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WATCHING FOR WOLVES:

Perspectives on Policing Among Experienced Officers in Atlanta

by

WILLIAM ODUM

Under the Direction of Faidra Papavasiliou PhD

ABSTRACT

The relationship between the police and the public is largely mediated through policing practice and procedure. The perspective of the officer on the individual level, as well as that of the cumulative police force of a community, frames these practices, ultimately influencing the types of interactions that play out between officers and civilians. This paper looks at the ways in which police officers perceive their communities, their jobs, and themselves in the larger practice of policing. Based on ethnographic research on police in the Atlanta area, this work focuses on the perspective of police officers, and how they are affected by training and their experiences in law enforcement. This study suggests that an ontological shift, which is experienced through training and working as a police officer, contributes to a conceptual division between the police and the public for officers, affecting larger public relations.

INDEX WORDS: Anthropology of Police, Police, Police Perspective, Police practice, Atlanta Police

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WILLIAM ODUM

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

in the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

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DEDICATION

For the victims of unnecessary killings and violence in law enforcement.

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1 INTRODUCTION

On New Year's Eve I was working [a night club] last year, and this lady, probably mid-20's, walks up to me and starts telling me that she's not really with the guy that she's with. That she's only using him because he keeps buying her drinks. She tells me this. She just walks over and starts telling me this. And in my mind, I'm like, okay, but why are you telling me this? (laughs) I'm like... what can I do for you? I don't know what she was wanting me to...I don't even know!

Maybe she was just talking to you like another person?

But she knew I was a cop though!...To this day, I'm not quite sure what she was expecting me to do, she never got around to telling me why she did this... I'm not sure what problem she wanted me to solve.

Seemingly, putting on the badge, and all that it entails, is a tough but straightforward process. If someone is committing a crime, the police are the ones to stop it. However, the actual practice itself is not so cut and dry. It involves multiple levels of adaptation, improvisation, and understanding. At another point in the interview the officer quoted above explained that "policing is all about decisions", which are always interconnected; decisions from whether or not to have breakfast, to writing a citation or a warning, to pulling the trigger or not. The complexities of policing are something that police officers must know well. However, police expectations of their role, and the expectations of the public, seem to often exist on opposite sides of a conceptual divide. Although this statement is not intended to apply universally to all

officers and civilians, there are certainly divisive tendencies in police ideology, separating those behind the badge, from those in front of it.

The story the officer tells above is symbolic of larger contradictions between what police understand as their role in society and what civilians understand, at least according to some officers. Despite the fact that my informants have expressed many times how they wish to be treated, and to be thought of as people, the uniform demands a certain professional ideal, which they must embody. When the line separating the roles of a person and of an officer are blurred or crossed, this results in confusion. In my research, I approach this confusion head on by exploring the police perspective in the greater Atlanta area. What does it mean to police be a police officer in the world? How do police officers understand the communities they work in? And finally, how do officers understand the public perception of the police, both in their communities and at large? The end goal of my research is to highlight a general perspective of police officers that influences their behavior.

The officers in my research, with their collective experience, offer a comparative perspective of policing in the Atlanta area. This is not only because of the wide range of geographic areas they've worked in, but also because of the diverse jobs and responsibilities they have had within the institution. The Atlanta metropolitan area is comprised of dozens of counties, hundreds of cities, and countless communities, sprawling across over 8,000 square miles. Such a vast area necessitates a multitude of police jurisdictions, organizations, institutions, and units. Some of these departments date back to the 19th and early 20th centuries, and currently police hundreds of thousands in cities or counties. Other departments are less than 50 years old and police small towns or cities. The metro Atlanta area encompasses everything between sparsely populated rural areas to very dense urban environments. My research focuses primarily

on officers who work or have worked in counties within Atlanta city limits, or that are immediately adjacent. Gwinnett, Dekalb, and Fulton counties are the three counties in which the participants of this research have experience. The vast majority of the entire metropolitan Atlanta population lives in these three counties in rural, suburban, and urban environments.

Some officers spend a good portion of their career working in one area, while others work in several. All of the officers that I work with have experience as a “regular” beat cop, and collectively their experience traverses a large portion of the geographic Atlanta area and its varying criminal dynamics. Additionally, these officers have experience as trainers, investigators, and as members of specialized units (SWAT, Narcotics, etc.). In my attempt to gain insight into the lifeworlds of police officers, I have identified three components of the police perspective that contribute to the divide of incommunicability, nurturing misunderstanding between officers and the public. First, the police generally see themselves different because their training sets them apart in the way they see and interact with the world. Second, because of this training and their position in society, the police believe that the public cannot relate to the experience of working in law enforcement. Lastly, many officers believe that the public does not like the police and are not interested in considering the police perspective. I use these three points to argue that the training and socialization of the police affects officers in an ontological sense, which leads to defensive and exclusive behavior.

In the first chapter I contextualize my study with a literature review of much of the recent work in the anthropology of police. Most of this work deals with the state, questions of structure and agency, and violence. In the second chapter I discuss my research setting, giving a general survey of the research field, the methods I use in my research, and considers the ethics of this research. In the third chapter I lay out the general training process for police officers. This

information primarily comes from a training site in the metropolitan Atlanta area, where I engaged in interviews and participant observation. Additionally in this chapter I focus on officers' experience, what sorts of things constitute a day's work, and other aspects of police work. I specifically look at the *trained perception* of the police, focusing on the resulting perspective of formal training, socialization, and enculturation in police communities. Here I employ work from social sciences and philosophy to explore the police perspective of responsible awareness, and some of its implications. The fourth chapter builds on the points from the preceding chapters, focusing on how the police officers in my study see themselves in their communities, the people that constitute the communities, and these people's perception of the police. The fifth chapter, in conclusion, considers larger implications of my findings, and ways in which these findings could further the field of the anthropology of police. This research aims to inform the larger conversations happening around policing and the relationships between the police and the public. The perspective of the officer is critical information in these discussions, because, due to their position, police officers are influential agents in society. Any conversation concerning the duties of the badge should also consider the person behind it.

2 The Practice of Policing: A Theoretical Overview

In recent decades, anthropologists have conducted ethnographic research all over the world, ranging from Taiwan to Brazil (Fassin 2013, Garriott 2013, Haanstad 2013, Jauregui 2013, Karpiak 2013, Martin 2013, Penglase 2013). Despite different contexts, tactics, and practices among the world's various police forces, these studies offer valuable theoretical frameworks to study the police as an institution in society. Generally, the police can be

characterized by two aspects: their relationship with the state, and the legal ability to use violence. However, the body of anthropological research shows that enacting this role, at any place within the institution, is a complicated task on multiple accounts. In order to understand the complex roles and perspectives of the police, a general overview of the police as an institution and a practice must be made. The overview in this chapter focuses on three points: how the police are situated in the larger state context, how violence affects the lives of officers and civilians, and the variety of police practices and organization on the ground in different contexts.

Being a police officer is complex in part due to the relationship between an officer's agency and the rigid structure of the institution in which they operate. This relationship is dynamic and malleable, making it difficult to separate individual intention from institutional pressures and protocol (Jauregui 2013, Karpiak 2013). There is a vast array of motivations that police officers have for doing what they do, ranging from seeking steady income, to excitement, to a sense of moral duty, making for a complex answer to the question of *why* the police take the job. Underlying subjective values and understandings undoubtedly influence the behavior of police officers. However, it is necessary to remember that they must be reconciled with the stark disciplinary structure of policing institutions, regulations, and the law. In addition to these formal institutional pressures, the public nature of police work frequently places officers under the microscope of constant public scrutiny and evaluation. All of these pressures factor into the ways in which officers interact with and influence their communities. Identifying the interplay between the structural pressures of policing, an officer's agency, and the social pressures of their environment creates a sturdy foundation for an analysis of officer perspective.

2.1 The State and the Police

Much of the anthropological work that has been done on the police references at least one of two influential works from the early 20th century: “Politics as a Vocation”, an essay by sociologist Max Weber (1919), and *Towards the Critique of Violence* by philosopher Walter Benjamin in 1921 (1986). As is evident by the titles, these works are concerned with different topics, and neither deal directly with the police. The authors actually only briefly describe the police in relation to larger topics, which for Weber is the state, authority, and professional politics, and for Benjamin is violence, legality, and the state. Besides the fact that they both only briefly discuss the police, the common ground between these two pieces is that when they do discuss it, they identify its connection to the state and violence as a key component. Though violence is the hinge between the police and the state for both of the authors, the way the police enact this violence differ in their analyses. I will start with Weber’s framework and move on to Benjamin’s discussion of the police and violence. From there it is important to consider more recent theories of the police. The philosopher-historian Michel Foucault (1977, 2009) takes a comparative genealogical approach towards the police and their function, tracing the development of the position and function of the police in western European society from the 17th to the 20th century. Foucault's work coincides with Jean and John Comaroff's, who use a passage from French Sociologist Emilé Durkheim to discuss the current nature of crime and policing, capital, and the nation-state in an era dominated by late stage global capitalism. These four theoretical frameworks of the police broadly illustrate the role and position of the police as an institution in western society.

Though police around the world perform different tasks and mean different things, they are generally characterized by mediating the relationship between the state and the public

through the means of physical force. Max Weber (1919) focuses on this when defining the police (and military) as the active agents of legal violence in a state's effort to maintain its power and legitimacy. Violence in a state setting can only be sanctioned by the state, which in part works to maintain the authority to do so. This creates a monopoly on the legitimate and legal use of physical force by the state (Weber 1919:78). According to Weber, a state maintains its authority through means other than physical force, which is social legitimization (Weber 191:79). There are three forms of this legitimization: traditional, charismatic, and legal (Weber 1919:79). Traditional legitimization of authority is created and perpetuated through the enculturation process, is based in social facts, values, and cultural worldviews (Weber 1919:79). Authority can also be justified by desirable and attractive characteristics that someone or a group embodies (Weber 1919:79). This is charismatic authority, the type of authority of a prophet or a prophet may gain through affect and inspiration. And lastly, authority that can be reinforced by laws and other established rules. This is an example of a legal justification (Weber 1919:79). Weber reminds us that these three types of authority rarely exist in their pure form and that the three of them are tied into all positions of power (Weber 1919:79-80). The institution of the police is an embodiment of the dynamic authority of the state, serving as active agents to enforce its order, and maintaining the monopoly on violence. By Weber's account, the police are an institutional arm of a state apparatus, realizing state power on the ground. They are an extension of the complex authority of the state, enforcing order in the material world.

Walter Benjamin describes the police as independent from the state in terms of how their power functions, and this is because of their relationship with violence (Benjamin 1986:286). The authority the police have to use violence gives them an ability to establish a "police law" in each situation, which is not "identical or even connected to those of general law" (Benjamin

1986:287). They operate in a space that the state fails to control, whether for reasons of capability or negligence (Benjamin 1986:287). The police do this by using violence or the threat of violence to both *establish* and *preserve* law in situations of policing; two major functions of violence according to Benjamin (Benjamin 1986:287). In summary, for Weber the police work for the state as an institution of the state, manifesting its law and order. For Benjamin, the police work *with* the state, using their authority to employ violence to pick up where the rest of the state apparatus leaves off.

Michel Foucault offers a genealogical perspective, which attributes similar characteristics to the police that both Weber and Benjamin do. In Foucault's explanation, the police are the agents of an omnipresent and exhaustive surveillance that is intended to observe and police "the most elementary particle, the most passing phenomenon of the social body..."(Foucault 2007:214). This is possible because the power of the police is disciplinary. Discipline is not an institution or set of institutions, rather it is a "modality" for exercising power, which is comprised of techniques, instruments, and the objects of its application (Foucault 1977:214). Foucault describes western state societies as completely constituted by these institutions of discipline, which include schools, hospitals, prisons, government, etc. (Foucault 1977:24, 2007:354). Where these institutions fail, or do not reach, is where the police must pick up the slack (Foucault 1977:24, 2007:354). However, this was not always the case.

The specific role of the police in society was reshaped by a shift in economic and governmental reorganization in the mid to late 18th century (Foucault 2007:349-50). In the 17th century, nation states in central Europe were what Foucault calls "police states" (Foucault 2007:322). The police were the set of instruments, measures, and mechanisms that were meant to maintain a balanced relationship between "the increase of the state's forces and its good order",

or as it is often referred to in historical texts, the state's "splendor" (Foucault 2007:313). They did this by regulating almost every aspect of life, including population size, life necessities, health, activity, and circulation of the products of this activity in trade and redistribution (Foucault 2007:324-5). Because the end goal of increasing the state's "forces and good order" by means of intensively regulating life, the market became prioritized among the many objects of policing (Foucault 2007:337-8, 346-7). Eventually, this subjected policing to the paradigmatic shifts in economics as an academic and philosophical field (Foucault 2007:337-8, 346-7). In this period, the dominant art of governance was shaped by *economic* reason (Foucault 2007:348). In mid-18th century Western Europe the state and its police stepped back from their roles of regulating life and the market in favor of a more *laissez faire* liberal economic mode of governmentality (Foucault 2007:346-9). In this new art of governance, the role of the police was transferred from regulation to the "management" of state security (Foucault 2007:353-4). The previous objectives of the police, the regulation of life and well-being, was delegated to various developing institutions of discipline, as this was actually the most efficient organization of power to develop the state's "splendor" (Foucault 2007:354). At this time, the police took the form of what we understand them as now: a state institution with the objective of eliminating and preventing disorder and the disruption of civil society (Foucault 2007:354).

