from getting the wealth necessary to be classified in a higher economic status as most Whites are. It was not until 1930’s that Blacks started to obtain jobs, but the lowest and dirtiest ones (sanitation). Meehan and Ponder (2002) stated, “Minority motorists, particularly African Americans, have long complained that the police, especially in suburban areas, stop them for no legitimate reason but solely because they are black: a practice referred to as racial profiling” (p. 400). However, this may not be the case—but socioeconomic status may be a factor in racial profiling also. Meehan and ponder (2002) found in their research study that “Profiling, as measured by the proactive surveillance of African American drivers, significantly increases as African Americans travel farther from black communities and into white neighborhoods” (p. 422). In other words, police that stop African Americans that drive through white neighborhoods, may factor in social class along with race as a legitimate reason for the stop.
Communities have been segregated for centuries in the United States and abroad. Blacks, since before the Jim Crow era, have been segregated into what is known as the ghettos or urban cities. The ghettos or urban cities have historically been targeted and label mostly as places with high criminal activities. Police tend to patrol these communities far more different than the white suburban communities, or the nearby upscale communities. For example, about 5 minutes away from what is known as West Coconut Grove (The Black Grove), there is South Gables, Pinecrest, North Grove, and South Grove, which are housed with million dollar homes, professional athletes, movie stars, and top tier corporate executives. As noted by Epp, Moody, and Markel (2014), “implicit bias can shape perceptions of places as well as people, and the modern urban ghetto is widely seen as a setting of social disorder requiring greater policing” (p. 46).

According to Epp, Moody, and Markel (2014), “Policies favoring proactive investigatory stops, by directing officers to look not for violations of the law but suspicious individuals, activate departments’ and officers’ implicit stereotypes of which neighborhoods and which individuals are suspicious” (p. 50). More so than ever, if a person is unemployed and hanging out in a predominantly black neighborhood (ghetto), they will most likely be targeted by the police as suspicious. This could possibly lead to surveillance, stops and searches. I was once told when I arrived in Miami, not to drive around the block more than twice in the inner city. The second time around, expect to be tailed and pulled over by the police. This was true. I recall when my wife and I first started to date, I drove from my college campus to where she lived in Coconut Grove, FL. Her family owned three homes in the community. When I arrived in the Coconut Grove area where she lived (Black Grove they call it), I could not find her address. I was
driving a red Nissan Sentra, and was dressed casually. Of course, I could not find her house. I circled around the block and drove through the community several times until I see a car with tinted windows driving close behind me. It was tailing me very close. I proceeded to call my then friend, who is now my wife, and asked her to drive to meet me where I was. I also told her that a car with tinted windows kept following me. She asked what color the driver was. I told her he was a white male. She said don’t pull over or stop, because it was a plain clothes police officer. She gave me the direction, and I then proceeded to drive to her house while being followed by the officer. When I arrived at her house, she was standing in the front with some family members, and the police then took off. At this time, I was relieved. My wife explained to me that happens all the time when a new face comes into the community, and the police are in hot pursuit of drug dealers.

**Racial Profiling and Conflict Mediation**

Conflict mediation is increasingly becoming a field of interest for many social scientists, university level students in various academic programs (e.g. humanities, law, criminal justice), and practicing attorneys and mediation specialists). For the purposes of this study the researcher will discuss the mediation theory of transformation that will center on power shifting. As noted by Bush & Folger (2012), “beyond the other methods of taking accountability for fairness, one specific method of doing so is emphasized by mediation’s defenders, a method commonly referred to as power-balancing” (p.15). In addition, the researcher will discuss practical approaches for conflict mediation as suggestions for dealing with conflicts arising from racial profiling. This will allow the information from the participants to be interpreted and taken into consideration as an
indicator that racial profiling was used as a means for the police or law enforcement officer to instill fear, and to promote inferiority when conducting a traffic stop, and/or search, and seizure. In addition, as this research will not be a means to suggest that racial profiling will cease to exist, but should provide awareness to motivate and empower the participants and those that seek to speak out on this issue, to press for a possible balance of power between local police and Blacks. At times, during instances as mentioned regarding racial conflicts, those that feel victimized may also perceive that an imbalance of power exists. According to Moore (2003) mediators are most often faced with the challenge of power imbalance that reveals a difference in the strength of parties and their influence (p. 392). This often time will cause the parties that perceive the other party as having more power to feel inferior or in a win/lose situation. As an advocate for social justice in the Miami Dade County area and resident, the researcher has experienced from the voices of inner city residents their conflicting issues concerning racial profiling and disparities. The researcher also, as a senior pastor, is a mediator in the community of Coconut Grove (West Grove) as a voice among the churches, concerned residents, courts, and local police and city officials.

Attempts to combat against racial profiling through formed civil rights groups surfaced during the 1960s. According to Behnke (20170, the Black Panthers, a more radical form of activism, a Black group started by two Black male college students in Oakland, California, aimed to fight against racial profiling by teaching their members self-defense tactics, providing community service agencies, and educational services on the poor Black communities. Because of the segregation laws, and other tactics like redlining (a banking and mortgage tacit used to identify poor Black neighborhoods) to
discriminate against Blacks becoming homeowners, The Black Panthers attempted to find ways around these laws through their community service efforts. Today, redlining is not openly practiced, nor does segregation exist as a law.

As noted by Moore (2003), “Conflict and disputes exist when people or groups are engaged in competition to meet goals that they perceive to be, or actually are, incompatible” (p. xi). The conflicting issue that is of most importance is the relative information withheld by law enforcement agencies that motivates the conflict of not receiving equal justice when stopped and searched by police officers. The recent outcry of injustice by the NAACP, Rev. Al Sharpton, Rev. Jesse Jackson, the Black community, and other ethnic groups has stirred up many rallies and marches to send a strong message that the verdict rendered in the Zimmerman case and other similar cases is conflicting with the perceptions that are held by these individuals and groups. Not only are Blacks concerned about the racial profiling during incidents like the one involving Trayvon Martin and George Zimmerman, Michael Dunn, and Jordan Davis, but many Whites are speaking out on this matter as well. Finally, this research study will contribute data to motivate qualitative researchers to conduct additional interviews and focus group sessions for gathering perspectives on racial profiling and racial disparities towards minorities, and to search for a solution or solutions to the problem. The experience shared by the participants of this research study is not only a channel for adding collective meanings of what racial profiling is in a single eye, but also as a collective form of information, it can also be a platform for suggested solutions for further solutions to the matter.
Implications and Challenges for Gathering Information

Researchers rely on data collected from agencies or research firms when attempting to implement studies that involve statistics related to social injustice or racial profiling (Lundman, 2010; Petrocelli, Piquero, & Smith, 2003). When implementing research studies such as these, researchers may find that some data gathered from agency reports can be flawed because of certain expectations or requirements that must be met within the confinements of the existing law enforcement agencies. According to Glaser (2006) such data cannot be relied upon for research reporting because of the law enforcement agencies’ resistance to keeping and reporting data that indicates racial profiling, unlawful search and arrests, and police brutality (p. 397). Because of the widespread epidemic of police brutality, police shootings of unarmed victims, and traffic stops and searches, and most recently the Martin/Zimmerman incident, most law enforcement agencies will not report the data publicly unless by court order. At times, there have been many cases revealing the dishonesty in police filing arrest reports. U.S. News & World Report reported that a Fullerton, CA, police officer was accused of filling a false arrest report indicating that “51-year-old Miguel Siliceo, indicated that the suspect resisted arrest and charged his partner when the bodycam showed that nothing of this nature happened” (“Fullerton Officer Charged”, 2017). I was a witness to a community protest that ended up in a march because of a shooting of an unarmed Black youth (17 years old) by the City of Miami Police in 2000, in the Coconut Grove West area, which is considered Black Grove. The young man’s mother is a local clergy, and his father is a deacon in the church. Information such as the mentioned event is not always reported with the exact details unless witnesses come forward to provide statements in the court of
law. For example, when 50-year-old Rodney Scott was shot by Officer Michael Slager, in North Charleston, S.C., in April 2015, the entire incident was captured on a cell phone by a motorist that was passing by (Funke and Susman, 2016). Because of a lack of trust between local Black residents and police, some that are witnesses to events like this may choose not to step forward and testify. As noted by Harris (2003), “Thus, while statistics may indeed illuminate discussion of racial disparities in criminal justice, using incorrect or incomplete statistics to prove a point may not only be unhelpful but misleading” based on certain information being excluded (e.g. race and ethnicity) from police reports (pp. 72-73). If the attempt to measure whether racial profiling exist through police stops are misleading because of missing data, then policies implemented by states that require race to be included in traffic stop reports, must be both enforced and followed to make the reports justifiable. To confront and report the racial disparities that relates to racial profiling among Black men in the United States, collecting information through interviews and focus groups will be an important source for conducting a sound research project on this topic because the data comes from a source external to law enforcement agencies.

In a research article published by Heaton (2010), the author noted that the Attorney General investigating the New Jersey turnpike incident in 1999, that involved the shooting of four Black men, two African Americans and two Hispanics, by state troopers, while claiming they were driving reckless, eventually prompted an investigation by the that found that no radar detectors or video cameras were present. The research implemented by Heaton (2010) observing drivers on the New Jersey Turnpike went on to discover that more than 75 percent of the drivers stopped and ticketed were African
American and Hispanic. This observational data collection method, and the results found, prompted the New Jersey Attorney General and Governor to implement a mandatory statewide training program geared towards racial profiling for local law enforcement agencies to conduct for new and veteran police officers. The data collected in this research was strictly from an external source that was suggested by the Attorney General and Governor of New Jersey, without any data collected from the New Jersey State Police.

Researchers are not convinced that quantitative data collected from law enforcement agencies is complete enough to make an argument in favor or against the existence of racial profiling during traffic stops. According to Tillyer, Engel, and Cherkauskas (2009) quantitative data collection conducted by police agencies can be somewhat biased based on police officers’ decisions not to report race, or even that a traffic stop occurred. Due to the potential of law suits, embarrassment, sanctions, job loss, and increased hostility towards local police, some officers may decide not to report race or the traffic stop at all. As Tillyer, Engel, and Cherkauskas (2009) noted, “as previous commentators have noted, data collection and analysis of vehicle stop data are frequently characterized by methodological and statistical limitations that need to be recognized and, if possible, addressed” (p. 70). This exclusion of information (e.g. race and ethnicity) has been the most common problem for researching or reporting collected data to show that racial profiling continues to exist, and is a threat to Black men while driving. Lundman (2010) notes that “a central and long recognized problem with police-reported data, however, is the extent to which those data are valid and therefore accurately represent what they appear to measure” (p. 77). Based on Lundman’s
research, data that is not complete or consistent with the needed information (i.e. race and ethnicity) to measure whether profiling exists during traffic stops can be a conflicting process for researchers and reporting agencies when attempting to provide valid research data relating to racial profiling. As it appears in this dissertation, more racial profiling research is being driven by personal experiences shared through the lenses of those whom have suffered the same consequences.

Numbers are not always the honest factor in gathering information for race related research. While data can be skewed as discussed in this research through the law enforcement officers’ failure to collect information on race/ethnicity and/or gender during stops and searches, lived experiences can be more precise. Data can be manipulated by anyone seeking a favorable image. Law enforcement agencies and their officers do not want to be the villains in the eyes of the residents, media, government, or public. They would like to be viewed as institutions that train their officers to serve and protect the community. Even now with the new training and standards set by various jurisdictions for law enforcement agencies and their officers to collect race/ethnic information when issuing a traffic ticket, most still may exclude the race/ethnicity data due to the high demand for officers to be viewed as impartial.

Using the qualitative approach to analyze cases of racial profiling yields more accurate data for further research, law enforcement training, and public awareness. Through the acquisition of personal experiences, research participants are more willing to open up and share information that would not otherwise be provided from quantitative data. Since qualitative procedures incorporates “different philosophical assumptions; strategies of inquiry; and methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation” they
ultimately provide a more comprehensive scope to the research study (Creswell, 2009, p. 173). This is the very reason why the researcher of this dissertation chose the hermeneutical qualitative approach in gathering information based on the lived experiences of the research participants.

In order to implement a theoretical base, I analyzed research on the neoliberalism theory. Neoliberalism, as noted by Davis (2007), as it relates to racism “is typically characterized as a set of economic tenets promoting more efficient government, while decreasing government responsibility for addressing social problems, and reassigning identity-based biases to the private and personal spheres” (p. 349). Within this theory, race is not an important component, and excludes government from overseeing the racial issues that exist in society. In other words, government is to ignore the components of racial disparities that exist, and allow the marginalized groups (e.g. Blacks) to privatize it and deal with it themselves. In this case, racial profiling would not be a priority for our government to manage, concerns for policing the Black community, or doing away with the tense relations as it relates to neoliberalism.

If we look at neoliberalism in relation to the economics of policing the Black community, we can find that budgetary constraints may be a part of the problem. Lawrence and McCarthy (2013) discuss in their research on the policing in Oakland, CA. that it requires three key components, which includes organizational transformation, community partnership, and problem solving. In other words, there must be changes in the police department at all levels. However, the research revealed that limited budgets prevented training in this area. Budgetary constraints has always been a big concern for policing Black communities. The City of Miami use to fund a youth athletics and mentor
program called ‘PAL’, which stands for ‘Police Athletic League’. The program has since been limited to only a few areas, and sports because of budgetary reasons.

Community partnerships are absolutely critical in order for community policing efforts to be effective (Lawrence & McCarthy, 2013, p. 7). This component of policing is best effect when organizations and police departments come together to discuss the issues in the community. This could include the creation of more jobs for the community, which could lessen the illegal activities that exist. Another area of consideration could include partnering with schools to create afterschool programs for the youth. Again, this would need a funding source so the resources needed would be available. The neoliberalism theory would suggest that this should not be something of concern for private entities to involve themselves with. Neoliberalists would defer this to a public entity (e.g. a grant funded agency).

Finally, according the Lawrence and McCarthy, the police should move from a reactive crime-response model to a more proactive problem solving model (2013, p. 9). This effect directly places the police department in a position to address issues that are connected to crimes. This would call for police departments, organizations, and community members to come together to find ways of combating crime in an analytical approach. In addition, this may require funding for certain projects like research and analysis consulting, training of officers and volunteers, and additional part-time employees. With budget cuts persistently taking place in our government, preventive components as these may be difficult to implement.

However society views racial profiling, this issue must be monitored and not ignored. For anyone to suggest the racial profiling is a myth, or an excuse for Blacks to
gain sympathy, saying that the victim is exaggerating, or just trying to create additional conflict as a means against White police, the voices of those that have shared their experiences should be heard.
Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter discusses the purpose of the research study, and the research questions that were presented in chapter 1. The purpose, background, and design of the hermeneutical phenomenological research for this study is discussed. Following the discussion of the hermeneutics phenomenology, my experience, which inspired me to implement this research will be discussed. Finally, the conclusion of this chapter will discuss the procedures for the study, which includes the participants, the research setting, and data collection, organizing and analyzing the data.

The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this hermeneutical phenomenological study was to explore and analyze the lived experiences of Black males who identified themselves as being racially profiled, while being stopped, searched, and contained by local police. Most importantly, this study’s main focus was on how the participants perceived that racial profiling existed when they were stopped. To implement this process, participants selected for individual interviews were asked to answer open ended questions related to their experiences when pulled over by the police while driving. The participants were asked to discuss their experience in the lens of their own perceptions of racial profiling, allowing them to share several elements that would manifest themes relating to this phenomenon.

Choice of Participants

The researcher chose the sample of participants from the Black population based on the percentage of Black males stopped versus other gender and race. As stated, “42 percent of African American men are involved in traffic stops compared to all women, White men, and other ethnic groups” (Glaser, 2006, p. 396). Based on research
implemented, Black males have been the leading indicator for victims of racial profiling during traffic stops. As noted by Whitney (2008), “racial profiling in traffic stops has resulted in the proportion of African-Americans among the drivers searched by police far exceeding the proportion in the general population of drivers” (p. 264).

**Research Questions**

The following research questions were addressed in the research study: How do Black males who describe themselves as victims of traffic-related racial profiling perceive and define racial profiling? How can the perceptions shared by Black males gathered through lived experiences contribute to the efforts of addressing and researching racial profiling, and promoting continued awareness?

**Hermeneutic Phenomenological Research**

“Qualitative research begins with assumptions, a world view, the possible use of a theoretical lens, and the study of research problems inquiring into the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem” (Creswell, 2007, p. 37). The researcher for this phenomenological study used a hermeneutical qualitative approach by conducting interviews and a focus group session within the selected inner city and local areas of Miami, Florida, by gathering information on race, age, employment status, marital status, description of vehicle driven when stopped, description of community residing in or where the traffic stop occurred, and overall lived experience(s) during traffic stop(s).

