Preventative Community Policing in Immigrant Communities

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Preventative Community Policing in Immigrant Communities

A Case study of White Oak, Montgomery County, MD -USA.

Capstone paper submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for a Masters of Arts in Intercultural Service, Leadership and Management at the SIT Graduate Institute in Brattleboro, VT, USA.

Advisor: Mokhtar Bouba

July 2017
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Date: June 13, 2017
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would first like to say a BIG thank you to my Capstone advisor Dr. Mokhtar Bouba of the SIT Graduate Institute who was always there to answer my questions and whose great insight and encouragements really helped me throughout my research and writing. He consistently encouraged me to produce a stellar paper while steering me in the right direction whenever it was needed.

I would also like to thank the following experts who were involved in the validation survey for this research project:

Captain Marcus Jones, Commander of the 3rd District, for taking the time out of his busy schedule to give me some tidbits on the wonderful work that the MCPD do in the community.

Lorig Charkoudian, Executive Director of Community Mediation Maryland, for generously sharing her expertise and sound wisdom with me. Interviewing her was a real treat for my intellect.

My Practicum Supervisor, Daniel Koroma, Community Liaison for African and Caribbean Communities for the Montgomery County Government and Outreach Director of the African Immigrant Caucus (AIC). He allowed me to be part of the AIC outreach team and to engage the African Immigrant population in the D20 while contributing in giving them more visibility in the public square.

Coach Fofo, Director of the Elites Soccer Youth Development academy. His civic engagement and the difference that he makes every day in the life of the Youth of the D20 community truly inspired me.

Jim Levine, Ike Viny, Harmony Bobga, and all those who wholeheartedly participated and contributed in the successful conduct of the validation of the survey.

Finally, I must express my deepest gratitude to my parents Elise and Joe, and to my godparents Jaye Lowe and Ola Jil for believing in me and for providing me with unfailing support and continuous encouragement and prayers throughout my years of study and through the process of researching and writing my Capstone. I wish nothing but to make you all proud. Thank you!

Carole Chopi
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Abstract

The purpose of this exploratory qualitative case study was to discover what kind of mutually comfortable activities community residents and police officers of the White Oak District in Montgomery County Maryland would like to participate in to strengthen social bonding, social bridging, and social linkage so that they can prevent future difficulties in practicing community problem-solving policing. Although the research design could not be carried out as originally planned due to unexpected logistical issues, the study did result in unexpected findings relevant to addressing the principal research question. In this case study located in a major Mid Atlantic community on the Eastern Seaboard of the United States, community policing was discovered to be actively engaged in. One police commander, three community leaders, 28 immigrant community members, and 11 immigrant community members that were a subset of the 28 immigrant community members shared their thoughts about what has worked, not worked, is working, and may work in their community. Although there is still a long way to go to reach what anyone might consider an ideal situation, this community was found to be on their way to reinventing a policing system – along the lines of community policing ideals - that could work better than it has in the past.
I. Introduction

Improving community policing with immigrant populations has been an official long-term goal of immigrant advocates and law enforcement leaders in the United States at least since 1996 (Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS), 2008). Although many immigrants make successful transitions to life in the U. S. - their adopted country - some immigrant communities face challenges in communicating directly with police officers. These can be formidable challenges to surmount.

Language barriers are among the most direct challenges as the U.S. admits many immigrants who are not literate in English and in kind, many police officers do not speak the language of the immigrants who arrive from all parts of the world (COPS, 2008). Lack of access to suitable translation services, lack of training, lack of training tools, lack of translations of police information, and lack of suitable staffs hinder openness of communications and understanding.

Distrust of police can also be a formidable barrier (COPS, 2008). Many immigrants have sought asylum in the U.S. to move away from oppressive law enforcement in their countries of origin. Consequently, they may generalize experiences they have suffered by having apprehensions about all police wherever they exist. Additionally, open political disagreements about prospective U.S. immigration reform policies described in the U.S. press may threaten immigrant community trust of law enforcement outreach by the police. Lack of police training to overcome these barriers and a general lack of intermediary bridging organizations between the immigrant community and the police are also imposing barriers.
Anxiety about deportation can also be a substantial barrier especially by those who are undocumented who have overstayed their visas or have entered the U.S. illegally (COPS, 2008). News about raids and other similar actions by the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) division of the U. S. Department of Homeland Security travels rapidly within immigrant communities and can cause fear, panic and distrust. Immigrant communities do not know how or if local police are involved in ICE operations fueling general mistrust of all law enforcement. News media typically sensationalize, exaggerate, and provide misinformation about these types of actions that can cause further fear, panic, and distrust to be formulated, further dividing the immigrant community from the police. Lack of alternative accurate information sources can also exacerbate the formation of divisive opinions.

Significant shortage of U.S. law enforcement resources to fulfill the needs of the immigrant population is also a significant challenge. In 2015, there were 43.3 million (legal and illegal) immigrants in the U.S. equal to 13.5 percent of the U.S. population (U.S. Census, 2015). When the children of immigrants are counted, the number rises to 84.3 million people or 27 percent of the U.S. population (Zong & Batalova, 2017). In contrast, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported in 2014 that there were approximately 806,400 police officers or detectives in the U.S. – a tiny fraction of the immigrant population.

Community policing has developed over the past several decades into a process in which police departments coordinate with community citizens to invent what policing should be to the residents of the community (Skogan 1990). This structure depends upon relaxed and spontaneous interaction, citizen participation and decentralization of
initiative, mutual education, and focus on specific problems (Skogan, 2006). It is also characterized by prevention rather than reaction strategies (Trojanowicz & Bucqueroux, 1990). The number of problems solved rather than response time is how policing success is ideally measured in this paradigm (Goldstein, 1979) as has been confirmed in a major systemic review (Weisburd, Telep, Hinkle, & Eck, 2010). In community policing, a genuine partnership between the community and police is what has been described as ideal (Ellis & Albi, 2017). This is a structure in which the strength of pre-existing social connections preventively determines community resilience in the face of any and all problems. Social connection can be described in three dimensions: as social bonding within communities, as social bridging between communities, and as social linking between the community and public governing bodies such as the police (Ellis & Albi, 2017).

II. Research Question

The following research question will form the basis of the interview questions.

**RQ1:** What kinds of community activities can attract immigrant community residents and police officers closer together to prevent troubling relationships and poor communications so that they can prevent future difficulties in practicing community policing?

All of the study participants were asked in personal one-on-one interviews about a short list of alternative socialization venues to discover what participants would feel most comfortable participating in, and how they envision key aspects of the venues would operate. The research question was formulated to draw distinctions between alternative approaches to establishing social connections between immigrant community residents
and police officers in the White Oak district of Montgomery County, Maryland. Some of the alternative approaches included the following:

1. Create a website to provide information about local issues and Montgomery County’s decision-making process
2. A standard procedure to welcome new neighbors and introduce anyone who chooses to participate to introduce themselves
3. Share community information about people and news through social media
4. Announcement of different community members’ perspectives about community events, celebrations, and County governance including issues at volunteer boards, commissions, task forces, planning committees, and neighborhood association boards and committees.
5. Participation in neighborhood associations meetings.
6. Participation in combination police and community members meetings to discuss policing problems
7. Participation in an annual “porchfest” in which arts and entertainment would be held on the front porches of community residents. Musicians would be asked on a community website to participate and homeowners would be asked to sign up to volunteer as hosts in a collection of front porch venues. Listeners in the community including police officers would be asked to walk the neighborhoods as they move from porch to porch, an hour or so at each to enjoy the music of a group of bands and soloists (Mcgrath, 2016).

