

Antidemocratic Policing in America: The Institutionalization of Historical Trauma

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ABSTRACT

Countries have begun reforms to align their police forces with a democratic policing culture. Despite significant progress in interpreting the United States Constitution, the United States struggles with a key aspect of democratic governance: democratic policing. Consequently, the gap between law and departmental policy, and policing culture continues to widen. This study aims to contribute to Forde's theory by applying the antidemocratic framework at the institutional level to describe policing practices that have received widespread attention by exploring police misconduct through a power lens of regressive strategies. The sample includes extant literature and data from exonerees. This study uses an innovative methodology grounded in the GQI and integrated with grounded theory analysis to answer the research question: How does Forde's antidemocratic framework, rooted in historical trauma and political demoralization, manifest in contemporary police-civilian interactions? Forde's antidemocratic concepts—nativism, social distinctions, misinformation, fear, dehumanization, and subjugation—frame this study. The framework underpins the understanding of antidemocratic policing and how micro-level disempowerment and macro-historical trauma (colonialism) converge in modern institutions. The primary finding is that antidemocratic practices are institutionalized.

Keywords: Antidemocratic Policing; Civilian Demoralization; Democratic Policing; Institutional Trauma; Nativism; Opportunity Gap; Police Misconduct; Regressive Social Change; Social Distinctions; Subjugation; Systemic Disempowerment; Undemocratic Policing.

1.0. Introduction

This study aims to contribute to Forde's theory by applying its antidemocratic framework at the institutional level to describe policing practices that have received widespread attention from the media and scholars alike, and which continue to widen the divide between police and the public by exploring police misconduct through a power lens of regressive antidemocratic strategies. Antidemocratic strategies are not institutional artifacts of policing; they are elementary cultural inheritances that predate the institution and operate at every scale of human interaction. The same strategies Britain deployed against the colonists are the strategies children use in a classroom, the strategies embedded in marketing, and the strategies institutionalized in policing. Professionalization changed their form, not their substance: the slave patrol's exclusion becomes the discretionary stop, the Crown's unilateral authority becomes the Miranda waiver. Because the strategies are woven into the cultural substrate of the nation, they are reproduced independently of the institutions that most visibly enact them. Antidemocratic tactics and strategies must be recognized to create effective democratic policing frameworks for positive and sustainable social change. Historically, violence driven by security concerns led to the founding of the United States. This has been a problem for marginalized groups. Whether by colonists or the monarchy, police or civilians, violence holds a dynamic tension between power and human dignity. Although the United States is no longer under British rule, antidemocratic strategies are still used in policing, as evidenced by the tactics employed. "One of the darkest aspects of US history and culture is encapsulated in crime perpetrated by law enforcement officials" (p. 371)¹. To appreciate this, all one must do is reflect on the origin of the strategies used in policing in America, from the slave patrols from which they emerged,¹ to law enforcement's complicity in Klan lynchings, the Jim Crow era,¹ and Prohibition.² As a result of a lack of professionalism, poor communication skills, and little

common sense, policing began to change, and the US Supreme Court began to recognize and respect the human dignity and inalienable rights of suspects and offenders. Today, police misconduct, which includes abuse and lethal use of force, continues and takes various forms of due process violations: withholding, manufacturing or stealing evidence (e.g., Susan Zopatti),³ falsifying or using falsified documents (e.g., Annie Dookhan),⁴ exploiting departmental policies to cover bias (e.g., Amadou Diallo),⁵ extortion (e.g., “Buddy Boys,” “Morgue Boys”),^{6,7} drug dealing (Rampart Scandal),⁸ sodomizing a civilian with a broom (e.g., Abner Louima),⁹ and various types of abuse of power.^{1,10}

1.1. Study Objectives

The objective of this study is to extend Forde's (2023) antidemocratic framework to the institution of policing by examining how its six strategies—nativism, social distinctions, misinformation, fear, dehumanization, and subjugation—manifest in contemporary police-civilian interactions. Specifically, the study aims to:

1. Identify the mechanisms through which antidemocratic strategies operate in policing.
2. Assess whether these strategies are institutionalized, that is, embedded in police culture, law, and practice, rather than episodic or isolated to individual officers.
3. Demonstrate how macro-historical trauma (colonialism, slavery, and class-based exclusion) is reproduced through contemporary policing practices.
4. Surface disconfirming cases where democratic policing principles—knowledge, fairness, human dignity, unity, hope, and security have been operationalized as counterstrategies.
5. Test the transferability of the antidemocratic framework to a new domain (policing) using an innovative methodology that embeds the antithesis framework into the familiarization phase to reduce bias and force disconfirming case analysis.

2.0. Theoretical Framework

The democratic social change theory was constructed to understand America's transition to democracy through the Revolutionary War. A significant finding was that the Founders leveraged a framework of disempowering and empowering strategies.¹¹ These strategies emerged as two processes, one regressive and the other progressive, that, when employed together, result in sustainable transformation. The frameworks emerged from an exploratory study on democracy and social change using the American founding documents as a bounded sample. This led to the construction of a macro-level social change theory of America's transition to democracy grounded in strategies of power. It is a dual process-driven framework of democracy and anti-democracy. The social change theory, which consists of two categories of strategies of power, disempowerment (antidemocratic) and empowerment (democratic), is applicable across different levels of analysis and domains. Although the antidemocratic framework frames this study—nativism, social distinctions, misinformation, fear, dehumanization, and subjugation—the corresponding democratic principles (knowledge, fairness, human dignity, unity, hope, and security) provide a normative contrast against which antidemocratic practices are evaluated. The principles were operationalized for policing:

- Rights-based Enforcement (knowledge + fairness)
- Impartial Accountability (fairness + human dignity)
- Humane Custody (human dignity + security)
- Active Community Engagement (unity + hope)
- Contextual Responsiveness with Clear Safety Limits (security + human dignity)

Both frameworks, the antidemocratic and the democratic principles, emerged from the strategic use of a bounded sample of the United States' founding documents: the Articles of Confederation, the Declaration of Independence, the Federalist Papers, and the US Constitution. In accordance with the grounded theory principle, the concepts emerged from the substantive content. However, two theoretical codes require explanation. Nativism is a strategy of exclusion based on tribalism, in-group/out-group dynamics, and social distinctions, which involves hierarchical categorizations described in the Federalist Papers as factions. The other four retain their ordinary meanings, while two have been reconceptualized by Forde¹¹ (see Table 1). The Founders used subtle and aggressive tactics that supported various strategies simultaneously, whereas the British Crown's tactics were mostly aggressive.

Table 1. Antidemocratic Strategies.

Concept	Definition	Source
Nativism	Strategy of exclusion based on tribalism or in-group/out-group dynamics; imagined superiority v. inferiority	Forde ¹¹
Social Distinctions	Hierarchical categorizations or factions that position individuals by perceived social worth	Forde ¹¹
Misinformation	Deliberate distortion or withholding of truth to control outcomes	Common sense concept
Fear	Use of intimidation, threat, or coercion to compel compliance; false arrest/seizure	Common sense concept
Dehumanization	Denial of full humanity and dignity to individuals or groups	Common sense concept
Subjugation	Physical control over bodies, labor, movement, and material conditions	Common sense concept

Although this was the case between Great Britain and the colonists, the strategies described in this framework are not unique to the United States, its culture, or this historical period. They are inherent in human interaction and appear wherever power is contested. The theory was applied across domains to illustrate its transferable usefulness (school bullying, intimate partner violence, workplace violence, buyer-seller marketing interactions, and opportunity gaps created by an incremental approach to policies). These domains span Education, Psychology, Sociology, Business Ethics, Marketing Theory, and Public Policy/Political Science, demonstrating the framework's versatility in analyzing power dynamics, demoralization, and democratic social change in both interpersonal and systemic contexts. A recent co-constructed demonstration mapped 51 research gaps across public health, criminal justice, and international relations, 12 of which were generated through AI-assisted co-construction.

The antidemocratic framework causes tension that can lead to demoralization, not only as an end state but also—contrary to expectations, as a catalyst for positive and sustainable transformation in agentic individuals.^{11,12} However, the tension between those who favor antidemocratic strategies and those who advocate for democratic strategies is resolved through mutual, reciprocal entitlement.¹³ The named strategies are not new in practice. What is new is their integration into a single framework. Forde¹¹ employed a polytheoretical framework of Foucault, Marx, and Bourdieu in the primary research, highlighting gaps in their work: Foucault declined to name specific power tactics; Marx located power in class struggle but not beyond class; Bourdieu demonstrated how culture reproduces hierarchy through habitus, field, and distinction but did not identify a dominant culture shared across humanity. The present framework addresses these gaps by naming six strategies, showing how they operate together as a process that leads to demoralization, and identifying the struggle for recognition through power strategies as a universal substrate. Class, culture, and access to resources determine which tactic is deployed; the struggle itself is not bounded by any one of them.

While the theoretical framework can be used to understand positive and regressive social transformation, communication between individuals and groups, institutional culture, and the motivational aspect of demoralization, it cannot explain other forms of empowerment not included in the framework. This study extends the democratic social change theory to policing. An innovative methodology was created by tailoring the generic qualitative inquiry *ab initio* to extend grounded theories.

