

The rodney king example criminology essay

[Law](#), [Criminology](#)



Name: Professor: Course Code: Date of Submission: Outline of the Paper:

Introduction: Police officers and Ethics. Law and Police Ethics. The Rodney King Example. II. Issues that arise. Trust. Perceptions civilians have towards the police force. Indicators that civilians use to measure the level of trust they should have towards the police force. Legitimacy of police actions and development of trust. Laws that guide the ethical standards of police officers. Loyalty amongst members of the police force. The police officers dilemma. Importance of professionalism. III. Solutions. Police Training: Pre-Training period Rigid Qualifications. Emphasis on integrity and discipline. Post training period. Enactment of a problem based solving curriculum. Example of an ethical dilemma. Effects of the post training program. Management, Leadership and Administration: Creation of a single command structure. Office of the public complains. Effects of effective administration, management and Leadership IV. Conclusion. Subject matter of the paper. How effective the paper has managed to highlight the issues it addresses.

Introduction: Students of ethical studies denote that the field of law enforcement requires a high degree of ethical standards as compared to the other professions. This is because police officers have a huge responsibility placed upon them by the public, and the work they do, requires a high level of professionalism. For instance, police officers handle firearms, and it is essential to initiate a series of guidelines that would ensure proper use of the fire arm in question (Dempsey and Forst, 2012). People are always looking at the behavior of police officers, some with the intention of catching while violating their codes of conduct, and some look at the for leadership.

Whichever way, it is essential for police officers to be on the lookout, so that

they do not violate their ethical values. Violations of these values could result into a breach of the constitution, and the rights of individuals that they encounter with (Schmalleger, 2012). For example, a police officer who kills an unharmed suspect violates their code of conduct in regard to the use of the firearm, and the constitutional rights of the individual as per the Fourth amendment which guards against use of unnecessary force against citizens of the state (Dempsey and Forst, 2012). Despite the requirement that police officers abide by their codes of conduct, police officers are still caught doing acts that violate their ethical standards, such as use of unnecessary force, engaging in theft, abuse of authority, etc. All this are unethical practices that police officers should shun. A better example of police unethical behavior is the Rodney King incident. Rodney King was a construction worker, who was released on a parole. However, on March 3rd 1991, Rodney King was thoroughly beaten by four police officers, while their colleagues looked on, doing nothing. Their action was unconstitutional, as they violated the rights of Rodney King. On this basis, this paper analyzes the legal and ethical issues that arise when police officers look out for their colleagues. Issues That Arise: One ethical issue that arises when police officers look out for their colleagues is trust. Mistrust of police officers occurs because of three main perceptions namely (Dempsey and Forst, 2012).; There is a subculture operating within the police force that turns promising and good career officers, into unethical and bad police officers. The notion that the policing approach of police officers is filled with discrimination, especially on race. The police department is filled with corrupt officers, who abuse their authority for purposes of satisfying their selfish interests. When members of

the public are able to trust the police, the same force acquires legitimacy. This is a fundamental requirement that would enable police officers to carry out their duties efficiently, and in accordance to the law. However, on most occasions, the public have certain indicators that they measure in order to fully trust the police, and cooperate with them. These indicators are (Pollock, 2007); What are the priorities of police officers; is it to serve the public or their own interests. Are the police officers competent in carrying out their duties? Can individuals depend on police officers to protect them? Are the police officers respectful in the manner in which they interact with people? Police officers, while conducting their duties can have a different priority as opposed to that of their department. For instance, an officer of the law can liaise with criminal gangs for purposes of obtaining some money, in exchange of protecting the criminal gang (Pollock, 2007). This is in itself unethical behavior, because a police officer swears to protect the public against criminals, and the law. When the priorities of an officer are wrong, and the senior officers of the police department in which he comes from protects him, then they contribute to the erosion of the public confidence towards the police force (Schmallegger, 2012). This leads to mistrust and lack of collaboration between the police and the community where they are operating. It is always to the interest of the police force to discipline the rogue members of its force. Take an instance of the Rodney King case, the police officers who breached the rights of Rodney, and vigorously assaulted him were stripped off their titles, and prosecuted for unnecessary use of excessive force and abuse of authority (MacVean and Neyroud, 2012). When police officers seek to serve the interest of their department, they will ensure