All of the participants possessed relatively high levels of motivation to participate in community policing as indicated by their willingness to participate in the study.
III. Statement of the Problem

A recent study of 227 police officers in two urban police departments in the Mid-Atlantic and the Midwest has shown that there has been more acceptance of strategies and tactics of community policing including community-problem solving (Jenkins, 2016). These findings indicate that the police profession is changing from the law enforcement combatant culture that once dominated to a safeguard culture that protects citizens from harm and injustice in an effort to build public trust and police legitimacy (Meares & Neyroud, 2015; Stoughton, 2016). Nevertheless, although reform has steadily made progress, many police departments utilize both the law enforcement combatant and safeguard cultures (Jenkins, 2016). What is troublesome is that public confidence in policing has declined today to a low-point close to what it once was in 1993 following the Rodney King beating by four Los Angeles Police Officers (Stoughton, 2016). This can be understood in the context of the rise of violent extremism domestically and throughout the world, shootings of African Americans by police, and retaliatory killings of police in American urban areas (Johnston, 2017). Nationally, Muslim Americans have continued to be at the center of media attention and public debate about violent extremism, although they have been the cause of a smaller number of domestic terror attacks than other radicalized groups (Miller, 2014). The combination of these trends has created an atmosphere of heightened concern in U. S. immigrant communities about how resilient these communities are in the face of increased media discussions about law enforcement and violence prevention (Ellis & Abdi, 2017). The purpose of this qualitative case study is to understand what methodologies police and community members could agree upon to
strengthen social bonding, social bridging, and social linkage so that they can prevent future difficulties in practicing community problem-solving policing.

IV. Literature Review

Throughout the United States, minority communities struggle with police community-relations. For this research, we will include both the (black) immigrants and the African Americans in the same category as we try to describe what it means to be black in America, and identify the racial tension origins. These issues have roots in historical oppression and are impacted by broader economic and social injustices.

Being a black immigrant in America.

Per a new Pew Research Center analysis of U.S. Census (2017), 2.1 million African immigrants were living in the United States in 2015, accounting for 4.8% of the immigrants in the U. S. (Anderson, 2017). Montgomery County in the state of Maryland is the primary destination in the U.S. for people from Ethiopia and Cameroon, and is the second destination for immigrants from the continent of Africa, second only to Los Angeles. The top five countries of origin for people born abroad and living in the County are El Salvador, Mainland China, India, Ethiopia, and Korea. Montgomery County ranks fourth among all counties in the U. S. in the number of French speaking and African Languages speaking immigrants. Many black from Sub-Saharan Africa come to the U.S. in the hopes of having a better life. They face similar racial issues that African Americans experience in the country. During black heritage month in February, African-Americans are reminded of the tribulations their ancestors endured to obtain their freedom and to be considered as white men’s equals. Frequently, they are
reminded of the scars left by slavery and segregation, and the eternal racial injustices they face. An increasing number of stories in the media provide a glimpse of African American History. These include: film such as Roots that generally describe the long-suffering of slaves; historical articles such as "Slavery and the Making of America", “How the Faith of African Americans has Changed”; recent articles such as, “Ferguson and the Path to Peace”; television mini-series such as “Eyes on the Prize”; and Books such as "Race Matters".

The struggles with the police.

Many mourn the lives of young men like Michael Brown who are taken away from their families too early before they can fulfill their destiny (Roberts, 2015). In the end, a lot of African Americans still ask themselves, what has changed and are even skeptical that the Black Lives Matter Movement effectiveness (Horowitz & Livingston, 2016). Why bother striving to do good when their lives can be taken away by a policeman? (Funke & Susman, 2016).

These incidents increased the level of pessimism in black communities who have lost hope. However not to paint the black community as blameless, as there are many crimes committed by African Americans. Cornel West (1993) in his book Race Matters asserted that African Americans need to fight to maintain their civil rights and avoid bringing race (even though it matters) into every issue or promoting black separation and nationalism.

Many of the non-violent means of expressions African American use to deal with their frustration of the system are taken from the Civil Rights movement. Protests, strikes, boycott, civil resistance and civil disobedience have been the main means of non-
violence resistance used by the African Americans. Sit-ins were used more in the past. Marches that proved very effective in the past are still effective today. There was the Montgomery Bus boycott of Alabama involving Rosa Park, the Selma march back in the 60’s (Dreier, 2006). Maimuna Majumder believes that today, community education and voter registration seems to impact the communities positively to the extent that she sees “an Intriguing Link Between Police Shootings and Black Voter Registration” (2016). She believes that high rates of fatal police shootings of black Americans is mainly determined by the percentage of eligible black Americans registered to vote. However, the distrust between the police and the African American community puts everyone on edge and can easily lead to violence when only one person gets beaten down or tear gas is being used for crowd control (Lau & Wen, 2014). All of this could be avoided if the protests and marches were well organized by ensuring all protesters register so everyone can be identified in case of mishaps as recommended by the American Civil Liberties Union of Northern California. A non-violent approach merits consideration because it has worked in the past and can still work today. If Mahatma Gandhi could defeat the mighty British Empire with non-violence so can the Black community defeat racism, injustice and violence (Eingereicht von Sherif Abdel Samad, 2009, p159)? Even the bible says in James 2:17 that faith alone is dead if it is not followed by actions. Faith requires carrying through with a well implemented plan and taking actions in building peace (McGrory, 2008). The biggest hurdle is to surmount distrust and dislikes (Warde, 2006). Trusting one another by getting to know one another through tolerance and celebration of their diversities is crucial per James Hirsh in his book titled “Two Souls Indivisible” in which the author explains how African Americans can overcome their racial views and build a
solid bond to survive. Hirsh told the story of two US pilots, African American Fred Cherry and Caucasian Porter Halliburton who were thrown in the same jail by their Vietnamese captors hoping that they would kill each other on the basis of their racial differences. Instead, they reached out to each other and built one of the greatest friendships and stories of survival proving that it is possible to build peace despite differences when people can get passed the color of their skins and look more to what is important. This leads us to the importance of community policing.

**Community policing**

In the United States, regular community policing is the preserve of local communities that develop their policing policies depending upon what is most effective for local conditions (Ferreira, 1996). In Montgomery County, the White Oak Community is particularly marked by a huge immigrant population that cannot be ignored in developing effective policing policies that impact the practice of policing. While the policies may be contingent upon budget and output effectiveness, law and regulation provide the legal framework within which policing policy and practice are structured. Koch and Bennett’s (1994) definition has been applied by many communities as the most practical definition as “a belief or intention held by the police that they should consult with and take account of the wishes of the public in determining and evaluating operational policing and that they should collaborate with the police in identifying and solving local problems” (Bennett, 1994, p. 224). Trevor Jones and Tim Newborn wrote an interesting article in the British Journal of Criminology (2002) entitled “The Transformation of Policing” in which they explain that community policing has followed a persistent pattern throughout the history. One of the most important aspects of
community policing is peacekeeping. It is especially pertinent in the current ever-changing and evolving conditions that are more globalized, multiracial, and multicultural (Greene, 2000). The relationship between the stakeholders in community policing is also one of the most important factors to get the community, the government, the police to form a long-lasting partnership that will benefit all parties involved (Skogan & Hartnett, 1997).