The police in Foucault's framework operate in a space of exception, supplementing the rest of the institutions of governance. Foucault notes that the role of the police is characterized by exercising a negative power, while other institutions are positive (Foucault 2007:354). That is to say that the police exercise disciplinary power to eliminate threats to the status quo in exercising disciplinary power, while other disciplinary institutions in society are concerned with the productivity of society, by creating productive members of society. Foucault argues that the

institution of the police since the late 18th century is one that, much like Benjamin's explanation, fills in the gaps that the state's other institutions cannot (Foucault 1997:215, 2007:354). Nevertheless, he also states, as Weber did, that the institution of the police is intrinsically subsumed by the larger state apparatus of disciplinary power, despite that they operate with types of power mechanisms that are specific to policing (Foucault 1977:213). Although the police are still a part of the state apparatus, they fill in the cracks of the state's power, giving them a privilege of their own agency to a degree, with particular responsibilities and the legal capacity to act on their own. This is similar to the law-making and law-preserving character that Benjamin attributes to policing. Despite these similarities, Foucault focuses on something that is not discussed by Weber or Benjamin: the economic implications on policing, which is expanded by the Comaroffs (2016).

Comaroff and Comaroff (2016) also point out the relationship between policing and economic governance in their recent work on crime and policing, which they refer to as "a criminal anthropology of late modernity". They take a comparative approach in examining the relationship between crime and policing in the U.S. and South Africa, taking a lead from Emile Durkheim (2016). Emile Durkheim's (1938) states that "a society...free of crime would fall into chaos...bereft of the signs of its own existence as an authoritative order", implies that crime is half of a dichotomy that a society uses to understand itself (Comaroff & Comaroff 2016:5, Durkheim 1938:xxvii). Working off this statement, the Comaroffs argue that "crime is a critical prism through which a society might come to know itself", against which it would measure and assess itself (Comaroff & Comaroff 2016:5). In this sense, a major component of police work is the practical and ideological enforcement of the boundaries between crime and ordinary life. In concept and practice, the police are antagonistically oriented towards crime, the disruption of

civil society, in a larger effort to protect the good order of the state, as Foucault also explained. Herein lies a social function of the police: the enforcement and maintenance of ideologies. By identifying crime and criminals, the police play an active role in a society's understanding of itself and its proximal threats, such as deviants, others, and the estranged; its criminals.

The Comaroffs, in congruence with Foucault, follow Wacquant (2009) in explaining how policing in America and abroad has, in recent decades, taken a more "managerial model" that focuses on servicing the "polite, propertied American society", and its preferred aesthetic of socioeconomic order. This is the case because of larger notions of law and order criminalize the impoverished, the unpropertied, and the disordered (Comaroff & Comaroff 2016:45, Wacquant 2009:113). This shift in criminal justice is evidenced by the interests of policing practices in administrative mediations between crime and the private sector, protecting business-as-usual through property protection and the enforcement of an ideal order (Comaroff & Comaroff 2016:42-3). Such a relationship between the state, its military and policing apparatuses, and the economy is a product of colonial practices (Comaroff & Comaroff 2016:17). The conquest of lands by European states was an endeavor of establishing a civilized standard of life and business, creating a system of property and labor, which needed protection and regulation (Comaroff & Comaroff 2016:17). Criminal activity thus became anything that posed a threat to the systems of labor, property, and law (Comaroff & Comaroff 2016:17-18). Thus it seems fitting to this logic how punishment frequently takes the form of free labor, whether it is forcing convicts to mine for diamonds in South Africa in the 19th century or forcing prisoners into labor (Comaroff & Comaroff 2016:18-19). In this age, crime is used by government and corporations as a categorical tool of social meaning to gain the advantage of economic and political control and to hinder competition (Comaroff & Comaroff 2016:34).

The Comaroffs explain the common modernist understanding of crime and policing, the state, and governance that was established through these historical practices in four points (Comaroff & Comaroff 2016:21). The first is that lawlessness and crime is understood as a natural phenomenon that owes itself to the passions and drives of our animal nature running awry (Comaroff and Comaroff 2016:21). Second, that certain criminal types are assumed to be more prone to acting on these passions and drives due to their social position and/or moral cosmologies, and that their criminality is primarily concerned with property and labor (Comaroff and Comaroff 2016:21). Third, that because the general conceptual model of society as established through rational rule and law, with the welfare and safety of all its constituents as priority, crime is a direct transgression towards society and its order, and thus a mortal sin (Comaroff and Comaroff 2016:21). Lastly, that because of the state's responsibility to its people, it is obligated, and effectively succeeds, to police all crime that happens in its territory, no matter its form or degree (Comaroff and Comaroff 2016:21). The points raised by the Comaroffs emphasize how economic class interests affect crime and policing, a point that is not dissimilar to Foucault's.

Noting the rise of private militaries and security companies, they explain how the role of policing crime is also delegated to, or left to be assumed by, the private sector, in what they call a "post-Weberian age of private indirect governance" (Comaroff & Comaroff 2016:39). Here, the gaps that are filled by the state police in Benjamin and Foucault's work, are filled by private security companies and mercenaries, adding another potential degree of abstraction of the police from the state. Nonetheless, state sovereignty plays a role in influencing and framing policing, no matter the level of abstraction, through its monopoly on violence. Otherwise it would be defined as crime. Despite the fact that what might be categorized as crime in one set of circumstances

might be categorized as business or policing in another can effectively be the same thing, the authority to make such a decision is reserved for the sovereign. Whatever degree of integration the police have in relation to the state they are a part of, they are on the side of the sovereign when this decision is being made. In other words, the position of the police in relation to the state is one that identified as part of the state, at least by its ends. Which brings us to the other key component of policing: its means, which ultimately traces back to violence.

2.2 Violence and Policing

Walter Benjamin begins his piece by stating that in any political system violence is a means to an ends (Benjamin 1986:277). Benjamin notes that violence in government has two functions, which were briefly mentioned before. The two functions are *law-making* and *law-preserving* (Benjamin 1986:277, 283-4). An example of law-making violence would be that of a military in war or conquest, which, in a victory sanctions its own violent means and its dominance. “This sanction consists precisely in recognizing the new conditions as a new “law”...” (Benjamin 1986:283). Law-preserving function of violence is using “violence as a means of legal ends...for the subordination of citizens to laws” (Benjamin 1986:284). This is the ability of violence to protect, enforce, and maintain the law. Police violence functions as both of these types. It “is violence for legal ends (in the right of disposition), but with the simultaneous authority to decide these ends itself within wide limits (in the right of decree)” (Benjamin 1986:286). For Benjamin, the relationship the police have with violence is unique to their position, a position that is sanctioned by the state and its law, yet also, to a degree, unrestricted by them. The line that separates police autonomy from the limitations of the rigid institution is obfuscated by violence. It is important to consider the complex influences violence can, and does have on the police and civilians.

Because violence is a key component of policing, an analysis of policing necessitates an analysis of violence. When discussing violence, it would be neglectful to ignore Johann Galtung, who coined the term “structural violence”, and also created a highly influential model of violence that introduced the term “cultural violence”(1990). In his model, Galtung positions three types of violence, direct, structural, and cultural, on a triangle with all sides supporting each other (Galtung 1990:295). Direct violence consists of direct 'insults' or harm to one's needs or well-being. Structural violence are these insults that are brought about indirectly by institutions and power dynamics (Galtung 1990:292-3). Anthropologist Paul Farmer (2004), expanding on the concept of structural violence, describes it as harm that is systematically brought onto people indirectly by means of social organization (Farmer 2004:307). Additionally, Farmer notes that structural violence has a tendency to change with every era, taking on new forms through time and space, and that it is often constructed along lines of discrimination (Farmer 1996:273-274, 2004:315). The last component of Galtung's model, cultural violence, is that which "makes direct and structural violence look, even feel, right- or at least not wrong" (Galtung 1990:291). This is similar to Bourdieu's “symbolic violence”, which is when a set of cultural understandings and values “euphemizes” modes of domination and violence that are interwoven into society (1980:126). Galtung's framework offers a useful model to explore how state sanctioned violence and notions of law and order play into larger schemes of structural violence. Further, the concept of cultural violence is important to focus an ethnographic lens to search for various cultural nuances that in/directly dis/allow for violence.

Another theory of violence that is relevant to the anthropology of police is one proposed in Didier Fassin's ethnography of the Parisian police (2013). Fassin argues against popular and legal understandings of police violence as something that only exists in a physical realm. In this

form, violence is something that is traceable by its easily identifiable consequences of injury and death. Such an understanding is “defined in relation to a professional standard” by disciplinary and juridical authorities (Fassin 2013:128-129). He suggests that violence is defined this way to expand juridical control over situations of crime (Fassin 2013:129). To establish a new understanding of violence he emphasizes the public experience of violence and how it affects individuals (Fassin 2013:129). *Moral* violence is distinguishable from physical violence, which corporally affects its victims, and points to the effects of violence on “the entire person” through humiliation and emotional disturbance (Fassin 2013:129). Fassin defines moral violence as something that is not divorced from physical violence but rather as something that is felt internally as a consequence of or reaction to the various forms of violence that are experienced by its victims (Fassin 2013:130). He emphasizes the tendency of moral violence to be effectively invisible to popular conceptions of violence and ignored in official discourse and analyses (Fassin 2013:130). Moral violence is a valuable addition to Galtung's proposed model of direct, structural, and cultural violence, adding a deeper level of insight on how violence is experienced. It also emphasizes a more subjective plane on which violence plays out in society

An example of these types of violence at work is the case of the U.S., where policing practices protect a standard of living that is rooted in a history of racism and exploitation. Order maintenance” (more commonly known as broken windows theory) has become a popular mode of policing in the U.S. since its conceptualization in 1982 (Burton 2015:42). This form of policing gives high priority to policing the ‘petty’ criminal activity of daily life (Burton 2015:38). Order maintenance policing is an example of a tool of the managerial policing model described by Foucault and the Comaroffs, which is developed with the intention to minimize disorder and disruption of civil life. Orisami Burton (2015) argues, practices such as order

maintenance perpetuate institutions of racial discrimination, favoring and protecting a white “mode of social life” over other racialized modes (Burton 2015:38). The protection and enforcement of order and property by officers is inherently biased, in that the notion of ‘order’ has developed and been maintained in an institutionally racist context because it is rooted in historical institutions of slavery and white supremacy (Burton 2015:40,44-5). This practice, though potentially unintentional, is a working part of larger schemes of structural, cultural, and symbolic violence, which undoubtedly result in moral violence. The Comaroffs also note the transmutation of racist labor regulations and policing, highlighting the fact that slavery was abolished in 1865 in the U.S., unless it was a form of punishment (Comaroff & Comaroff 2016:17). What happened from that point on, especially in southern states, was an intense policing of otherwise minor infractions, such as loitering, vagrancy, and public rudeness, all of which were associated with people of color (Comaroff & Comaroff 2016:18). In Atlanta specifically, similar laws were instituted in preparation for the Olympic games in 1996, in an effort to manage homelessness, poverty, and vagrancy, largely affecting African American populations (Gustafson 2013:209).

In a similar point to Burton’s, Avram Bornstein (2015) explains how numbers based policing and zero-tolerance policies in New York City, meant to have ‘productive’ results, follow along the lines of order maintenance policing. Bornstein tends to the current issue of how racism is understood by the public and officials alike. He argues that the common assumption that cognitive bias is the main culprit is erroneous (Bornstein 2015:52). Currently, popular discourse understands discrimination by the police as being due to either explicit or implicit cognitive bias. Institutional racism is then defined as widespread cognitive bias (Bornstein 2015:52-53). However, this is not necessarily the case. Although cognitive bias persists in the

depths of everyone's psyche, assessing it as the sole component of racism issues in policing is problematic and insufficient (Bornstein 2015:53). Additionally, that is not the definition of institutional racism. Bornstein explains the difference between cognitive bias and institutional racism. Cognitive bias is personal prejudices that exist on a conscious and subconscious level (Bornstein 2015:52-53). Institutional racism is constituted by 'color blind' sets of regulations, laws, and policies that reinforce and perpetuate racist segregation and marginalization, mostly brought on by the systemic racism (explicit de jure racism) of the not-so-distant past of the United States (Bornstein 2015:53-54). Statistically driven goals, zero-tolerance policing, and order maintenance policing are examples of the ways in which theory shapes policing practice, affecting life experiences of other members of the community, and constitute various forms of violence.

Experiences of violence have heavy implications on the lives of those involved. Violence is not just effective in its present, it also persists through time. Veena Das argues that quotidian life is not a mundane series of events as it is often characterized, rather it is a constant management of memory and experience, in which violence plays a role (2007). As people go throughout the day, they compound the meanings and memories they gain from their experience. This impresses upon the individual, influencing both how they realize their self, and their own identity and narratives, as well as the nature of the surrounding world (Das 2007:218). Violence in its many forms, prolonged or isolated, constitutes the everyday through experience and memory (Das 2007:8-11). As anthropologist Beatrice Jauregui adds from her work with Indian police, violence is interwoven into life as a social modality (Jauregui 2013:133). Despite its destructive nature, violence is intimately tied to the subjective lifeworlds of those involved in it. Violence is an important culturally productive part of the lived experience, creating meanings,

associations, and affecting how people negotiate their life. The prevalence of violence and its effects influence the perspective of both the policed and the police themselves. Personal and social memories can emotionally charge the discourse surrounding violence, making the topic highly volatile and capable of polarizing the groups involved. Those authorized to employ violence in the name of the law will most likely be oriented differently to violence as a resource, experience, and concept than their unauthorized counterparts. Violence simultaneously empowers and oppresses, existing in social, physical, and symbolic realms as an experience, a pressure, and a tactic. As such, violence plays a serious role in shaping the worlds of the few authorized with its use, as well as the many unauthorized, as a mechanism of power.

