SR 968-22 Sociological Methodology

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**Assignment #2 – Developmental Readings**

1. Create Developmental Readings from seminal sources and scholarly peer-reviewed journal articles. Review instructions for Assignment #3, the course essential elements, and course readings to identify selections of books and journals to create entries.

a. Refer to the "Student Guide to Developmental Readings" in the General Helps folder for updated information on sample comments, the grading rubric, and key definitions related to developmental readings.

**Source One:** Oliver, W. M. (1998). Moving beyond “police-community relations” and “the police and society”: Community-oriented policing as an academic course. *Journal of Criminal Justice Education*, *9*(2), 303–317. https://doi.org/10.1080/10511259800084351

**Comment 1:** Community-oriented policing has taken the police in the United States and elsewhere by storm

**Comment 2:** Community-oriented policing different from police-community relations.

**Quote/Paraphrase:** Community-oriented policing has taken the police in the United States and elsewhere by storm. It has become the organizing philosophy, policy, and practical application of police departments nationwide (Oliver, 1998). Community-oriented policing has continued to evolve out of the police-community relations era. Many of the programs that existed in the early 1980s look far different today and would no longer be recognizable as the same programs (Oliver, 1998).

**Essential Element:** The organizational philosophy of police-community relations articulated a need to understand the diversity of the community in which the police worked, establish partnerships with the community, and open the lines of communication to enhance the police's effectiveness (Oliver, 1998).

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is a variant of the discussion. Despite the ongoing efforts to improve police-community relations in both practical initiatives and academic discussions, many programs stemming from this organizational philosophy have struggled to achieve meaningful success. This is largely due to their limited and narrow definitions of public interactions, which fail to capture the complexities of community engagement. Additionally, these programs have often been poorly designed and inadequately supported, lacking the necessary resources and strategic planning. Furthermore, the absence of genuine community involvement has significantly hampered their effectiveness. As a result, this organizational approach found itself in a state of considerable difficulty, highlighting the need for a more inclusive and well-rounded strategy to foster better relations between law enforcement and the communities they serve (Oliver, 1998).

**Contextualization:** The Maryland State Police Resident Trooper Program was designed to enhance community policing efforts by placing state troopers in designated communities to serve as a direct link between law enforcement and residents. This presence was believed to help build trust and foster positive relationships between law enforcement and residents. The role of our resident troopers included crime prevention efforts, investigating local incidents, and collaborating with community members to identify and address crime trends.

Being stationed within communities made our troopers more accessible to residents, facilitating easier communication and allowing for more immediate responses to concerns or emergencies. Troopers also complemented local law enforcement agencies by providing additional resources and expertise, especially in areas where local departments may face staffing or resource challenges.

The program's mission was to enhance community safety and strengthen law enforcement and community relationships. However, it faced challenges that have led to its decline or perceived failure in some areas.

As communities evolve, their needs and concerns may change. Since the program did not adapt to these shifts, it became less relevant or effective in addressing current issues. While our Maryland State Police Resident Trooper Program had the potential to enhance community relations, these challenges highlight the complexities of implementing effective community policing strategies. Addressing these issues will be essential for future attempts to revitalize or replicate similar programs.

**Source Two**: Barna, M. (2021). Public health approach to police reform gaining momentum: States, cities redirecting police funding. *the Nation’s Health*, *51*(5), 1–8.

**Comment 3:** Disproportionate harm African Americans suffer at the hands of the police

**Comment 4**: Prejudices can lead to brutality

**Quote/Paraphrase:** Police reform became a rallying cry in the U.S. one year ago as civil rights demonstrations erupted in response to police violence toward Black Americans, prompted in part by the murder of George Floyd by a Minneapolis police officer. Police violence and systemic racism entered the national conversation on a bigger scale than ever.

**Essential Element:** This comment is associated with U.S. communities have been redirecting police funds to programs that take a public health approach to public safety.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is an additive to the discussion. In quick succession, over 30 states passed new police oversight and reform laws, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures. These included limiting officer immunity, mandating body cameras, restricting neck restraints, and requiring no-knock warrants (Barna, 2021). More than 20 cities and municipalities have redirected funds from police budgets for 2021, according to a Bloomberg City-Lab analysis. Funds are gradually shifting to community-based programs in mental health (Barna, 2021).