Herman Goldstein (1979) was very critical of the police practices of the time in his article “Improving Policing: A problem-oriented approach”. For him, problem-oriented policing (POP) that many police departments had started to implement were more focused on the means than the ends. Following this approach “rapid patrol car response to calls for service” was used by several southern states police departments (Goldstein, 1979, p. 236). There were even slave patrols that were controlled by officers to arrest black slaves who were not doing their jobs or who were found guilty for whatever crime they had committed. It is important to note that at the time black officers were forbidden to arrest white men. Goldstein (1979) felt that those departments were investing more on staffing and management than on problem solving. He believed that the police were not effectively fighting crimes. For that reason he felt compelled to call for a paradigm shift to replace what the National Research Council called the “standard model of policing” with the “Problem-oriented policing” (p. 241).

Bertus Ferreira (1996) in the “Use and Effectiveness of Community Policing in a Democracy” noted that there were three major areas in the history of policing: 1) The Political era from 1840–1930, during which southern states had what was called slave patrols; 2) the reform era (1930-1980) during which technology played a big role and
affected relationships; and 1980-present - the Community era - in which Marshall believed the world became a small village. The police want now to become a part of the community and reestablish the relationship with the community. Jones and Newburn (2002) believed that future generations will look back on this latter era as “the end of a monopoly’ by the public police; and the search for identity by the public police” (p,130). Police departments across the U.S. have put in a lot of efforts in redefining the role of police officers and reinventing their image. The MCPD is trying its best to create regular contact with citizens. They want to promote police accountability and be seen as agents of change. For many scholars, Japan remains the standard in terms of crime prevention as they have very low crime rate (Komiya, 1999). Some challenges noted by scholars such as Kenneth Peak (2000) who deplored the lack of communication between the police and the community. Normally, open communication flows freely both ways between two parties, but in the case of the police they talk to citizens but do not take the time to listen to what they have to say. They are more interested in portraying a good image but they do not take the time to establish a basis on which they can engage with community in open dialogue. There is also the mistrust towards the police that is a challenge. Ever since the beating of Rodney King in 1991 by some police officers of the Los Angeles Police Department which was recorded, and showed King punched 53 times after being pulled over by the police for speeding. The following year, the police officers who were involved in the beating were acquitted by an all-white jury, sparking therefore 3-day riots. This was followed by overturning of that decision by a federal appeals court. Nevertheless, irreparable damage was done. The tragic killing of Michael Brown in August 2014 in Ferguson by Darren Wilson, who was eventually indicted, reopened some
old wounds that never healed. All the efforts that the police were making to establish a good rapport with the local populations were ruined. Police departments have their own unique policing style as they do things differently from one another. Chief George McNeil (2014) from the Somerset Police Department in Crime & Safety defined in “The Chief’s Report – Volume 2, Number 13” a policing style as “a collection of the police department's methods, routines, and processes”. He explained that each police departments’ policing style reflects their culture and impacts the role that the police play in their community. He believed that the socioeconomic make-up of a community, its size, and its government organization are keys elements to the policing style that a department would adopt. James Wilson (2003) identified three department’s policing styles:

• Watchman: Like the name indicates their job is to keep the peace, maintain order while resolving disputes. According to Wilson, this style is mainly adopted in diverse, small rural towns and blue-collar communities. Officers do exercise a lot of discretion as they choose the offenses to address and those to overlook. This discreational power sometimes can be confused with discrimination but overall this is a more lenient and milder style unlike the legalistic one.

• Legalistic: While this style has the same components as the watchman, it is a stricter style in which the officers focus on enforcing criminal law in a very professional way. For Wilson, this style is pretty close to the “paramilitary style” as the methods employed are - very formal - threats of arrest and actual arrests in case of violations of law. This style is mostly used in larger cities where the populations are diverse and the governments are well organized.
Service: Though the Montgomery County has adopted a legalistic style they also pride in serving and helping - and in different ways they cooperate with - the community. This method favors an interdependent relationship between the police and the community. The community relies on the police to check issues, to protect and help them in time of crisis, while the police depend on the community to report any wrongdoing and give crucial data and information to address the community’s concerns and give them quality service.

It is important to note that there is a strong expectation from the community that they expect the police to be more accountable and also getting the residents of the community more involved in decision-making and in policing. Community policing is now the most popular style used across the U.S. The police structures are more decentralized now as the officers are more proactive and do a lot of critical thinking while working closely with the communities they serve (citation).

Community policing is widely used now by legislators and police authorities who had noticed the changing nature way of communities and the soaring of crime and social disorder rates. According to Diamond & Weiss, law enforcement and other municipal leaders therefore had no other choice but to redefine the role of police departments and come up with better systems to check issues and control wrongdoing. Proactive policing (Diamond & Weiss, 2009).

As per The Guardian’s 2015 online report, “In 2015, police officers killed at least 1139 people in the United States among which 1 out of 4 of these victims were black americans”. These statistics reveal what is striking is how disportionate this number is compared to the the national Black population. Black Americans are significantly more
likely to die killed by the police than white, Latinos, and Asian Americans (Guardian Database, 2015). Furthermore, Black victims are “2.5 times as likely as white victims to have been unarmed at the time of their death” (Mathulia, 1982, p. 161). Other data show that blacks are more likely to be stopped by police. According to Jennifer Eberhardt (2016), a social psychologist at Stanford University, in Oakland California, black residents represent 28% of the population of Oakland yet account for 60 percent of police stops. She further adds that black men were four times more likely to be searched during a traffic stop than white men (Stanford SPARQ, 2016). For those reasons, it is understandable why Blacks in America believe that they are discriminated and highly distrust the police (Dovidio, Gaertner, Kawakami, & Hodson, 2002). According to a poll conducted by Gallup and posted on their website in July 2016, asking the question ‘Americans who have a great deal or quite a lot of confidence in Police’ 58% were Whites and 29% were Blacks. The underpinnings of these distinctions can find its roots in the fact that African Americans have always been regarded as a minority gathering by the police, and the Jim Crow laws in the South states did not help. According to Phillip Atiba Goff, a social psychologist at the University of California, Los Angeles and co-founder of the Center for Policing Equity (2015) “they’re situations that trap us into behaving in ways that are not consistent with our values”. People tend to focus on how police treat them. For instance, according to research, people give a positive feedback when an officer treated them fairly and respectfully even if he ended up giving them a speeding ticket (Tyler, 2005). People who feel that they received “procedural justice” will also feel like the officer is legitimate and trustworthy and would not mind complying in the future as long as the process is fair and done in such a way
that the people are judged by a neutral and unbiased system, and are given the
opportunity to be heard and treated respectfully (Tyler & Fagan, 2008).