The hermeneutical approach was implemented by Martin Heidegger (1889 – 1976), a German born researcher that focused on theology. Heidegger also learned the descriptive phenomenological approach from Edmond Husseral (1859- 1838), but later
initiated the hermeneutical phenomenological approach from his study of theology (Laverty 2003). Both Husseral and Heidegger both implied the view that human conscience is based on the truth from the world in which we live (Sloan and Bowe, 2014). The researcher of this dissertation also studied Theology in graduate school. Erickson (1985) notes that “theology employs the insight of other areas of truth, and relates to the issues of general culture and learning” (p.21). Though commonly used in studying Biblical truth, theology is a study of terms and concepts in scriptures that reveals themes and definitive meaning of a message focusing on the existence and life of an individual(s). Hermeneutics also being a course of study for me during divinity school, I had to research the life experiences of biblical characters (e.g. Jesus, Paul, or John the Baptist) and develop a topic and themes in order to analyze and write and share a message/sermon. In the same manner, I am sharing the life experiences of the participants of this research.

Since my experience of being stopped by a local police officer and not given a specific cause as to why I was stopped, it encouraged me to conduct the research study. I was stopped while driving through Coral Gables, on my way to a bank staff meeting, by a Coral Gables police officer. After asking the officer why I was stopped, and refusing to give him my license, he called for backup. I was held for a length of time that caused me to be late for my staff meeting. At that time, I was dressed in a suit and bowtie, and driving a 1995 Audi Cabriolet. Finally I was let go, without a warning or a ticket being issued. Although I conducted this research study based on my own experience, I created room for others to share their lived experiences during the times they were stopped by the police. The interpretations of the participants lived experiences allowed me to gain a
presence with them, while acknowledging the opportunity to gather various reflections on the perceptions of racial profiling. Thus, qualitative research allows researchers to interpret and shared the voices of the lived experiences shared. The researcher is not the voice for the participant, but only a channel for interpretation and analysis.

Participants

The background information gathered (Appendix B) was used for demographical purposes only. The participants interviewed and selected for this study consisted of twelve Black Males between the ages of 20 to 49 from, Miami, Florida, mostly form the Coconut Grove (West Grove) area. As noted by Sloan and Bowe (2014), “qualitative approaches to research such as phenomenology seek to include knowledge as co-constructed. That means that the choice of focus made by the researcher and the choice of his or her interview questions, for example, will aid in data gathering as much as the recorded experiences of the participants” (p. 13). Qualitative approaches with hermeneutical phenomenology will extend beyond relying on the interview questions, but will rely more on the lived experiences of the participants, and the themes gathered from the shared information.

Emphasis by the researcher was placed on the importance of the participants providing their own lived experiences during the time they were pulled over by a police officer, while explaining the goals and objectives of the proposed research, and the final outcomes. The researcher’s aim was to maximize further opportunities presented through a hermeneutical phenomenological approach that will allow researchers that use this approach to extend further research on this topic, while providing the findings to be shared with interested researchers of academia, concerned groups, organizations, and law
enforcement agencies. As the phenomenological approach itself provides what people perceive of the world that they live in, the hermeneutical phenomenological approach provides a subjective experience of individuals or groups (Kafle 2011). The researcher taking a hermeneutical phenomenology approach makes room for the participants to describe their lived experiences based on the influence of the situation, their feelings, and/or opinions. This phenomenological method involved research that included reading and analyzing text transcriptions from the interviews and the focus group session based on the responses of the research participants. Themes from the text transcripts were implemented and isolated to avoid any overlapping of the gathered information.

Black residents heavily populate west Grove, and was founded by earlier Bahamian Black settlers. The researcher attempted to recruit 100 Black males within the same age group and area to participate in a private interview, or a one hour focus group session. Only ten from the targeted area responded and participated for the interviews, while two others were from areas outside of Coconut Grove. The focus group consisted of an open discussion moderated by the researcher, and a question and answer session. Twenty-five attendees showed up for the focus group session. In order to make the final selection of participants for the study, the researcher a flyer/invitation designed by the researcher was submitted to area organizations (e.g. the area churches, Coconut Grove Ministerial Alliance, Coconut Grove Collaborative Group, Coconut Grove Tenants and Home Owners Association, and the University of Miami Law School, Center for Ethics, and FIU) to recruit the targeted sample population. The invitation consisted of a form and a self-addressed envelope to be completed and returned to the researcher by mail confirming participation in the interview process or focus group. After receiving twelve
qualified participant responses for the interview process, the researcher accepted and confirmed the participants for the focus groups. The participants were qualified based on age, driving ability, and if they perceived that they had been victims of racial profiling. The invitation disclosed the number of individuals for the interview process, and for the focus groups.

Table 1

Summary of Interview Participant’s

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Car Model</th>
<th>Current Residence</th>
<th>Area Stopped</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male #1</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Sales Clerk</td>
<td>Chrysler 300</td>
<td>South Miami</td>
<td>Palmetto Bay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male #2</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>IT Tech</td>
<td>Nissan Maxima</td>
<td>Coconut Grove</td>
<td>Pinecrest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male #3</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>Ford Mustang</td>
<td>Kendall</td>
<td>West Palm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male #4</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Truck Driver</td>
<td>Dodge Challenger</td>
<td>Coconut Grove</td>
<td>South Miami</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male #5</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>Asst. Director</td>
<td>Nissan Altima</td>
<td>North Miami</td>
<td>Hialeah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male #6</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>MRI Tech</td>
<td>Nissan Altima</td>
<td>Coconut Grove</td>
<td>Pinecrest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male #7</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>Political Aide</td>
<td>Mercedes Benz</td>
<td>Miami Gardens</td>
<td>Aventura</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male #8</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Nissan Maxima</td>
<td>Coconut Grove</td>
<td>South Miami</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male #9</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>BMW</td>
<td>College Campus</td>
<td>North Miami</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male #10</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Waste Driver</td>
<td>Infinity M37</td>
<td>Overtown</td>
<td>Overtown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male #11</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Reg. Nurse</td>
<td>Mercedes Benz</td>
<td>Coconut Grove</td>
<td>South Miami</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male #12</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Chevy Camaro</td>
<td>College Campus</td>
<td>South Miami</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. All participants held a valid Florida, Class-A Driver’s License.

Data Collection

The primary focus for gathering data in this study was interviews, and a focus group session. According to Glover (2009), “Qualitative work has been shown to offer a more consistent interpretation of social phenomenon than quantitative work alone, primarily as a result respondents having the space and flexibility to contextualize answers to questions, in addition to allowing the researcher to probe participant responses for clarification, expansion, and meaning” (p. 53). The researcher could allow each participant the freedom to share or not share information concerning their lived experiences. The participants had time to think and reflect, while being probed with
additional questions that would allow open ended responses. As noted by van Manen (2007), “phenomenology is a project of sober reflection on the lived experiences of human existence-sober, in the sense that reflecting on experience must be thoughtful, and as much as possible, free from theoretical , prejudicial and suppositional intoxications” (p. 11). The final research analysis from the participants’ experiences is expected to be used for future research reference, litigation, additional community forums on racial profiling, and as a point of information for law enforcement training.

**Data Analysis**

The data analysis was performed based on the hermeneutical approach, which included reading the interview and focus group transcripts, reflective writing, and interpreting what the participants shared and translating them into meaningful words and themes (Kafle, 2011; Sloan and Bowe, 2014). After the researcher completed the steps suggested by Kafle (2011), and Sloan and Bowe (2014), the next step was to bracket my thoughts, and the assumptions shared by the participants, then the reduction of topics discovered were simplified into code words, then the formatting of themes (Moustakas, 1994). The participants’ interview transcripts were analyzed to form 7 major themes (see Table 1 below). The final step for the data analysis was to make meaning of the participants’ responses, and transfer the information under the related theme (Creswell, 2004).
Table 2

Major Themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feelings of anger and distrust</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Forced to produce documents without a violation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confronted as though presumed guilty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling powerless because of violation of rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Targeted because of being a Black male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expectation of the use of physical force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slight improvement, but no end to the issue</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bracketing

As noted by Drew (2004), bracketing is when various qualities from the researcher are sorted based on their own experience. For example, the researcher of this study shared his own experience when being pulled over by local police in a very affluent community. I was driving on Old Cutler Road on evening around 9:30pm, on the way home after attending a networking event at Northern Trust Bank. I was driving a 2007 Audi A4, cruising with the windows down. I was listening to some light Jazz. Just when I came to a stop light around Kendall Drive (88th Street), and Old Cutler Road, a Coral Gables Police pulled up behind me with flashing lights. It is dark out, and typically because Old Cutler Road, going south is lined with big trees makes it darker. I noticed that the police car was right up on my tail, which confirmed that the officer wanted me to pull over. There is not much traffic on Old Cutler Road during the late hours of the evening, which caused me to become worried. There are mostly upscale homes well over one million dollars in this area. Of course the officer gets out of his vehicle and ask for my driver’s license, registration, and insurance card. I gave the officer everything he asked for. The officer then asked where I was headed. I told him home. He then asked where I was coming from. I told him from a business networking event. The officer went to the back of my car, as I knew to get my license plate number. He came back to tell me
to wait for a moment. A second police car came up to the scene. Being in this area before, and seeing Black motorists pulled over, I knew that this was a routine practice for another officer to come and assist. The officer that pulled me over went to his car and sat there for about five minutes or so. The other office stood outside behind my car. The officer that pulled me over came back with my documents and told me to be careful and have a nice evening.

**Instruments**

Once the participants were selected for the study, the researcher arranged information meetings at four local churches for the participants to meet and go through an orientation. The orientation consisted of the explanation of the research study, the compensation (food and non-alcoholic beverages), and a questionnaire. The meetings took place over a 6-month time (1 meeting each month). Each participant received an informed consent form to complete, along with a letter of confidentiality. A survey consisting of ten questions was administered to each participant. The surveys consisted of questions asking about traffic stops, searches, arrest, physical altercations, if witnesses were present, court hearings if any, and the outcomes. In addition, churches were asked to donate the use of their facilities during the orientation and completion of the surveys and focus groups. The surveys and other information collected was stored in a confidential file, and will remain stored for three years in the researcher’s home office in a secured file cabinet.

**Interview Procedures**

During the private interviews, each participant was offered coffee or/and water, and a snack (Chips, Candy, and Fruit Bars). The interviews were conducted in a private
office at the researcher’s church. Each participant was provided with a copy of the informed consent form. The researcher explained the suggested length of time for the interviews (1 hour), and informed the participant if the interview went longer they could consent to stop or keep going. The researcher also explained to the participants that if they were not able to continue the interview for any reason it would conclude until an agreed upon date and time, or not continue. The participants were asked to inform the researcher if they did not want to continue the interview process. All of the twelve selected research participants completed their interviews. Only two research participants went beyond the suggested time. The researcher disclosed the confidentiality of the research, and that the transcripts from the interviews would be stored away in a secure file cabinet for a period of 36 months, and then shredded. After the researcher went over the logistics for the interview, the question and answer session began. Each participant was asked 10 open-ended questions (Appendix A) implemented by the researcher.

**Interview Session Protocol**

The protocol and design of the interview sessions were semi-structured. Participants were able to choose a date and time for the interview, but not the place. The place for the interviews were approved by the IRB, and the church officers. The questions for the interview were designed so that they would address the research questions. If needed, a second interview session would be granted (e.g. essence of time, if participant could not continue for emotional reasons). The interview protocol and structured served as a guide for each interview session.

The interview questions were designed to address the research questions of this study. The current interview questions (see Appendix A) were used in the interview
sessions based on my lived experience, and the events mentioned in this study.

**Interview Qualification**

The research participants were informed about the research study through the distribution of announcements in the form of flyers, given out to local store owners, churches, and individuals. Prior to the interview sessions, participants were given and informed consent form approved by the NSU Internal Review Board explaining that they accepted to volunteer in the research study (see Appendix D). The participants’ information was stored in my home office file cabinet, and will remain stored for thirty-six months, and then shredded.

**Implications**

Despite the data in the reporting system from law enforcement agencies, the research provides information that will be of great importance for preventive measures concerning racial profiling, unlawful stops and searches, police brutality, and unlawful arrests. If the result from the study show that data continues to exist that is inconsistent in the law enforcement arena, then additional measures will be taken to increase the awareness of these unethical practices, and research will be further implemented to confirm the need for correct data to be reported.

As mentioned before, all law enforcement agencies are not willing to share the police reports for their own reasons unless requested by the Courts because of information that was excluded from the traffic stop reports. As mentioned by Feder (2012) “Examples of racial profiling by federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies are illustrated by in recent legal settlements and data collected by governmental agencies and private groups, suggesting that minorities are disproportionately the subject of
routine traffic stops” (p. 1). In this case, researchers that show interests in this topic should continue to implement further qualitative research studies to gather and report their findings based on information provided by minorities said to have been victims of racial profiling.

**Ethical Considerations**

The implementation and involvement of human subjects in research requires that certain protocols, methodologies, guidelines, and laws be followed to limit the possibility of physical or mental harm. Ethics in research continues to be a guidance tool to protect the participants selected, and to uphold the confidentiality of any information gathered, unless otherwise requested by court order. According to Creswell (2007), “regardless of the approach to qualitative inquiry, a qualitative researcher faces many ethical issues that surface during data collection in the field and in analysis and dissemination of qualitative reports” (p. 141). The researcher is aware of the sensitivity relating to ethnic/racial issues, both past and present, and will be responsible for respecting the participants’ wishes to keep shared information confidential, respecting their decisions to withdraw from participating in the research, and proving informed consent information before participant selection, and throughout each interview and focus group session. The approval for the research ethics was granted by the IRB of Nova Southeastern University (Appendix C).

The inclusion of informed consent is a necessary component of ethics in research that serves as a valuable aspect of providing important information to the research participants. The researcher will provide each participant selected for interviews and focus groups with an informed consent letter that will outline the important details of the
research process in a clear and understandable manner. If there is a need, the researcher will explain any information on an individual basis as requested. As noted by Creswell (2007), “to gain support from participants, a qualitative researcher conveys to participants that they are participating in a study, explains the purpose of the study, and does not engage in deception about the nature of the study” (p. 142). An informed consent form was given to each participant (Appendix D) with their right to assent and not be exploited or coerced. The informed consent forms were collected and securely stored in a file drawer by the researcher. The researcher was the only one with access to the files. Participants was allowed to withdraw from the research study at any time. If a research participant asked to gain further explanation concerning the research study and its process, they were recommended to speak with one of the research committee members.

The research participants were granted the right to withdraw from the research without any cost. This information was provided in the informed consent form, and during the interviews and focus group session (s). The researcher understood clearly that no harm was to be extended to the participants. In addition, the researcher was aware that past experiences shared during the interviews or focus group session (s) could cause painful or undesirable memories to manifest. The researcher did not observe any type of discomfort or emotional stress, which allowed the interviews and focus group session to continue without any known factors. The researcher did discover that by the level of tone and expletive words used (I did not repeat the expletive words in this research paper in respect of the readers) during the participants’ responses, there were many individuals that were experiencing a form of anger and resentment towards local law enforcement agencies. For example, during the focus group session, many of the participants stood and
shared that would like to have the roles reversed so they can harass the police, instead being harassed. One participant in an interview session shared that he was so angry with how the police treated him during a traffic stop that he wanted to explode, but knew that it would only make the situation worse. Another participant, during the interview session shared that the way he was treated by the police caused him to become so angry that he began to sweat and bite his lips and grit his teeth. In addition, during the focus groups session, one participant stressed that he was so angry with the way the police get away with how they treat Blacks that he would like for them to experience losing a family member or loved one to a bullet from someone who should uphold the law and protect the citizens. It has been discussed that the Fourth Amendment was implemented to prevent the abuse of policing that has been documented in the most recent and historical accounts of traffic stops. Although there are certain limitations in the Fourth Amendment that allows law enforcement to act upon their own hunch to prevent criminal activity, “the issue is that officers disproportionately apply traffic laws against disfavored groups” (Oliver, 2000, p. 1413).

Although my research did not aim to depict all White police officers as bad cops, the racial profiling phenomenon remains a conflict in the Black community, and society. Black men, being statistically the most targeted as revealed in this research, have had to, and continue to face this issue even being if they are innocent. Therefore, any attempt to discredit the information shared by those that have experienced racial profiling in this research, will say that it does not exist.
Chapter 4: Findings

The purpose of this qualitative, hermeneutical phenomenological research study was to analyze the lived experiences and perceptions of racial profiling from Black Males during traffic stops in their local communities. The research study addresses the following two major questions:

1) How do Black males who describe themselves as were having been victims of traffic-related racial profiling, perceive and define racial profiling?

