9-10-2021

U.S. policing as racialized violence and control: a qualitative assessment of black narratives from Ferguson, Missouri

Jason M. Williams
Montclair State University, williamsjas@montclair.edu

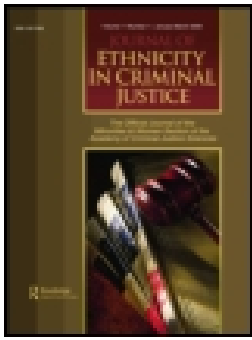# U.S. policing as racialized violence and control: a qualitative assessment of black narratives from Ferguson, Missouri

Jason M. Williams

Published online: 10 Sep 2021.

Submit your article to this journal

View related articles

View Crossmark data

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Check for updates

U.S. policing as racialized violence and control: a qualitative assessment of black narratives from Ferguson, Missouri

Jason M. Williams

Montclair State University, Montclair, NJ, USA

ABSTRACT

U.S. policing has long been captured within a master narrative of colorblind consensus; however, distinct lived experiences between community groups depict grave disparities in law enforcement experiences and perceptions. Orthodox conceptions of law enforcement ultimately silence marginalized voices disproportionately affected by negative contacts with law enforcement. Centering data in critical theory, this study will present thematic results from semi-interviews gathered in Ferguson, M.O., during a critical ethnographic research project. Themes reveal experiences and perceptions of racialized and violent policing, the unique position of Black officers, and regard for the impact police have on children. Results also help to foreground new epistemic frameworks for contextualizing U.S. policing along racial and geographic contours.

Introduction

U.S. policing has long been captured within a colorblind narrative that distorts the lived reality of many who are subjected to adverse effects of law enforcement administration. While U.S. citizens are indoctrinated to believe that governing institutions are impartial and theoretically equal, especially in the post-1960s and Obama eras, consistent expressions of resistance to the institution of policing affirm an oppositional reality. Policing, in particular, has continued, for the most part, to be that singular prong within the U.S. social control complex that has continued to affect the lives of the oppressed (Williams, 2017). Moreover, some have argued that the institution has meandered within the lives of the powerless precisely for expressed purposes of maintaining the status quo of white supremacy and caste (Tatum, 1994). According to a national poll, about 65% of Americans believe that law enforcement officers should be held civilly liable for their indiscretions and overuse of force (Pew Research

Center, 2020). The same poll indicated stark racial differences as well. For instance, nearly 85% of those identifying as Black adults believed that citizens should be able to sue law enforcement officers, "as do 75% Hispanics adults and 60% of white adults" (p. 1). This poll represents the rallying cry for change that has come about during the aftermath of what appeared to be ceremonious police-involved deaths and displays of excessive force around the nation.

However, for some citizens, civil liability may not be enough. Since the police-involved deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Toni McDade, and others, abolitionist affirmations around the reconfiguration of law enforcement have reemerged astoundingly (see Lartey & Griffin, 2020). Despite abolitionist calls, the Pew Research Center (2020) reported that over 70% of Americans believe that police agencies' expenditures should remain the same. Although Blacks were likely to favor cuts, close to half of those Blacks recorded in the poll noted that budgets should be reduced. Meanwhile, just over 20% of whites favored cutting police budgets. The poll indicated that age was a significant factor, underscoring that people under 50 years old were more likely to support defunding than those who were older. Lastly, "90% of the public favors a federal government database to track officers accused of misconduct" (p. 4).

Through the bifurcation of law enforcement administration and citizens' experiences, a keen comprehension of intersectional realities can be ascertained that readily exposes the foundational, theoretical indoctrinations that underlie and sustain contemporary policing against the voices of those whose very lives know better—victims of police brutality. Consistent deaths of Black Americans at the hands of law enforcement have cultivated mass movements across the U.S. and the world in hopes of ushering change in institutions charged with keeping the peace. Despite the outcries of Black Americans and their allies, substantial change has yet to materialize in ways that eradicate root causes of police brutality. Despite minimal changes in the administration of justice, the voices of those most affected by police murder and violence have not fully influenced changes being made by legislators.

The quantitative literature continues to report evident disparities regarding experiences and perceptions with the police based on race/ethnicity (Berg, Stewart, Intravia, Warren, & Simons, 2016; Decker, 1981; Epp, Maynard-Moody, & Haider-Markel, 2014; Gabbidon & Higgins, 2009; Graziano & Gauthier, 2019; Rice, Reitzel, & Piquero, 2005; Stewart, Baumer, Brunson, & Simons, 2009; Weitzer & Tuch, 2002). While those studies are crucial, we argue that it is the voices that are most important in both academic and political discourses. Some qualitative research has also reported unnerving findings regarding citizen perceptions and police

experiences (Brunson, 2007; Brunson & Miller, 2006a, 2006b; Brunson & Weitzer, 2009; Cobbina, Owusu-Bempah, & Bender, 2016; Gau & Brunson, 2010; Weitzer & Brunson, 2013). However, lacking throughout much of the literature (quantitative and qualitative) are assessments that contextualize Black American experiences within critical theory consistent with their historical and contemporary lived reality.

Thus, this article uses qualitative methodology to investigate the perceptions and experiences of Black American citizens' interactions with police in Ferguson, Missouri. Narratives were collected during the aftermath of the police-involved murder of Michael Brown. This article attempts to respond to arguments that criminological scholarship fails to capture the narrative of those affected by state violence fully by using analytical frameworks most appropriate for Black Americans navigating racialized policing. The colonial model is the chosen framework for this inquiry since it not only responds intricately to the Black American condition, but it does so in ways that build on a genealogy of critical theory developed by Black radical scholars. Using critical theories developed by Black scholars to unpack Black American narratives, we argue, is most epistemically ethical and suitable for the current study.

Theoretical framework: the colonial model

The colonial model has been an underused framework within criminal justice and criminological contexts, although it has been around for some time. For purposes of the current study, we rely on Staples' (1975) and Tatum's (1994) depiction of this model concerning race and policing.

Staples (1975) largely contextualized the colonial model as a framework within which Black Americans are continuously racially subjugated. He states:

> Race is a political identity because it defines the way in which an individual is to be treated by the political state and the conditions of one's oppression. It is cultural in the sense that white cultural values always have ascendancy over black cultural values, thus what is "good" or "bad," "criminal" or "legitimate" behavior is always defined in terms favorable to the ruling class. The result is that crime by blacks in America is structured by their relationship to the colonial structure, which is based on racial inequality and perpetuated by the political state (p. 14–15).

Thus, social control is a political mechanism by which racial groups are sorted—and minoritized people are beneath the majority group. This theory is similar to (and predates) Critical Race Theory (see, Bell, 1992; Crenshaw, Gotanda, Peller, & Thomas, 1995; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012), which unequivocally accepts white supremacy as foundational to the functionality

of American society and its institutions—especially those charged with governance.

