Two Shades of Blue: Black and White in the Blue Brotherhood

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[The cops] whipped his ass like they're supposed to! There they go jumping on the racist bandwagon. This ain't no White and Black issue. It's a police issue. He shot a cop, and I'll whip his ass myself!

> A Black female police officer watching TV news footage of a
> Black man being beaten by Philadelphia police, July 2000

Introduction

Police repeat the mantra that the only race among police officers is blue. Police officers do share a common police identity based on conservative social beliefs, opposition to *ghetto* culture,[1] dangerous work conditions, irregular hours, excessive paperwork, and negative opinions of most "victims" (see Table 1). But these shared values exist distinct from and do not lessen a certain level of distrust and attitudinal differences between Black and White police officers. Despite an outward emphasis on the unity of blue over any division between Black and White, Black and White police officers remain two distinct shades of blue, with distinct attitudes toward each other and the community they serve (see Table 2).

Black police officers are more inclined to see their role as protecting the "good people"; White police officers place greater emphasis on arresting criminals. Both Black and White police officers see the police administration and departmental discipline process as unfairly biased against their own respective race. And morale differs by race, with higher morale among Black police officers.

Research on African Americans in Policing

The history of Blacks in policing is quite distinct from the history of police overall. Kelling and Moore (1988) describe three historical eras of police—(1) political, (2) reform, and (3) community/problem-solving—that conceptualize major changes in the White-dominated police organizations of the 19th and 20th centuries. From 1845 to the early 1900s, urban police departments were decentralized power structures that were indebted to local political alderman. High levels of police discretion went along with low levels of accountability. For better or for worse, police officers were intrinsically tied to their local political surroundings. Reformers liked neither the immigrant-based politics of this era nor the police. As reformers won political battles, changes occurred in policing.

The reform era, under the banner of science and progress, saw standards in hiring and promotions implemented, departments centralized, and efforts made to separate police from the corrupting influence of elected officials (Kelling & Moore, 1988). Police in the reform era shifted away from crime prevention and toward a more narrow focus on law enforcement and reactive crime fighting. Limitations

of this era came to light during the Civil Rights era. Along with calls to question police discretion (Goldstein, 1963; Kadish, 1962; LaFave, 1962; Piliavin & Briar, 1964), police were seen as particularly challenged in minority neighborhoods (Banton, 1964).

Table 1. Summary of Black and White Police Attitudes

Subject	Attitudes Shared by Police (No Significant Racial Differences)
The ghetto	Violent, bad, dirty
Departmental discipline	Department will sacrifice an officer for political reasons
Social ideology	Conservative
Victims who know their assailant	Deserve what they get
Lower-class Whites	Fat, wife beating, inbred, no teeth, cop fighting, redneck drunks
Lower-class Blacks	Baby making, welfare dependent, drug using, cop-hating drunks

	Attitudes Not Shared by Police (Significant Racial Differences)	
Subject	**Black Police**	**White Police**
Residents of the ghetto	Good and bad people live in ghetto	All bad
Departmental discipline	Biased against Blacks because an "old-boy's network" protects Whites	Biased against Whites because department is politically afraid to punish Blacks
Hiring process	Process is tougher for Blacks	Standards lowered for Blacks
Black police identity	Cop identity more important than race identity	Many are Black before blue
White police identity	Too many racist redneck crackers	More "professional"
Self-identity as police	Strong, but just a job	Strong
Political ideology	Independent, conservative, or liberal	Independent or conservative
Role of police	Peacekeepers	Crime fighters
The city	Bad, but problems are everywhere	Bad; where trouble comes from

The reform era of policing seemed to have ended around 1970 (Kelling & Moore, 1988). Egon Bittner (1967) cast a positive spin on discretion, and this led, at least eventually, to a greater focus on problem-solving policing (Goldstein, 1990; Skogan, 1990; Wilson & Kelling, 1982). The true death of the reform era may have been as late as the aftermaths of the 1992 Rodney King riots in Los Angeles. High crime rates and the inability of politicians to fire Los Angeles Police Chief Darryl Gates led to a radical rethinking of the role of police *vis-à-vis* the community. Combined with a dramatic decline in crime in New York and other cities, the paradigm of police has shifted, but exactly to what is not yet clear.

The three eras of policing, while great for mainstream society, fail to have much relevance to the African-American policing experience (Williams & Murphy, 1990). In the South, police descended not from the noble ideals of London's Robert Peel but from horrific slave patrols (Reichel, 1988; Walker, 1977). Throughout America, the political era did not benefit African Americans who had little if any political power; the reform era's emphasis on law enforcement did little to help victims of legal discrimination; and the problem-solving or community era rarely solved problems working with the Black community but, instead, focused on the Black community as the problem to be solved (Williams & Murphy, 1990).

remained White-dominated organizations at odds with many in the Black community. Blacks had to cope with problems beyond the "normal" scope of police work (Alex, 1969). Perhaps the simplest description is from the 2000 movie *Shaft* in which Richard Roundtree describes the problem to Samuel L. Jackson: "Too black for the brotherhood, too blue for the brothers."

Race as a variable in policing has reoccurred in countless studies, but it appears most always in relation to criminals, victims, profiling, discretion, and arrest decisions (e.g., Black & Reiss, 1970; Holdaway, 1997a; Mastrofski et al., 2002; Sampson & Lauritsen, 1997; Skolnick & Fyfe, 1993; Tonry, 1995). Klinger (1997) observed that police officers in high-crime districts treat all members of the public, regardless of race, worse than police officers in low-crime districts. While within a district race may not be a significant causal factor, high and low crime districts are correlated with race, and this affects police officer behavior.

Compared to race as a variable in police-public interactions, little is known about differences between Black and White police officers (Alex, 1969; Beard, 1977; Campbell, 1980; Dowler, 2005; Haarr, 1997, 2005; Haarr & Morash, 1999; Leinen, 1984; Teahan, 1975). While Alex (1969) documented differences between Black and White officers, much has changed in both policing and society at large in the 40 years since his groundbreaking 1965 research. Overt racism has lessened over the decades, and minority police are no longer considered novelties. While on the street, Black officers will still be accused of being an "Uncle Tom," this insult has lost much of any weight it may have held. When a contemporary Black officer was asked, "You ever get the feeling you're working for the Man?" He gave a quizzical look and replied, "We all working for the Man somehow."

Despite the passage of time, many of Alex's (1969) conclusions remain valid: a dislike of police in general is still present in many minority communities; despite social differences between Black and White police officers, the job is seen as a basis for cooperation that overrides race; overt appeals from suspects for racial solidarity fall on deaf ears; and African Americans are more likely to become police officers because of the benefits in a civil service job rather than wanting to be a police officer per se.

Black (1971) and Geller and Scott (1991) found similar policing styles and behavior among Black and White police officers. Holdaway (1997b), in a study of British police, found that White police officers' behavior and attitudes negatively affected Black and Asian colleagues. Yet, despite problems, Dowler (2005) found morale to be higher for Black officers. While not explicitly comparing Black and White police, Barlow and Barlow (2002) clearly show elements of racial distinctions in police. They propose that Black police have largely been co-opted by a corrupt White power structure (Barlow & Barlow, 2000) and racially profile against other Blacks. They found a majority of Black officers perceive themselves as targets of racial profiling at the hands of other police and one in ten Black officers admit using racial profiling on others (Barlow & Barlow, 2002).

