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An Exploration of African American and Hispanic Male Youth Perception of Officers Who Patrol in Urban Communities

Goal of Study

To understand what factors contribute to the development of African American and Hispanic male youth perceptions of police officers and whether the development of these factors is affected by the race of the police officer

Research Questions

- What perceptions do African American and Hispanic males have of African American and Hispanic police officers?
- How do young African American and Hispanic males expect to be treated by African American and Hispanic police officers?
- Who would African American and Hispanic males rather patrol in their neighborhood?
- How do African American and Hispanic male youth think African American and Hispanic police officers view them?

Sampling

- Target Population
 - School Aged Children
 - College Aged Adults
- Sampling Strategy
 - Purposive
 - Ages 12-25

Focus Groups

- Recruitment
 - Colleges
 - Universities
 - Middle Schools
 - High Schools
- Audiotape
- Videotape

Emerging Themes

Question	African American	Hispanic	College Students	Theme
See police in your community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not often 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not often • All the time near projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All the time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not Often • All the time
What is your perception of police officers in your community?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not very nice—Have seen family members mistreated and are influence by what they have heard and seen on TV. • Have personally not had a bad experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not nice—They are racist and disrespectful • Have personally not had a bad experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can't trust police—They are always looking for a reason to arrest them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have observed or had bad experiences with the police
Have you ever been stopped and questioned?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No • Family members stopped for no reason 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No • Family members stopped but was wrong 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • Get nervous when they see the police 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observed family interaction with police • Police anxiety
Why do you believe you were stopped?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Because they were Black 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skin tone • Language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expect to get stopped if three or more people are in car • With White friends police will let them go • With Black friends forced to get out of the car and get frisked 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Race influenced interaction with police

Emerging Themes

Question	African American	Hispanic	College Students	Theme
Do you mostly come in contact with AA, Hispanic or White police officers?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> African American and Hispanic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hispanic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> White 	
Do AA (Hispanic) officers treat you differently than White officers?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes—Ask them about their day Don't call them names White police officers speak in a disrespectful tone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes--They care about what they say White police officers dismiss what they say 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No Sometimes worse Have to be careful about the clothes they wear 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respect
When you see police officers (AA, Hispanic or White) do you go the other way?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes, don't want to take a chance "The police are the police" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes Avoid police officers regardless of ethnicity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes Turn to see if they follow Stop, park and get out of the car and go in the store 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Don't feel comfortable interacting with police officers of any race.
Do you expect officers to harass you when you see them?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No Would not be surprised 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No Want to avoid contact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fear

Emerging Themes

Question	African American	Hispanic	College Students	Theme
How do you think police officers perceive you when they see you on the streets?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thugs • Troublemaker 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Troublemaker • Gang member 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drug Dealer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lawbreaker
If you needed help would you go to a police officer?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In extreme emergency situations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only if somebody was hurt • Afraid they would want to question them and they would get in trouble • People who live in certain communities feel they are judged on how they look • Others are judged on where they live and how they look 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of Trust
What do you think can be done to improve the relationship between young males and the police officers in your community?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treat with respect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treat with respect • Spend more time in the neighborhood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't judge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect

Developmental Model of African American and Hispanic Males' Perception of Police Officers