The colonial model has roots in various critical works such as Fanon's (1961) seminal book, *The Wretched of the Earth*, Blauner's (1969) essay, *Internal Colonialism and Ghetto Revolt*, Cruse's (1968) essay, *Revolutionary Nationalism and the Afro-American,* and many other canonical works particularly during the Freedom Movement era—a time in which radical thought was sought and embraced. Nevertheless, these earlier works intricately helped to contextualize Black life in the U.S. under the confines of oppression and repression[1], particularly during a period of overt racialized uproar. These theoretical frameworks are also more ethically applicable to Blacks as a group, given their historical experiences along the socio-political continuum. Similarly, Staples (1975) contention is that one's lived experience largely marks colonialism through society's structural political machinery, which keeps the Black community "as an underdeveloped colony whose economics and politics are controlled by leaders of the racially dominant group" (p. 14).

In the current study, we analyze Black residents' narratives regarding their sense of position within the Ferguson, Missouri community following immense tension with the police after Michael Brown's death. Many of the Ferguson Resistance suppositions were grounded in longstanding perceptions of general governmental unfairness, neglect, and police misconduct (Boyles, 2019; Cobbina, 2019; Williams, 2017). Given the above reality in Ferguson, it becomes necessary to foreground our analysis within theoretical contours that pays close attention to the lived reality and perceptions of those whose narratives are being analyzed. Tatum (1994) lamented that police play an essential role in the degradation of Black citizens by upholding the status quo of white supremacy. For instance, she writes, "the police…maintain frequent and direct contact with the native. Their role in the colonial social system is to put oppression and domination into practice" (as noted in, Gabbidon, Greene, & Young, 2002, p. 311). Tatum (1994) argued that police engage in these processes knowingly; therefore, implying that law enforcement should not be given the benefit of events like Ferguson. Tatum's suppositions are in agreement with a host of viewpoints that are covered in the next section.

Policing as racialized social control

Lawrence-McIntyre (1992) purported that policing misconduct is part and parcel of a two-tiered social control system. She argued that it was through a process of criminalizing Black Americans that wider white society, and thus the system was able to effectuate its harsh mistreatment of Blacks.

In the aftermath of slavery, she explains, policing became a distinct institution of social control that sought to maintain the status quo, as well as an impetus for utter revenge at the behest of whites who were upset at newfound Black freedoms.

Moreover, Balbus (1973) defined the criminal legal system as a program of legal repression. He also redefined the "riots" of the earlier Twentieth Century as revolts. In doing so, he charts those revolts that occurred primarily in Los Angeles, Detroit, and Chicago, painstakingly through a racial-structural lens—essentially arguing that these revolts set the impetus for a racially charged social control mechanism via the courts that played a significant role in instituting repression. For example, many demonstrators, now known as political prisoners (see, James, 2003), were summarily sought and charged by the judicial system for engaging in the fight for Black liberation. It should be noted that these demonstrators under the U.S. Constitution should have had the right to engage in protest. However, Balbus (1973), with surgical precision, unpacks what he terms as the *dialectics of legal repression* to show how revolutionaries were essentially punished as examples to others who would want to follow, but also how these targeted prosecutions served the purpose of upholding white supremacy and the current social order. Policing was a principal in this new age formation of social control.

Issues surrounding policing today stem from the early 1990s, primarily with the Rodney King incident. He was beaten in 1991 by the Los Angeles Police Department after a rapid chase, under the suspicion of being under the influence of a controlled substance. Following the stop, King was summarily beaten, and the footage recorded by George Holliday (a passerby) was depicted on news screens across the globe. Although his initial charge was dropped, the officers involved in the beating were eventually charged for excessive force. At the state level, the officers were acquitted, yet two were convicted and imprisoned following a federal probe into the violation of King's civil rights. King also won a civil court judgment for punitive damages resulting in 3.8 million dollars (Mydans, 1994). The reaction to the first trial caused a major uprising in Los Angeles that resulted in a robust racial outbreak.

While the acquittal in the Zimmerman trial gave birth to Black Lives Matter (BLM), this case was different because unlike state-sanctioned murder, Trayvon Martin (Zimmerman's victim) was murdered in a vigilante fashion. Furthermore, Eric Garner, Sandra Bland, and many other Black Americans who were murdered by police (or state-agents) helped build the momentum that would catapult social movements around Black liberation and freedom into high-speed. While BLM came about during the aftermath of the Zimmerman acquittal, Michael Brown's death at the hands of Officer Darren Wilson in Ferguson, Missouri, engraved BLM as an

organization in homes around the world (Nummi, Jennings, & Feagin, 2019). BLM has called attention to anti-Black state-sanctioned violence and has done so in ways that are hugely intersectional and deeply radical, unlike past movements (Fleming & Morris, 2015; Nummi et al., 2019). While BLM certainly has similarities to former civil rights efforts, activists operating within and around BLM benefit from many technological advents today that helps to bolster their message and reach, such that change can be made (Fleming & Morris, 2015).

The suppositions made by activists today are well documented by empirical research. One such area of corroboration is ecological studies in policing (Klinger, 1997). Building from foundational arguments of police behavior in ecological explanations, research has shown that police malpractice is racially distributed (Mastrofski, Reisig, & McCluskey, 2002). Moreover, ecological contexts also underscore the importance of disaggregating geographies of policing and race (Boyles, 2015, 2019), as geography can often serve as a proxy for other social identifiers (i.e., race, class, etc.). Boyles (2015) underscores the core importance of intersectionalizing geographic terrains such as the suburban against the "expected Black urban space." In her study, she depicts strenuous accounts of police misconduct from participants in suburban Ferguson, Missouri, and provides a counter-canvas from which to compare urban policing and Blacks. Also, the Investigation of the Ferguson Police Department further unearthed a pattern and practice of pervasive racial discrimination and repression in the suburban town that subjected Black residents to mere caste (Department of Justice (DOJ), 2015; Williams, 2017). In fact, Black residents experienced much of the same kind of surveillance and social control tactics as those in urban districts (Fagan & Davies, 2000; Hurst & Frank, 2000). Therefore, critical ecological understandings of policing illuminate contemporary racial discourses of police misconduct and racialized social control.

Through the conflation of geographies of policing—with race as a proxy, the symbolic assailant became a mainstay within law enforcement administration. Skolnick (2011) developed the term symbolic assailant, who purported that the assailant represents the quintessential enemy to law enforcement. The archetype assailant is primarily based on stereotypical depictions of "criminals" officers have observed on patrol and those whom they have come to associate with danger and criminality: Black men. This terminology was further explored by Black criminologists who sought to contextualize the term in contemporary discourses of racialized policing (see, Jones-Brown, 2007; Russell-Brown, 2008). Brunson and Miller (2006a) conducted qualitative research using in-depth interviews with 40 participants from an oppressed neighborhood. They found that, for the most part, the young men in the study believed themselves to be symbolic

assailants. Their sense of self was, in large part, based on their interaction with police. Thus, their interfacing with police played a direct role in how they depicted themselves within the eyes of the law. The authors conclude that the overarching impact of continuous negative interactions with police must be taken to account if procedural justice is to be achieved. Their research and suggestions corroborate neighboring research around Black citizens and community policing relations, which suggest that lived experiences and perception of fairness must be foregrounded (Brandl, Stroshine, & Frank, 2001; Phillips & Bowling, 2003; Williams, 2019).