**Contextualization:**  My aspiration to become a police officer has been shaped significantly by my upbringing, surrounded by coaches and family members who served in law enforcement. This influence instilled in me a deep respect for the role of police officers as community pillars. To further pursue this career path, I earned an undergraduate degree in criminal justice. Upon my graduation from Maryland State Police Academy I focused on the principles and values exemplified by those officers who inspired me. This was almost forty years ago and policing was different. In recent years, I have had the unique opportunity to witness a significant transformation in the way some law enforcement officers engage with the communities we are sworn to protect. There were moments when I found myself alongside officers who approached various situations with an underlying assumption that everyone, they encountered posed a potential threat, fostering an environment where the law was enforced with a heavy hand. While I fully appreciated the importance of executing my duties as an officer, my approach has always leaned towards that of a peacemaker, prioritizing constructive dialogue in my interactions with the public. Many individuals we encounter daily are not inherently problematic; rather, they are often individuals navigating mental health crises or difficult life circumstances. Acknowledging this reality has led to a pivotal shift in policing practices across the United States, with numerous agencies implementing mandatory training focused on de-escalation techniques and mental health awareness. As we move into 2025, the prevailing path of policing remains rooted in the commitment to protect and serve. However, there is now a deeper understanding of the necessity to approach situations with the perspective that they may involve mental health challenges rather than simply viewing those we encounter as potential hardcore criminals. This evolving mindset reflects a broader recognition of the complexities of the human experience and the importance of compassion in law enforcement.

**Source Three:**  Wang, X., Ready, J., & Davies, G. (2019). Race, Ethnicity, and Perceived Minority Police Presence: Examining Perceptions of Criminal Injustice Among Los Angeles Residents. *Law & Society Review*, *53*(3), 706–739. https://doi.org/10.1111/lasr.12423

**Comment 5:** Minority officers will enhance residents' perceptions of police and the criminal justice system

**Comment 6:** A racially and ethnically diverse police force is now widely accepted and positively viewed in American political and law enforcement circles

**Quote/Paraphrase:** The prevailing belief in the community is that increasing the number of minority police officers will lead to improved perceptions of law enforcement and the criminal justice system among residents. However, it may be beneficial to conduct a more thorough and systematic examination of this hypothesis to assess its validity more accurately (Wang et al., 2019).

Additionally, it is essential to explore whether the presence of minority officers has a more pronounced impact on the perceptions of criminal injustice among minority residents living in more integrated, predominantly white neighborhoods, as opposed to those residing in neighborhoods primarily composed of other minority groups. Such research could provide valuable insights into the complexities of community-police relations and the intricate ways in which racial dynamics affect perceptions of justice and safety (Wang et al., 2019).

**Essential Element:** This comment indicates that understanding how the perception of minority police presence within neighborhoods influences residents' views on criminal injustice is critical. This includes investigating whether the effect of minority police visibility is more significant among minority residents compared to their non-minority counterparts, as well as how these dynamics differ across various neighborhood demographics (Wang et al., 2019).

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This comment is a variant of the discussion. Using individual-level data, several studies have found that officer race has limited significance for residents' attitudes (Wang et al., 2019). Furthermore, studies examining the interaction effect between officer race and resident race on attitudes about police actions have produced inconclusive findings: although some did not find the officer-driver race interaction had a significant effect (Wang et al., 2019).

**Contextualization:** As a Maryland State Trooper, I underwent an intensive training regimen at the police academy with diverse recruits. This diversity shaped our training experience and prepared us for the varied communities we would serve. We were deployed to our initial assignments upon graduation, immersing ourselves in neighborhoods that reflected various cultures and lifestyles.

Throughout my early years on the force, I noticed a common phenomenon: regardless of our location or the nature of our assignment, whether we were the lead responders or backup, members of the public instinctively turned to us. Their trust and expectation seemed to stem from our state police uniforms as symbols of authority and protection greater than the local jurisdictions; our race did not affect their perception.

Policing has shifted dramatically in recent years. A growing wave of skepticism toward law enforcement has emerged, leading to a notable change in how officers are perceived, irrespective of race. When we respond to incidents, it often feels like the badge is viewed with suspicion. Both minority and white troopers find themselves facing a similar level of scrutiny, as the legitimacy of police actions is frequently called into question. The bond of trust between officers and communities has frayed, leaving many to grapple with a pervasive atmosphere of doubt and distrust in policing.

