

(White) Police and Black Males
SOC604: Lecture II
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(White) Police and Black Males

- American urban police forces as the face of the State/Dominant
- Possess enormous discretionary power to enforce—or not to enforce—existing laws
- Often have military backgrounds
- Receive working-class salaries
- Serve as agents of social control in contexts of profound anomie

(White) Police and Black Males

- Cycles of oppression
 - * Black males stopped by police for being black (commonly referred to as ‘color-coding’ or ‘racial profiling’)
 - * Black males then arrested and receive a police record for minor/non-violent offences (loitering, curfew violations, possession of small amounts of marijuana, speeding—‘doin 55 in a 54, as Jay Z says)
 - * Cycle continues when they are stopped a subsequent time and are now ‘criminals’ with a ‘police record’

(White) Police and Black Males

- Key interview excerpt:

‘At 8:30 on a Thursday evening...’ (p.185)

(White) Police and Black Males

- Reflexivity vis-à-vis 'the Man': Negotiating Police Encounters in the Urban Milieu
 - * 'Street' versus 'Decent' (or 'square')
 - * Code-switching
 - * Camouflaging
 - * Alternate 'pose' vis-à-vis 'the Man'
 - * Dialog and dialectic switching
 - * Urban agents/street cultures as objects/practices in need of social control

(White) Police and Black Males

- The Identification Card
 - * Symbolic weapon of identity within an existing legitimate institution—such cards say, ‘I am not just Black, but also a university student or a business employee.’
 - * Way to establish identity beyond ‘the hood’
 - * Badge/emblem of status in the dominant society
 - * Identifies urban actors as agents already ‘under control’

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- Key interview excerpt:

‘I know how I used to feel when I enrolled in college last year, when I had an ID card...(p.188)

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- Militarization of American Police Forces
 - * Federal surplus of military vehicles and weapons
 - * Discounted pricing to State and local police forces
 - * Military grade outfitting of urban police with army assault rifles, body armor, night vision and advanced surveillance technology, tanks, helicopters, etc.
 - * Creation of 'special' assault units
 - * Dialog and dialectic switching
 - * Urban agents/street cultures as an object in need of social control

(White) Police and Black Males

- Baghdad by the Bay? Syria, or St. Louis?

* http://www.huffingtonpost.com/rebecca-gordon/san-francisco-police-mario-woods_b_9298196.html

* <http://mashable.com/2014/08/14/5-things-police-militarization-america-ferguson-mike-brown>