The effects of the looming threat of violence and harm for officers undoubtedly affects the perspective and health of officers. Among police officers, there have been some noted trajectories of resilience, while there have also been some unhealthy and problematic coping mechanisms. Problems with substance abuse and addiction have been noted as harmful coping strategies for police officers (Austin-Ketch et al. 2011:28). Officers have also been noted to do what is called ‘avoidant coping’ by avoiding acknowledgement of stress or pain, probably in an attempt to uphold authority, masculinity, and ‘toughness’ (Anderson et al. 2002:404; Pasillas et al. 2006:42,47). Both of these mechanisms tend to produce more stress at various levels for the officers. Police officers that have exhibited symptoms for moderate to severe PTSD have also shown abnormal cortisol secretion levels than other officers.

In Buffalo, New York, Violanti et al. conducted a study with an urban police force, focusing on about 100 individuals and the relationship between their diurnal cortisol patterns and PTSD symptoms (Violanti et al. 2007). To measure the symptoms of PTSD, Violanti et al. used

the Impact of Event Scale (IES), which is based on an assessment and self-reported data (Violanti et al 2007:190). Officers who exhibited severe PTSD symptoms, in this study, were generally older (mid 40's), had a high body mass index, and were more likely to have high levels of alcohol consumption (Violanti et al. 2007:193). This could mean that older individuals are more prone to experience PTSD because of aging processes or simply their longer experience in the field with all of its stressors than their younger partners. Individuals who had severe PTSD symptoms also had abnormal diurnal cortisol patterns (Violanti et al. 2007:196). Instead of low cortisol levels upon awakening that rose and fell throughout the day, officers with PTSD symptoms started with higher cortisol levels, which consistently rose throughout the day and fell abruptly near its end (Violanti et al. 2007:196). These results show that the officers who likely have PTSD are experiencing dysregulation with their hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis (Violanti et al. 2007:197). This situation suggests that the officers in this category could be experiencing a state of constant and persistent arousal (Violanti et al. 2007:197). Such a state would definitely affect the ways that police officers perform do their jobs. The effects of this sort of constantly aroused state will surely take its toll on the officer experiencing them, but just as much the communities she or he works in.

The police's legal ability to use violence, and the sets of responsibility and expectations they face because of it make the job one of complex moral and ethical negotiation. Beatrice Jauregui argues that despite a categorical relationship between policing and violence, this relationship is complicated and complex, playing out differently in each context (Jauregui 2013:127-128). The privilege the police have of legal use of violence does not make officers the omni-powerful army of governance. Rather, they must answer to institutional and societal pressures (Jauregui 2013:129). Laws and regulation, sociopolitical pressures, resources, personal

morality and emotions, and organization rankings are *always* factors in policing (Jauregui 2013:128). Popular social constructions of legality and justice affect police practice as much as written law and policy. This is largely due to the fact that policing is inherently a public role. It is important to take a holistic perspective when examining the police, considering the various dynamics of each setting in which the police operate. Now that the relationship between the police and the state has been analyzed and a closer look at violence as a key component of policing has been taken, we can look at a variety of ethnographies from around the world to see how policing actually plays out on the ground.

2.3 In the Field: Policing in Practice

Policing around the world takes different forms; however, there are similarities. The police are a working component of authority within larger societal systems, they must negotiate and maintain this authority, and they are directly tied to the state despite any privileges or autonomy they may have. The following are points made from recent ethnographic research on the police, which deal with these themes. First, William Garriott (2013) argues that the police operate in a larger cultural practice of policing. Second, Kevin Karpiak (2010,2013) shows how confusing and complex fulfilling and maintaining the role of an officer can be. Lastly, Martin (2013) and Haanstad (2013) explain how the connection between the state and the police not only links the public to the state, but also is culturally productive and useful in policing practices.

To situate the role and perspective of a police officer in society, it is important to remember Foucault's description of the police (2009). Although the police operate in a specific space in a particular way, they are still working mechanisms of a larger network of systems that disciplines a population through enculturation (Foucault 1977,2009). Even though the legitimization of the police and their ability to utilize violence grants them privileges that

civilians do not have, officers are not the sole instruments of the forces that police a community (Garriott 2013a:15). In what Pierre Bourdieu (1980:59) refers to as the “conductorless orchestration” of the collective habitus of a society, “regularity, unity, and systematicity” pervades through the cultural practices of life, unconsciously perpetuated by each individual. William Garriott focuses on how policing is practiced in every aspect of daily life by civilians and officers alike in a larger social practice (Garriott 2013b:69). His work with rural communities in Appalachia focuses on how the production and sale of the popular drug methamphetamine is policed. He argues that the task of policing is collectively carried out by civilians and officers alike. Community members actively engage in policing by enforcing regulations of economic and social interactions through various means (Garriott 2013b:73). This is exemplified by store policies that were designed to limit and surveil the sale of ingredients and equipment used in the production of methamphetamine. In addition to this, public announcements and posters task the public to aid in the surveillance of methamphetamine production and sale by informing the police of suspicious activity (Garriott 2013b:68-70). Policing is even extended to the training of semi-truck drivers, who are taught to spot and identify the remnants of a portable makeshift meth production kit that is usually tossed onto the roadside (Garriott 2013b:69-70). Such examples highlight the pervasiveness of the policing practice. The role of law enforcement officers is not only public because of its responsibility to the community, and the fact that the police operate in public. The police must enlist the public in the larger collaborative project of policing of the community.

Operating in the public, with the public, and for the public in a generally visible way has direct implications for how police officers conduct their jobs. They must maintain the two major components of their authority: power and legitimacy. The police, individually and collectively,

must operate in a way that the public perceives as trustworthy, just, and capable; proving a certain capacity for power, while simultaneously doing so in a righteous and just manner. This task involves complicated and layered negotiations of power relations in various social settings to which police must pay attention. Kevin Karpiak's (2013) study of police in Paris focuses on small interactions between officers and recruits in a training session to make this point. These interactions in the training session later develop into a discussion about the confusion among officers on the use of formal and informal registers when addressing civilians, trainees, and other officers.

In Paris, a review board of police officers were present for a training session to assess the instructor on how he trained and interacted with his students (Karpiak 2013:87-90). Throughout the training session, the trainer addressed his recruits in both formal and informal linguistic registers, being inconsistent in his formalities (Karpiak 2013:89). This led to a discussion between the review board and the instructor, attempting to establish a rule for which register to use when addressing people of varying positions and ranks. They all seemed to agree that civilians and higher ranks should be shown respect with the formal register, but no one could agree on a set way to address others outside of these two categories (Karpiak 2013:92). Karpiak uses this as an example of the dynamic and unclear nature negotiating authority as a police officer. The discussion of the French officers illustrates the problems that are encountered and the norms that develop while managing a role of police authority among other officers within the policing institution and civilians in public alike (Karpiak 2013:92).

Though embodying and maintaining the power and legitimacy of authority may not take the same form as it does among Karpiak's officers in France, the struggle is nonetheless unavoidable, and inherent to the role of police. Here it is important to consider how officers

conceptually construct their own authority; that is, how they understand and convince themselves of their own legitimized power. This is a process that is intimately tied to officer subjectivity, and how it is shaped by police training, enculturation, and interactions with other officers and civilians. The police perception of their own specific role within the larger societal practice of policing relies on both the emic perspective from within policing culture as well as how the public understands them.

Karpiak (2010), in another ethnographic account, argues for the importance of the public perspective in the policing practice. He explains how a discussion between himself, a police officer, and a group of civilians, transcended social norms of public-police interaction (Karpiak 2010). The conversation took place completely spontaneously and informally, an important factor in the development of the discussion. A group of policemen were speaking with Karpiak at a cafe about his research when another individual from a nearby table interjected and questioned the officers about drug policing tactics (Karpiak 2010:23). What followed was an in depth and respectful discussion, which eventually evolved into a collective attempt to define the roles, responsibilities, and purposes of the police (Karpiak 2010:23). Karpiak argues that this discussion is indicative of a larger issue that involves the police, describing the practice of policing as a “form of social, ethical, and cognitive problem”, which is failed by current key terms and language that has been used to describe it (Karpiak 2010:24). He emphasizes a necessity to conceptualize the police as “contingent and emergent”, focusing on the contexts in which the practice of policing takes place and the various forms it takes (Karpiak 2010:24). Karpiak’s experience here indicates that despite a definite relationship to the state and legal capacity for violence, the role of the police must fit into its environment. The power of the police receives its legitimization from its surroundings.

Public conceptualizations and popular discourse surrounding the police realizes the state and police as extensions of each other. Jeffrey Martin (2013) emphasizes this in his work in Taiwan, focusing on societal definitions and public understandings of the police as a state institution. In Taiwan, the police work collaboratively with community members in assessing the situation, as opposed to being experts in a categorical understanding of crime as something that exists in exception from the everyday experience of life (Martin 2013:161). Martin argues that community members' daily life, and all its nuances, are both conceptually and actually connected to the state by means of the social position and practice of the police. The police in this context work as "linking agents", through the public's conceptual realization and actual interactions, conceptually and practically connect the common experience with a larger state apparatus and conceptual realm of law and order (Martin 2013:161-2,176). Expanding on Martin's points, Eric Haanstad (2013) suggests that the police in Thailand manipulate and use the symbols that link them to the state, such as national imagery and official symbols, to enact their power and authority (Haanstad 2013:195). Through extravagant displays of physical force, the use of symbols, concepts, and intersemiotic communication, the police in Thailand "become the embodiment of state sovereignty in public imagination", despite the various pressures and limitations that officers experience (Haanstad 2013:195). The Thai police refract and reshape cultural meanings and experiences by means of actual physical mediation and enforcing order (Haanstad 2013:181-182). They effectively become what their symbols stand for, manifesting the law, order, and power of the state into reality. The police in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro also actively try to do this (Larkins2015:57). However, the police in the favelas have to compete with local drug dealers, with both groups creating spectacles to win over the public perception and cultural associations of order, security, and safety (Larkins 2015:78-79). The conceptual

connection the police have to the state is one that is understood publicly, which makes the role of the police more than just one of law enforcement. The police materialize the state in the lives of its civilians.

The complicated network of agents, forces, actions, perspectives, and experiences make it difficult to simply define the police. However, general characteristics of the police seem to prevail. The role of the police in society, their authority to use violence, and their connection with the state, play out in different ways according to their contexts. Each set of circumstances involves a unique police response. To assess the perspective and practices of the police is to assess the sociopolitical pressures of their context, the community they work in, and the individual understandings and perspectives of the officers themselves.

3 Methods and the Field

In this chapter I will describe my research field and the methods I used to approach the broad police community in the Atlanta area. The overall policing institution in Georgia consists of a multiplicity of organizations. Police, marshal, and sheriff agencies for the state, counties, cities, towns, and other jurisdictions all have different primary focuses in law enforcement. The Sheriff's department largely deals with jails, while the police fulfill the more classic role of the cop on the streets. In these agencies, there are various specialized units (i.e. SWAT, Narcotics, etc.) that are developed according to the necessities of their contexts. Because Atlanta is home to the majority of the population of the state of Georgia, it is also home to much of the state's Law Enforcement. The Atlanta metropolitan area is made up of 28 counties and is currently estimated to be home to approximately 5.7 million people (Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce 2006,

Niese 2016). This research focuses on what I refer to as the immediate Atlanta area, meaning counties that contain the city limits of Atlanta, or their adjacent counties. The law enforcement officers that participated in this research have extensive experience as law enforcement officers. However, they all worked in different positions within different agencies of policing, such as the county police department, training facilities, county district attorney's office, and the sheriff's department. These agencies are all similar in that they employ uniformed individuals to police the community. However, they are different in their jurisdictions, focuses, policies, and internal organizations.

Police officers who work primarily "in the field", or on the street and in public, have received specialized training to do their job. They are constantly interacting with an institutional organization of surveillance and regulation, and are quite familiar with formal and official policy and norms. At the same time, officers work and interact with one another, developing their own sets of rules and norms in relation to the official rhetoric. Police trainers, investigators, and senior officers who spend much of their time within the institution as opposed to on the street, offer similar insights, but from a slightly different perspective. These people are themselves police officers but often have years of experience under their belts in the field as a 'regular' officer as well as in a specialized unit (narcotics, homicide, etc.). From their various positions within the institution, my informants operate at different capacities and tend to different responsibilities. For example, an investigator or trainer position is usually more predictable, safe, and stable. Specifically, trainers have a peculiar perspective from within the institution, observing the development process of recruits forming into police officers by facilitating their training and education. Working as a trainer, investigator, or in some other position within a policing institution, officers embody and enact a role that is different but not disconnected from

their colleagues on patrol. Regardless of position in law enforcement, officers are agents of police identity, values, and ideologies, despite the hierarchical separation of labor and responsibility within policing institutions. The experiences of my informants offer a general view into the police perspective from within various policing institutions in the Atlanta area.