**Source Four:** Reisig, M. D., & Stroshine Chandek, M. (2001). The effects of expectancy disconfirmation on outcome satisfaction in police‐citizen encounters. *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies & Management*, *24*(1), 88–99. https://doi.org/10.1108/13639510110382278

**Comment 8:** Citizens have low expectations when encountering police.

**Comment 9:** Police performance affirms the negative expectation.

**Quote/Paraphrase:** This study explores the expectancy disconfirmation model by analyzing survey data collected from citizens who have recently interacted with the police. The findings provide strong support for the model's central hypothesis, revealing that a greater gap between what citizens expect from police performance and the actual service they receive has a negative impact on their satisfaction with how the police manage these encounters. In other words, when citizens feel that their expectations are not met during interactions with law enforcement, their overall satisfaction declines significantly (Reisig & Stroshine Chandek, 2001).

**Essential Element:** The public expects professionalism when encountering the police

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is additive to the discussion. The expectancy disconfirmation model suggests that consumer satisfaction arises from the alignment between an individual’s expectations and the actual performance of a product (Reisig & Stroshine Chandek, 2001). This concept can be effectively applied to the realm of policing. Under this framework, citizen satisfaction with police services can be understood as the interplay between what community members anticipate from law enforcement and their perceptions of how well the police meet those expectations (Reisig & Stroshine Chandek, 2001). In other words, if citizens expect a certain level of service or responsiveness from the police and their experiences align with or diverge from these expectations, it will significantly influence their overall satisfaction with the police force (Reisig & Stroshine Chandek, 2001).

**Contextualization:** When I reflect on my past, memories emerge of the strong relationships I fostered with the police officers patrolling my neighborhood. These experiences shaped my vision and set the standard for my expectations of law enforcement. As I began my own career in policing, I carried with me the determination to embody those same ideals. I knew that the citizens expected me to be accountable for my actions. Wearing the uniform, I understood the responsibility that came with my role: to act with unwavering respect and professionalism in every interaction. I needed to be accountable for my actions

When someone dials 911, they reach out in a moment of vulnerability, seeking assistance and a protective presence that reassures them they are safe. In those critical moments, they look to us, police officers, as guardians who will respond promptly to emergencies, deter criminal activity, and maintain a sense of order within the community.

Moreover, the public expects us to engage with all individuals fairly, without bias or discrimination, irrespective of their race, ethnicity, gender, or socioeconomic background. Many seek the comforting assurance that the law will be enforced impartially. These collective expectations play a crucial role in shaping public perceptions of law enforcement and determining the success of various policing strategies.

By consistently meeting these expectations through community-oriented practices, actively listening, building relationships, and fostering inclusivity, police can cultivate trust among residents, enhance their cooperation, and ultimately promote a safer community for everyone.

**Source Five:** Lane, R. (2019). “I am a police officer, not a social worker or mental health nurse”: Online discourses of exclusion and resistance regarding mental health‐related police work. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, *29*(5), 429–442. https://doi.org/10.1002/casp.2410

**Comment 10:** The police have faced high‐profile criticisms over their handling of mental health‐related incidents.

**Comment 11:** Mental health work is not considered a valid part of the police role.

**Quote/Paraphrase:** Around 15% of police incidents are estimated to involve individuals with mental health concerns. Despite this, police officers receive minimal mental health training. The police have been publicly criticized for their handling of mental health-related incidents, and concerns have been raised about the lack of funding and fragmented nature of mental health services, which has led to police officers being compelled to take on a primary role in mental health care (Lane, 2019).

**Essential Element:** This comment is associated with mental health problems are reified and associated with violence, and extreme behavior, justifying the use of force by police.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is a variant of the discussion. Mental health and policing have been debated from various perspectives. Because of the changes to mental health services, the police are increasingly expected to take a role in supporting people with mental illness (Leese & Russell, 2017). Police officers are collaborating more frequently with individuals undergoing mental health crises, prompting a call for the health service to enhance access to suitable mental health support. Furthermore, the Crisis Care Concordat advocates for partnerships between the police, health, and social care systems to enhance the well-being of individuals amid a mental health crisis (Leese & Russell, 2017).

**Contextualization:** It is crucial to provide mental health awareness training for police officers for several reasons. Mental health awareness training enhances our understanding of mental health issues and improves our interactions with individuals experiencing mental health crises. As part of police reform efforts, we must now have de-escalation training. Furthermore, our tactics, equipment, and response procedures have been updated to address the issue of responding to calls involving individuals experiencing mental health crises. Given that a significant number of people with mental health difficulties encounter the police daily, the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) (Home Office, 1984) serves as the foundation for protecting vulnerable children and adults while they are in custody (Leese & Russell, 2017). Implementing comprehensive mental health awareness training has led to better outcomes for both my team and the communities we serve, fostering a safer and more understanding environment.