2) How can the perceptions shared by Black males gathered through lived experiences contribute to the efforts of addressing and researching racial profiling, and promoting continued awareness?

The research analysis produced seven themes implemented and discussed in this chapter, from the responses of the participants’ interviews, and the focus group session. The themes discovered are as follows: (1) Feelings of Anger and Distrust, (2) Forced to produce documents without a violation, (3) Confronted as though presumed guilty, (4) Feeling powerless because of violation of rights, (5) Targeted because of being a Black male, (6) Expectation of the use of physical force, and (7) Slight improvement, but no end to the issue.

Each theme was carefully analyzed from the responses of the participants to reflect related information that would provide answers for the research questions in this dissertation. While some themes may seem closely related in nature, the related research literature and excerpts from the participants’ responses provides deeper insight to unique differences to support why they were selected for final analysis. Each theme must be taken into consideration based on the lived experiences from the responses of the
participants.

**Theme #1: Feelings of anger and distrust**

Emotions and feelings play in big part in how one accepts and reacts to different situations in life. Anger and distrust, a focal point of discussion in this research, are two things that have been shared commonly among the research participants. Anger, as we all know, can cause anxiety, bitterness, and discord. Anxiety causes an individual and/or group to worry about what is going to happen before and during any confrontation. Bitterness causes an individual or group to hold resentment against others that leaves an unpleasant memory or taste behind after a confrontation. Discord erupts from a lack of harmony or disagreement between two people, or between groups. These feelings could lead to fear that may cause an individual or group to perceive that they must defend and protect themselves, or leave the scene, at all costs. But in many cases when fear sets in and anger or distrust arises, it may cause an individual or group to fight (resist) or take flight (run/flee the scene). That is why the results witnessed in many of the police pursuits and stops seen through the media may have been based on fear of the unknown outcome, causing one to fight or take flight. The honest reality is that when any person is faced with an unknown outcome, or have witnessed similar events relating to their own, the first thing that comes to mind may be to resist or run. The truth is, people can be afraid of being confronted by law enforcement officers seeing all the events and the results of them that have taken place. I have been in similar situations where I did not know what was going to happen while being pulled over, nor what the outcome would be. Although I did not choose to resist, it sure came to mind that I was in harm’s way, became nervous, and wanted to get out.
People in these situations are sometimes overcome with feelings of being vulnerable because they are defenseless, under subject to the authorities, and the authorities have a right to use their weapons. Not to forget that law enforcement officers have used physical force and made arrests at their discretion, even if it was not within the policies for policing. Victims of racial profiling see this as an excuse for police officers when they use race as a factor to stop, search, and/or arrest, more than a justifiable approach to combating crime.

During the interviews and the focus group session for this research, the participants discussed their feelings of anger and distrust. Many of the participants revealed that they were overwhelmed with anger when stopped by a police officer and was not given a clear reason for the stop, and sometimes frisked and searched. This type of revealed anger has lingered among Blacks because of the ongoing approaches used to stop, frisk, and search Blacks while driving. Often, anger expressed by Black males that perceive that they have been profiled and stopped causes a battle of words to stir, generally initiated by the driver towards the police office conducting the stop. Epp, Maynard-Mood, and Haider-Markel (2014) describes anger displayed by harsh words being communicated by the Black male driver, as a “tit-for-tat” hypothesis. Tit-for-tat often occurs when one party (most often the driver being stopped) begins to shout insulting words to the other party (in this case the police officer conducting the stop) because of feeling overwhelmed and angry. For example, one of the participants interviewed during this research expressed his experience. The participant was driving a 2014 Black Chrysler 300 with tinted windows through the area of Palmetto Bay, an upscale community of mostly whites.
Participant: I was so angry, knowing that I had been stopped because I was Black in a predominantly White community, I immediately called the police officer conducting the stop a racist bigot. The officer then blurted back that my next stop would be in jail. I told the police officer that he should be the one going to jail.

Epp, Maynard-Moody and Haider-Markel (2014) state that ‘Many African American drivers have told us that they do virtually everything to avoid such an escalation: they defer to the officer’s commands and requests, avoid any suspicious movements, and keep their mouth shut even when they feel deeply indignant at the officer’s intrusions” (p. 88).

Recent incidents in Cincinnati, Florida, Louisiana, Minnesota, and St. Louis, have motivated Blacks, and other ethnic groups across the United States and other countries to express their concern, anger, and outrage over these police shootings. These shootings unfortunately have caused anger and acts of vengeance, which resulted in police officers being targeted, killed, and injured during the recent protests. The protests spreading across the globe, with the slogan and chants, “Black Lives matter”, have proven the emotions of an angered people seeking justice.

Racial profiling has also generated a low level of Black citizens’ trust toward law enforcement officers from any or all agencies. One participant shared that whenever he sees a police officer in sight, whether driving or walking, he tries to avoid them. I asked how he avoids the officer that is near, and the participant said that he turn at the nearest street corner if driving or go into a store or public place if walking. Another participant shared that they slow down and make sure they are not breaking any traffic laws when driving. This tension has been witnessed sense the days of slavery, Jim Crow,
segregation, and the civil rights movement. Blacks are not that comfortable with interacting with white police officers. For most in this research study, they revealed that they would rather deal with a white female police officer than a white male.

One of the participants in this research study shared that he was driving in one of Miami’s ritzy communities to visit a friend, and out of nowhere a police officer pulled him over and asked why was he in the community, and where was he going. The participant described his car as an older model Chevy with some dings on the passenger side door.

Participant: I was driving through a very ritzy community of homes that were one million dollars and up. As I came to a circle that led to my friends’ house, a police cruiser came close to my rear bumper, and I was signaled to pull over. I had been to my friend’s house before, but driving a different car. This time I decided to drive my 1967, somewhat restored, Chevy Camaro. I was angry before even finding out why the officer pulled me over. All I thought was this White cop is going to ask me to get out of the car, make me put my hands behind my back, and search me. All of my lights were working, and I was not speeding or anything. On another note, I thought the office just admired my old model Camaro. Nope! The officer (White male) asked me for my driver’s license, registration, and insurance card. I asked if I did anything wrong. The officer remained silent and just stared at me. Then the officer told me that I only had a few seconds to get my documents into his hands. I gave him the documents, and he went to his car. When he got back to my car, where I was instructed to wait, he asked why I was driving
through the community. I told him that I was going to a friend’s house. He then gave me my documents back and told me I was free to go.

Just the notion of knowing that you have not committed a crime or a moving violation is enough to get you upset. Even seeing how Whites can drive through Black communities with no problem, blacks get harassed for no reason at all, and in so many words and actions are told that cannot freely go where they like to go.

**Theme #2: Forced to produce documents without a violation**

Participants were asked to share their experiences being pulled over and forced to provide their driver’s license, insurance card, and registration, while not presented with a verbal explanation of committing a moving violation. During any traffic stop performed by a police officer, it is common that if a driver committed a moving violation they will be asked to produce a driver’s license, registration, and proof of insurance. These documents give a driver the legal right to own and operate a motor vehicle at any time or any place. Drivers of motor vehicles willingly produce these documents at the request of the police officer when they understand a moving violation has occurred. The violator understands that they are guilty and should produce the proper documentation that is requested by the officer. We should note that an officer probably knows who the car is registered to before he/she approaches the vehicle because of the technology.

There are times that Black Male drivers become perplexed when stopped and asked to produce a driver’s license, registration, and proof of insurance, especially if they believe that they have not committed a moving violation. A research participant revealed during the focus group discussion that he refused to give the officer that stopped him any operating vehicle documents (i.e. driver’s license, registration, and insurance) unless the
officer gave a valid reason for why he was being stopped. This type of response to an officer’s request to produce these documents could lead to an escalated debate, and a possible altercation, and then an arrest. On one Friday evening, while driving from West Palm Beach, Florida, from an outing at the beach, a participant that attends a local four-year university in the North Dade area was pulled over by two local state troopers on the I-95 South expressway. The participant, a 22, year old male, in his final semester of college, was driving a 2016 Ford Mustang convertible, with the top down. This participant shared the following experience.

Participant: I was leaving a beach party in West Palm Beach, at around 8:00pm, celebrating a friend’s birthday. I had not had any alcoholic beverages, because my friend does not drink, and I do not drink, and therefore did not allow any alcoholic beverages to be served during the party. As I was driving westbound from the beach to the I-95 South entrance, and driving behind several other vehicles, once I entered onto I-95 South, and no less than maybe a mile driven, here comes to Florida State Trooper cars zooming behind me. I was flowing with the traffic, with cars in front of me, behind me, and in the left lane of me. St this time I am wondering what I did for these troopers to zoom up behind me, signaling me to pull over. I immediately pulled over. As soon as I pulled over the trooper nearest my car gets out, taps on the window for me to roll it down, and ask for my driver’s license, registration, and insurance card. I asked the trooper why I was pulled over, and he again requested my driver’s license, registration, and insurance card. I again asked the trooper for an explanation for why he pulled me over. He then signaled for the other trooper to come to the car. The second trooper
requested for me to step out of the car. I stepped out of the car, and decided to just
give the trooper my documents. The first trooper asked where I was coming from.
The other trooper asked if I had been drinking, and told him no because I don’t
drink. He then asked if he could search my vehicle, and I said you could see
whatever you need to see because my top is down. He then said what about the
trunk. I told him it was nothing in there but books for class and some sandals and
wet clothes from the beach. The other trooper went to his car to check my license,
I figured. He came back and gave me my license and other documents, and being
there for at least an hour, and told me I was free to go without a warning or a
ticket.

Many drivers that are pulled over suspect that they have committed a moving
violation, have a broken tail light, or some other visible flaw. Most may not expect to be
pulled over without an explanation for why, and may feel that they should not have to
produce any documents until given a verifiable reason. During a Sunday afternoon,
around 3:00pm, coming from the local Mall, a participant, age 31, was driving north on
U.S. 1, heading to eat at a local restaurant before going home and being pulled over by a
local police officer. The participant had also been at a local church worship service that
morning that he normally attends on a weekly basis. The participant was driving a 2015
Black Dodge Challenger SRT, with tinted windows, and all the accessories of a muscle
car. Here is the experience that the participant shared.

Participant: After attending Sunday worship service at a church where I have
been a member for the past seven years, I decided to stop at the Mall to buy a few
personal items. I was probably in the Mall for about a couple of hours or so,
taking my time to glance and make sure I got everything that I needed so I would not have to go back. I had on a pair of light beige khaki pants with a blue and white stripped dress shirt. As I went into the parking lot to enter my car, I noticed two police squad cars parked side by side with the officers having a conversation. I did not think much of it, and just got into my car, started it up, and headed to exit from the parking lot. As soon as I got to the traffic light as I entered Kendall Drive, heading to U. S. 1, I see this squad car with flashing lights approaching quickly behind me. I suspected that the officer was racing to an emergency call. I was wrong. The officer came behind my vehicle and commanded that I pull my vehicle over into a nearby fast food restaurant parking lot. Instead of me waiting in the car for the officer to approach, I immediately exited my car as the officer approached and asked why I was pulled over. The officer told me to never get out of the car unless I am asked to. He immediately requested my driver’s license, registration, and insurance ID card. I told him I had to get it out of my glove compartment. He told me to open the door to the passenger side and slowly open the glove compartment. I did as he said, and gave him the documents. While the officer was scanning my documents, I asked again why he pulled me over. He gave me a mean stare. I then said never mind, I guess that is the way it is done today. The officer told me to watch what I say so I would not have to spend Sunday in jail. This was so frustrating to me that I sat on the hood of my car while the officer to his sweet little time walking to his car to check my driver’s license and plates. He had nerve enough to ask me how fast my car went. I told him fast enough to get pulled over. He smirked and told me he took that as a joke. All the
while in my mind I was saying to myself that he was a joke. I knew that I was not speeding or did not have any dysfunctional tail lights, and my license plate was up to date. The officer finally gave me back my license and told me to have a good day, and nice car.

Although the driver did not receive a citation or was arrested, the issues here is that the officer forced the participant to produce his driver’s license, registration, and insurance card against his will, and without a just cause. Many of the focus group participants expressed that they were not willing to give their driver’s license to the police officer that pulled them over unless they gave them a valid reason as to why they were stopped.

**Theme #3: Confronted as though presumed guilty**

Research participants in this study shared their experience on how they were approached when pulled over by police. Looking at the recent police shootings that has transpired from Rodney King to now Alton Sterling, and Philander Castile, Blacks are often approached by the police in a more aggressive manner when they question why they have been stopped, or resist arrest. “Not long before Timothy Loehmann shot and killed Tamir Rice, the Department of Justice issued a scathing report on the Cleveland police department’s patterns and practices of discrimination and the use of force” (Hayes, 2017, p. 82).

Some of the participants, and the experiences that have happened recently, are more startling as the one I described above. For example, one participant described his experience as a living nightmare, as he was driving from his job to his home. The participant, a 23 year old Black male, and a MRI technician for a local clinic, driving a
black-on-black 2014 Nissan Altima, with 22 inch mag wheels and tinted windows, described his experience as one hundred percent racist. The participant shared that a Black man can work an honest job and still get harassed by White police officers.

Participant: I was driving on a one-way street in an upscale neighborhood just five minutes away from where I live. As I approached a stop sign, I noticed a police squad car parked on the other side of the road. The squad car quickly made a swerving U-turn, speeding up behind me before I could take off from the intersection. This was around 10:00pm. There were two officers in the car. Of course, when I saw the light flashing, I pulled over. The officer from the driver’s side immediately walked up to my car with his gun pulled. The other officer yelled, get out of the car now and on the ground with your hands behind your back! So, what else could I do but abide to keep from getting shot. I could hear one officer yelling, “Where are you coming from, and where are you going! I said, in a trembling voice, “from work, on my way home. After all the drama and confusion, I was let go. I felt like I was in a living nightmare. The way the officers approached me was unreal.

In situations as the one just given, you wonder if the officers that confront Black men understand the rights of being an American citizen that deserves equal protection and treatment. According to Glover (2009), “Blacks and other people of color are often the most ardent defenders of the rights extended to Americans discursively in the liberty and justice rights framework that characterizes the citizenship realm” (p. 81). Would they have confronted an innocent White man like this? Philander Castile was getting his driver’s license out of his pocket as requested by the police officer, but was shot and later
died according to the video that his girlfriend recorded while the incident took place.

Several of the participants in this study shared that they felt they were presumed guilty by White society, just for being black. During the focus groups session, a Black male stood up, after I asked if they perceived that they were already presumed guilty by police when pulled over, and shared that since slavery days, Blacks have been guilty of crimes that they don’t even commit. Another focus group participant shared that just because of the color of the Black man’s skin, it marks them as guilty. During an interview session, a participant, Black male, age 33, shared his experience as being presumed guilty without a moving violation.

Participant: I was driving at around 10:45pm, to pick up a friend from the airport, and just as I reached the traffic light coming out of my community, here comes an unmarked police car tailing me. I immediately stopped. The officers then jumped out of their car quickly and approached my car with their guns drawn. One officer shouted for me to get out of the car with my hands up. As I was getting out of the car, I asked the officer if I had done anything. The other officer told me to keep quiet and follow orders. The other officer came to search me, and then told me to remain calm. At that time, two other marked police cars showed up on the scene. One officer was a canine police. He let the dog out of his car. The dog began sniffing its way around my car. I told the officers that they would not find anything, and they were wasting their time. The canine officer told me to keep quiet and things would not get out of hand. I must have been there for about 30 minutes. The officers that pulled me over starting talking on their radios. Another officer asked if I had drugs on me. I told him no. He asked if I had any weapons
on me, and I told him no. One of the officers that pulled me over came and explained that a man had just robbed some tourists in the area. I asked him if it was a Black or White man. He said it didn’t matter, just wanted to catch the idiot. The officer came over and told me that I should not drive late because the criminals hang out at that time, and I fit the description. I told him the only description I fit is being Black. The officers told me that I was free to go.

As the ongoing quest to fight against drug trafficking remains a priority for law enforcement agencies, D.A.R.E. (Drug Abuse Resistance Education program) and the United States Government; African Americans, along with Latinos, have been the main target as illegal drug dealers in our inner-city communities.