Some propose that differences among police are minor or have little if any work-related impact. Brown (1981) emphasized the inherently political nature of policing as more important than individual differences among police officers. He warned of long-term changes in policing in which—like Weber's (1918/1946) view

Table 2. Similar and Dissimilar Black and White Police Attitudes, Survey Data

	Black Mean (SD)	White Mean (SD)	Racial Correlation	Level of Sig.
Similar Attitudes				
Proud and happy to work for Baltimore City Police Department; put in a lot of effort to help department.	4.2 (0.55)	3.5 (0.85)	-0.38	0.027
Being a cop is a good job.	3.9 (1.07)	4.2 (0.77)	0.2	0.276
Citizens know more about neighborhoods than police; police need more and better contact with citizens; police should work to reduce citizens' fear of crime.	4.3 (0.48)	4.2 (0.43)	-0.19	0.305
(Disagree with) the media treats police fairly.	2.3 (1.18)	2.0 (1.08)	-0.14	0.446
(Disagree with) affirmative action is good for hiring and promotions.	1.7 (1.11)	1.5 (0.76)	-0.11	0.558
When growing up, physically disciplined by parents with hits, fists, belts, cords, or any other method more severe than open-handed spanking on behind.	All the time: 13% Often: 8% Sometimes: 62% Never: 17%	All the time: 5% Often: 14% Sometimes: 36% Never: 45%	-0.23	0.132
Dissimilar Attitudes				
Police officers have reason to be distrustful of most citizens. (White police are more distrustful.)	2.2 (1.14)	3.1 (0.91)	0.43	0.013
The main job of police should be to arrest criminals. (Black police disagree.)	2.2 (0.60)	3.1 (1.05)	0.42	0.016
To prevent crime, society must attack the root causes of crime (e.g., poverty, unemployment, poor education, racism, etc.). (Black police agree more.)	4.3 (0.73)	3.5 (1.07)	-0.35	0.048
I could just as well be working for another police department. (White police agree.)	2.9 (1.23)	3.8 (1.11)	0.38	0.030
This department really inspires the very best in me in the way of job performance. (Black police agree.)	3.6 (0.96)	2.8 (1.07)	-0.39	0.025
A combination of 10 morale-related questions. (Morale for Black police is higher than White police.)	3.7 (0.66)	3.2 (0.60)	-0.35	0.049

Mean on a 1 to 5 scale: 1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree. At $t = 3$, n= 13 Blacks and 22 Whites.

This history of Blacks in policing differs from White police officers who held both political and legal advantage. While token appointments of Blacks were made in Northern police departments in the 1870s (Lane, 1986; Walker, 1977), these officers were not on equal footing with White officers (Williams & Murphy, 1990). As late as 1961, many departments severely restricted the right of Black police officers to make arrests (President's Commission, 1967). In the post-bellum South, Blacks were appointed to the police in large numbers in New Orleans, but following the departure of Northern troops and the return of local civilian rule, the number of Black police officers in New Orleans dropped from 177 in 1870 to 27 in 1880. Between 1910 and 1950, there were no Black police in New Orleans (Williams & Murphy, 1990).

Black police officers faced further difficulties in the 1960s. Even though Blacks entered police departments as legal equals to White officers, police departments

of politicians—the judgment of bureaucrats would replace passion, responsibility, and proportion. Klinger (1997) recognized a high degree of potential discretion among individual police officers, but he claimed that such freedom was negated by the social realities and working norms of individual police districts such as Van Maanen's (1982) "informal" organizational rules.

In contrast to those who deemphasize the role of race and police, research on those policed (Websdale, 2001; Weitzer, 2000) finds that many citizens—particularly poor Blacks—believe that Black and White officers do behave differently. Weitzer (2000) emphasizes class distinctions between lower- and middle-class Blacks. Additionally, personal narratives (Bentley, 1997) and newspaper reporting (Winerip, 2000) have documented different attitudes among Black and White police.

Police actions in America's high-crime minority neighborhoods have additional significance. Arguably the first anti-police riot by African Americans took place in 1935 Harlem (Barlow & Barlow, 2000). Since then, real and perceived police misconduct in non-White communities has sparked almost every major civil disturbance in America. While police perform vital functions in all locales, violent crime—and police response toward that violence—is heavily concentrated in a more limited number of specific urban neighborhoods. In the late 1990s, for instance, decreasing violence in a limited number of high-crime neighborhoods in New York City significantly lowered the violent crime rate in the United States overall. Between 1990 and 1997, New York City's homicides declined from 2,245 to 770 (Langan & Durose, 2004). This accounted for one-third of the total U.S. homicide decline during this period (U.S. Department of Justice, 1992, 1999). Improved police-minority relations, further crime reductions, and lasting urban peace depend on greater understanding of police in high-crime urban areas.

Research on the U.S. Army (Moskos & Butler, 1996) found that even in a relatively successfully integrated institution, Blacks and Whites do not share identical views on professional opportunities or race relations. Given differences between Blacks and Whites in American society, certainly the idea that differences would exist both within and between Black and White police has a certain *prima facie* logic to it.

Methods

As an institution, police have been known to be extremely insular (Rubinstein, 1973); resentful of outsiders (Friedmann, 1992); and in general hostile to research, experimentation, and analysis (Bouza, 1990). Some of this hostility may be explained by a desire to avoid being exposed, yet an aversion to researchers may rest more on deeply rooted ideological grounds (Young, 1991). Police simply—and usually correctly—don't see how an outside researcher will help their work.

Access problems can be avoided if one uses precollected quantitative data. But the cleanliness of computer data sets should not obscure the methods and limitations of the original data collection.[2] From the yearly *Uniform Crime Reports* to Reiss's (1971) oft-cited research, police officers and graduate student researchers witness, define, and categorize subjective realities into *UCR* Part I crimes or police-citizen encounters. Outside of arrests and traffic citations, however, most police activity

has no formal record, and official police statistics are notoriously susceptible to manipulation (Manning, 2001; Young, 1991).

While there is much to be gained from macro-level statistical regressions, such analyses miss police attitudes and behavior on an individual level. Just as the national average income means little if one is unemployed, average police behavior can easily be overshadowed by specific incidents. People angry at the New York police for torturing Abner Louima or killing Amadou Dialou were not assuaged by a Deputy Police Commissioner who stated that New York City police were six times *less* likely to use lethal force compared to the police in Washington, DC ("NYPD Blues," 1999). A motorist pulled over by a police officer cares more about the individual officer than police officers' behavior in general toward people of his or her race. Even when quantitative data are relatively accessible, valid, and reliable—such as numbers of police-involved shootings in a certain city—statistical outliers and individual experiences can have more qualitative significance than any statistically significant correlation.

Maurice Punch (1979) argues that participant observation is the best and perhaps only means to gather valid job-related police data. The researcher must "outwit the institutional obstacle-course to gain entry and . . . penetrate the mine-field of social defenses to reach the inner reality of police work" (p. 4). While participant-observation researchers may risk "going native" and losing unbiased objectivity, the enormous benefits of rich, qualitative police data reward those who confront and overcome such risks.[3]

In order to gain unrestricted research access to the Baltimore police, this author became an employed and uniformed Baltimore City police officer in 1999. The status as police officer overcame much of the hostility traditionally present from police toward academic researchers.[4] The research occurred in three continuous stages totaling 20 months. At all stages (including the hiring process), the research was conducted in an overt manner. The first research stage was six months as a trainee in the Baltimore City Police Academy. The second stage, two months of field training in Baltimore's Eastern District, consisted of uniformed patrol with a more experienced field training officer as partner. During this stage, the officer learns the nuts and bolts of police patrol work (Van Maanen, 1973). The third and primary research site was 12 months in Eastern District uniformed patrol on the permanent midnight shift (11:39 PM to 8:12 AM). During the final two stages, more experienced veteran officers, primarily squad mates, were informally interviewed both on and off the job.

Research as a police officer was facilitated by frequent downtime while working and the job requirement to carry pen and paper at all times. Some of the time detailed notes were written in the squad car during slow periods. More often, very brief field notes were expanded after returning home from work. Quotes were reconstructed as accurately as possible. Unless otherwise implied, all quotations are from personal and private conversations with research subjects. Names have been changed. Identifiers are intentionally vague to preserve anonymity.