Qualitative research has underscored the importance of nominating people's lived experiences as viable sources of knowledge around policing. The argument to foreground qualitative research is particularly keen given the historical positionality of law enforcement as a counter to Black liberty and freedom in the U.S. (Balbus, 1973; Civil Rights Congress, 1952; Lawrence-McIntyre, 1992). While quantitative analyses serve as significant sources of impact and provide the frequency with which racialized policing is executed, qualitative research unearths the human component, which is sorely missing within policing literature. Similar to the study mentioned above, Brunson and Miller (2006b) conducted another qualitative inquiry into Black citizens' experiences and perceptions with police, and this time they foreground gender differences. While most accounts pointed to police violence against young Black men, they found that Black women often felt under-protected by police, particularly in instances when they needed intervention regarding sexual assault. In cases when respondents were appropriately inquiring from police, they experienced excessive force, arrest, or received no information at all. Collectively, these experiences are congruent with arguments mentioned in the theoretical framework that describe the Black condition as one consistent with colonization.

Cobbina et al. (2016) conducted qualitative research in Ferguson, Missouri, focusing on perceptions of race, crime, and policing among protesters. They found that nearly 60% of respondents believed that police viewed Blacks as criminals—a remark consistent with the symbolic assailant concept. Participants noted reasons were grounded in stereotypical logics that constructs Blackness and Black space as criminal-prone because of expected social disorganization and lack of education (among others). Some participants noted that slavery was a core factor for the divergent kinds of policing Blacks experienced in Ferguson. Meanwhile, others simply believed that police were genuinely afraid of Black residents and viewed them as threats. These perceptions are consistent with Lawrence-McIntyre (1992) thesis around the criminalization of Blackness as a precursor for the destruction of Black bodies and geographies via systems of social control like that of policing.

Methods

While the researcher was employed at another institution (Fairleigh Dickinson University) at the start of data collection, we submitted the protocol to Montclair State University's Institutional Review Board in August 2016 for subsequent approval (IRB-FY16-17-329).

Research question

This study sought to investigate lived experiences and perceptions regarding police interactions with Black Americans living in Ferguson Missouri during the aftermath of Michael Brown's death. More specifically, we wanted to know the details around participants' experiences, their perceptions of those experiences, and any relevant ensuing remarks that would naturally come from the semi-structured interviewing process. Semi-structured interviewing allows for a free-flowing conversation between the participant and the researcher (Bhattacharya, 2017), thus breaking down traditional hierarchies of power dynamics inherent in field research. This modality often caused us to stray away from certain questions as the participant took control over the conversation (albeit while still responding to our general inquiries).

Study setting

Narratives from this study are the result of critical ethnographic research in Ferguson, Missouri. This research began during the aftermath of the police-involved shooting of Michael Brown. The researcher made several trips to Ferguson starting in the fall of 2014. During these trips, the researcher engaged in participant observation while also collecting narratives via semi-structured interviews with Black American adult community members. Some participant observation examples included attending demonstrations, organizing meetings, and other activities congruent with boots-on-the-ground oriented research.

According to 2019 figures, Blacks account for nearly 70% of Ferguson, Missouri's population (U.S. Census, 2020). Meanwhile, whites account for about 24% of those residing in Ferguson (U.S. Census, 2020). Just over half of residents owned their homes from 2014 to 2018, while the median gross rent was $900.00 (U.S. Census, 2020). While close to 90% of residents graduate from high school, just under 20% enter post-secondary education (U.S. Census, 2020). Moreover, poverty affects 20% of the population, as the per capita income rests at $21,000, and the median household income is an estimated 41,600[2](U.S. Census, 2020). People without health insurance represent 12% of the population (U.S. Census, 2020).

In 2015, the Department of Justice released a report detailing its investigation into the Ferguson Police Department (DOJ, 2015) after the police-involved murder of Michael Brown, which created a revolt captured across the world. Primarily Black residents were horrified that their quest for justice had been sabotaged by the system, as Officer Darren Wilson failed to be indicted. Wilson's non-indictment precipitated massive protest from residents who sought to partake in their First Amendment rights, resulting in multiple clashes with police immediately after the grand jury decision. The anniversary of Brown's death would often reignite revolts as emotions about the non-indictment would often enflame feelings of injustice.

Nevertheless, the Department of Justice's report (DOJ, 2015) detailed a series of longstanding unlawful practices that disproportionately affected Black American residents. For instance, the weaponization of courts to induce additional harms onto Ferguson's most desperate and poverty-stricken citizens (DOJ, 2015). They noted how law enforcement acted as a revenue-generating machine to the detriment of public safety, thus further decimating trust between police and the community (DOJ, 2015). These examples and more, they concluded, resulted in the wholesale violation of several Constitutional rights granted to the residents of Ferguson. The report also mentioned that many of these gross infractions were avoidable. The current study is grounded in the above setting.

Participants

The sample (n = 10) consists of four Black women and six Black men. Most have lived in Ferguson, Missouri, for over five years, while one participant has resided there her entire life (27 years). Only two participants lived there for under five years. The majority of them are parents (7), ranging from having 2–4 children. Also, each was single except for one participant who was engaged. Ages ranged from the early twenties up to sixty years-old.

Procedures

The current study consists of narratives drawn from critical ethnographic research. The study took place over a series of trips to Ferguson, Missouri starting in fall 2014. Critical ethnographic research typically consists of mixed qualitative methodologies that are ideologically consistent with the issue under investigation (Bhattacharya, 2017). Critical ethnography is fully inclusive to the standpoint epistemologies of participants' lived realities, perspectives, and expectations during the research process. Under this

framework, respondents are collaborators in the knowledge production process—their expressions are viable units of data (Haraway, 1988; Harding, 1991; Hill Collins, 2013; Smith, 1990). More importantly, such methodologies are accountable to ideological undercurrents that govern the sociological setting under analysis (Bhattacharya, 2017). For example, this research sought to investigate the phenomenon of police interactions with Black American residents in Ferguson, Missouri—but through the residents' vantage point. The study also took place during the aftermath of the police-involved shooting of Michael Brown, a Black male resident of said town. Therefore, utilizing critical ethnography was a fundamental all-encompassing methodology that allowed the researcher to engage various qualitative tools that genuinely and unapologetically foregrounded participants' lived experiences.