I approached my topic of the police perspective ethnographically. Ethnographic research is particularly useful in this endeavor because it focuses on cultural nuances and complexities (Jauregui 2013:138). For this research I conducted ethnographic interviews with officers, as well as participant observation at a training facility. I conducted a total of eight semi-structured interviews with six different officers. Additionally, during participant observation, and the time before and after interviews among officers, I engaged in multiple informal conversations and interactions that typify ethnographic fieldwork (Bernard 2011:156). All of my informants are men over the age of 30 and have wives and/or children. Half of the group is white, with one Hispanic officer and two African American officers. With the exception of one, all of the participants have lived most of their lives and grew up in or near the Atlanta area. Additionally, all of my informants have over a decade of in law enforcement, which offers a depth of information that is impossible without such extensive experience.

My research participants have altogether worked in the most populated regions of the Atlanta area. They have experience and currently work in Fulton, Gwinnett, and Dekalb counties. The agencies that employ my informants are organized at the county level (county police departments, sheriff's office, or district attorney's office). Only one participant has worked for a small city on the south side of the Atlanta area and is currently working for the police department of a university. Although my sample size is limited to these three major counties, the experience of my informants allows for a slightly broader view of the police

communities in the Atlanta area. The participants of this research have experience as ‘ordinary’ beat cops, investigators, trainers, detectives, and in specialized units. To offer brief profiles of my informants, I remain vague to protect their identity, giving them pseudonyms, and not specifying the location they work in. Getting into specific dynamics of an administration or agency can offer information that is traceable to my informants.

Russell and Steven both work at a county training facility in a highly populated county that is diverse in its environments and population. They both have college degrees, over ten years of experience, and over two years of experience as instructors. In addition to experience as a “normal” officer in basic uniform, Russell worked in the S.W.A.T. career division before becoming a trainer, and Steven worked in a Narcotics division. They are both from the county they work in they work for and are invested and committed to the jurisdiction.

Dalton grew up in the Midwest and moved to Georgia in his adolescence. He became a police officer in a small city in the southern Atlanta area approximately 20 years ago. He spent 15 years in this town, many of which he spent as a detective of major crimes, which were in no shortage during this time period in this area. In addition to this he worked as an instructor. In the past five years he started working at university and college police departments in the Atlanta area, as well as the city, where he appreciates a lighter workload and lower risks. Lawrence has worked for 22 years in the same county, which is also one that he grew up in. He also has a degree in criminal justice, and has worked for 14 years as an investigator of child crimes and homicide at the district attorney’s office. His work experience here is very different from that of cops on the street. He spends most of his time indoors, dealing with cases and deliberating with other experienced officers about evidence, police reports, and trials. Although he has experience

of working “in the field”, he admits that the job of an investigator is better for its hours, physical demands, and pay.

Joe worked for 20 years in the sheriff’s department of one of these highly populated counties. There he worked on the gang, intake, and secured operations units in the county jail. He retired after 20 years and has worked at multiple places that would be considered “part time” for officers who were still on the force. These are jobs where officers work doing security or traffic detail for restaurants, clubs, schools, and other institutions for extra income. Almost all police officers take up these jobs, which is unsurprisingly an experience all of my informants share. Currently, Joe works at a high school, where he does security, policing the halls, breaking up fights and, though not often, making arrests if necessary. Charlie started in the county police department about 18 years ago. He grew up in housing projects, and was working towards higher education. He joined the force and eventually got a job at the county’s district attorney’s office. After retiring from there, he transferred to the district attorney’s office in another county to work as a detective. He is currently pursuing a graduate degree while doing this as well.

My informants are representative of a large population of seasoned officers and superiors within the institution. My informants can be considered cultural ‘experts’, who are not only professionally experienced police officers and trainers, but are also fully integrated into the law enforcement culture of the area (Bernard 2011:113). However, though they can speak to their own experiences as rookies, they are not new recruits, young officers, or inexperienced. This skews my sample to careerists and does not represent the diversity of experiences in the force. Ideally, the group would be more representative of women, the various ethnicities, and the different ages and levels of experience that make up the whole of the police forces in the Atlanta area. The fact that my entire sample community consisted of men severely limited the access I

had to the perspective of women officers. Gender in policing institutions did not arise as a topic of conversation. However, this does focus my study on the perspective of *men* in law enforcement, who make up the majority of the workforce in the United States (Data USA). Additionally, two of the participants of this research have about 12 years of experience each, while the other four have roughly 20 each. I could not find statistics on the average years of experience of officers in the Atlanta area, or in the U.S., although In a study in Cincinnati in 2005, it was recorded that a third of the officers that left during course of the study had under a year of experience, and almost two thirds had under five years (Riley et al. 2005). Another study in Arizona in 2005 noted that out of 446 recruits, 13% quit before they finished the police academy and 22% quit during field training or while in their first year on the force (Haarr 2005). Finally, in a study in North Carolina, it was noted that the average stay in law enforcement was 34 months (Yearwood & Freeman 2004). Although these data do not speak to the Atlanta area, they give a general idea of career length in the United States. Additionally, the average age of law enforcement officers in the U.S. is 39.5, with most officers in the U.S. being men between the ages of 28 and 40 (Data USA). According to my informants who have worked as trainers in the area most officers start in their mid-20s. Combining this with the average age of officers in the U.S., this places the average level of experience at around ten years. The participants of this study range from their early thirties to their fifties, placing them within this range, and although their age and gender are limited, the sample is ethnically diverse, and generally representative of a large portion of law enforcement in the U.S.

The officers who participated in this research had their own reasons for doing so, and those who ignored my emails, business cards, and recruitment flyers had their own reasons for not participating as well. I sent emails to various departments in the Atlanta area as well as

personal emails of officers that were offered department websites in an attempt to open my sample community to include people of other ethnicities, genders, and the LGBTQ community. I was initially in contact with four additional officers, although for whatever reason they ceased communication with me. Two of these informants were introduced to me through a mutual friend. One I met at a previous job of mine, another on university campus, and one was introduced to me through a primary informant. Despite my efforts, my sample size was limited to the six men. Although my informants were very forthcoming, an understandable caution and wariness among police officers towards public conversations and the media became more evident as the research continued. This and the small time frame I had to collect data kept me from building trust with more people. However, my access into the community does not grant me immunity from being treated as an outsider and being received as a civilian, or perhaps worse, a nosy anthropologist. This was evident by the fact that, whether consciously or not, officers, frequently maintained a professional demeanor, responding with standard information and seemingly formalized answers. This was particularly highlighted as I gained rapport with my informants, as they oscillated between formal and informal registers depending on the questions asked and topics raised.

In addition to the preconceptions of my participants, my own philosophies and ethics inevitably influence my research and analysis. Policing is a practice that unavoidably deals with cultural notions of morality and politics. In order to minimize misinterpretation of my findings based on my personal biases, I must clarify my own political and ethical subject position. Policing practices are not in line with my scope of political and ethical beliefs. Largely, I do not agree with the existence of a policing institution. This sets me as a radical political Other to my research community. However, despite the fact that I may not politically support it, the police do

exist, and since this is the reality, I believe that analyzing and researching the police is a necessity. This is not only necessary for transparency, but also to empower those who find themselves subjected to policing mechanisms with the knowledge of these mechanisms work. Being explicit about this is an important part of the ethnographic process, which Beatrice Jauregui argues, is an “ethical project” in and of itself (Jauregui 2013:147). As an ethnographer, acknowledging my subject position and all of its implications is necessary, since ethnography should be, as Jauregui puts it, “continually striving to engage critically with the Other, while allowing said Other to exist and contribute to the building of knowledge” (Jauregui 2013:147). I discussed my political position and personal ideology with of my informants, with whom I became comfortable with telling such things. One does not typically sit across the table from a police officer and tell them that they believe the police should be dismantled. Lawrence engaged me in discussion, did not attack my politics, and respectfully carried on with the conversation. I expected this, which is why I told him. As for my other informants, they did not ask my personal ideologies or politics, as the conversation never came up. Rather, they seemed to be more appreciative of the fact that I was interested in their perspective. I do believe that more of my informants would have been open to such conversations, but our discussions focused on the practices, perspectives, and public relations. Information of my own political beliefs was not actively censored. If any of my participants had questioned, I would have responded honestly and respectfully.

Regardless of my political and ethical leanings, with this research I am committed to a full and honest attempt to critically analyze and understand the perspectives, ethical and otherwise, of police officers. I can truthfully say that this endeavor has changed my own understandings, perceptions, and beliefs. After conducting this research I am truthfully invested

in the police perspective, the people wearing the badge, and the relationship between the public and the police. Such is the nature of ethnography, a process that inevitably necessitates a negotiation of ethics and perspective (Fassin 2013:22-4, Jauregui 2013:147). Consequently, amidst the bias inherent to my political and ethical position, comes a legitimate sense of curiosity and interest, making this project serve as a process of personal as well as academic discovery, in which I am deeply invested. The ethical responsibility to my participants and their safety has made necessary a level of vagueness of personal and specific geographical and social information. This analysis is particularly sensitive to personal information, assigning pseudonyms to individuals. Additionally, geographic areas, cities, counties, and other jurisdictions are not mentioned by name. Rather, they are generally described to the extent that is relevant to the analysis. This may include geographic size, population size and density, cultural associations, and type of environment (rural vs. urban, etc.). Working in law enforcement is a dangerous vocation on many different levels. Largely this is because the public role of police is one that is often in contention with people. The pseudonyms and ambiguity in this research's descriptions is in the interest of the participants.

Special attention to research procedure and ethics is a necessary component to the successful execution of any research and the realization of its goals. I conducted this project for multiple reasons. First and foremost, it is intended to offer an accurate and critical analysis of the perspective of police officers in the Atlanta area. The purpose of such an analysis is to offer insight into policing practices and culture that may be generally applied to policing in the United States. Such information can be used to frame understandings of the nature of policing and its working components in an effort to have more productive and accurate discussions about the police, the law, and justice. Therefore the intended audience of this work is *everyone*. Policing is

a public practice, and any anthropology of the police is therefore, to a degree, public anthropology (Mutsaers et al 2015). With this goal in mind, the knowledge this project produces is meant to be accessible, comprehensive, and useful to anthropologists, the public, and police officers alike.

4 The Totality of Circumstances

The trained officer is one who has gone through a rite of passage in police culture, a process that changes a civilian to an officer. An analysis of this training process is a window into the background of logics, practices, and ideologies of policing. In this chapter I explain the formal processes which police officers undergo, and how it shapes the ways officers perceive and interact with their surroundings. This includes mandatory training one receives at the academy, as well as the periodic maintenance courses that officers have to attend. Additionally, this chapter critically engages the specialized and trained perspective of the police, and considers the ontological and practical implications of police training. To illustrate the core of this perceptive logic I now describe an experience from my fieldwork.

4.1 Action & Reaction

The Firearms Training System (FATS®) is a virtual reality system that is often used in police academies to train officers on the use of both lethal and non-lethal weapons in various scenarios. This system is comprised of multiple components. It involves computer software, a camera, a projector, and special simulation weapons. To use this system, a trainer controls the program through the software on a computer, while the projector projects a scenario onto a

screen or wall. Each scenario is a collection of live action video clips that were shot with different characters and various settings, making a virtual reality with which the trainee must interact. During the simulation, there are multiple points in each scenario when the trainer operating the software is prompted to choose one of multiple possible options into which the scenario transpires. The choices the trainer makes direct what happens on the screen. For example, the trainer could choose a person on the screen to put their hands behind their head or to pull a weapon and attack. The trainee must speak to the people on the screen as they would in a real life scenario, utilizing props in the room (such as the door to a police car, etc.), and the weapons they are armed with for the specific scenario. The weapons are the same size and weight as their 'real' counterparts, the pistol and the taser, etc. These weapons work much like arcade video games, allowing the user to fire accurately on the screen in the simulation. The trainee is recorded throughout the entire simulation and is shown the footage afterwards where critique and praise can be given by the trainer.

On my first day of research at a county training facility in a suburban region of the Atlanta area, I was given the opportunity to experience this training procedure firsthand. Before starting the simulation, my informant, Russell, gave me some background to each scenario. This information was supposed to mimic what an officer receives from an emergency call: location, number of people, type of situation, presence of weapons, etc. After a few runs, one scenario in particular proved especially educational, teaching me a concept that I eventually learned is a major, central component of police logic. In Russell's explanation, he told me that the individual I was about to encounter in the scenario had just shot three police officers and was fleeing in a brown van that he eventually crashed into a tree next to the road. The simulation began just after the police cruiser had stopped on the shoulder of the road. On the screen I saw a van with its

front end crumpled into a large tree. A man stumbles out of the driver's seat with a gun pointed at his own head, threatening to kill himself. To this point, with the exception of a hostage scenario, the scenarios had involved characters outside of storefronts and traffic stops, many of which I handled by simply talking. In this scenario, I felt jammed. I did not know whether to pull my weapon or try to stop the person from committing suicide. After a few attempts at telling the character to put the gun down, I found myself, contrary to my intention, pointing my gun at him, telling him to put the gun down or else I would have to shoot. The man pulled his gun away from his head and toward me. He shot me before I could react, despite already having my pistol pointed at him.