Participant-observation and extensive informal interviews were supplemented with a longitudinal 65-question survey.[5] The survey was given to a class of 50 Baltimore police recruits at the beginning and end of the police academy, and a

third time to the same group after a year on the street for an overall response rate of 86% ($n = 45$, 50, and 34, respectively, for the first, second, and third administration of the survey). There were 25 Blacks and 25 Whites (including one Hispanic), 37 men and 13 women (the largest number of women ever in a single Baltimore police academy class). Toward the end of the police academy, a supplement on racial attitudes was added to the survey.

While the first two stages of the questionnaire occurred in the closed environment of the police academy, the final stage necessitated tracking individual subjects down at their respective work districts. Many subjects expressed strong aversion to completing the questionnaire, especially when they had already done so once or twice before.[6] No incentive was offered, but no individual refused to complete the questionnaire when personally asked. Some subjects, due to days off and other factors, could not be located. A copy of the questionnaire, including a cover letter and stamped return envelope, was mailed to the academy classmates who could not be located in person. None of these questionnaires were returned.[7]

While the phenomenon that attitudes and beliefs are correlated in general with the race of police officers is a reasonable hypothesis, care should be taken before generalizing these data to other cities or even other police districts in Baltimore. The Eastern District is not a typical police working environment. All four variables cited by Klinger (1997) as affecting police behavior—(1) the severity of "normal" crime, (2) the perceived "deservedness" of victims, (3) the level of officer cynicism, and (4) the overall workload—are extreme in the Eastern District. Baltimore's rate of violence remains among the nation's highest (Broadwater, 2008). Although comprising only 7% of Baltimore's 650,000 total population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2002), approximately one-fifth of Baltimore's annual 270 homicides and one-fourth of its 95,000 arrests occur in Baltimore's Eastern District.[8]

In 2000, approximately two-thirds of Baltimore, one-half of the police academy class, one-third of the Baltimore Police Department, and one-sixth of police officers working the Eastern District midnight shift were African American.

Becoming Blue: Police Socialization

Colman and Gorman (1982) showed the police academy to have a temporary liberalizing effect on police trainees. This research confirms that finding but only for White trainees. For most White police academy trainees, the police academy provided the first deep personal interaction with both the city and with Blacks. There is no residency requirement in Baltimore for police officers. Sixteen of 25 Black trainees in the academy were born and raised in Baltimore City, while only two of 25 Whites could claim likewise. With the exception of this author, all the White trainees in the academy class lived outside the city. Most of the Black trainees lived in the city.[9]

In general, Whites' favorable opinions of Blacks increased during the academy. Negative stereotypes about Black men from the "ghetto" were often dispelled. After four months in the academy, one White trainee discussed his perceptions of one of the Blacks in the class:

You know, I felt really bad because here's a Black from the city, from Barclay Street [a street in the Eastern District]. I think he's just some dumb Black. Then I find out he's got a four-year degree. I don't have a degree. And he gets hundreds on the tests! He's a smart guy and here I am thinking he's not because of my first impression.

Another White trainee said, "I didn't avoid Blacks. There just aren't any blacks where I grew up. I guess you could say I'm a redneck. A lot of my family are racist. But I don't think I am; it's just I've never really known any Blacks."

Black trainees' opinions of Whites were much less changed by the academy experience as Blacks had greater previous experience with Whites:

I don't think my opinions have changed [regarding White people]. I think for a lot of Whites in the class, it's strange for them to be around Blacks for the first time. But Black folks? You're going to deal with Whites no matter what. So for me, it's no big deal. Sometimes I'm surprised by some of the things I hear in class [from Whites], but I guess that's what diversity is all about.

White police believed that standards were lowered to accommodate for Black officers. While the class valedictorian was Black, 14 of the top 16 class members in "academics"[10] were White. The lowest performers in "academics," shooting, and driving range were Black. I asked a Black trainee to explain the racial disparity in "academics." He said, "I think it's a joke. They end up giving you all the answers anyway. I think it's just that Whites go home and study while the brothers don't. Do you study? What's the point of studying if you know you're going to pass?" One White trainee said,

Look, they need more cops and at the same time they are trying to get all these Blacks in the police? Well how are you going to do that? Half the people in the city have criminal records or can't finish high school. How much you want to bet that half the Blacks in the class were hired because they were Black.

Only 6% of respondents, 11% of Blacks and no Whites, indicated support for affirmative action on the anonymous questionnaire. In public, all officers—Black, White, male, and female—openly expressed an aversion to any form of preferences based on race or gender. The hiring process frustrated both Blacks and Whites due to the length of time involved (anywhere between three and nine months) and the closed and seemingly arbitrary nature in which hiring decisions were made.

One Black trainee with a personal connection in the personnel department reported in a conversation to a small group of Blacks and Whites that the start of the class was held up until 25 qualified Blacks could be hired to match with 25 Whites previously approved. Qualified candidates are those who have a high school diploma or GED, can meet minimum physical requirements, do not have an extensive arrest record or any domestic violence convictions, and want to become police officers.

Many Black officers believed the hiring process was tougher for Blacks because of racism within the police department. One Black woman trainee told of her

experience taking the polygraph exam, one stage of the hiring process: "That [White] guy was a real . . . mmm, well I don't like using those words. But he asked me, 'What is it like to be raised without a father, like most people of your race?' Like most people of your race! I was burning up." Other Blacks also reported a confrontational polygraph exam, while this author and some (but not all) of the other White candidates recalled the same polygrapher as cordial and polite.

In the police academy class setting, police trainees expressed "proper" sentiments about policing as a means to help people. As a police sergeant told the academy class, "You're being assimilated into the blue brotherhood." In conversations and interviews, however, White police—younger on average than Black police and many just over the minimum 21 years of age requirement—were more likely to stress the perceived action of the job. One White trainee exclaimed, "I can't believe they're going to pay me to carry a gun!" Other trainees said, "I've always wanted to be a cop since the day I was born." A third said, "I can't wait to get out there. Maybe I watched [the TV show] *COPS* too much as a kid." A White trainee who was in a bar after work a few hours after handling his departmental gun for the first time expressed simply, "Just looking at that gun gave me a boner!"

Black police were quicker to emphasize the benefits of policing as a worthwhile and stable occupation. Black trainees were more attracted by an opportunity to "do good" and the stability of a government job, especially considering the poor alternative job opportunities available to those with only a high school diploma or GED. A Black trainee told me in private that with only a Baltimore public high school education, finding a good job was difficult: "I'm a single mother. I don't want to rely on some boss or some man just to get by. This is a real job: health care, the works. I've got to settle down and think of my family." Another Black woman said, "My sister is a cop. And I see the opportunities it's given her. Opportunities as a woman, as a mother, that I don't think you could get elsewhere." One Black male emphasized Christianity saying, "I'm a religious person, and one day I just got the calling." Another male said, "I believe that we can actually do some good and help people." At least one Black trainee saw policing as a way out of a dangerous life. In class, he explained why he stayed out of trouble and became a police officer:

> I had to go to a lot of funerals when I was a kid, of my friends and people I knew. And every time you go you see their mothers crying, going "My baby!" I didn't want to put my mother through that. You see the look in their eyes and I said, "My mother's never going to be crying like that because of me." I didn't want to put her through that.

At the end of the police academy, 83% of Black trainees and 43% of White trainees listed the "chance to help people" as an important reason why they wanted to be a cop. "Job excitement" was mentioned by 17% of Blacks compared to 43% of Whites.

Five of the 25 Blacks and nine of the 25 Whites in the academy class were military veterans. For veterans and those who had previously worked for a department of corrections, policing was seen as the next step up on a career path.

The academy is not a "weed-out" process (Moskos, 2008). Toward the end of the academy period, the department assigned the class to two very similar police

districts: (1) the high-crime Eastern District and (2) the high-crime Western District. It was left to the class to decide who would go where.[11] Instructors emphasized the benefits of working in dangerous areas: "You should be happy you're going to the Eastern and Western. You'll learn a lot there. Just keep a good attitude. Stay humble." Another instructor said, "You're going to see more and do more in your first years than many police deal with their whole careers. After a few years, you can go anywhere; write your own ticket." Instructors downplayed work-related danger with a commonly expressed fatalism: "Why are you afraid of being shot? Once it's your time to go, it's time to go."