One such tool was the use of semi-structured interviews. Interviewees were recruited during demonstrations and ethnographic canvasing of the community. The study relied mostly on snowball sampling, since the targeted population is a hard-to-reach group (Bhattacharya, 2017). Upon starting audio-recorded interviews, informed consent was established, and participants were ensured that they could stop the interview if they should become uncomfortable. Respondents earned $10.00 for their engagement after the interview. Interviews lasted 25 min on average. Through the collection of interviews, the researcher developed a holistic phenomenological inference around participants' experiences and perceptions with police in Ferguson (Saldana, 2014). Also, interviews allowed for additional triangulation avenues with other qualitative data collection methods such as participant observation, photos, archival sources, etc. (Bhattacharya, 2017).

Participant observation was another method utilized, which allowed the researcher to become immersed within the phenomenon of community and police relations. The study took place during the aftermath of Michael Brown's death and various hostile demonstrations between the community and police. Participant observation provides yet another window through which to observe and experience participants' culture and lived experiences (Saldana, 2014). Various memos, photos, and recordings were taken as additional datasets during these moments. Moreover, the researcher's positionality as a Black American male helped establish further rapport during all the research process stages. Rapport building is an essential and necessary process in qualitative research (Prior, 2018). Rapport building is especially crucial with research around hard-to-reach populations (Bhattacharya, 2017). Consistent with the tradition of critical ethnography, the researcher's lived knowledges around the Black experience and history played an essential role in navigating the research site, understanding cultural cues, and deciphering narratives, gestures, and expressions. Thus,

the researcher's role as a conscious actor during data collection helped improve the accuracy of said data by establishing unfiltered trust with interviewees and the surrounding community.

Analysis

We utilized MAXQDA for data analysis. Transcripts were entered into the program and scanned for repetition as typical in phenomenological assessments (Saldana, 2014). First, the researcher engaged open coding, which allowed for the initial comprehension of interview data (Saldana, 2014). Open coding allowed for the building of initial themes. Next, axial coding helped develop broader categories into which the open coding could fit (Bhattacharya, 2017). Axial coding provided an impetus to establish patterned concepts, and understandings of those patterns began to emerge from the interview data through several rounds of coding. Both processes were vital because they allowed the researcher to thoroughly comb through the data such that repetition in patterns can be achieved. To build rigor, interview data were triangulated against other relevant collected data sources, primarily participant observation notes, memos, and photos. This allowed the researcher to control for a level of qualitative validity (Saldana, 2014). Once patterns began to develop, they were narrowed down to specific themes for presentation in this article.

In alignment with critical ethnography, this study reports emerged patterns within a theoretical framework (the colonial model) that is epistemically ethical and appropriate for the issue under investigation. Thus, below, we provide results on the three most relevant emerging themes from the study: *the police, tolerating community violence, and the children.*

Results

The themes below depicted a recurring theme of colonial control and racialized policing in Ferguson, Missouri. While Michael Brown's death facilitated tremendous pushback from community members, the narratives below show that these issues were long occurring before Brown was shot. Below we share various accounts that capture Black community members' lived experiences and perceptions from Ferguson, Missouri, as they interface with their police department.

The police

Consistent with policing's ecological theories and the symbolic assailant, as noted above, many respondents purported feeling hunted by police.

Ecological policing has often institutionalized stereotypical and racist practices in law enforcement (Mastrofski et al., 2002), leading to severe malpractice (DOJ, 2015). For instance, Cephas, 60, talked about how he avoids police precisely because of the profiling he has experienced, *"I don't have any felonies or warrants, but when they stop you that's what they're looking for, you know. But like I said, in some situations, you just gotta know that you can't win with them, so you gotta avoid them."* At 60 years old, Cephas talked about the various bouts he has had with police over the years, even recalling some of the more overt forms of racist policing he witnessed as a youth. Yet, he laments, *"the kids today have it much worse than we did. Police today are far more racist from what I can see."* Interestingly enough, as an elder, Cephas did not seem to believe that advancements in civil rights have been sufficient to suffice true freedom for Black Americans. Again, recalling how youth today have it worse than his generation, alongside other chronic unemployment, tolerated poor-performing schools, and other social issues, he seemed to believe that Blacks in his community existed within a reality intentionally built for repression. According to Tatum's (1994) conception of colonial policing, law enforcement would play a key role in instituting repression—which goes in hand with Cephas' expressions about his community.

Others readily agreed with Cephas. Tyrone, 29, lamented, *"this shit's been going on for how many years now? Since we [Blacks] came over here on ships."* While Tyrone's sentiments are more pessimistic, he firmly believed that his feelings were grounded in historical fact, as he did not think the system was capable of helping his community. Tyrone said of the system, *"fuck them, I don't care about nobody in the judicial system because they don't give a fuck about us. It's about their money and hanging us."* Bennie, 23, revealed multiple stories about the harassment he has experienced at the police's hands. He says that he no longer feels comfortable calling on them for help. Bennie shared, *"so when I see a cop ride pass, I look at them like, okay, if you have the opportunity, you're gonna hit me or look for a reason to charge me. That's how I feel about them."* Their cumulative negative experiences underscored many participants' pessimism about police in Ferguson.

Consistent with the colonial model, colonizing people includes installing hopelessness and helplessness upon them—and respondents summarily showed signs of both. For instance, Dominique, 18, who had been active in the demonstrations, feared that police were not paying attention:

> *It's [protests] not going to make a difference. It is not because the police are not listening to anything we have to say, because if they were, they would have given us our justice. But that's the point, we over here talking to them, and they don't care. That's what the people don't understand; the police do not care what we're saying.*

Dominque was deeply committed to her perception that police were not listening: *"They [police] keep on killing little kids, we're going to keep on talking, and we're going to keep on acting a 'fool.' If you keep on killing, we're going to keep on doing what we do."* Despite some participant's sense of hopelessness and helplessness, they believed all they had was their voice.

All participants noted blatant negative interactions with police, and each believed that policing in Ferguson was mostly motivated by race. Tyesha, 20, had experienced gender-based profiling where she felt police had sexually harassed she and her friends after stopping them and letting them go without incident. She shared, *"we were walking down the street, and they asked us to get on the wall, they flashed the lights on our backside then asked us to turn around and show our hands. One of my girls was pregnant, too, no respect for her. It just felt weird like they were undressing us or something."* She also believed the issue of racial profiling in Ferguson was most explicit on young Black men, noting an incident with her brother:

> *People get pulled over for nothing here. It happened to me, but it happens all the time to my brother. My brother is a Black man, and he has dreds. They pulled him over, claiming he didn't signal, but he did. I saw him do it.*

They overwhelmingly reported that police openly used racial epithets. For instance, Dominique recalled an incident during a protest, *"they were calling us niggers, knowing we couldn't do anything 'cause they got the shield, and they have guns, tear gas, and all that stuff. We couldn't do anything but cuss them out."* Mark, 32, corroborates, with his testimony, *"…you can't walk down the street when police pull up and fucking with you for no reason and all that bullshit."* While residents report typical harassment from law enforcement, *"all that bullshit,"* as Mark describes, materializes as extra-legal harassment[3], such as verbal assault and other indignities that serves to dehumanize their personhood and sense of freedom. Interviewees report that this added harassment enflames the negative perception and feeling of their interactions with police.