3.0. Literature Review

Scholars have extensively documented police misconduct and its causes: race, class, police culture, and legal gaps. However, no study has examined police misconduct through Forde's¹¹ antidemocratic lens, which locates antidemocratic strategies embedded in America's political institutions and founding documents. Police–community relationships have been strained since the inception of policing.^{1,2} The strain has been investigated from multiple perspectives, including those related to police misconduct. Jain et al.¹⁴ defined police misconduct as the “illegal or unethical actions or the violation of individuals’ constitutional rights by police officers in the conduct of their duties” (p. 3). Police violations of civil liberties can take various forms, and it is essential to understand the strategies before creating a democratic policing framework. The traditional view of police–civilian tension has been attributed to police officers’ efforts to establish law and order.¹⁵ However, the strain is more likely to be about recognition: recognition of police authority and its place in society and the recognition of civilians’ human dignity and their place in society. The recognition for both is resolved within the paradigm of the United States Constitution, specifically the 4th, 5th, and 14th Amendments. Due process violations by law enforcement are erroneously attributed to race and profiling;¹⁶ the proximate mechanism is cultural — the belief that certain groups require harsher discipline in the struggle to retain recognition and power — even where the distribution of harm is racial. For White Americans, police misconduct violations are often centered on class.¹⁷ Other forms of misconduct include excessive use of force, corruption, false arrests, sexual offenses,¹ planting evidence, witness tampering, lying under oath,¹⁸ and the failure of law enforcement to disclose favorable evidence to district attorneys.^{18,19}

The government took several steps to address police misconduct. Successful attempts include professionalizing the police, pre-employment screening, Brady lists, cop tracing, landmark cases, and others.² However, these efforts have forced officers to unite and isolate themselves from the community.² It is suggested that because the strategies have been institutionalized, professionalization has led to sophisticated tactics that are more difficult to detect and that support anti-democratic strategies. A policing subculture with “norms of the police [approving] the selective use of illegal violence against suspects” and systematically indoctrinating recruits into both norms emerged (p. 1732).² Scholars suspect that the tribal nature of policing and recruitment from among a “culture that normalizes violence, is preoccupied with maintaining self-respect, proving their masculinity, [and] zero tolerance,” may explain the legitimization of police violence (p. 1733).² Moreover, officers are greatly concerned about being duped by suspects.² It is suggested that, because these strategies are historical and pervasive in society (see Table 2), and because the extent to which they are leveraged is the main difference, their deployment has been normalized. The difference between a lynching and unlawful use of force may be the difference between killing a civilian and hospitalizing them. The same anti-democratic tenets are present in both. Same mechanism, different degree.

Table 2. Antidemocratic Mechanisms.

Mechanism	Example	Source
Policing Strategies	Slave patrols	Lopez & Thomas ¹
Complicity in Historical Violence	Law enforcement's complicity in Klan lynchings and abuse of power during the Jim Crow era	Lopez & Thomas ¹
Institutional Continuity	Veteran officers teach recruits organizational policy contrary to ethical behavior; us-versus-them mentality; referral practices of problem officers	Jones ²⁰ ; Malone ²¹ ; Twibell et al. ²²
Code of Silence	The code of silence limits prosecution by hiding misconduct	Dunkle ²³ ; Noble ²⁴ ; Westmarland & Conway ²⁵
Police-prosecutor relationship	Police-prosecutors relationship	Trivedi & Gonzalez Van Cleve ²⁶
Union Resistance	Police unions oppose Brady list, and influence prosecutors with campaign contributions	Moran ²⁷
Public Disclosure	Officers fear reputational and physical harm from publicly disclosing misconduct records	Moran ²⁷
Opportunity gaps	Brady Doctrine inapplicable to pleas	United States v. Ruiz ²⁸
Officer selection bias	Problem officers refer other problem candidates for the same position	Twibell et al. ²²

3.1. Law, Policy, and Opportunity Gaps

The US Supreme Court has sought to rein in police misconduct with several landmark decisions: “exclusionary rule, the Miranda doctrine, [and] the Terry rules of stops and frisks” (p. 1749).² Despite these efforts, these and other decisions are not enough to protect Americans’ civil liberties. Opportunity gap theory posits that policy gaps undermine human dignity and hinder human flourishing by maintaining the status quo through incrementalism and narrow Court decisions.¹² In the context of policing, these opportunities are often exploited to control others

deemed inferior, undesirable, and in need of discipline. The literature reveals that specific opportunity gaps operationalize the antidemocratic strategies outlined in the theoretical framework: nativism (the system positioned against civilians), misinformation (mischaracterizing constitutional and innate human rights), fear, social distinctions (reinforcing stratification), dehumanization, and subjugation. Table 3 illustrates how these gaps manifest in documented cases.

Table 3. Opportunity Gaps.

Gap	Description	Consequence	Data Source
Brady Doctrine Inapplicable to Pleas	Prosecutors need not disclose exculpatory evidence in plea negotiations	Innocent people plead guilty from fear	<i>United States v. Ruiz</i> ²⁸
Miranda Waiver Burden on Suspect	Suspect must invoke rights; silence = waiver	Interrogations proceed without counsel	<i>Berghuis v. Thompkins</i> ²⁹
Failure to Preserve Evidence	Inadequate departmental policies excuse evidence destruction	Accused denied fair trial	<i>Arizona v. Youngblood</i> ³⁰
Brady List Absence/Secrecy	No centralized record of officer misconduct	Problem officers move jurisdictions undetected	Moran ²⁷ ; Moran & Hodge ³¹
Police Union Contract Protections	Delayed interrogations, expunged records	Officer misconduct shielded from accountability	Smith ³²

Brady doctrine “requires the government to disclose favorable and material evidence to the defendant” (p. 1).¹⁹ Yet, it is inapplicable to plea deals, an arguable violation of the accused’s Fifth and Fourteenth due process rights.³³ This opportunity gap¹² forces innocent people to plead guilty to crimes they have not committed in the name of questionable efficiency. The lack of application of Brady to plea bargaining creates the impression of a system-designed ‘safety valve’ that empowers the state and disempowers citizens, while creating the illusion that fairness and power rest with the people. Research supports the view that innocent people enter plea agreements^{19,34,35} out of fear of receiving longer or more severe sentences if found guilty by a jury, a likely outcome for the marginalized.^{19,36} In *Arizona v. Youngblood*,³⁰ the Court favored an inadequate departmental policy over the accused’s due process right to a fair trial when the police failed to preserve evidence by refrigerating the sample,³³ another opportunity gap that shields institutional actors. Moreover, narrow Supreme Court decisions, procedural rules, and police unions create spaces where institutional actors can operate with impunity. These opportunity gaps are features of the broader national culture, which relies on an antidemocratic framework of power strategies rooted in an antiquated idea of unilateral power.

Accountability mechanisms face institutional resistance. Over 1,000 prosecutor offices failed to respond to Brady list requests, with some states, although having Brady lists, claiming no officers on them.²⁷ Police unions oppose Brady lists and influence prosecutors through campaign contributions.²⁷ Cop tracing efforts are undermined by databases that do not include the officer’s name, defense organizations that do not have computerized records, problems with the indexing of court records, and protective orders issued in civil cases “prevent discoverable information beyond the confines of the case” (p. 49).³⁷ These barriers are features of institutional protection. As of

January 2024, nearly \$8 billion has been paid to 3,478 exonerees.³⁶ Minorities, particularly African Americans and Latino men and women, are vulnerable to police violence.^{1,38} This makes the more than 85% of African Americans who were wrongfully accused and exonerated remarkable,³⁶ especially since there are more cases to review than lawyers and staff members to review them speedily.

4.0. Method

I developed an innovative methodology grounded in generic qualitative inquiry (GQI) and integrated grounded theory data analysis with familiarization to extend extant theory. Uniquely, this approach embedded the antithesis framework directly into the familiarization phase to force disconfirming case analysis and stress-test theoretical transferability. This framework answered the research question: How does Forde's antidemocratic framework, rooted in historical trauma and political demoralization, manifest in contemporary police-civilian interactions? Forde's¹¹ antidemocratic framework was employed deductively to a 39-case theoretical sample drawn from a 75-case bounded sample comprised of studies of wrongful convictions, extant literature on historical police-citizen problems, and democratic policing (see Appendix A), and 27 sources on democratic policing were analyzed during the familiarization phase (see Appendix B): Although they were coded, they were not part of the theoretical samples. Within that bounded pool, a theoretical sampling approach was employed to select cases for coding as analysis proceeded. In accordance with grounded theory principles, theoretical sampling continued only until theoretical saturation was reached, the point at which no new codes, categories, or insights emerged from the data.⁵⁰ Saturation was achieved after coding 39 of the 75 available cases. Cases were eligible for inclusion in the bounded sample if they met three criteria: (a) they documented police-civilian interactions involving alleged or confirmed misconduct; (b) they were available in the public record (court documents, exoneration registries, investigative journalism, or peer-reviewed literature); and (c) they contained covered democratic and antidemocratic policing content. The exclusion criterion was content outside the policing domain (e.g., correctional-only or military-only contexts).

4.1. Research Design

The modified GQI has four pragmatic advantages: (a) it accommodated the use of extant data; (b) it supported theoretical sampling; (c) it permitted the fusion of analytic techniques from multiple qualitative traditions³⁹; and (d) it allowed the exploration of how the phenomena manifest, rather than merely whether they occur.⁴⁰ It allowed the integration of the GT data analysis method, familiarization, and Forde's¹¹ data analysis plan, and different data sources (i.e., extant literature, case records, and archival data), making it well-suited to extend existing theory. The goal was to gather sufficient empirical evidence to verify, refine, or reject the antidemocratic framework in the policing context.

4.2. Data Collection and Analysis

Grounded theory's constant compare-and-contrast method facilitated dialectical logic. The process began with familiarization, an approach that helps analysts immerse themselves in the substantive data.⁴¹⁻⁴³ The familiarization phase was operationalized as an active, fluid immersive engagement. The antithesis framework¹¹

was juxtaposed against the substantive democratic policing content. Within this stage of the process, the dialectical tension was exploited to: (a) Force disconfirming case analysis, (b) Improve theoretical sensitivity, (c) Establish boundary conditions, (d) Stress-test the theory in a new context, (e) Test transferability rather than generate new theory, and (f) Assess the rigor of the original grounded theory. This starting point did not preclude the emergence of new theoretical codes; instead, it magnified emergent data, and divergent data became critical sites for data analysis. Within this methodology, familiarization is an active constant compare-and-contrast data analysis method that requires the analyst to carefully examine variations to determine whether theoretical refinement is necessary or if the variation can be resolved within the existing framework. Familiarization allowed the emergence of disconfirming cases, antidemocratic and democratic strategies, and the conceptualization of democratic policing. Reacquaintance with the substantive content underpinning the theoretical codes was necessary to reduce bias and improper coding. The primary data analysis method was Forde's⁴⁴ robust data analysis techniques, which included reflexivity and memos to identify patterns and deviations. Reflexivity memos and newly coded data were systematically linked to the conceptual frameworks. The democratic policing data were also coded and compared with the empowerment codes.