Needless to say I failed the simulation. Russell had obviously given me this particular simulation to prove a point. He mentioned how often people respond similarly to me, and how dangerous such a reaction is. He swiveled his chair behind the computer desk in the room to talk to me about this. He asked me why I felt compelled to talk to him as opposed to shooting him. I attributed my response to a reactionary disposition that was triggered by his seemingly suicidal posture, I switched from a defensive stance to one of openness and negotiation. Russell then proceeded to explain to me his trained perspective on the matter, picking up a simulation pistol that was on the desk by his hand. He brought the gun to his head, mimicking the character from the simulation, told me that he was going to point the gun at me, and directed me to react to it. He started talking to me about my research, about our mutual friend. I indulged him and answered his questions. In the middle of my answer to his second or third question, he pulled his gun from his head to me and pulled the trigger. The click happened long before my arm had even begun to move to pull mine.

Russell reminded me that all action is faster than reaction and that even if I perceive what seems to be the complete situation, things can change before I can react. He was not patronizing me. Rather he was implicitly emphasizing the enormous implications of this simple fact. He brought up my initial reaction of negotiation, noting that despite what he told me beforehand about the assailant shooting three officers before fleeing the scene, I did not want to make the decision to shoot. In hindsight, he practically told me what my reaction should be through his contextualization of the character driving the van. Yet I still failed to assess the potential danger of the situation, underestimating the threat that the character posed. Russell explained that the best orientation towards the unknowable future is gained through preparation for the unexpected. One must have a finely tuned sense of awareness, quick responsiveness, and an intimate knowledge of the *totality of circumstances* to best prepare for the unknown potential threat.

In discussions with my informants I made a point to ask about this aspect of police perspective. The fact that action is *always* faster than reaction is central to tactical police logic. Every decision must be made with this fact in mind. The possibility and potential for violence that an officer confronts while enforcing order calls for an intense level of preparedness, which can otherwise seem excessive. The decisions an officer makes, and how he or she reads and reacts to a situation, inevitably could have dire consequences. Officers must know this. By contextualizing exercises with expectations of malicious and violent intent, their training teaches them to normalize a posture of awareness and preemption. Training hones recruits' perception to identify a threat before it materializes. This develops a vigilant disposition that identifies crime by reading every situation and considering the totality of circumstances. Crime exists in potentiality, and thus, is a looming and persistent affective reality. Fighting crime efficiently is a question of preparation, reaction, and preemption, the prime objects of the training process.

4.2 Joining the Force

They come in and they're all packed full of this college educated knowledge and they think they can go out and save the world. That's a great aspiration, but don't try to save the world, try to save the next person on the next call. Try to save yourself and make sure you go home to your family. You go out there and try to save the world you're gonna end up having an ego-centric attitude and you're gonna end up doing something stupid or getting yourself hurt

I realize that now, but I didn't then. I realized that they were trying to break us down and build us back up, but I didn't realize the extent to which they were doing it

Formal training is a disciplinary process that focuses on perception, mental and physiological reaction, and a general understanding of ethics, laws, and protocol, in order to sharpen the tool of discretion. Discretion is the active decision process that police officers use to determine their action or reaction to a particular set of circumstances. This process involves multiple levels of consideration. To carry out this process adequately, an officer must have full knowledge and investment in fulfilling their role as a police officer. In order to do this, recruits are trained on what the job entails, what they are expected to do, and how best to carry out these expectations and fulfill the role of the police officer.

In Georgia, police officers are trained at regional training facilities. The duration of training is, at minimum, approximately ten weeks. However, the usual duration, at least at the facilities described by my informants, ranges between 18 and 26 weeks. In this time recruits have classes on the theories behind policing. This involves the teaching of concepts and practices such as community policing, “verbal judo”, sensitivity training, and fair and impartial policing.

Additionally, recruits learn protocol, policy, and policing laws in Georgia, as well as any particular relevant characteristics or information on specific communities (counties, cities, etc.). Due to state standards, much of the curriculum is generally similar across training facilities in a region and the state. However, each facility differs, training according to its own setting and jurisdictions. This includes temporary courses, which are often implemented in response to local or national incidents (such as sensitivity training, etc.). Class material for such courses often comes from 3rd party or affiliated research groups who sell the course material and teach police trainers how to use the material in training new recruits and current officers. In addition to the primary training, officers must attend a mandatory 20 hours of yearly maintenance training, such as weapons training or special tactics. This number of hours is the minimum, and these maintenance classes can collectively add up to approximately 32 hours of training, depending on the facility. The physical aspect of training consists of weapons training and martial arts, where recruits are taught how to most effectively and accurately exercise their right to use physical force. The officers I interviewed told me that the quality and quantity of these various components of training vary between training centers. In some cases, physical training is carried out with dummies, while others use sparring techniques with an actual instructor embodying the role of the assailant, acting out various scenarios and adding a more realistic and unpredictable characteristic to training.

To be accepted into the police academy in Georgia an applicant must at least be 18 years old and have a GED or high school diploma. They must go through the application process, which, at the facility of my informants, is split up into two phases and can take multiple months. Initially, in addition to an assessment of physical ability and personal information, an applicant must fill out what is called a “blue book”, where they are to write a self-narrative, including a

detailed life and work history. Upon completing the physical assessment, applicants then get scheduled for an oral job interview. After successfully completing this first phase, the applicants are placed on a list, from which individuals are selected and given a conditional job offer that is dependent on the completion of phase two. During phase two, applicants are go through a psychological evaluation, polygraph testing, a physical examination, drug screening, and a basic mathematics and reasoning exam. Outside of physical incompetency, an applicant can be denied for multiple reasons. If the individual has a history of drug usage, a criminal history, or exhibits any dishonesty in their life history, assessments, and exams, then they are disqualified.

Though recently graduated officers can work wherever they find a position in the state of Georgia, the officers I interviewed at the training center noted how their recruits typically end up working in the same county as the training facility. They attributed this to superior benefits and mobility offered by their county's agency. This is often a major factor influencing an individual's decision of where to work. Better pay, benefits, and opportunities, along with location are the major factors that go into this decision. Additionally, personal investment and feelings of attachment to certain areas or jurisdictions also affect this decision. Both of the trainers that I interviewed at the facility were from the county they worked in. One informant, Steven, mentioned how his upbringing in the county and familiarity with the community was one of the main reasons he joined and works where he does. Along with the higher standard that he attributed to this county department, he wanted to give back a service to *his* community.

In regards to motivations for joining the force, moral compulsion and a sense of commitment are common themes among my informants. One informant, Dalton, claimed that he became a police office because he *had* to. He felt that he was born for it, and that it was a position of service that select people are truly made for. Another officer, after explaining how he

was a good fit for the police, stated, both in or out of uniform, “every day of my life is community service”. However, all of my informants admitted that many officers come in for more pragmatic reasons. The job of a police officer, though dangerous, is stable, with reliable benefits, options, and opportunity.

Although some of my informants stated multiple times that most recruits have a moral or ethical investment in the job, none of them could deny the attractiveness of the excitement, danger, and the authority that is experienced as a police officer. The attractiveness to the job varies from person to person, though the officers I interviewed described it as if that there are *types* of people who apply for the job. People often come from backgrounds of service and discipline, such as military, first responder, and civil servants. Although these are usually the types that become police officers, recruits may still come from college, or directly out of high school as well. However, the likelihood of a military background, so it seems to my informants, increases with a longer career in law enforcement. My informants mentioned that often when people quit, they do it within their first five years either due to personal reasons or external reasons. My informants attributed this to the fact that many people come into law enforcement because they are unsure about what they want to do as a career. However, because I did not interview with any ex-police officers, I cannot accurately offer an insight into the reasons officers have for leaving. Nevertheless, a career in law enforcement is stable, it pays, and it is accessible. Paradoxically, I was also told that these were often the same reasons people left early on in their careers. On one hand, compensation is stable, on the other, it is insufficient. Promotions often incentivize longer careers. All of my informants had been promoted multiple times to be in the position they were in at the time of my research. When I questioned about this process, and how individuals were evaluated, I received vague answers. From what I gather, the

process involves a board of experienced superiors within the administration, who engage in a “very subjective process”. This was how the promotion process was explained to me every time I asked, as subjective, vague, and that no one really knows how officers are evaluated. However, my informants did reiterate multiple times when explaining this, that there was no “arrest or citation quota”, or that officers do not earn points by bringing people in. Nevertheless, promotions were attainable despite the ambiguity of the exact reasons for them, so long as an officer proved to be a “good” officer, which will be explored further later.

Whatever the reason is for people coming in and staying or leaving, going through the academy and putting on the uniform is a rite of passage that turns an individual into a police officer, which means many different things in terms of perspective. But one thing that it means for sure, is the development and maintenance of a law enforcement identity, which is created through the discipline of training and socialization among officers and the administration. The perspective that the discipline and socialization of the academy cultivates, and the identity it develops are all part of the rite of passage of the training process, which systematically produces a standard of police perception and abilities.

4.3 “Every situation is a potential threat”: Training Perception

A lot of times when I meet somebody for the first time I’m looking at hips, because that’s where a lot of weapons are held.. I’m looking at hands, where their hands are. Can I see their pockets? ...So you look for body language, what are people doing? ... Where are people’s eyes?

Officers are taught to think the scenario through. And a lot of times they think of the worst case scenario... so they pull up, and that’s the only thing going through their head.

Physical and perception training are honed to perfect the art of discretion, to be able to identify a threat with minimal error or misinterpretation. Particular rules, protocol, and procedures are involved in the complex process of decision-making that involves preparation, cognition, and action. The ability to react quickly and accurately must operate in tandem with a maximally informed perception. When I asked my informants, some with experience as trainers, what the goal of training was, their answers centered on producing an officer with a well-adjusted and accurate discretionary ability. The main goal for the trainers I interviewed was to produce an officer who was prepared and qualified to make the “hard decision” when necessary. In addition to this, this officer would remain on the force to be a productive asset to the department, eventually making a career out of policing. The ideal training process that produces this type of officer, who is proficient in the art of discretion and employing her or his abilities in asserting authority, looks different for each officer. Though the current systems seem to produce these prepared and responsible officers to my informants, they have differing opinions on what the perfect way to cultivate these traits is, and what might be neglected or ignored in the current model.

Cumulatively, training works primarily on a recruit’s perception and physical capability to respond to that perception. In order to identify a threat accurately, individuals are trained in a sort of sociocultural semiotics: reading body language, aesthetics, context, disposition, and behavior. Ideally, taking into account the *totality of the circumstances*, officers can locate a threat in any situation, or at least identify the potential for one. This is important, when considering the fact that was reiterated throughout every one of my interviews, that action is faster than reaction. The potential threat that exists in the future is never completely knowable.

To best arm one's self against it, is to take a stance of preemption that is informed by all senses. This is the explicit objective of training. When done correctly, the officers that go through this training process come out finely tuned and calibrated to minimize collateral damage, that is, unjustified and unnecessary killings. However, as alluded to by one of my informants, the implicit objective of training is producing officers who are ethically and morally invested in the job who will take on the burden and sacrifice of the role. No officer, trainer or otherwise, wants someone that is incompetent to back them up. Incompetency, in this case, means an inability or unwillingness to operate to the fullest capacity when on the job. A number of things could make one incompetent, though the selection process preemptively weeds out those with physical and glaring social or mental characteristics that would inhibit a person from adequately fulfilling the role as a police officer. However, individuals can and do what is called "box checking", or doing the bare minimum to become an officer. People who do this, according to my informants, are not as invested as they should be, which creates a weakness in the force. In one sense this is a problem of unmet potential in the fight against crime. In another aspect, this is a highly dangerous and potentially crippling risk. As my Joe explained to me, "if you're somebody that *just works* there, I'll never work with you, personally. Can't. Won't. That means you'll get me killed".

Becoming a police officer, from the information that I have gathered, is not a possibility for everyone. Outside of the standards and requirements set by the institution and legislation, a specific temperament is necessary to play this role. One must be able to develop a particular perspective combining an acute sense of awareness with certain ethical and moral fiber, and the physical capacity to back it up. Together, these aspects are what training puts in the most work to develop. The training process works to shift and form new practices and behaviors in officers.

By working on the perception of recruits and how they interact with the world, training changes the worlds they inhabit, and who they are in relation to it, by preparing them to embody the role of a police officer in society.

4.4 Decisions, decisions, decisions

And even when things don't go over the way they should and I have to use physical force to take someone into custody, as soon as I've done that, I'm done. I go back to treating you with respect and dignity. It took me a couple years to come down off the adrenaline high and widen up my tunnel vision, and realize 'okay I can calm down now'. That really came from my trainers, and I had some of the best trainers, and that's how they always taught me. Even when it was a life or death struggle, once we removed the threat, they told me immediately "it's okay, we got it", helping me to realize that I'm still amped up and I need to back it down.