Taking the colonial models to account, participants' experiences with police provide credence for many of the arguments made by earlier theorists on the colonial model (Tatum, 1994; Staples, 1975). Moreover, their feelings of not having control over their bodies and not having freedom of movement is crucial toward understanding the association of their narratives alongside the colonial model. They note actively avoiding the police simply because they do not believe the police are there to protect them but rather to harm them—an argument made in Tatum's (1994) framing of law enforcement's function on oppressed people. Moreover, through the above narratives a gendered distinction is made visible, which is consistent with historical practices of colonization, particularly as a

means of installing more hopelessness and helplessness among targeted groups (Collins, 2002; Cruse, 1968; Davis, 2011).

Black police officers

Furthermore, a clear majority of subjects expressed clear condemnation of Black police officers. Generally, they believed that Black officers are acculturated into the system and would not step up to protect Blacks or enforce the law equally because their foremost goal is to impress white officers and the broader system of white supremacy. For instance, Jennifer, 53, noted differential treatment between a few white officers who were with a sole Black colleague:

> *I think the Black one was trying to impress them [white officers]. Because they [white officers] treated me like I'm an older woman, you know, but he [Black officer] didn't, and I believe that was a show-off moment for him. So, I gave most of it back. When you know better, you do better.*

Being an elder, Jennifer expressed discontent with the sole Black officer, who seemed unable to show her a level of respect consistent with her age. Meanwhile, his white colleagues were able to materialize respect. As a result, she chastised him without incident. Bennie said, *"I feel as if they're under a leash…there's only so much that a Black officer can say and do, you know?"*

A single participant, Tyesha, noted that she did not have direct issues with Black officers, yet she still had concerns: *"I don't really have any problems with the Black cops. But I still don't like cops, period. I'm not a racist at all. So, it doesn't matter about their color. If you wear a badge, I don't like you."* She furthered lamented, *"They [Black officers] represent the system, too…they are allowing it, so it has nothing to do with color to me."* Residents were not bought by diversity and inclusion discourses in law enforcement. For example, Tyrone uttered, *"just 'cause you hire a couple of Black cops and a police chief, he still gotta do what the fuck they all say. He's a puppet."* Johnny agrees, *"they [Black officers] just run with the system. Period."*

Under the system of slavery (America's first system of policing), enslaved Blacks often served as overseers which resulted in status gains (Wiethoff, 2006). Moreover, media reports consistently depict misconduct in majority Black police agencies that oversee Black communities (Lussenhop, 2018). The narratives above show how Blacks can be tools of colonial policing. More important, Black Americans, who are living under differential racialized policing, are depicting Black officers as part of the very system that their Blackness is supposed to neutralize. Residents did not seem to buy the hiring of BIPOC officers as a remedy, as they see the entire institution

of policing as illegitimate. Yet, this depiction has much to do with their experiences of policing under a colonial model, which also includes Black officers.

Tolerating community violence

Colonial frameworks predict extreme disarray within colonized communities. Such disorganization may include intra-community and racial violence along with other behaviors that are perceived as self-sabotaging impediments. These displays of violence and broader "anti-social" behavior further underscore stereotypical archetypes of people living in these communities. Some forms of policing practices, including community policing, intelligence-led policing, and others are likely to be instituted. Such depictions are byproducts of grander structural barriers and racisms bestowed onto marginalized geographies, however. Incidentally, these factors are often left out of discourses that attempt to theorize on the development of "anti-social" behavior in historically oppressed and repressed communities.

Interviewees recalled concurrently witnessing violence in the community and inaction from the police. Johnny, 27, spoke about a shootout that happened in which two opposing sides were on the attack near innocent bystanders, yet the police sat back and did not intervene:

> Well, to me, I think they're [police] real crooked. The system allows racism. Like the shooting I spoke about, the police let that go on. Them dudes shot over fifty rounds, and they were running back and forth while innocent people, including kids, were in the way. The cops ain't do shit but sit on the side. They don't give a fuck about the violence either.

Three additional people witnessed and spoke about the above incident, corroborating Johnny's testimony.

In addition to witnessing the above incident, Tyrone accented that, *"gun battles—all this shit is nothing, I'm used to it now."* Some participants exhibited signs of desensitization to violence and other oppression-induced-community abnormalities, all of which are symptoms of colonization that can manifest mental illness. Additionally, Cephas added, *"you gotta grow up fast out here. You get hip to the game early."* They spoke to their community's positionality as ripe for crime precisely due to the sustained lack of resources and political power. Travis, 29, points to structural economic inequality: "*We're going to need more jobs, more hiring, so people are not just sitting around every day. Otherwise, negativity is going to catch on.*"

According to some respondents, when police take action against violence, they are often aggressive, and victims are treated like culprits. Dominique

recalled an incident in which a man was shot by an assailant and yet approached by the police as a criminal:

> *So, the police ran over there and was trying to beat on the boy because he was still walking. I guess they thought he was running from the police. I ran over there and was like, 'No, no no, he's been shot!' They threw him down, dragged him by the thread, going toward this dumpster. I was fuming like, 'Y'all gonna throw his body in the dumpster?" They proceeded to put cuffs on him, and all I could see was his crazy breathing and blinking eyes. I was so scared for the boy, he needed help and they cuffing him, why?!*

A majority of participants spoke about intra-racial violence in the community. They mostly believed that such violence was the result of community disarray and political abandonment. Dominque also believed that Black-on-Black violence served a discursive purpose of legitimating institutional anti-Black violence:

> *Black people fighting Black people is bad because all that does is make the police laugh. Last night there were so many kids fighting each other, and the police was just laughing. That's what they like to see. They like to see us not getting along with each other; they're trying to break us. That's the whole problem.*

They believed that intra-community violence sent messages to the broader public that residents did not care about each other. Counter to mainstream anti-Black narratives, there was a resounding condemnation of violence within the Ferguson community. Dominque opined, *"we're not supposed to give the police a show…or they [the police] will then say, 'we can take them one by one.'"*

Some believed it to be an uphill battle fighting the violence within the community concurrently with the state-sanctioned variety. However, a few subjects explained community-based violence within colonial frameworks, fully understanding how each feeds off the other. Under a colonial model of governance, it benefits the dominate group tremendously to position its subordinate as viciously dangerous and helplessly untamable. For African Americans, this has been the label since slavery—and it was supercharged during Radical Reconstruction with the use of racially designed draconian laws that helped to mass incarcerate African Americans. In the contemporary context, such labels or tropes serve a distinct purpose in legitimating colonized geographies such that the deaths that occur therein are easily diminished and forgotten. Meanwhile, all activity within such spaces are the result of how the people within interface with mainstream society—whether it be through the lack of resources, political abandonment, or other structural/institutional influences. The ability for dominate society to be cleared from its culpability of the conditions in colonized geographies is not by mistake. Ideologies of personal responsibility and hyper-individualism are at the

foundation of the ideological positioning that is required for maintaining internal colonies (Staples, 1975; Cruse, 1968) in pluralistic societies in which all are said to have equal opportunity to aspire.