The study proceeded in five stages. First, familiarization was conducted with democratic policing literature to establish the normative antithesis and reduce bias. Second, theoretical sampling selected cases from the bounded sample of 75, guided by intuition in the selection of cases and the question "Whom does this incident empower, and whom does it disempower?" Third, open coding categorized large chunks of data (police misconduct, Brady violations, wrongful convictions, excessive force, and related categories) and then narrowed to an incident-by-incident or narrower technique. Fourth, selective coding compared the substantive content of the incidents against the a priori codes until saturation was reached at 39 cases. Fifth, constant comparison, reflexivity memos, and situational, dramaturgical, holistic thinking, and systems analyses were applied throughout to test the framework's boundaries and identify disconfirming cases.

4.2.1. Familiarization

Familiarization provided an initial, purposeful understanding of the data⁴⁰ and a "holistic sense of what is going on."⁴² Key ideas and recurring patterns across the substantive data were identified. The familiarization process consisted of exploring the definitions of democratic policing and the substantive content from which the theoretical codes emerged. The definitions of democratic policing were deconstructed, coded, and compared to policing practices. From this process and analysis,⁴⁴ normative democratic principles (knowledge, fairness, human dignity, unity, hope, and security)¹¹ were applied to the substantive democratic policing content and definitions. The literature on democratic policing upholds the democratic principles in the founding documents and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Democratic policing was then operationalized through five principles: Rights-based Enforcement, Impartial Accountability, Humane Custody, Active Community Engagement, and Contextual Responsiveness with Clear Limits (see Appendix C for full analysis).

Although policing prioritizes security, it must not do so at the expense of human dignity, fairness, and the well-being of officers, the community, and offenders. It must ensure procedural justice and police-civilian

interaction. Applying Forde's democratic principles to democratic policing led to a prescriptive model that dictates ideal police conduct and imparts hope to the community through:

- *Rights-based Enforcement*: This requires knowledge and enforcement of the law while preserving the civil liberties and the human dignity of civilians.
- *Impartial Accountability*: Officers must be fair in upholding the law and hold themselves and their colleagues accountable for their behavior. The power of police unions must be curtailed, as officers under investigation enjoy greater due process rights than innocent civilians.
- *Humane Custody*: Police officers must provide a safe environment for individuals in custody, with strict adherence to the force continuum and the evaluation of tactics that have led to fatal accidents among medically vulnerable populations with heart conditions, respiratory diseases, and spinal conditions.
- *Active Community Engagement*: To bridge the police-community divide, police officers must engage in community events to foster trust and respect from the people they serve. This approach can greatly reduce officer stress, conflict, and injury when properly engaged (Trinkner et al., 2016).
- *Contextual Responsiveness with Clear Safety Limits*: Officers must possess communication skills and consider the values (legitimacy-based policing), disabilities, and coping strategies of members of the community they serve so long as those values do not endanger the lives of officers or innocent civilians. This knowledge must pair theory with practice to prevent avoidable conflicts.

A more holistic solution to police misconduct entails defining norms that uphold democratic policing. The solution is a synthesis of what we know of the history of the politics of democratic government and the global police crisis^{45,2} and a prescriptive approach to policing. Marty Stroud III, a former Louisiana prosecutor who sent Glenn Ford to death row, made the following statement after he was exonerated in 2014 (p. 1)⁴⁶: "*I was arrogant, judgmental, narcissistic and very full of myself. I was not as interested in justice as I was in winning.*"

4.2.2. Theoretical Sampling and Coding

Theoretical sampling proceeded by selecting cases intuitively, and then continuing to select cases until no new codes emerged. The process was aided by reflexivity memos drafted during the familiarization process, intuition, and the response to 'Whom does this incident empower, and whom does it disempower?', which in essence is a power analysis. The theoretical samples underwent an iterative process of comparison employing dramaturgical and situational analysis, perspective-taking, and systems and holistic thinking. Disempowerment and empowerment served as sensitizing concepts¹¹ to provide a general sense of the phenomenon under investigation.⁴⁷ Disconfirming cases, instances of disempowerment or empowerment, were sampled both deliberately and organically: deliberately through the strategic employment of the familiarization phase, which was designed to surface them, and organically, because they appeared in the data during coding. Although empowerment incidents were not fully discussed in this study, they were nonetheless sought during data analysis (familiarization phase) for comparison to determine whether the police or the suspect was being empowered by the strategy being employed (see Appendix D).

Large chunks of data were initially coded and categorized during theoretical sampling: police misconduct, Brady violations, wrongful convictions, excessive force, bias in policing, discretion, under- and over-policing, perceptions of police, witness intimidation, police subculture, special populations and police encounters, and marginalization. Data were then reanalyzed using the constant comparative method with an incident-to-incident approach. Throughout the analysis, whenever an incident was identified as a potential example of disempowerment, the question “Whom does this incident empower, and whom does it disempower?” guided further theoretical sampling and coding. Once identified as disempowering or anti-democratic, the substantive data were compared against a priori theoretical codes, theoretical codes that led to theory development^{48,49} in the primary study. Two coding processes were engaged: open and selective coding. Coding involved deconstruction and abstraction, which comprises essence-finding, identifying the similarities that allowed a particular thing to be represented by one or more a priori abstract codes: misinformation, dehumanization, subjugation, fear, nativism, and social distinctions, and knowledge, fairness, human dignity, unity, hope, and security—although not covered in detail in this paper. Support for Forde’s¹¹ antidemocratic framework can be found in the Findings and Literature Review sections, as all-is-data is a grounded theory principle.⁵⁰

4.2.3. Coding Techniques

This study continued to use Forde’s¹¹ data analysis techniques, which include the following:

Perspective-taking. Empathy was engaged to understand interactions from the perspectives of each actor: police, civilians, and the community. Situational analysis was engaged to assess three forms of situations: (a) relational analysis, which was used to examine interactions among police, citizens, and the community; (b) social world arena analysis, which was engaged to examine diverse arenas where police and citizens interact (e.g., community, precinct, court); and (c) positional analysis, which was used to examine tensions such as police safety versus due process rights, constitutional guarantees versus procedural efficiency, and social control versus healthy police-community relationships.⁵¹ Dramaturgical analysis draws on Goffman’s⁵² theater metaphor; police officers, district attorneys, and suspects were analyzed as protagonists, antagonists, and supporting actors in the broader drama of the criminal justice system. Holistic and systems thinking. This approach was used to understand both the big picture and the constituent parts of the criminal justice system and society in general.⁵³ It led to police tactics that uphold the antidemocratic tenets in Forde’s framework.¹¹

4.3. Coding Decision Rules

Table 1 provides the definitions of the six strategies. The following states the coding rules applied to the data. Nativism was coded when the data revealed identity-based exclusion—targeting individuals or groups based on perceived foreignness, race, ethnicity, or other markers of tribalism, creating an in-group/out-group dynamic. Social distinctions were coded when the data revealed hierarchy-based treatment: differences in power, status, or social standing that determined how police processed individuals. Misinformation was coded when the data revealed deliberate distortion, withholding, or fabrication of evidence, testimony, or records. Fear was coded when the data revealed intimidation, threat, excessive force, or coercion designed to compel compliance through terror rather than consent. Dehumanization was coded when the data revealed denial of full humanity or dignity—

treatment of civilians as less than human, as outside moral consideration, or as undeserving of basic respect. Subjugation was coded when the data revealed physical control over bodies (seizure) or psychological control. When an incident contained elements of multiple strategies, it was coded for all applicable strategies, with memos documenting the overlap.

4.4. Trustworthiness

Because the author constructed the antidemocratic framework, several measures were taken to control for researcher bias and ensure rigor. First, familiarization was employed strategically with democratic policing rather than the subject of inquiry (undemocratic policing). Careful attention was paid to whether scholars framed democratic policing as a strategy that empowers both police and civilians. This approach increased rigor, tested theory, facilitated emergence, reduced bias, and grounded the researcher in what policing should look like rather than actual policing practices in America. Familiarization with democratic policing literature involved exploring and examining national and global perspectives of democratic policing^{45,54,55} in a variety of areas: bureaucracy,^{45,54-57} community policing and practice,^{45,54,56,57,} politics,¹⁶ Supreme Court decisions,² conceptual framework,⁵⁸ frameworks for action,⁵⁹ and the subjective perspective of law enforcement.⁶⁰ Moreover, this familiarization functioned as a fluid dialectical engagement that activated the dialectic inherent in the substantive content. While the intent to seek disconfirming cases was deliberate and the process active, these cases emerged organically because the nascent framework was applied to policing for the first time. Although the process was fluid, it facilitated the systematic identification of disconfirming cases (see Table 4). Second, a post hoc literature review was written to avoid contaminating the theoretical sample with prior assumptions. Third, a bounded sample strategy of 75 diverse cases was employed to ensure that coding decisions accounted for all cases in the sample, not merely those that supported the framework. Hence, an attempt was made to reduce confirmation bias. Fourth, theoretical sampling, grounded theory's sample selection method, was used to select cases until saturation rather than to select all available cases, which reduces the risk of overfitting the framework to the data. Fifth, the constant compare-and-contrast method required that each incident be compared against other incidents and against the a priori codes, reducing the risk of selective interpretation. Methodological self-consciousness⁶¹ was maintained throughout. Sixth, the use of memos written throughout coding⁴⁹ to document assumptions, uncertainties, and deviations from expected patterns added traditional rigor to the study (see Appendix E). Finally, the study adhered to Charmaz and Thornberg's⁶² constructivist grounded theory trustworthiness criteria: credibility (the substantive data grounds the a priori codes and in vivo codes), resonance (transferable lived experience of exonerees and victims of police misconduct), originality (contributed to recognizing police misconduct as anti-democratic), and usefulness (applying the theory to policing to understand strategies leading to abuse of power and due process violations). The result is a method that honors rigor by facilitating emergence, yielding a framework grounded in the substantive content of policing literature. Together, these measures connect the study's framework, question, method, and findings. The framework supplies the six strategies and their antitheses. The research question asks how those strategies manifest in police-civilian interactions. The method tests that question through familiarization with the antithesis, theoretical sampling to saturation, and constant comparison against the a priori codes.