One participant stood up during the focus group discussion and said,

Participant: There are more police cars patrolling my neighborhood than the rich neighborhood that is 7 minutes away from me. I cannot understand why we as Blacks are monitored more than any other group in this country. If we were living in an upscale, ritzy community, and with tons of money, we would only see two or three patrol cars every now and then. I know crime exists in upscale communities, but it is hidden to protect Whites. Whites do their things discretely, and are sometimes protected by the police instead of apprehended by them. Matter of fact, I know rich White people that openly tell me that they do drugs, and some of their teenage children do drugs. They say the difference is, they can hide in their expensive homes, and quiet communities and get away with it, where in the Black community, it is done on the street corners, or in abandoned buildings, in cars, in the Park, or other places of open exposure. I don’t do drugs,
but I can guarantee that if I was just standing on the corner minding my business, or having a conversation with someone I know, the police would stop me for no reason at all because of where I live. Just because I live in the inner city, it doesn’t mean that I am a criminal or drug addict. I have been stopped several times driving through my own community because I am not the rich, or the famous.

During an interview, a participant, age 37, described that when he was stopped, he knew he would be approached in an aggressive way because of the time of night, and being Black. The participant was driving a Gray 2015 Nissan Maxima, with tinted windows, coming from a sports bar with some friends. The time, according to the participant was around 12:45am, on a Saturday morning.

Participant: I was driving southbound on US 1, and after stopping at a red light, I saw a police lights approaching from a marked sport utility vehicle. I was thinking that it would pass. No it did not. It pulled right up behind me, signaling me to pull over. I complied. A police officer got out of his car in all black military type uniform, with his hand on his gun. I thought in my mind that I was surely about to get shot, or at least physically abused. All I thought about were the police shootings of unarmed Black drivers that had taken place. When the officer got to the car, he yelled, “out of the car, right now”! So I got out with my hands up, and got down on my knees immediately. Cars were slowly passing by trying to see what was going on. The officer asked me if I had a gun in the car. I told him no. He then asked if I had any weapons on me. I said no. He then told me that he needed to search the car. I told him that would not be necessary, because I was not carrying anything illegal in my car. He then said that he still needed to search my
car. He told me that he was calling for backup, and to stay still. Eventually, so I would not risk any physical harm, or possibly getting shot, I allowed the officers to search my car. They found nothing. I was eventually let go without any citations.

Most of the participants for the interviews and focus group session indicated that based on how they perceive the officers’ approach, they will not ask questions, and they will do whatever they ask. One focus group participant shared that he would not end up like the other unarmed victims from police shootings. Another focus group participant shared that it is a no win situation when the police approach you ready to draw their guns. The participant went on to stress that it is best to just shut up and do whatever they tell you to do, and leave alive.

Theme #4: Feeling powerless because of violation of rights

Feeling powerless can cause a sense of self-worth that is at a low level. Individuals that feel as though they have no worth in society could come to believe that they have no value, or can gain no control at any time. This type of feeling can be within and without. Thoughts that lead to one saying to themselves things like, why should I even bother to explain or give any input, expresses a feeling of being powerless or helpless. These types of individuals see others as dictators, bullies, tyrants, or just controlling people that could care less about their feelings or interests.

One participant, age 22, a college student, described his experience while being pulled over by two police officers around 6:00am on a Friday morning. The participant shared in a face-to-face interview with me that he was heading to the North campus in his 2013 BMW, of his university for an early class that started at 7:30am. The route that he
drove was Biscayne Blvd. This route would take him all the way north in about 45 minutes to the main entrance of the campus. However, the trip to the north campus was delayed. Here is the experience that the participant shared with me as I listened.

Participant: I was heading north on Biscayne Blvd., when I saw a speeding car with lights flashing coming towards my car. I realized as it approached quickly and at a close proximity, it was one of those plain detective type police cars. The car was dark gray with tinted windows. I knew that when the car was tailing me like it was, that was a signal for me to pull over. So, I pulled over into a shopping center parking lot. The officers jumped out of the car as if they were pursuing a criminal. I quickly rolled my wind down and asked what the problem was. The office that was driving, who approached my car first responded by telling me to just listen and follow instructions. I told him I have a right to ask what the problem was because I am on my way to class, and did not want to be late. The second officer just stood silent, not saying one word. He looked as if he was posing for a magazine for the toughest law enforcement officer look. The other officer loudly requested me to give him my driver’s license and insurance card, which I had both. I then asked if I was speeding or anything. The officer said just wait until I am done, and I will let you know. I told him to proceed, but my license and insurance is good. The officer said he would determine that for himself. He then told me that it would be best if I did not say anything. I told him as long as I haven’t committed a crime then I have a right to speak on my behalf. The officer told me that I was digging myself deeper into hole. The second officer then asked what campus I was going to, and what class was I taking. I told him
the campus, and then when I told him that I was taking a pre-law course, he kind of loosened up a bit. He said so I assume that you are going to be a lawyer. I told him that he was exactly right. The other office asked me to exit my vehicle. He then asked if he could search my vehicle. I said for what purpose. I told him that there is nothing in my car but a few clothes to go to the gym when I am done with class, my books, and some snacks. He did not want to hear that, because his response was that he did not ask what was in the car. It was now 7:05am, and my class started at 7:30am. I asked the officer if I could text my professor to let him know what was going on, and I might be late for class. He asked where my phone was. I told him on the dashboard clip. He said get it slowly, and then said no, I will get it for you. So, he went into my car anyway. He gave me my phone. And I sent the text message to my professor, and he responded telling me to be careful and get the officer’s names and badge numbers. The second officer asked if the professor contacted me, and I said yes. He asked what he said. I told him exactly what my professor said. The other officer said that I could go in a minute, but he had to check a few other things. I said that I am late anyway now. He said he was trying to be nice. I said not by making me late for an important class. We were going back and forth, back, and forth, back, and forth. It was as though he wanted to control the entire situation and not allow me any input into it. He finally told me that I could go. It was now 7:20am. I arrived at class at 7:40am, after going 50 in a 40-mph speed zone. I felt powerless and inferior to this officer. I could not get a word out without him challenging me, and signaling to me that he did not
care about what I felt, nor what I was saying. Well, a Black man and a White officer usually creates conflict of power, I think.

Reflecting on the days of slavery, Blacks have always been assumed as the inferior race. Blacks were captured, forced into serving Whites, and bought and sold as the inferior group. During the harsh times of slavery, Blacks could only eat, go, speak, and sleep when given permission. They were under the strict control and orders of the White master. The only Black that had some what of favor and power was the ‘House Negro’. Most House Negros, as they were labeled, were considered ‘Uncle Toms’. They would watch to see if a slave(s) would try to escape, and then tell the master. This sometimes happens when a Black officer and White officer are on the scene of a traffic stop.

A participant, Black male, 37 years old, described to me during an interview his experience when and White police officer pulled him over around 8:30pm, in the inner city of Miami, called Overtown. He shared that the moment he was pulled over, another car came zooming up. The second officer was a Black male. The participant explained that he had a sigh of relief when the Black policer officer showed up. When he got out of his car and spoke, that sigh of relief turned into shock. It was shared by the participant that the Black officer started walking around the car as if he was looking for something illegal. Here is the experience that the participant shared with me.

Participant: I was driving through Overtown, an inner-city neighborhood within the City of Miami limits, on the way to pick up some food from a local fast food restaurant. I had just left from talking with a neighbor about how the community was being taken over by new development. So, I get into my car, a 2012 Infinity
M37, and head South just beside I-95. As I get close to the restaurant, and get ready to park my car, here comes a police car with lights flashing pulling up behind me before I could park. I noticed the officer on his radio, as if he was calling in my license plate, or for back-up. Lo and behold, it was for back-up. Soon, here comes Mr. Hero Black cop, racing toward the scene, and jumping out of his car like Robin in a Batman movie. I’m like, what in the world did I do to get this type of attention from these police. I have been living and socializing in this community for years. I grew up here. So, I ask immediately what is going on here. The White officer said just follower the orders that you are about to receive and there will be no trouble. I responded by telling him it will be no trouble because I haven’t done a thing to get into trouble. The Black officer said just listen and don’t speak. I knew that I was among a traitor. Selling his own people out for no reason at all. The White officer, very short and muscular, kept proceeded to ask where I was coming from, and what was I doing. I told him it sounded like he already knew where I was coming from and what I was doing. I said didn’t you see me casually talking with my neighbor for a good while. He said he didn’t know who he was talking with or how long, but just to answer the question and not get smart. The Black officer then told me to not be so quick to assume what we saw and how long, but to just answer our questions. The Black officer asked what was I talking about back there with the other person on the corner, and was there any exchanging of drugs going on. I told him that we were talking about this community and how developers are taking over. He said that is probably a good thing, and will make our jobs easier. I asked the White officer if
he was going to write me a ticket of what. He said not this time, but I do need to
search you and your car to see if any contraband is present. I told him that he only
finds a clean car and his reflection in the mirror. The Black officer said that I was
still be smart with my mouth. I told them that they did not have permission to
search my car for no reason. The White officer said that they would either search
the car or call for additional back-up, and that I could be handcuffed and placed in
the back of the police car until the search has been performed. They ran a check
on my license and plates, and I was quite sure that everything checked out fine.
The Black officer then called me to where he was standing and said just cooperate
and you won’t have to go to jail tonight. I said no one is going to search my car
because I have rights. He asked what rights are those. He then said the only rights
you have now is to cooperate and keep quiet. By that time another White male
officer showed up and asked what happened. They talked among each other. The
officer that showed up last told the Black officer to put the cuffs on me and place
me in the back of the police car while they searched my car. So, it was, I was
sitting in the back of a police car, handcuffed, while local neighbors witnessed all
of this. They searched my car, and after finding that no drugs were present, they
let me go. I felt like I was all by myself, with no say, or no opportunity to defend
myself. I knew that I was under these officers control even though I did not do
anything or have any drugs on me. But the biggest thing that made me angry and
feel powerless was when the Black officer acted in the same manner as the White
officers did.
This research participant was faced with an experience that also prompted disbelief because of how the black police officer behaved. The participant was probably expecting the black police officer to defend him in some way. As neoliberalism is viewed as a means to banish the thought of treating your neighbor as thyself, or having empathy towards others, during lived experiences as this one, we can see that the neoliberal police holds the power over the black driver. I was taught to just do whatever the police tell you to do, and everything will be fine. But as the researcher of this dissertation, I find that to be a way to motivate police to possess more power over black men, even if they have done nothing wrong.

A participant, 33 years old, registered nurse and student, driving a 2010 White Mercedes Benz, shared his experience as not unusual while driving the same US-1 route. The participant believed that White police will always have the upper hand over Black men. He shared that he did not expect anything different when being stopped by the police. According to several participants, police are given this type of power, and it comes from the protection and training that they receive.

Participant: I have been stopped several times. Matter of fact, I can almost say over 20 times in one year. Every time I am stopped by a police officer, they are white and very pushy. I can never ask them a questions without them telling me to shut up and comply. I guess they think with my scrubs on, I am coming from a bank robbery, or maybe my scrubs are similar to prison uniforms, although they are green. I was stopped coming from work one night, and was very tired. As I am driving, here comes a police car tailing me. I thought I had a tail light out, my brake lights were not working, or my turn signal light was not working. So, I pull
over, and when the officer came to my car, I asked, what I did. The officer asked me where I was going. I told him home to my bed. He then asked me where I was coming from. I told him from my place of employment, because I do work. The officer told me it was no need to get smart. I told him he stopped me, I didn’t stop him. The officer then told me that he would ask the questions, and all I needed to do was answer them without being smart. The officer then asked for my driver’s license and registration. I gave them to him. After he took them form my hand, I said I hoped he had a good reason for stopping me. The officer told me he always have a good reason for stopping people. He went to check my license and registration, and came back asking what I did for a living. I told him that I get pulled over by police for a living. He said there you go again. I told him that I could say whatever I wanted to, as long as I don’t incriminate myself. The officer then told me that he had the badge and the authority to take this matter further. I told him that he could do whatever he wanted to do, but I did not commit a crime, or a moving violation. The officer then told me to just take my documents and have a nice night.

Participants shared experiences of being told to shut up or get arrested. They shared that this was most common among Black men being stopped by the police. Participants reported that they were asked to get out of their cars being they asked why they were being stopped, and admitting that they did get smart with the police, but did not make verbal threats.

Many of the participants shared that there has been some improvement since the days of legalized slavery has been abolished, but society continues to deal with Blacks as
it did in the days of slavery. For example, one participant in the focus group session shared that “he could be as innocent as a puppy dog, but as long as he is a Black man on this earth, he perceived that his rights as a United States citizen and a working-class male would be violated.”

One participant explained it like this during the focus group session,

Participant: If I wasn’t Black, I could live free just like White people do. I could go where I please to go, when I want to go, and how I want to go, and not be harassed. But in this Black skin, whenever I leave the confinements of my home, I am a target waiting to be hit off guard by this so-called justice system. Matter of fact, I would make more money than I am making now, own a bigger house in an exclusive community, and be able to walk, ride, or run in the presence of the police and not be confronted. As a Black man, I have not equal rights to live free in this tainted society. If I can’t drive a simple car to my destination, without being pulled over by a racist cop, then I have no rights. If I cannot drive during any hour of the day or night, then I have no rights. If cannot ask why I am being pulled over, then I have no rights. There are no rights for Blacks, except live and do as told, or suffer the consequences. I was just driving to a friend’s house to watch a football game when a police pulled me over. I knew I was in for it when I saw that he was a big Whited muscle bound cop. He had a mean face like a giant ready to break me in half. The officer told me that I knew the routine. I said what the routine is. He said you know what you’re supposed to give me when I walk up to your car. I then asked why I was pulled over. He told me not to worry about that, but just get my driver’s license, registration, and insurance card out. I asked
for what, knowing that I did not break any laws. The officer told me that he would ask me to get out of the car next if I did not give him what he asked for. I then told the officer that I had a right to ask him why I was being pulled over. He said I didn’t. I told him that at that point I did not have to give him my driver’s license. The officer then called for backup. I told him that he could call whoever he wanted to, but I deserved the right to know why I was pulled over. Two additional police cars pulled up. As they walked over to my car, I said, welcome to the party officers. Your colleague refuses to tell me why he pulled me over. Finally the officer said that I did not signal when changing lanes. I told him that I was not changing lanes until you pulled me over. He said I still should have used my signal light. The officer wrote me a ticket and told me to have a nice day. Clearly he had to come up with something to justify why he pulled me over.

These lived experiences and expressions shared only show that Blacks are more convinced that the rights that are afforded to Whites are not theirs to share. As one scholar noted, “given that nearly all motorists commit some traffic offense, even on short trips, the base-line expectation of an ordinary traffic offender is that his liberty and privacy will go undisturbed” (Oliver, 2000, p. 1412).

During the fall of 2014, a research participant and his date were driving from a late movie around 11:47pm, and discovered as they were pulling out of the parking garage in a 2015 Chevy Camaro Convertible, a car with flashing lights zooming up behind them. Here are two local college students out for an evening of enjoyment having dinner and a movie after.
Participant: We had just left the movie theater at Sunset Place, in South Miami. While walking to the garage, we were just discussing how we enjoyed the dinner and the movie that was played. We then got into the car, paid the parking fee to the attendant, and pulled out of the garage onto the street. Suddenly, lights flashing from what we knew as a police car was behind us, and quickly approaching. My instincts moved me to pull over to allow the police car to get by, as I thought that maybe there was an emergency call in progress. This was not so. The police car came close to almost tapping the rear of my car. The next thing I knew is that through the loud speaker, the officer said pull over. By the way, my date was a white Hispanic female. I pulled over to abide by the officer’s request. The officer exited his car with his hand over his gun, and ask that I provide him with my driver’s license and insurance card. I was of course terrified by his approach. I handed him my driver’s license and insurance card, and asked what the problem was. The officer told me to just do what he asks. I told him we were just leaving the movies, and was headed back to campus. The officer said he did not ask me to tell him about the movies. He told me that he knew where I was coming from. I immediately told him that he was violating the law because I had not committed any traffic violation, or committed any crime. The officer then said he would be the judge of that. The officer then asked my date her name and why was she out so late. She told that officer that she was an adult and did not have to give him any details concerning where she goes and what time. The officer then said he could arrest smart mouth people easily. I then said I have my rights, and he could either issue a ticket for a moving violation, or let us go. The officer then
asked if we had any drugs or alcohol. I said no. He said may I search the car? I said no. The officer then proceeded to walk around the car with his flashlight as if doing a search anyway. I told him that I have rights, and I am protected by those rights as a citizen. At that point, a back-up officer pulled on up and got out of the car. He asked his fellow officer what was the problem. He said they refused the request for me to search the vehicle. The back-up office then approached us and ask where we were coming from, and where we were going. I told him the same thing I told the other police officer. He then walked over to the other officer that pulled us over and had a discussion with him for about 2 or 3 minutes. The officer that pulled us over came and gave me my driver’s license and insurance card back, and said we were free to go. I thought that I would surely be asked to sit in the back of the police car, or get down on the ground when I refused to allow the officer to search my car. I have rights, and when one is aware of their rights, they can refuse certain request that will violate their rights.