that they carry out their duties to the highest level of professionalism, not comprising their service even if it is their colleague who is engaging in the criminal act. The police force as an institution has various codes of ethics that guide their behaviors, and some of them are entrenched in the law, therefore breaking the code of conduct, amounts to breaking the same laws that they are supposed to protect. For Instance the 2 United States Code establishes the capital police and outlines their functions, and one of them is maintenance of law and order. The patriot act is another law passed by congress in 2001, and it outlines the functions of the police officers (MacVean and Neyroud, 2012). On this basis, successfully arresting rogue officers who contravene these rules, and prosecuting them, can result to an increase of public confidence towards the police force, and therefore leading to an increase in trust. Therefore, for police officers to earn the trust of the public, they must be prepared to strictly observe and follow the codes of ethics put in place. Another ethical issue that arises out of the police desire to look at their fellow officers is on whether to be loyal to their fellow colleagues, or to engage in acts of fighting crime. This notion presents an ethical dilemma to a police officer, because if he decides to be loyal, it therefore means he or she will let go on the unethical behaviors of his fellow police officers. This usually creates a sub culture of loyalty amongst police officers, whereby whistleblowing is strongly discouraged. They base their assumptions on the fact that police officers are human beings, and there are always chances of them committing errors. However, though loyalty to coworkers is a good thing, it must be strongly discouraged because it is possible to breed corruption, and hide it. When performing their functions of

crime control, police officers are guided by the law, and they would like to ensure professionalism, and expertise in the manner in which they conduct their operations (MacVean and Neyroud, 2012). When they are professional, police officers won't tolerate any acts of unethical behavior emanating from their colleagues. Their loyalty would be to the ideals and the principles guiding the force, and their operations. Solutions: To improve on these issue that emanate, it is important for the police department to enact a curriculum that addresses current issues that face the police force, and the society at large. Police officers must be trained on the importance of integrity, and maintaining good relations with members of the public (MacVean and Neyroud, 2012). For any person to qualify as police officer, they must pass through vigorous integrity tests that will ensure that the right people are in the police force. Enlisting people with integrity will result to the creation of a police force that respects the fundamental rights of the citizens it is tasked to protect, and a police force that respects the code of ethics that it vowed to follow (Schmallegger, 2012). It is also important to establish a post training program, whose curriculum reflects the current policing techniques. The approach that security organization should use in the post training program is the problem-based learning. This approach will enable police officers to learn about an issue, through experience in solving such an issue/ problem. For example, when a police officer is faced with an ethical dilemma, on whether to report the unethical conduct of his fellow officers, the problem based approach in learning will take advantage on this experience, and impart skills on such an officer, on the methods of handling the dilemma in which he is in. The goals of the problem based learning approach are to help

police officers develop skills in intrinsic motivation, and collaborative skills. This will make police officers to interact freely with civilians, ensuring that they respect their fundamental rights, and they do not engage in any activity that would compromise the image of the police force. In the management and administration of the police force, it is essential to make all units within the police force under one central command structure. This will create unity within the police force, and they will serve with zeal, increasing the level of security within the community. The management must also create an office of public complains, which has the responsibility of hearing petitions from the public in regard to the conduct of the police force. By doing this, the police department would be creating a rapport with the citizens, ensuring collaboration during the process of community policing. To minimize the sub-culture of loyalty amongst members of the police force, it is important for the police department to conduct periodical transfers amongst police officers. This would ensure that the officers under consideration would only be loyal to the principles of the organization, and not individual employees. It is also important to conduct performance appraisals amongst police officers, as a method of managing and improving on the performance of the police officers under consideration. Performance appraisals will identify the ethical weaknesses within the police, and provide measures of improving on them. This is an efficient management tool, because police officers would know that their actions are always monitored, and promotion would depend on how efficient they conduct their duties. On this basis therefore, promotion within the police force should only be based on efficiency in service delivery to the particular police officer. This would ensure good leadership, and the

observance of the various ethical standards of the police force. Conclusion: In conclusion, this paper has managed to highlight the ethical and legal issues that members of the police force face, when they are looking out for their colleagues. This paper has managed to identify why police officers are always under the scrutiny of the public, and it denotes that it is because of their important role in enforcing law and order within the community. This paper denotes that mistrust emanating from the public, and loyalty amongst police officers are some of the major issues that arise when police officers breach their codes of ethics. On this note, where there is mistrust amongst civilians to police officers, would always result to lack of legitimacy on any action that police officers undertake within the community. To obtain legitimacy, it is therefore important for the police to make the public trust them, and their actions must also be based on law. This paper has managed to explain these points in detail. Finally, this paper has managed to provide solutions to the ethical issues that arise from police when police officers breach their codes of conduct, and protect rogue members of their force.