5.0. Findings

Police officers lie. About nearly every aspect of their work and at every stage of the criminal legal process, including arrest paperwork, warrant affidavits, courtroom testimony, and disciplinary proceedings.

—Dunkle, 2021

The findings are consistent with Forde's analysis of types of antidemocratic strategies that have become ubiquitous in policing and are institutionalized.¹¹ One possible explanation is that the strategies were used politically, and policing, influenced by politics, adopted and integrated them in the field. Narratives were coded for instances of fear, misinformation, social distinctions, and other concepts in the framework. Narratives that expressed an us-versus-them idea were coded as nativism versus social distinctions or fear, although fear could be assumed under certain contexts. Social distinction was used when the narrative indicated hierarchy, but the group was not part of the "us" (law enforcement). The analysis confirmed Forde's six antidemocratic strategies in contemporary policing. That no new concepts emerged is itself a finding: it suggests the same strategies used in the nation's founding—nativism, social distinctions, misinformation, fear, dehumanization, and subjugation continue to operate in modern policing institutions, supporting the argument that antidemocratic practice is institutionalized, not a rare occurrence. Although all the strategies were found among policing literature and exoneree narratives, the examples cited are not exhaustive of the antidemocratic tactics found within the institution of policing, nor is this paper an attempt to conflate ethical, professional police officers with those who garner media attention and are held in contempt by their colleagues and their community. Note that certain types of police misconduct (e.g., falsely alleging resisting arrest) against women and other minorities often involve multiple strategies simultaneously: nativism, social distinctions, fear, misinformation, dehumanization, and subjugation.

The institutionalization of antidemocratic strategies is not inferred solely from the recurrence of misconduct. Forde¹¹ demonstrated that the same six strategies operate across National Security Strategy, school bullying, intimate partner violence, and workplaces, establishing that the strategies are recurrent and transferable, not domain-specific. In the present study, the strategies appear in policing through specific institutional carriers: slave patrol origins, complicity in historical violence, the code of silence, police-prosecutor relationships, union resistance to Brady lists, opportunity gaps created by court doctrine, and officer selection bias (see Tables 2 and 3). These carriers are not individual behaviors; they are embedded in law, policy, contract, and training. Together with the finding that no new concepts emerged across 39 coded cases, this evidence supports the claim that antidemocratic strategies are institutionalized in policing, not episodic.

Additional findings include tension between what the founding documents showed and what the exoneree data showed. One such tension was between the violation of exonerees' due process rights and the Bill of Rights⁶³ and the Declaration of Independence—with one exception, when Native Americans were dehumanized and referred to as savages.⁶⁴ There was less tension between exoneree narratives and the U.S. Constitution, the Federalist Papers, and the Articles of Confederation. These documents contained more antidemocratic strategies.¹¹ Moreover, research supports the cultural transmission of organizational policies and practices among veteran police officers

who train recruits, rather than the police ethics learned in the classroom.²¹ This facilitates and sustains police fear and misconduct. A persistent policing strategy is the “Us vs. Them” mentality even within policing. Police officers form in-groups to exclude other officers whose behavior and preferences do not reflect departmental values. This suggests that there may be more shared cultural values, for example, viewing certain officers as they view the public, as the enemy and the repository of danger.

5.1. Nativism: The Tribe versus Community

The politics of in-group favoritism initiates the antidemocratic policing process. To understand the phenomenon of policing, early sociological studies of policing focused on how the actual operations of police departments conflicted with “democratic ideals” and “legal mandate” (p. 1731).² Sklansky describes policing from the perspective of Jerome Skolnick, other officers, and his academic research on policing:

[T]he police were a ‘conflict group,’ united by the manner in which the job they shared isolated them from the community and threatened their collective sense of status. The police officer ‘regard[ed] himself to be a pariah’ and came to ‘regard the public as an enemy.’ The collective alienation of police officers drove them to create a distinctive set of group norms, at war in important respects with ‘formal social controls’ (p. 1732).²

A former police officer from the Rampart Scandal, Perez,⁸ captures the heart of nativism in policing:

The us-against-them ethos of the overzealous cop began to consume me. The end justified the means.... We vaguely sensed we were doing the wrong things for the right reasons. ... Time and again, I stepped over that line... landing with both feet sometimes on innocent persons. My job became an intoxicant that I lusted after.

Jerome Skolnick (as cited by Sklansky)² quotes a police officer who describes himself as the outcast (“a pariah”) and “regarded the public as an enemy.” Here, the police are the alienated victims of a society he sees as the enemy. From this perspective, police misconduct (e.g., lethal force, falsifying documents, planting evidence, etc.) is justified. By contrast, Perez⁸ described “the us-against-them ethos” as an intoxicant that empowered him, and one which he craved. Nativism serves multiple functions for the in-group: isolation (from the bad other),⁶⁵ power, recognition, and belonging. The psychological component of nativism (status, identity, and purpose) makes the most primal hierarchy compelling even when “we vaguely sensed we were doing the wrong things” and “innocent persons” suffered. This mirrors the founding documents’ concept of nativism by creating “we the people” against enslaved people, Native Americans, and immigrants.

5.2. Social Distinctions

Social distinctions manifest in policing as marginalization of the working classes, racial and religious minority groups, victims of human trafficking, substance abusers, and members of the LGBTQ community. Often, their concerns go unheard.⁶⁶ Today, as in the past, people of color are the most likely victims of police misconduct.^{1,36} Yet, African American men are the group most likely to be exonerated for rape and homicide offenses because of police and official misconduct.⁶⁷ However, Blacks and Hispanics are not the only victims of social distinctions and police subjugation. *Police harassment and violence, namely routine police raids of bars frequented by lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender LGBTQ movement (p. 529).⁶⁸*

Hagerty⁶⁹ quoted Richard Miles, an exoneree, after serving 15 years in prison:

The only thing that I can think of is the police wanted to close out a case, and they picked out the first Black male they saw. They knew that they would be able to fit this person into a case. And that's what they did. All of those wounds, I still walk with mentally. We have all died by the misconduct of people in authority.

Police Sgt. Keith Wildhaber, who was awarded \$20M for being told to hide his gayness, described what a member of the police told him, as quoted in a federal discrimination lawsuit⁷⁰:

The command staff has a problem with your sexuality... If you ever want to see a white shirt, you should tone down your gayness.

This example illustrates that the us-versus-them narrative applies not only to civilians, but also within the organization towards other officers. Moreover, the exclusion of outward display of non-heterosexual comportment defines the parameters of us versus them (nativism).

Mary Ann Tikalsky, who was charged with disorderly conduct and later found innocent of the charge, was awarded \$30,000 by the City of Chicago based on a strip-search count:

She was arrested for disorderly conduct and taken to the Second District Police Station at 51st Street and Wentworth Avenue. There a female detention aide subjected her to a visual strip search. First Miss Tikalsky had to bare her body from the waist up; then she had to lower her slacks and underwear, squat and bend from the waist several times, and alternately face toward and away from the matron.⁷¹

In policing and other areas, Blacks, the LGBTQ+, and women are categorized and ranked as less deserving of respect. Richard Miles, an exoneree, was chosen as if among a sample of convenience and was targeted because he was “the first Black male they saw.” Social distinctions is unlike nativism because hierarchy extends to in-groups: Officer Wildhaber (who was advised to “tone down your gayness⁷⁰,” and Tikalsky (a woman assaulted by a woman officer).⁷¹ The psychology of social distinction creates a graded sense of importance that individuals internalize and integrate. Their lived experiences determine their perceived social status and become their “brand.” This often determines their preference, culture, and behavior.⁷² In the founding documents, factions were created to denote power and level of importance. In policing, a person’s level on the social hierarchy generally determines how police and the criminal justice system treat them, and what the police can get away with. The underlying master strategy is divide-and-rule. Hierarchies in the founding documents include: paupers, vagabonds, fugitives of justice, enslaved people, women, non-property-owning White men, and naturalized citizens.

5.3. Misinformation

A pattern of police misconduct exists nationwide.^{1,36} As of 2020, the Innocence Project has documented more than 300 DNA exonerations, with only 3% of these cases not involving wrongful convictions for rape or murder.⁷³ The National Registry of Exonerees³⁵ registered over 3,478 exonerations in January 2024. The total number of years lost is over 31,500. Only 16% of exonerees are non-Black.³⁶ Wrongfully convicted individuals typically spend an average of 15 years in prison before being exonerated.³⁶ Glynn Simmons was convicted of murder in 1975 based

on mistaken identity, perjured testimony, official misconduct, and inadequate legal defense.³⁶ He was exonerated in 2023. Simmons was in prison longer than any exoneree in the history of the United States. In 2022, Cassandra Black Elk was falsely accused of shaking her daughter to death. She was so distraught that she confessed to the crime in a plea agreement. However, the prosecutor failed to request the preliminary and final autopsy report before extending the agreement. There are more stories of exonerees whose lives were changed forever by wrongful convictions in “Faces of Brady: The Human Cost of Brady Violations.”⁷³ Cassandra Black Elk’s forensic report read: *No evidence of foul play* (p. 11).³⁶ In a similar case in Texas involving mistaken witness identification, false or misleading forensic evidence, perjury or false accusation, and official misconduct (p. 6),³⁶ Kerry Max Cook was twice convicted despite his innocence. The Texas Court of Criminal Appeals ruled that Cook’s conviction should be vacated on the grounds of actual innocence. The ruling read:

Several actions of the State go beyond gross negligence and reach into the realm of intentional deception against the tribunal. Cook spent close to a decade and [a] half on death row from the very beginning based on a web of fabricated testimony and misrepresentations (p.6).³⁶

The National Registry of Exonerations (p 4)³⁶ wrote the following:

We know of official misconduct in 104, or 71% of exonerations that occurred in 2024. Most of these cases involved more than one kind of misconduct, such as the failure to disclose exculpatory evidence to the defense (95 cases), witness tampering (43 cases), perjury by an official actor (39 cases), knowing presentation of perjured testimony (11), police misconduct in interrogations (9), prosecutorial dishonesty in court (8), or forensic misconduct (5).