De-escalation is highly valued among my informants. It is a major characteristic that differentiates 'good' cops from the 'bad'. A trained officer is one who is always on the lookout and is prepared for the worst. A *good* officer is one who neither overreacts or underreacts, using their discretion effectively and accurately, never using unnecessary force but not taking any chances. To do this, self-discipline, restraint, problem solving, and critical thought is necessary. Exerting control over physical and affectual reactions to a situation is an ability gained from training itself. Fear, excitement, and anger are as much a part of policing as the necessity to control such emotions. Ideally, to effectively control these emotions, an officer must consider how, why, and from where every urge, desire, and decision throughout the day comes. One

informant emphasized this especially, describing policing as a “series of decisions” that influence everything, especially the job performance of a police officer, where “the worst decision is no decision”. “The difference between a good officer and a bad officer is decision making. It all comes down to who can be decisive. You have to be able to make quick and good decisions. Just about everything we do is decision making”. He explained how all of the decisions made from the type of music for the commute to work to the whether or not to pull someone over are all influenced by each other. This means considering the implications of every move, act, or reaction on the overall trajectory of the day, week, year, or entire career. The ability to adequately use discretion is dependent on the overall course of events and decisions made at various points throughout the course of being a police officer. It becomes a priority to link the present to the potential future, in order to best prime and prepare for the impending threat. The officer must understand her or himself, and the surrounding world, in a way that implicates their agency and consciousness with the larger series of decisions, actions, and reactions of the context

To train officers to take on a vigilant perception and attentive disposition, is an act of what Brian Massumi (2015) calls *ontopower*. Massumi employs Foucault’s notion of biopower to explain a shift in perception, and ultimately a shift in ontology, in the past few decades with the rise of terrorism and unknown, unpredictable threats. The concept of biopower refers to the control, influence, and ordering of bodies, which is especially present in disciplinary and security societies (Foucault 1990). Through micro mechanisms of power, biopower is enacted on people individually throughout development, education, and regulation (Foucault 1990:140-1). Such mechanisms are seen in the institutions and administrations that order life in contemporary society, such as medical institutions, universities, the military, and the police (Foucault

1977:167-9, 1990:141). These collectively constitute what Foucault calls *governmentality*, where the multiple administrative bodies that make up the state apparatus and other hegemonic institutions exercise control over the members of society (Foucault 2007:108). Eventually, through disciplinary practices in almost every aspect of life, the disciplinary structure disappears into the bodies of its subject, creating “docile bodies” that are malleable and easily conformed to work with organizations of power (Foucault 1977:136,177-184). Ultimately, this process creates self-governing individuals, and by extension populations, who enact their agency to reproduce and perpetuate systems of domination (Foucault 1977:164,174,220).

Massumi extends this logic to its ontological implications in his philosophical, psychological, and historical approach to perception, power, and war (2015). Contemporary military powers, according to Massumi, work using the operational logic of preemption (Massumi 2015:5). This is evidenced in the “shock and awe” campaign of the Bush administration, an exercise of ontopower on the enemy by the U.S., and a noticeable shift from the operative logic of the Cold War era that gripped grand military strategies for decades (Massumi 2015:79). Military logic in the Cold War era was that of deterrence, where the enemy was not only known, but it could be accurately assessed. In relation to this assessment, a reorientation could be made to better protect against and engage with the enemy (Massumi 2015:6-9). The operative logic of preemption became most prevalent during the early 2000’s where the atmosphere changed from one in which the enemy was visible and measurable, to one that was invisible and virtually undetectable (Massumi 2015:71-2). This created an operative logic that is based on anticipation, expectancy, and proactivity as opposed to reaction (Massumi 2015:15-17). This new operative logic necessitated a rearrangement and recalibration of perception, effectively reshaping the world and the self of the agent (Massumi 2015:15-16). This process is not dissimilar to that of military or

police training. Where the object of biopower is the corporeal being that is held and normalized to a standard, the object of ontopower is the perception and the reality of its subjects. This process works on subconscious levels of awareness, attention, and reaction. It is meant to position the subject against the ever-persistent struggle against time in order to best prime the self for an anticipation of the inevitable future threat. By being trained to take in the totality of circumstances, to base all activity and decision off this information, and to posture themselves based on the fact that action is faster than reaction, police training can be considered as an ontopowerful process. Through the training and experiences, police officers are effectively reoriented in relation to the surrounding world.

The attentional blink is the instant that exists in the time between when an individual shifts their attention from one object to another (Massumi 2015:65). What determines what object the attention is attracted to next is set of factors, largely having to deal with how attention works and, in some cases, how it has been trained to work (Massumi 2015:66). The ontopowerful effects form the preemptive operative logic through what Massumi and psychologists call “priming” (Massumi 2015:66). Priming “refers to the capacity of micro-events occurring in the attentional gap to modulate the coming perception” (Massumi 2015:66). This process involves “‘higher’ cognitive functions”, that include recognition of faces, words, and objects, situational awareness, implicit cultural understandings of context, including perceived implications of race, gender, and class (Massumi 2015:66). These factors influence the attention, priming for an “emergent awareness” that takes a “posture” of preemptive anticipation, as opposed to a reflex reaction to stimulus (Massumi 2015:66-7). The process of priming perception operates “on the level at which the capacity for action is in the making” (Massumi 2015:71). It is “proto-epistemological-and already ontological, in that it concerns changes in the body’s degree and

mode of enablement in and toward its total situation or life environment” (Massumi 2015:71). A perspective that has been mobilized and primed for a preemptive operative logic is one that must work in anticipation of what is to come in order to best guard itself from the future threat, and must constantly re/posture itself to do this (Massumi 2015:75-7). To incorporate the terminology of my informants, a perspective such as this must proficiently recognize the totality of the circumstances on the most basic of cognitive levels in order to make the best decision. Such a mode of perception cannot just be described simply as profiling, though it may effectively produce similar results. The object of ontopowerful training processes exists on a deeper level than the conscious cognition and reasoning of profiling. It deals with the most basic perceptions of the world.

What constitutes crime, danger, and a threat, among other cultural norms, assumptions, and understandings are the factors that work in the process of priming. These conceptual factors are the primary objects of enhancement in police training, shaping the perspectives of recruits to be able to best spot crime before anyone else does or can. Experience as a police officer throughout a career has an effect on this as well. Ideas of crime, what is dangerous, and who exactly is a threat may be reformed or abolished, as well as reinforced. These are the concepts and categories of what Massumi refers to as “higher” cognitive functions”, which prime the perception of preemption for officers who must anticipate the danger that hides in future events. This is the stance that must be taken by officers to, as Dalton put it, “save the person on the next call”, and “make sure [they] go home to [their] families”. Examples of these categories and concepts are assumptions of race, gender, socioeconomic class, and associations of geographic locations, parts of town, neighborhoods, and situations. The way my informants prepare themselves when answering a domestic violence call is different than when they answer a call for robbery, or

conduct a traffic stop. They also expect certain degrees of danger or types of situations they have to deal with. Dalton remarked that working on a university campus much safer and more relaxed than the neighborhood that he used to police in the southern Atlanta area. Joe and Charlie explained that when working a night club, it is “guaranteed you’re gonna have to fight somebody or arrest somebody”. Russell told me that it was protocol to have guns drawn for certain situations, such as a burglary in progress or other similar situations, while having a gun drawn might unintentionally exacerbate other situations. The way these incidents are assessed is influenced by the parts of town, who is involved, and the ways in which the officers interact with the context of the incident, which vary from situation to situation.

Every one of my informants who I asked about the difference between a good police officer and a bad one, answered that a good cop was one who not only could make a decision (as opposed to freezing or deflecting) but one that was experienced and accurate in reading the situation. Russell used an example of someone calling 911 on a black man in a predominately white neighborhood. He said that if someone reported this as suspicious activity, it was up to the police officer to decipher the situation and decide if the call was a product of profiling and overreaction on the caller’s part or if the person in the car actually posed a threat. Russell explained that this scenario could play out in any of the possible ways and that each one had to be assessed by the totality of its own circumstances.

There exists a certain level of vigilance, of awareness, and expectancy that makes for a well-adjusted perspective. Being too assumptive or too reactive to the ever-pervasive presence of potential threat can lead an officer to overestimate the use of force, overreact, and over-police, as mentioned by an officer in the leading quote of this section, as well as the preceding one. However, being too comfortable can result in injury or death of anyone involved. This is a fact

that was mentioned multiple times in my interviews. My informants stated many times that officers who have under five years of experience and those with over 30 years of experience are at the most risk. This is because the perspective is either too wound up or too relaxed.

The effects of this type of operational logic and its ontological implications have much to do with recent discussions about the relationship between the police, crime, and marginalized populations, namely African American and black communities. The object of the ontopowerful processes of training and experience as an officer is the scheme of conceptual prototypes and categories that construct the perceived world of the recruit or officer. Ideas of criminality and danger, as explained by Burton, are often ascribed to identities that are performed in a manner that is outside of hegemonic standards of civility, politeness, and productivity (Burton 2015:38-40, Comaroff & Comaroff:30-1,44-6). Cultural assumptions and stereotypes of race, gender, and class are undoubtedly at work here. Police training and the policing experience may work to deconstruct some of these assumptions while it can also exacerbate them.

4.5 Identifying problems

Efforts are made within the institution to deal with these cultural assumptions, often taking the form of special classes. This coincides with the logic of my informants, who stated multiple times that the best answer to the recent controversial phenomena in policing is more training. It is in the best interest of the policing institution, in theory, to train their officers to have the best sense of awareness and accuracy when assessing a situation. Because the authority of the police relies on public perception and legitimization, the police must be interested in public welfare. Sensitivity training and impartial policing classes are given as part of the

curriculum as well as the periodical maintenance classes in an attempt to combat the perspectives that lead to unjustified killings. However, this does not mean that the problem of stereotyping and profiling on a subconscious level is solved, despite the boastings of some my informants who are proud of the absence of such incidents in their own jurisdictions. Impartial policing, as I understand it from my informants, is policing that is unbiased in its practices, not discriminating against people of any race, class, gender, or any other category or group. The impartial policing class focuses on implicit bias, teaching that everyone, including officers, is guilty of this. It then teaches practical tools of perception and attention to try to counteract or work against implicit bias. For example, at the scene of a car accident, it teaches the officer to look at the road, the cars, and the circumstances to determine the fault of the accident, as opposed to the drivers, whose gender, race, or class may influence the officer's decision. This class, and its chosen mechanism to minimize discriminatory policing practices, is valuable for its work to educate officers of their implicit bias. However, despite the good it does, it is problematic in two ways: such courses do not teach or work with the major causes of institutional and systemic discrimination of gender, race, and class, and the suggested practices are contradictory to the logic of police perspective.

Such practices are not preventative, or take into account larger and systemic injustices of discrimination and prejudice within legislature and the economy. The perspective of the individual police officer is not the only working component in larger schemes of structural violence. This is not to take away the importance from the development of personal perspective of officers, rather it raises an additional question about criminality, how it is understood, and how it is based in sociocultural hegemonic understandings of race, gender, and class. Such is a

question that is reminiscent of Durkheim's observation that crime has as much to do with the legal world, as it does with its illegal antagonist.

The ontopowerful training of individuals is highly effective, training them to see danger, identify threats, and spot crime. In addition to concerns of the personal perspective of the police officer, questions of what constitutes crime, and how it might be used to understand categories of people in a discriminatory way, is a necessary component of larger conversations of policing. This is a point that is also supported by Bornstein, who argues for a framework that understands institutional racism not as constituted by a collection of individual racist perspectives, rather by historical, traditional, and cultural regimes of knowledge, Truth, and Order (Bornstein 2015:52-3). It is incorrect to ascribe blame of the structural violence of society, and even its policing practices solely to police officers, though, it is still highly important to examine the personal perspective of individual police. However, a course such as the impartial policing class is not a fix-all, nor does it ask the pertinent questions that critically engage ideas of society, justice, and law. In addition to this, answers to recent controversy such as this course are not practically aligned with policing logic.

The suggestion of the impartial policing class, which instruct officers to limit their perception and omit certain aspects of the world, works against a perspective that has been trained to be aware of the totality of circumstances. To instruct officers to avoid paying attention to the people involved, perhaps the most important component of a totality of circumstances, is contradictory to the operative logic of preemption. This probably explains why recruits and officers did not take the class seriously when it was initially instituted into the curriculum. When I questioned Russell, a trainer for some years, about the sorts of classes that recruits are not

particularly excited about, or dislike, he almost immediately answered with the impartial policing course.

The title of the class doesn't sound sexy, it sounds very, "we're doing this because people want us to" type thing... When I first heard the name I was like, "is some civilian going to come in here and tell us how horrible we are and that we need to radically change the way we police?" But it's actually not. The company is founded by police officers and it is taught by police officers. I've enjoyed teaching the class, it brings up some good points as to what negative effects biased policing can have. It's not as bad as it sounds.

Russell admitted that other officers wound up enjoying the course, finding it informative and useful. However, seeming from Russell's explanation, the prior contempt held for the course by the instructor, officers, and trainees alike comes from an assumption of impracticality, and that it was designed by the public, who ultimately don't understand policing practice, to change policing practices. This is telling of where officers stand when it comes to similar courses, and indicative of two points. The first is that these sorts of courses can be implemented, and have been implemented, despite their incompatibility with the reality of policing practice and logic. Despite the class redeeming itself in the eyes of recruits, officers, and trainers the overall lesson of the class is, as I have argued, questionable when included into the larger preemptive posture and perception of policing. Second, that the public perspective on policing practices is devalued in relation to the perspective of other professionals, namely police officers. These two points are major considerations for any discussion concerning the police perspective and the relationship between the public and the police. Not only do the police have to maintain a certain level of rapport with the public and popular notions of justice to maintain authority, answering to public

outcries of injustice and demands for reform is a mechanism that may not be as effective as it seems, or at least effective in the way it is presented to be. This dynamic of authority maintenance and duty is a result of a necessary connection between the police and the public as two different entities, a type of relation that is inherent in the organization of society. This dynamic, and all of the differentiating factors between the two groups, such as perspective, ideology, values, roles, and ontology seem to lead to police understandings of the public and police as two separate categories of people in society. The differences of the public and the police, as perceived by the officers of my research, have a direct influence on policing perspective and practices, a factor that plays out in the social, ideological, and work lives of police officers. This binary of the police and the public may seem to be a direct consequence of the mere existence of the police. Nonetheless, this binary is the primary source for miscommunication, misunderstanding, and poor relations between the police and their communities.