The children

Participants provided narratives about the impact community violence and policing had on the children of Ferguson. Additionally, they also offered advice for children that they believed would shield them from the pain that they have experienced.

They noted lots of trauma with community children. For instance, Brown's death brought about shockwaves of fear, especially with Black youth, according to respondents. Meanwhile, some say they wish reality were different. For instance, Tyesha said, *"I have a four-year-old daughter. I don't want my daughter to think that the police is not good because one day she might need the police."* But Cindy, 27, adds, *"It's sad they're growing up not to trust cops."* Meanwhile, Dominique has witnessed youth having hostile altercations with police:

> *I've seen kids at ten-years-old, cussing out police after they've been in their face. The kids are mad too. But that's the problem; the cops don't understand. These kids [Black youth] just saw someone like them get killed, and they don't want to be killed either. The cops should back away.*

Tyrone spoke about his childhood contextualizing how hard it was to reconcile living as a Black youth in a racist society. Tyrone believed this experience caused him severe mental distress, saying, *"it's growing up in a society that you feel don't give a fuck about you."* Many were afraid for today's Black youth because they believed they lacked guidance and a sense of pride. These sentiments, in many ways, tie back to the colonial model because respondents note the distinct reality Black children face in their community. Such feelings should be not be normal for anyone growing up in a society where everyone is treated equal. Yet, these participants inhabit particular space and racial categories that puts them at risk of harboring such experiences.

Regarding advice, they overwhelmingly encouraged Black youth to remain in school. Education was offered as a quintessential equalizer and protector. Some believed it best for children to leave the community, too. For instance, Tyrone uttered:

> *Love school, get a job, get the fuck away from here. Know that these people here don't look out for you. These people don't give a fuck about you. They want you to kill each other. They want a genocide. They want us to slaughter each other off. Don't give them what they want.*

Dominique added, *"don't do drugs, don't act bad, and don't do anything illegal. Just stay a child as long as you can."* Lastly, many believed that children needed a sense of pride in their heritage because knowing themselves can bring about encouragement and determination. For instance, Tyrone concluded, *"this is our city. This is our country. We are the backbone of this country—and they know that. But as long as they feel like they can brainwash us and keep us against each other, we'll always be in the dark. It's time to wake up!"* Because interviewees felt political figures largely abandoned them, advice to children were often hyper-individualized and slightly pivoted against reliance on the state. Such advice illuminates the extent to which Black youth in such locales are neglected by the state and are socialized to become desensitized to said neglect. For some, this unusual reaction to state neglect can be a form of motivation, whereas, for others, it can induce mental illness. Overall, the uncertain and disoriented advice is on part with operating under the colonial model.

Discussion

This article contextualizes Black American residents' experiences and perceptions in Ferguson, Missouri, with police. The colonial model serves as a most applicable framework through which to contextualize the provided narratives fully. For instance, Staples (1975) contended that under the colonial model, Black Americans are continuously subjugated under a system of colonization. Meanwhile, Tatum (1994) purported that the police act as a sustaining force of oppression and repression such that their activities are equivalent to colonization. Moreover, Tatum argues that institutional policing actively serves in a support capacity to the color caste system. Thus, given these core tenets, Black Americans face a peculiar kind of social control and policing—one that is particularly cruel and racialized. Extenuating circumstances also color these forms of control within the broader social structure.

Regarding participants' experiences with police, results depict damning corroboration with the colonial model. Residents mostly believed that they were abandoned by political figures and the system writ large. Police served an illustrative purpose of keeping them in place and subjecting them to harm. The use of extra-legal harassment by officers enflamed their sense of detachment and dehumanization. There was a strong sense that policing today is far more problematic from the elders and underscored by deeply entrenched institutional inequities. Such perceptions are congruent with the colonial model, as colonized geographies are often minimized to mere nonexistence, and residents are offered below minimum services via the social safety net. Blacks in Ferguson are inundated in

chronic unemployment, poor-performing schools (Hannah-Jones, 2014; Kneebone, 2014), and other social abnormalities that hinder them from participating productively in society. Consequently, these manufactured impediments result in Black residents lacking political will and power to change their reality and reach self-determination. Within colonial contexts such as Black Ferguson, community efficacy is obliterated before it has even begun through the installation of institutional hopelessness and helplessness.

Moreover, when social institutions fail within oppressed and repressed Black communities, law enforcement is often deployed as a mechanism of social control to upkeep the status quo (Lawrence-McIntyre, 1992; Tatum, 1994). Through this lens, the colonial model reigns supreme insofar that Blacks are conceived as out-of-control captives in need of taming. Through the ecological model of policing, such communities are viewed as open-air prisons, and they are likewise experienced that way by residents. Recall some of the narratives provided by subjects that underscored the desensitization to violence which is equivalent to that which one would experience in traditional prisons (see Boxer, Middlemass, & Delorenzo, 2009). The cultivation and proliferation of mental illness become a real prospect for many living in such spaces, starting during youth, as noted by Tyrone.

Also, gender-based differences were clearly articulated by interviewees. Women noted a lack of respect for their bodies and their age. During slavery, Reconstruction, and Jim Crow, Black women were routinely treated like inanimate objects, without the capacity of receiving genuine justice in the judicial system. Interviewees note a qualitatively similar experience to their ancestors, who lived through the terror of those past eras. Thus, consciousness around how officers deploy customer service matters and their interaction with citizens should be intersectionally purposeful. Procedural justice was a constant theme in this study, and from the vantage point of those interviewed, it was lacking. Yet, procedural justice, from a colonial model perspective, would be lacking; its absence is intentional, as those living within such a model are merely enemy combatants.

The toleration of violence within the community painted a depressing daily reality for participants. As many of them noted, grander structural inequities largely foregrounded daily setbacks for community members. They understood that chronic unemployment and overall institutional neglect created an atmosphere of hopelessness, helplessness, and criminality that legitimated racialized policing. Living in such a state is the hallmark of living under colonial rule, as it induces an anomic state from which the target cannot escape. Moreover, feelings of pride are nonexistent, and people begin to lose attachment to their neighborhood, as shame becomes the norm and the program under which people operate. This is realized

through the narratives that underscored advice to youth. Some believed that kids would do well to leave Ferguson. The current trend of people leaving such areas makes it easier for gentrification efforts to settle in as remaining residents find it hard to fight outsiders encroaching on their turf. Nevertheless, narratives around crime and overall community decay drive both gentrification and the navigation of educated people outside these communities.