Despite the instructors' reassuring words, in reality, the Eastern and Western Districts are the worst patrol assignments in the city. Virtually no police officer volunteers to work in these districts, and many officers assigned to these districts have standing transfer requests. In the police academy, only three of 50 trainees desired to work in either the Eastern on Western districts.

For all the same reasons most people wish to live outside bad neighborhoods, most patrol officers wish to work outside bad neighborhoods. Along with increased danger, working conditions are a significant factor: equipment is more battered, with primarily too few radios and broken cars; eating choices are limited; the streets are dirty; contagious diseases are more common; unpleasant interactions with a hostile public are more frequent; permanent "manpower shortages" limit officers' ability to take days off and make transferring out of the district difficult.

Socially, the class divided along racial lines. Reflecting the social networks that developed in class, all but two Whites chose the Eastern District and all but two Blacks chose the Western District. During academy free time, such as lunch, Blacks and Whites usually sat with others of the same race. Outside of the academy, friendships also tended to develop with others of the same race. During a break, class members got together with their friends to see which district they wanted to go to. Most made the decision based on lessening commuting time and a desire to work with friends made in the police academy. As one Black class member put it, "Well, I guess [the racial split] really shouldn't surprise anybody. I don't think it's that people were trying to avoid others. But you see the way people hang out. Perhaps with the exception of you and [another trainee], all the Whites are at one table and all the Blacks another." The other trainee was the self-proclaimed "redneck" who had grown up not knowing any Blacks.

White officers' attitudes towards the ghetto were based more on racial and cultural stereotypes, while the opinions of Black officers were more nuanced, based on personal experience and class distinctions in these ghetto communities. Neither Blacks nor Whites hold a positive view of the ghetto. There is no definitive definition for an American ghetto. Ghettos can be diverse and encompass a wide variety of cultures and classes (Anderson, 1999; Duneier, 1992; Wilson, 1996). Depending on use and context, *ghetto* can be either a geographic area or a personal character trait. If one accepts the concept of a ghetto as a description of a geographic entity, certainly Baltimore's Eastern District qualifies. If one accepts the concept of ghetto as a descriptive term related to behavior and beliefs, certainly many residents of the Eastern District qualify. As *ghetto* is usually a negative descriptor, many residents would strongly object to themselves or their community being labeled that way.

At the same time, other residents—seen celebrating *gangsta* or *thug life*—claim to be proud of being *ghetto*.

The term *ghetto* was used by Black and White police officers as a negative term both to describe a geographic area and individual character traits (see discussion by Anderson, 1999). Styles of behavior, movement, and physical appearance were all at various times described as *ghetto*. Whites associated *ghetto* as synonymous with being inarticulate, Black, and criminal. White officers were quick to label people as *ghetto*, while Blacks used the term to define specific actions or characteristics of a person. In other words, a Black officer is more likely to say a person is "acting ghetto," while a White officer is more likely to label the person as *ghetto*.

Many Black police saw themselves as rising above the ghetto. I asked a Black officer why Blacks were disparaged for talking "ghetto." His reply, which is akin to Goffman's (1959) concept of role playing, "You can be from the ghetto, but you don't have to act it out." For this Black officer, *ghetto* was a geographic entity and a lifestyle choice, not a state of being.

While most Black officers in the academy believed they had a better idea than White officers regarding realities in the Eastern and Western District ghettos, apprehension crossed racial lines: "They don't play around there. You got some hard brothers, no doubt." In class, some Blacks expressed resentment of the negative attitudes held by Whites toward people living in the two districts: "These neighborhoods aren't that bad. I grew up in the Western. Am I a bad person? There are lots of good people there." A White trainee, whose brother was a Baltimore County police officer, was a bit more introspective in private:

> I think the problem is that I'm afraid of Blacks. Isn't that a horrible thing to say? It's not that I'm prejudiced, but I was raised thinking, "Oh, the city. You go there and you get shot." I wouldn't even go downtown. I didn't grow up with any Blacks, and all you hear are bad things. When I was sixteen, I was even afraid to go to Fell's Point [a popular and "safe" neighborhood]!

He described his feelings on first hearing the news of the unpopular and dangerous assignment:

> My heart was a-flutter. I'm going to hyperventilate when I get home. But maybe it's good. It's not something I would have picked, but sometimes it's good to be forced into something. It's like being afraid to ride a really scary roller-coaster. . . . I can take my county friends for ride-alongs and show them how police work is really done in the city!

The same trainee was physically ill during the last days of the academy. He described it as "Eastern District Flu, I guess. It's just all nerves. I'm scared. Because it's like a roller-coaster, and we're going up and all you hear is that 'click-click-clack' sound. But you know what's coming up next!" In class, a slightly built White man said, "Dude, I'm not a big guy. How am I going to tell a corner of big, uh, Black drug dealers to clear off? I mean, what's to stop them from raping me!?" A Black in class noted, "But a lot of these people [Whites] aren't from these areas. They don't know." In private, a Black trainee said that while the perceptions of many of the Whites in the academy were based on ignorance and prejudice, the

realities of the ghetto could often live up to the worst stereotypes: "Whites here are going to be in for quite a culture shock."

Rookie police quickly see what give the ghetto a bad name: unsanitary living conditions, rats, roaches, broken glass, trash, disease, addiction, nonworking plumbing, and violence. For some Whites, this confirms preexisting negative stereotypes:

> If you're documenting this for your research or whatever, get this down: These people out here are a subhuman race. I mean, this raid we did today. You pull up a sheet, and cockroaches are running around the bed. Who can sleep like this? Everyone is drugged out, like that Zombie movie: "Brains, I want brains!"

Another White officer explained,

> It's a different world [here in the Eastern]. Girls running around with babies. Shaneequa and Laquanda. Half the time they don't even know how to spell it. Look around: trash, shit, rats, junkies. They don't want to work. People prefer to take drugs, drink a "double-deuce" [22-ounce bottle of Malt Liquor], get in the cheese line.

White officers see living in the ghetto as a choice people make and cannot comprehend why anybody, including Anderson's (1999) "decent people," would choose such a life:

> I don't understand why anybody would want to live in this shithole [the Eastern District]. If I lived here, I would leave. If you chose to stay here, I have no sympathy for you. . . . What are you hanging around for? The smell? To call us racist for trying to clear hoodle-heads off the corners? No, I don't care if you have a job. It's their [working people's] kids who are out causing all the trouble. [Working parents] want us to clean up the neighborhood, but they're the first ones to bitch when we lock up their son. Nobody ever believes it's their baby out there causing trouble. If you choose to live here, you're part of the problem.

One discussion with a White officer focused on the idea of living in the ghetto by choice:

> *Officer:* I don't understand why anybody lives here.

> *Question:* Where do you want them to live? You want them to move to your neighborhood?

> *Officer:* [chuckles] No, but they could move to another neighborhood in the city.

> *Question:* Would you rent to them?

> *Officer:* Some slumlord would rent to them there, too.

Question: Then they'd be in another ghetto. How would it help this place if every working person left? Call me liberal, but jobs would help.

Officer: That's not the issue. These people don't want to leave 'cause "baby's motha'" is here. Because they make their money selling drugs here. You liberals always want to blame society. Well, there's nothing about society or poverty that keeps you from cleaning your home. You want to give these people something? How about a broom. And a frying pan. You don't have to be rich to clean your house. I mean the kids are living in filth. That's got nothing to do with money. And all that crappy food they buy? It costs more. But they're lazy. [Getting government] disability [checks] is like winning the lotto.