One participant, a Black male, shared during the focus group session that laws are not to protect Black people, but only White people. The participant went on to say that every time I get close to, or spot a police officer, I start trembling knowing that because I am black, I could very well face injustice if the officer decides to stop me. He shared that he was stopped several times, detained, searched, and let go without any explanation. Another participant during an interview session shared that he had been stopped by the police so many times, for no reason at all, and let go, until he knows that whenever he is stopped, it will be the same old thing. He shared that it was like a repeat of the slavery
days; you just can’t escape it. He then went on to share his experience when he was
stopped leaving a bowling alley, after a night out with some friends.

Participant: I am getting into my car in the parking lot of the bowling alley, drive
onto the boulevard, and lo and behold, here comes two White motorcycle cops
coming up behind me, and pulled me over. I was like, anything wrong officers.
They asked immediately if I had been drinking. I said no. they then asked me to
step out of my car. I did. They asked for my driver’s license and registration.
Surprised they didn’t ask for my insurance card. So I did not volunteer to give it
to them. One officer asked would I agree to a alcohol test. I said no, because I did
not have anything to drink. The other officer said that they would call for a squad
car to take me into the police station if I did not agree to an alcohol test. I told him
to go ahead and call whomever he wanted to. I refused to take the alcohol test and
did not have anything to drink. They finally called a squad car. I still refused to
take the test. The officer that arrived in the squad car got close up to my face. I
then realized he was trying to see if he could smell alcohol on me. Some of my
friends did have a drink or two, but not much. The officer that came in the squad
car pulled the other two officers to the side and was having a discussion. They
came back and gave me my documents, and told me I was free to go.

Theme #5: Targeted because of being a Black Male

Here is a topic that can be somewhat difficult during experiences, discussions,
reading, or writing. Bireda (2010) wrote, “The discussion of racial stereotyping is an
emotional, sensitive, and often uncomfortable topic” (p. 45). As the researcher, and one
who was a victim of being racially profiled, I too find it somewhat emotional when
narrating my own lived experience to others. I often question the tactics of law
enforcement officers towards Black males versus White males. One research participant
stood up during the focus groups sessions and shouted out that Black men have been
targeted since the time of slavery. Most research has proven that Black men have been
stopped by law enforcement officers more than any other race or gender. With the
assumption that Black men are more pronged to criminal acts, this has open the door for
them to be targets of racial profiling, stops, searches, and sometimes arrests. According to
Brunson (2007), “descriptions of black citizens’ mistreatment by police are abundant in
some African American communities” (p. 71). This could be based on the amount of
criminal activities that persist (e.g. drug dealing, drug use, gangs, theft, prostitution) in
the communities, or just because they are predominantly black.

The inequity of racial imparities may be a common factor when Black males are
being pulled over by White police officers more than other races. Dugan stated that “a
particularly devastating form of inequity, in terms of its impact on the members of the
discriminated-against group, occurs in the realm of criminal justice systems: Dugan went
on to say,

“Compared to members of the dominant group, subordinate-group members are
more likely to be stopped, questioned, and searched by the police than are
members of dominant arbitrary-sets, everything else being equal. Once arrested,
subordinates are more likely to be beaten by the police while in custody and lore
likely to be held in custody awaiting trial rather than released on bail. Once tried,
they are more likely to be found guilty, less likely to be sentenced to alternatives
to prison (e.g., community service), more likely to be sentenced to longer prison
terms, less likely to be granted parole, and when convinced of capital offenses, they are more likely to be executed, especially for capital offenses against dominants” (2004, p. 5).

A research participant, age 27, was driving home on late evening, around 10:30pm or later, found himself being pulled over by the local police. He was driving a late model pickup truck with mag wheels and tinted windows. The participant also shared that he had his tools in the bed of his truck as he had just finished working at a construction site where a new condominium building was going up. In an interview with a research participant, the following experience during a traffic stop was shared.

Participant: I was driving home at 10:30pm, when I saw flashing lights quickly approaching the rear of my vehicle. At that moment, I proceeded to slow down after realizing it was a squad car, and then pulled over. I knew what the situation was before the police approached my vehicle. The officer asked for my driver’s license and registration. I reached into my center console and gave him my registration, and then pulled my wallet out and gave him the driver’s license. The officer asked me where I was going. I calmly said, home. The officer then asked where I was coming from. I calmly said, work. He then asked where I worked. I said, for a local construction company. I was sure that he could see that by the cement on my boots and pants. The officer then begins to say that they have been looking for a local suspect that robbed a woman two nights ago. I said, that is funny, I always hear about things like that when it happens in this community. The officer then said blatantly, you kind of fit the description of the suspect. I then said that I don’t have to rob anybody because I work for a living. The officer
then responded by saying, I did not ask you that. The officer then asked if it would be okay if he searched the car. I said, no you may not. The officer then said please get out of the car. So, I got out of the car as he requested. The officer then asks me to step away from the vehicle while he radioed for back-up. When back-up arrived (a Canine Cop), the canine officer released the mutt from the car to sniff my car. The canine dog found nothing. The canine officer said to me, next time just comply and your life will be easier. I said it is already easy because I work for a living and support my family. The officer gave me back my documents and said have a nice evening.

Another participant during an interview, 24 years old, a father of 2, a part-time student and full-time stock clerk for a major clothing retail store, shared that his experience when leaving his job.

Participant: I thought everybody knew that I worked in the mall. I guess not. I leave at the same time every night. However, this time, I am getting into my Honda Civic, with tinted windows, and the mag wheels, and the loud exhaust. When I exited the mall parking garage and headed toward the highway to go south, I see a state trooper hauling tail behind me. I did notice a trooper car sitting just before the entrance of the highway. I was not speeding. I was gradually getting on to the highway. I was a bit tired also because I had class that morning before going to work. Now all of my white co-workers that drive the same way were in sight. Out of all of these driver getting onto the highway, the trooper pulls me over. He gets out of his car with his trooper hat on and ticket pad in his hand, while talking on his radio. I rolled my window down and sked why I was being
pulled over. He just said driver’s license, registration, and insurance card please. I said for what. I told him that I did not do anything to get pulled over. He said a second time, driver’s license, registration, and insurance card please”. I then proceeded to ask him why. The trooper said this could be easy or hard. I told him that the hard thing was that he could not give me a reason for pulling me over. He then said if I wanted to play hard ball then he would too. Another trooper pulled up on the scene and got out of her car. A White female. She asked the other trooper what was the problem. He told her I was not cooperating with him. She then came over to me and asked what is the problem sir with you giving him your license and registration. I said because he did not give me a reason when all of the other White drivers did not get stopped. She said then may I see them. I gave them to her, and she went to her car, came back and had a discussion with the other trooper. The female trooper came and gave me my documents back and told me I was free to go.

The participant shared that he knew he was stopped because he was black, and not because he had done anything wrong. Many of the participants during the interviews and focus group expressed that this is a normal thing for Blacks to get pulled over for no reason at all.

Would this had happened if the participant was white? Bireda (2010) noted that “stereotypical images of African Americans have existed since the enslavement of African peoples in this country, and have become as American as apple pie” (p. 43). I asked some of my white friends if they had ever been pulled over and why. They said it was for speeding and not signaling when changing lanes. One friend said that he told the
officer that he was not speeding and that it was a waste of time stopping him. He said the 
officer asked him for his license, registration, and insurance, and proceeded with 
checking his driving record and so on. The officer then came back and said this is a 
warning. Be careful. Why could this not be the same for the Black male? President 
Barack Obama stated on CNN, after the shooting of Philando Castile, in Minnesota, and 
Alton Sterling, in Baton Rouge, LA, that blacks are stopped 30% more than any other 
etnic group, and are searched and arrested 50% more than any other ethnic group (CNN, 
July 2016).

One research participant, age 33, was riding his motorcycle around 12:30am, 
traveling along US 1 heading south to a friend’s apartment to spend the night. He 
described his motorcycle as a custom-made cruiser with neon lights and a lot of chrome, 
with a sound system that could shake the ground. However, he shared that he was not 
blasting the music loud enough to draw any attention. He did explain that the custom 
exhaust on his motorcycle is very loud. The research participant saw three police cars 
parked near the median as he cruised past what he described as “Shops of Sunset Place”. 
This is where restaurants, bars, clothing shops, and the movie theatre is located. As he 
continued, the research participant saw flashing lights zooming up behind him. Here is 
what was shared in the interview.

Participant: As I was cruising and enjoying some Kenny G. on my CD player, I 
see these flashing lights zooming up behind me, and then hear, pull over now! 
Pull over now! So, I pulled over and put the kickstand down on my motorcycle, 
and waited for the officer to approach me. This idiot approaches me with his gun 
drawn. So, I immediately put my hands straight up in the air. The officer told me
to keep my hands up and get off the bike. Trying not to get shot as an innocent man, I did what the officer asked me to do. After about 3 minutes standing with my hands in the air, and wondering what was going on, I see two other squad cars rushing to the scene. All I thought was, I will be going to jail for no reason at all tonight. The two officers that showed up ask the other officer what he had so far. I said to myself, they don’t have a thing, and will not find anything, or whatever they are looking for. I knew then, here I am, a Black man on a custom motorcycle, minding my own business, and here come these racist cops with nothing else to do but harass me. They checked my license, insurance, pockets (patted me down), and my side bags on the motorcycle, and found nothing but my change of clothes, my money, and a pair of shoes. I thought to myself, how stupid they must feel to find nothing. Finally, the officers came to a decision and allowed me to go. One of the officers told me he had a similar bike, and to be careful riding down here in Miami, because there are a lot of motorcycle accidents that turn fatal.

As noted by Rudovsky (2001), “even if we could eliminate racial bias in street level policing, the problem of arbitrary stops and searches would still be present” (p. 299).

A 23-year-old participant that I interviewed shared that he was just going to a local convenience store to pick up some necessary items that he needed in the house. The research participant described the time as being very dark out, after 10:00pm. He described the store as a small but very busy and convenient for the community because of its proximity. The store was described as being busy throughout the day and night, being a 24-hour store that was open seven days a week. The car driven by the research
participant was a 2015 BMW 328 IC, which is a convertible, and very sporty, and
considered a luxury vehicle. The following experience was shared by a research
participant during an interview.

Participant: I was coming out of a convenience store around 10:15pm after work.
I needed to pick up some toiletries. I also purchased a can of Pepsi and a bag of
chips to snack on while on the way home. I was hungry at the time. As I was
getting into my car, I noticed two white police officers in a patrol car. I also
noticed the officer on the passenger side staring at me, and watching my every
move. I got in the car casually, started it up—and begin to pull out of the
convenience store parking lot. As I pulled up to the first stop light, I noticed the
patrol car zooming out of the parking lot behind me. Immediately the officer
commanded that I pull over from the loud speaker. I pulled over. The officer from
the passenger side came up to the car and asked me where I was going. He did not
even ask for my driver’s license or registration. By the way, I was driving a late
model BMW. I responded by saying this is a free country, and I can go where I
want to at any time. The officer said don’t get smart with me boy. Just answer the
question. I said that I was going home if he didn’t mind. He said where were you
coming from before you went into the store. I said why. The officer said just
answer the question. Then the other officer came up to the passenger side of my
car. I said to both officers if you don’t mind I would like to take the toilet paper
home for my family. The officer on the passenger side said they can wait for that.
The officer standing on my side said give me your driver’s license and
registration. And by the way, let me see proof of insurance also. One officer said,
nice car. What is your occupation? This went on for about an hour while they did their routine check. I said oh, by the way, I am a VP of technology for a major bank. The officer gave me back my documents and said go home and be safe. If I was white this would not happen to me. I had on pressed kakis and a blue button-down shirt. That is my normal attire for Fridays. Maybe it was my small afro that attracted them. As if a Black man with an afro can’t have a good job.

One participant shared his experience while being pulled over in an upscale Miami community during a one-on-one interview session. The participant interviewed during this research study shared that he was driving his 1994 Nissan Maxima, which had some dents on the driver’s side, and faded paint, through the Pinecrest community at 8pm (mostly million dollars plus homes are in this area), and was stopped for no reason at all.

Participant: As I was pulled over, the officer conducting the stop asked what I was doing driving through the community so late. I told him that I was on my way home from work, and that I drove this route every night going home. The officer asked me to produce a driver’s license, and after to exit the car. After exiting the car, the officer asked if he could search the car because I fit the description of a person that was committing robberies in the area. I did not give the officer permission to search my car, but that he could write a ticket if I committed a moving violation. The officer then called for backup, and in the length of about 2 minutes, 3 additional police officers drove up. The officer told me that it would be to my advantage if they could search the car. I told him I was coming from my job at a local hospital, and used this route to get home quicker. The officer then asked for my work ID. I stated that if I had been white and driving a luxury car, with
dapper clothing, they would have not pulled me over. I eventually gave the office my work ID, but insisted that they had no reason to search my car. After back and forward resistance, I just told the police office to go ahead and waste his time and mine searching the car. I turned around and saw a marked SUV with the label Canine Police on it. The officer driving the SUV got out quickly and open the rear door and out jumps a dog. The officer led the dog to my car, and allowed the dog to sniff around the entire car. I guess the dog did not show any signs of sniffing anything that they were looking for (drugs of course), so the officer gave me back my license and work ID, and allowed me to leave.

Space is a term used in the socioeconomic status view for places where people of certain color and economic status live. The research participant above felt that the police officer targeted him because he perceived that he was out of place.

Black men did not ask to be born black, and therefore have no choice but to face the consequences of racial disparities and racial profiling that exists because of the color of their skin. Many have heard, but may not have comprehended what Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. meant when he said, “I have a dread that my four children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character”. Black men should not have to fear being targets of racial profiling when driving in any place, at any time, in any car, or in any dress attire. Besides, Whites drive where they please, at any time, dressed any way they please, and drive whatever they choose to drive. People are too prone to misjudge an individual because society has placed a label on them. It is more so that people send a message that Blacks are bad for
society, and therefore should be targeted as so, and not be treated as other citizens, or given the same rights as they have been provided.

**Theme#6: Expectation of the use of physical force**

It is often not recorded when police use excessive force during traffic stops. Past and present experiences have proven that some police officers use physical force, whether by gun, stick, or pinning the subject down on the ground during traffic stops and searches. As stated by McElvain (2009) “interestingly, of all the activities and responsibilities performed by the police the one most discussed is use of force” (p. 21). This is what causes Black males to perceive in advance that when they are stopped by a police officer, the use of physical force may erupt. Legewie (2016) stated that “Racial profiling and the disproportionate use of police force are controversial political issues” (p. 379). Recent incidents resulting in police shootings of unarmed victims during traffic stops have become factual proof that the use of physical force is a practical approach by some police officers. The vice-president of the Association for Los Angeles Deputy Sheriffs quoted “What a ridiculous piece of claptrap! In response to a suggestion that before using force, officers should consider how the public might view their actions” (Jackman, 2016, p. 1). This officer was clearly defining himself as one who would support the use of force by officers no matter what the public thinks. Here is what a participant shared during an interview about his experience during what he thought was a routine traffic stop.

Participant: I saw lights flashing in my rearview mirror and immediately pulled over, as I thought that the officer was trying to get around me for an emergency call or something. Then the patrol car pulled up right behind me and I heard, ‘pull
the vehicle over’. The officer got out of his car and walked up to my window and asked for my driver’s license, registration, and insurance card. I asked the officer why I was pulled over. He said just honor the request that I made. I then asked the officer if there was a traffic violation committed to give him reason to pull me over. The officer then commanded me with a firm voice to exit my vehicle. He said since I did not want to honor the first request, he would see if I would honor the next. I said ok, I get out of the car but that is all. The officer said I could not tell him what he could proceed to do or not proceed to do. I said to him I have rights. He then grabbed me by the arm and turned my body so my back would be facing him, and he shoved me onto my car. I then yelled that this was illegal! This is police brutality! Take your hands off of me! I did not commit any crime, or break any law! Let me go! I then noticed additional patrol cars with flashing lights approaching the area very quickly. One officer got out and asked what the problem was. The officer said he did not honor my request. The officer that asked what the problem was came over and asked where I was going. I said to pick up my wife from the train. He asked why so late in the night. I told him that she is a nurse and works different hours. He then requested that the officer who pulled me over let me up from the car. The second officer said you may go. Have a good evening.

Yes, of course, this could have been avoided by just giving the officer the documents that he requested. This however, does not call for the use of force, because someone ask why they are being pulled over.
Another participant, 36 years old, driving a 2011 customized Nissan Altima, shared that he was leaving his cousin’s apartment, and could not even get into his car before a police ran up and threw him onto the hood of his car.