5 Shepherds, Sheepdogs, Wolves, and Sheep

We are a lot like a sheep dog. Wolves are trying to get to the sheep and hurt them. The sheepdog has to be really tough with the wolves. The sheepdog also has to herd the sheep over to where it's safe. And sometimes you have to get a little rough with the sheep. "Hey! get over there like I told you to!" and the sheep don't always understand why the sheepdog is being mean and rough. But ultimately it's for the sheep's betterment. There's wolves over

there! I can see how the public sees us as a protector but also a little too mean or rough or unapproachable at times.

The police play a different role than civilians in society. However, as the metaphor given by my informant indicates, in some ways, the police see themselves as a different category of people than civilians. As another officer told me his own metaphor, the police were shepherds to the flock. There are reasons why police officers assume that civilians generally cannot understand or relate to the police perspective. Ultimately, this fissure can lead to defensiveness, dead end conversations, and doomed discussion between the police officers and outsiders, if such interactions even take place. To better understand where law enforcement officers are coming from, it is important to be familiar with some of the ways they see themselves in relation to the members of the public. Understanding these presumptions helps to identify points of friction and miscommunication between officers and civilians.

According to my informants, becoming a good police officer involves more than just academy training and proper enculturation. Years of experience on the force and in the field and frequent refresher courses are all necessary in the development of a police officer. There are always lessons to be learned, experiences to have, and things to improve. Three major factors of the division between the public and police officers emerged in my interviews: technical capacity of police officers, public misunderstanding of the police role, and a perceived prevalence of anti-police sentiment among the public.

5.1 Noticing everything

And I guess a person who is not in law enforcement wouldn't notice everything, but we tend to notice and remember everything. That's good and also that's bad....

It's the sheepdog mentality. Even when I'm off duty I feel like I've got a duty to help and protect.

The training that officers receive does not only work on their perception while they are in uniform. It affects their daily experience, whether they are on or off the clock. As Steven, an officer with years of experience explained, "I don't get paid 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. But when I'm with my family, I'm watching what people are doing". The trained perspective, in this sense, actually does differentiate the police from the general public. Ordinary civilians likely have no way to know how to see the world through the tactical lenses that the police are trained to be able to use. As my informant Charlie told me, "I guess a person who is not in law enforcement wouldn't notice everything, but we tend to notice and remember everything". I asked Lawrence during an interview to demonstrate what might be these things that officers notice and civilians generally do not. Just as we were discussing what police officers are trained to see that normal civilians are not, an on-duty police officer walked into the café we were having our conversation in. I noted how he looked relaxed, and that it was probably because I saw this particular officer in this café frequently. "I bet he's not", Lawrence responded. He continued, "I bet when he walked in, he looked around, noticed where the exits were, noticed who was in here..." I asked Lawrence, "do you ever lose that?", referring to the vigilance he was describing. "I haven't", he answered.

For officers, their professional vision creates a divide, which disqualifies ordinary civilians from understanding or criticizing the practices, tactics, and perspectives of the police. Inherent in the structure a profession is the monopoly its agents have on the professional discourse (Goodwin 1994:626). In the case of the police, their discourse is framed in larger issues of crime and danger. Specific terminology, jargon, and focusing on certain things when discussing situations constitutes a specialized, “professional vision” (Goodwin 1994:626). Officers are not only trained to see things in a particular, “professional” way, but they also learn to articulate it in a specialized register (Goodwin 1994:626). Officers are not only the ones qualified and authorized to see things the ways that they do, as many of my informants describe it, they are the only ones who can adequately discuss it, and thus critique it.

Simply the fact that the general public has not received training to be able to understand the police perspective was frequently mentioned in my interviews as a way to discount their perspective. The only possible source for effective critique must be from a qualified position that is capable of relating to and methodologically understanding the perspective of the police. Steven, an experienced officer, frequently stated that he was open to what the public and activists had to say about the police. However, every time he reiterated how such parties needed to understand the officer perspective. By this, what he means is that most officers have zero malicious intent in what they do, and what might seem to the *untrained* eye as brutality, cruelty, or injustice, is actually, when seen through professional vision, is completely legitimate, just, and necessary. However, when asked about the perspective of the public, especially those of critical activist groups such as Black Lives Matter, multiple of my informants admitted that they were not actually familiar with the arguments or points made by these groups, or if they did not admit this they did not seem to be. What seemed to be the case was that whether they knew the critique

or not, the officers I interviewed were quick to defend the officer's position and advocate for the public to trust in the perspective of the police. Though they often expressed this with a disclaimer; the fact that there are "bad cops" out there that do bad things, and should not be allowed to be police officers. These bad cops were truly the source of the problem, ultimately causing what my informants described as overreaction and exaggeration on the part of the media and the public discourse. According to my informants, if the public could understand where the police are coming from, they would see this and not be so negative.

5.2 "They don't understand"

You don't think you change when you become a police officer, but I guess you see so much and you interact with so much... You don't trust like you used to trust.

They don't get it, they don't know. They haven't seen the things I've seen, they haven't been through the things that I've been through

The quotes from my informants exhibit the lack of faith officers have in ordinary people's capacity to relate to the phenomenological position of the police. The police, along with other civil servants, experience a different set of expectations, responsibilities, and concerns than the ordinary civilian is tasked with. In our interviews, officers often noted how non-civil servants did not understand the position of civil servants, especially those of the police, fire fighters, and other first responders. Multiple informants extended this capacity to "understand" to people working in education, military, and health industries as well. At its core, this logic is based on

the experiences of embodying a certain role that is at the service of the larger population. To embody this role, one must navigate the pressures of social expectation, take on certain responsibilities, and deal with risk that are otherwise avoidable (Jauregui 2013:128, Karpiak 2013:93). This not only leads to a difference in experience between officers and civilians that actually ill-equips either side to understand the other. This fact constitutes a component of the social discourse of the police, a fact that, as stated often by all of my informants, all officers knew and felt.

The expectations that a community has of its police officers derive from the public nature of policing (Mutsaers et al. 2015). As a police officer, one is always seen by the public in relation to a conceptual ideal, which they must embody. How forgiving or critical a community is of this role is dependent on the situation, set of circumstances, and the community itself. Additionally, the public lacks the qualification and perspective to be able to criticize certain policing practices. Nonetheless, officers still feel pressures from public expectation, and the duty they swore their responsibility to. This was expressed by Russell, who said that “people expect us to be robots”, and that every move and decision should be perfectly calculated. Public expectations toward officers also vary across lines of race. Two African American officers, Joe and Charlie, explained how they are often treated with less respect by black civilians. They assume that these community members feel a sense of betrayal, which the officers attributed to a general misunderstanding of policing, and the role of the individual officer in relation to larger systemic and institutional issues. However, Charlie stated that he felt less discrimination from other police officers, and that he knew another officer that was a “card carrying member of the KKK”, who he said that he could count on and “call right now” if he needed to, and that his colleague’s affiliation did not affect his performance. He used this to explain how the badge can

transcend categories for other police officers, but it cannot seem to do the same thing for the public. In one way or another, all of my informants expressed the viewpoint that the public community should recognize the humanity of the police, and that the police make mistakes and are doing a service in the interest of the community.

The anxiety officers feel comes from other sources as well. A consequence of a preemptive perspective is the potential for the future threat to create an “affective reality” in the present (Massumi 2015:192-7). Though my informants did not say that they were constantly experiencing feelings of anxiety or fear, some did say that recent events have caused for some concern and higher levels of awareness. After the recent attacks on police officers in Dallas and Baton Rouge, and rising anti-police sentiment in social media, Steven remarked that he felt the need to stay vigilant “now more than ever”. Even getting coffee at a gas station or stopping at a red light demanded a higher level of awareness than before these incidents. Though my informants did not explain these feelings explicitly as anxiety. However, they did note how the potential for serious injury or death has risen, and that their experience of this potential threat provoked a more prominent response of attention, awareness, and nervousness.

However, despite these points of contention, my research participants expressed their sense of responsibility and duty to the public; a duty that was crystallized when they swore an oath as a police officer. As Steven, Dalton, and Russell explained to me on separate occasions, the majority of the police, especially those who have been in law enforcement for years, have a passion for the job and feel a sense of moral duty. The exceptions are those who are looking for a steady job, and those who, as Dalton said, “don’t really know what they want to do”. Whether it is peoples’ safety, the protection of property, or directing traffic, my informants are invested in maintaining and enforcing the order of life as they know it. They see themselves, along with

other civil servants, as underappreciated for their work, which seems to be a major component of their identity. Sacrificing one's time, safety, and money for the greater good of the community is basically the job description. The police see themselves as part of a group of overworked and understated unsung heroes of society, making possible the everyday and the ordinary that the general public enjoys.

When considering the notion of service, and how the officers I spoke with always situated their jobs in a larger service to the community, I wanted to hear them articulate how they understood the duty they took on. Didier Fassin evokes two common French conceptualizations of the police, the "prince's police" and the "people's police" to talk about the accountability and commitment of the police in practice (Fassin 2013:180). The former refers to police who are committed and accountable to larger authorities or government, and the latter are at the service of the public (Fassin 2013:180). I used this dichotomy to see who these officers *felt* they were responsible to. Russell answered with his own metaphor, similar to that of Lawrence.

I would say rather than a prince or people's police, personally, I look at it more like a shepherd mentality. The sheep are out there, they are doing their thing, they're grazing, they're living life. And I'm watching for the wolves to come... If wolves try to come in and kill some of the sheep, then I need to act.

To analyze this metaphor further, I borrow again from Fassin. In his ethnography of the Parisian anti-crime brigade unit of the police (brigades anti-criminalité or BAC), Fassin develops a framework to assess the moral economy of his sample community, which frames the decisions and practices of the police in the BAC (Fassin 2013:211-2). He bases his assessment on two axes. The first is a consideration of who the police identify with in an "us and them"

understanding of humanity. The second is a consideration of the orientation of duty and obligation that officers have.

The first axis deals with the "moral community" that the police conceptualize themselves as a part of through practice and discourse (Fassin 2013:211). By this, Fassin is referring to the "set of persons, real or virtual, with whom the officers imagine they share a common humanity" (Fassin 2013:211). There are two forms the moral communities can take. One form of the community includes everyone within the community, and beyond, regardless of personal traits and actions. The other form excludes individuals according to *a priori* categories of people based on these qualities (Fassin 2013:211). In other words, the first type of moral community recognizes criminals, civilians, and police as members of the same group. The second form differentiates criminals from the rest of society, effectively creating an "us and them" dichotomy.

The second axis is concerned with "the moral obligation officers feel toward their profession and the set of norms associated with it" (Fassin 2013:211). Fassin explains that there are also two possible forms this obligation may manifest itself: obligation to society or obligation to the law. In one form, "this obligation serves as a more or less implicit point of reference in the exercise of their duty, imposing respect for both the law as a general principle and rights as attached to individuals" (Fassin 2013:212). In the second, this obligation "becomes minimal", in which case an officer enforces law and order with little attention given to justice or an individuals' rights and welfare (Fassin 2013:212). An example of the second form would be a draconian regime, or the perpetuation of unjust discrimination and profiling because it is an established norm, as opposed to breaking the cycle and "doing the right thing". This form usually results in "unjustified or disproportionate use of force and the distortion of authority into abuse of power" (Fassin 2013:212).

The first axis of Fassin's framework deals with the moral community of the police. In the metaphors of Lawrence and Russell, the line separating the "good guys" from the "bad guys" differs from person to person, though it does exist. Despite the differences in where individual officers draw the line of their moral communities, to use the metaphor my informant used, wolves do exist, they are the threat, and they are different from ordinary civilians (the sheep). This makes the general moral community of these officers exclusive. It does not include everyone in a group of shared humanity. There are some people who belong to the *a priori* category of the true criminal, or the wolf.

As both Russell and Lawrence explained, every criminal is not necessarily a wolf. Things like drug addiction, disorders, and other related issues often result in someone breaking the law, but this does not make an individual a wolf. Additionally, people who are experimenting with crime and have to "learn the hard way", or whose criminal character is more or less a product of their circumstances, are typically not wolves either. What makes a wolf, is someone who takes the chances and knowingly decides to go through life as a criminal. Or as Lawrence explained, with his experience as an investigator of child crimes and adult sex crimes, a wolf is "someone who will take what they want from you and not care what happens, whether it is money, sex, or security". He explained that there were some "really bad wolves out there", from which society needed protection.

