## Abstract

Police brutality is a real world issue. Any time a police officer uses excessive and unnecessary force, the public should take notice. In those cases, police are using inductive reasoning and starting with the conclusion that a person is a threat, which the evidence will not show. Deductive reasoning is much more effective for criminal justice, where officers and investigators shall use deductive reasoning and begin with evidence, rather than a conclusion. The media has pushed rhetoric, presenting the narrative that police officers are inherently racist and there is a system that promotes brutality against persons of color. Both sides of the issue are examined using an objective approach, where the findings and conclusions sustain objectivity. Bias and fallacy have been a burden on this issue and the competing narratives, where the media has manipulated the public into thinking police are racist, biased, and without regard for communities of color. This paper will explore these issues through an objective lens.

### Police Brutality: Critical Thinking and an Objective View

Police brutality is on the rise and is due to racist officers who want to terrorize black communities. This is a headline that media sources will use to gain the attention of the viewer. This is a form of inductive reasoning that uses the headline to grab the attention, but does not necessarily work backwards to present facts and data. Inductive reasoning is problematic in discussion on high-profile issues, as are fallacies and narratives that do not align with the factual evidence (data). A real discussion as to whether police brutality is systematically impacting people is required to take an objective approach in analyzing these arguments, highlighting the role of policing in the United States, and determining whether the media and those pushing these narratives are manipulating the public. Through fallacy and rhetoric, rather than real world facts, an issue such as police brutality is viewed under a manipulated interpretation.

## Arguments: Police Brutality is a Concern (Systematically)

Beating and killing of unarmed African-Americans by racist cops is at the height of the discussion. John Osom (2016) chronicles case studies and narratives where unarmed black men were killed by police officers, and the presumption is that these officers were racist. Predictive policing is a systematically racist issue as it is going to predict that black people and other persons of color (but especially African Americans) are more likely to commit crimes (Pearse et al. 117). Therefore, officers feel justified when they use excessive force, even lethal force against black men because the computer is telling them that this individual is a threat. The key issue here, according to the text, is that there is an essential free-for-all by police officers to harm persons of color, where the communities, families, and individuals are terrorized to the point they can no longer trust police.

To build on the argument, mental health is severely impacted due to interaction with police. DeVylder, Fedina &amp; Link (2020) find that police brutality and abuse against citizens weakens their capacity to have any level of trust with the police. Engagement is going to suffer as the police are viewed as villains in these communities (Ref-s918663). Here, the argument is that the police are pushing their own agenda and initiative on the community members. When they do not comply, police use force and will later justify that force by arguing the suspect was combative or was in non-compliance with the law. Under a systematically racist system, this is the way of life for police who feel justified in the use of brutality against those who are not a threat.

### Counter-Arguments: Police Brutality is Mythical (Systematically)

The vast majority of cases do not involve any brutality. Desmond, Papachristos &amp; Kirk (2016) find that most cases are going to be civil and without dispute, irrespective of skin color. Predictive policing has argued that African Americans in urban settings are more likely to commit crimes because this is what the analytics are showing (Johnson). There are racist officers just as there are racist offenders. Categorizing a police department or entire system of being racist and oppressive does not solve the problem, but contributes to the divide. As the evidence speaks, one must begin to use critical thinking to determine which narrative makes more sense and applies to the current conditions.

### Evaluation of Critical Thinking

In examining a sensitive and controversial issue such as systemic police brutality, the language behind the presentation of an issue becomes significantly important. One creating the narrative, particularly a narrative that argues police brutality is a systematic problem, is going to use rhetoric that personally connects with those who believe this is a key issue. For example, DeVylder, Fedina &amp; Link (2020) correlated violence witnessed with mental health, where the aim of the study was to specifically analyze situations where one was exposed to trauma and violence at the hands of the police. Here, the fallacy that correlation is not causation must be addressed.

Common occurrences happening do not suggest there is a correlation. The narrative, or rhetoric promoted by those who believe police brutality is a systematic issue would make this correlation, but would be promoting a fallacy (correlation does not mean causation). The statistics have indicated that police brutality occurs at a weakening rate, and is not necessarily the norm but is situational depending on the circumstances. The slippery slope fallacy also applies in the context of those who argue that people of color, particularly black males, are living in fear of the police because they expect to be brutalized and traumatized.

As has been presented, there are consequences of police misconduct. The study by Desmond, Papachristos &amp; Kirk (2016) finds that black men are less likely to dial 911 when there has been police misconduct. Now, the narrative and rhetoric offered in literature and the media categorizes black men and persons of color as being traumatized by the police. This is a slippery slope fallacy as a percentage of the population not dialing 911 does not indicate systematic racism by the police force and an overwhelming rate of police brutality. There may be a reactionary response, or there may be situations where one is not calling 911 as doing so could incriminate the self (Ref-s096532). The slippery slope and other fallacies apply more so to the narrative, where there is an argument presented early in the discussion that the police are racist and take pride in promoting brutality. This sentiment is driven by fallacy and rhetoric, but not logic and data, where there must be careful use of critical thinking in analyzing any argument.

## Inductive and Deductive Reasoning

Inductive reasoning falls short in the scope of criminal justice. Beginning with a conclusion is problematic in the scope of criminal justice as the whole point becomes trying to prove that the conclusion is true (Smith). Through deductive reasoning, one is going to take on a more situational and individualized approach, which makes sense for the issue of police brutality (Smith). Consider an incident where a suspect was shot. He was without a firearm and was black. The narrative, and the fallacies being pushed by the media in this instance are that an officer was racist and showing brutality toward the traumatized individual. These incidents have occurred recently. Now, consider an inductive approach that starts with this conclusion and works backwards. This would require looking at the history of the officer, determining whether he has been involved in similar situations, and so forth. Inductive reasoning falls short because the conclusion and subsequent narrative has already been set, where the fallacies apply.

Deductive reasoning is going to look at the facts first. Consider the same situation where the suspect was evading police, was violent with them, and was going for a knife. All of these factors are important, but they are missing from the conclusion that has been established under inductive reasoning. It is nearly impossible to get away from a certain conclusion in today’s social environment as that will be the headline or the tagline (Ref-u321387). Therefore, inductive reasoning is not only falling short respective of any investigation, but is diminishing the public’s trust in media and reporting. By manipulating the public to believe the conclusion using an inductive approach, the theory that the police are racist and gain join in brutalizing and terrorizing communities of color holds true, while the data will suggest otherwise.