COM-803 Hermeneutics and Communications

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Omega Graduate School

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Professor

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Assignment

### *Developmental Readings*

Review Assignment #3, the course essential elements, assigned readings, and recommended readings to identify selections of books and scholarly articles to identify and select developmental reading sources and entries.

* Refer to the “[Student Guide to Developmental Readings](https://drive.google.com/file/d/161V_FaYR2BnNGCSFUlWPjUSIQzcH04Hq/view?usp=share_link)” for updated information on sample comments, rubrics, and key definitions related to developmental readings.

**Source One:** Franklin, J. C., & Hein, J. F. (2021). *Thin blue fault line--policing America: a 21st century challenge of compromise*. Charles C. Thomas, Publisher, Ltd.

**Comment 1:** Lack of trust between law enforcement and minority communities

**Comment 2:** Rebuilding the trust between law enforcement and minority communities.

**Quote/Paraphrase:** American policing has never had a stellar reputation with minorities. It can be said that any minority in history has been abused, belittled, taken advantage of, and more. The callousness has caused hostility in the black community toward American policing **(**Franklin & Hein, 2021)**.**

**Essential Element:** This comment is associated with excessive use of force and lack of trust between law enforcement and minority communities.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is an additive to the topic of abuse in policing. Anyone of the age in the 1960s will remember a violent confrontation in Birmingham, Alabama, between police and people of color demonstrating for equality (Franklin & Hein, 2021). On April 12, 2015, a 25-year-old black man from the west side of Baltimore was arrested and put inside a Baltimore Police Department transport van, and then, 45 minutes later, was found unconscious and not breathing, his spinal cord severely severed (Franklin & Hein, 2021).

**Contextualization:**  The concern of poor policing in minority neighborhoods has been brought to the forefront by various incidents and reports over the years. Unfortunately, these communities often experience a higher level of police presence, surveillance, and enforcement, leading to feelings of over-policing and targeting. As my team has assisted allied agencies throughout my career, I have witnessed many of these issues firsthand. Seeing a few bad actors tarnish the profession's reputation and detract from its true purpose: to serve and protect is disheartening. Addressing these issues requires a multifaceted approach that involves community engagement, police reform, accountability measures, and efforts to build trust between law enforcement and minority communities. Fair and equitable policing practices that uphold the rights and dignity of all individuals, regardless of their background, are crucial to regaining the trust of our communities.

**Source Two:** Dingle, T. (2022). *African American Male Perceptions of Police in the Era of YouTube*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

**Comment 3:** African American males’ perception of police

**Comment 4**: YouTube's influence on policing

**Quote/Paraphrase:** Research has examined attitudes concerning police violence toward African American male adults. Findings concluded that individuals approve of police violence associated with negative images of African Americans (Dingle, 2022).

**Essential Element:** This comment is associated with the often negative portrayal of African American males with law enforcement on YouTube videos.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is additive to the discussion. African American males are subject to the influence of labeling, which refers to African American males being judged because of the perception associated with the image of their demographic. The police are called because some say African Americans should not be in this neighborhood. Some Caucasians call the police on African American people simply for being in Starbucks (Dingle, 2022).

**Contextualization:** Historical and contemporary experiences of systemic racism, discrimination, and unequal treatment by law enforcement deeply influence the perception of police among Black men. Black men in the United States have a strained relationship with the police, shaped by a long history of racial profiling, police brutality, and injustice. Ironically, I can address this from both sides of the fence. Being a black police officer for many years has allowed me to have a real-time perspective on how much some things have changed and how some things have gone backward. I often travel around the country on official business with my team. There have been many occasions when, just driving around in another city, I have been stopped simply for driving through a neighborhood. In those times, it was stressful because I was armed, and I did not know the mindset of the officers. It is funny and sad to hear their reasons for being stopped once they find out I am a police officer.

Today's technology has allowed us to capture and share video footage, including door cameras, surveillance equipment, and cellphone cameras. As a result, platforms like YouTube have become an influential space for documenting and sharing policing incidents, both positive and negative. Many of these videos have featured my team and me, whether we were aware of it. This technology can be beneficial in the realm of policing, as it can help to raise awareness around issues related to accountability, community relations, and policing practices.

**Source Three:** Malone Gonzalez, S., Simon, S. J., & Rogers, K. K. (2022). The diversity officer: Police officers’ and black women civilians’ epistemologies of race and racism in policing. *Law & Society Review*, *56*(3), 477–499. https://doi.org/10.1111/lasr.12623

**Comment 5:** Diversifying police forces

**Comment 6:** Black women, civilians, and police use divergent epistemologies.

**Comment 7:** Mothers fear for the safety of their children.

**Quote/Paraphrase:** The push to diversify the police is not new. Little research investigates how this effort is discussed and understood by police officers and black civilian groups. We explore how police and black civilians understand the significance of race and racism in policing by analyzing their discourse on police officers of color, particularly black officers. (Malone Gonzalez et al., 2022).

**Essential Element:** This comment suggests that diversity in policing may reduce racism and police brutality.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This comment is a variant of the discussion. Heightened scrutiny of police post-Ferguson has renewed conversations about "police-minority relations," with police departments across the country adopting reforms that purport to improve relationships with minority communities. Black women use a standpoint epistemology to frame the problem of police violence as a structural relationship produced through a history of racism and identify police diversity initiatives as incapable of addressing this institutionalized racism. This frame positions race as an outcome of historical and structural racism, while police describe race as a static identity and source of inhered cultural differences (Malone Gonzalez et al., 2022).