Respondents gave credence to underscoring the geographies of policing and race (Boyles, 2015). While Ferguson, Missouri is categorized as a suburb, Black residents live as if they exist in the inner city. Thus, the concentric zone conception of social disorganization does not seem to suffice for Ferguson's underprivileged. In fact, Blackness is most salient and continues to be a master status under which participants are mistreated and presumed criminal. Anderson (2011) argued that the modern-day color-line question revolves around the never-ending association of the ghetto with Blackness of all kinds—and, therefore, the assumption that all Blacks carry with them the stereotypical baggage of the ghetto. Those in this study encapsulated the sentiments of Anderson's supposition. They firmly believed that race played an overarching lead in how police patrolled their community and how resources were distributed. Importantly, they also did not trust Black officers, primarily based on negative experiences. They saw Black officers as a part of the system and, therefore, against the community.

However, the study is not without limitations. For instance, its small sample size is consistent with the nature of qualitative inquiry, which focuses on micro context and thick description of social issues (Bhattacharya, 2017). Unlike quantitative analysis, this study does not use a representative analysis of the wider Black community in Ferguson Missouri, which would have provided a more holistic depiction. Therefore, results from this study cannot be generalized, as the data collected is limited to those who self-selected themselves into the study.

Nevertheless, results corroborate many findings noted in the Investigation of the Ferguson Police Department report (DOJ, 2015). The report revealed a pattern and practice of pervasive racialized policing that amounted to extreme Constitutional violations that disproportionately affected Black residents. The fact that these residents had to live in such a harsh, racist reality for so long begs the question as to why such differential treatment was allowed and tolerated for long and why it took a police-involved murder to uncover such egregious practices. The triangulation of the Department of Justice findings alongside narratives from this study shows that the colonial model may be the most appropriate and epistemically ethical framework for analyzing policing in Black communities. Yet, the

focus must not be on policing solely. Structural inequities inclusive to the entirety of the community's lived experiences must be triangulated into the discourses if Black people's truth is ever to be fully comprehended and policing decolonized.

Notes

1. Oppression is used to underscore attention given to the prolonged maltreatment and subjugation of African Americans as a matter of policy and custom. Whereas repression is used to make clear how even during the aftermath of groundbreaking policies such as the Civil Rights Acts of the 60s, there are still attempts at stifling the economic and socio-political upward mobility of African Americans. Thus, repression acts as a mechanism of holding subordinate groups in their place.
2. Each in 2018 dollars and ranging from 2014 to 2018.
3. We define extra-legal harassment as those forms of harassment and violence experienced or perceived by community members that fall outside the boundaries of legally defined and physical duties of law enforcement. Examples are but not limited to the use of, racial epithets, uncomfortable gestures, and overall disrespectful disposition. BIPOCs are typically the victims of such experiences with law enforcement and the broader judicial system.

Notes on contributor

Jason M. Williams is an associate professor in the Department of Justice Studies, Montclair State University. His areas of expertise include race and justice, social control, policing and punishment. He also focuses on the sociology of criminological knowledge.

ORCID

Jason M. Williams http://orcid.org/0000-0003-4663-8993

References

Anderson, E. (2011). *The cosmopolitan canopy: Race and civility in everyday life*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.

Balbus, I. D. (1973). *The dialectics of legal repression: Black rebels before the American Criminal Courts*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Bell, D. (1992). *Faces At The Bottom Of The Well: The Permanence Of Racism*. New York: Basic Books.

Berg, M. T., Stewart, E. A., Intravia, J., Warren, P. Y., & Simons, R. L. (2016). Cynical streets: Neighborhood social processes and perceptions of criminal injustice. *Criminology*, *54*(3), 520–547. doi:10.1111/1745-9125.12113

Bhattacharya, K. (2017). *Fundamentals of qualitative research: A practical guide*. New York: Routledge.

Boxer, P., Middlemass, K., & Delorenzo, T. (2009). Exposure to violent crime during incarceration: Effects on psychological adjustment following release. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, *36*(8), 793–807. doi:10.1177/0093854809336453

Boyles, A. S. (2015). *Race, place, and suburban policing: Too close for comfort*. Berkely: University of California Press.

Boyles, A. S. (2019). *You can't stop the revolution: Community disorder and social ties in post-Ferguson America*. Berkely: University of California Press.

Brandl, S., Stroshine, M., & Frank, J. (2001). Who are the complaint-prone officers?: An examination of the relationship between police officers' attributes, arrest activity, assignment, and citizens' complaints about excessive force. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, *29*(6), 521–529. doi:10.1016/S0047-2352(01)00114-3

Brunson, R. K. (2007). Police don't like black people": African-American young men's accumulated police experiences. *Criminology & Public Policy*, *6*(1), 71–101. doi:10.1111/j.1745-9133.2007.00423.x

Brunson, R. K., & Miller, J. (2006a). Young black men and urban policing in the United States. *The British Journal of Criminology*, *46*(4), 613–640. doi:10.1093/bjc/azi093

Brunson, R. K., & Miller, J. (2006b). Gender, race, and urban policing: The experience of African-American youths. *Gender & Society*, *20*(4), 531–552. doi:10.1177/0891243206287727

Brunson, R. K., & Weitzer, R. (2009). Police relations with black and white youths in different urban neighborhoods. *Urban Affairs Review*, *44*(6), 858–885. doi:10.1177/1078087408326973

Civil Rights Congress. (1952). We charge genocide: The historic petition to the United Nations for relief from a crime of the United States Government against the negro people. Civil Rights Congress.

Crenshaw, K., Gotanda, N., Peller, G., & Thomas, K. (Eds.). (1995). *Critical race theory: The key writings that formed the movement*. New York: The New Press.

Cruse, H. (1968). *Rebellion Or Revolution?*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Cobbina, J. E. (2019). *Hands up, don't shoot: Why the protests in Ferguson and Baltimore matter, and how they changed America*. New York: NYU Press.

Cobbina, J. E., Owusu-Bempah, A., & Bender, K. (2016). Perceptions of race, crime, and policing among Ferguson protesters. *Journal of Crime and Justice*, *39*(1), 210–229. doi:10.1080/0735648X.2015.1119950

Collins, P. H. (2002). *Black feminist thought: Knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of empowerment*. New York: Routledge.

Davis, A. Y. (2011). *Women, race, & class*. New York: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group.

Decker, S. H. (1981). Citizen attitudes toward the police: A review of past findings and suggestions for future policy. *Journal of Police Science and Administration*, *9*, 80–87.

Delgado, R. & Stefancic, J. (2012). *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction, Second Edition*. New York: NYU Press.

Department of Justice (DOJ). (2015, March 4). *Justice department announces findings of two civil rights investigations in Ferguson, Missouri*. https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/justice-department-announces-findings-two-civil-rights-investigations-ferguson-missouri.

Epp, C. R., Maynard-Moody, S., & Haider-Markel, D. P. (2014). *Pulled over: How police stops define race and citizenship*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Fagan, J., & Davies, G. (2000). Street stops and broken windows: Terry, race, and disorder in New York City. *Fordham Urban Law Journal*, *28*(2), 457–504.