Participant: I was leaving my cousin’s apartment, and getting into my car, and I see a police officer running up to me and then shoving me up against the side of my car. I was like, what the heck is going on here. The officer told me not to move or else. I actually in fear, and wondering if this officer was going to arrest me, or shoot me. The office then wrap his leg inside of my leg, causing me to fall to the ground on my face. I ended up with a slight scratch on my forehead.

Witnesses started to crowd around to see what was going on. My cousin came out of his apartment and shouted to the police officer that I had just left his apartment, and why was he holding me. By the way, I have long dreadlocks (braids), and very dark skin. The officer told my cousin to stay back and shut up. At that time about 3 other police cars showed up. A sergeant asked me where I had been earlier, and I told him work, and then I stopped by my cousin’s house. He told me that a robbery had just occurred, and I fit the profile. I told him I just left my job, and I was a retail warehouse worker. He requested my license form the other officer that apprehended me, but the officer told him that he did not ask me for it. The sergeant asked me where my license and registration was. I told him that it was in my back pocket. The officer allowed me to take them out of my pocket. He proceeded to his car, and then came back and apologized. He then explained that another man with the same complexion and hair style had just robbed some tourists, and they had been searching the area for him. The officers then allowed
me to get in my car and leave. My cousin shouted and told them to get it right the next time because all Black men don’t commit crimes.

Besides the physical abuse, at times, the participants also felt embarrassed because of being handled in this manner, and those that witnesses it. The participants also shared that the embarrassment can also cause mental abuse.

According to Jackman (2016), “police killed 990 people in the United States in 2015, according to a Washington Post database, of which 9 percent were unarmed, 16 percent wielded knives and 5 percent used their vehicles as weapons” (Jackman, 2016, p. 2). The simplest response to why so many civilians are killed by police officers would be because police reveal that they fear for their own lives. But how could this be true for the 9% that was unarmed? When does tactical training without the use of a fire arm take place for the 16% of knife wielding victims? Police officers receive extensive training in self-defense, which consist of how they must defend themselves against someone without a weapon, with a knife, or with a stick. What happens when an unarmed young man that plays drums for a local church leaving band practice breaks down on the side of the road, and is shot and killed by a plains clothes police officer? A reporter from the Washington Post wrote a story about Corey Jones, a drummer for a band called ‘The Prezidents”, and musician for his church, vehicle broke down on the side of the highway in Palm Beach Gardens, on his way home from practice around 1:45 a.m. Jones phoned a friend and band member, to help him out. The band member showed up and waited with Jones until 2:30 a.m., while the tow truck was in route. After Jones’ friend left, some plains clothes police pulled up and approached the car, thinking that it was abandoned. Jones was in the
A research participant explained his experience like this:

Participant: You would have thought that I robbed 10 banks, killed 50 people, and raped 100 people. When the police stopped me at around 10:49pm, while on my way to get a friend from the Metrorail station, 4 police cars surrounded my car. One officer frantically ran up to my car and ordered me to exit with my hands in the air. I asked the officer what was the problem. He ordered me to just do what he said to do, and to keep my mouth shut. I was driving a black Nissan Maxima with light tinted windows, custom wheels as most would call them, and a clean tag with no mechanical issues. Matter of fact I had just had the car serviced at a local Nissan dealer. The officer then proceeded to open the door of my car while the other officers (4 additional ones) held me at gun point, and searched my car. He asked where was my license and registration? I told him it was in my center console. The officer pulled the document out and read them carefully. One officer asked where I was going at this time of night. I said to pick up a friend from the Metrorail station and take them home. The friend was a neighbor (woman) that I agreed to pick up if she got of late so she would not walk home at that time of night. It was about a six-block walk to her house. My friend had started walking and saw the incident taking place. She walked over and asked the officers what was wrong. Then she said she was waiting for me to pick her up and take her home. Another officer said that there had been a murder that was drug related in the area and that my car fit the profile of the accused suspect. They continued to hold me for about 1 ½ hours, while other officers showed up on the scene, and
realized that I was not the person they were looking for. I asked the officer if all of that was necessary. He said I was free to go, and to leave it at that. One officer, a Black female, apologized and said be careful, and that is a good deed that you are doing, picking up this lady so she would not have to walk home in this community at this time of night. Another officer, a White male, said be safe.

Another participant shared during an interview that he would have never thought that he would face physical force by a police officer, while not being guilty of anything. The participant was driving a late model BMW M3 with tinted windows, while leaving a local Walmart store, at round 11:20pm.

Participant: I was getting into my car in the Walmart parking garage, and as I left the garage, lo and behold, a police cruiser comes behind me signaling me to pull over. I had been stopped before, so I knew the routine of pulling right away. I thought that maybe the officer received a call and wanted to get past, but no, he slowed down behind me, and tailed me so I could pull over. The officer then exited his car in a very anxious way, and demanded that I get out of my car, with my hands where he could see them. As I got out of the car, the officer shoved me up against the car. I asked the officer what was his problem. He told me I was his problem if I didn’t shut up. I told him that I was just coming out of Walmart. He then shouted, what’s in the car. I told him nothing but something I bought from Walmart. Another officer came speeding up, and jumped out of his car like I had committed a major crime or something. The office told the other officer that drove up, that he wanted to search the car. The second officer on scene asked if he could search the car. I asked why. He said it was routine in a situation like this because
they received a call from someone about a drug transaction that just took place in the area. I told him it wasn’t me. The office said my car fit the profile. In the meantime, the other office kept shoving me up against my car, while keeping his hand on his gun. The second officer went to his car and, I guess checked my license and tag number. He came back and told the other officer that I was clean. The other officer then took his hand off of my chest and said things like this happen when people call about drug dealing in the area. I was very angry that they used physical force on me, even though they did not punch or shoot me.

Lived experiences of physical force were shared by most of the participants, whether it was being pulled out of their vehicle, grabbed by the arm, shoved up against the car, thrown on the hood of the car, or thrown to the ground. Most of the participants shared that they expected the use of physical force because of the current incidents that has taken place, and because of being black.

It was reported in the Washington Post Magazine that the fatal shootings in 2016 by police were up in numbers compared to 2015, in the first six months (Kindy at el, 2016). With the media reporting these occurrences, the outcry of the Black community along with Whites who are against racial profiling and abuse by police, and those that are fighting against this in our government, we would hope that the fatalities would not increase. As one recent study stated, “federal data on police shootings between 2010 and 2012 show that young Black male civilians were 21 times more likely to be killed by police than young White male civilians”, which shows an increase to prior years (Hall, Hall, and Perry, 2016, p. 4).
Theme #7: Slight improvement, but no end to the issue

During an interview with a research participant, age 33, an assistant manager in a retail store, he indicated that police officers can do whatever they please, while no one is monitoring or reporting it. The research participant described his experience while driving through the downtown area of Miami around 1:00am in the morning after coming from the Bayside Marketplace. The participant was driving a rental car (2016 Jaguar Sedan) because his personal car was involved in a rear end accident, and was in the body shop being repaired. While leaving the public parking garage and turning onto Biscayne Blvd., the participant shared that he was immediately pulled over by two White police officers in an unmarked car. The research participant shared what he called one of the most degrading experiences that should have been recorded.

Participant: As I drove out of the public parking garage, turning onto Biscayne Blvd., to travel north to my apartment, here comes an unmarked police car with flashing lights tailing me, and finally telling me to pull over. Naturally, I pulled over so I could avoid any unnecessary altercations. I then see two White plain clothes police officers through my rear-view mirror, quickly approaching my car with hands on their gun holsters. Immediately when the officers reached the driver and passenger side of the car, the officer on my side yelled “out of the car now” Mr.! I rolled my window down and asked what the screaming was for. The officer said not questions, just get out of the car. I then exited the car, and while exiting the car, the officer grabbed me and put me face down on the hood of the car, and placed handcuffs on me. I asked the officer what I did to get arrested. He told me to keep my mouth shut and things would not get out of hand. The other
officer said nothing, but just kept staring at the inside of the car that I was driving. I told the officer that he stopped and handcuffed me for no reason at all, and failed to read me my rights. He said that I was making things worse by opening my fat mouth. I was not even asked to produce my driver’s license or insurance before being handcuffed. This was clearly illegal. The officer that said nothing then asked if he could search the car, and I said no. I said you have no reason to search the car, and it was a rental car, and if they wanted to call the rental car company they could to search it. The officer shoved me into the hood of the car as if he was very angry. I felt the force of his forearm pushing me into the hood of the car, pinning both my chest and face down. The other officer went to the police car and sat in their, which I knew he was checking the tag number. He came back over to the other office and told him the car checked out to be good, and was not stolen. The officer that held me on the hood of the car finally let me up and took the cuffs off, and asked where I was going. I told him I was going home but would be going to the police station to report this to his authorities. He told me that it would be a waste of my time, and no one would believe me. I told him I would take my chances and go anyway. He told me I was free to go and do whatever I wanted to do.

Encounters with police that involve Blacks being illegally stopped, searched, and held in custody happens too often without being reported and monitored because of the understanding that no one will follow-up on the matter anyway. As noted by Walker (2007), “Allegations of officer misconduct may come from either internal or external sources. Internal allegations involve reports by supervisors or other department
employees. External allegations involve formal or informal complaints by citizens” (p. 18). Eyewitnesses do often not support external allegations, and therefore get reported without further investigation. Therefore, the importance of pre-and post-intervention programs that monitor reports of police misconduct must be of high importance.

During the focus group session, a man in his mid-forties stood up as if he was about to leave, but raised his hand and voiced his concern that no one really cares about monitoring the bad behavior of the police. The focus group session participant shared that all the incidents that have taken place where police have stopped Black men for no reason at all, searched their cars, held them in custody without warrant, and ended up shooting some of them, will never be paid close attention to. The participant shared that he had been stopped several times and let go, knowing that it was illegal, and that he was being racially profiled. He then shared his opinion that if the Whites in society feel safe by the ill policing, it will continue the way it is, and all the bad things that these police do will get thrown under the rug. He also said that the police internal affairs office is a joke today. More of the participants during the focus group session agreed. It was shared that police should be consistently evaluated on their police work, and not by observation of their supervisors.

During an interview session, one participant, 24 years old, driving a 2015 Ford Mustang GT, shared that he was stopped by two police officers while driving to a local restaurant to pick up his carry-out order. This driver shared that he knew he was being racially profiled because there was no one else near him but White drivers with their nice cars.
Participant: Hey, I decided not to cook that night and ordered some food from a local restaurant, about 3 blocks from where I live. As I was driving, I noticed an unmarked police car with two officers in it following very close. I kept driving the below the speed limit, because I have a Mustang GT, which is very fast. When I arrived to the restaurant, I noticed the lights flashing behind me from the police car. The officer on the passenger side got out and came to my car and requested that I roll down my window. I did so. He then ask me where I was going. I told him I was going to get some food from the restaurant. The officer then asked for my driver’s license, registration, and insurance card. After receiving the documents, the officer then asked me to get out of my car. I asked the officer if there was a problem. He told me to comply and get out of the car. As I was getting out of the car, the second officer came a pushed me to the hood of my car, and told me not to move. He spread my legs and began to pat me down. I kept asking if I had done anything wrong. The first officer that came to my car took his flashlight and started walking around my car, and then asked if he could search the vehicle. I told him no. HE said it would be best for me if I allowed him to search my car. I said no. He told me that I could choose to get arrested, or allow him to search the car. At that point, I felt that the officer was trying to overpower me with threats. But I knew my rights. The second officer finally told the other officer to let me go, and they gave me my documents back. This proves that there is not much improvement in the fight against racial profiling when I can get stopped for no reason. I am glad I knew my rights, and did not have anything in my car that was illegal.
The participant experienced a situation that many are seeking to see improvements in as discussed. During the focus group session, the question of how to improve the issue of racial profiling came up. One participant, a Black Male, indicated that if every police officer that stops Black drivers without any violation were reprimanded strongly, this would probably not happen so often.

**Composite Description**

Through the shared lived experiences the composite description focused on themes of the phenomenon of dealing with the events stemming from racial profiling. From the application of the above themes, the lived experiences revealed the participants’ discussions of the reality of dealing with racial profiling. All participants shared that racial profiling will be a part of life for Black men as long as they live.

Each participant, regardless of economic status, type of employment, model of car owned, all felt that they were racially profiled when pulled over by the police. The participants knew that others would also be interviewed, and most likely would share similar experiences. In addition, based on the shared experiences of the participants, each felt that racial profiling is more common towards Black men, than any other gender or race. All participants felt that because of their skin color, they were racially profiled by police.

Regarding the participants’ lived experiences with racial profiling, all of the participants expressed that their rights were violated, and they were unjustly treated when pulled over by the police. Some participants felt that they were pulled over because of the abuse and stereotyping that stems from the days of slavery. They felt that the same discrimination that occurred during the days of slavery, continues to exist today.
Participants shared that they did not see much improvement in the fight against racial discrimination. In addition to sharing that there is not much improvement in the quest to eliminate racial profiling, most of the participants agreed that they just have to live with it.

Every one of the participants expressed negative feelings towards the way society and police identify Blacks as criminals instead of realizing that Whites commit crimes also. All participants shared that just being Black makes them the guilty. Furthermore, participants shared that Whites were taught since the days of slavery that Black men are aggressive and violent, and are lazy, and therefore seek to get what they want illegally. In addition, participants expressed they unwillingness to have any dealings with the police.

Participants did not anticipate that there will be improvement in the fight against racial profiling. Most did share that it was getting better before it started getting worse again. In addition, most participants did agree that the fight against racial profiling and other methods of combating this issue should continue. Finally, the participants shared that the participation in the research allowed them to release their frustrations.

**Description of Themes**

The seven major themes were generated during the reduction stage of the research analysis. Each description of the themes have been compiled based on the responses of the participants. The participants all had experienced being pulled over, while perceiving that they were racially profiled. Several code words were generated from the participants’ responses, and therefore provided similar meanings for discovering the seven themes.
Theme #1: **Feelings of anger and distrust.** All of the participants, including the focus group session attendees shared that they felt angry during the time they were pulled over, and while witnessing the police shootings that have taken place throughout the United States. They all expressed a negative image of White police officers. Therefore, most of the participants expressed their distrust towards White police officers and would rather not have any dealings with them at all. Some of the participants shared that they will never feel comfortable approaching or being approached by a White police officer, even if it was in their community.

Theme #2: **Forced to produce documents without a violation.** Out of the 12 participants that were interviewed, most shared that they had not committed a moving violation when they were pulled over. Most of the participants expressed that if they had committed a moving violation, they would have admitted to it. The participants that were forced to produce their driver’s license, insurance card, and registration, sharing that they did not commit a crime or a moving violation questioned the police officer (s) for doing so. They participants shared repeatedly that they strongly felt that their rights were violated because they were asked to produce documents and did not commit a moving violation, and did not receive an explanation as to why they were stopped. Most participants shared that they were hesitant in giving their documents to the police officer.

Theme #3: **Confronted as though presumed guilty.** Regarding the participants’ shared thoughts expressing that because of the societal norms and stereotyping of Black men as all being criminals, they felt that they are presumed guilty before innocent. All of the participants expressed that the slavery days and Jim Crow era, most of White society perceives all Black men as criminals. Most of the participants shared that Black men
could have jobs, drive cars, and live moral lives, but will still be labeled as a criminal in the eyes of some people. The participants expressed that whenever a call is made to report a crime, police conclude that a Black man committed it.

**Theme #4: Feeling powerless because of violation of rights.** Each time a participant was pulled over by a police officer and searched, they expressed that the officer abused his authority, overpowered them with threats to arrest them, and they felt that their rights as citizens were violated. The participants that were searched without will expressed that the Fourteenth Amendment did not protect Blacks rights to protect their property. All of the participants shared that White men could ask or say anything they wished when pulled over by the police. Therefore, they expressed that the laws are only to protect White society, while limiting what Blacks can say or do to protect themselves from the unlawful practices of the police.

**Theme #5: Targeted because of being a Black Male.** All of the participants expressed that they were targets of racial profiling because of being Black men. The participants shared that this overlaps from the days of slavery. Some participants that shared their knowledge voluntarily about the history of slavery, expressed that it was then, and it is now that Black men are targeted as is the days of slavery, and considered aggressive, violent, and lazy. The participants expressed negative attitudes towards White police and White people because of this issue.

**Theme #6: Expectation of the use of physical force.** All the participants expressed that they feared that the police stopping them would use physical force if they did not comply, or even if they did comply. The participants shared that they did not know what to expect when they were pulled over. Most of the participants’ reasons for
expecting the use of physical force from the police was because of the recent events of police shootings of unarmed men. Furthermore, participants shared that they were very nervous, and at times feared when being approached by White police.

