force, to the opposite end, where torture resides. Both technologies betray a societal faith in policing that excuses and extends force beyond its legal domain.

The implications for scholars interested in race and policing should be clear. We should abandon any uncritical faith in policing. It is due time that the glare of the blue light be redirected at law enforcement. Strapping police officers with body cameras is a start. But it will not solve the problem of police violence, since cultural ideas about who is a "criminal" always shape encounters and infiltrate the analysis of evidence.

What I am suggesting is that by linking itself to a broader history of protest against police violence, the cell phone camera that a protester points at a police brigade in the midst of occupying a burning city might be seen as one attempt to peel back the secrets that seldom gain public recognition. Such revelatory acts, one by one, aggregated, might just expose the cruelty a society allows itself.

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# shouldn't black lives matter all the time?

by elliott currie

The country, indeed much of the world, has been transfixed by the recent spate of police killings of Black men in the U.S. The names of those men—including Michael Brown, Walter Scott, and Freddie Gray—and the places where they died—Ferguson, North Charleston, and Baltimore, respectively—will surely resonate in our minds for a very long time. That's as it should be, but I've found myself increasingly troubled by the way we talk about these events. More precisely, by what we leave out when we talk about them.

The outrage over these killings is certainly justified, as is the sense that they reveal something both morally disturbing and deeply illuminating about the nature of race relations and of policing in the United States. But what troubles me is that we seem far less outraged by the much larger number of Black men who die quite predictably in America's cities year in and year out, mostly at the hands of people very much like them. Their deaths may or may not reach the media. But they are reflections of the larger social catastrophe of which police killings are only one part. And their lives and deaths should matter, too.

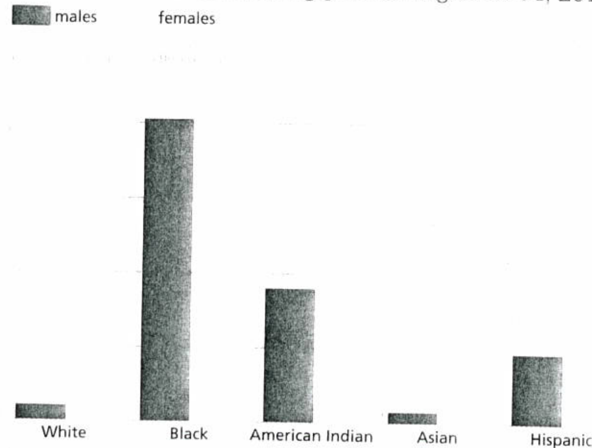
> The American Black men who die quite predictably, year in and year out, at the hands of people much like them are reflections of the larger social catastrophe of which police killings are only one part. Their lives and deaths should matter, too.

We can catch a glimpse of that catastrophe in the cold figures on race and homicide deaths supplied by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Overall, in 2013, the Black homicide death rate in the United States was almost exactly seven times the rate for non-Hispanic Whites. If Black Americans had enjoyed the same homicide death rate as Whites, more than 6,900 of the roughly 8,000 Black homicide victims that year would have lived. Put the other way around, if non-Hispanic Whites suffered the same risk of homicide death as Blacks, there would have been about 35,000 White homicide victims instead of the roughly 5,000 who actually died in 2013.

For the group of Americans most at risk—young Black men—these differences are, of course, much starker. Between the ages of 15 and 29, Black men have sixteen times the homicide death rate of their White counterparts. I think I can guarantee you that if 13,000 young White men had lost their lives to violence in 2013 (instead of 836), the outcry would have been deafening, and the demand for real solutions vocal and earnest.

It doesn't diminish the tragedy of Michael Brown's death in Ferguson to point out that over 100 young Black men died of homicide in the state of Missouri in 2013. But it does suggest

U.S. homicide rates among persons ages 15-34, 2010




Sources: CDC/NCHS National Vital Statistics System (Mortality) and U.S. Census Bureau.

that our concern about—even knowledge of—the loss of young African-American lives is troublingly selective. I doubt that, at least outside of Missouri, most of us could give a name to any of those young victims. But they are no less victims, and their deaths are no less a reflection of the devastating impact of the structural conditions that shape Black lives.

Why do the deaths of Black men at the hands of police stir a usually sleepy American conscience, while the far more common community violence mostly flies beneath the radar? Partly, I'm sure, because there is a special sting to killing when it's done by agents of the state: it symbolizes, in a particularly inescapable way, the reality of official complicity in maintaining the whole system of racial injustice. Killings by police are an especially harsh reminder of where things really stand in an ostensibly post-racial America. But I think there's more to it than that.

I suspect that it outrages Americans less when Black youth kill other Black youth because it is hard for us to grasp the idea that this kind of killing, too, has social roots—that it is part and parcel of the same system that gives us the callous brutality of police in Baltimore and North Charleston. When the hand that holds the gun is a White police officer's, the connection between the shooting and generations of structural racism is immediate and direct. When the hand belongs to a 19-year-old Black kid, the connection is complex and indirect. But our widespread failure to make that more demanding connection represents a failure of the moral as well as the sociological imagination. In a deeply individualistic culture, we "see" the social in killings by police in a way that eludes us when youth kill each other.

Let me be absolutely clear: I'm not suggesting that we should care less about the killings by police than we do, but that we should care about endemic youth violence more. And I'm also suggesting that we are unlikely to make much progress against either kind of killing until we clearly acknowledge that both result from the same stubbornly entrenched social forces that have made all too many Black lives seem expendable.

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# toward harm reduction policing

by katherine beckett

Across the country, urban governments face significant pressure to reduce outdoor drug market activity and visible homelessness. At the same time, critics increasingly urge police departments to avoid the heavy-handed and often racially charged tactics associated with "broken windows" policing, stop-and-frisk, and the failed drug war. Identifying a productive way forward in the context of these contradictory pressures is no easy task. But in Seattle, a new program shows how police discretion and resources can be mobilized to serve humanitarian ends and reduce reliance on our bloated criminal justice system.

Like most urban police agencies, the Seattle Police Department (SPD) relied heavily on racially disparate drug war tactics in recent decades. It also created and employed controversial new legal tools in an effort to restrict the spatial mobility of those deemed "disorderly." Yet these aggressive enforcement tactics did not eradicate the social ills associated with homelessness or open-air drug and sex markets.

The persistence of urban "disorder" triggered significant community pressure to do something to make the rapidly gentrifying and tourist-rich downtown area feel more hospitable to workers, residents, and visitors. At the same time, the racially disparate impact of the SPD's drug enforcement practices was the subject of lengthy, complex and time-consuming litigation that exhausted all of those involved. By the late 2000s, no one was satisfied with the status quo, including the SPD itself. As Sergeant Sean Whitcomb, spokesman for the department, put it, "officers are frustrated arresting the same people over