Fleming, C. M., & Morris, A. (2015). Theorizing ethnic and racial movements in the global age: Lessons from the civil rights movement. *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity*, *1*(1), 105–126. doi:10.1177/2332649214562473

Gabbidon, S. L., Greene, H. T., & Young, V. D. (2002). *African-American classics in criminology and criminal justice*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE.

Gabbidon, S. L., & Higgins, G. E. (2009). The role of race/ethnicity and race relations on public opinion related to the treatment of blacks by the police. *Police Quarterly*, *12*(1), 102–115. doi:10.1177/1098611108329692

Gau, J. M., & Brunson, R. K. (2010). Procedural justice and order maintenance policing: A study of inner-city young men's perceptions of police legitimacy. *Justice Quarterly*, *27*(2), 255–279. doi:10.1080/07418820902763889

Graziano, L. M., & Gauthier, J. F. (2019). Examining the racial-ethnic continuum and perceptions of police misconduct. *Policing and Society*, *29*(6), 657–672. doi:10.1080/10439463.2017.1310859

Hannah-Jones, N. (2014). School segregation, the continuing tragedy of Ferguson. *ProPublica*. https://www.propublica.org/article/ferguson-school-segregation?token=2Af-da3_4a5kZwuyUcu2dePYQjk2YB3DX.

Haraway, D. (1988). Situated knowledges: The science question in feminism and the privilege of partial perspective. *Feminist Studies*, *14*(3), 575–599. doi:10.2307/3178066

Harding, S. (1991). *Whose science? Whose knowledge?: Thinking from women's Lives*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Hill Collins, P. (2013). *On intellectual activism*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Hurst, Y. G., & Frank, J. (2000). How kids view cops: The nature of juvenile attitudes toward the police. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, *28*(3), 189–202. doi:10.1016/S0047-2352(00)00035-0

James, J. (Ed.). (2003). *Imprisoned intellectuals: America's political prisoners write on life, liberation, and rebellion*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Jones-Brown, D. (2007). Forever the symbolic assailant: The more things change, the more they remain the same. *Criminology & Public Policy*, *6*(1), 103–121. doi:10.1111/j.1745-9133.2007.00424.x

Klinger, D. A. (1997). Negotiating order in patrol work: An ecological theory of police response to deviance. *Criminology*, *35*(2), 277–306. doi:10.1111/j.1745-9125.1997.tb00877.x

Kneebone, E. (2014). Ferguson, Mo. emblematic of growing suburban poverty. *Brookings*. https://www.brookings.edu/blog/the-avenue/2014/08/15/ferguson-mo-emblematic-of-growing-suburban-poverty/.

Lartey, J., & Griffin, A. (2020). The System: The Future of Policing. *The Marshall Project*. https://www.themarshallproject.org/2020/10/23/the-future-of-policing.

Lawrence-McIntyre, C. C. (1992). *Criminalizing a race: Free blacks during slavery*. New York: Kayode.

Lussenhop, J. (2018, February 13). Who were the corrupt Baltimore police officers? BBC News. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-43035628.

Mastrofski, S. D., Reisig, M. D., & McCluskey, J. D. (2002). Police disrespect toward the public: An encounter-based analysis. *Criminology*, *40*(3), 519–552. doi:10.1111/j.1745-9125.2002.tb00965.x

Mydans, S. (1994, April 20). Rodney King is awarded $3.8 million (Published 1994). The New York Times. https://www.nytimes.com/1994/04/20/us/rodney-king-is-awarded-3.8-million.html.

Nummi, J., Jennings, C., & Feagin, J. (2019). #BlackLivesMatter: Innovative black resistance. *Sociological Forum*, *34*(S1), 1042–1064. doi:10.1111/socf.12540

Pew Research Center. (2020, July 9). Majority of Public Favors Giving Civilians the Power to Sue Police Officers for Misconduct. Pew Research Center - U.S. Politics; *Policy*. https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2020/07/09/majority-of-public-favors-giving-civiliansthe-power-to-sue-police-officers-for-misconduct/.

Phillips, C., & Bowling, B. (2003). Racism, ethnicity, and criminology: Developing minority perspectives. *British Journal of Criminology*, *43*(2), 269–290. doi:10.1093/bjc/43.2.269

Prior, M. (2018). Accomplishing "rapport" in qualitative research interviews: Empathic moments in interaction. *Applied Linguistics Review*, *9*(4), 487–511. doi:10.1515/applirev-2017-0029

Rice, S. K., Reitzel, J. D., & Piquero, A. R. (2005). Shades of brown. *Journal of Ethnicity in Criminal Justice*, *3*(1-2), 47–70. doi:10.1300/J222v03n01_03

Russell-Brown, K. (2008). *The color of crime* (2nd ed.). NewYork: NYU Press.

Saldana, J. (2014). *Thinking qualitatively: Methods of mind*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.

Staples, R. (1975). White Racism, Black Crime, and American Justice: An Application of the Colonial Model to Explain Crime and Race. *Phylon*. (1960), *36*(1), 14–22. https://doi.org/10.2307/274841.

Stewart, E. A., Baumer, E. P., Brunson, R. K., & Simons, R. L. (2009). Neighborhood racial context and perceptions of police-based racial discrimination among black youth. *Criminology*, *47*(3), 847–887. doi:10.1111/j.1745-9125.2009.00159.x

Skolnick, J. H. (2011). Justice without trial: Law enforcement in democratic society. New Orleans: Quid Pro Books.

Smith, D. E. (1990). *The conceptual practices of power: A feminist sociology of knowledge*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Tatum, B. (1994). The colonial model as a theoretical explanation of crime and delinquency. In A. T. Sulton (Ed.), *African-American perspectives on crime causation, criminal justice administration, and crime prevention*. Boston: Butterworth-Heinemann.

U.S. Census. (2020). *U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: Ferguson city, Missouri*. https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fergusoncitymissouri.

Weitzer, R., & Brunson, R. K. (2013). African-American perceptions of police misconduct and accountability. *Journal of Qualitative Criminal Justice & Criminology*, *1*(2). 243–266. doi:10.21428/88de04a1.413bb0cd

Weitzer, R., & Tuch, S. A. (2002). Perceptions of racial profiling: Race, class, and personal experience. *Criminology*, *40*(2), 435–456. doi:10.1111/j.1745-9125.2002.tb00962.x

Wiethoff, W. E. (2006). Enslaved Africans' rivalry with white overseers in plantation culture: An unconventional interpretation. *Journal of Black Studies*, *36*(3), 429–455. doi:10.1177/0021934704273958

Williams, J. (2017). Race and justice outcomes: Contextualizing racial discrimination and Ferguson. *Ralph Bunche Journal of Public Affairs*, *6*(1). https://digitalscholarship.tsu.edu/rbjpa/vol6/iss1/5.

Williams, J. M. (2019). Black males and their experiences with policing under the "Iconic Ghetto" in Ferguson, Missouri. In J. M. Williams & S. Kniffley (Eds.), *Black males and the criminal justice system* (pp. 11–20). New York: Routledge.