Annotated Bibliography: Dempsey, J. S., & Forst, L. S. (2012). An introduction to policing (6th ed.). Clifton Park, NY: Delmar Cengage Learning. This book by Dempsey and Forst concerns itself with American community policing approach by law enforcement officers. It also talks about the role of the public and private sector in ensuring that law enforcement officers conduct their duties in the most professional manner, and in accordance to the set up laws in United States of America. This book analyzes specific aspects of police operations, and the issues that arise while police officers are on the process of policing, and the technology in use. In conclusion this book

identifies the various roles of police officers, and the rewards they gain in enforcing law. It also analyzes the strengths and the difficulties that police officers encounter while they are in the process of enforcing law. The information contained in this book is reliable, and relevant to my topic, because it contains ethical dilemmas, and issues that police officers face. The authors are also clear in the manner in which they express their points, and this is because they have wide experience in the field of criminal justice. However they fail to give a clear definition of ethics, and ethical dilemmas that law enforcement officers are at risk of facing. John Dempsey is an expert in criminal law, and currently he is a lecturer at the University of New York. He also has experience in Public Administration, and therefore we can rely on this book to get the necessary information concerning ethical standards set up by the police force. Linda Forst on the author hand is a professor of Criminal Justice at Shoreline Community college in Seattle. She is also a member of the Washington Board of Law Enforcement Education, Standards, and Training Board. On this note therefore, she is a source of extensive knowledge on matters of criminal justice. MacVean, A., & Neyroud, P. (2012). Police ethics and values. Exeter: Learning Matters. This book by MacVean and Neyroud introduces a reader into police ethics, and the values associated with community policing. It also gives an analysis of the police culture, and the ethical procedures that regulate the behavior of police officers when they conduct community policing. The book illustrates the importance of leadership and management in the police force, and the guidelines in which officers should use when they are confronted in circumstances where the use of force is necessary. On this basis therefore,

this book is highly relevant for my study, because it contributed to my understanding of ethical issues that police officers face, and the importance of leadership and effective management within the police force. The authors are also objective in the manner in which they analyze and convey their points, making it easier to understand the concept they are bringing up. However, the author has failed to give examples of specific policing programs that the police force engages in. Allyson Mac Veau has experience in the criminal justice system, as he worked at the department of serious crime and organized Unit, based in the home office. He is also the founder and director of John Grieve community policing unit, which identifies areas where law enforcement officers should lay emphasis while carrying out their patrols. Peter Neyroud on the other hand is a career police officer, having joined the police in 1980s, and ascending through the ranks. On this note therefore, the two authors provide relevant information, based on their experiences in policing. Pollock, J. M. (2007). Ethical dilemmas and decisions in criminal justice (5th ed.). Belmont, CA: Thomson/Wadsworth. This book introduces students of criminal justice on the ethical standards of the criminal justice system. This book covers all aspects of the criminal justice system which includes the police force, the judiciary, and the department of corrective services. This book identifies the various codes of conduct that officers within these departments ought to follow, and the ethical dilemmas that they might face in the process of conducting their duties. The authors of this book have managed to give a clear description of the various accepted ethical standards among the police force, and on this basis, I find this book to be relevant to my study. The author is objective in his arguments, and this

is because of his background in criminal justice system. However the author has not described the structure of the American police force, and this was essential in helping me to understand the various problems the organization could face. Jocelyn Pollock holds a PHD degree in Criminal Justice System, and is a professor of Criminal Justice at the University of San Marcos, in Texas. She once served as a parole and probation officer in Washington. She was also served the State of New York, in their department of Correctional services. On this basis, she brings in a wealth of experience on issues that pertain to ethical standards of police officers, and thus her contribution was essential in my studies. Schmallegger, F. (2012). Criminal justice: a brief introduction (9th ed.). Boston: PrenticeHall. This book by Frank Schmallegger gives an introduction of the criminal justice system and the role of the police force in the system. This book analyzes the various ethical standards and values set up by the police department, and how effective they are in guiding the behaviors of the specific police officers. It also introduces us to the perceptions that the public has towards an inefficient police unit, and how to change these perceptions. On this basis, this book is relevant to my studies, as it gives a description of the theories of solving the various ethical dilemmas a police officer might face, and issues that arise out of such dilemmas. The author is objective in his analysis, and this is because of the relevant experience he has in the criminal Justice system. The only information that Frank has not given in this book is examples of instances where the police have clashed with the community in which they are tasked to protect. Frank Schmallegger holds a PHD in sociology, which a major in criminology. He teaches criminal Justice at the University of North Carolina,

and he is also a director of Justice research association. Because of these numerous experiences he has in criminal justice, information that he relays are trusted and accurate. Top of FormBottom of Form