

Essay Example

Instructions	Examine police brutality against the Blacks in the U.S. using the symbolic interactionism theory. Discuss the causes of this violence.
<p>Hook- Introducing the overall topic Identifying the sub-topic Defining terms/ background Stating relevance/ thesis statement Roadmap</p>	<p>Less than 10% of Blacks deaths under police prompt criminal charges despite Blacks being disproportionately affected by police brutality (Carter, 2017). As a result, police violence against the Blacks has become a major social and political discourse in the U.S., with scholars, policy making stakeholders, and the larger society members showing interest in unravelling this social phenomenon. Police brutality against the Blacks is viewed as the use of excessive an unwarranted force against African Americans primarily because of their skin color. The brutality has resulted into mistrust in institutions, unsafe communities, and division in society. Accordingly, this essay examines the causes of the disparities in the use of force to help understand ways to resolve the resulting problems. It uses the symbolic interactionism theory to explore the symbols acquired by police in their interactions with others, and the relationship between these interactions and brutality.</p>
<p>Topic sentence Research Explanation and application Concluding sentence- Reconnecting to the topic</p>	<p>In line with symbolic interactionism, personal inclination towards violence is one of the main causes of police brutality against Blacks. Weiburd et al. (2001) note that a study commissioned by the Police Foundation showed that some police officers condoned the use of excessive force. This category of police officers believed that it was necessary to apply violence when assaulted in their work or when execution of a task required it. Based on the theory, these attitudes can be categorized as part of the “self”. Brutality against Blacks occurs at a personal level. The interactions between the police officer and the Black person are reciprocal, with each individual representing their evaluation of the “self”. Police exhibiting higher levels of violence arguably have negative “self” assessment. Such an assessment derives from poor beliefs, values, and attitudes. Studies indicate that subjective interpretations that form the basis of police brutality against Blacks are based on prejudiced beliefs and attitudes towards Black people.</p>
<p>Topic sentence Research Explanation and application Concluding sentence</p>	<p>Another cause of police brutality against the Blacks is group reference norms, rules, and expectations.. Research indicates that while police perceive Black minority groups as law breakers, the minority groups see police as violators. Studies show that interactions between young Blacks and the police are characterized by stereotypes that portray Blacks as violent and dangerous (Carboda & Rock, 2016). According to the symbolic interactionism theory, these interactions are influenced by the different values, beliefs, and expectations within respective small social networks. They define the presence of the police stereotypes and Blacks’ behavioural expectations like running away from the police, resisting arrest, and hatred for the police. Research indicate that symbols play a key role in determining the norms, values, and expectations that govern interactions between the police and groups of young Black males and the level of violence that result from these interactions.</p>
<p>Topic sentence Research</p>	<p>A further cause of police brutality against the Blacks is negative role portrayal. Kwon (2012), observes that studies indicate that lack of a higher authority restraining the use of violence has made police officers assume the role of a control agent and authority figure in society. These roles predispose them to meeting violence against those they perceive as opponents of control and authority. Police in the US has been depicted as an important agent and authority in the fight against crime. The symbolic interactionism theory argues</p>

Explanation and Application	that role-identities have a major impact on the behaviour of an individual or a group, where such roles come along with behavioural expectations attached to a specific status that is defined by a set of relationships. These behaviours create the link between personal and social organization that nurture police brutality against certain groups of people. Largely, the role identity of the police is attributed to the high levels of brutality especially against the blacks.
Concluding sentence	
Topic sentence	As well, police organizational culture is a cause of police brutality against the Blacks. La Vigne et al. (2017) observe that studies show that militarization of police that has usually targeted the Blacks has often eroded public confidence in the role of police, and instead exposed them to higher risk of attacks. This culture is prevalent across most of the police departments in the U.S. Further, the police has been associated with a subculture that has for many years exerted more force against the minorities. According to symbolic interactionism, organizational culture encompasses social patterns that are generated and maintained through human interactions, where such patterns result into a complex web of meanings. The police culture in the U.S. determines how police officers interpret different incidences when executing their duties. This culture consists of assumptions and beliefs that distort police world view about the Blacks, consequently resulting into more violence against Black people.
Research	
Explanation and application	
Concluding sentence	
Restating main points	To sum up, this essay has used the symbolic interactionism theory to explore reasons for the prevalence of police violence against the Blacks. Research indicates that the causes of such brutality are both individual and societal. At the individual level, personal inclinations deriving from identification of "self", which often come along with biases against Blacks predispose the police to violence. The societal level entails institutional aspects such as police organizational culture, negative role portrayal, and group reference norms, rules, and expectations that incline the police towards brutality against the Blacks. Police culture and leaderships play a key role in entrenching a violence within police institutions. To address police brutality against the Blacks, policy makers need to explore solutions to both the individual and institutional factors that expose the police towards committing violence.
Summary of key points	
Concluding sentence/ position on the issue	

Citations

Journal article	Carbado, Devon W & Rock Patrick. What Exposes African Americans to Police Violence? <i>Harvard Civil Rights-Civil Liberties Law Review</i> , 2016, [Vol. 51. P. 159-189.
Journal article	Carter, Corinthia A. "Police Brutality, the Law & Today's Social Justice Movement: How the lack of Police Accountability has Fueled #Hashtag Activism." <i>Cuny Law Review</i> , vol. 20, no. 521, 2017.
Book	Hewitt, John. <i>Self & Society</i> . Allyn & Bacon, 2002.
Journal article	Kwon, JiHyun. "Towards a Theoretical Understanding of Police Brutality." <i>Verstehen</i> , vol. 4, 2012.
Webpage	La Vigne, Nancy et al. "How Do People in High-Crime, Low-Income Communities View the Police?" <i>Urban Institute</i> . 2017, https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/88476/how_do_people_in_high-crime_view_the_police.pdf . Accessed 1 March 2019.

Webpage	Weisburd David, et al. "The Abuse of Police Authority: A National Study of Police Officers' Attitudes." 2001, https://www.policefoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Weisburd-et-al.-2001-The-Abuse-of-Police-Authority.pdf Accessed 1 March 2019.
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