The credibility of government witnesses, particularly the testimony of law enforcement officers,⁷⁴ should be “greater than the government’s opportunity to attack the credibility of the defendant” (p. 1339).⁷⁵ Yet evidence supports that widespread attempt at fabrication, a type of misinformation, is “any intentionally deceptive stated message.... either verbally or in writing” (p. 1).²⁴ Police officers frequently engage in significant deceptive conduct in the course of g their duties,^{23,24} including undercover operations, the use of unmarked vehicles, and the deception of suspects.²⁴ They may present false evidence to a suspect to obtain a confession (e.g., see *Halsey v. Pfeiffer*), falsify a report (see *Black* 835 F.3d at 362) alleging the codefendant confessed, or claim they were identified in a lineup.^{76,23,24} As a result, this may create the perception that all lies are acceptable, and an unethical officer may lie or create false evidence to secure an arrest or conviction.^{23,24} The earliest documented cases of police perjury occurred in New York, Rhode Island, and Atlanta.³⁷ The New York police commissioner reminded officers of the tradition of sticking together and “to give testimony in one another’s favor, no matter what the facts are.”³⁷

In New York, officers coined the term “testilying” (p. 2063)²³ to capture lying before the grand jury, testimonial perjury, documentary perjury, and falsification of police records. In Boston, it is referred to as “creative writing” (p. 2064).²³ Perjury cases were often linked to police violence, like fabrication of charges to justify police “clubbing and beating people on the streets” (p. 2070).³⁷ Dunkle²³ asserts that the 1960 Mapp v. Ohio decision incentivized officers to lie to “prevent judges from excluding inadmissible evidence” (p. 2065). Miranda v. Arizona reinforced this incentive by applying the exclusionary rule to an officer’s failure to provide prophylactic

warnings. Unsurprisingly, some police departments explicitly or implicitly reward officers who lie to secure an arrest or conviction. The incentive to lie is further reinforced in departments that promote officers who falsify testimony, documents, confessions, and evidence.²³ Lying can lead to Brady violations. Moreover, lying has grave consequences for the innocent,³⁶ police officers,²⁴ the community, and taxpayers.^{37,77-79} Because of the consequences of lying, fabrication of evidence claims, according to the Third Circuit Court of Appeals in 2014, requires “a plaintiff [to] show that there is a reasonable likelihood that, absent that fabricated evidence, the defendant would not have been criminally charged” (p. 27).⁷⁶ This means that the “plaintiff must show that the evidence was false, planted, or otherwise fabricated” and that the officer acted in bad faith by offering the fabricated evidence anyway, thereby affecting the outcome of the case (2020, p. 28).⁷⁶

Deception has become part of policing as it is part of politics or power. In policing, officers must gain legitimate access to the underworld as undercover agents. They must be creative to secure truthful confessions. But the line is crossed when evidence is planted, perjury is committed, and they knowingly arrest innocent people. The psychology of misinformation (e.g., deception, falsification, perjury, and Brady violations) rests on power, control, and the feeling of intellectual superiority. Police officers are not taught to deceive because they are capable or highly skilled at their job, but rather to gain an intellectual advantage over suspects who may be more astute, for self-preservation, and to control legal outcomes. In the founding documents, misinformation served to protect the republic. The right of the people to overthrow government in the Declaration of Independence had become treasonous.^{64,80} The idea of checks and balances in the US Constitution, which is supposed to be in favor of the people (e.g., the Electoral College, the protection of interest groups whose interests may not be that of the American people [see the First Amendment], and Judicial decisions favoring corporations), betrays “We the people.”⁶³

5.4. Fear

In the context of policing, fear can appear as a generalized fear of the police because of known and unknown consequences, whether the person is innocent or the perpetrator. It can also manifest before making face-to-face contact with officers. During police encounters, the fear can stem from police fabricating evidence, withholding evidence, planting evidence, taking the victim’s or witness’s words out of context, coercion, incarceration, and abuse. The latter three may relate to “witnesses reluctant to tell the truth display the same, but less intense, verbal and nonverbal cues as liars” (p. 74).⁸¹ Innocent and guilty suspects may waive their rights out of fear of being perceived as guilty.⁸¹ During trial, the accused may fear the worst-case scenario, losing their freedom, child custody, retaliation against their family member, and ineffective counsel, to name a few.

W. Kamau Bell, a Black American who is six feet four inches tall, described his encounter with the police as follows:

*I am afraid of the cops. Absolutely petrified of the cops. Now understand, I’ve never been arrested or held for questioning. I’ve never been told that I “fit the description.” But that doesn’t change a thing. I am afraid of cops the way that spiders are afraid of boots.*⁸²

Laura Mullen told her sex trafficking story and her fear of reporting the crime to the police:

I was convinced and afraid that if I talked, someone would hurt me or worse. I felt so trapped; the police wanted to get me and my trafficker wanted to get me.... One told me: 'You are not a productive member of society.' Even if they could have helped, cops had always made me feel bad about myself. To me, I was living in my worst nightmare but even then, the cops were the boogieman.⁸³

In policing, fear can often lead to excessive use of force, bypassing the Force Continuum, false confessions, and innocent plea bargaining to avoid going to court on a case that defense attorneys often have no evidence to support. Known and unknown outcomes can produce the same level of fear. The psychology of fear is as paralyzing as it can be motivational. When people are afraid, they seek security, at times, at any cost. In the founding documents, the fear of loss of freedom and the threat of foreign and domestic terrorism was so visceral that it permeates the founding documents, from the long train of abuses and usurpations in the Declaration of Independence⁶⁴ to the Articles of Confederation⁸⁰ that limited where paupers, vagabonds, and fugitives from justice could travel, to the establishment of a representative form of government and the creation of factions to weaken the people in the Federalist Papers,⁸⁴ to the Preamble of the US Constitution,⁶³ to how politicians control narratives.

5.5. Dehumanization

The dehumanization of civilians by police during encounters manifests in a variety of forms: beliefs (stereotypes, the belief that marginalized individuals are less than human), actions (failure to uphold substantive and due process rights, over-policing, police stops, use of force, arrests, booking procedures), omissions (under-policing, violations of constitutional rights, failure to respond), and psychological (status policing, fear—which can itself be dehumanizing). Fear is not only dehumanizing for civilians who experience the threat of police violence, but for officers whose fear of the “other” justifies preemptive control. From this perspective, dehumanization is both a weapon and defense. Regardless of the form, the communicated message is constant: Some lives matter less. As a result of various forms of dehumanization, police abuse of civilians came to the attention of the Court. Supreme Court Justices recognized certain police interview tactics as violative of human dignity in *Miranda v. Arizona*: The Court determined that “the unabashedly coercive nature of such interrogation... is inherently coercive and destructive of human dignity” (p. 8).⁸⁵ In *Hope v. Pelzer*,⁸⁶ an offender was shackled to a hitching post in the hot sun. The court found that “The use of the hitching post under the circumstances alleged here offends contemporary standards of decency and human dignity.” Despite the recognition of human rights by the Court, officers use the dehumanizing phrase, “no humans involved” [NHI], to describe marginalized groups. The term captured what is described as officers’ refusal to “change it back in their heads that we’re trash.”⁸⁷

Weidensee defined No Humans Involved as:

[T]he unofficial term used by members of the Los Angeles Police Department and other public officials to describe the murders of people of color and those in other communities deemed nonhuman. The use of this term came to light in 1992, following the acquittal of LAPD officers caught on video beating Rodney King. The process of dehumanization inherent in the term, first identified with encounters between law enforcement and Black

Americans, was used in reference to other marginalized groups as well. No humans involved (NHI) has been used alongside terms like 'misdemeanor murders' and 'prostitute murders' to minimize the killing of women sex workers (p. 1).⁶⁶

The “Us vs. Them” ethos in policing facilitates dehumanization,^{88,89} blurring the line between respect for a suspect’s or victim’s human dignity on the one hand and the justification of ruthless behaviors by police officers who cast civilians as the “other,” and a defense mechanism for officers’ mental health from routine exposure to trauma. The strategy may be a coping mechanism or a durable belief that outsiders whom they are unable to empathize with are less deserving of basic respect.⁸⁹ The psychology behind the dehumanization of victims is the same tactic, moral disengagement,⁹⁰ used by psychopaths before terrorizing, mangling, or killing their victims. While psychopaths are unable to empathize because of an innate personality trait, officers may start by suppressing empathy for their well-being. Suppression of empathy is often an outcome of professional training. Moreover, it is reinforced by a police culture that rewards hardness² and routine exposure to human suffering, violence, and death. NHI can be understood as the product of institutional, cultural, and psychological convergence. Victims of dehumanization may feel unseen, unheard, and unrecognized as part of a larger community shared by them and officers. This may lead to feelings of low self-worth, increased criminal activity, resisting arrest, or retaliation against the officer, which can be understood as stemming from demoralization from cumulative dehumanization⁹¹ with an antidemocratic policing process. Dehumanization creates distrust⁸⁸ and increases the likelihood of aggression by the officer and the suspect. Research by Baker et al.⁹⁴ and Bustamonte et al.⁹¹ supports the dehumanization → anger → misconduct pathway and Forde’s¹¹ theory that demoralization is a catalyst for transforming humiliation to dignity via constructive and destructive actions. In the founding documents, Great Britain’s efforts to demoralize the colonies led to the Revolutionary War. However, demoralization did not end with the monarch. Enslaved people were valued as chattel and three-fifths of a person for apportioning congressional representation, rather than one whole human being like free people. Historically, Black Americans worked in the hot sun in the field or in chain gangs. They were also stopped and questioned using coercive interrogation tactics. *Miranda v. Arizona*⁸⁵ and *Hope v. Pelzer*⁸⁶ are recognizable: They are echoes from America’s colonial and antebellum eras. NHI continues that theme into modern-day America.