Black officers' sympathies extend moreso to the working residents of the ghetto. Some older residents cannot afford to leave, while others are too stubborn to leave their home of many decades. Other residents feel a civic duty to stay and make things better. Both Black and White police have sympathy for those perceived as having no means to leave—specifically old people; infants; and the multitude of stray, abandoned, and abused animals. "The old people, the dogs," one White officer said, "I feel for them. They can't leave. But anybody with a job? You could live anywhere. If you chose to bring up your family here, I don't get it."

Black officers are more likely to think of the ghetto in class terms, with ghetto being synonymous with lower-class Blacks and conscious lifestyle choices. These attitudes correspond to Anderson's (1990, 1999) delineation between *decent* versus *street* or *ghetto* residents.

A Black officer described *ghetto* in terms of property owners:

The problem here is nobody owns their property. There are plenty of Black neighborhoods where people have lawns. Take care of things. Don't let kids deal drugs on their block. But those are mostly the homeowners. Everything here is Section 8 [government subsidized rent]. Just trash one place and move on to the next. Who would ever buy into here? . . . Some people think whenever they see Black, it's ghetto. But it's not like that.

Asked to be specific about what makes an area a ghetto, the Black officer said,

Single mothers, kids by different fathers, drugs, alcohol, hanging out all night. You don't know where your 14-year-old is because [you are] strung out yourself. You don't care. It's a way you dress, a way you talk, a forty [ounce bottle of malt liquor]. [Using the expressions] "Bs and Hs" [bitches and whores], "yo," "aw'ite" [all right]. The [summer] uniform [of drug dealers, White t-shirt, baggy jeans worn low, beige Timberland boots]. . . . You can't be a bad-ass forever. A junkie is just a "yo-boy" [kid hanging on the corner] plus a few years of heroin. You start sniffing the profits [of drug deals]. These people need some religion. Religion and a good ass whoopin'.

Some White officers make similar distinctions about property owners but still conceive of sharp geographic boundaries. One young White officer said, "Near the Eastern [District police station], the neighborhood is nice. There are [Black]

homeowners near the district; then things go downhill on Federal Street. There's that hill over there, and you cross that and it's like entering the gates of hell."

While acknowledging that some "decent" people live in the ghetto, White police are quicker to conceive of the ghetto as a monolithic geographic entity. Black police mirrored Anderson's (1990, 1999) language, distinguishing between those in the ghetto whom they consider to be "ghetto" and the middle and working-class "decent" people also living in the same area:

> I'm from the ghetto. I speak three languages: English, bad English, and profanity! But that don't mean I got to act ghetto. I could stand on the corner with the "yo"s [term for troublesome youths who use the word "yo" a lot], pants hung low, wearing Tims [Timberland boots], saying, "whatup, yo?" But that ain't me.

Most police, both Black and White, believe that the social problems in the Eastern District are hopeless. One Black officer said, "It's hard not to think that this is a jungle here. People running around in the street at all hours. Getting high, acting like fools. . . . They ought to tear everything down. All of it!" A White officer echoed this belief: "I'd like to napalm the whole area. Wouldn't that be beautiful? Just come in with the air strikes and watch the whole thing go up in flames. . . . I don't know what else you can do. If people want to live this way, I say fuck 'em."

A Black officer proposed similar ends through different means: "If it were up to me, I'd build big walls and just flood the place [the Eastern District]. Biblical like. Flood the place and start a-fresh. I think that's all you can do." When I asked the Black officer how his belief that the entire area be "flooded" differed from the attitudes of White police, he responded, "Naw, I'm not like that because I'd let the good people build an ark and float out. Old people, working people, line 'em up, two by two. White cops will be standing on the walls with big poles pushing people back in."[12]

In a different context, the same African-American officer said, "I just wish some of them [White officers] would take the time to talk to people rather than just talking at people. . . . There are lots of good people here, but you'd never know it if you don't make the effort." In a previous conversation with me, a White officer had labeled this Black officer "a sympathizer."[13]

Derogatory talk about residents of the Eastern District does not necessarily reflect race. Cops share an equally hostile attitude towards lower-class Whites and anybody who repeatedly demands police attention. A White cop explained, "My philosophy is I hate everybody equally. We're dealing with shits no matter where we work. Everyone is going to lie to you." One White officer described the perils of working in a White neighborhood:

> Those rednecks are just [as] bad [as "ghetto" Blacks in the Eastern District]. Same drinking, same domestics [domestic violence], same kids, same welfare. But in Pigtown or South Baltimore [lower-class White neighborhoods], you'll see things you never get here, like incest and huffing [inhaling fumes]. It's like one big Jerry Springer set. Pookie [in the ghetto] may not know who his daddy is, but half the time those [White] motherfuckers don't want to know!

Plus, they [Whites] fight cops more. But it's strange because the same people who fight cops one day will help you out the next. Here, [Black] people just want nothing to do with you.

Driving through a lower-class White neighborhood, a Black officer looked out the window and said, "You get weird stuff here, like incest reports." Describing the same area, another White officer said, "Man, those rednecks are stupid. At least the Blacks [in the Eastern] got an excuse; they were born in the ghetto. But those Whites are just dumb!" Lower-class Whites in poor White neighborhoods were routinely disparaged with greater venom than middle or working-class African Americans living in the ghetto. While the word *ghetto* was not used to describe a White neighborhood, negative characteristics of the ghetto were seen to transcend racial and geographic boundaries.

While police freely make negative comments about the Black residents of the ghetto, only once did this author hear the word *nigger* used by a White officer. A White officer described how he was off duty, standing in a check-out line at a grocery store while a young "ghetto" Black man was in front of him on his cell phone making a drug deal. "All I could think," said the officer, "was 'that nigger!'" Black officers were much more free to use the word and its derivative, *nigga*. But its use was controversial. When a Black officer used the word in a negative context in a crowded station house at shift change, a White officer ran from the area saying, "Whoa! Dropping the N-Bomb. I'm getting out of here."

Deserving Victims

Both Black and White police believe that the vast majority of victims—if not completely deserving of their predicament—are at least complicit in their victimization. "Innocent" or "true" or "real" victims would be those who do not know their assailant and were not participating in criminal activity (usually buying or selling drugs) at the time of their victimization. The concept of the "deserving" victim, the idea that the victim had it coming, is a large source of police officers' negative attitudes toward citizens.

A veteran of over 15 years discussed how many truly "innocent" victims he had seen:

> Well, I'd say a lot of the theft from autos are probably legit. Some of the yokings [unarmed muggings] and robberies. Child abuse, things like that. But shooting victims, probably three or four total. Often the guy shot isn't the intended victim. Nobody here can aim. But he's a cousin or someone involved. Once there was a stray bullet that went into a second floor window and got this guy watching TV. He was innocent! Three or four out of a couple of hundred. I'd say 99% of these idiots deserve it in one way or another.

Police disparage both the willing participation which leads to some victimization and the repeated strains on police time and resources. An officer explains, "If every idiot who could pick up a phone didn't call us whenever they wanted— 'My daughter won't go to school,' 'My boyfriend put his feet in my hair'—we might have a little time to clear the corners, do [drug] surveillance, [or] walk foot." "Everybody lies," a Black officer said, "especially the shooting victims. Because

they all know who shot them. And why. They don't want police involved with them any more than they did before they got shot."

One gunshot victim, despite a serious bullet wound and full knowledge of who shot him, wouldn't even tell this author his own name. The shooter was later arrested, but the State Attorney's office dropped the charges because "[the victim] wouldn't tell us the same story twice. He's no angel himself." Victims may be wanted for other crimes or simply have no desire to get involved in the criminal justice system at any level.

A police officer, after being awakened by a 4:00 AM call for an in-progress aggravated assault, rhetorically asked,

> What are you doing out at 4:00 AM? It's not like anything's open. Even the yakomee [Chinese take out] joint is closed. If you weren't out trying to cop [buy drugs] or burn somebody [sell fake drugs], you wouldn't get your ass kicked. There's no reason to be on the street at this hour. Asshole did something wrong. He deserves it.