As we can see the relationship between the police and the black community is
quite tricky and to address this social disorder, community policing is organized around
less rigid hierarchies and protocols with the cooperation of the larger community as an
effort to address the root causes of neighborhood crime (Bureau of Justice Assistance,
1994). The key components of community policing are organizational transformation,
community partnership, problem solving (The Chief Justice Earl Warren Institute on Law
and Social Justice Policy, 2013). Organization transformation involves transformational
changes in the organizational structure and operation of a police department. This
includes management policies, organizational structure, information technologt systems,
personnel practices (Diamond and Weiss, 2009). Decentralization plays a key role here
as the local officers and precinct leaders are given more authority and discretion in order
to finding creative solutions to specific problems that affect communities. Cities across
the U.S. have instututed regional district models as part of their community policing
initiatives with these precinct leaders of different ranks (Maguire and Wells, 2009). The
great challenge in the organizational transformation is the limited budgets of police
departments. Therefore, these latter ones employ civilians because they are way cheaper
than sworn officers. That is how in most departments they represent 30-50% of the staff
of many departments (Maguire and Wells, 2009). As for Community partnership, the
goal is to prioritize and tackle public safety issues that matter to the community. It is an
on-going process that involves working together as partners. As Lawrence and McCarthy
of the Warren Institute (2013) say “This encompasses a wide range of groups such as
neighborhood associations, faith-based organizations, tenant councils, business groups, local government agencies, social service providers, schools, and local businesses”¹. They add that the police can therefore address neighborhood concerns through these vehicles. The authors stress the importance of trust and mutual respect from both the community and the police for this partnership to be successful. For cities where these are lacking, it is more than imperative to rebuild that trust and respect.

Problem solving is focused on preventive ways to fight crime before it happens by addressing and identifying issues that trigger criminal activities (The Chief Justice Earl Warren Institute on Law and Social Justice Policy, 2013). The most popular approach used is the “SARA Problem-solving model standing for Scanning, Analysis, Response, and Assessment” (Clarke & Eck, 2005). This model has been experimented through ten rigorous studies between 1993 and 2006 to analyze its effectiveness. A summary of these ten studies in 2010 showed that crime statistics were considerably reduced in cities where crime and disorder reign (City Policy Associates, 2000).

Some of the most common challenges of community policing according to Lawrence and McCarthy of the Warren Institute are:

First of all the lack of resources as police departments have limited budgets. Secondly, they also believe that it takes a lot of hard work to achieve a successful community policing. Furthermore, the authors believe that it is more difficult to change the culture of a department than to change policies and procedures. They also believe that community partnerships imply educating all stakeholders, including the missing voices, and sharing the results and outcomes whether positive or negative. For problem-solving to be effective, the authors believe that it is capital to have input from “several

information sources, high quality and reliable data, officer autonomy to craft and implement targeted and creative solutions.” This process additionally requires on-going communication.

V. **Methodology (or Purpose of the Study)**

The purpose of this exploratory qualitative case study was to discover what kind of mutually comfortable activities community residents and police officers of the White Oak District in Montgomery County Maryland would like to participate in to strengthen social bonding, social bridging, and social linkage so that they can prevent future difficulties in practicing community problem-solving policing.

A convenience sample of 28 community participants representing Montgomery County immigrant residents were asked general questions about their interaction with the police in their community; a subset of 11 of the 28 participants were asked about alternative methods of social bonding, social bridging, and social linkage with the police; three Montgomery County community leaders who were asked about the logistics of the immigrant community meeting with the police; and one police commander of the Montgomery County police department who was asked about police policy in working with the community. The 11 participants were asked to evaluate a short list of alternative socialization venues to discover what participants felt were most comfortable participating in, how they envision key aspects of the venues would operate. Semi-structured, open-ended interview questions were asked using an interview guide created by the researcher to allow the participants flexibility with minimal restrictions in

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responding (see Appendix A). The qualitative approach allowed for semi-structured, open-ended questioning that enabled researchers to delve into issues with greater probative power and relatively fewer restrictions than required by other approaches. This approach also provided detailed qualifying responses when the researcher sought unknown perspectives and insights, deeper descriptions, and enhanced detail (Yin, 2014). Probing follow-up questions were posed to clarify participants’ responses. Member checking was carried out to determine the credibility of the accounts given by the participants. Data was compiled and analyzed by the researcher. Similar approaches were taken with the 28 participants, 3 community leaders, and the police commander. It was believed that the four different interview sets would provide a triangulated view of past, present and future immigrant community and police relationships.

Quantitative research design was not chosen for this study because the structured, close-ended questioning approach inherent to quantitative research would not provide study participants with sufficient discretion, flexibility, and freedom to disclose information about personal lived experiences in their own words and manner. The restrictive nature of quantitative research design partially derives from its use of quantitative statistical techniques that impose criteria to meet the objective of obtaining generalizable results. Additionally, there is also a practical matter of limiting in-depth questioning and interactive follow-up questioning due to the large samples required in quantitative research to overcome the probabilities of error inherent in small samples.

Qualitative research design, on the other hand, is not bound by the same objectives, criteria, statistical methodologies, and requirements for large numbers to the same degree as quantitative design (Maxwell, 2013). Qualitative design not only enables
open-ended semi-structured questioning that is conceptually the opposite of close-ended structured questioning, but also the delineation and analysis of context. A concern about context is directly applicable in this case as interrogation involves the community resident and the police officers as well as unique circumstances associated with a community. Additionally, qualitative design does not require or allow for the generalization of results, nor the application of quantitative statistical analysis (Corbin & Strauss, 2014).

Within the qualitative research design approach, two options are available that could possibly apply to address the research questions in this study: the case study approach and the phenomenology approach. I considered the phenomenology approach that considers the subjective meaning of experiences to the persons who have had the experience and are able to describe the essence of the events comprehensively (Moustakas, 1994; van Manen, 2014). I also considered the qualitative case study approach that fits research that asks how and why questions in contemporary contexts when contexts cannot be manipulated (Yin, 2014). Ultimately, I chose the case study approach because I believed it was a closer fit with my research question.

VI. Findings

The purpose of this exploratory qualitative case study was to discover what activities both community residents and police officers of the White Oak District in Montgomery County Maryland would find suitable to strengthen social bonding, social bridging, and social linkage to prevent future difficulties in community problem-solving and policing.
Four forms of data were compiled for this study. First, I interviewed 11 residents, some of whom were immigrants, representing the White Oak District in Montgomery County, Maryland, about their willingness to participate in seven different possible approaches to strengthen social bonding, social bridging, and social linkage. Second, I interviewed three community leaders representing the White Oak District in Montgomery County Maryland about historical initiatives and relationships between the community and the police. Third I interviewed a commander of the third district of the Silver Spring Police about general police objectives. Fourth, and finally, I interviewed 28 residents of the community, some of who were recent immigrants, on direct actual experiences they have participated in with police or indirect experiences they have shared with their friends, acquaintances, and/or family about the police.

A. Interview of the residents.

I interviewed 11 of the residents, some of whom were immigrants, asking them about their general reaction and response to seven alternative approaches to strengthening social bonding, social bridging, and social linkage between the community and the police in the White Oak District in Montgomery County Maryland. These are questions that were formulated from the seven alternatives previously described as being related to the study research question. The following are responses from the 11 community members to the questions formulated from that list found in Appendix A:

**Question 1:** Are there website approaches that might help strengthen social bonding between immigrants and police officers? Do you currently
use websites to follow your county’s decision-making processes or to follow county community activities?