5.6. Subjugation

Community consequences are many. One that can be empirically explored as resulting from police misconduct is the millions of dollars that have been awarded to victims in police brutality settlements, and “billions of taxpayers’ dollars are spent each year on civil actions against police officers” (Lopez & Thomas, 2004, p. 372, citing Spector, 1992, p. 13).¹ Compensation for exonerees was \$4 billion. That figure has almost doubled.³⁶ There is an unquantifiable cost in emotional and material damages and police distrust because of “poorly handled incidents.”¹ The top 10 states with the highest number of agents tried and convicted for police misconduct per 10,000 agents had an average of 13 agents tried and convicted for some misconduct: corruption, sexual offenses, and assault.¹ Mississippi had the highest number of tried and convicted agents (26), with West Virginia having the lowest (6) within the 10-year data range¹ and Oklahoma with 99 federal agents accused of misconduct. Cohen⁹⁵ describes

why police departments are sued through the experience of an exoneree, Eric Caine, who was declared innocent and settled with the city for \$10 million:

For decades, he maintained he didn't brutally kill an elderly couple. The police, he said, beat him into a false confession. Locked up at age 20, he was freed at 46, bewildered by a world he no longer recognized.

Caine went on to say that the 25 years of psychological subjugation “*was real hell to me. My sense of dignity, my sense of self-worth was destroyed — all shattered, all gone. ... Every second, every minute of the day, I think about my mortality.*”⁹⁵ Ronald Kitchen, an exoneree, was tortured into confessing to five murders. He served 21 years in prison, with 13 of them on death row. During his time there, seven men were executed:⁹⁵ *You keep thinking ... Is that going to happen to me?* More recently, in Chatsworth, Georgia, an 87-year-old grandmother, Bishara, went to pick up dandelion greens with her knife on a partially fenced lot owned by the Boys and Girls Club, according to an Innocence Project staff member.⁹⁶ The 911 caller noted that Bishara did not attack anyone. He stated: “She’s old, so she can’t get around too well, but . . . looks like she’s walking around looking for something like vegetation to cut down or something. She has a bag, too.” An Innocence Project⁹⁶ staff member reported the following:

One of the responding officers pointed his gun at Bishara, while the other fired a Taser and struck her in the chest and stomach. According to the police report, the officers then handcuffed and arrested her on charges of trespassing and obstructing law enforcement officers. Later, Bishara was taken to a hospital, where she was treated for her injuries and released.

Various police subduing tactics are illustrated in the preceding section. These tactics are psychological (fear, humiliation) and physical (sexual offenses, assault, taser, physical and psychological seizure). Not only did police officers subjugate suspects during encounters, but they also subjugated the community by placing the burden of funding their lawsuits. No matter which tactic is employed, all can potentially affect the psyche. Subjugation is about officers showing power and dominance. In policing, the will to dominate arises from multiple, mutually reinforcing sources: personal psychology (officers bringing their personal problems to work), institutional incentive (pressure to secure a conviction), and professional culture (reflects the practices witnessed and rewarded among fellow officers). Psychologically, subjugation can lead to a sense of accomplishment, duty, belonging, and power, all of which can create the feeling of intoxication.⁸ While there are legitimate reasons and means to subdue suspects that in themselves lead to trauma, illegitimate means leave more heightened and durable psychological trauma. Victims of police brutality will often develop post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Sensory cues such as police sirens, uniforms, passing police cars, police radios, encounters with the police, and a commercial or movie featuring an officer can trigger panic. This aligns with current PTSD research, which identifies external markers as common panic and distress triggers.⁹⁷ In the founding documents, subjugation is as subtle as the function of the Electoral College (dilutes voting power), jury of your peers, to less subtle forms, the 2nd Amendment and the right to overthrow the government (both of which enlist civilians for informal duty and legitimize violence against the state; see January 6), and Article IV of the Articles of Confederation⁸⁰ in which the state controls the freedom of movement of paupers, vagabonds, and fugitives from justice. Hence, subjugation is embedded in legal structure as

historical relics and practices of control. Understanding Forde's¹¹ antidemocratic tenets requires examining the deeper architecture of power that legitimizes officers' abusive tactics.

5.7. Disconfirming Cases

Familiarization with the substantive content facilitated the disconfirming cases. While ample support for the antidemocratic strategies in Forde's¹¹ framework exists, disconfirming cases (see Table 4) provide a more balanced perspective of policing in America. No negative cases emerged that were not resolved within the frameworks of democratic and antidemocratic strategies. The table documents counterstrategies that have produced measurable change that structural reform can build upon.

Table 4. Disconfirming Cases.

Case	Change	Source
Milwaukee FBI Agent Speech	It is not us versus them. <i>We are</i> them. Be understanding.	Jones, G. B. ²⁰
Camden County Police Dept, NJ	Despite a large settlement for an excessive force case, community policing, leadership changes, and technology have rebuilt trust, as measured by the drop in violent crime (50%) and murders falling from 67 to 17 from 2012 to 2024.	NBC10 Philadelphia ⁹⁸
Philadelphia's CPOC	In an audit, there was 88% body camera footage availability in the 24th District (2025). However, the commission is pushing training improvements; only 54% of offenders were fully compliant with recording policies.	Government Report: Citizens Police Oversight Commission ⁹⁹
California's Police Records Access Project	Transparency in hiring checks and over 100 investigative reports are available in a publicly searchable database of 1.5M pages from 12,000 misconduct cases.	CalMatters ¹⁰⁰
Portland's IPR	MPS & Associates, a new Independent Monitor, was appointed to enforce DOJ reform agreements. In 2024, 25 officers faced discipline due to misconduct. Nine resigned.	City of Portland ¹⁰¹

In Milwaukee, the FBI agent counters nativism by reminding recruits that they are civilians. The Camden, Philadelphia, and California examples illustrate that technology can assist with policing reform. Moreover, California illustrates that better hiring practices and transparency can deter police misconduct. Finally, Portland's adoption of independent oversight can assist in holding bad actors in uniform accountable for their actions.

6.0. Discussion

Democratic policing has become a global aspiration, reflected in reform efforts across countries and in international human rights instruments. Yet the gap between aspiration and practice persists worldwide, suggesting that the strategies that undermine democratic policing are not national pathologies but general features of

institutionalized power. Historical trauma is one pathway through which these strategies become embedded and reproduced: The United States is one site where this process is documented. The framework's applicability to policing reform is therefore not limited to the United States; it speaks to any context where democratic accountability is asserted but antidemocratic strategies remain institutionalized. What varies across contexts is not the presence of the strategies but the form they take, the degree to which they are deployed, and the institutional structures that sustain them. This study contributes a framework of antidemocratic strategies to the field of policing, with which to evaluate their performance. Silvers et al.⁸⁹ and Stoughton^{102,103} provide support for the distinction between antidemocratic and democratic policing. In their studies of traditional policing culture, scholars distinguish the 'warrior' mindset, which aligns with antidemocratic strategies, from the 'guardian' mindset, which aligns with procedural justice and democratic values. The guardian mindset^{103,104} gives citizens a voice, treats them politely and respectfully, and prioritizes service over crime-fighting.¹⁰³ It seeks long-term relationships with community members and protects human dignity whenever possible.¹⁰⁴ McLean et al.,¹⁰⁴ Murphy and McCarty,¹⁰⁵ and Paoline et al.¹⁰⁶ provide empirical evidence for the warrior and guardian approaches to policing. Their findings strongly support the culture of those who leverage Forde's¹¹ framework of policing strategies, with democratic policing being the preferred approach for most encounters. However, there are circumstances (that is, active threats to officer and civilian safety) where the warrior mindset's focus on control and protection becomes necessary.

The current crisis in American policing is not an institutional anomaly. It is the contemporary expression of a national culture in which disempowering antidemocratic strategies like nativism, social distinctions, misinformation, fear, dehumanization, and subjugation have been ingrained since the nation's founding against the other: Indigenous nations, enslaved populations, poor colonial whites, and immigrants. These same strategies are now applied to the very community from which officers come. The strategies destabilize the very communities the institution is sworn to protect. The same logic that structures police-civilian interactions today guided centuries of land dispossession, labor exploitation, and political exclusion of the marginalized, of both Whites and non-Whites alike. What appears as institutional failure is, in fact, historical trauma etched into a national playbook of disempowerment and into the national psyche. American politicians and civilians would do well to recognize antidemocratic tactics and strategies and their effects on the nation.

As the disconfirming cases in Table 4 show, antidemocratic strategies are deeply institutionalized; alternative approaches are possible. Camden, New Jersey's community policing model, Portland's DOJ-enforced reform agreement, and California's transparency database are all counterstrategies that align with Forde's¹¹ democratic strategies. The persistence of misconduct despite decades of reform efforts raises an uncomfortable question: Can an institution whose foundational purpose was the control and subjugation of marginalized populations be reformed into a genuinely democratic one, or must it be dismantled for a fundamental structural transformation? The institutionalization of antidemocratic strategies, as seen in police culture, law, and practice, suggests reform cannot be limited to training and body cameras. Reform requires structural transformation that reimagines the role of police in America, redefines public safety, and addresses historical trauma to bridge the gap between police and

the community. Yet, whether transformation can occur within existing institutions or requires dismantling the system remains an open question. However, the evidence suggests that incremental reform is insufficient. The reform must be comprehensive, extending from street-level policing, law enforcement education, policing special populations (i.e., Crisis Intervention Teams), the judicial system's processing of defendants (Brady reform and other opportunity gaps), to corrections officers policing inmates, possibly exceeding even the scope of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act of 2025 in ambition and structural reach.

6.1. Limitations

This study has several limitations. First, Glaser's⁵⁰ all-is-data assumption is a mismatch between alternative sources of information and the direct quotes called for by the qualitative method. Moreover, the reliance on 'all is data' rather than on primary interviews or observation limits the depth of narrative available for coding. This may create the appearance that the work is a literature review rather than having a basis in grounded theory. Second, the empirical findings are drawn primarily from US policing; although the framework has been applied across domains and its logic is not nation-specific, the antidemocratic policing evidence is American. The familiarization literature on democratic policing, however, extends across international lines, which partially offsets this limitation. Third, because the author constructed the framework under test, researcher subjectivity is an inherent risk; measures were taken to reduce bias (novel approach to familiarization using the antithesis (democratic policing), post hoc literature review, bounded sample, reflexivity memos), but the risk cannot be eliminated. Fourth, the theoretical sample of 39 cases, drawn from a bounded pool of 75, was sufficient for saturation but does not represent the full range of police-civilian interactions. Fifth, generalizability is theoretical, although several sources cited were empirical. The framework's applicability to other contexts is supported by its prior application across domains. These limitations do not undermine the study's central claim that antidemocratic strategies are institutionalized in policing, but they delimit the scope of the evidence.