**Contextualization:** A diverse police force can positively impact community relationships, provided officers are well-trained from the moment they enter the police force and throughout their careers. However, from my experience, training is only the first step. Many police officers enter the profession with their own biases and prejudices. The hiring process needs to address these biases and prejudices. When the police force reflects the diversity of its community, it can help to establish trust and rapport with community members. Seeing officers from similar backgrounds or shared experiences can make people feel understood and respected.

A diverse police force can also help to reduce bias and discrimination in policing practices. Officers with different perspectives and experiences can challenge stereotypes, promote fairness, and ensure that all community members are treated equitably. Additionally, diverse teams bring a range of ideas and approaches to problem-solving. When officers from different backgrounds work together, they can develop innovative strategies to address community concerns and improve public safety.

A diverse police force can foster positive relationships with the community, enhance accountability, and create a more inclusive and responsive law enforcement agency.

**Source Four:** Holmes IV, O. (2020). Police brutality and four other ways racism kills Black people. *Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion: An International Journal*, *ahead-of-print*(ahead-of-print). https://doi.org/10.1108/edi-06-2020-0151

**Comment 8:** Police brutality, other ways racism kills black people.

**Comment 9:** Assigning black people the responsibility for fixing racism

**Quote/Paraphrase:** Although police killings and physical violence are primarily associated with police brutality, it is essential to note that police brutality also includes emotional and sexual violence, verbal assaults, psychological intimidation, and other forms of police misconduct. Racism negatively impacts Black people's psychological, emotional, social, spiritual, financial and physical well-being (Holmes IV, 2020)

**Essential Element:** Police brutality and racism affect black people in many ways.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is additive to the discussion. The tactic at the heart of the above messages is that no matter how much pain, loss, depravity, **or** racism black people experience, we are expected to suppress our genuine emotions and impulses and attend to others' needs and desires. Although the practicality of this tactic is understandable even today, this form of racism is also killing us. While it is true that black people have done the lion's share of the work of advancing and securing civil rights for everyone in this country, this responsibility should not rest solely on black people. Being the work mule to organize people, pass legislation, secure broader opportunities for all people, reform policies and practices, etc., are conspicuous ways in which people expect Black people to fix racism (Holmes IV, 2020).

**Contextualization:** Having the opportunity to work throughout the Maryland and District of Columbia area has allowed me to see and, in many cases, interact with individuals who have been traumatized by the police. The trauma of police brutality is a serious issue that can have long-lasting effects on individuals, families, and communities. Victims of police brutality may experience physical injuries, psychological trauma, and emotional distress. The trauma of police brutality can manifest in various ways, including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, depression, and feelings of fear, anger, and helplessness. It can erode trust in law enforcement, exacerbate existing social inequalities, and contribute to a sense of injustice and powerlessness.

**Source Five:** Dempsey, R. P., Eskander, E. E., & Dubljević, V. (2023). Ethical Decision-Making in Law Enforcement: A Scoping Review. *Psych*, *5*(2), 576–601. https://doi.org/10.3390/psych5020037

**Comment 10:** Creating ethical decision-making in law enforcement.

**Comment 11:** The tough-on-crime perspective is conducive to ethical and moral

decisions.

**Comment 12:** The high rate of police fatalities influences decision-making.

**Quote/Paraphrase:** Police officers who serve the public in a free society must be able to uphold every aspect of their profession to promote public safety and maintain the rule of law. Doing so requires a sense of ethics and the ability to use moral reasoning to navigate the ambiguous job complexities of law enforcement and the life-and-death circumstances police may encounter at a moment’s notice (Dempsey et al., 2023).

**Essential Element:** This comment is associated with the dichotomy of tough policing while having an ethical compass.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is a variant of the discussion. The issue of policing in uncertain and stressful environments has sparked significant debate, considering high-profile cases of police violence in the United States. Maintaining public confidence and trust in law enforcement has become increasingly challenging. Police officers face numerous split-second value-based decisions that profoundly impact the lives and well-being of individuals and communities. Society and specific communities also evaluate policing from an ethical standpoint. The complexities of the job, combined with the high rates of fatalities among law enforcement officers, have made it difficult to determine what is right and wrong, particularly when everyone is perceived as a potential threat (Dempsey et al., 2023).

**Contextualization:** As a police officer, I often face split-second decisions in high-pressure situations that require quick thinking and sound judgment. These decisions can have significant consequences and impact my team's and the community's safety. The training, experience, and clear protocols that we receive are essential in helping us make effective decisions under pressure. Law enforcement agencies must provide comprehensive training, including scenario-based simulations, de-escalation techniques, and cultural sensitivity training. By equipping officers with the necessary skills and knowledge, they are better prepared to handle challenging situations and make split-second decisions that prioritize the safety and well-being of all individuals involved.
Additionally, promoting a culture of accountability, transparency, and continuous improvement within police departments can help ensure that officers are held to high standards and are supported in their decision-making processes. By fostering a culture of trust and professionalism, law enforcement agencies can work towards building positive relationships with the communities they serve and promoting public safety responsibly and ethically.

**Works Cited**

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