**Theme #7: Slight improvement, but no end to the issue.** Finally, all of the participants shared that they felt that there has been a little improvement made in the fight against racial profiling. Most shared that it is much better than it was during the 70s through the 90s. However, some participants expressed that it seemed as though it got worse stemming from the recent police shootings of unarmed Black men. The participants did share that there is much more work to be done so this issue does not get back to where it was before. The participants expressed that it will take more than just research and books to improve the situation.

Through the interviews and focus group session, the participants shared their experiences of feeling that they were racially profiled when pulled over by the police. The themes that were discovered from the data defined the acts of racial profiling through the lens of the participants. This is why the hermeneutical phenomenological approach is so important when researching the lived experiences of the participants.

In the next chapter, I will discuss the analysis of the findings from my research study. Additional articles are shared, implications, recommendations, and the need for further research to be implemented.
Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion

Racial profiling not only originated as a way for Whites to find and capture Blacks and forced them into slavery, but also as a channel for law enforcement to combat the drug war. There is not one person existing in these states that does not desire to be treated equally. Every human being on this earth wants to be treated with the same respect as shown to others. Section 1, of the 14th Amendment, of the U.S. Constitution states, “No state shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any state deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection laws” (Cornell University Law School, 2017). We all desire to have equal access to jobs and salaries, owning homes, communities, public places, protection, and to our privacy.

“ Stops, searches, and arrests without cause and of persons of color based on their race-are repeated thousands of times every year throughout the United States, and in too many instances reflect official police policy or practice” (Rudovsky, 2001, p. 298). Institutional policies within law enforcement agencies are trained to be used, which overrides the “Fourth Amendment Laws”. “Moreover, while there is substantial commentary regarding the Fourth Amendment standards that govern stop and frisk practices, almost no attention has been given to the question of stops and frisks conducted without legal justification, independent from racial profiling concerns” (Rudovsky, 2001, p. 299).

How far do the rights of Black citizens go as it pertains to the Fourth and Fourteenth Amendments? What are limitations or clauses that have been established in
these Amendments that allow police to stop and search whomever they please to? Many could argue that these amendments are not one hundred percent protective of the rights of all citizens, especially Blacks. When more Black males are being targeted for traffic stops, searches, and arrests, it sends a message that there are either police breaking the law and violating the rights of Black citizens, or the law is not being enforced to protect Blacks as citizens deserving of equal rights. Alexander (2011) states “what has changed since the collapse of Jim Crow has no less to do with the basic structure of our society than with the language we use to justify it. In the era of colorblindness, it is no longer socially permissible to use race, explicitly, as a justification for discrimination, exclusion, and social contempt. So, we don’t. Rather than rely on race, we use our criminal justice system to label people of color “criminals” and then engage in all the practices we supposedly left behind” (p. 2).

The use of race in policing to stop and search is clearly against certain proposed legislations that have not yet been passed by Congress, but is defined as a needed law that will protect the rights of all minorities. Schuck, Martin, and Glaser stated the context of the “End Racial Profiling Act (ERPA) of 2010, and said it is defined as,

“The practice of a law enforcement agent or agency relying, to any degree, on race, ethnicity, national origin, or religion in selecting which individual to subject to routine or spontaneous investigatory activities or in deciding upon the scope and substance of law enforcement activity following the initial investigatory procedure, except when there is trustworthy information, relevant to the locality and timeframe, that links a person of a particular race, ethnicity, national origin, or religion to an identified criminal incident or scheme” (2012, p. 496).
Would this not be basically criminal profiling as well? This is where one’s rights are clearly violated because they have been stereotyped and labeled a criminal because of ethnicity and race.

This research provides information from various participants that volunteered to share their lived experiences of being victims of racial profiling while driving. They shared their views of being citizens who operate vehicles just like every other race, but not having the same equal freedom to drive and not be profiled and harassed. The researched primarily focused on the events that occurred while the Black males that volunteered to participate in either a personal interview, or focus group session for this research, sharing their lived experiences while driving and being pulled over by local police, viewing it as pre-textual and investigatory stops. These two ramifications are only part of the racial disparities that connect with racial profiling. As Russell-Brown (1999) stated, “It has been argued that although DWB (Driving While Black) is among the most well-known crimes of Blackness, it is hardly the only one of its kind. In fact, the net which criminalizes Blackness has been cast far and wide” (p. 730). Therefore, statistics collected by law enforcement agencies or other statistical research collected will not do the job in seeking ways to lessen this phenomenon alone. By focusing on the lived experiences of the research participants with a qualitative approach, this research helps to fill gaps in information reported by quantitative research.

Based on the perceptions that racial profiling is under-reported and fuels the practice for investigatory stops and pre-textual stops by law enforcement officers, many Blacks believe that statistic reports will not change the issue. As the researcher, and a victim of racial profiling, I agree that reported numbers with illustrative graphs will not
solve this problem. Real life lived experiences provide information that comes directly from those individuals that have been stopped, searched, or handled physically by police officers, will gain the attention of the people. When people express their lived experiences and they are shared through research, it could provide a more meaningful shared channel for our society to respond for improving this situation. Several Black males that participated in the discussion forum agreed that they are caught up in a society of being victims of racial profiling because of centuries of racial discrimination and slavery. Most were concerned that they were already stereotyped as boys as being criminals, intimidating, aggressive, rude, and violent. As the researcher, my thoughts on this is that Blacks are the status quo that has been embedded into the minds of society to stamp a belief that we are all criminals and do not belong in this society. This has been the norm since the Jim Crow era. Blacks were hunted down, physically beaten, chained, and then tagged, while also forced into laboring for whites without pay. As noted by Weatherspoon (2003-2004),

“Racial profiling by law enforcement officials in this country is an everyday occurrence. African-Americans are the primary victims of racial profiling, as some law enforcement officers perceive that all African-American citizens are engaged in crime and lawlessness. Thus, such individuals are stopped, searched, and arrested without sufficient probable cause to justify law enforcement action. These stereotypical biases are racist assumptions which breed resentment and hostility between African-Americans and law enforcement officers. Without viable remedies to end racial profiling, race relations in this country, especially between African-Americans and law enforcement officers, will continue to
deteriorate” (p. 761).

If Blacks are seen as criminals and not as doctors, lawyers, engineers, professors, or executives, and no matter how they dress, what they drive, how educated they are, they will always be seen as out of place in this society. They will always be targeted as the next prisoner. They will always be stopped and searched. They will always be that dark disconnected mark in society. The executive shared the many times and experiences while being stopped and harassed by White police officers while attending college. If there is no probable cause for arrest anyway, why should the use of force be enforced by the police? Why would a police officer immediately pull their firearm if there is no present threat? In my (researcher’s) experience being pulled over by a white policeman, even driving a late model sports car through a ritzy community, the officer aggressively exited his car and approached my car asking for a driver’s license and registration. The officer also asked for my insurance card. As if I did not have one. Though, there are some drivers that don’t carry automobile insurance due to several reasons (e.g. affordability, or suspended license). Yes. Even being a local clergy, professional, and honest citizen, police will stop you for their own reason (s).

Excessive behavior that disregards the laws for lawful policing should call for excessive punishment. “Existing performance evaluation procedures in policing have been severely criticized. A 1977 Police Foundation study found that they did not adequately reflect actual police work and generally provided inflated assessments of officer performance” (Walker, 2007, p. 14). When I say excessive punishment, I suggest that police that have been reported by Blacks or citizens as being aggressive, or illegally stopped and searched, should not be pulled off patrol duty and placed at a desk, or
relieved of duty with pay pending the outcome. Police that are reported for committing such acts as should be relieved without pay until further notice, or dismissed from duty. Depending of the severity of the incident (e.g. police shooting of an unarmed Black man), the police involved should even receive criminal punishment. Too many times police that have abused or shot unarmed Black men during traffic stops have been let off too easy.

Juarez (2004) shared his experience as witnessing useless beatings on Black males, as a Narcotics detective noting that “after spending one of my first few days in Narcotics and witnessing another senseless beating, I realized that I needed an outlet to alleviate my on-the-job tension and confusion” (p. 140). This study showed that these tactics by police officers still continue today. The events that ended in unarmed victims apprehended and sometimes shot and killed by police officers echo the historical events of the early days when Black men were targeted and beat, and even killed. As noted by Davis (2017), “though repeated studies suggest that widespread, racially targeted investigatory stops do little to reduce crime, there is evidence that police department across the country engage in extensive race-based policing and have been doing so for some time” (p. 103). Though my research study provides the voices of those victimized by racial profiling, additional voices must be heard to make a collaborative effort to combat against this racial disparity.

According to Epp, Maynard-Moody, and Haider-Markel (2014), an innovative implementation in the war against drugs was to transform traffic police officers (both local and highway patrol) into narcotics police. This approach and change of tactics would not only provide traffic safety patrol, but would also be deemed to identify drug dealers transporting drugs along the highways and into the local inner cities. Harris
(1999), in a research study reported to the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), stated,

“Racial profiling is based on the premise that most drug offenses are committed by minorities. The premise is factually untrue, but it has nonetheless become a self-fulfilling prophecy. Because police look for drugs primarily among African Americans and Latinos, they find a disproportionate number of them with contraband. Therefore, more minorities are arrested, prosecuted, convicted, and jailed, thus reinforcing the perception that drug trafficking is primarily a minority activity. This perception creates the profile that results in more stops of minority drivers. At the same time, white drivers receive far less police attention, many of the drug dealers and possessors among them go unapprehended, and the perception that whites commit fewer drug offenses than minorities is perpetuated. And so, the cycle continues.”

Although the mass production of illegal drugs is not grown and manufactured in the United States, nor in the Black community, Blacks remain a target for drug trafficking in the local inner cities---whether in Miami, FL, Los Angeles, CA, or any other major US inner city. During the 1980’s, an adopted practice by law enforcement agencies country wide known as investigatory stops, was used to capture drug traffickers while they were transporting drugs to local communities in their cars. This became a conflicting practice because of the known stereotyping of Blacks as criminals. This is the very time that the DEA began training law enforcement agencies nationwide on the procedures of conducting investigatory stops. These are the induced tactics that have shaped the perceptions of Black men to believe that most White police officers that pull them over
are racists. As stated by Epp, Moody, and Markel (2014), “African American drivers, just like officers who pull them over, perceive and interpret the encounter through a racial frame” (p. 47).

Framing, which is based on and individuals’ or group’s perception of the society or world that they live in has become a motivating factor for racial bias and perceived behavior by individuals or groups. This can go both ways in society, and with the focus on racial profiling. Blacks, as mentioned before, can also frame whites. One participant stood up quickly with an anxious look on his face and commented that 99% of white police are racists, along with majority white Americans. Many other participants commented not to leave out the fact that they all believe that every Black man is a criminal. Epp, Moody, and Markel (2014) stated that “Most Americans, especially white Americans believe that crime has a black face” (p. 44). Again, most black Americans tend to believe that majority whites are racists, especially police officers. Just as police officers during their investigatory traffic stops frame blacks as criminal, Blacks frame most white police officers as racist. In situations dealing with police-civilian encounters, framing comes because of a greater social and historical account. Framing causes individuals and groups to carry both cognitive and cultural elements that are brought to new experiences. “Frames are especially powerful and persistent when they arise out of, and in turn shape, institutions and institutionalized practice” (Epp, Moody, and Markel, 2014, p. 41). As mentioned in this research, the DEA conducted training to various local municipal and state law enforcement agencies that motivated the concept of framing Blacks to conduct investigatory traffic stops in hopes of apprehending drug traffickers. But what about the honest blue collar or white collar Black employees that are not drug
traffickers but stopped and searched? Are all Blacks presumed guilty until proven innocent because of the DEA training techniques, and the concept of framing? This is a reverse of the ‘all are innocent until proven guilty’ statement of the law.

Harris (1999), in an ACLU article stated,

“Fighting crime is surely a high priority. But it must be done without damaging other important values: the freedom to go about our business without unwarranted police interference and the right to be treated equally before the law, without regard to race or ethnicity. “Driving while black” assails these basic American ideals. And unless we address this problem, all of us, not just people of color, stand to lose” (p. 1).

This is not just the possibility of a losing battle for blacks, but for all of society, and for our justice system. Recently, the summer of 2016, five Dallas police officers were shot in what was perceived as retaliation for the vast shootings of blacks by police in various states across the US. Fernandez, Perez-Pena, and Bromwich, of the New York Times reported that “The heavily armed sniper who gunned down police officers in downtown Dallas, leaving five of them dead, specifically set out to kill as many white officers as he could” (2016). These are events that display a losing effort in the fight against racial profiling, and a fight for equality. Rudovsky (2001) stated,

“The failure of most law enforcement agencies to collect and analyze data concerning car and pedestrian stops, or to conduct comprehensive reviews of the legality of stops and searches-as to both racial profiling and stop and searches made without cause, regardless of race-has undermine efforts to make sound empirical judgments. Many police agencies have authorized or tolerated racial
profiling and random, suspicion less stops and searches, as part of policing programs that operate on the theory that the more stops and searches that are conducted, whether in compliance with the Constitution or not, more drugs, weapons, and intelligence will be secured” (p. 304).

In each section, end with a transition sentence or two.

Power can be used in various situations based on individual, group, and institutionalized beliefs and/or norms. Based on beliefs and/or norms, people can define power and the use of, whether good or the abuse of it, in various ways. For example, if Whites have been taught to believe that Blacks are inferior, and that this is the way it shall always be, then they will not see that abuse of power in racial discriminations or profiling. VeneKlasen and Miller stated that “Power can be defined as the degree of control over material, human, intellectual and financial resources exercised by different sections of society” (2006, p. 38). Let’s take for instance ‘human power’ as it relates to a victim of racial profiling and the acting police officer. If individuals perceive that they are victims of racial profiling, and they have no say in the matter, then this is where one human is perceived to have power over the other. In other words, the police officer is perceived to have power over the civilian. This could be based on several factors related to the police being viewed as having unlimited power over a civilian. The police carry a badge that gives him sole discretion as to who he chooses to pull over, and who he chooses not to pull over. As Schuck, Martin, and Glaser (2012) stated, “the practice of racial profiling, which involves singling out a person or persons for special (usually law-enforcement-related) attention based solely on their race or ethnicity, is part of a specific
set of issues that the United States has grappled with in protecting the civil rights of minority individuals belonging to a specific class” (p. 491).

There are various factors that relate to the imbalance of power in our society. We have an imbalance of economic power, ethnicity/race power, ender power, social power, political power, and policing power. As it relates to policing power, which is the main factor of power in this research, police have the power of the badge to uphold the law, and discretion to use force. As stated by VeneKlasen and Miller, “Different degrees of power are sustained and perpetuated thorough social divisions such as gender, age, caste, class, ethnicity, race, north-south; and through institutions such as the family, religion, education, media, the law, etc.” (2006, p. 38).

An imbalance of power can cause one to feel inferior or powerless when trying to defend themselves or prove their innocence. When one feels a sense of being powerless in any situation, they may perceive that nothing can be said or done to convince the other party that they have done nothing wrong, or their concerns are being ignored. Dugan (2004) describes that this type of feeling is related to the inequity of power that exists in our society. This leads to a stage of becoming frustrated, feeling helpless, and at times, a feeling of having no control over the situation. At the point of feeling powerless, some may feel that there is no way out, and that they are forced to settle and accept whatever is believed to be a factor or solution during any situation. For example, one participant described his encounter with a police officer when he was stopped and searched, as a dead-end zone. He revealed that he could not say anything without the police officer telling him to be quiet, unless he wanted to go to jail. The participant then said he felt that he was inferior to this officer, not treated equal as white citizens are, even though it is his
taxes that pays the officer’s salary. “Inequity is the virtually inevitable result of two powerful forces: prejudice on the level of the individual, and political imbalance on the social level” (Dugan, 2004, p. 1).

From the government to the Black community, there has been a quest for improving the police and citizen relationship to one of trust. However, with the recent outlashed of police shootings, of Black Males, some see the relationship failing to improve, and at a standstill. Majority of the research participants stated that the issue of racial profiling has improved slightly, but not enough for Blacks feel safe and trust our local police agencies. The participants shared that their experiences prove what they are stressing is real and there is an urgent need for great improvement. After the most recent civilian confrontations with police officers, some participants said the matter is now getting worse. As it seemed that the issue to lessen the racial profiling practice would manifest, the past few years have shown that it is abounding again.