**Source Six:** Dempsey, J. S., & Forst, L. S. (2016). An introduction to policing. Cengage Learning

**Comment 10:** Policing creates a culture of Us vs Them

**Comment 11:** Loyalty among police creates a code of silence

**Quote/Paraphrase:** Numerous academic studies have indicated that the nature of policing and the experiences that officers go through on the job cause them to band together into a police culture or subculture (Dempsey & Forst, 2016). The police culture or police subculture is a combination of shared norms, values, goals, career patterns, lifestyle, and occupational structure that is somewhat different from the combination held by the rest of society (Dempsey & Forst, 2016).

**Essential Element:**  Police culture emphasizes toughness, which influences interaction with the public.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is an additive to the discussion. to police culture or subculture. The police subculture, like many other subcultures, is marked by a sense of exclusivity, secrecy, and a tendency to separate from those outside the group. Police officers primarily interact with their colleagues during work hours and often socialize together even after work and on days off, sometimes at the expense of spending time with old friends and family. During their off-duty hours, officers often discuss work-related matters (Dempsey & Forst, 2016).

**Contextualization:** As state troopers in Maryland, we take pride in being known as "Maryland's Finest." This identity is instilled in us from the application process until retirement. Policing is not just a job; it is a calling for those motivated by the right reasons.

In the Maryland State Police, we highly value solidarity and brotherhood, which fosters strong camaraderie among troopers and creates a tight-knit community. However, this closeness can lead to insularity. An "us vs. them" mentality is common among police officers, often causing them to view the public as potential threats, especially after negative encounters. Additionally, some officers may strongly believe in using force to maintain control and enforce the law, raising important discussions about such actions' appropriateness and ethical implications.

Subcultures exist within the broader police culture, influenced by various factors such as specialized units (like SWAT, narcotics, and K9), geographical differences (urban vs. rural policing), and variations in rank and experience (troopers vs. officers). Given the stressful nature of police work, there can be a culture that stigmatizes mental health issues.

Understanding police culture and its subcultures is crucial for addressing concerns related to accountability, community relations, and the overall effectiveness of law enforcement agencies. Engaging in open dialogue and reform efforts can help bridge the gaps between police and the communities they serve.

**Source Seven:** McCarthy, M. M., Porter, L. E., Townsley, M., & Alpert, G. P. (2019). The effect of community-oriented policing on police use of force: does community matter? *Policing: An International Journal*, *42*(4), 556–570. https://doi.org/10.1108/pijpsm-10-2018-0148

**Comment 12:** The use of force by police has become an increasing focus of public concern.

**Comment 13:** Public outcry and civil unrest exacerbated tensions between police and minority communities in the USA

**Quote/Paraphrase:** The use of force by police has become an increasing focus of public concern following a series of officer-involved deaths of primarily African–American citizens in the USA in recent years. These events and the subsequent public outcry and civil unrest exacerbated tensions between police and minority communities in the USA. They created a crisis of trust for US police agencies in African American communities (McCarthy et al., 2019).

**Essential Element:** In its earliest incarnations, COP was explicitly designed to increase satisfaction with the police, rebuild legitimacy, reduce fear of crime, and forge better community relationships (McCarthy et al., 2019).

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is a variant of the discussion. In response, there were recommendations from both the President’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing and the IACP that police agencies re-commit efforts to build meaningful relationships with the community by adopting community-oriented policing (COP) approaches (McCarthy et al., 2019). The increased police engagement with the community is associated with the frequency of police use of force (McCarthy et al., 2019).

**Contextualization:** In certain instances, the heightened focus on conventional law enforcement duties may have eclipsed our resident trooper program's crucial community engagement element. This has resulted in a perception among the public that our troopers prioritized enforcement actions over nurturing meaningful relationships within the community. Overall, our resident trooper program had the potential to create a more collaborative and engaged relationship between law enforcement and the communities we serve, which can positively impact the frequency and nature of force used during police interactions. However, successful implementation requires commitment, training, and ongoing evaluation to ensure that the principles of community policing are effectively integrated into everyday law enforcement practices.

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