6.2. Methodological Contribution

This study contributes to the methodological literature by demonstrating that complex methodological problems can be resolved through the flexibility of generic qualitative inquiry. The design was developed ab initio to address research design limitations in extending grounded theory into a new domain, making this specific design a novel methodological contribution. A modified generic qualitative inquiry offers a tailored, high-rigor, replicable data analysis method for researchers seeking to extend their own or another scholar's grounded theory. This research method draws on familiarization, dialectical analysis, and the rigor of grounded theory. It retains the same data analysis plan as the primary study (e.g., data analysis techniques, sensitizing concepts, bounded sample).^{11,44} The design requires embedding the antithesis framework from the original grounded theory study into the familiarization phase in the earliest stage before coding begins, rather than as a measure of theoretical saturation. Embedding the explained variation, the antithesis framework from the primary study into the familiarization phase, is valuable because of the following data analysis goals: (a) Forces disconfirming case analysis, (b) Improves theoretical sensitivity, (c) Establishes boundary conditions, (d) Stress-tests the theory in new context, (e) Tests transferability rather than generate new theory, and (f) Assesses the rigor of the original grounded theory.

7.0. Conclusion

Empirical findings. The study found that all six antidemocratic strategies—nativism, social distinctions, misinformation, fear, dehumanization, and subjugation—operate in contemporary American policing. No new concepts emerged across 39 coded cases, indicating that the framework transfers intact to this domain. The strategies are carried by institutional mechanisms and the opportunity gaps that sustain them (Tables 2 and 3), including the code of silence, police-prosecutor relationships, union contracts, court doctrine, and officer selection practices. Disconfirming cases show that democratic alternatives are achievable (see Table 4).

Theoretical implications. The study extends Forde's (2023) framework to policing and demonstrates its transferability across domains. It also clarifies the framework's contribution relative to Foucault, Bourdieu, and Marx: the framework names six strategies that were previously unnamed as an integrated set, identifies the struggle for recognition through power strategies as a universal substrate, and shows how the strategies become institutionalized. The framework's range is therefore broad, not US-specific.

Recommendations. Reform cannot be limited to training and body cameras. Structural transformation is required, extending from street-level policing to law enforcement education, judicial processing of defendants, and corrections. Table 4 documents counterstrategies that have produced measurable change; these are the models structural reform can build on.

In conclusion, it is unsurprising, given policing strategies' origin in slave patrols, that antidemocratic and demoralizing strategies are still being used against the same groups of people who have been dehumanized throughout the history of the United States. These strategies are ubiquitous and institutionalized. Yet, what is disturbing about police misconduct, particularly as it relates to lethal and excessive use of force and due process rights violations, is that the strategies have been embedded into the fabric of society and have therefore been normalized. This means that most people are blind to how these strategies affect others. The institution of policing, police unions, and legislators have no regard for how they affect civilians. They lack awareness of how demoralization resulting from these strategies could lead to future Christopher Dorners, individuals among civilians and law enforcement who turn their anger into violence. Officers must be mindful of the extent to which they apply tactics and ensure their use remains within the due process rights framework. Reasonable individuals engage in self-examination and empathy, and adjust their behavior accordingly. Police officers and other public servants who cannot self-examine and improve are unfit for public service. While disempowering strategies are pervasive and sometimes necessary, the type of tactic employed is a choice. Wrongful convictions can have repercussions¹⁰⁷ for taxpayers who are held responsible for paying police misconduct settlements.^{37,77-79}

7.1. Future Research

Future studies on democratic policing could address the following gaps:

1. Investigate whether police misconduct, particularly excessive use of force, is a symptom of officer demoralization rather than solely individual deviance or policy failure.

2. Examine the types of antidemocratic disempowerment tactics leveraged against innocent civilians by other criminal justice practitioners, including prosecutors, correctional officers, and parole board members.
3. Apply the antidemocratic framework specifically to Brady violations, judicial decisions, and Parole Board decisions to assess whether the same six strategies—nativism, social distinctions, misinformation, fear, dehumanization, and subjugation—operate across these contexts.
4. Compare whether agentic (purposeful) or non-agentic (institutional) demoralized police officers are more likely to engage in antidemocratic policing, and whether intervention strategies differ by type.
5. Systematically test the framework in the 51 research gaps previously mapped across domains including public health, criminal justice, and international relations, 12 of which were generated through AI-assisted co-construction.¹⁰⁸
6. Conduct comparative jurisdictional studies to identify which institutional structures—civilian oversight, union contract provisions, training models—buffer or exacerbate the institutionalization of antidemocratic strategies.

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The author has declared that no competing financial, professional, or personal interests exist.

Consent for publication

The author consents to the publication of this research work.

Availability of data and material

Supplementary information is included in the appendices.

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Appendix A: Antidemocratic: Theoretical Samples

1. Brady lists
2. California police misconduct records now available in public database
3. City and U.S. Department of Justice jointly nominate independent monitor for Settlement Agreement
4. Creating Architects of Justice: A Gift from Modern Ethics to Brady on Its 60th Anniversary
5. Crime rates down, quality of life up in Camden County, New Jersey Police Department
6. Criminal Law: Cop Tracing
7. Fabrication of Evidence Claims
8. Faces of Brady: The human cost of Brady violations
9. Georgia police taser 87-year-old woman
10. *Halsey v. Pfeiffer*
11. *Hope v. Pelzer*
12. How Chicago racked up a \$662M police misconduct bill
13. Jury Gives Cop \$20M for Being Told to Hide 'Gayness.'
14. Law enforcement perspectives on public access to misconduct records
15. Law enforcement: Do it J-U-S-T-I-C-E
16. *Miranda v. Arizona*
17. Misconduct Settlements Cost \$500 Million Over 6 Years
18. Morgue cops fight for regular duty
19. National Registry of Exonerations: Annual Report of the National Registry of Exonerations
20. National Registry of Exonerations: Exonerations by year
21. No criminal charges in Braintree police evidence scandal exposed by 5 Investigators
22. No Humans Involved: The Dehumanization of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls
23. On Being a Black Male, Six Feet Four Inches Tall, in America in 2014
24. Police and democracy

25. Police ethics and integrity: Keeping the 'blue code' of silence
26. Police officer truthfulness and the Brady decision
27. Police violence and public health
28. Prosecutors and Corrupt Science
29. Repeated Police Misconduct by 200 Officers Cost Chicago Taxpayers \$164.3M Over 5 Years: Analysis
30. Sentencing statement of Rafael Perez
31. Survivor Story: Laura Mullen
32. The air was blue with perjury: Police lies and the case for abolition
33. The Citizens Police Oversight Commission audit examines body-worn camera compliance in Philadelphia's 24th District
34. The Geography of Law Enforcement Malpractice: National Patterns of Official Misconduct in the United States, 1989–1999
35. The Other Police Violence
36. They won't change it back in their heads that we're trash': the intersection of sex work-related stigma and evolving policing strategies
37. Unarmed Amadou Diallo is killed by four police officers who shot at him 41 times in 1999
38. Us vs. them: Why now?
39. Why did Annie Dookhan lie?

Appendix B: Democratic Policing Literature

1. Bayley's six critical elements of democratic policing: evaluating donor-assisted reform in Armenia, Georgia, and Ukraine
2. Democracy, bureaucracy, and criminal justice reform
3. Democratic policing: A conceptual framework
4. Democratic policing: A framework for action
5. Police and democracy
6. The impact of police culture on traffic stop searches: An analysis of attitudes and behavior
7. Police officer use of force mindset and street-level behavior
8. Police officers as warriors or guardians: Empirical reality or intriguing rhetoric?

9. Confirming or resisting the 'racist cop' stereotype?
10. Can police legitimacy promote collective security?
11. Policing, security, and democracy: Theory and practice
12. The Politics of Police
13. What democratic policing is... and is not
14. The world police crisis and the construction of democratic policing
15. Does citizen opinion matter? An analysis of police officers' support for democratic policing in South Korea
16. OSCE's police-related activities: Lessons learned during the last decade
17. Police culture and coercion
18. Democratic policing in a changing world
19. Justice from within: The relations between a procedurally
20. Coercion versus consent in an era of mistrust
21. The group engagement model: Procedural justice, social identity, and cooperative behavior
22. Why people obey the law
23. Self-legitimacy, police culture and support for democratic policing in an English constabulary
24. Traditional police culture, use of force, and procedural justice: Investigating individual, organizational, and contextual factors
25. Law enforcement's "warrior" problem
26. Principled policing: Warrior cops and guardian officers
27. Democratic police reforms in war-torn societies

Appendix C: Democratic Policing Analysis

Familiarization was the starting point for data analysis; therefore, it seemed appropriate to discuss the findings on how scholars framed democratic policing from various perspectives: bureaucratic business model,⁶⁰ political framework,⁵⁵ and post-conflict police reform.⁵⁶ Although some scholars proposed realistic changes to policing, others seem to think that policing practice in America is adequate. Because of its inherently interdisciplinary nature and the difficulty of reaching consensus on how the subject should be explored and theorized, like the trajectory of Criminal Justice, democratic policing should be established as an academic discipline. Democratic policing, as the normative framework for policing in democracies, similarly requires its own field of study, one that integrates scholarly inquiry, policy analysis, and practitioner knowledge to develop a coherent body of theory

and practice (refer to Familiarization). The basic definition against which all democratic policing was compared is based on a memo from the author's interpretation of Forde's¹¹ work on the universal principles of democracy that emerged from the founding documents and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights^{11,109} (see Fig. 1). Concepts fitting the context of policing replaced the abstract democratic principles.

Democratic policing is a policing culture and style that a) is knowledgeable of and that enforces the United States Constitution and local laws to preserve the human dignity of civilians, b) is fair by upholding the law, unbiased, and holds guilty civilians and police officers accountable, c) creates, secures, and maintains a secure environment for individuals in custody, d) engages in community events to foster trust and respect between the law enforcement community and the people served, e) and considers and respect the values of the community they serve so long as those values do not endanger the lives of officers, the lives of innocent civilians, or suspects'.