Nearly three-fourths of the 11 community members were aware of community websites that could be used to help strengthen social bonding and social bridge building between immigrants and police officers. The residents who said they were aware of these websites did mention specific websites they had experience with named them off-the-top-of-their-heads without looking them up, indicating they used these sites and had a surprising depth of knowledge about them naming the following: Vera Institute of Justice on police immigrant community interaction - vera.org/Policing; Police and youth interaction - strategiesforyouth.org/; Montgomery County civil rights-mococivilrights.wordpress.com/; Connecting African American immigrants - United/USA.org; mymcmmedia.org/tag/montgomery-county-african-affairs-advisory-group/; African American Caucus – African Immigrant Caucus-facebook.com/AfricanAAG/; Immigrant resources – Montgomery County immigrant resources - Gilcrest center - montgomerycountymd.gov/gilchrist/.

Clearly then, this was a well thought of alternative that the community residents were using that might be likely places for the police to also visit. One person even suggested other ways to facilitate social bonding between immigrants and police officers by having each county have a website where immigrants can register their data once they become a resident of that county. Through that website the county could organize seminars periodically maybe twice a year where everyone get together to know each other and share vital information.
**Question 2:** Are there "Welcome to new neighbor" activities that might help strengthen social bonding between immigrants and police officers?  
*Follow up Q1: How many housewarming parties have you attended for new neighbors in this county community?* *Follow up Q2: Have you ever given a housewarming party for new neighbors?*

Roughly half of the 11 residents were aware of welcome activities in the communities for new residents, but most did not appear to have participated in them or had never organized such an event. A few of the residents thought it would be a good idea for police to conduct such activities. One person knew of a church in their neighborhood that had these activities but also knew that they didn’t invite police officers to the events. Another person acknowledged it as a way that apartment managers/ home associations use it to welcome new tenants or homeowners into the neighborhood, however this person believed that it would be draining on the limited resources of the police departments.

**Question 3:** Are there social media approaches that might help strengthen social bonding between immigrants and police officers? *Follow up Q1: Do you currently use social media with your friends and neighbors to discuss your county’s decision-making processes or to discuss your county’s community activities?*

Many of the 11 residents were aware of social media and mentioned Facebook, WhatsApp, Linkedin, EventBrite, Ebay, and Craigslist. 3 of them have used social media
to discuss decision-making processes or community activities, but many indicated that they have not used social media for this purpose. Several people, but not a majority, thought it would be a good idea to use social media for this purpose. One person was rather skeptical because they believe that most immigrants (35 years above) aren’t active on social media given that they come in primarily with the motive of making money and seek greener pastures.

**Question 4:** Are there public announcements of different community members’ perspectives about community affairs and community activities that might strengthen social bonding between immigrants and police officers? Follow up Q1: Do you currently make public announcements of community members’ perspectives about community affairs or about community members’ community activities?

Only 3 of the 11 community members were aware of public announcements of community events and named the Montgomery County Council member page, Jehwru, and Umberto – the director of City Hall, but most were not familiar with this. One mentioned personally to have made a public announcement to raise awareness of the Ebola crisis.

**Question 5:** Neighborhood association meetings might help strengthen social bonding between immigrants and police officers? Follow up Q1: Do you participate in neighborhood association meetings to follow your county’s decision-making processes or to follow county community activities?
Most of the 11 community members were aware of neighborhood association meetings and thought they were a good opportunity to help strengthen social bonding between neighbors including police. 4 members of the group have attended these meetings in Montgomery County. However, 7 members have not attended and several would not attend or said it would be difficult for many as most people are very busy. One person even regretted the fact that the information they get come from word of mouth, meaning they only get it from fellow members of their community instead of merely going to the source for the correct information.

Question 6: Do you think participation in combination police and community member meetings to discuss policing problems might help strengthen social bonding between immigrants and police officers? Follow up Q1: Do you participate in combination police and community member meetings to discuss policing problems?

All 11 community members thought that community meetings specifically between community members and police were a good opportunity to help strengthen social bonding between neighbors including police. Several have attended these meetings in Montgomery County. Most have not attended, weren’t sure they wanted to attend, and didn’t know about them. One person expressed that having large numbers at such meetings would be valuable.

Question 7: Do you think participation in an annual community “porchfest” in which arts and entertainment would be held on the front porches of community residents might help strengthen social bonding
between immigrants and police officers? Follow up Q1: Have you ever participated in something like an annual “porchfest” in which arts and entertainment would be held on the front porches of community residents might help strengthen social bonding between immigrants and police officers?

Although most have never heard of such an event, most of the 11 were very enthusiastic about having a “porchfest” type of event for social bonding. They thought it was a great idea, and wanted to participate. Two attended something similar in Takoma Park. Several said it was a “great”, “interesting”, “fantastic”, “nice”, and “wow” idea.

B. Interview of the community leaders.

The following are key themes from the interviews with three community leaders on the research question: What kinds of community activities can attract immigrant community residents and police officers closer together to prevent troubling relationships and poor communications so that they can prevent future difficulties in practicing community problem-solving policing?

I interviewed three community leaders: A community organizer a community mediator, and a youth sports developer. Some of the key themes made in relation to the research question were the following:

Building relationships between the community and the police.

All three leaders agreed that this community has made a concerted effort to bring the community and police closer together. The youth sports developer
asserted. He believes that the Montgomery County Police have taken a big step to merge the community and the police. He even confided that they are working to bring the police to their programs, have a meeting with them so that they can sit down and have coffee with the citizens, high school students. The goal is to encourage the police to talk to them about different topics to break down the barriers, given that the police have this reputation in the whole United States of being scary and dreaded.

He also admits that there is a real fear among immigrant communities. The irony in that is that they came because of the US values of liberty and freedom but now live in fear because they were not born here. For him, as an immigrant, “that scary law they try to push not only affects the African community, but it affects Latinos, Caribbean, Africans, anybody who is not born to this country that comes to look for liberty” (Personal communication, July 2017). He stressed on the fear that these immigrants have of these kinds of policies, and for that reason everyone in the community is paying close attention to every decision being made.

The Community organizer contributed the following suggestions that he participated in the formulation and implementation of a resource guide and about which he said the following:

One of the things we did (The Montgomery County Government) was we put together a resource guide whereby people are able to get information on services ranging from housing, to childcare... We put together a list of
service providers who are ready to help on a pro bono basis. So, residents who are in need of any legal advice, regardless of whether they have a court case coming up, or if they have a traffic case coming up, or any type of case that’s coming up … if they have an immigration case that’s coming up. If they are not sure about how the changes from the federal government will impact that case that they have they can now pick up the phone, call one of those attorneys and have a one-on-one consultation with them. (Personal communication, July 2017)

At the heart of building relationships is relationship building in which the community organizer shared his perspective on its long term basis when he said:

I will say it’s an ongoing process; relationship building is something that is complex, because you are dealing with human beings. We have emotions, we have feelings. It’s really building that trust, which does not happen overnight, because there are many things that we are all influenced by, you know our upbringing, or maybe just one incident...The interactions that we have on a one-on-one, just like the way I’m having it with you, or in a group, like with the many group meetings that I have attended, those interactions can either erode trust, but they can also build trust as well. It’s just having that consciousness that listen; the work is not finished just because we just finished this interview. The work is not done just because I just finished a community meeting. The work continues… (Personal communication, July 2017)

Relationship building not only comes from the amount of time spent together but also the meaning that comes from working together. The Community mediator made the point this way when she said:

I think that another way to really do meaningful work together is when people solve problems together they can build relationships and change how they see each other. I think too often community policing has been watered down to have a cookout in the neighborhood and the police handing out hot dogs and playing basketball with the kids. That’s a nice
thing; I don’t want to dismiss that. I think that’s important and you should do that, but that’s not really community policing. That doesn’t give community input into how policing happens and that doesn’t really shift at a deeper level of how people understand each other, because they’re not talking about here’s how I experience an officer. Here are my fears based on my experiences in this country, or my fears based on my experience in the country I came from, or my fears based on what I understand about ICE. Even though I know you’re not ICE, here’s why I’m afraid to have a conversation. That kind of conversation is not happening on the basketball court, so while that’s a beautiful thing it’s not the same as these conversations that we’re talking about having. (Personal communication, July 2017)

**Community participation in formulation of community policing.**

The community mediator described the idea of doing *dedicated dialogue circles* in which she would convince eight to ten people of a various community groups such as a youth group to commit to participating in meetings where they are usually found, in the case of students in a school, on a regular basis for a year, to talk about building and then really initiating the building of relationships with police. She asserted the following:

We can tell the Principal, some of the kids should be kids who are really struggling with the police and aren’t doing well with the police and don’t like the police. Some of the kids should be kids who are kind of neutral about police and some could be doing well with the police, but we want a mix. We don’t just want people who love the police, because that’s not helpful to work through the hard stuff. (Personal communication, July 2017)

The community mediator argued that the key point in ensuring participation was to go where people are normally congregating. She argued the following:

You might want to think about where people are already going, or what are people already doing. Where are people already congregating, and can we bring this into that space… if you’re finding a way to take it to where people already are then it may be not as hard to get people to come out for something else. People are busy, people work two jobs and they’re taking care of their elderly parents and they’ve got young kids, or whatever else is going on. (Personal communication, July 2017)
She also asserted that it is important to not only get enough police officers to these meetings but also important to put groups together in proportions that will ensure one-to-one dialogue. She said:

...a big piece of what was happening was that officers and residents were having one-on-one dialogues, small group dialogues with 3 to 4 people talking to each other and really having this very human connection. You can’t do that when you have two officers and 60 residents and the residents are sort of standing up, making a statement and then sitting back down.  
(Personal communication, July 2017)

She then added a point about the logistics of really getting down to business and dealing with difficult issues gets down to establishing patterns over enough time to be able to break down barriers of trust, allowing bonding to happen by saying:

The other piece of the puzzle is how can you maximize input from people who are very busy into police decision-making? If the gold standard is that police and community members together spend a year writing new policies, I think that’s a great way to do things......I often find that I would rather have smaller groups of people multiple times. Lots of smaller groups where people can really tell their story in a very deep way to an officer and the officer can tell their story in a very deep way to a resident and a different kind of connection happens and that’s really difficult to do I’ve found. (Personal communication, July 2017)

Getting officers to participate is especially difficult given the many jobs they have to attend to in any given week. The key here is to make the dialogue circles a part of the police officer’s training cycle that the police department sets up. In referring to what is currently being done in Baltimore, she said the following:

This year one of the pieces of the curriculum is that they take 10 of those officers that week and on Thursday those officers get sent to a school and have this dialogue, do a dialogue circle... That’s the only way we’ve been able to get the police department to commit. Here’s 10 officers for eight hours to talk to kids the entire time and you can do one-on-one stuff, because you have 10 officers and 10 kids, so you really have that very intimate setting. I think that’s another piece of
the puzzle. While you’re thinking about how we get community members to come, we also want to think about how we have a meaningful dialogue. (Personal communication, July 2017)

C. Police Commander’s perspective on community policing

My conversation with the police commander elicited generalities, which if taken as a stand-alone statement is not very helpful in understanding the nature of community policing in the White Oak community. However, taken together with the other interviews, this response begins to suggest the way the police are approaching community policing in the present, what they intend to do in the future, and how others are responding to it.

The commander shared his definition of community policing as “Working towards a common goal to preserve the peace, protect the rights of citizens, developing positive relationships with community members to work towards solutions regarding public safety in the community”.

He explained that he came up with the community policing initiatives in White Oak because it became apparent to him that there was a tremendous need for the police department to do a better job of reaching out to the White Oak community to improve safety and reduce crime. In these efforts, it is important that the community becomes a partner and they trust the police department to reach this goal. Therefore, they began outreach efforts that are continuing and expanding at-this-time for better communication to reach this goal. Trust is vitally important on both parts in-order-to-have success, he stresses.
He also shared what he is the proudest of and the areas that need improvements. He believes that relationship building has grown immensely since he has arrived as Commander and at the same time, he admits that they need to continue growth in this same area as the police with the community throughout.

As he noted before, the trust of the community and successful communication between all parties helps to qualify their relationship with the immigrant community. Education about American policing and embracing the police mission and understanding its’ role in the community is vitally important.

In order to make sure that community policing works in Montgomery County, the commander argued that it is important to work towards continued and better communication and education on all parties. “We need to listen to our communities and their needs and share how we can help them in the public safety arena” (personal communication, July 2017).

Regarding maintaining peace, the commander reiterated the importance of communication, listening and respecting each other, and working through conflicts in a respectful manner. As mentioned before in this research and confirmed by the sports developer, many immigrants are afraid of ICE and of the immigration reforms. For many, any police officer they see could be ICE. Thus, this fear could erode the relationship between the MCPD and the community policing efforts that the MCPD is putting in. The best way to avoid this specific case, per the commander is:

By educating the immigrant community of the role of the police department versus the role of ICE. The police department mission is completely different as we are committed to preserving life and property and protecting the rights of all citizens. We are also committed to solving crimes and making people
feel safe in the communities they work and live. We do not enforce federal laws dealing with immigration and thus, this is not our role and we do not work with ICE to do the same. We must communicate this often with the Immigrant community (personal communication, July 2017).

D. Community members’ perspective.

The following is a listing of responses from 28 community members (Immigrants) about their direct experiences they have participated in with police or indirect experiences they have shared with their friends, acquaintances, and/or family about the police. Each box represents a different community member.

Table 1: Community Feedback about Direct and Indirect Experiences with Police
| Feedback | Bad: Ray was stopped by the police after passing a stop. He felt like the police was a bit hard on him because he didn’t know he was a resident of the community. |
| Good personal experience with the police. The police always show up when needed. |
| Bad: Police pulled out their gun on him at the 711, mistaking him for a prowler who matched his description. |
| Bad: He was arrested because he was at the wrong place, at the wrong time. He strongly feels like the police needs to be more polite and use different protocol. |
| Bad opinion of the police. He feels like the police need to play the role of adviser to young people. |
| Mix opinion, but would like to get to know police better. |
| Mix feelings about the police but sympathizes with them. He believes the police need to be more friendly and go to people’s home. He also believes they need a better training. |
| No personal experience with the police but believes that they should consider blacks as equal to them. |
| Good experience with the police; she witnessed some police officers who actually warned the young people rather than prosecuting them. |
| Good experience but believes that the police need to learn more about other cultures and know how to communicate with them. |
| Bad experience: She witnessed the police treating badly some young people in her neighborhood. |
| She also believes that it is important for black youth to respect authority. |
| She recommends that the police engage calmly with the people and exercise patience. They need to behave like gentlemen. |
| Bad experience with the police. He was stopped by an Asian police who called a black officer to arrest him. He feels like the police could have cut him some slack had they known he was a resident. He said he had such a bad experience that he distrusts them. |
| He deplores the fact that the police are not familiar with the cultures of the people they are supposed to protect. |
| The police can improve their relationship with the community by bringing to their level. For |