The second axis of Fassin's framework deals with the overall responsibility that officers have (Fassin 2013:211-2). The officers that participated in my research undoubtedly feel a responsibility to their community. In our interviews, they often expressed a strong sense of duty, morality, and passion, they show that they believe what they do to be a necessary service that involves high levels of risk, and which not everybody can do. However, their responsibility is

more to is the best interest of society and its laws, not necessarily its collective desires, critiques, or perspectives. This is not to say that that my informants are completely morally aligned with the law; however, as an informant stated, “there’s rules for a reason, we may not like all of them...and somebody has to keep the peace”. Despite the potential that they might occasionally disagree with the law, according to this quote, officers believe in the rationality and reason behind the laws, and they have stepped up to enforce it. There is an intrinsic connection between law and order and the well-being of the community for my officers, who seem to assume a public misunderstanding before problematic legislation. This was apparent when discussing the recent killings of unarmed black men by officers. My informants welcomed any civilian to ask how shooting was justified in these scenarios. They offered to go through any footage of some of these controversial shootings and highlight and identify micro event that led up to the officer pulling the trigger, which might be invisible to the untrained eye. This response assumes that public critique is centered on a level of inadequacy or racial bias on behalf of the individual officer. My informants frequently admitted that the “bad cops” out there, who may have malicious intent, were likely to just be unmotivated, lazy, or poorly trained, and that the problem was due to a small portion of police officers. Premeditated defensive responses to public critique were frequently given to me by officers when discussing the relationship between the police and the public. Multiple informants said many statements that started with something like, “I want the public to know that I will sit and listen to what they have to say but they need to understand that...”. As my informant exemplified, officers *are* often open to discussion with civilians. However, as it appears from these sorts of statements from my informants, this discussion must happen on the terms of the officer, with the condition that the public must know that they *do not* know something. The notion that the public might not always knows what is best for it, and that

it does not always have to understand, supports a larger paternalistic orientation of the police towards society.

Perhaps this is related, to go back to the first axis of Fassin's framework, to the moral communities of my officers. On two separate occasions, both Russel and Lawrence gave a very similar metaphor to describe the relationship between the police and the public. In both of these explanations, the police officers were represented not by sheep, or by wolves, but by something entirely different. In one metaphor, the police were shepherds, and in the other they were sheepdogs. These metaphors suggest a revision of Fassin's framework. Instead of a moral community that can be characterized by the sizes of two possible groups of people (criminals and non-criminals), I argue for a third subcategory: the shepherd/sheepdog. Shepherds and Sheepdogs are categorically different due to their subjective experience, their practiced roles, and their moral interests. Though they are different from sheep and wolves, shepherds and sheepdogs share enough in common with the sheep for the two to be considered as part of the same overall moral community. This is reinforced by the threat of the true Other, the dangerous wolf, who takes what it wants with no regard to safety or well-being. Using this revised version of Fassin's framework, it is apparent that the participants of my research differentiate themselves from civilians by means of their experience, their roles, and their interest in the community's welfare, despite how the community might feel about it. However, according to my informants, a major reason officers separate themselves is because the public does not like them.

5.3 "People don't like cops"

I extend a lot more respect than what I get

So you show up, and nobody wants you there. Nobody. That happens a lot.

Most people dread telling people they're a police officer. Most police officers don't wanna have that conversation because a lot of people don't like police officers

My informants stated multiple times that the public is unaccepting, overcritical, and dehumanizing of the police. They attributed much of the recent negative attention given to police on social media to these characteristics of the public. A consequence is that among police officers are often uninterested in engaging in conversations with non-sympathizing civilians about policing practices. As Dalton blatantly stated, “cops only want to talk to cops”. The tendency for exclusive discourse among police officers has self-perpetuating factors, some of which have been explained in the previous sections of this chapter. The fact that the general public is untrained means that they cannot fully understand the perspective of the police officer. The experiential relatability that only other officers have, which in some cases can be extended to other civil servants and first responders, is a major reason for exclusivity. This is supplemented by the view that the public dislikes and in some cases even hates the police.

Lawrence, the investigator, described himself as far more liberal than the other officers with whom he works, who are generally more conservative. He claims that the two major reasons for his difference in political affiliation is that he sees the institution from the inside with a critical perspective, and that many of his friends are more liberal than he is. He claimed that most officers, certainly many of the officers that he worked with, do not do this. When I asked him why, he said that “a lotta people don't wanna be challenged”, that it was “easier to spout off family values than facts”, and that most times when police officers are challenged, they feel

attacked and misunderstood. This point was also explained to me by another one of my informants. Dalton said that he personally believed that he could learn from and engage with the civilian perspective, but that this was not the case with many other police officers. Both of these officers, who felt they had differing views from the normative police perspective, stated that despite the lack of critical perspective among officers, they understood why officers took such defensive stances.

As referenced in the quote above, Lawrence noted that, despite having a more liberal and critical disposition, he dreads telling people that he is a police officer. He often approaches the common question of “what do you do?” by answering that he works in public relations. He says that he does this because he does not want to have the long conversation, and potential debate, when he is going about his daily business as just another community member. In this sense, despite the training, the perception, and the responsibility that police officers always carry with them, it is easy to see their desire to be treated as civilians in their personal lives. In order for police officers to not have to explain themselves or take a defensive stance they often socialize with other police officers and civil servants, who, as my other two informants have stated, typically have the same viewpoints.

To learn from this, it is important to consider *why* conversations are shut down before they ever happen. If a critical discussion on policing that involves the police themselves is to take place, it is evident that some considerations must be made by all parties involved. Understanding the police perspective of how they see the public, as well as how they think the public sees them, is crucial to this discussion. Despite an intense sense of duty and responsibility to their communities, the police often discount public perspective on the grounds that it does not understand the reality of policing. Additionally, the public, according to my informants, does not

think favorably of the police, and often holds impossible expectations of them, and is too critical. This results in minimal productive conversation between the police and the public, often preventing it from happening altogether. I asked my informants what they wanted members of the public community to know. Additionally, I asked for what they thought should be done to better relations with the public on the administrative institutional level, the individual level, and in the social circles of the police. I engage with these suggestions in the conclusion.

6 Conclusions

In this work I have explained the general training practices of the police in the Atlanta area. Through these training practices, as I have argued, officers experience a change in perception, identity, and behavior, resulting in an ontological shift into a preemptive operative logic and perspective. Additionally, through these training processes, experience, and the socialization that inherently comes with taking on a new profession, officers have a tendency to isolate themselves in social groups that are largely exclusive of the "ordinary" perspective. This exclusion is based on three major components of police perceptions of civilians and the general public. The fact that they are unqualified to understand the police perspective, that they cannot relate to the experience of fulfilling the role of a police officer, and that much of the public dislikes the police impels officers to defensively form closed social circles. This is not a characteristic that is unique to officers, and these sorts of reactions and perspectives are not an accurate portrayal of every officer. However, from the discussion with my informants, it was made clear either explicitly or implicitly that these are general characteristics of the broader policing institution. In this final

chapter, I pull from my informants' suggestions of what should be done regarding this perspective and the issues in the relationship between the police and the public.

Putting a face on the badge

They didn't run from you as officer so-and-so, they're running from your symbol. They're running from your badge

Pay attention, look around, say hi to people. That might actually help the officer get to know the community, but it might put the face on the badge for the community. They might say 'hey that's officer so-and-so, I really like him. He don't treat us like shit!'

Respect and explain. Cause they don't know. as best as you can, slow down, and tell them why. A lotta times they wanna know why.

When asked what they would like the public to know, every one of the officers from my research wanted to inform the public that most officers believed in what they did and had no malicious intent. Additionally, they stated that they would like to see the police portrayed in the media and social media with more humanity and as more approachable. They felt like popular expectations of the police were too rigid, and perhaps if they were relaxed, general anti-police sentiment would subside. When talking about the effects of what my informants frequently referred to as “media bias”, Dalton said that it was “fueling a lot more animosity and rage

towards police and from the police towards black males”. Dalton’s comment is a confirmation of the polarizing effects of critical and negative public perception of the police among officers.

When considering changes that should be made within policing institutions to better public relations, my informants had differing ideas. Dalton felt like the higher levels of the administration should be reformed, especially “larger prison schemes”. He stated that as an officer, he is not in control of the legislation and protocol that deals with these sorts of things and their consequences of structural violence and perpetuation of inequalities. He argued that the police were not contributing to larger injustices of policing in the U.S. because their hands were tied. Charlie also alluded to feeling restricted by the administration and laws while doing his job. Acting out a conversation with someone he was arresting or dealing with in a potential situation, he said

This is why you’re going... this is why he’s going. I have to. I have no choice. This is the law they broke. This is the call I came to investigate. I have to. I don’t have a lot of discretion in this. I have discretion in this, but I don’t have a lotta discretion in this

Dalton and Charlie expressed a sense of helplessness when it came to the standard rules and protocol of policing. Although it could be argued that individual officers do indeed play a direct role in structural violence and inequality perpetuation, perhaps here it is better to note what the views of my informants tell us. As officers there are privileges specific to the job, but ultimately there is always a larger institution and a series of superiors to answer to. It is necessary to consider this reality of hierarchy and bureaucracy.

Other officers felt that when dealing with issues such as unnecessary shootings, the focus would do better to be on training procedures. Perhaps there is no single method to bridge the communicative divide between the public and the police. This process will likely involve all aspects of policing, from the administrative protocol to the individual personal practices of officers in their social lives. In regards to the issue of the high number of killings of unarmed people, the consensus among civilians and officers alike is usually a call for more training. Sensitivity training, classes like the impartial policing class, and other courses that deal with topics of profiling, stereotypes, gender, race, and class are not strangers to the curriculum in police academies. However, these classes are usually temporary curriculum, and are part of a list of multiple possible classes that can be taught as a maintenance course or in the core curriculum of officers. Additionally, officers and recruits might hold contempt for classes that are developed and implemented by "some civilian" as a sort of response to social issues. This is not to argue that these classes do no good. However, their briefness and inconsistency likely do not make sufficient impression on recruits and officers. Additionally, it is important to ask if such classes are compatible with the rest of policing tactics and perspective. More intensive and frequent weapons and tactical training is something that seems to be stable and consistent through training and periodical maintenance. Two of the three trainers I interviewed had full confidence in this component of training. One of them told me that it is the best answer to the issue of innocent killings by police officers. This coincides with the logic of training, to sharpen the tools of perception and reaction to best prepare someone to make the right decision. However, this sort of training does not focus on the sociocultural understandings of criminality and how it is associated with and built upon lines of race and class.

The relationship between race and the perception of danger and threat are evident in a recent study among Boston Police. In a 2012 study in Massachusetts, police officers were asked to engage in stress inducing role play scenarios after which they participated in a simulation game where they had to choose and identify threats, and then shoot the individuals (Akinola 2012). The simulation involved four types of characters that the officers had to differentiate between dangerous and not dangerous: black and white men, both armed and unarmed. The results of the study showed that during the period of stress, indicated by heightened cortisol levels, officers exhibited more accuracy and less error in identifying threats (Akinola 2012:172). Assuming an evolutionary perspective, this makes sense as an example of how these physiological reactions can improve an individual's chance by making them more alert, aware, and vigilant. Nevertheless, the study also indicated that this reaction was calibrated to an apparent pattern in the officers' conceptualization of threats. The heightened responsiveness and vigilance, and lower error rates were only exhibited in the differentiation of armed and unarmed black individuals (Akinola 2012:172). The officer's error rates with white targets were not different between the control simulation game and the simulation the officers went through with heightened cortisol (Akinola 2012:172). Such a difference can speak to the associations of threat and criminality that are intertwined with ideas of race and class, which can play a role in the decisions anyone makes, including police officers. A suggestion from an informant acknowledges this dynamic and calls for more substantial efforts to be put into socialization and diversity training.

Dalton, who also had experience as a trainer, argued

Too much training is focused on firearms qualifications. What do you do two or three times out of the year? You go to the range and shoot at a target. It becomes muscle

memory. What do I do when there's a threat? I pull my gun and I shoot it. I have a problem with that. And I think there needs to be a lot more de-escalation in training.

Dalton added that he would have liked to see more training in compassion, critical thinking, and perspectivism. The courses that do deal with these sorts of topics are often not required, and if they are they are only taken once. Dalton said that for 20 years he has been questioning why weapons training happens yearly, and sometimes multiple times a year, while other sorts of classes aren't. When discussing possible administrative reform, Dalton used dispatching practices as an example of dynamics within the institution that the individual officer had little say in. He explained that often the way officers understand and experience their communities were affected by the way officers were dispatched by the administration. In large populated areas with massive amounts of calls, what Dalton refers to as "bad calls" are prioritized, which means situations that involve more danger or a larger threat to individuals as well as the responding officer. This has a negative effect on the "good calls", which feel like more of a waste of time when "real" things are happening. "That's a disconnect", he said, explaining how these sorts of dispatch patterns can exhaust an officer, normalize them to a certain threat level, and hinder them from engaging and investing in their communities in ways that build positive connections.

Both Dalton and Lawrence called for diversity socialization among police officers, whether it is with peers with different perspectives or people of different ethnic backgrounds. This would potentially involve personal social lives, as well as those while in uniform. Suggestions such as this are a process of shifting collective behavior and perspective as well as institutional practices. Lawrence said that police officers would do better to open up their social circles and allow for more critical discussion. He claimed that if the institution catered to more

critical perspectives by recruiting from colleges or offering more perspective in the strict discipline, the police perspective might not be so exclusive and defensive.

My informants' suggestions argue for a shift in training and socialization, whether it is sharpening the tool of discretion to yield a lower error frequency through weapons training, or teaching and *acclimating* officers to a diverse set of groups. Ultimately these suggestions deal with how officers identify and deal with people and potential threats. To rework notions of danger, threat, and criminality that people are inculcated with during their enculturation and practice of culture (Bourdieu 1980), is an exercise of ontopower. To employ Fassin's framework once more, what these sorts of processes do is rework the moral economy of the police. They shift the relationship, to use my officers' metaphor, between the shepherd and the sheep, and perhaps even the wolf. Shifting this relationship will shift the power dynamics and understandings of the other in the relationship, potentially allowing for smoother and better received communication.

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