Figure 1. Forde's Principles of Democracy Applied to Policing.

Currently, democratic policing is defined by both narrow and broad definitions. Muntingh⁵⁸ provides a concise definition of democratic policing that comprises all six democratic principles of Forde's empowerment framework: knowledge, fairness, human dignity, unity, hope, and security.¹¹ Muntingh defines democratic policing as required to "meet three fundamental requirements: (1) there is democratic accountability for policing practices that are vetted in the public arena and have popular support; (2) police adhere to the rule of law; and (3) the police behave in a manner that is procedurally fair in service of the public" (p. 122).⁵⁸ Muntingh includes the civilian members as partners and overseers of policing.⁵⁸ By contrast, Bonner's⁵⁴ definition includes all six of Forde's democratic principles; however, attaining security and hope is questionable, since interest groups such as police unions secure more political power than civilians by influencing elections, departmental policies, and federal and state laws. Bonner's political framework assumes electoral accountability can constrain police power. This assumption fails to account for the institutional seizure through the political process by police unions, which exert influence through campaign contributions, lobbying, and collective bargaining agreements that shield officers from accountability.^{27,32} As a political definition of democratic policing, it fails to recognize the effect of policing as an institution embedded in political structure, and the most vulnerable populations cannot adequately rely on an educational system that ignores their needs. For Bonner, democratic policing "can be as minimal as regular, free, fair, and competitive elections that allow voters to choose between leaders with different ideas on policing policies and practices. Alternatively, it can be more robust, requiring liberal democratic checks and balances or even non-police-focused socio-economic reforms (social democracy;" p. 1057).⁵⁴

Like Bonner,⁵⁴ Stone and Ward's definition takes a different approach.⁵⁹ They took a business model approach to democratic policing. Stone and Ward found that a consensus among the international community "on six general [democratic policing] principles exists: 'effectiveness, efficiency, accessibility, accountability, congruence, and general order'" (p. 15).⁵⁹ The language (effective, efficient, accessible, and general order) is partly why democratic policing is necessary. The terms are vague and do not always uphold the due process rights of suspects or offenders. For example, effective policing can be linked to abuse of or fatal use of power. Efficient policing can be linked to under-policing in crime-ridden neighborhoods and plea bargaining by innocent civilians. Furthermore,

accessible policing can lead to over-policing, while general order can lead to arrests when adolescents are congregating, and having a good time is confused with social disorder.

Stodiek⁵⁵ and Neild,⁴³ on the other hand, take a systems approach and cover Forde's six principles of democracy—knowledge, fairness, human dignity, unity, hope, and security. Both Stodiek and Neild see democratic policing as a function that leads to social stability. “Democratic policing, that is effective in crime prevention, unbiased, and safeguards the rights of the individual, is central to preventing conflicts, preserving social stability during crisis and supporting post-conflict rehabilitation” (p. 201-202).⁵⁵ Neild⁴³ seems to understand the role of policing, appreciates the civilian's perspective, and knows that an effective and efficient approach to social order relies on a community orientation. Their approach to democratic policing aligns with the essence of Forde's democratic policing framework: it assumes that knowledge, fairness, and dignity-respecting policing create security, community unity, and stability through hope. Both Stodiek's and Neild's frameworks suggest a normative approach to democratic policing, one that treats human rights and fairness as ends in themselves and can mitigate conflict and build trust. Of the five works analyzed, no weaknesses were observed in Muntingh's,⁵⁸ Neild's,⁴³ and Stodiek's⁵⁵ definitions of democratic policing. They embody democratic principles found in the US Constitution and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (see Table 5).¹¹

Table 5. Democratic Policing: Summary of Analysis.

Scholar	Knowledge	Fairness	Human Dignity	Unity	Hope	Security	Weakness
Bonner ⁵⁴	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	?	Interest groups undermine elections
Muntingh ⁵⁸	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	None identified
Neild ⁴³	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	None identified
Stodiek ⁵⁵	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	None identified
Stone & Ward ⁵⁹	?	✓	✓	✓	✓	?	Vague concepts; business model

Appendix D: Analysis of Democratic Policing Literature

Table 6. Democratic Policing Literature.

Scholar	Knowledge	Fairness	Human Dignity	Unity	Hope	Security	Notes
Manning ¹¹⁰	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Covers all six principles. Respecting rights = Knowledge; fairness and justice = Fairness; careful not to abuse authority = Human Dignity; citizen inclusion = Unity; transparency and accountability = Hope; limiting force and public safety = Security

Tyler¹¹¹; Tyler & Blader¹¹²	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Organizational justice → identification → democratic policing. Knowledge of procedures is embedded in procedural justice. Fairness is central. Human dignity in just treatment. Unity through identification. Hope through organizational support. Security through procedural justice, organizational identity, and following departmental policies.
Bradford & Quinton¹¹³	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Officers who identify with their organization = Unity; confidence in authority = Security; support for democratic policing = Knowledge, Fairness; upholding citizens' rights = Human Dignity; limiting force = Security; hope through organizational support
Myhill & Bradford¹¹⁴	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Like Tyler/Bradford. Organizational identification → confidence; confident officers support democratic policing; Knowledge in procedural justice; Fairness in organizational treatment; Human Dignity in just treatment; Unity through identification; Security through confident authority
Trinkner et al.,⁹²; Trinkner & Tyler⁹³	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Organizational fairness → well-being, commitment → procedurally fair policing = Knowledge, Fairness; organizational dysfunction → cynicism, stress, citizen suspicion = undermines all six principles. Knowledge is embedded in the procedural justice framework
Paoline et al.⁸⁸	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Traditional police culture = antidemocratic (distrust, enforcement over engagement = undermines Unity, Human Dignity); officers who endorse traditional culture = more likely to use force = undermines Security, Human Dignity; Knowledge of rights = necessary for Fairness
Silver et al.⁸⁹	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Procedurally just attitudes and values are associated with procedural fairness (politeness, respect for citizens, and recognition = Knowledge, Fairness, Human Dignity, and less use of force = Security; hope rather than the warrior mindset

Stoughton ¹⁰² ₁₀₃	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Warrior mindset = antidemocratic (moral superiority, controlling citizens = undermines Human Dignity, Unity, Security); Guardian mindset = democratic (service-oriented, trust through just treatment, short-term encounters to facilitate long-term relationships; avoidance of unnecessary indignity = Knowledge, Fairness, Human Dignity, Unity, Security, Hope)
McLean et al. ¹⁰⁴	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Warrior mindset → higher force propensity → undermines Security, Human Dignity; lower community engagement → undermines Unity; Guardian mindset → higher community engagement → Unity; lower force → Security, Human Dignity; Knowledge in prioritizing community engagement
Murphy & McCarthy ¹⁰⁵	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Empirical support for warrior/guardian mindsets; warrior → lower community engagement, higher force; guardian → higher community engagement, lower force; Knowledge through understanding when each mindset is appropriate

Appendix E: Coding Memo: Democratic-Anti-Democratic Gap Assessment

Democratic policing was assessed from multiple perspectives (refer to Table 6), with Bonner assessing a breadth of political definitions and noting that definitions “can be as minimal as regular, free, fair, and competitive elections that allow voters to choose between leaders with different ideas on policing policies and practices” (p. 1057).⁵⁴ Minimal definitions assume elections can guarantee democratic policing practices by linking voting with collective power. However, this alignment undermines all six of the democratic principles.¹¹ Police unions and other special interest groups influence campaigns and policy.²⁷ Alternatively, Bonner asserts that the definitions of democratic policing “can be more robust, requiring liberal democratic checks and balances or even non-police focused socioeconomic reforms (social democracy)” (p. 1057).⁵⁴ While the more robust definition may be a start, it is unrealistic since most people are unaware that policing is embedded in political structures and how those structures function in practice.

Muntingh defines democratic policing as required to “meet three fundamental requirements: (1) there is democratic accountability for policing practices that are vetted in the public arena and have popular support [KNOWLEDGE, FAIRNESS, HUMAN DIGNITY, SECURITY, UNITY, HOPE]; (2) police adhere to the rule of law [FAIRNESS]; and (3) the police behave in a manner that is procedurally fair in service of the public” [FAIRNESS, SECURITY; p.122].⁵⁸

For Stone and Ward, there is a consensus among the international community “on six general [democratic policing] principles: ‘effectiveness [SECURITY, *what is effective policing? Too vague*], efficiency [*under-policing, plea bargains*], accessibility [FAIRNESS, HUMAN DIGNITY, UNITY; *over-policing*],

accountability [HOPE, *but who will hold them accountable?*], congruence, and general order” (p. 15).⁵⁹ [*Talks about democratic policing as a business model*]. Stone and Ward dismiss the consequences of over- and -under-policing.⁵⁹

For Stodiek,⁵⁵ “Democratic policing, that is effective in crime prevention [SECURITY, KNOWLEDGE, HOPE], unbiased [FAIRNESS, SECURITY], and safeguards the rights of the individual [FAIRNESS, SECURITY, HUMAN DIGNITY, HOPE, KNOWLEDGE], is central to preventing conflicts [KNOWLEDGE, HUMAN DIGNITY, SECURITY], preserving social stability [UNITY] during crisis and supporting post-conflict rehabilitation” (p. 201-202)⁵⁵ [SECURITY, HUMAN DIGNITY, HOPE, KNOWLEDGE].

For Neild, “policing that respects the rights of all citizens [FAIRNESS] and is responsive [HOPE, UNITY, SECURITY] to their needs can be effective in controlling crime [SECURITY] and maintaining order [UNITY]. And this dynamic relationship between respectfulness [HUMAN DIGNITY], responsiveness [HOPE, UNITY] and effectiveness [KNOWLEDGE, FAIRNESS, HUMAN DIGNITY, HOPE, UNITY, SECURITY] lies at the core of democratic policing” [p. 24].⁴³ “This requires a multi-sectoral strategy, encompassing a wide range of actors [UNITY]: from the military and civilian police in peacekeeping operations to donors that provide support for democratic institutional, economic and social development⁴³” (FAIRNESS, HUMAN DIGNITY; UNITY; p. 24). She recognizes that democratic policing reform “implies a radical shift from the traditional concepts of law and order and social order” (p. 24).⁴³