Most Blacks perceive that the situation concerning racial profiling is getting worse based on the recent police shootings. Some have even stated that we are going back to the “Jim Crow era”. So how do we improve the situation? Or can we? One research participant suggested that there should be a thorough background check of police officers that differ from the normal one, although the threat of racial profiling will not be eliminated. No one will reveal their true love or hate for others. There has been some slight improvement, but not enough to say that racial profiling is at a minimum, or near being eliminated.

Several participants suggested in the focus group session and interviews, that more activism by civil rights groups and other organizations, that are against racial
profiling and the abuse that follows, step up and become more vocal. VeneKlasen and Miller suggest that “as people become more conscious of a conflict and their own interests, many moves to action and confront the problem through advocacy and activism” (2006, p. 42). In other words, this must be ongoing and not just when incidents like those mentioned in this research occur. Other participants believe that there is no end to racial profiling if Blacks are stereotyped as the only criminals that exists based on the color of their skin. “Previous research has documented racial bias in various areas of policing including racial profiling in pedestrian and vehicle stops, the use of police force, and even an officer’s decision to shoot black and white criminal suspects in computer simulations” (Legewie, 2016, p. 380).

Are police being held accountable for their actions? Most participants suggested that all law enforcement agencies should enforce a stronger policy on accountability for their police officers. When police are held accountable for their actions it proves to be one of the most vital elements in the law enforcement agencies to show that they are looking for ways to improve policing and reducing racial profiling. Accountability should be held on an individual and agency level of policing. Walker (2006) suggested that both the individual police officer and the area law enforcement agencies should be held accountable for their practices. Individual police officers’ practices of racial profiling, traffic stops and searches of Blacks, use of deadly force, and arrests generally affects the reputation of the entire local or national law enforcement agencies. Police should be held accountable just as citizens when it comes to breaking the law through the acts of racial discrimination, use of deadly force on an unarmed victim, invading one’s property
without written warrant, or simply doing what they desire to do based on their
destotypical impulse.

The incident involving Professor Henry Gates, J. and Sgt. James Crowley
motivated national and international media coverage, which also stimulated dialogue,
focus groups, and increased training. The topic of racial profiling has become a vocal
outcry for justice in the Black community across the media due to the police shootings of
unarmed victims being stopped. More dialogue and media coverage must be implemented
so that the entire world can become involved in the process of improving racial relations.
However, there remains a lack of hidden information relating to those that have been
victims of racial profiling. This could be based on individuals not wanting to share their
experience because they simply believe that nothing will improve the situation, or they
may not see it a racial profiling, but the police doing their job. This keeps the information
from being shared with concerned citizens and organizations that speak out for justice
against racial profiling, or the media, which is a channel to expose the lived experiences.

There is not much improvement on the involvement of being racially profiled due
to pre-textual stops. Rudovsky (2001) stated that “stops, searches, and arrests without
cause and of persons of color based on their race are repeated thousands of times every
year throughout the United Sates, and in too many instances reflect official police policy
or practice” (p. 298). Where police officers make stops based on beliefs drawn from
stereotypes, pre-textual stops will proceed without caution. Blacks have been stamped as
the main perpetrators of crime committed in the United States of America. This is the
reason they are disproportionately stopped along the various highways and streets of our
communities. As stated by Oliver (2000), “A pretextual stop based on racial profiling
stems, therefore, from the belief that stopping minorities will yield evidence of crime more often than stopping other motorists” (p. 1414).

Police officers should be trained on how to treat all people equally, and not accept false perceptions that will motivate them to see Blacks as their main target for stops, searches, and arrests. All citizens of the United States pay taxes, which part of these taxes are allocated for law enforcement wages. This should stimulate a series of discussions on implementing plans for educating the police on maintaining a positive community-police relationship. Citizens that pay the salaries of these officers should not be afraid to interact with them, or drive in the cities that they patrol. There used to be a time when police would patrol the Black neighborhoods on foot, while sometimes stopping to have a pleasant conversation with the residents, and even having a little fun with the youth that were playing on the sidewalk. Today, most Blacks will try to avoid saying one word to our police officers. If police officers would get to know the people more through dialogues and friendly conversations, this may reduce the racial profiling that Blacks experience. All people, regardless of race or color, would like to be treated with dignity and respect. No individual wants to be an outcast because of being born black. “On the street, the most visible symbol of class is a driver’s vehicle” (Epp, Maynard-Mood, and Haider-Markel, 2014, p. 68). The make, model, and year of an automobile has been a symbol of status since the Twentieth Century.

It is too often that limitations are not set on how police should police the communities, while considering the affects they have on the residents and the criminal justice system. New police cadets are being trained to respond and arrests, but not being trained on eliminating racial biases that lead to racial profiling. This should call for initial
training, and implementing retraining for our police on positive policing, that could motivate eliminating the myth that Blacks are the face of crime, lessening the targeting of Blacks for investigative stops, aiming at seeing everyone in a shade of gray and not inferior or superior based on color, and knowing exactly who the residents are and what they do. This may call for the local police agencies, local government, and selected community resident leaders to coordinate open forums more often that just after an incident takes place. Ongoing dialogues such as this will build working and trusting relationships between citizens and police agencies. This will allow local police the opportunity to gather an understanding of the concerns, likes, dislikes, needs, and desires from the community residents.

One key missing element, in the wake of combating racial profiling and police shootings that led to the recent protests and violence, is the implementation of community mediation and restorative programs to improve the police and community relationships, while aiming to reduce the number of Blacks being racially profiled and the traumatic events that have recently occurred. Mediation would allow top brass from local law enforcement agencies and community residents to come together at the table to discuss their concerns and interests related to the current approaches to policing the Black communities, or Blacks in general. In addition, implementing a community mediation program for police and citizens to meet and collaborate allows for a constructive process that could lead to resolutions that will lessen the tension between Black citizens and police. This will also allow the parties (citizens and police) to have more responsibility in resolving the conflicts. Working relationships can be formed through mediation, while also allowing restoration of citizen and police relationships.
Restorative programs, which aims to employ social and justice equality in our communities, can be a valuable source for rebuilding citizens’ trust towards local police (Walker, 2007). This will employ a transformative process that will hopefully lead to building working relationships between citizens and police. The restorative programs implemented should employ ongoing community dialogues (Focus Groups/Forums/Panels) between citizens and police to discuss concerns, current incidents, and the overall improvements of the police practices. Communities should also appoint committee members that will communicate with the local police department heads at approved upon times (e.g. monthly, or as needed) throughout the year to discuss any shared concerns, incidents, issues, or improvements. The overall goal of the restorative program should focus on transforming the social and justice system of the community from a negative to a positive. Through this effort, citizens and police should see improvements in the areas of communication and working relations. Citizens should no longer have a high level of fear at the presence of police, but a level of comfort knowing that everyone, regardless of race or ethnicity, will be treated fairly and justly.

There should also be pre-and post-intervention programs designed to train police in acceptable policing tactics, and to monitor the complaints that are brought to the department concerning the misconduct of a police officer(s). “Early intervention systems (EIS) involve a performance data base that permits police managers to identify officers with patterns of problematic conduct and then to provide specially tailored interventions designed to correct those conduct problems” (Walker, 2007, p. 15). The intervention programs that are implemented should include various indicators that will be used to identify police officers that have the most problems in policing.
Limitations

My research also suggest that certain limitations exist that must be considered. Qualitative studies that focus on the perceptions of the participants’ of the research can be generalized if not carefully noted. Also, there are time constraints that must be considered when research studies include interviews and focus group sessions. I conducted twelve individual interviews (Black males), and one focus group session with twenty-five attendees (Black males). Some of the interviews had to be re-scheduled, which caused the scheduled completion time to be extended. In addition, attempts to recruit other Black males in the Miami area were unsuccessful due to the allotted times, which would have allowed for more men to respond and participate in the research study.

Contribution to the Field

This research study contributes in three ways to the study of racial profiling and racial disparities, and the use of mediation. First, racial profiling is increasingly becoming a topic of interests by academicians, law enforcement, government, civil rights leaders, and the public. The researcher will gather related qualitative phenomenological research on racial profiling, while adding additional information to contribute to the efforts of understanding racial profiling through live experiences and group perceptions. Second, the research will add to the study of racial profiling, racial disparities, and extended topics relating to race. The research will add our to knowledge how the stories of individuals and groups that experienced racial profiling should become a focal point of research data to be shared among interested parties. The themes implemented from the lived experiences of the research participants adds as important elements otherwise not provided in statistical analysis for further research.
The final contribution to the field of racial profiling and how the use of mediation brings the underlying concerns or issues to the forefront of this conflict serves as an important tool for collaboration between Black citizens and police. Those that show interest in this research phenomenon will be made aware of the various elements of racial profiling not shared through statistical analysis to assist in the promotion of mediation as a tool to being law enforcement agencies and the Black community to the table to discuss the concerns and interests. Mediation will be suggested as a possibility for shifting power and building trust between police and Blacks.

In the implementation of mediation as it relates to this research, because Blacks have cried out that there is no justice for them within the criminal justice system and society, careful consideration must be taken when suggesting mediation between community and law enforcement. Community mediation must be planned carefully, and must know that in past situations, this process has been initiated by judicial reformers, religious leaders, and community groups (Harrington and Merry, 1988). As we have witnessed during the recent police shootings of unarmed Black men, groups like “Black Lives Matter, Trayvon Martin’s parents, civil rights activists like the Reverend Al Sharpton, the Reverend Jesse Jackson, and others have come to communities during these events. Marches organized by groups have also taken place. That is why timing is so important when attempting to initiate mediation. For example, in the case of initiating mediation for racial profiling in a Black community, mediator (s) must seek to first observe whether the time for mediation is right, or let the legal process take course. Those who have a strong and influential presence in the community must be able to
convince all parties to come to the table as a peaceful strategy, to discuss the issue in a collaborative, collective, and respectable manner.

Another strategy for implementing mediation is that mediators should meet with parties at separate times to explain to them how and why mediation could be a valuable means to improving community/police relations. Other valuable leaders or prominent figures that could influence parties to come to the table to discuss the issues at hand would include politician, movie stars, professional athletes, and business leaders. In additional, there must be a valid reason for why opposing parties are being influenced to come to the table to discuss the issues. The reasons therefore cannot be biased, or indicate that there will be an imbalance of power. All parties’ voices must be heard in order to understand the concerns and issues that create the conflict.

**Future Research**

This research will be accessible for future use to expand upon the topic of racial profiling, and those minority groups that are affected by this tactic. The methods and themes discussed in this research can be used to address racial profiling in other areas (e.g. Employment, Retail, Travel, and Home Ownership). Researchers of this phenomenon should also take into consideration that law enforcement could be included in future research. Police officers can also share their perceptions of racial profiling and their experiences dealing with Black motorists. The research can also be expanded to include other states and countries. It would be beneficial to examine police interactions with Black motorists in other countries to know their perceptions of racial profiling.

Finally, research on racial profiling should be extended into other academic research disciplines, such as the social sciences, business, and law. Research from other
academic disciplines can allow an in-depth analysis that could provide a higher level of insight into the meaning of racial profiling. The most that I would like to accomplish from this research is for law enforcement to consider the concerns, experiences, issues, and perceptions of Black males.
References


Appendix A

Individual Conducted Interview Questions

1. Please explain in your own words how you felt and the overall experience during the time (s) you were stopped.

2. Could you describe the community that you live in?

3. Were you asked to show your driver’s license, registration, and insurance? What was your response?

4. Were you asked to get out of your vehicle? How did you feel?

5. Were you asked to be frisked by the police officer? How did you feel??

6. If the police officer asked, or did not ask to search your vehicle, could you describe the process, and your response, if any to the officer?

7. If you did not give the office permission to search your vehicle, could you tell me what happened at that point?

8. Did the police officer issue you a ticket for a traffic violation?

9. If any physical force was used by the police officer, could you explain what happened?

10. Are there any other thoughts that you would like to share at this time?
Appendix B

Focus Group Questions

1. How many times have you been stopped by a police officer while driving?
2. What time of day, and where were you stopped?
3. Do you feel that there was a reason other than a moving violation when you were stopped? Please explain.
4. What did the officer (s) do after you were stopped?
5. Did the officer explain to you why you were stopped? If yes, please share.
6. Did they frisk you, or search the car? Please describe this process.
7. What were your thoughts when the police officer (s) stopped you?
8. Where were any other passengers in the car with you at this time?
9. What is the make and year of your car?
10. Do you feel that you were being racially profiled? Why?
11. Were there any witnesses around? Please describe the witnesses and how they reacted.
12. Can you share your thoughts on the issue of racial profiling? What does it mean to you?
13. Do you feel that this issue is being addressed appropriately? Why or Why not?
14. Please share with me your thoughts concerning whether there is enough information being shared about racial profiling to make everyone aware about this issue of concern.
15. Please share with me your thoughts concerning whether there are legitimate efforts being made towards the fight against racial profiling? What efforts, if any, do you think can be implemented to further the fight against racial profiling?
Appendix C

General Information Form

Please provide the requested information below by placing a check mark beside the correct information, and filling in your current age.

1. Marital Status – Married____ Not Married____
2. Age - ______
3. Employment Status – Employed___ Unemployed____
4. Employment Occupation - _____________________________________________
5. Make and model of vehicle - ___________________________________________
6. Do you hold a valid driver’s license – Yes____ No____?
Appendix D

Adult Informed Consent

Consent Form for Participation in the Research Study Entitled: Racial Profiling: A Phenomenological Study of Racial Conflicts and Disparities among Black Males and Their Lived Experiences during Traffic Stops

Funding Source: None

IRB protocol #:

Principal investigator(s) Co-investigator(s)
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Cutler Bay, FL 33190 and Social Sciences
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For questions/concerns about your research rights, contact:
Human Research Oversight Board (Institutional Review Board or IRB)
Nova Southeastern University
(954) 262-5369/Toll Free: 866-499-0790
IRB@nsu.nova.edu

Site Information (if applicable)
Address

What is the study about?
I am conducting this research study in partial fulfillment of the requirements of a doctor of philosophy degree. The study involves research related to the lived experiences and perceptions of males between the ages of 18 to 49 that have been stopped while driving by police officers, while believing that racial profiling was the cause of being stopped.

Why are you asking me?
You are being asked to participate in this study to share your experience during the time you were stopped by a police officer. The approximate number of participants in this research study will be 50.

What will I be doing if I agree to be in the study?
Your participation in this study will ask that you provide information during the interview, or focus group relating to your experience while driving and being stopped by a police officer. The duration of your commitment to this study will be up to 1 hour during the interview session, or 1 hour during the focus group session.

Is there any audio or video recording?
There will be no audio or video recording.

What are the dangers to me?
There may be minimal risk of loss of confidentiality. I will minimize the risk by storing all confidential documents into a locked file cabinet for the duration of the study and 36 months after. If you have any concerns about the risk or benefits of participating in this study, you can contact [James C. Jackson III, Ed. D at 786-537-6049] or the IRB office at the number indicated above.

Are there any benefits for taking part in this research study?
There are no direct benefits.

Will I get paid for being in the study? Will it cost me anything?
There are no costs to you or payments made for participating in this study.

How will you keep my information private?
All information obtained in this study is strictly confidential unless disclosure is required by law. The interview and focus group notes will only be used for informational purposes during the research study, and for the final analysis on the dissertation research. The IRB, regulatory agencies, dissertation chair, and the principal investigator may review research records.

What if I do not want to participate or I want to leave the study?
You have the right to leave this study at any time or refuse to participate. If you do decide to leave or you decide not to participate, you will not experience any penalty or loss of services you have a right to receive. If you choose to withdraw, any information collected about you before the date you leave the study will be kept in the research records for 36 months from the conclusion of the study and may be used as a part of the research.

You have the right to leave this study at any time or refuse to participate. If you do decide to leave or you decide not to participate, you will not experience any penalty or loss of services you have a right to receive. If you choose to withdraw, any information collected about you before the date you leave the study will be kept in the research records for 36 months from the conclusion of the study but you may request that it not be used.

Other Considerations:
If significant new information relating to the study becomes available, which may relate to your willingness to continue to participate, this information will be provided to you by the principal and co-investigators.

Voluntary Consent by Participant:
By signing below, you indicate that
• this study has been explained to you
• you have read this document or it has been read to you
• your questions about this research study have been answered
• you have been told that you may ask the researchers any study related questions in the future or contact them in the event of a research-related injury
• you have been told that you may ask Institutional Review Board (IRB) personnel questions about your study rights
• you are entitled to a copy of this form after you have read and signed it
• you voluntarily agree to participate in the study entitled “Racial Profiling: A Phenomenological Study of Racial Conflicts and Disparities among Black Males and Their Lived Experiences during Traffic Stops”.

Participant’s Signature: ___________________________ Date: ________________

Participant’s Name: ______________________________ Date: ________________

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent: ______________________________

Date: _________________________________