Table 1 - Community Feedback about Direct and Indirect Experiences with Police
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Work in the force.</th>
<th>Mixed opinion but feels that the police need more racial sensitivity.</th>
<th>He appreciates the effort that the police are making to engage with the police.</th>
<th>Bad experience with police. He was stopped and frisked inappropriately.</th>
<th>Bad opinion of the police but is willing to get the chance to know them.</th>
<th>Mixed opinion; He feels like some policemen are not fit to work in urban neighborhoods</th>
<th>Good opinion of police but believes that more outreach events needs to happen between the police and community on a quarterly basis.</th>
<th>That will open the lines of communications.</th>
<th>More multicultural police officers</th>
<th>are needed; only 2% are latinos. A better communication is imperative because it is like a parents/kids relationship. If the police protect and have community interest at heart, then the people won’t run away when they see the police.</th>
<th>Mixed opinion about police. Mutual respect is crucial; police should stop profiling, while the people from the community need to respect the authority.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Case</td>
<td>He deplores the fact that a great number of the cops who pulled him over are not from the area.</td>
<td>She doesn’t have anything against the police but feels like they should protect people more efficiently.</td>
<td>He recommends that the police hire more people from the community to travel to events with the young kids, attend the community social events.</td>
<td>New in the community and would like to partake in events where they get to interact with the police if it can help break stereotypes.</td>
<td>Mixed opinion of police. His older brother was unfairly arrested by the police. He believes that they tend to abuse their power in general.</td>
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VII. Discussion.

I was not able to fully carry out my research design due to logistics challenges. However, I got a strong suggestion about the nature of community policing in the Montgomery County based upon interviews with one police commander, three community leaders, 28 immigrant community residents, and 11 of the 28 community residents.

Evidence of community policing in the White Oak immigrant Community of Montgomery County Maryland in 2017 suggests a strategic straddle in which the police department conservatively uses the traditional law enforcement combatant approach to stop criminal behavior; as well as employing the newly emerging safeguard approach that protects citizens from harm and injustice in an effort to build public trust and police legitimacy as described by Jenkins (2016), Meares and Neyroud (2015), and Stoughton (2016). The police commander provided statements that fit both old and new approaches. This was seen in the commander’s statement when he defined community policing as, “Working towards a common goal to preserve the peace, protect the rights of citizens, developing positive relationships with community members to work towards solutions regarding public safety in the community.” Preservation of the peace, and protecting the rights of citizens fits the older conservative approach; while development positive relationships with community members to work towards solutions regarding public safety in the community is taken from the new policing culture of community policing. When these statements are compared with statements taken from the community leaders, it also suggests confirmation of both approaches, with the caveat that the conservative approach
has been the dominant approach right up to the present, and the new approach may still be only resident in the future.

Evidence that the old approach is very much in existence came from the interviews of the 28 residents in which many negative casual encounters with the police can be seen in numerous examples (see Table 1). Typical statements were the following, “Mixed opinion of police. His older brother was unfairly arrested by the police. He believes that they tend to abuse their power in general.” Another said, “Bad experience with police. He was stopped and frisked inappropriately.” And yet another said, “Bad experience: She witnessed the police treating badly some people in her neighborhood.”

Evidence of the new approach was also in existence which came from the assertion of the youth sports developer, one of the three community leaders who said about the future:

I believe Montgomery County Police have taken a big step to merge the community and the police…. We are working to bring the police to our programs, have a meeting with them, sit down and have coffee with the citizens, high school students. (Personal communication, July 2017)

It also came from the community mediator who said about mutual planning of community policing:

…a big piece of what was happening was that officers and residents were having one-on-one dialogues, small group dialogues with 3 to 4 people talking to each other and really having this very human connection. (Personal communication, July 2017)

She then added:

This year one of the pieces of the curriculum is that they take 10 of those officers that week and on Thursday those officers get sent to a school and have this dialogue, do a dialogue circle… That’s the only way we’ve been able to get the police department to commit. Here’s 10 officers for eight hours to talk to kids the entire time and you can do one-on-one stuff, because you have 10 officers and 10
What Montgomery County is working towards, is more fundamental than planning, however. This would be a basis of trust needs to exist between community members and the police before effective planning can result from working together. This is what Ellis and Albi (2017) asserted was the key to community policing that they said was a structure of prerequisite social connections that preventively ensures community resilience against all challenges. Further social connection has multiple dimensions: social bonding within communities, social bridges between communities, and social linking between the community and public governing bodies such as the police (Ellis & Albi, 2017).

The Community developer described trust building as a continuous, long-term process when he said:

I will say it’s an ongoing process; relationship building is something that is complex, because you are dealing with human beings. We have emotions, we have feelings. It’s really building that trust, which does not happen overnight, because there are many things that we are all influenced by, you know our upbringing, or maybe just one incident… The interactions that we have on a one-on-one, just like the way I’m having it with you, or in a group, like with the many group meetings that I have attended, those interactions can either erode trust, but they can also build trust as well. It’s just having that consciousness that listen; the work is not finished just because we just finished this interview. The work is not done just because I just finished a community meeting. The work continues. (Personal communication, July 2017)

The community mediator added:

I think that another way to really do meaningful work together is when people solve problems together they can build relationships and change how they see each other. (Personal communication, July 2017)
Put another way, she said about long term commitments:

The other piece of the puzzle is how can you maximize input from people who are very busy into police decision-making? If the gold standard is that police and community members together spend a year writing new policies, I think that’s a great way to do things. (Personal communication, July 2017)

Having a strategic straddle indicates that there is still a long way to go in Montgomery County to reach the ideals of community policing. They need to take baby steps first to get there. The community mediator made this point in saying:

I think too often community policing has been watered down to have a cookout in the neighborhood and the police handing out hot dogs and playing basketball with the kids. That’s a nice thing; I don’t want to dismiss that. I think that’s important and you should do that, but that’s not really community policing. That doesn’t give community input into how policing happens and that doesn’t really shift at a deeper level of how people understand each other, because they’re not talking about here’s how I experience an officer. Here are my fears based on my experiences in this country, or my fears based on my experience in the country I came from, or my fears based on what I understand about ICE. Even though I know you’re not ICE, here’s why I’m afraid to have a conversation. That kind of conversation is not happening on the basketball court, so while that’s a beautiful thing it’s not the same as these conversations that we’re talking about having. (Personal communication, July 2017)

This is a good segue to another set of interviews I spent with 11 of the 28 community members in discovering what kind of mutually comfortable activities community residents and police officers of the White Oak District in Montgomery County Maryland would like to participate in to strengthen social bonding, social bridging, and social linkage so that they can prevent future difficulties in practicing community problem-solving policing. Although I wanted to get further into this than I did, I discovered some interesting tidbits from this group. All of them were very internet savvy and were very comfortable with methods of social bonding that involved use of
websites on the internet and social media, although more were comfortable with website access than socializing on social media. Social bonding in 2017 has been increasingly occurring on social media so this is understandable, but what about traditional face-to-face interaction at welcome neighbor socialization parties? It was surprising to discover how few of the participants that ever participated in that kind of social engagement. Similarly, most were not comfortable seeking public announcements, nor neighborhood association meetings, and as I previously mentioned social media. General busyness seemed to be difficult for the prospects of meeting directly with police in combination police and community member meetings, although part of the difficulty may arise in not having a strong enough social bond prior to meeting in this way. Busyness was also mentioned by the community mediator when she said suggested the following:

You might want to think about where people are already going, or what are people already doing. Where are people already congregating, and can we bring this into that space… if you’re finding a way to take it to where people already are then it may be not as hard to get people to come out for something else. People are busy, people work two jobs and they’re taking care of their elderly parents and they’ve got young kids, or whatever else is going on.