Another officer described a call that was dispatched as a rape:

> That's no rape. That's FTP: failure to pay. She consented to sex and didn't get her $20, so she wants him locked up. Then she changes her mind because she doesn't want to go to the hospital. So I've got to write it up as agg [aggravated] assault? Why do I want to increase the crime rate [statistics] because she won't stop sucking dicks?

While prejudging the situation may close the mind to the possibility of a "legitimate" victim, officers would change their attitude when there was a victim perceived as "real."

Domestic violence, occasionally disparaged as "ghetto foreplay," contributed heavily to the belief of "complicit" victims. A Black officer explains,

> You know how often I've locked him up? Locked her up a few times, too. But it doesn't matter. It doesn't matter what we do because she don't go to court. Or if she does, they'll come in all lovey-dovey and she'll say, "I loves him." She could leave [him]. Or at least get him locked up [for longer] and have the place to herself. But she keeps going back to him. [Then she calls us because she] just wants him out of the house for the night.

A White officer received a call from a family trapped in their own house by an unfamiliar pit bull resting on their marble stoop. The dog had clear facial scars from dog fighting and, though calm, showed no desire to move from the stoop. The officer told me, "It's sad that I feel more for the dog than the people here. What did the dog do to deserve this? . . . I mean, I can rationalize and say the people choose to live this way. But the dog?"

Both Black and White police recognize the chasm between the police and the public as problematic:

Nobody here will talk to police. Half the public hates us. The other half is scared to talk to us. I would be, too. But we can't do anything without the public. They know who's dirty [involved with drugs] and who's not. They know who's shooting who. We don't know. They live here. We just drive around in big billboards. How are we supposed to see anything? The public doesn't understand that nothing will ever go to court if nobody talks. We can only do so much. As long as nobody ever sees anything, things aren't going to change.

White officers are more likely to blame the public for these bad relations:

People get bad ideas from the media or from criminals that we're corrupt or brutal. But we're not. Or they refuse to think that their son could be involved with drugs. They want the corner cleared, but if we pick up their son it must be the racist cops picking on him because he's Black. And with the amount of drugs you've got in this area, of course they aren't going to like police because we're trying to lock them up. Too many people here are pro-criminal.

Black officers are more likely to place some of the blame for poor public relations on the police: "Police just don't know how to talk to people. We're too rude. We piss someone off and the next time he don't want nothing to do with us. Or he starts to believe some of the things people say about police. Can you blame him?"

Blame the Liberals

Black and White police share a belief that the root causes of most social problems are values they perceive as politically "liberal": affirmative action, welfare, premarital sex, and parents who refuse to physically discipline their children. In the police academy, a high-ranking instructor said, "Sometimes you get those bleeding-heart liberals who think everything is [child] abuse. But it's up to us to decide what is criminal child abuse . . . [But] you shouldn't be using a belt [in disciplining a child]." At this point, there was a loud and open groan in the classroom. One Black trainee said, "Nobody would have been left to raise me." Another Black commented, "Both my parents would have been locked up."

Over 70% of the recruits in academy class admitted, most often proudly, that they were physically disciplined with methods defined by academy instructors as physical child abuse under Maryland law (see Table 2). A White instructor stated, "People haven't had their asses whipped. Now nobody beats them, not parents, not friends, and certainly not the police. That's the problem."

White police were quicker than Black police to blame the problems of the ghetto on liberal politicians. The First Lady, Hillary Clinton, was a surprisingly popular scapegoat:

I hate Hillary Clinton, that bitch. Her book: *It Takes a Village*. And all these liberals giving her awards. It takes a parent. Fuck a village! It takes one good parent. That's what these people don't have. If they had a parent who raised them right, instead of calling the police every fucking time they had a problem, half of the kids would turn out OK. . . . That motherfucker there [on the last call], when was the last time he read a book to his kid? Being a father

is more than buying Pampers. These idiots can't raise kids. They shouldn't have them in the first place. And then they don't know how to be parents and blame the school for everything.

Anther White officer said, "I don't understand how you can be liberal. You want to see 30 years of failed liberal policy? Just look around the Eastern. Everything is fucked up."

Many Black police shared similarly conservative views towards "ghetto" residents:

People out here are lazy. L – A – Z – Y. Waiting in the cheese line. Being poor is no excuse for being ignorant. I made it in this country. It can be done. But you got to work for it. As long as the welfare checks [and] the disability [checks] keep coming and people want to shoot up [inject drugs], nothing is going to change. But it's not society's fault. Society doesn't make you sell drugs any more than it made me police. You've got to take responsibility for your actions. Stop whining and blaming others.

While being arrested, one suspect appealed to a Black officer by pleading, "Brother, you got to understand." The officer responded, "I'm not your brother! I'm not your cousin. I'm not your 'homie.' And no, I don't understand where you're 'coming from.' I'm old enough to be your daddy!" Neither party had anything else to say.[14]

Morale

Police morale is highest the day job applicants are hired. Morale drops for police through the academy and again after the first year on the street. This decline is much more pronounced for White police.[15] I asked a more veteran White officer if he thought White police were more demoralized than Black police (Dowler, 2005). He responded,

It wouldn't surprise me. Everybody is always talking about racism. Well you know what? We're [White people are] a minority here [in Baltimore]. Who's sticking up for our rights? Where's our NAACP? One of us gets fired and nobody cares. But try and fire a number one [Black person], people are out on the streets. City hall has meetings (Epstein, 2001). You don't think that has an effect?

Another White officer addressed the problems of working patrol in the Eastern:

They give lip service to patrol being the backbone of the department. But if they were really serious about the Eastern, they wouldn't always dump on patrol. If they need officers for a specialized unit, they take them from patrol. Now we can't get days off. If what we do is really so important, patrol should be taking officers from other divisions. Entice people to work patrol in the Eastern. How can we do a good job if half the district has 70s [transfer request forms] written and the other half is bitter?

A Black officer expressed a slightly better view of the Eastern District: "People are always going to bitch and complain. I don't know what they were expecting. People always think the grass is greener on the other side. You come here. You do your job. You go home. It's not so bad."

A small minority of young officers, both Black and White, enjoy working the Eastern District because of the faster-paced work or because the district is one of the least desirable assignments. A young Black cop said, "I don't want to hump out [do nothing] all day. I want to go out and do things; lock people up!" A White officer explained the advantages of working in an unpopular locale:

> You can fuck around here. What can they do to you? I'm already in the Eastern, working midnights! There's nothing lower. They want to transfer me? Go right ahead. Put me somewhere better. Here, pretty much everybody just leaves you alone to do your job. It's just one less thing to worry about.

Most officers who are able to eventually do transfer out of the Eastern District to districts less "ghetto." For the short term, morale for these officers tends to go up. A White officer gloated soon after a transfer out of the Eastern:

> It's great [in another district]! It's like a whole 'nother department. People wave to the police. People like the police. It's weird. . . . There's only one drug corner in the whole sector. . . . And things work smoothly. There are enough cars to go around. Everybody is not whining all the time. It's like things are supposed to work. . . . I even look forward to coming to work. I can't believe I'm saying that. But at the Eastern, I was thinking about quitting.

Reasons frequently given by police for poor morale include no reward for a job well done but quick punishment for mistakes; police management perceived as out of touch and unsupportive of patrol officers (Reuss-Ianni, 1983)[16]; poor working conditions (previously mentioned); and excessive paperwork—for example, arresting a juvenile for minor drug possession requires completing 15 forms, all but two in longhand, and a three- to six-hour booking process in four separate locations.

Many older patrol officers know they are past any chance for promotion and worry about providing for their families after they retire. Pension generally represents a 50% cut in pay. With only a high school diploma, these officers fear for their post-police job prospects and ability to provide for their families. On one call, police responded to a man on the side of the street crying. He kept repeating, "I want to kill myself. I want to kill myself. I want to kill myself." A long-time White veteran of the Eastern District told him, "Come on, it can't be that bad. At least you're not stuck in a dead-end job [like me]!"

Biased Discipline

Both Black and White police view the police administration and departmental discipline process as unfairly biased against their own respective race. According to the 2000 Baltimore Police Department Internal Survey, 80% of Baltimore police officers believe that departmental discipline is unfair and inconsistent. Both Black

and White police officers believe that the department is unwilling or unable to thoroughly discipline officers of the other race.

Paradoxically, both Black and White officers see their own race as disproportionately punished by the system. It seems incongruous that the police department disciplinary process can be simultaneously biased against Blacks and biased against Whites. But the biases are perceived in different parts of the system. Black officers perceive the informal process of discipline as benefiting White officers (Beard, 1977; Leinen, 1984); White officers see the formal process of discipline as benefiting Black officers. To a large extent, both beliefs have merit. A White officer said, "They'll never punish a Black officer unless they can find a White officer to balance the numbers"; a Black officer said, "You Whites can get away with anything."

For instance, an off-duty White officer was being arrested for being drunk and disorderly. Before going to central booking, this officer was released without charges by a White supervisor after a stern lecture and warning—an informal resolution. The supervisor, however, was then brought up on formal charges for not booking the suspect. Another sergeant related the story to me:

> You know Lieutenant DiMaggio? Used to be Sergeant? Well he hit the jackpot [got in trouble]. A Black officer arrested an [off-duty White] officer for being disorderly in a bar or something like that. Well, Lieutenant DiMaggio is on duty. He talks to them and lets him go. How are you going to risk an officer's career on one misdemeanor? So he drops it. Next thing we hear is that he's being charged. Big time. I don't know if it was the arresting officer or IID [Internal Affairs, known by the acronym for the unit's former name: Internal Investigation Division] or what. But he could be fired. I don't know if it will come to that. But they could easily push him back to Sergeant. He doesn't deserve that.

Departmental discipline is based on violations of *General Orders*, a system common to most police departments. These rules are collected by individual officers in a confusing, four-inch-thick binder filled, in no particular order, with individual regulations quixotically designed to cover every aspect of police work both on and off duty. General Orders are often outdated, impractical, and occasionally even contradictory. General Orders are perceived by rank-and-file police officers as neither a help nor a guide to policing. Instead, they are a way for the department to avoid legal liability and punish any officer it chooses. Standard operating procedures are in contradiction with many General Orders. Police officers congregate, go to the bathroom without notifying dispatch, improvise based on necessity, and exercise discretion. None of these practices is condoned by the book of General Orders.

The relationship between formal and informal rules is simultaneously schizophrenic and symbiotic. Implicit is the assumption that the efficiency of the smart rules allows the formal, proper rules to survive.[17] Freilich and Schubert (1991) write,

> Formal writings created to control police behaviors are termed proper [formal] rules and principles. Police officers who avoid or evade these rules and principles are considered as deviants, actors who deviate from the proper. Deviants, contrary to public opinion, sometimes make positive

contributions to the success and vitality of organizations. . . . Such deviant behavior sometimes is copied by actors who have important positions in the organization. As other actors join the bandwagon, a new rule slowly develops . . . a "smart [informal] rule."

Yet any deviation from the formal rules—no matter how smart, creative, or well-intentioned—is potentially subject to disciplinary action. Police codify proper rules in extremely great detail. Yet these details are often out-of-touch with on-the-street job realities.

A White officer described General Orders as . . .

[a] way to fuck you. If they want to get you, they'll find something. If they can't, there's always "conduct unbecoming." That's kind of the catch-all, at least till they write a new GO [General Order] to cover what you did. Some of those GOs are actually a hoot to read because most are only written after somebody jackpots [messes up and gets caught]. Like there's one saying you can't shoot an animal from more than 30 feet away or something. That means somebody somewhere was squeezing off rounds from halfway down the block and hit something he shouldn't have.

A Black officer expressed similar feelings:

Look, we've [patrol officers] got to cover our ass and they've [the administration] got to cover theirs. We write reports to cover ours and they've got the GOs to cover theirs. It's all about protecting that behind. . . . When it hits the fan, they'll hang you out to dry before you even know you're wet!

The gap between how things *must* be done and how things *should* be done, though faced in many occupations, is perhaps larger and more critical in policing (Freilich & Schubert, 1991).

The seemingly random nature of the discipline process is reflected in the slang use of the word *jackpot* to describe getting in trouble. To *jackpot* or *get in the jackpot* does not describe an act of wrongdoing but, rather, the act of getting mired in the departmental discipline process regardless of the nature of the transgression or the officer's actual guilt or innocence.

As White officers have always been the majority in the Baltimore Police Department, Black officers perceive an "old boy's club" which allows Whites to get away with certain behavior. One Black officer described an entire work shift of one district as "just a bunch of drinking buddies. That's not fair to the rest of us. I think the whole shift should be broken up." Another Black officer said, "White police get away with bloody murder around here. You know how it is. You spend enough time with them, and they start talking about [how Black people are] monkeys and all that kind of thing. How are you going to punish your friends if you go hunting with them?"

Whether a violation of a General Order is grounds for official reprimand is usually up to a police officer's immediate supervisor, the sergeant. As described in greater detail by Van Maanen (1983), the sergeant is the keystone of the discipline

process. While Internal Affairs can and does investigate and punish officers, the vast majority of minor violations are punished at the discretion of the sergeant. A sergeant can completely overlook an offense or demand a formal written account. Sergeants are expected to consider a wide variety of factors such as context, frequency, and severity before disciplining officers. For good and for bad, personal factors inevitably come into play.

Black police continue to see racism among White officers as a significant and socially segregating issue. One Black female said, "You see all those cops who wear gloves all the time, even though it's against General Orders? They don't want to touch a Black person." Black officers perceived a large percentage of White officers—particularly those who act or proclaim themselves to be "redneck"—as racist.

Compared with Black officers, White police perceive far fewer racial issues and problems. Reverse racism, however, is seen as a significant factor by most White officers:

> We got to watch what we say, what we do. Blacks can use the N-word anytime they want. They can screw up and people say it's not their fault. We mess up and we're called racist. How many White people do you see around here [on the streets of the Eastern District]? We can't do anything without being called racists. "White motherfucker" this and "White motherfucker" that. The only racism around here is against White people. I'm sick of it.

Whites see affirmative action, political correctness, and a Black majority in the city as strong evidence that the department is biased against Whites in general. One White officer said, "[The administration] is afraid to punish Blacks. It's all political. They don't want the media and politicians screaming bloody murder. So every time a [Black] is suspended, they've got to find a White to fuck with too." Another White officer said, "They should get rid of all bad cops, and stop talking about race all the time. Every time they [the administration] wants to jackpot [punish] a Black, I guarantee you they're going to find a White to balance the numbers. You just hope it's not you." A White officer cynically explained that when it came to punishment, the department simply needed "White meat."

A White officer expressed a belief common among White officers that Black officers were responsible for a disproportionate share of transgressions:

> You know it's always the number ones [Black officers], hitting that ass [sleeping with women], domestics with baby's motha', getting in the jackpot [getting caught]. But they know nothing's going to happen to them. All they have to do is scream racism, or sexism, or both! How can you prove it's not?

A Black officer explained that since more Black officers lived in the city, their transgressions were more visible: "It's off-duty that kills you. That's why I moved out. Far away. You got to learn: Don't get yo' honey where you make yo' money."

Conclusion

Blue exists before Black and White, but Black and White have not blended into blue. Black police officers see race relations within the department as more problematic

than do White police. While the police department is not torn by racial strife, clear and meaningful differences exist between Black and White police officers' beliefs regarding crime fighting, departmental politics, and the African-American community. Black police, more than White police, see crime to be a direct result of the root causes of poverty, racism, and poor education. White police are more likely to believe crime escalates from general social disorder. White officers, more than Black officers, see the role of police as "crime fighters" locking up "bad guys." Black police are more likely to see their role as "peacekeepers," protecting the "good people" in the ghetto. Black police officers emphasize class struggle between the "decent" working class and the "street" or "ghetto" culture within the community. White police officers see the "ghetto" more as a miasma that pollutes all in its midst. A fraternity of blue coexists with but does not eliminate nor significantly lessen these differences.