She also added:

I often find that I would rather have smaller groups of people multiple times. Lots of smaller groups where people can really tell their story in a very deep way to an officer and the officer can tell their story in a very deep way to a resident and a different kind of connection happens and that’s difficult to do I’ve found. (Personal communication, July 2017)

What was truly surprising and a hint that traditional socializing may hold some promise the enthusiasm that was expressed for participating in “porchfest” in which community members would each sponsor musical entertainment on their own porches as community members walked through the community and gathered to participate in
enjoying simple entertainment and casual socialization. This suggested was what was missing was the lack of something creative and new instead of the idea of socializing.

VIII. **Recommendations.**

*Seeking comfortable social bonding, bridging and linkage activities.*

The immigrant community and the police who reside in the White Oak District of Montgomery County Maryland appear to be in the preliminary stages of creating and evolving a new community problem-solving policing paradigm and culture. They have shown evidence of changing from a law enforcement combatant paradigm and culture that formerly dominated Montgomery County to a safeguard paradigm and culture that protects citizens from harm and injustice to build public trust and legitimacy. What they lack and conceptually could require solidifying this movement is a steady stream of mutual trust building experiences. These would be social bonding to strengthen relationships between others within neighborhoods in the community; social bridging to strengthen relationships between neighborhoods and other communities; and social linkage to strengthen relationships between the neighborhoods and communities and the police. This could come down to selecting, initiating, and producing a series of mutually comfortable activities between immigrant community residents and the police such as one or more of the seven options described in this study in concert with one or more of the techniques suggested by the three community leaders. Specifically, the initial activities that seemed most comfortable to the immigrant community were: 1) use of the specialized websites designed to facilitate communication and education between the parties; 2) new creative forms of face-to-face contact such as periodic porchfests; and 3)
activities integrated with where people are normally found most days, such as in school or at work, that do not require extraordinary efforts to make special arrangements.

**Future research.**

Further research to better understand pathways that build stronger immigrant community and police social bonding, bridging, and linkage may facilitate the discovery of greater efficiencies in support of these fledgling efforts. These pathways may include comfortable methods that have been found to facilitate immigrant bonding, bridging and linkage in their own cultures. Alternatively, there may also be successful pathways that have been operated in other immigrant communities within other countries as well as the United States. The pathway may also be expanded to include not just initial steps at strengthening social bonding, social bridging, and social linkage, but also steps that lead to direct meetings and working arrangements between immigrant communities and the police to plan, problem-solve, manage, and prevent complex issues from worsening.

IX. **Conclusions.**

Mutually comfortable activities could exist that community residents and police officers of the White Oak District in Montgomery County Maryland could participate in to strengthen social bonding, social bridging, and social linkage in their community. This would be a first step towards formulating a pathway to preventing future difficulties in practicing community problem-solving policing. This study has suggested possible choices that could be made to achieve success including use of the specialized websites designed to facilitate communication and education between the parties; creative forms of
face-to-face contact such as periodic porchfests; and activities integrated with where people are normally found most days. Further research is needed to validate these suggested findings to strengthen social bonding, social bridging, and social linkage in immigrant communities in the U.S. as a first step towards formulating a pathway to preventing future difficulties in practicing community problem-solving policing.
X. References


Montgomery County Government website http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/


Informed Consent Letter

White Oak Community Policing

Researcher and Contact Information:
- Carole Chopi

Supervisor:
- Dr. Mokhtar Bouba (Mokhtar.Bouba@sit.edu)

Purpose of the Study

I am a Master candidate student from SIT Graduate Institute conducting a research on the role that Community policing could play in the Montgomery County in order to strengthen the relationship between the Montgomery County Police Department and the Immigrant Community (MCPD). I am working closely with my advisor, Professor Mokhtar Bouba, who will be supervising my research. During the process, I would like to ask you some questions about prospective community activities that could attract you to becoming closer with police officers in your community. These are activities that would be designed to strengthen social bonding (of immigrants with police officers within the immigrant community), social bridging (of immigrants with police officers between immigrant communities), and social linkage (between the immigrant communities and police officers) so that future difficulties can be avoided in practicing community problem-solving policing. In formulating your responses to the questions I’m going to ask you, I’d like to ask you to focus upon single examples in particular you’ve experienced that were similar so your responses can be based on specifics.

Confidentiality:

All information provided will be strictly confidential. We will keep your identity and any information that you provide confidential and no part or parts of that information shall be disclosed to the public or other audiences without your express authorization.

Compensation:

While we cannot compensate you for your time, your participation will be invaluable to our project as the goal of this research is to make sure the Police and the minorities communities of White Oak get along well.

Information about this Study:
You will have the opportunity to ask, and have answered, all your questions about this research by emailing me. All inquiries are confidential.

*Participant's Agreement Statement:*

If you agree to participate in my study, kindly sign your name and date to this form before you proceed to the survey, or before the interview begins.

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I have read the information provided above. I voluntarily agree to participate in this study. After it is signed, I confirm to have results from my survey to be used by researchers to further their objective.

.................................................................  .....................
Name                        Date

Thank you,
Sincerely,

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.................  Dr. Mokhtar
Carole Chopi  Bouba
Advisor

Academic
Interview Questions

1. Are there website approaches that might help strengthen social bonding between immigrants and police officers? Follow up Q1: Do you currently use websites to follow your county’s decision-making processes or to follow county community activities?

2. Are there welcome to new neighbor activities that might help strengthen social bonding between immigrants and police officers? Follow up Q1: How many housewarming parties have you attended for new neighbors in this county community? Follow up Q2: Have you ever given a housewarming party for new neighbors?

3. Are there social media approaches that might help strengthen social bonding between immigrants and police officers? Follow up Q1: Do you currently use social media with your friends and neighbors to discuss your county’s decision-making processes or to discuss your county’s community activities?

4. Are there public announcements of different community members’ perspectives about community affairs and community activities that might strengthen social bonding between immigrants and police officers? Follow up Q1: Do you currently make public announcements of community members’ perspectives about community affairs or about community members’ community activities?

5. Do you think that participation in neighborhood association meetings might help strengthen social bonding between immigrants and police officers? Follow up Q1: Do you participate in neighborhood association meetings to follow your county’s decision-making processes or to follow county community activities?
6  Do you think participation in combination police and community members meetings to discuss policing problems might help strengthen social bonding between immigrants and police officers? Follow up Q1: Do you participate in combination police and community members meetings to discuss policing problems?

7  Do you think participation in an annual community “porchfest” in which arts and entertainment would be held on the front porches of community residents might help strengthen social bonding between immigrants and police officers? Follow up Q1: Have you ever participated in something like an annual “porchfest” in which arts and entertainment would be held on the front porches of community residents might help strengthen social bonding between immigrants and police officers?