Much of what is perceived as police identity—socially conservative values and a rejection of lower-class culture—is present before officers enter the police department. The shared experiences of police work help overcome racial differences, but they do not eliminate differences between Black and White police officers. Black and White Baltimore City police officers are born into dissimilar social and geographic conditions and remain in largely separate social worlds before, during, and after their entry into the police department. Not surprisingly, attitudes reflect this social separation.[18]

Police identity—the so-called "blue brotherhood"—is less a unifying force than a tool that allows effective functioning in spite of racial differences. In work-related situations, especially those involving danger, the race of a police officer is irrelevant.[19] When backup is needed, police officers do not care about the race of the responding officer. One Black academy instructor said, "I don't care if you're white, black, green, or brown, as long as you back me up when I'm getting my ass kicked, you're blue. And that's all that matters."[20] The so-called "blue brotherhood" is not a monolithic entity as much as a tent under which a clan of cousins constantly feuds and squabbles: "When you put on that uniform, you're not White or Black. You're blue. We're one big happy family, right? Dysfunctional as hell. But what family isn't?"

Endnotes

[1] The term *ghetto* is used because it is the vernacular of police officers and many (though by no means all) of the residents in the area.

[2] The Minneapolis Domestic Violence Experiment provides a good example of poor methods influencing quantitative results and, as result, public police (Sherman & Berk, 1984). In this study, mandatory arrest was shown to reduce reoccurring domestic violence. Officers were supposed to handle domestic violence situations based on the response indicated on the top card of a random deck. The "problem" was that police officers, unbeknownst to the researchers, were exercising professional discretion and, in effect, stacking the deck (Berk, Smith, & Sherman, 1989). More careful replication shows that in many cases a mandatory domestic violence arrest makes the problem worse. Nevertheless, mandatory arrest became and remains law in many jurisdictions.

[3] Though charges of "going native" can neither be disproved nor dismissed, I believe that methodological risks inherent to participant-observation research are generally

overblown. *Objectivity* is too often a mask for ignorance. And attempts by outsiders to gain trust and access as an outsider can lead to even greater methodological corruption.

[4] Ironically, there was more hassle from my Harvard professors about me being a Baltimore police officer than there was from Baltimore police officers about me being a Harvard graduate student.

[5] The survey is available from the author on request and is reprinted in Moskos (2008).

[6] Resistance to completing the questionnaire was most often rooted in the belief that completion of the survey would not benefit research subjects and could, perhaps, come back to haunt them. There was also an undercurrent of ideological opposition to research, generally perceived to be anti-police (Young, 1991). But ties from the police academy overcame any such opposition . . . at least in person.

[7] On one hand, the aversion police have to filling out questionnaires cannot be overemphasized. Cops will do anything to avoid filling out a survey. Simply put, no good is coming from others knowing their inside beliefs. Perhaps more importantly, too many questionnaires are too long, poorly written, and fail to guarantee anonymity through overly specific background questions (simply asking race, sex, and rank is usually a giveaway). On the other hand, cops can be an easy group from which to get high response rates. Given the pseudo-military chain-of-command, officers will fill a survey when a higher-ranking officer implies they have to. Officers will also fill out a survey as a personal favor to a sympathetic researcher, at least if the researcher confronts them in person.

[8] The Eastern District homicide rate for men 18 to 24 is 615 per 100,000. This rate is approximately four times the national rate for Black men of this age and 40 times the rate for the equivalent White Baltimoreans. A 15-year-old male in Baltimore's Eastern District has a 11.6% chance of being murdered before age 35 (Moskos, 2008, footnote 14, pp. 203-204). Another way to conceive of the level of violence is to note that more people are lost to homicide each year in the Eastern District—both in raw numbers and per capita—than the hardest hit community, Hoboken, New Jersey, lost in the World Trade Center attacks of September 11, 2001 (Newman, 2002).

[9] Most of the White recruits would have preferred a better paying police job outside of the city but took jobs in the city because Baltimore City was hiring. There is also the perception that a police officer in a high-crime city is somehow more "real police" than an officer working in a quiet town. Some trainees, mostly White, claimed to have taken large pay cuts to work for the Baltimore City Police Department. At the time, the starting annual police salary was $28,400. After two years and a new contract, the salary was $32,000.

[10] "Academics" was a loose term to describe all classroom subjects that could be tested on paper. I put the word in quotes because the "academics" of the Baltimore Police Academy bore little resemblance to any standard school program I know. Little emphasis was placed on subject retention. Lessons were geared more toward protecting the department from legal liability than educating police officers. There was an open secret that answers to some tests would be given to the class in pretest review sessions. Very little attempt was made to explain to trainees how the material presented in the police academy was relevant to day-to-day police work. Survey data show that less than half the class saw a relationship between what police learn in the academy and what police need to know on the street.

[11] Initially, the academy trainees were allowed to ask for any of the nine police districts. But these requests were later ignored, and the class was informed it was to be split entirely into the two highest-crime districts. Perhaps as a consolation, it was left to the class to divide itself between the two districts.

[12] The flooding metaphor was said before the flooding and destruction of New Orleans, Louisiana. But the attempts by neighboring White communities to keep displaced Black New Orleans residents from taking refuge in their communities showed the painful truth of this officer's beliefs.

[13] I can't be certain what was meant by the label *sympathizer* as I did not ask the White officer what he meant. My interpretation is that the White officer was questioning the Black officer's loyalty toward police *vis-à-vis* the Black residents of the Eastern District. This may lend support to Dowler's (2005) link between perceived criticism toward Black officers and the perceived militancy of Black officers (though I would not describe this particular Black officer as "militant").

[14] I would expect the police officer's response to be similar even if no White police officer was present. But of course, as a White person, I cannot know for sure.

[15] Qualitative evidence is strong. Quantitatively, morale is measured in the questionnaire as a combination of the mean for ten questions. At the start of the academy, on a one-to-five scale with five equaling high morale, Whites measured 3.9 and Blacks 3.8. After a year on the streets, Whites measured 3.2 and Blacks 3.7. Collectively, the decline over time was significant at the 0.05 level. The decline for Whites was significant at the 0.01 level.

[16] Reuss-Ianni articulates the rift between patrol officers and management-level officers in her wonderful "Cop's Code."

[17] For an example regarding radio communication, see Manning (1997, p. 262).

[18] The link between police officers' personal beliefs and their professional behavior is vital and yet very poorly understood. I believe that most police are professional inasmuch as the link between personal beliefs and professional behavior is quite small. In other words, police officers can overcome their personal prejudices and treat citizens in a professional manner. Of course, I saw some unprofessional police work toward citizens, but bad (and good) behavior came from both Black and White officers. Try as I might, I could see very little significant correlation between police officers' personal attitudes and professional behavior. Some police officers were undoubtedly better than others. Yet work quality ultimately seems little related to personal beliefs or barroom bravado.

[19] An intellectual sergeant discussing this matter said, "Everyone says that race is the issue, but basically race isn't a problem. There will always be issues, but your White cop isn't drastically different from your Black cop. The real issue is gender, but people don't want to talk about that!"

[20] Slow backup is a very rare but very serious occupational hazard. When it happens, it is generally a personal issue that transcends race. In the Eastern District, given the number of officers in a small geographic area, backup is never far away and generally quick (though when you need backup every second counts). Slow backup is a very serious informal sanction often caused by the belief that the requesting officer repeatedly puts

him- or herself into dangerous or unethical situations that could and should be avoided. Failure to provide backup can be an attempt to change an officer's behavior and a way of avoiding responsibility for whatever situation has developed.

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